

# **An Experiential Approach to the Delivery of the Grade 10 Civics Curriculum in Ontario: The Case of DILA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study examines an educational intervention, which attempts to create experiential learning opportunities, to gain an understanding of the effects of teachers' and students' development as active democratic citizens. The educational intervention comes in the form of a youth program entitled 'Day of Information for a Lifetime of Action' (DILA). The research answers the following question: does an experiential approach to the delivery of the Grade 10 Civics Curriculum such as DILA affect the development of active democratic citizens - as characterized by civic identity, civic engagement, and civic competence? And if so, how does it influence the students' understanding of their role in a democratic society, their self-reported likelihood of future civic engagement and their self-reported ability to be civically effective?

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## **CHAPTER ONE:**

No one is born a good citizen; no nation is born a democracy. Rather, both are processes that continue to evolve over a lifetime. Young people must be included from birth.

-- Kofi Annan

### **INTRODUCTION**

If you were about to have a medical operation, and you overheard the doctor say, “don’t worry I have read about this in a book,” would you feel confident in the doctor’s ability to perform your procedure? If just before your plane was about to land, the pilot got on the microphone and assured everyone, “although I have never landed a plane before, I have had the process thoroughly explained to me,” would you sit back feeling assured about the safety of the flight? Would you learn how to read, write, swim, drive a car, or play an instrument simply by watching others perform these acts or by reading about them in text books? The answer for the overwhelming majority of people to all of the above questions would be a resounding no! Why? Because life’s most important lessons are ultimately learned through experience.

Democracy is a political system that allows eligible citizens to participate both directly or indirectly in decisions that affect their lives (Parliament of Canada, 2009). In a democratic society, to be an actively involved democratic citizen is one of the most important lessons a person can learn. When those lessons are not learned, the central pillar of democracy, public participation, is removed and democracy ceases to function by all theoretical and practical measures. Some forms of passive learning, such as reading and observing, play an important role in an individual’s democratic development. However, without the opportunity to actively experience and engage in democratic processes, the lesson remains incomplete, lacking in much of its value and meaning. A functioning democratic society necessitates more than simply

individual avenues towards participation. Citizens must learn the importance of their voice, develop the will to use it and be empowered to use it effectively.

This study examines an educational intervention, which attempts to create experiential learning opportunities, to gain an understanding of the effects of teachers' and students' development as active democratic citizens. The educational intervention comes in the form of a youth program entitled 'Day of Information for a Lifetime of Action' (DILA), a program that I founded in 2006 and now coordinate. DILA was initially a one day conference and has evolved into a yearlong program that works within schools and after school programs across the Ottawa area. The goal of the DILA program is to support youth in taking action on issues that are relevant to them. Further details about the DILA program, its influences and the intervention will be provided in the research description section of this thesis. The research is guided by the following question: does an experiential approach to the delivery of the Grade 10 Civics Curriculum such as DILA affect the development of active democratic citizens - as characterized by civic identity, civic engagement, and civic competence? And, if so, how does it influence the students' understanding of their role in a democratic society, their self-reported likelihood of future civic engagement and their self-reported ability to be civically effective? The definition of an active democratic citizen used in this study emerged from the broad and diverse literature on citizenship education. Civic identity represents the perspectives a citizen has about their role in a democratic society. Civic engagement represents the will to take civic action. Civic competence represents the confidence that their actions will be effective. These concepts must also be understood through the perceptions of their meaning of the students themselves. As such, a component of the study will further contextualise experiential learning.

In order to understand where one is going, we must look at where we have been. As such, before describing the intervention and the means of determining if it has an effect, I will present a brief history of civic education and an overview of the research on the current state of civic education. I argue that the delivery of the civics curriculum demands attention and study. As we shall see, based on the research and as observed in practice, civics education lacks consistency in delivery and largely misses its intended goals. A review of the literature includes an examination of citizenship theory, how citizenship is reflected in course curriculum, what experiential learning means in civics, and how it has proven supportive of the development of active citizenship. The literature review will provide the justification for the study and the basis for its conceptual framework. In closing, the potential contributions of the research will be presented along with the limitations of the proposed research.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **HISTORY OF CIVIC EDUCATION IN CANADA**

Schools in Canada were founded as institutions that would prepare students for their role as citizens and, until the 1980s, all subjects taught had to be justified in terms of how they would lead to the civic development of the students (Osborne, 2000). From the inception of public schools, there have been debates about the type of ideal citizen schools should be striving to develop. The concept of citizenship has been and remains “essentially contested, that is to say, one whose meaning can never be once and for all decisively fixed, but which will always be the subject of debate and disagreement” (Osborne, 2000, p. 11). One side of the citizenship debate insists that schools should ensure that citizens understand their role in the nation, develop a shared respect of social order, and adhere to and perpetuate traditional values, customs, and traditions (Granatstein, 1999; Heater, 1992; Parker, 2003). In contrast, another school of thought conceives education in emancipatory terms that allows individuals to develop their own ability to challenge and change the political and social landscape when the ideals of justice, fairness, and equality are compromised (Barman, 1988; Dewey, 1920; Friere, 2010). Despite the contrasting views of the goals of citizenship education, commonality lay in the fact that schools were identified as the mechanism that would best prepare students for their role as citizens. The rationale, at least in the rhetoric of both contrasting camps, was that those who had the ability to vote needed to be able to participate in the democratic process intelligently (Osborne, 2000; Hebert & Sears, 2004; Kahne & Westheimer, 2003).

The early educational policy was more in line with the notions of instilling unity, but it can be seen that in practice, from the very beginning, there was often a disjoint between curriculum and practice, which resulted in “schooling being resisted, sabotaged, manipulated,

and diverted as those who were supposed to be its object sought to blunt its impact or turn it to their own advantage” (Osborne, 2000, p. 9). There have been efforts to manifest the emancipatory notions of education within the curriculum (McLean, 2010). These efforts to promote “progressive education ... student-centred learning theory, which focusses on studying contemporary problems to better prepare children for the real world through interactive, experiential classroom learning experiences” (Mclean, 2010, p. 46) have never succeeded in transforming the curriculum fully and more often than not found strength in small communities of practice that promoted active engaged citizenry through direct experience despite the curriculum (McLean, 2000).

Within Ontario, and indeed Canada as a whole, beginning in the 1980s, there has been a shift away from citizenship education. As Ken Osborne describes it, those that shape education policy and set education priorities “more or less abandoned citizenship, however defined, as a goal of general education in their haste to turn schools into training grounds for the new global economy” (Osborne, 2000, p. 10). Several other researchers and experts in the field in Canada and the United States have demonstrated this is part of a global shift in education: civic education is becoming de-prioritized in favour of more economically focused outcomes. (Carnegie Corporation of New York & CIRCLE, 2003; Hebert & Sears, 2004; Osborne, 2000; UNESCO, 1996; Volante, 2004; Westheimer, 2008). This change of focus in educational policy has shifted school practice from preparing youth to be active participants in a democratic society to creating economic contributors and consumers (Osborne, 2000).

## **CURRENT ACADEMIC RESEARCH ON CIVICS EDUCATION**

Given the move away from the civic mission of schools, it is not surprising that teachers are struggling with a course that strives to prepare students for their role as active democratic citizens. The shift of focus in educational policy has coincided with a shift in educational research goals. There are limited external studies on whether or not the Ontario Grade 10 Civics course is achieving its stated goals in the city of Ottawa. One study conducted research in four Ottawa area civics classes. The research indicates many inconsistencies between the civics classes in the different schools. These inconsistencies extended to interpretations of the curriculum how the curriculum was delivered and the student outcomes (Giron, 2012). This study reinforces the notion that locally, civics is a de-prioritized subject that lacks consistency in delivery and consistently misses its intended goals.

When we look at the research on civics courses from across North America (sometimes called social studies), similar patterns are identified. A common theme in the literature is the disparities between what the curriculum describes, what educators intend to teach, what ends up being taught and what students actually learn (Osborne, 2000; Sears & Hughes, 1996). This disconnect is reflected in the student responses to civics courses. In surveying the research conducted on civic education in Canada and drawing from her 20 years of work in the field, Susan Gibson concluded that students do not see civics as a course that prepares them to participate in a democracy (Gibson, 2012). Further research conducted by academics and practitioners on civics classes in Canada and America consistently indicate that students rate civics as their least favorite subject and most irrelevant to their lives (Egan, 1980; Heafner, 2004; Steffay & Hood, 1994; Thorton, 2005). As a result, rather than an opportunity to facilitate youths' development as active democratic citizens, the ineffective delivery of the civics course

has resulted in alienating many youth from politics and civil society in general (McVeigh & Barnett, 2010).

In 2009, the Library of Parliament brought together 25 of the top thinkers in the area of youth engagement and youth involvement to address youth's growing alienation from conventional political engagement. The group, which included academics, educators, school board administrators and members of civil society, identified the "decline in quality and enthusiasm of civics education in the classroom" (Clarke, p. 3, 2009) as one of the key factors in youth becoming disengaged from conventional political engagement based on the following:

- Civics programs and methods of delivery are not evolving to meet student needs. Likewise, teachers do not always receive sufficient training in the subject.
- In general, teachers and students are disinterested in civics education.
- In general, schools focus more on civic engagement than they do on democratic engagement.

(Clarke, 2009)

### **THE COURSE ITSELF: GRADE 10 CIVICS**

Currently, the province of Ontario requires all students to complete a Grade 10 Civics course (taught in conjunction with a course entitled, "Careers") in order to graduate from high school. For one half of the semester, students study civics, and for the other half of the semester, they explore how to enter the job market. The order of the courses varies from school to school, and the courses are split over the duration of one semester (Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, 2012). The course description is as follows:

#### **Civics - CHV2O - Civics, Grade 10, Open**

This course explores what it means to be an informed, participating citizen in a democratic society. Students will learn about the elements of democracy in local, national, and global contexts, about political reactions to social change, and about political decision making processes in Canada. They will explore their own and others' ideas about civics questions and learn how to think critically about public issues and react responsibly to them.

(Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, p. 175, 2012)

Given the language that describes the Grade 10 Civics course, one would think that civics classrooms would provide an opportunity for students to connect in real ways to issues relevant to them and to understand their privilege, opportunity and responsibility as an active part of democracy. Unfortunately, as demonstrated through review of the literature this is rarely the case in practice.

### CONVENTIONAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT MEASURES

At some point it will occur to someone: we have a democratic crisis on our hands – a crisis of legitimacy, a crisis of efficacy – Andrew Coyne, Editor, Maclean’s Magazine (Coyne 2008, p. 55).

Following the shift in educational policy that changed the focus of schools, Canada saw a sharp decrease in one of the most basic traditional measures of participation in a democratic society: voter turnout. The trends of voter turnout, and specifically youth voter turnout, indicate that we are failing to prepare our youth for participation in a democratic society. Canada’s voter turnout rate was consistently above 70% from 1900 to 1997, with an average of 72.95%. But starting in the 1990s, Canada saw a sharp decrease in overall voter turnout; during the last five Federal Elections the average voter turnout rate was 61.34% (Elections Canada, 2013). This data profiles an over 10% decrease in voting patterns that had been constant for almost a century, and represents citizens turning away from the most basic form of traditional participation in a democratic society (Elections Canada, 2013).

When we delve into the data further, we can see that the major factor in this decline is a trend of decreasing youth voter turnout. In an Elections Canada report, entitled *Confronting the Problem of Declining Voter Turnout Among Youth*, the decreasing youth voter turnout is presented as part of a larger “democratic deficit” in our society that “may have serious

implications for the health of its democratic political system” (Elections Canada, 2003). This problem is dramatically illustrated by the abysmal turnout rates of first time voters, with Elections Canada reporting that only 22% of youth aged 18-20 voted in the 2000 election (Elections Canada, 2003). The same report undertook a survey which polled youth who had not voted. The findings indicated that youth were disengaged from the political process, because voting lacked meaning for them; they saw politics as irrelevant to their lives and felt they lacked the tools to engage in the democratic process (Elections Canada, 2003).

American political science professor Robert D. Putnam explains similar trends in America with the *decline theory* (Putnam, 2000). Theorists like Putnam point to participation in traditional politics and involvement in community organizations as the sole measures of civic engagement, and they indicate that the decline in these measures will lead to a failure of democracy itself. From this perspective, non-conventional forms of civic engagement destabilize democratic societies by misdirecting efforts to forms of engagement that challenge rather than support the institutions of democracy (Putnam, 2000). Supporters of the decline theory see non-conventional forms of engagement as “a fundamental threat to the survival of healthy communities and democratic political systems” (Stolle & Hooghe, 2004, p. 153).

### **BEYOND CONVENTIONAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT MEASURES**

There is a growing body of research that looks to evolve the notion of what civic engagement means beyond conventional political activities, “such as voting and party membership” (Clarke, 2009). The 2009 Canadian Library of Parliament report that brought together over 25 leading figures in youth engagement acknowledged the general decline in voter turnout, mainly as a result of younger voters not participating in elections (Clarke, 2009). This report also indicated that the decline in traditional political activity has resulted in youth today

that are more likely to participate in “non-traditional forms of engagement such as social justice and environmental organizations, international development projects, and online petitions and forums” (Clarke, 2009).

Similar findings are found in Stolle and Hooghe’s article, “The Debate about the *Alleged Decline of Social Capital and Civic Engagement in Western Societies*,” in which responses to the *decline theory* are put forward. They argue that civic engagement levels have not changed, but that the outlet for this engagement has changed to “non-hierarchical and informal networks, in addition to a variety of life style related sporadic mobilization efforts” (Stolle & Hooghe, 2004, p. 159). Stolle and Hooghe caution that these non-conventional forms of civic engagement are “difficult to measure because of their fluid, spontaneous and unstructured character” (Stolle & Hooghe, 2004, p. 166) and question whether non-conventional forms of civic engagement can ensure that government is responsive to the wishes of the people.

### **THE MIDDLE GROUND**

In response to the stark contrasts and divisions that exist over what constitutes civic engagement and democratic citizenship some scholars have thought it important to find some common ground on the subject. One of the major divisions on what constitutes a civic behavior largely centres on the distinction between “the emphasis that electoral politics or other forms of involvement in the community should have in conceptions of citizenship” (Sherrod et al., 2002, p. 264). In an effort to bridge that divide, over a 2 year period in 2001 a group of scholars from various academic backgrounds came together, funded by the William T. Grant Foundation. Their goal was to find some common ground amongst the competing definitions and perspectives on what citizenship is and how it is to be measured. Within the group, divisions

existed not only along political lines but also between academic disciplines; political scientists looking at the skills one possessed to participate in democracy; developmentalists looking at how one sees oneself in relation to other groups in society; and psychologists looking at the individual thought processes involved in citizenship (Sherrod et al, 2002). The agreement that was reached noted that “citizenship includes the ability to move beyond one’s individual self-interest and to be committed to the well-being of some larger group of which one is a member” (Sherrod et al, 2008, p. 265). The question to the group, then, becomes whether “investment in groups other than the nation state represent a form of citizenship?” (Sherrod et al., 2002, p. 265). Given that citizenship develops in a variety of contexts, the conclusion drawn is that it must “involve multiple components if we are to understand its development” (Sherrod et al., 2002, p. 265). These conclusions point to a complex definition of citizenship that is context dependant and impacts how we work to encourage democratic development.

### **EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING**

I hear and I forget, I see and I remember. I do and I understand. –Confucius, 450 BC

Approaching democratic development through direct experience is a recurring theme that finds much supports in a review of the literature (Ahokas, 2010; Beaumont, 2010; Carnegie Corporation of New York & CIRCLE, 2003; Claes et al., 2009; Clarke, 2009; Fox et al., 2010; Kahne et al., 2006; Morgan, 2001; Rogers et al., 2012; Syvertsen et a., 2007). The concept of experiential learning is based in the work of Dewey, Lewin and Piaget, and its theoretical basis lies in “the central role that experience plays in the learning process” (Kolb, 1984, p. 20). One of the most prominent names associated with experiential learning is John Dewey. In a book he co-authored with his wife, entitled *Schools of To-morrow*, John and Evelyn Dewey present the idea

that "learning by doing" (Dewey & Dewey, 1915, p. 120) is preferable to learning by listening, because the subject matter becomes more real and relevant to the student (Dewey & Dewey, 1915). Applied to civics, experiential learning entails students engaging in actual civic activities as opposed to only reading or hearing about them.

A strong theme in the research on civic education in New York or the United States is the need to move away from traditional approaches which focus on rote memorization towards an experiential approach to curriculum delivery (Carnegie Corporation of New York & CIRCLE, 2003, Syversten, 2007). CIRCLE research conducted by the Anneberg Institute demonstrated that experiential learning opportunities - such as issue-based organizing - allow youth to engage in political and civic activity which translates into long-term commitments to stay involved in civics. Youth that were involved in organizing were three times more likely to have subsequently been involved in community problem solving compared to those who had not been involved in organizing (Mediratta et al., 2009). They demonstrated gains in their "sense of politically engaged identity, political understanding, civic skills, and expectations for future political action" (Beaumont, 2010, p. 538).

Despite strong evidence from multiple disciplines indicating how important direct and meaningful political experience is ... young people's political experiences are typically left to happenstance of individual backgrounds. (Beaumont, 2010, p. 554)

Experiential learning opportunities are one of the practices that have been shown to support the development of active democratic citizens (Ahokas, 2010; Beaumont, 2010; Carnegie Corporation of New York & CIRCLE, 2003; Claes et al., 2009; Clarke, 2009; Fox et al., 2010; Kahne et al., 2006; Morgan, 2001; Rogers et al., 2012; Syvertsen et a., 2007). In a study conducted in Canada, there were similar findings; the greatest predictors of civic engagement

(both conventional and non-conventional) were community service and hands on experiences (Claes et al., 2009).

## **CRITIQUE OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IN CIVICS**

### **THE APPROACH**

An experience based approach to civic education is not without its critics. Henry Milner, a scholar of politics, argues that the focus of civics education should be on transmitting the knowledge that would allow individuals to participate in a democratic society, rather than focusing on the experience of it. He proposes that civic literacy is the largest factor in determining an active and engaged populous (Milner, 2002). Those that value the current relative stability of western society charge that an emphasis on experiencing civic action that challenges the status quo, devalues the current institutions of society and the historical factors that led to them, resulting in societal instability due to a continual challenging of the status quo (Bauerlein, 2012; Downs, 2012; Granatstein, 1999).

### **THE OPPORTUNITY**

Another critique of experience based civics education acknowledges the value of the approach, but it criticizes the unequal access to this approach. This critique begins by identifying the most significant factor in determining an individual's development as an active democratic citizen as their socio-economic status (SES) (Kahne & Middaugh, 2008). This has led to the research on the *Civic Opportunity* Gap, by which "student's race and academic track record, and a school's average socioeconomic status determine the availability of the school-based civic learning opportunities that promote voting and broader forms of civic engagement" (Kahne &

Middaugh, 2008, p. 3). This research asserts that those who are most underrepresented in the formal mechanisms of democracy are the least likely to receive the civic educational opportunities that have proven successful at cultivating active and engaged citizens; in effect the students who could benefit the most from these opportunities are the one who are least likely to have the opportunity to participate in them (Kahne & Middaugh, 2008).

A similar study conducted previously on youth has been conducted within a Canadian context on the *Civic Core* and found that:

18% of adults were responsible for 80% of all money donated to organized charities  
9% accounted for 80% of hours volunteered  
21% accounted for 65% of civic participation  
(Reed & Selbee, 2001, p.2)

When Reed and Selbee looked for common factors that individuals in the *Civic Core* possess, they found that these individuals tended to be of higher SES status and have been active in secular youth groups, student government and/or volunteered as youth. The report points to a Canadian experience where the vast majority do not actively participate in civil society and those that do share higher SES status and had opportunities to engage in civically focused activities as youth (Reed & Selbee, 2001).

### **HOW THE LITERATURE REVIEW HAS SHAPED THIS STUDY**

As we have seen, there have been numerous debates over what the goals of civic education should be, but regardless of the goals, schools were seen as universal mechanisms that were best suited to transmit these civic lessons. Recent shifts in educational priorities changed the focus of schools from the civic mission that they were founded upon, towards more economically-focused goals (Carnegie Corporation of New York & CIRCLE, 2003; Hebert & Sears, 2004; UNESCO, 1996; Volante, 2004; Westheimer, 2008). As the formal remnants of

schools' civic mission, civics courses have been inconsistent in their outcomes for developing active democratic citizens and, in some cases, have hindered this development. Concurrently, there has been a decline in conventional civic engagement, with much research and debate about the rise in non-conventional engagement. The middle ground recognizes that the notion of civic engagement is evolving, and any attempt to measure civic development should reflect this evolution. One approach that has proven effective in supporting the development of civic engagement is experiential civic learning opportunities. Acknowledging that an understanding of history and existing processes have their place in civic education, they cannot be the only focus if democratic development is to occur. The critics of an experiential approach to civics education notwithstanding, this study looks at an educational intervention that creates experiential learning opportunities and observes if there is an effect on students' civic development, part of which is measured by students' self-reported likelihood of future conventional and non-conventional civic engagement.

At the time of this thesis, there has not been a study of the effectiveness of the Grade 10 Civics curriculum in supporting the development of active democratic citizens when an experiential approach is attempted. This research addresses this gap by studying the outcomes of the Grade 10 Civics courses in Ottawa when an experiential approach is implemented. The uniqueness of this study is working with students to understand what, if any, are the effects of creating experiential learning opportunities while also examining the effects, if any, the intervention had on teachers in terms of their teaching practices. This study adds to the understanding of the effects of an experiential approach to civics education from the perspective of both the students and the teachers.

### **CHAPTER THREE: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

For this research, the framework for an active democratic citizen includes a social-justice civic identity, expectations of conventional and/or alternative civic engagement and perceived competence for civic action. The development of active democratic citizens (See Appendix Two) is herein conceptualized as an inexact, non-sequential process whereby the development of one characteristic does not universally precede, predict or relate to another (Bentley et al., 2006, Cohen & Chafee, 2012, Mason & Delandshere, 2010, Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). For example, some individuals may develop a perception of their competence for civic action which in turns leads to the development of their social justice oriented identity which leads to their expectations of future civic engagement. Other individuals may develop a social justice identity but fail to develop an expectation of civic engagement or perceived competence for civic action. Development as an active democratic citizen has no clear starting point or prescribed progression. Instead, democratic development occurs in a “variety of informally organized communities of practice, defined as individuals who are mutually engaged in some kind of joint enterprise and who share a dynamic repertoire of tools, concepts, and narrative or stories” (Torney-Purta et al., 2010). Through this lens, an individual’s development as an active democratic citizen can be seen as both pervasive, in that it can occur at any point, and elusive, in that we do not know the exact conditions that make it possible (Biesta et al., 2009).

#### **DEMOCRATIC CITIZENS: WHAT DO WE MEAN?**

If there is no struggle there is no progress. Those who profess to favour freedom and yet deprecate agitation are men who wants crops without plowing up the ground they want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters ... Power concedes nothing without demand. It never did and it never will. Find out just what people will quietly submit to and you found the exact measure of injustice and wrong which will be imposed on them. (Frederick Douglass, 1857)

As was demonstrated in a review of the history of civic education in Canada, the notion of citizenship is and has always been contested. In a paper prepared by the EPACE project (Exchanging good practices for the promotion of an active citizenship in the EU) over 300 definitions of active citizenship were identified (Ahokas, 2010). Citizenship as a contested concept is echoed in many scholarly works (Cohen, 2010; Hebert, & Sears, 2004; Osborne, 2000; Sherrod, Flannagan, & Youniss, 2002). One recurring theme in the literature is the need to define a framework to understand citizenship before undertaking any research. A common suggested starting point is to ask “what kind of citizens enable a democracy to flourish?”

One response to that question is suggested by Joel Westheimer and Joseph Kahne in their paper, *What Kind of Citizen? The Politics of Education for Democracy*. Westheimer and Kahne identify divisions, often arising along political lines, over what democratic citizenship entails and how to go about ensuring it develops within individuals. They argue that it is not enough to simply put a priority on civics education, but we must examine also what types of citizens are necessary for a democracy to function. The starting point for their examination is the question, “what kind of citizen would we need to support an effective democratic society?” (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p. 239). They demonstrate how in many cases the political lessons of civics have been removed in favour of character education (Kahne & Westheimer, 2003). This effect can be seen in a Canadian context in Ontario with Ministry of Education documents such as *Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12* which places a clear emphasis on character education (Ministry of Education, 2008).

The push towards character development has coincided with the move to standardized tests and has resulted in a hidden curriculum in our classrooms that emphasizes how to “please authority and pass the tests, not how to develop convictions and stand up for them” (Westheimer,

2008, p.7). While development of character traits is certainly important, it is not enough to ensure democratic participation. Excessive emphasis on character development obscures the development of active democratic citizens by focusing on individual rather than collective efforts and lacks an exploration of systemic social issues (Kahne, & Westheimer, 2003). For a democracy to flourish it requires citizens “assessing when behavior is needed to maintain the status quo and when it is necessary to take action to change it.” (Sherrod et al., 2002, p. 265). The need for citizens to be able to critically analyse their surroundings and understand their ability to change the system are widely accepted components that make up the type of citizens that would allow democracy to flourish (Conover, & Searing, 2000; Tourney-Purta, Lehman et al., 2001; Westheimer, & Kahne, 2004).

### **STUDYING DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP**

I have described the way the definition of a good citizen is contested within the civic education literature and also indicated my interest in a political conception of citizenship – one suitable for *democratic* participation rather than a version of citizenship that focuses exclusively on character development. Even with this refined definition, conceptualizing a way to assess “good” citizenship is not straightforward. In reviewing the literature on civic education, however, three components of active democratic citizenship that can serve as guides for civic education studies stand out (Beaumont, 2010; Carnegie Corporation of New York & CIRCLE, 2003; Claes et al., 2009; Clarke, 2009; Fox et al., 2010; & Sears, 2004; Osborne, 2000; UNESCO, 1996; Volante, 2004; Westheimer, 2008). These are: civic identity, civic engagement, and civic competence. They are based on my interpretation of the literature and form the conceptual framework of my research (see Appendix Two).

## CIVIC IDENTITY

Civic identity is conceptualized as how individuals see the roles of citizens in a democratic society; how they go about assessing civic issues and possessing the knowledge of actions that would potentially address civic issues. Westheimer and Kahne emphasize the importance of teaching students to recognize and act on the root causes of problems in society to achieve a truly democratic notion of citizenship. They call this kind of citizen behaviour “social justice-oriented”. Based on the argument that a “social justice-oriented citizen” would be necessary for a democracy to function, civic identity is evaluated by measures that assess an individual’s “social justice-oriented” civic identity. Westheimer & Kahne are careful to caution that the social-justice oriented civic identity does not necessarily lead to civic action or civic competence. Their research indicates an inexact relationship between the development of civic identity, civic engagement and civic competence (Kahne & Westheimer, 2003).

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Civic engagement is conceptualized as the actualization of civic identity. For the purpose of this study I will be looking at self-reported expectations of future civic engagement. Studies have shown a reasonable correlation between individuals’ expectations of future civic engagement and their actual civic behaviors (Campbell, 2007 & McIntosh & Munoz, 2009). A distinction will be made between conventional politics and alternative forms of civic engagement. Conventional politics represents the likelihood that an individual will engage in the traditional mechanisms of democracy; voting, involvement in election campaigns and running for public office (Flanagan et al, 2007). Alternative forms of civic engagement represent civic

behaviors outside of the formal mechanisms of democracy- boycotts, protests, direct community involvement (Flannagan et al, 2007).

### CIVIC COMPETENCE

Perceived competence for civic action moves beyond expectation of action in that it reflects a self-reported effectiveness of civic action. This characteristic has been included because it has been demonstrated to sustain civic action over time in the face of adversity (Beaumont, 2010; McAdam, 1982, 1988; Morrell, 2003).

From voting for an underdog candidate to protesting a school's decisions to raise tuition, democratic participation is akin to philosopher Soren Kierkegaard's notion of a *leap of faith*, an act of risk-taking under conditions of uncertainty, without any guarantee of success, based on personal belief and commitment. In the political sphere, we must have primary faith in ourselves and others, and courage and confidence for civic action. (Beaumont, 2010, p. 552)

In other words, if one has confidence in her/his ability to make a difference, he/she is more likely to persist in efforts to do so.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: THE RESEARCH**

This study seeks to understand the role that experiential learning can play in the development of active democratic citizens, and how a teacher's practice changes as a result of an experiential approach. The research took the form of an educational intervention, the DILA Youth Program. Seventy-six students in five Ottawa, Ontario area Grade 10 classes, and five teachers of these classes, participated in the study. The research took the form of “explanatory mixed methods design” (Creswell, 2012, p. 542), in that the qualitative data collected provides a deeper understanding of the quantitative data; the quantitative data was collected first, followed by the collection of qualitative data. The design and data analysis/ interpretation procedure follow the *multi levels* approach (Tashakkori & Teddie, 1998), in that a surveys were completed by individual students, followed by individual questionnaires and written reflections written by the teachers.

### **THE EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION: THE DILA YOUTH PROGRAM**

DILA began as a one day youth conference in the spring of 2007 and has since evolved into a year long program that works in schools with extracurricular programs and within classes. DILA's involvement or lack thereof in Ottawa schools has largely been based on the discretion of teachers; where teachers see DILA's mandate of supporting youth in taking action on issues that are relevant to them, DILA has been present. For the purpose of this study, DILA's programming focused exclusively on working with Grade 10 Civics classes. In preparation for this focus, DILA partnered with an organization called Generation Citizen ([www.generationcitizen.org](http://www.generationcitizen.org)).

Founded in 2009, Generation Citizen (GC) has grown to work with over 6,000 students in 2012/2013 in Providence, New York City and Boston (“Generation Citizen”, 2013). Given the development of GC, and the similarities of approach to DILA, a partnership has been formed whereby DILA uses GC resources and adapts them for use with Ontario Grade 10 Civics’ curriculum for use within a Canadian context. The effectiveness of GC’s programming in supporting the development of the skills, knowledge and attitudes required for a democracy has been researched and validated by both internal and external studies (Casciano, 2013; Casciano & Davis, 2013; Cohen, 2011; Cohen & Chaffee, 2012; Pope et al., 2011). Given the similar nature of the two programs and the success of GC, the incorporation of GC resources has served to strengthen the already successful DILA programming.

Funding for the program is provided by the Ontario Trillium Foundation. The 2013/2014 DILA team is comprised of one DILA coordinator (the author of this thesis) and one full time paid DILA facilitator (a DILA full time employee). The facilitator is a male Caucasian who is a recent graduate of the Bachelor of Education Program at the University of Ottawa. The facilitator has undergone an intensive 2 week training course run by the DILA program coordinator that was based upon materials provided by Generation Citizen and by the coordinators experience working within the schools. At the time of the research the facilitator had worked for DILA for two semesters and had delivered the DILA program to 26 classes in 11 different high schools. The facilitator was supported by the coordinator with regular phone and email communication along with regular weekly meetings. The coordinator’s role was largely supporting the efforts of the facilitator, helping with communications and logistics.

Schools that choose to participate in the DILA Program are identified in a variety of ways; in some cases teachers have previously worked with DILA, in other cases department

heads have contacted us because they have heard about the program and are interested in working with DILA. The facilitator shapes the program implementation by meeting with teachers prior to the start of the course and providing resources and support to implement the DILA program. The facilitator also supports the program by visiting each school once a week and teaching the class on that day. Teachers involved in the study benefit from having access to resources and assessment tools that directly relate to the Grade 10 Civics Curriculum and have proven successful in increasing student engagement in the course (Cohen & Chaffee, 2012; Pope et al., 2011).

Through the program, students choose a civic issue about which they are concerned. The DILA facilitator directs the process of selecting a topic. The process consists of students identifying issues that are important to them in an open discussion/brainstorming activity. Students are then asked to come to a consensus by asking students to vote on a short list of issues with the mind set of voting not once for what they most want, but as many times as they like for all of the issues that they could get behind. The winner will be the one that generates the most support from the class. Once an issue has been chosen as a group, students research that issue, construct a plan to address it, implement that plan and reflect on what they have accomplished. In cases where there is an existing organization(s) (NGOs and/or community groups) working on the issue the group of students have chosen, students are provided the option of connecting with that organization for additional support or provided with information to support their action project. It is not mandatory that students connect with an organization. The goal is to have students work in and outside of class toward tangible action – giving youth a voice in the issues that are relevant to them by facilitating their opportunities to act on those issues.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

For this research, the DILA facilitator worked with the students for the duration of the civics class (eight weeks). The participants of this research were students from Grade 10 Civics classes in Ottawa area high schools. Five classes from four separate schools were involved in the research project and they were all from the Ottawa Carleton District School Board. Involvement of any school staff was dependent on obtaining University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board approval, Ottawa-Carleton Research Advisory Committee (OCRAC) approval and principals consenting to their school's participation. When those criteria were met, with the direction of the individual school principals, individual teachers were approached about participating in the study. It was made clear to teachers, and subsequently to students, that their involvement in the DILA Program in no way necessitated their participation in the study, and that involvement in the study was completely optional. There were several logistical challenges obtaining final ethics approval from OCRAC that resulted in final approved being received days into the start of the semester, resulting in a lower than expected sample size.

## **INSTRUMENTS**

Any effects of the educational intervention were assessed through a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. All of the instruments used in this study have educative value in that they assess learning outcomes that are related to the Grade 10 Civics curriculum. In order to protect students', schools' and teachers' anonymity they were assigned their own code names that were used when analyzing and representing data.

## QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

The quantitative research is intended to assess students' development as active democratic citizens and the student's perceptions of their learning environment. All quantitative data was collected through surveys. All survey questions were taken from CIRCLE Working Paper 55, *Civic Measurement Models: Tapping Adolescents' Civic Engagement* (see Appendix Three). CIRCLE Working Paper 55 presents a set of civic measures with good psychometric properties that are all based on students' self-assessments with all questions being answered on a 1 to 5 scale reflecting likelihood or agreement with statements and situations (Flannagan et al., 2007). Only questions that related to the characteristics that comprise my definition of an active democratic citizen were chosen from the Circle questionnaire. The creators of the survey ensured that "constructs were created so as to maximize the meaning of the scale of the statistical reliability" (Flanagan et al., 2007, p. 2). Survey creators also evaluated the constructs for both face and measurement validity (Flanagan et al, 2007). Civic Identity is taken from Westheimer and Kahne's (2002) framework for the type of citizen that would be necessary for democracy to flourish. In the self-assessment, students report on how much they agree or disagree with a series of statements intended to determine their identity as a *Social-Justice Oriented Citizen* (see table 2). Civic engagement, both conventional and alternative, is assessed through a series of 14 future behaviors that youth self-reported as their likelihood of actualizing civic engagement. Civic competence is measured by self-reported competence for civic action by a series of 9 situations in which students self-report their civic ability.

## QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The surveys were followed by a series of open ended questions which students responded to in written form (see Appendix Four), as per the best practices for research on civic education

identified in the *Handbook of Research on Civic Engagement* (Torney-Purta, et al., 2010). The quantitative data did not influence the questions that were used in the qualitative data collection. At the conclusion of the intervention, teachers filled out a questionnaire about the effects that the intervention had on their teaching practice. Qualitative data was collected to provide additional insights that might have been missed through the survey data, as per best practices in researching civic engagement (Bentley, et al., 2007; Biesta, et al, 2009; Mason & Delandshere, 2010; Torney-Punta et al., 2010). The written responses “gather open-ended responses to questions on a questionnaire” (Creswell, 2012, p. 213). Insights into additional context variables are provided by the DILA facilitator in chart form in the results section.

## ANALYSIS

### QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Survey items were selected to explore three independent variables – time (pre and post), school (A,B,C,D,E) and category (social justice civic identity, expectation of conventional civic engagement, expectation of alternative civic engagement and perceived competence for civic action). The dependant variable assessed students’ development as active democratic citizens on a five point scale. The variables that were assessed were; Civic Identity as a Justice Oriented Citizen, Likelihood of future Conventional Civic Engagement, Likelihood of future Alternative Civic Engagement and Self Perceived Civic Competence, along with the average of all of the scores across the four categories, resulting in five dependant variables. In order to generate a single value for the components that comprise my definition of an active democratic citizen, an average of all survey items that comprised that variable was calculated. Additionally, a single value was calculated based on the average across all categories to assess overall effect on the

educational intervention. The quantitative data that I collected was analyzed using a 2 (time) x 5 (school) x 4 (category) split plot ANOVA in which time and category are within-subjects factors and school is a between-subjects factor.

### QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Reflection questions for the students were designed to provide further insight into the five dependent variables that the survey was intended to assess. The reflection questions for the teachers were designed to provide insight into how the educational intervention may have affected their teaching practice. The questions were answered through written reflections. Data collected through the written reflections was explored through a “preliminary exploratory analysis” (Creswell, 2012, p. 243) to assess the information in its entirety to inform the means of organizing and coding. The coding of the data followed the steps recommended by Tesch (1990) and Creswell (2007) outlined in *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*, by Creswell. Data was coded and themes were selected that relate to the focus of the study (Creswell, 2012). Themes were organized by “layering themes” (Creswell, 2012, p. 251) as a means to streamline the information for the purpose of analysis and presentation. Additionally, the “interrelating themes” (Creswell, 2012, p. 252) that make up the conceptual framework were examined in relation to themes that emerge through students’ descriptions of their learning environment.

### LIMITATIONS

#### INFLUENCES BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

An individual who enters the schooling system spends a large portion of her/his time in the classroom, but external variables outside the control of the teacher may have as much or

more of an effect on learning and the development of active democratic citizens. Despite the inclusion of some qualitative measures to gain further insights into the broader contexts within which democratic development occurs, there are influences beyond the scope of my study that impact an individual's development. Nonetheless, I endeavoured to gain a further understanding of the effects of experiential learning on a student's development as an active democratic citizen with my study.

In an ethnographic research project on civic education that was conducted in England over two years, the strongest recommendation that was put forward was to focus on “the actual condition of young people's citizenship, rather than in the mere improvement of the curriculum for citizenship teaching” (Biesta, et. al, 2009, pg. 16), with the implication being that the focus on changes to the curriculum or classroom practice failed to address the underlying problems of youth lacking real entry points into civic and political life and the undemocratic nature of the education system itself (Faulks, 2006 & Gilborn, 2006). My research looks strictly at civics classes and not the plethora of other situations that had an effect on these students over the period of observation.

#### NO CONTROL GROUP

All of the data gathered in this research is from students that participated in the educational intervention- the DILA program. Thus, the study did not collect data for comparison from students in a traditional civics class- where there was no DILA educational intervention. This limitation prevents direct comparisons of the effects of the invention classes with non-intervention classes (or control groups). On the one hand, the lack of a control group means that some or all of the findings of effects witnessed in the research may or may not have

been caused by the intervention, and may have occurred in the absence of the educational intervention. On the other hand, research presented earlier in the literature review (see *Current Academic Research on Civics Education*), asserts that traditional civics classes do not have a positive effect on the development of active democratic citizens and that experiential approaches hold promise in furthering those goals. It is reasonable, therefore, to infer some causality for positive outcomes in the case of the DILA intervention.

### MEASUREMENT

The measurements being used in this research represent students' self-reported competence for civic action that may or may not be a true reflection of the development of those civic behaviors (Beaumont, 2010). While self-perception of one's own ability is an important factor in coming to influence one's confidence to act civically, it does not in fact mean that they have necessarily developed those abilities. The measurements for civic engagement, both conventional and alternative, represent intentions to engage in activities rather than actual activities. Intending to vote and actually voting are clearly different things and, although intent affects actualization, there is not a perfect correlation between the two.

### LIMITED CLASSROOM TIME

The initial commitment from each school and teacher was to have a DILA facilitator visit the classes once a week for the duration of the Grade 10 Civics class and to work with DILA in designing the delivery of the curriculum for the remaining classes. There were some classes where the DILA facilitator was not able to visit weekly. This resulting inconsistency of length of time between class visit and/or reduction in number of classroom visits, resulted in the

intervention not being delivered as initially designed. Additionally, there were differences in the way that various teachers delivered the curriculum beyond our intervention that affected students' development as democratic citizens.

#### AUTHOR'S PREDISPOSITIONS

The individual undertaking the research is also the founder and coordinator of the DILA youth program. As such there is a natural proclivity for the founder of something to believe that it has merit and is having an effect, which may or may not be consistent with its actual merit or effect. The interpretations of the observations, guided classroom discussions and written reflections have to be viewed strictly through a research lens to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. To combat this potential conflict of interest, all interpretations have been member checked with both students and teachers before being reported.

#### LACK OF COMPLETE PARTICIPATION OF EACH STUDENT IN EACH SCHOOL

In several of the schools that the research was conducted not all of the students participated in the research. This occurred for two main reasons; consent and assent forms not being returned and the students being absent on the days that the pre or post surveys were administered. Given the inability to fully access the reasons of participation in the research or the effects on those that did not participate it is difficult to speculate as to what effect this may have had on the research.

## **CONTRIBUTION OF THE RESEARCH TO THE FIELD OF EDUCATION**

...we recommend the fostering of partnerships between organizations and institutions that are developing civic engagement programs and scholars interested in assessing the impacts of such programs and drawing generalizations from them  
(Torney-Purta et al., 2010, p. 519)

Prior to my research, there has yet to be a research project undertaken within the Ottawa area that studied the effects of an educational intervention that delivers the curriculum through an experiential learning program. Additionally, there has been very limited external research conducted on the Grade 10 Civics curriculum in Ottawa. This research provides an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the factors that can influence the democratic development of students in Grade 10 Civics classes that can be used to improve the way this important but de-prioritized course is taught. Further contributions include studying the effects of an experiential education intervention on both student development and a teacher's classroom practices.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS**

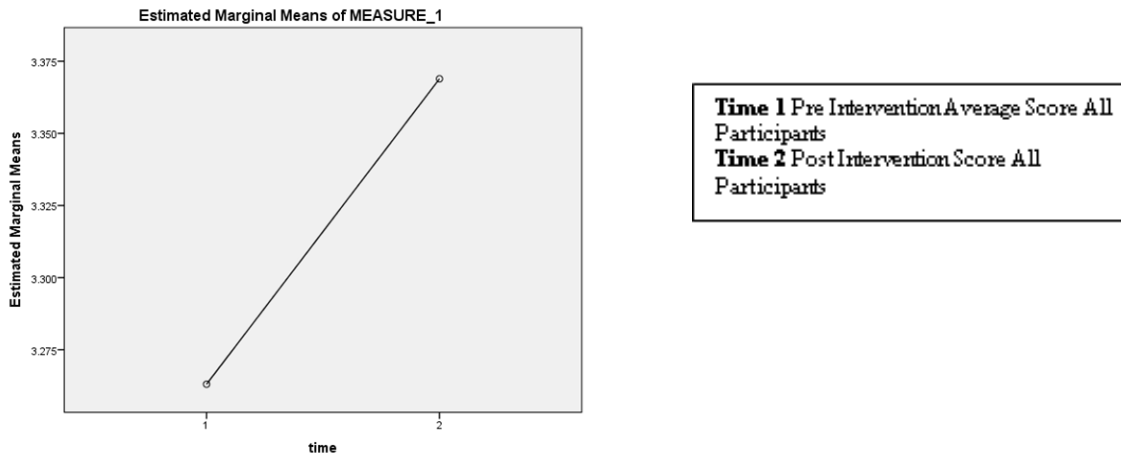
### **RESULTS:**

Total N was 69. N was 20 for school A, 12 for school B, 14 for school C, 8 for school D and 15 for school E. Sphericity was not violated with values of 1 for time (pre/post), .215 for category (category representing the individual components that comprise my definition of an active democratic citizen), .478 for measurement by time, and .332 for time\*category. The results of the 2 x 5 x 4 ANOVA indicate that main effect of time was significant  $F(1,64)= 5.30, p=.025$ , the main effect of category was significant  $F(3,192)= 164.38, p=.000$ , the category by school interaction was significant  $F(12,192)= 2.25, p=.013$ , and the time by school interaction approached significance  $F(4,64)= 2.09, p= .093$ . None of the other main effects or interactions approached significance.

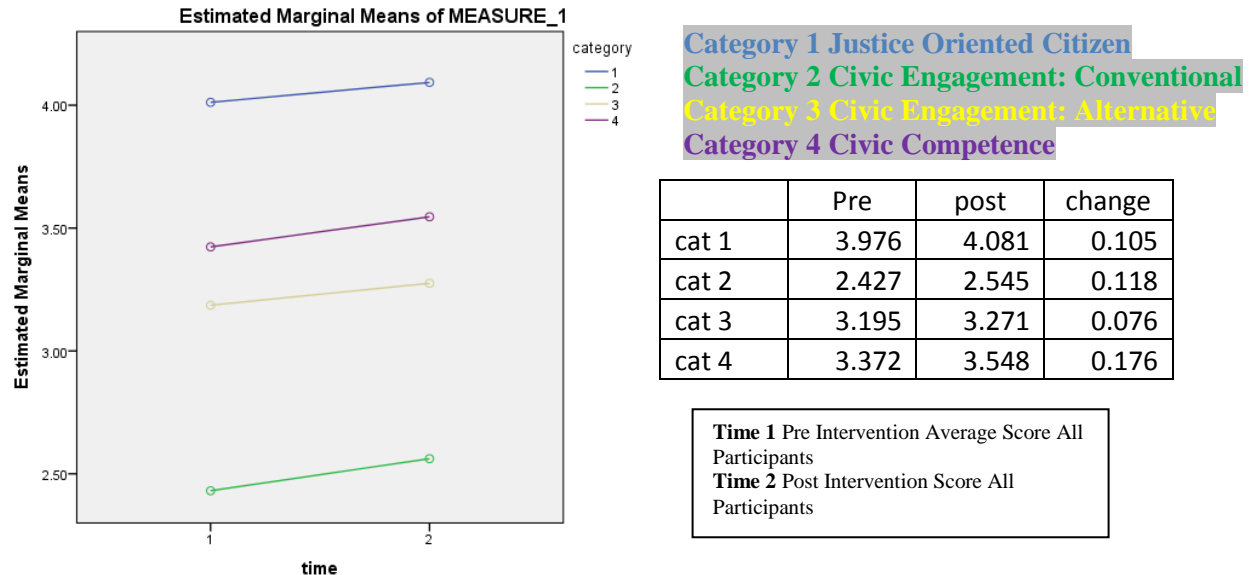
### **THE MAIN EFFECT OF TIME:**

As indicated above, there was a significant difference in the mean scores (the average of all 4 dependent variables) of individuals pre and post intervention. The grand mean of the scores went from a pre score of 3.263 to a post score of 3.369, an increase of 0.106 (see Figure 1). This finding indicates that overall the educational intervention DILA had a statistically significant effect on the Grand Mean of participants' pre and post test scores. The interaction between the categories and time was found to be insignificant, suggesting that the pre and post increase was consistent across categories (see figure 2).

**Figure 1: Grand mean of scores from all components of active citizenship by time.**



**Figure 2: Mean pre and post scores from individual components of active citizenship (categories 1-4) by time.**



**ANALYSIS OF THE MAIN EFFECT OF TIME:**

The overall average results indicate that an experiential approach to the delivery of the Grade 10 Civics Curriculum, such as DILA, has a positive effect on the development of active democratic citizens- as characterized by civic identity, civic engagement, and civic competence. The increase in the average of all scores across the categories demonstrates an overall significant effect. The results of individual categories by individual schools is reported and analyzed to gain

an understanding of the effects of the intervention and is justified by the significant category x school interaction. This result indicates that an experiential approach to the delivery of the Grade 10 Civics Curriculum, such as DILA, leads to the consistent development of each of the individual characteristics that comprise my definition of an active democratic citizen; Justice Oriented Citizen, Civic Engagement: Conventional, Civic Engagement: Alternative, and Civic Behaviors.

### **MAIN EFFECT OF CATEGORY**

There was a significant difference among the category scores. Students consistently scored themselves highest in the category for Justice Oriented Citizen 4.029, followed by Civic Behaviors 3.460, then Alternative Civic Engagement 3.362 and substantially lower was Convention Civic Engagement 2.632.

### **ANALYSIS OF THE MAIN EFFECT OF CATEGORY**

Convention Civic Engagement and Alternative Civic Engagement are the only directly comparable scores in that they represent a series of scenarios that students responded to the same question “When you think of your life after high school, how likely is it that you would do each of the following?” (Flanagan et al., 2007). These findings illuminate the difference between conventional and alternative civic engagement in today’s youth. The participants consistently rated a higher likelihood that they would engage in alternative forms of civic engagement than conventional. The higher scores for non-conventional forms of civic engagement, compared to the scores of conventional forms of engagement, provide further support for the notion that youth are moving away from conventional forms of civic engagement in favour of alternative means.

## **EFFECT OF SCHOOL AND INTERACTIONS WITH SCHOOL**

The main effect of school was not significant, however the category by school interaction was significant and the time by school interaction was marginally significant. The qualitative data suggested some interesting differences between schools that were consistent with the variation shown in the quantitative data (shown in figure 4). Although the 3-way interaction was not statistically significant, the fact that the variation present was consistent with qualitative findings may indicate that there was too little power/sensitivity in the quantitative analysis to detect the differences in effect. We can see that there is further variation in the effects across dependant variables, in some schools there was an increase in one category and a decrease in another. These effects will be further analyzed by looking at the effects within each school with further insight provided by the qualitative data collected.

## **RESULTS BY SCHOOL**

**Figure 3: Overall Effects by Individual School.**

<b>Figure 3 All Category avg/ school</b>			
	Pre	Post	Change
A	3.325	3.432	0.107
B	3.145	3.447	0.302
C	3.380	3.548	0.168
D	3.118	3.273	0.155
E	3.243	3.107	-0.136

As reported earlier, the time by school interaction illustrated in figure 3 was only marginally significant, but will be examined in conjunction with qualitative results to gain further insights into what factors had an effect on the students' scores. In looking at the average scores by school (figure 3), we can see that there were variations in both the average pre scores

and the average post scores across the schools. Additionally we see a sharp increase in some schools in average scores, and in the case of school E a decrease in the average score between pre and post intervention.

**Figure 4: Mean scores from individual components of active citizenship (categories 1-4) of pre and post scores by individual school.**

	A	A	A	B	B	B	C	C	C	D	D	D	E	E	E
	pre	post	chg	pre	post	chg	pre	post	chg	pre	Post	chg	pre	post	chg
JOC	4.200	4.160	-0.040	3.917	4.183	0.266	4.029	4.129	0.100	3.800	3.975	0.175	3.933	3.960	0.027
CEC	2.512	2.700	0.188	2.313	2.604	0.291	2.589	2.732	0.143	2.469	2.438	-0.031	2.250	2.250	0.000
CEA	3.200	3.517	0.317	3.139	3.333	0.194	3.155	3.250	0.095	3.313	3.375	0.062	3.167	2.878	-0.289
CC	3.398	3.350	-0.048	3.213	3.667	0.454	3.746	4.079	0.333	2.889	3.306	0.417	3.622	3.341	-0.281

### SCHOOL A

In School A, 20 of the 25 students in the class participated in the research project.

#### WHAT HAPPENED AT SCHOOL A?

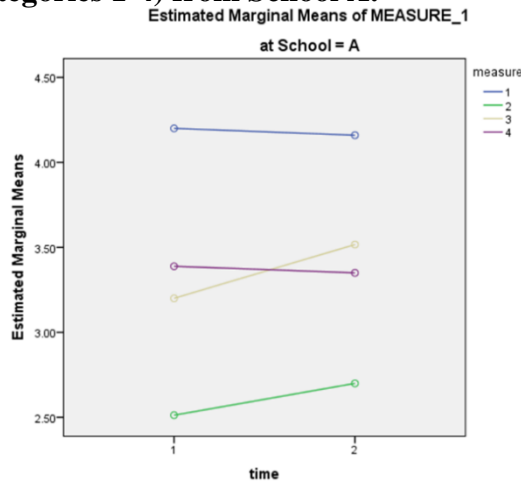
There was much dissension in class A about the issues that the class chose. Students chose the issue of animal cruelty by a class vote, but those that were in opposition failed to go along with the decision of the majority. This dissension and failure to see a democratic decision as a means of determining the focus of collective action left lingering discussions about animal cruelty and its relevance. Rather than having students turn their attention to a common cause they decided on as a group and what they could do about it, they continued to debate the importance of the cause and suggested other causes to take action on. This, in turn, took time that might have otherwise been spent focusing on the process of identifying root causes. This failure to move forward with research highlights the importance of having students: 1) see the issue that they are working on as relevant to their lives and important to them: and/or, 2) place value and honour the outcomes of a decision made through a democratic process, even when it is not what they initially wanted. The summative project in this class was outwardly successful, in that public service announcements were developed by the students and presented to a wide

audience on multiple occasions including the Humane Society, community leaders and the school community. Students had an authentic learning experience in that they researched how to create a video, produced it and showcased it. The majority of students enjoyed the experience, highlighted by quotes like: “DILA is like learning but in a fun way;” “Very fun but educational;” “It’s a lot of fun and inspiring”. These factors lead to greater engagement in the class by most, but did not result in the development of civic identity and civic competence, two critical components of an active democratic citizens. This development did not occur possibly because dissension over the chosen issue prevented the discussion from progressing to the necessary analysis of root causes.

#### QUANTITATIVE DATA FROM SCHOOL A

School A’s average score of all categories increased by 0.107 from 3.325 to 3.432. Student’s from School A average scores of their Identity as Social Justice Oriented Citizens slightly decreased by 0.040 from 4.200 to 4.160, average scores of likelihood of Conventional Civic Engagement increased by 0.188 from 2.512 to 2.700, average scores in likelihood of Alternative Civic Engagement increased by 0.317 from 3.200 to 3.517 and students self-reported Competence for Civic Behaviors decreased slightly by 0.039 from 3.389 to 3.350. The average scores across categories for School A can be seen in Figure 5 below.

**Figure 5: Mean pre and post scores from individual components of active citizenship (categories 1-4) from School A.**



Category 1 Justice Oriented Citizen  
 Category 2 Civic Engagement: Conventional  
 Category 3 Civic Engagement: Alternative  
 Category 4 Civic Competence

	pre	post	change
cat 1	4.200	4.160	-0.040
cat 2	2.512	2.700	0.188
cat 3	3.200	3.517	0.317
cat 4	3.398	3.350	-0.048

**Time 1** Pre Intervention Average Score All Participants from School A  
**Time 2** Post Intervention Score All Participants from School A

**QUALITATIVE DATA FROM DILA FACILITATOR FOR SCHOOL A:**

<b>School:</b> A		<b>Partnership:</b> Humane Society
<b>Root Cause:</b> Not enough awareness about Animal Cruelty	<b>Issue:</b> Animal Cruelty	<b>Goal:</b> Raise awareness of the issue of Animal Cruelty
<b>Percentage of Action Plan Completed:</b> 100% - Action Plan was put into effect		
<b>Description of Action Plan:</b> As our third class of this term to independently come to a consensus on Animal Cruelty as their issue, Class A decided to develop a series of Public Service Announcements meant to raise awareness of how to promote Animal Welfare. They developed 7 storyboards for their PSA's, three of which were filmed which they presented to the Humane Society and other community leaders at Ottawa City Hall during DILA's inaugural Youth Action Showcase in May. The theme of their PSA campaign was "start a trend, make a pet your friend," and it was meant to promote the idea that animals should be treated with greater respect.		

### QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTED FROM STUDENTS FOR SCHOOL A

Of the 20 students who participated in School A, 7 students thought that the purpose of the educational intervention was to raise awareness about the issues the class chose (animal rights) and 13 students thought the program was intended to encourage participants to be more active in their community and show them how they could make a difference. 17 students said they learned something about making a difference and 3 students indicated that they learned more about the issue (animal rights). When asked about which part of the course had the biggest impact, 6 students indicated the presentation given by an outside agency, 12 students indicated creating and implementing the action plan and 2 students did not respond. When asked how they would describe the course to another student, 17 students responded positively and 3 students did not respond. When asked if the course was relevant to their lives, 15 students responded yes, 3 students responded no and 2 students did not respond. When asked how they saw themselves engaging in their community now, 8 students responded by volunteering or donating, 10 students indicated alternative ways, 1 student did not know, and 1 student did not respond. When asked how they saw themselves engaging in their community in the future, 5 students responded by volunteering or donating, 10 students indicated alternative ways, 2 students did not know, and 3 students did not respond. When asked if they learned how to address issues they were concerned about 13 students said yes, 4 students said no and 3 students did not respond. When asked what they learned about how to make a difference 13 students indicated how to make a plan and how to publicize an issue and 7 students did not respond.

### QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTED FROM SCHOOL A TEACHER:

Teacher A indicated that the biggest impact of participating in the educational intervention was twofold: (1) students talking about the issues and the project outside of class and (2) having other instructors come in and lead was refreshing to see a different approach to delivering the curriculum. Participation in the program effected teaching practice by allowing the teacher to think outside of the classroom, beyond the constraints of the curriculum and to engage the students in meaningful ways.

The DILA program changed the way the curriculum was delivered by challenging the teacher to look at the curriculum in a less stringent way, while still meeting the overall expectations. The focus became about making the learning experience ‘real’, encouraging students to develop their voice and to be part of change that they wanted to see.

### ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL A

School A had the second lowest overall increase in average score of 0.107 due to slight decreases in JOC of -0.040 and CC of -0.048. The decrease in JOC can be partly explained by it being the highest pre score in that category at 4.200 across all schools. The analysis the students conducted on the issue led them to identify a root cause of individuals lacking awareness about an issue, placing the emphasis on the responsibility of the individual’s knowledge and behaviors. The resulting action plan, which was successfully implemented and had an impact in the school, was directed at their peers and individual members of society as opposed to a systemic injustice. JOC and CC relate to individuals identity and self-reported abilities to address systemic issues. In cases where students did not identify a systemic issue, they were unlikely to see development in their civic identities or self-reported civic competencies because they have not necessarily

been provided with opportunity to develop them. Further evidence of this analysis can be found in the fact that Class A had the highest percentage of students (35% or seven students) believing that this intervention was focused on increasing awareness about the specific issue the class chose as opposed to encouraging engagement in the community and how youth could make a difference. When students were asked, *was the course relevant to your life?* over half the students responded in terms of whether animal cruelty was relevant to them: “Yes because I am an animal person” or “Not at all, I don’t have pets.” Those responses indicate a failure in the process to have the students see the particular issue chosen as secondary to the process of learning how to address an issue, and to transfer those skills to other issues. In response to the question *“What part of the course had the biggest impact on you?”* students most often identified the creation of the video, which again demonstrates a focus on output rather than process or analysis.

The most pronounced affect at School A was the increase in CEA of 0.317. This increase might be attributed to the fact that the students designed and successfully implemented an alternative civic action. This effect of increasing likelihood of future alternative engagement can be seen in the qualitative data, where in response to a question about future community engagement, 17 students indicated alternative avenues. Interestingly, there was the second highest increase of all schools in conventional civic engagement (voting and engagement in the election process) from 0.188 from 2.512 to 2.700. This result is attributed to the fact that the empowerment the students felt to address issues ‘within the system’ by addressing their peers and members of the community, extended to their views of engaging in conventional politics as a means to contribute to their community.

The insight from the teacher of School A indicates that the major impact of the intervention was making the curriculum and means of delivering it more ‘real’ and engaging the students in something of interest to them. Having the students choose and identify an issue can have the effect of getting them more engaged and increasing their willingness to get involved in future existing convention and alternative initiatives. However it does not necessarily allow them the opportunity to develop their identities and confidence in their ability to change and challenge the system of power.

## **SCHOOL B**

In School B 12 of the 25 students in the class participated in the research project.

### **WHAT HAPPENED AT SCHOOL B?**

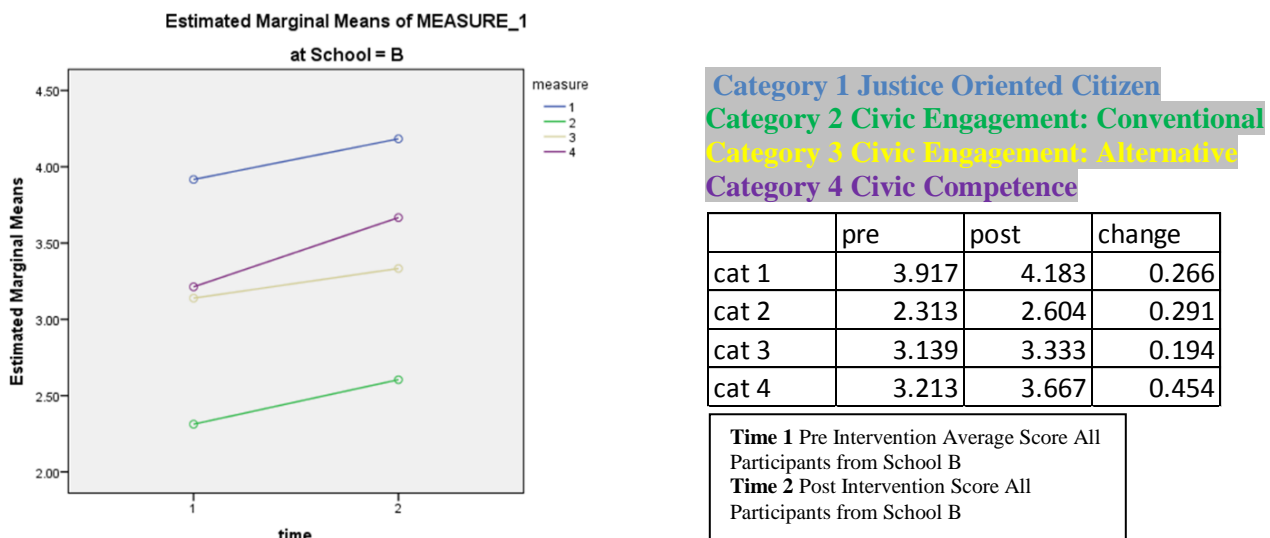
There were several recurring news stories about the issue this class choose (“rape culture”) at the time of this educational intervention. The recurring news story coupled with a dynamic and engaging guest speaker resulted in the overwhelming majority of the class supporting the issue. The focus then moved to rich and deep discussions, research and analysis of the root causes of the issues and the identification of power structures that should be worked with to address the issue. The students failed to complete their action plan, but the focus on process and analysis resulted in large increases in all aspects of their development as active democratic citizens. This development is reflected in student responses to questions about what they learned with regard to addressing issues: “To attack the problem at its source and to get people aware of the problem and get the people involved;” “It’s the root causes - stop issues at roots – educate people why this is an issue;” “How to approach and follow through with planning to make a difference;” “It takes time, but it will make a difference.” The lack of a tangible project might

lead some to classify the efforts as unsuccessful, but from a developmental standpoint this class is where the educational intervention had the greatest impact.

QUANTITATIVE DATA FROM SCHOOL B:

School B’s average score of all categories increased by 0.302 from 3.145 to 3.447. This was by far the largest increase of any school. Student’s from School B average scores of their Identity as Social Justice Oriented Citizens increased by 0.266 from 3.917 to 4.183, average scores of likelihood of Conventional Civic Engagement increased by 0.291 from 2.313 to 2.604, average scores in likelihood of Alternative Civic Engagement increased by 0.194 from 3.139 to 3.333 and students self-reported Competence for Civic Behaviors increased by 0.454 from 3.213 to 3.667. The average scores across categories for School B can be seen below in Figure 6.

**Figure 6- Mean pre and post scores from individual components of active citizenship (categories 1-4) from School B.**



QUALITATIVE DATA FROM DILA FACILITATOR FOR SCHOOL B:

<b>School:</b> B		<b>Partnership:</b> The SFUO’s Women’s Resource Centre.
<b>Root Cause:</b> Lack of awareness of “Rape Culture”	<b>Issue:</b> Sexism/ “Rape Culture”	<b>Goal:</b> Raise awareness of “Rape Culture”

**Percentage of Action Plan Completed:**

75% - Action Plan proposal was finished but not put into effect

**Description of Action Plan:** After coming to a consensus that Sexism was a topic worth pursuing, we invited a representative from the SFUO's Women's Resource Centre to speak to the work she does to advocate against sexism. Given the topicality of "Rape Culture" issues at the University of Ottawa in February, the classroom teacher encouraged the focus of the presentation to be on raising awareness of "rape culture." After this eye-opening experience for students, they settled on a social media awareness campaign which would promote the already existing anti-Rape Culture posters which the school administration had put up around the school - the "Don't be that guy" poster campaign. The thought was that they could put a poster with their twitter handle next to these posters and then use Twitter to put out anti-Rape Culture content. They came up with a slew of anti-Rape Culture material and wrote a letter to the principal asking permission to advertise their Twitter account in the school, but as of writing, they have yet to deliver the letter.

QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTED FROM STUDENTS FOR SCHOOL B:

Of the 12 students in School B, 1 student thought that the purpose of the educational intervention was to raise awareness about the issues the class chose (sexism) and 11 students thought the program was intended to encourage participants to be more active in their community and show them how they could make a difference. 11 students said they learned something about making a difference, 1 student indicated that they learned more about the issue (sexism) and 1 student indicated that they learned nothing. When asked about which part of the course had the biggest impact, 10 students indicated the presentation given by an outside agency, 1 student indicated creating and implementing the action plan and 1 student indicated that nothing had an impact on them. When asked how they would describe the course to another all 12 students responded positively. When asked if the course was relevant to their lives 11 students responded yes and 1 student responded no. When asked how they saw themselves engaging in their community now 1 student responded by volunteering or donating, 7 students indicated alternative ways, 1 student indicated that they would not get involved, and 3 failed to respond. When asked how they saw themselves engaging in their community in the future, 3 students

responded by volunteering or donating, 6 students indicated alternative ways, 2 students indicated traditional politics and 1 said they would not get involved. When asked if they learned how to address issues they were concerned about, 10 students said yes and 2 students said no. When asked what they learned about how to make a difference, 10 students indicated how to make a plan and how to publicize an issue, 1 student indicated they learned nothing and 1 student did not respond.

#### QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTED FROM SCHOOL B TEACHER:

Teacher B indicated that the biggest impact of participating in the DILA program was seeing initial apathy of the students turn into action. Participation in the program effected teaching practice by allowing the teacher to see how another educator (DILA Facilitator) approached the subject matter. The DILA program changed the way the curriculum was delivered by giving the teacher more confidence to use project based learning.

#### ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL B:

School B had the highest overall increase in average score of 0.302, along with the highest category increases in JOC of 0.266, CEC of 0.291 and CC of 0.454. Additionally, they had the second highest increase in CEA of 0.194. There were several factors that led to the high levels of increases that occurred in this class. The issue the students chose was present in the media around the time the students chose the issues, providing additional motivation, information and context around the issue. This impact was magnified by having a dynamic and impactful ‘guest speaker’ speak to the class about the issue; 10 of the 12 students said the guest speaker had the greatest impact on them. These two factors set the stage for the students’

development, in that the students' interest in an issue was caused by and supported by perpetual media coverage, making it both relevant to their lives and important in a wider societal context. The guest speaker was able to build upon this initial momentum and solidified the students resolve around the issue. This speaks to the value of allowing students to choose timely issues as an entry point for civic engagement, and the importance and impact of quality presentations from outside agencies.

In analyzing the root cause of their issue, students moved beyond individual actions and attitudes and focused on changing a systemic injustice. This analysis shaped student actions and the focus of them, as their actions were focused on changing widely held assumptions that manifested themselves in the mechanisms of society. The focus of their action was to work with school administration to build on an existing initiative. They sought to address some of the systemic issues that were at the root of rape culture. The results are pronounced increases in self-reported civic competence, civic identity and conventional civic engagement.

Students in School B saw the educational intervention as teaching them how to address issues in their community as opposed to how to address a specific issue. This is highlighted in the student responses to the question *what was the goal of the program?* - "To teach kids and high school students ways we can make a difference if we engage ourselves" In response to the question *Was this course relevant to you and your life?* more evidence of a transference of the skills learned can be seen: "Yes, it showed me to stand up for what I think is right;" "Yes it showed me that I have a voice and that I can help with my community."

Students saw what they have learned as an approach to addressing systemic injustices that is transferable to other situations, and the data indicates that they are likely, willing and self reportedly able to do so. The analysis of School B reveals that development as an active

democratic citizen is greatly enhanced when the students support the issue chosen and that this can be enhanced by an issue that has strong links to the outside world, specifically media attention and the support of an outside agency. Furthermore, the completion of the action plan (class B did not fully complete their action plan) is secondary to a process where students, through their analysis, identify systematic issues and the sources of power that have influence over that issue.

### **SCHOOL C:**

In School C 17 of the 25 students in the class participated in the research project.

### **WHAT HAPPENED AT SCHOOL C?:**

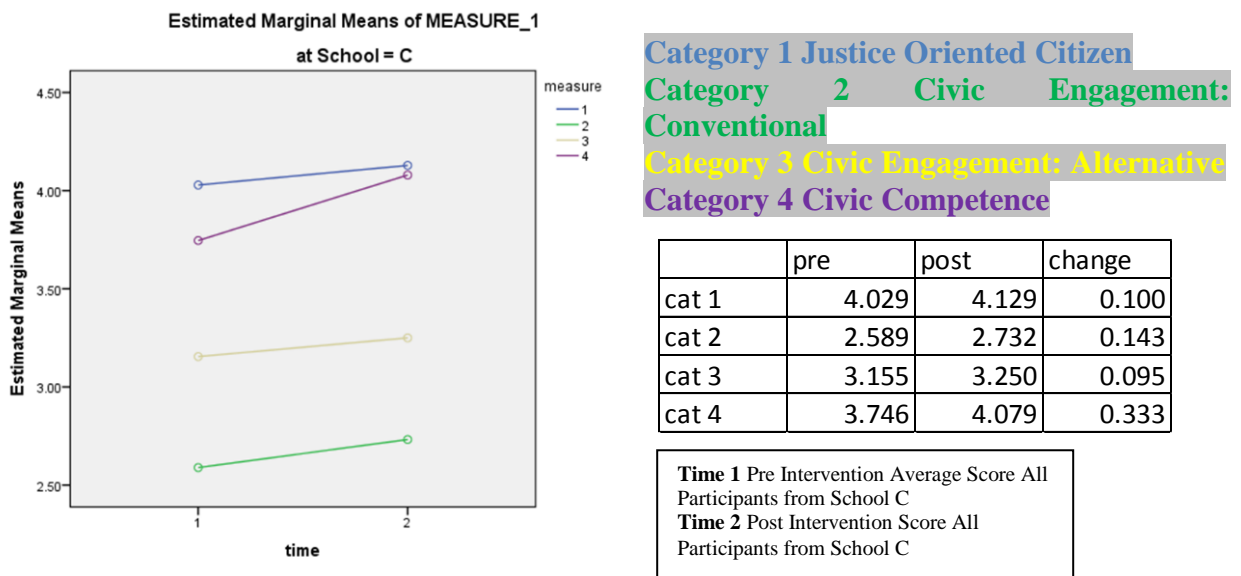
Students in School C rallied around an issue of student voice in school affairs and of particular importance to students striving for their French Immersion Certificate. This can be seen in the students' reflections about choosing an issue of relevance: "That if you are passionate about your topic, it can be an amazing experience. If not, nothing will get done;" "I learned that you really need to care about what you set out to accomplish." The students were able to go through the process of identifying the root cause as lack of student voice in course creation and identify the appropriate source of power that could affect the root cause. Furthermore they designed and administered a survey aimed at providing students a voice in the course selection. Although the survey results were not reported to the principal, the process that the students undertook of analyzing causes and power structures led to their development as active democratic citizens. They saw the lessons learned as transferrable to how they could address other issues: "I would say that this experience gave me more knowledge about how capable we are and that if we try we can make a difference;" "I learned to take a stand and speak your

opinion and that a plan is very important.” The experience at School C echoes the experience at School B in that completion of projects is secondary to the process that students use to develop their course of action.

QUANTITATIVE DATA FROM SCHOOL C

School C’s average score of all categories increased by 0.168, from 3.380 to 3.548. Students from School C’s average scores of their Identity as Social Justice Oriented Citizens increased by 0.100 from 4.029 to 4.129, average scores of likelihood of Conventional Civic Engagement increased by 0.143 from 2.589 to 2.732, average scores in likelihood of Alternative Civic Engagement increased by 0.143 from 2.589 to 2.732, average scores in likelihood of Alternative Civic Engagement increased by 0.095 from 3.155 to 3.250 and students self-reported Competence for Civic Behaviors increased by 0.333 from 3.746 to 4.079. The average scores across categories for School C can be seen in Figure 7 below.

**Figure 7: Mean pre and post scores from individual components of active citizenship (categories 1-4) from School C.**



QUALITATIVE DATA FROM DILA FACILITATOR FOR SCHOOL C:

<b>School:</b> C	<b>Teacher:</b>	<b>Partnership:</b> none
<b>Root Cause:</b> No student input as to what is offered	<b>Issue:</b> Not enough Grade 11 Electives for French Immersion Students	<b>Goal:</b> Provide student input into course selection
<b>Percentage of Action Plan Completed:</b> 80% - Action Plan was put into effect*		
<b>Description of Action Plan:</b> Students in this French Immersion class had just gone through course selection for the next year and were upset that in order to gain their French Immersion certificate upon graduation they had to take the only two courses offered in French in Grade 11. They felt that they should have more choice and set out to survey other French Immersion students to discover what choices they would like to have. They managed to propose, get approval for, administer, and report on the survey. *They did not carry through with the delivery of their report to the principal.		

QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTED FROM STUDENTS FOR SCHOOL C:

Of the 17 students who responded to the qualitative survey in Class C, all 17 thought the program was intended to encourage participants to be more active in their community and show them how they could make a difference. 13 students said they learned something about making a difference, 1 student indicated that they learned more about the issue (French Education), 2 students indicated they learned how difficult it is to make a change and 1 student indicated that they learned nothing. When asked about which part of the course had the biggest impact, 3 students indicated not being able to finish the project, 5 students indicated creating the action plan, 4 students said it had no impact and 5 students did not respond. When asked how they would describe the course to another student, 16 students responded positively and 1 student responded negatively. When asked if the course was relevant to their lives, 9 students responded yes, 7 students responded no, and 1 student did not respond. When asked how they saw themselves engaging in their community now, 7 students responded by volunteering or donating,

6 students indicated alternative ways, 3 students indicated they would not get involved, and 1 student indicated no difference. When asked how they saw themselves engaging in their community in the future, 3 students responded by volunteering or donating, 11 students indicated alternative ways, 1 student said no different, 1 student did not know and 1 student did not respond. When asked if they learned how to address issues they were concerned about, 8 students said yes, 7 students said no and 2 students did not respond. When asked what they learned about how to make a difference, 8 students indicated how to make a plan and how to publicize an issue, 8 students did not respond and 1 student indicated that she/he learned nothing.

#### QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTED FROM SCHOOL C TEACHER:

Teacher C did not see a big impact from her participation in the DILA program. Participation in the program did not affect teaching practice as the teacher indicated that she/he had always incorporated social justice into teaching. The teacher indicated the DILA program did not change the way the curriculum was delivered as she/he already used similar curriculum assessment tools.

#### ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL C:

School C had the second highest overall increase across scores of 0.168 and sharp increase in self-reported civic competence of 0.333. These results can be attributed to the fact that students chose an issue that was relevant to them, and developed a plan that involved gathering evidence and presenting to the appropriate source of power that could address the issue. In going through the process of identifying a decision maker, and developing a plan based on addressing root causes, we can see a pronounced increase in civic competence, along with

more modest increases in all other categories. We again see that the completion of the action plan (which was not fully completed at School C), was of secondary importance to the process of analysis and development of a plan. All 17 of the students saw the education intervention as intending to encourage their growth as active democratic citizens. This can be seen in the responses to the question *what did you think the goal of the program was?* – “To educate students and encourage them to become active citizens;” “To be an active citizen in your community” “To get students to realize that they can make a difference.” Development as an active democratic citizen was not contingent on successful action, but rather that students saw that they could take action on things that are important to them, and they learned that the analysis and planning is transferable to other issues. The students did differentiate between the educational intervention and the way the rest of the course was delivered, indicating inaccuracy of the teacher’s self-assessment of the program being no different than how he/she was delivering the curriculum.

### **SCHOOL D:**

In School D, 8 of the 24 students in the class participated in the research project.

#### **WHAT HAPPENED AT SCHOOL D?:**

The students of School D were able to come together on an issue which allowed them to focus on the process, analysis and planning. This outcome allowed students the opportunity to develop their skills as active democratic citizens and to see these skills as transferable to work on other issues. However, scheduling issues played a major role in limiting the effects of the program, with a reduced number of visits (5 as opposed to the regular 8-12) and those visits being on Fridays (a day where students were distracted by the coming weekend). These circumstances limited the amount of time students had to put into completing the plan which

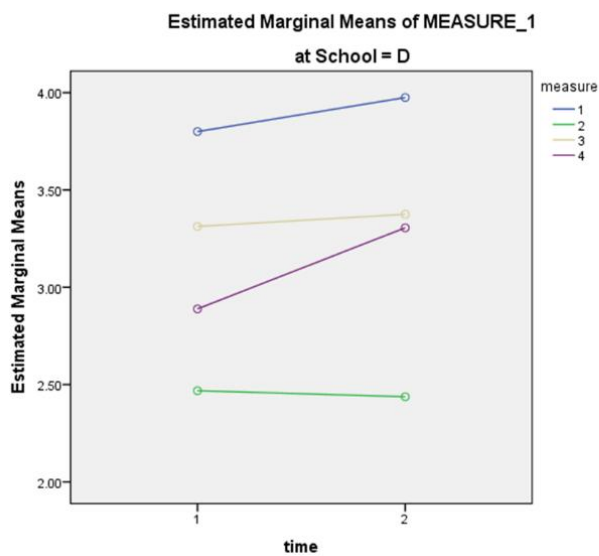
may have limited the development of likelihood of future engagement. The slight increase in likelihood of alternative engagements and slight decrease in conventional engagements may indicate that these goals were further hampered by difficulty connecting with an external organization. Evidence from some of the other schools shows that having external organizations paint a picture of the people that are currently engaged and describing how they are engaged plays an important part of having students envision themselves engaging in the future. It allows students to imagine themselves in those roles and help increase the self-reported likelihood of engagement. We can see again that completion of the plan is secondary to development of civic identity and civic competence. Identifying a root cause and a systemic issue enables youth to feel empowered and to imagine the possibility for change. This can be seen in students' comments about the effects and relevance of the course on their lives: "This was relevant to my life because I enjoy making a difference in communities. I just didn't know how;" "Yes it was relevant. Kids always have strong opinions but don't know how to change things." The work that was done helped the students understand that change was possible even if they were not able to bring about change through their actions.

#### QUANTITATIVE DATA FROM SCHOOL D:

School D's average score of all categories increased by 0.155, from 3.118 to 3.273. Student's from School D's average scores of their Identity as Social Justice Oriented Citizens increased by 0.175 from 3.800 to 3.975, average scores of likelihood of Conventional Civic Engagement decreased slightly by 0.031 from 2.469 to 2.438, average scores in likelihood of Alternative Civic Engagement increased by 0.035 from 3.313 to 3.375 and students self-reported

Competence for Civic Behaviors increased by 0.417 from 2.889 to 3.306. The average scores across categories for School D can be seen below in Figure 8 below.

**Figure 8: Mean pre and post scores from individual components of active citizenship (categories 1-4) from School D.**



Category 1 Justice Oriented Citizen  
 Category 2 Civic Engagement: Conventional  
 Category 3 Civic Engagement: Alternative  
 Category 4 Civic Competence

	pre	post	change
cat 1	3.800	3.975	0.175
cat 2	2.469	2.438	-0.031
cat 3	3.313	3.375	0.062
cat 4	2.889	3.306	0.417

**Time 1** Pre Intervention Average Score All Participants from School D  
**Time 2** Post Intervention Score All Participants from School D

QUALITATIVE DATA FROM DILA FACILITATOR FOR SCHOOL D:

<b>School:</b> D	<b>Teacher:</b>	<b>Partnership:</b> None
<b>Root Cause:</b> Lack of Awareness/Stigma	<b>Issue:</b> Mental Health	<b>Goal:</b> Raise awareness of Mental Health/reduce stigma
<b>Percentage of Action Plan Completed:</b> 50% - Action Plan was not finished for proposal		

**Description of Action Plan:** Due to a variety of circumstances, this class' Action Plan never got off of the ground. First, the scheduling of the class on Friday mornings meant that the DILA facilitator was only able to visit with the class five times, as opposed to nine times with other classes, and the class' schedule was set so that there was no opportunity to rebook these missed visits. With the missed classes and the March Break, a period of three weeks went by between visits, and this lengthy delay further reduced the time available to the DILA facilitator because it necessitated a robust review of the program. Additionally, the class was French Immersion, and a proposed partnership with the Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre was cancelled because their presentation of the mental health services they offered could not be offered fully in French. Consequently, the project lost even more steam, because these visits from community partners were so necessary to motivate students to finish their Action Plans. Nonetheless, the class was able to make excellent progress on their awareness campaign - one girl even put together an excellent video on her own - and had we had even one more week, we might have been able to get a proposal of to the school principal to run their awareness campaign.

#### QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTED FROM STUDENTS FOR SCHOOL D:

Of the 8 participating students in Class B, all 8 thought the program was intended to encourage participants to be more active in their community and show them how they could make a difference. All 8 students said they learned something about making a difference. When asked about which part of the course had the biggest impact, 7 students indicated creating and implementing the action plan and 1 student indicated that nothing had an impact on them. When asked how they would describe the course to another, all 8 students responded positively. When asked if the course was relevant to their lives, 5 students responded yes and 3 students responded no. When asked how they saw themselves engaging in their community now, 2 students responded by volunteering or donating, 2 students indicated alternative ways, 1 student indicated no differently, and 2 students indicated that they would not get involved. When asked how they saw themselves engaging in their community in the future, 3 students responded by volunteering or donating, 2 students indicated alternative ways, 1 student didn't know, 1 student said no differently and 1 student said they would not get involved. When asked if they learned how to address issues they were concerned about, all 8 students said yes. When asked what they learned

about how to make a difference, 4 students indicated how to make a plan and how to publicize an issue, 4 students indicated their confidence in addressing an issue had increased.

#### QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTED FROM SCHOOL D TEACHER:

Teacher D indicated the biggest impact was to see other teachers in action and to see every single student given the opportunity and encouraged to speak their mind. Participation in the program affected teaching practice by allowing the teacher to reflect on their teaching practice and gave them something to compare it with. The teacher did find it difficult to give up a significant amount of time to do this program. The teacher further indicated that the DILA program did not change the way she/he delivered the curriculum as according to the teacher's self-assessment, they already had a wonderful program that had proven to be successful.

#### ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL D:

School D had the third highest overall increase across scores of 0.155 and the second highest increase in self-reported civic competence of 0.333. The overall impact of the educational intervention was mitigated by inconsistency of visits by the DILA facilitator that caused a long delay between visits. We do see that the students went through the process of identifying and researching the systemic causes of an issue and began the process of an awareness campaign targeted at the root causes of the issue they identified. We see here again that, even though an action plan was not completed, the students' scores increased in self-reported civic competence and civic identities, consistent with the observed effects in other classes that went through the same process. We see slight decreases in conventional and alternative forms of civic engagement, which is not surprising given the fact that the students

were not able to actualize their action plan. Students' qualitative results support these findings with all 8 students reporting that the program was intended to encourage participants to be more active in their community, and all 8 students said they learned something about making a difference "I learned that no matter who you are you can always get involved in a positive way with an important issue;" "...we learn how to make a difference. I would also say that this course has inspired me to continue to make a difference." We see here again that the completion of an action plan is related to increasing the likelihood of future civic engagement while civic identity and self-reported civic competence is related to the process of analysis and development of a plan.

### **SCHOOL E:**

In School E 15 of the 19 students in the class participated in the research project.

#### **WHAT HAPPENED AT SCHOOL E?**

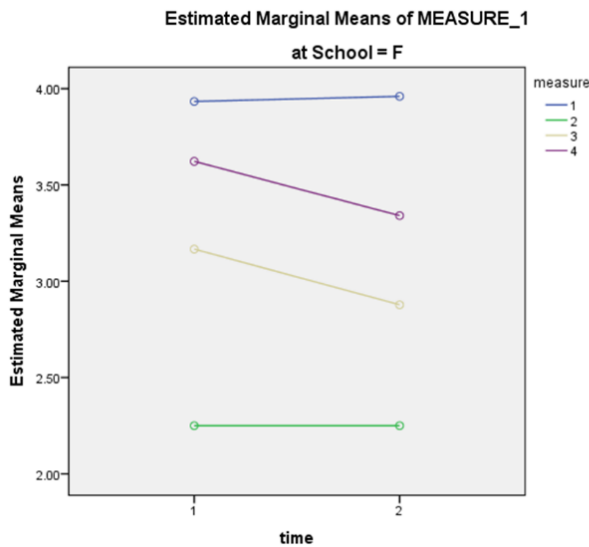
Looking solely at the output from class E, outside observers may conclude that there was a successful intervention. Public service announcements (PSAs) developed by students were run for a week along with members of the class appearing on the school's own morning radio show. However the means by which these PSAs were developed may have led to a negative effect on the students' development as active democratic citizens. There were many issues between the classroom teacher and the students that lead to a general sense of mistrust between the teacher and the students. The teacher would continually interject into the process, and reject or discount ideas from students. This rejection of ideas from the teacher came at all phases of the process from identifying issues to developing responses to the issue, not allowing critical parts of the process to unfold. As a result there was much dissent and disruption within this class. The

students did not identify the process by which the issue was chosen and the course of action chosen to address the issue. This is reflected in the feedback from Teacher E who “felt some frustration with students who were disengaged or did not always contribute positively to the class.” The lack of buy-in from the entire class resulted in extra time managing behavioral issues within the class. The lack of teacher support for the issue the students initially chose and the resulting behavioural issues did not allow the class to progress to a deeper analysis and identify a source of power responsible for the issue identified. Students commonly responded to questions of relevance about the course in the following manner: “No because the main goal wasn’t important to me;” “No because I don’t do this stuff outside of school/this course.” Time was an additional issue again with March break causing classes to be missed where deeper analysis usually takes place. Timing issues were also found to be reflected in feedback made by students: “I felt there was not enough time to do anything big... I learned that I should not waste time or there will be no time to do something.”

#### QUANTITATIVE DATA FROM SCHOOL E

School E’s average score of all categories decreased by 0.136 from 3.243 to 3.107. Student’s average scores from School E of their Identity as Social Justice Oriented Citizens slightly increased by 0.027 from 3.933 to 3.960, average scores of likelihood of Conventional Civic Engagement did not change and remained constant at 2.250, average scores in likelihood of Alternative Civic Engagement decreased by 0.289 from 3.167 to 2.878 and students self-reported Civic Competence decreased by 0.281 from 3.622 to 3.341. The average scores across categories for Civic School E can be seen below in Figure 9 below.

**Figure 9- Means scores from individual components of active citizenship (categories 1-4) of pre and post scores from School E**



Category 1 Justice Oriented Citizen  
 Category 2 Civic Engagement: Conventional  
 Category 3 Civic Engagement: Alternative  
 Category 4 Civic Competence

	pre	post	change
cat 1	3.933	3.960	0.027
cat 2	2.250	2.250	0.000
cat 3	3.167	2.878	-0.289
cat 4	3.622	3.341	-0.281

**Time 1** Pre Intervention Average Score All Participants from School E  
**Time 2** Post Intervention Score All Participants from School E

QUALITATIVE DATA FROM DILA FACILITATOR:

<b>School:</b> E	<b>Teacher:</b>	<b>Partnership:</b> none.
<b>Root Cause:</b> The media’s portrayal of “ideal” bodies	<b>Issue:</b> Negative sense of Self/Body-image	<b>Goal:</b> Promote Positive Self/Body-Image
<b>Percentage of Action Plan Completed:</b> 100% - Action Plan was put into effect		
<b>Description of Action Plan:</b> This class wound up putting together a “positive-thinking challenge week” for their Action Plan. Representatives were interviewed by the school’s morning announcement program, where they discussed the problem of negative body image, introduced some of the causes, and challenged the school to “not to think a single negative thought about the way you look” and to be complementary rather than critical of the way that others looked for a whole week. This “positive thinking challenge” week was supported by running several PSA-style videos that other students in the class came up with during the morning announcements. Originally, this class also wanted to sell suckers to raise the funds necessary to purchase a positive self-awareness bracelet for other students to wear to remind them to think positive thoughts about themselves and how they look. The bracelets were going to have a slogan such as “imperfection = i’m_perfection” on them. Unfortunately, the limited timing of Civics and the positioning of March Break in the middle of the program made this idea impractical.		

### QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTED FROM STUDENTS:

Of the 15 students in School E 11 thought the program was intended to encourage participants to be more active in their community and show them how they could make a difference and 4 did not respond. 11 students said they learned something about making a difference and 4 students did not respond. When asked about which part of the course had the biggest impact on them, 5 students had indicated creating and implementing the action plan, 4 students indicated learning about the issue and 6 students did not respond. When asked how they would describe the course to another, 10 students responded positively, and 5 students did not respond. When asked if the course was relevant to their lives, 7 students responded yes, 4 students responded no, and 4 students did not respond. When asked how they saw themselves engaging in their community now, 6 students indicated alternative ways, 1 student indicated that they would not get involved, 1 student said they were not sure and 7 students did not respond. When asked how they saw themselves engaging in their community in the future, 1 student responded by volunteering or donating, 8 students indicated alternative ways, 1 student said they would not get involved, and 5 students did not respond. When asked if they learned how to address issues they were concerned about, all 7 students said yes and 8 students did not respond. When asked what they learned about how to make a difference, 4 students indicated how to make a plan and how to publicize an issue, 1 student indicated not much and 10 students did not respond.

### QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTED FROM SCHOOL E TEACHER:

Teacher E indicated that the biggest impact of participating in the DILA program was creating an authentic action plan with students. Teacher E loved seeing students engaged and

collaborating with one another, but was frustrated to see students who were disengaged and who did not contribute positively to our project.

Participation in the program effected teaching practice in that the teacher made several connections throughout the course between other lessons and what was being done with DILA. The DILA program changed the way the curriculum was delivered and evaluated in that the summative project was related to the DILA project.

### ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL E

School E was the only school to have its average score across all categories decrease, with only one category showing a slight increase; civic identity. Conventional civic engagement remained constant and substantial decreases in both alternative civic engagement and self-reported civic competence. The class identified a root cause of media portrayal of body image, but rather than focus their action on the power structure (media outlets), the focus was placed on changing how individuals reacted to the media and how they communicated with one another. The emphasis of action shifted from the cause of the issue (images in the media) to those that were affected by it. The action plan aimed at changing individual reactions was completed and implemented, but the effects on the student's development as active democratic citizens were negative. The teacher's feedback indicates that the learning experience was authentic and issues, ideas and action were student led and student planned. What was missing from a developmental standpoint was digging deeper into the root causes or structures that lead to this issues and a resulting action that addressed a structural injustice. The classroom climate, largely influenced by the teacher's mistrust of the students, did not provide a space where students felt motivated or could get to this stage of analysis. The qualitative response from students is highlighted by many non-responses (7 of the students answered 4 or less of the 10 questions and

often with joke answers). This demonstrates a level of indifference to the intervention. Even though 11 of 15 students thought the program was intended to encourage participants to be more active in their community, this was clearly not the case in this class. This class highlighted the importance of taking the time and providing a space where students buy into the process of choosing and analysing issues in order for development as active democratic citizens to take place. The teacher's mistrust of the students and behavioural issues stifled the process of getting buy in and affected the analysis and resulting action plan. The failure to have buy-in from students or for students to feel their voices are not heard or valued has the potential to have a negative effect on students' development as an active democratic citizen.

## **CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION**

### **Conclusion: Emergent Themes and Areas for Further Research**

This study asked if an experiential approach to the delivery of grade 10 civics curriculum affected teachers' and students' development as active democratic citizens as characterized by civic identity, civic engagement and civic competences. The research indicates that the experiential approach to the Civics Curriculum employed in this study, DILA, has a statistically significant positive effect on students' development as active democratic citizens, across all categories that were used in this research. In an analysis of the qualitative data, interesting themes emerged from a cross-case analysis that could be the basis for future research.

1) *Outward success does not equate to personal development and too much focus on a specific issue loses sight of the transferability of the lessons learned in addressing them.* Emphasis on issues and/or the completion of a plan do not lead to a student's development as an active democratic citizen, and in some cases an over emphasis on outputs, which are not valued by students, can have a negative impact on the students' development, specifically towards the development of their civic identities and self-reported civic competence. Instead, development occurs when there is a focus on the process of analysis and identification of a root cause, and planning a corresponding action. Analysis of root causes is critical to the development of civic identity and civic competence. This is clearly seen in the 2 schools that demonstrated the greatest increase in development as active democratic citizens -- schools B and C. Neither of these schools fully completed their action plan, but they identified a root cause, a power source that they could address and that allowed them to develop a corresponding action. This theme becomes clear in looking at the results of School E, where students regressed in their development as active democratic citizens but completed their action plan. A suggested area for future research would be to examine youths' development as active democratic citizens when

they are involved in prescribed community service learning opportunities that tend to focus on individual actions (charity and donations) and specific outcomes (fundraising dollars), compared to the youths' development as active democratic citizens when they are involved in an approach that places a greater emphasis on deeper analysis of the issues and identification of root causes.

2) *Having students value the issue and/ or placing value in the process by which an issue is chosen is critical to having students move into the process of analysis of root causes.* When students are provided with the opportunity to analyse and identify root causes, they develop their civic identities and civic competences -- two critical areas of active democratic citizenship. Having all students buy-in to the process is critical to progressing to a point where deeper analysis is possible. When students do not see value in the issue they are working on and/or fail to honor the democratic process by which issues are chosen, they will derail the process and prevent deeper analysis from taking place. It is important to spend time to ensure that students feel their voices are heard, and they understand the value of choosing an issue by democratic processes and the importance compromise accommodation in order to work with others. This way if "their issue" is not chosen, they still feel that they can learn from the experience. In classes B and C, student comments rarely centred on the issues themselves but rather the process of working to address that issue. We can see the opposite results in School E where student comments centered on whether they supported the issue or not. A suggested area for future research would be to examine youths' development as active democratic citizens as it relates to the value they place in both means by which issues are prioritized and how much they identify with issues that are prioritized.

3) *Teachers need to be exposed to, and have the confidence and support necessary to use project based/ experience based learning.* One of the major challenges to youth becoming

civically engaged is the “decline in quality and enthusiasm of civics education in the classroom” (Clarke, p. 3, 2009). The feedback from teachers who embraced the educational intervention were resoundingly positive; in these cases, teachers indicated that their involvement with the intervention allowed them to re-think how they deliver the Grade 10 Civics curriculum. It allowed them to deliver and assess it in a more authentic and engaging way. This is a challenging task in a difficult course that does not receive a lot of support and is inconsistently delivered. Supporting teachers in this course can have a positive effect on the teachers’ development as well as the students’. When teachers do not embrace this process it can have adverse affects on student development as active democratic citizens. A further area of research would be to examine which programs and/or types of support are most beneficial to teachers when attempting to create experiential learning opportunities in Grade 10 Civics Classes and the barriers to the implementation of these teaching techniques

Schools, and specifically Grade 10 Civics classes within those schools, can be places where youth learn to value democracy, understand their important role in the democratic process, and have the willingness and confidence to act on their convictions. Alternatively, schools and Grade 10 Civics classes can be places that discourage engagement by placing artificial limits on what is possible by creating false parameters on what is learned and how it is taught. If we truly value democracy, and the engaged citizens that are necessary for it to function, then we need to ensure that our schools, and specifically our civics classes, fall into the former description and not the later. This study has built on existing literature and demonstrated through research that allowing students to have the ‘experience’ of engaging in civic action, namely; choosing an issue, researching that issue and developing a response to that is issue, is the greatest teacher of all when it comes to an individual’s development as an active democratic citizen.

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## **APPENDIX ONE**

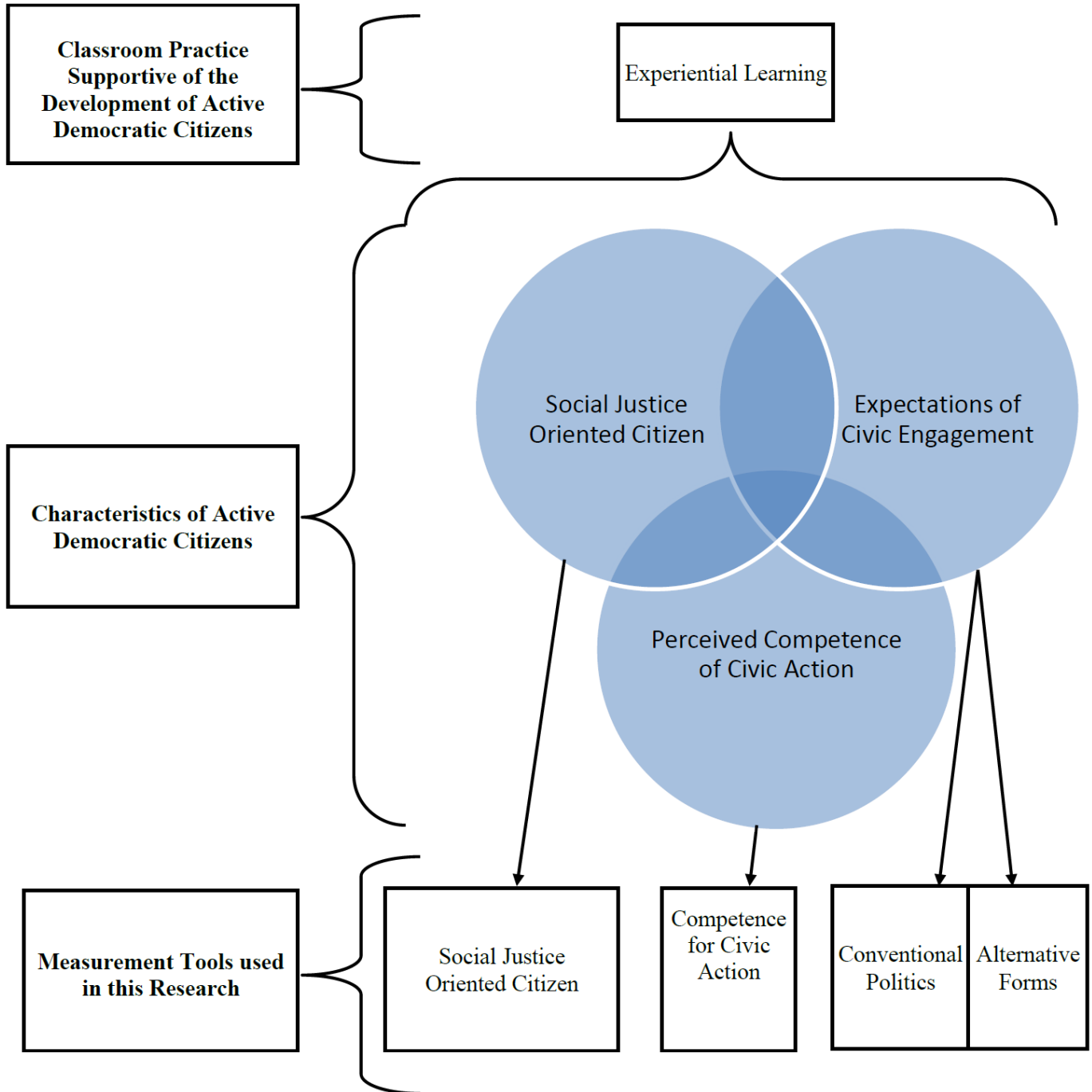
### **THE THREE STRANDS OF THE ONTARIO GRADE 10 CIVICS CURRICULUM:**

<b>Informed Citizenship</b>	An understanding of key civics questions, concepts, structures, and processes is fundamental to informed citizenship. In a diverse and rapidly changing society that invites political participation, the informed citizen should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the reasons for and dimensions of democracy. In the Civics course, students will gain an understanding of contrasting views of citizenship within personal, community, national, and global contexts. As well, they will learn the principles and practices of decision making.
<b>Purposeful Citizenship</b>	It is important that students understand the role of the citizen, and the personal values and perspectives that guide citizen thinking and actions. Students need to reflect upon their personal sense of civic identity, moral purpose, and legal responsibility – and to compare their views with those of others. They should examine important civic questions and consider the challenges of governing communities in which contrasting values, multiple perspectives, and differing purposes coexist.
<b>Active Citizenship</b>	Students need to learn basic civic literacy skills and have opportunities to apply those skills meaningfully by participating actively in the civic affairs of their community. Civic literacy skills include skills in the areas of research and inquiry, critical and creative thinking, decision making, conflict resolution, and collaboration. Full participatory citizenship requires an understanding of practices used in civic affairs to influence public decision making.

(Ministry of Education, pg. 63, 2005.)

## APPENDIX TWO

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:



### APPENDIX THREE

PRE & POST SURVEY QUESTIONS:

**TYPES OF CITIZEN**

**Justice Oriented Citizen**

How much do you agree or disagree with each of the statements?

Question	1. Strongly disagree	2. Disagree	3. Uncertain	4. Agree	5. Strongly agree
I think it's important to challenge inequalities in society. <sup>1</sup>					
I think that it is important to think critically about laws and government. <sup>1</sup>					
I think that it's important to buy products from socially responsible businesses. <sup>1</sup>					
I think that it is important to work for positive social change. <sup>1</sup>					
When thinking about problems in society, it is important to focus on the underlying causes. <sup>1</sup>					

<sup>1</sup>: Items adapted from Justice Oriented Citizen (Westheimer & Kahne 2004).

As compiled in Flanagan, C. Syvertsen, A. K. & Stout, M. (2007). *Civic Measurement Models: Tapping Adolescents' Civic Engagement*. Circle Working Paper 55, May 2007. Available:

<http://www.sohe.wisc.edu/is/documents/CIRCLEWP55FlanaganSyvertsenStout.pdf> [Date accessed: April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013.]

## **CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: CONVENTIONAL POLITICS**

### **Expectations for Engagement in Electoral Politics**

When you think of your life after high school, how likely is it that you would do each of the following?

Question	<i>Likelihood Scale</i>				
	1. Not at all	2.	3. Maybe	4.	5. Extremely likely
Vote on a regular basis. <sup>3</sup>					
Wear a campaign button to support a candidate. <sup>2</sup>					
Volunteer for a political party. <sup>1,2</sup>					

<sup>1</sup>: Items drawn from the California Civic Index (Kahne, Middaugh, & Schutjer-Mance, 2005).

<sup>2</sup> : Item adapted from the Civic Engagement Questionnaire (Keeter, Zukin, Andolina, & Jenkins, 2002).

<sup>3</sup> : Item adapted from the IEA Civic Education Study (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswarld, & Schulz, 2001).

As compiled in Flanagan, C. Syvertsen, A. K. & Stout, M. (2007). *Civic Measurement Models: Tapping Adolescents' Civic Engagement*. Circle Working Paper 55, May 2007. Available:

<http://www.sohe.wisc.edu/is/documents/CIRCLEWP55FlannaganSyvertsenStout.pdf> [Date accessed: April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013.]

### **Personal Political Aspirations**

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Question	<i>Agreement Scale</i>				
	1. Strongly disagree	2. Disagree	3. Uncertain	4. Agree	5. Strongly agree
I am interested in a career in politics and government. <sup>4</sup>					

<sup>4</sup> : Item drawn from the CityWorks Evaluation (Kahne, Chi, & Middaugh, 2002).

As compiled in Flanagan, C. Syvertsen, A. K. & Stout, M. (2007). *Civic Measurement Models: Tapping Adolescents' Civic Engagement*. Circle Working Paper 55, May 2007. Available:

<http://www.sohe.wisc.edu/is/documents/CIRCLEWP55FlannaganSyvertsenStout.pdf> [Date accessed: April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013.]

**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: ALTERNATIVE FORMS**

**Expectations for Unconventional Political Engagement.**

When you think of your life after high school, how likely is it that you would do each of the following?

Question	<i>Likelihood Scale</i>				
	1. Not at all likely	2.	3. Maybe	4.	5. Extremely likely
Participation in a boycott against a company. <sup>2</sup>					
Refuse to buy clothes made in sweatshops. <sup>2</sup>					
Participate in political activities such as protests, marches, or demonstrations. <sup>2</sup>					

<sup>2</sup> : Items adapted from the Civic Engagement Questionnaire (Keeter, Zukin, Andolina, & Jenkins, 2002). As compiled in Flanagan, C. Syvertsen, A. K. & Stout, M. (2007). *Civic Measurement Models: Tapping Adolescents’ Civic Engagement*. Circle Working Paper 55, May 2007. Available: <http://www.sohe.wisc.edu/is/documents/CIRCLEWP55FlanaganSyvertsenStout.pdf> [Date accessed: April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013.]

**Expectations for Engagement in Community Issues**

When think about life after high school, how likely is it that you would do each of the following?

Question	<i>Likelihood Scale</i>				
	1. Not at all likely	2.	3. Maybe	4.	5. Extremely likely
Do volunteer work to help needy people.					
Get involved in issues like health or safety that affect your community.					
Work with a group to solve a problem in the community where you live. <sup>1</sup>					

<sup>1</sup>: Items drawn from the California Civic Index (Kahne, Middaugh, & Schutjer-Mance, 2005). As compiled in Flanagan, C. Syvertsen, A. K. & Stout, M. (2007). *Civic Measurement Models: Tapping Adolescents’ Civic Engagement*. Circle Working Paper 55, May 2007. Available: <http://www.sohe.wisc.edu/is/documents/CIRCLEWP55FlanaganSyvertsenStout.pdf> [Date accessed: April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013.]

## **CIVIC BEHAVIORS**

### **Competence for Civic Action:**

If you found a problem in your community that you wanted to do something about, how well do you think that you would be able to do each of the following?

Question	Ability Scale				
	1. Definitely can not	2. probably can not	3. Maybe	4. probably can	5. definitely can
Create a plan to address the problem. <sup>1</sup>					
Get other people to care about the problem. <sup>1</sup>					
Organize a meeting. <sup>1</sup>					
Express your views in front of a group of people. <sup>1</sup>					
Identify individuals or groups who could help you with the problem. <sup>1</sup>					
Write an opinion letter to a local newspaper. <sup>2</sup>					
Call someone on the phone that you had never met before to get their help with the problem. <sup>1</sup>					
Contact an elected official about the problem. <sup>1</sup>					
Organize a petition.					

<sup>1</sup>: Items drawn from the California Civic Index (Kahne, Middaugh, & Schutjer-Mance, 2005).

<sup>2</sup> : Item adapted from the Civic Engagement Questionnaire (Keeter, Zukin, Andolina, & Jenkins, 2002). As compiled in Flanagan, C. Syvertsen, A. K. & Stout, M. (2007). *Civic Measurement Models: Tapping Adolescents' Civic Engagement*. Circle Working Paper 55, May 2007. Available: <http://www.sohe.wisc.edu/is/documents/CIRCLEWP55FlannaganSyvertsenStout.pdf> [Date accessed: April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013.]

## **APPENDIX FOUR**

### **POST COURSE OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS:**

#### **Questions intended to assess classroom practices:**

What do you think the goal of this course was?

What have you learned in this course?

What had biggest impact on you in this course?

How would you describe this learning experience to another student about to take the same course?

Was this course relevant to you and your life? Why or why not?

#### **Questions intended to assess civic engagement:**

How do you see yourself engaging in your community now?

How do you see yourself engaging in your community in the future?

#### **Questions intended to assess competence for civic action**

Did you feel that you learned how to address issues you were concerned about in this class?

If so what did you learn about addressing them?