Introduction

Civics and Citizenship Education promotes knowledge of Australia’s democratic heritage, its political and legal institutions, and its society so that young people can participate as informed citizens. It also fosters the skills, values and dispositions of active citizenship that will assist them to participate in their communities and in Australian democratic life.

Rationale

The Melbourne Declaration of Educational Goals for Young Australians, issued by all Australian Ministers for Education on 5 December 2008, includes a commitment to supporting young Australians to become active and informed citizens. Civics and citizenship education in schools helps to ensure that all young Australians can contribute to the ongoing renewal of Australia’s democracy.

The Declaration states that active and informed citizens:

- act with moral and ethical integrity
- appreciate Australia’s social, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity, and have an understanding of Australia’s system of government, history and culture
- understand and acknowledge the value of Indigenous cultures and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians
- are committed to national values of democracy, equity and justice, and participate in Australia’s civic life
- are able to relate to and communicate across cultures, especially the cultures and countries of Asia
- work for the common good, in particular sustaining and improving natural and social environments.

The Melbourne Declaration commits state, territory and Commonwealth governments to work in collaboration with all school sectors in developing a world class curriculum that supports all young Australians to become active and informed citizens. The Declaration notes that such a curriculum:

... will support students to relate well to others and foster an understanding of Australian society, citizenship and national values, including through the study of civics and citizenship.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) has been established to develop a rigorous and world-class national curriculum from Kindergarten to Year 12, initially for the learning areas of English, mathematics, science and history, and later for geography, languages and the arts. The Australian Curriculum in civics and citizenship will be developed in the third phase of ACARA’s work. The development of the Australian Curriculum in history and geography will also support the teaching of civics and citizenship.

Current civics and citizenship teaching in states and territories is informed by the National Statements of Learning for Civics and Citizenship, implemented since January 2008. The Statements document agreed essential skills, knowledge, understandings and capacities in civics and citizenship that all young Australians should have the opportunity to learn by the end of Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. In turn, the Statements of Learning complement the MCEECYDA National Assessment Program – Civics and Citizenship.

A national test in civics and citizenship is undertaken through the National Assessment Program – Civics and Citizenship every three years by a sample of students in Years 6 and 10. The first such test took place in 2004 and a second test was held in 2007. Results from these tests are available at www.mceetya.edu.au/mceecdy/nap_civics_and_citizenship,12182.html.
Background to civics and citizenship education and existing resources

The Australian Government has supported civics and citizenship education in schools through the Discovering Democracy program (1997–2004), the subsequent Civics and Citizenship Education program (since 2004) and the Parliament and Civics Education Rebate (PACER) program (since 2006).

Discovering Democracy resources, including primary and secondary school kits and the Discovering Democracy Australian Readers were sent to all schools and teacher professional development programs were conducted in all states and territories around these resources. The resources employed engaging pedagogical approaches to develop in students an understanding of Australian democratic institutions, their history, values and processes. The Discovering Democracy units are available on the Civics and Citizenship Education website www1.curriculum.edu.au/ddunits/index.htm.

About the professional learning package

An approach to citizenship participation

The formal part of the civics and citizenship curriculum is essential for students to reach an understanding of Australian democracy and its institutions. An understanding of Australian democratic institutions, their history and values empowers young people to participate in Australia’s democratic society and to make sense of their world. Assisting students to engage in active citizenship complements this understanding, as it helps to instil in students the disposition to participate in their communities, and fosters in them the capacities to contribute to Australian democracy.

This Professional Learning Package focuses on the citizenship dimension of civics and citizenship education, and encourages and guides you to construct opportunities in your classroom, school and community that will foster in students the disposition to participate in those environments. Creating opportunities for student participation in the classroom, for student voice in the school and active engagement in the wider community assists students to put into practice the knowledge and values of the formal curriculum, and helps them make connections between their civics and citizenship learning and their experiences. Active participation in the curriculum and in the community also enables students to develop the skills of citizenship, and allows them to engage and shape their values in meaningful interactions with others.

Focus

Throughout this professional learning package, you will be encouraged to conceive of students as active citizens, and to see the classroom, the school and the community as places where students can experience and enact democratic values and hone their dispositions for active citizenship. You will be invited to reflect on the nature and dimensions of civics and citizenship values, and to ‘unpack’ the dispositions that students require to be engaged and effective citizens. You will also be required to identify the kinds of civics and citizenship knowledge, skills, values and dispositions that can be achieved in the classroom, the school and the community, and to actively create opportunities for their achievement.

Findings from a survey of students conducted along with the 2007 national test provide some guidance on what schools can do to improve achievement of their students in civics and citizenship. These findings show that, other things being equal, student participation in school governance activities and in civics and citizenship related activities outside school can lift student learning outcomes in civics and citizenship. Students who participate in such activities seem to gain knowledge about civics and citizenship that students who miss out on such opportunities do not acquire.
Design

This learning package is divided into three self-paced, stand-alone learning modules, with a focus on student civics and citizenship participation in the classroom, the school and the community. Each of the learning modules contains the following features.

- A clear outline of the purposes and aims of the module and the civics and citizenship skills, knowledge, values and dispositions that you can reasonably expect to facilitate in the classroom, school or community, respectively.
- Three case studies on actual teacher and school practice which you are encouraged to explore, interrogate and reflect upon, and from which you may draw conclusions for your own practice.
- An adult learning model that prompts, stimulates and guides your learning through each of the self-contained modules.
- Defined outcomes that you can expect to achieve after working through a module.
- A list of resources for your reference and to extend your learning.

How to use this professional learning package

You may choose to undertake the modules as part of a collegial or facilitator-led professional learning activity. You will need to decide which of the following three modules to engage with based on your classroom and/or school context and your own professional learning needs and interests. The three modules are:

- **Classroom Practice**: The development and operation of a democratic classroom
- **Beyond the Classroom**: The active engagement of all students in democratic participation in school through the provision of leadership and decision-making roles
- **Participation in the Community**: The development and implementation of student participation in service learning and local council projects, fundraising and social-justice campaigns.

You will begin each module by reflecting on your current strengths, areas for development, ideas and questions that you may have in terms of civics and citizenship. Throughout the modules you will enhance your understanding of the purpose, processes and strategies for developing, implementing and maintaining student leadership, decision-making and participatory roles as highlighted in the case studies as you are supported to apply these to your classroom and/or school context. You will also develop strategies and tools for monitoring progress and measuring success in relation to student participation. These approaches will assist you in developing or strengthening your own program for student civics and citizenship participation.

The adult learning model for this professional learning package has five key aspects with which you will engage.

- **Construct**: Tasks that facilitate the building of new knowledge
- **Connect**: Tasks that draw on the learner’s prior knowledge and experiences and make links to new concepts
- **Collaborate**: Tasks that engage the learner in collegial discussion and interaction
- **Reflect**: Tasks that encourage the learner to critically consider their professional practice and programs
- **Implement**: Tasks that involve the learner in applying the strategies, tools and programs they have developed.

Source: adapted from Liddicoat, AJ et al 2003 pp 47–51
Module 1 – Classroom Practice

Outcomes
At the completion of this module, you will be able to:

• conceive of the classroom as a democratic place in which students can actively participate in creating the context of their learning environment
• determine the values, decision-making processes and climate of a democratic classroom
• create links between students’ classroom participation and civics and citizenship knowledge and skills.

Purpose
Ensuring that students develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions to participate in their communities is the central goal of the civics and citizenship education program. One such community is the classroom, where students can assist in establishing the context of their learning environment, and be charged with the responsibility of ensuring that it is a democratic space in which all are empowered to contribute to the learning experience.

Valuing and providing opportunities for active, democratic participation in the classroom assists students in making connections between their participation and their understanding of democratic processes. It also assists with the socialisation of students into an ethic of cooperation, encourages respect and gives them responsibility for their learning.

Creating a democratic environment in the classroom provides opportunities for students to enhance and apply their understanding of civics and citizenship values. Civics and citizenship values are the values that are associated with Australian democratic life, its institutions and democratic participation, and are explored in detail in this module. Throughout this module, you will be encouraged to reflect on how your classroom practice and program equips students with the knowledge, skills and dispositions to participate fully – now and in the future – as active and informed members of their communities.

Aims
The aims of the module are to:

• familiarise you with the knowledge, skills and dispositions for successful civics and citizenship participation
• assist you in identifying the civics and citizenship values that can by fostered in classroom contexts
• engage you in interrogating case studies of good civics and citizenship practice in which students participated in the classroom
• encourage you to draw conclusions from your learning experience in this module for your own classroom practice
• empower you to create a democratic classroom in which students can participate.

Structure and content
This module identifies the civics and citizenship education outcomes that students are able to achieve in the classroom, and contains case studies of teacher classroom practice in civics and citizenship education. You will be asked to work through three case studies, and reflect on how you would establish and maintain a democratic classroom that values, supports and provides opportunities for student participation in decision making.
The learning model outlined in the introduction will facilitate your engagement with this module by constructing the learning experience for you. At key points, you will be asked to engage with the content of a section by referring to the learning model. Designated sections (*) of the learning model will assist you in constructing your own program for students’ civics and citizenship participation in the classroom. Through your engagement with the learning model you will be required to consider the reasons for student participation in the classroom, to work through three case studies in which teachers created opportunities for student civic and citizenship participation, to reflect on your approach and the opportunities you provide for student participation in classroom decision making, and to develop ways of assessing that participation.

The case studies focus on:

• using play to develop participatory knowledge, skills and dispositions
• applying parliamentary processes to classroom decision making
• building a harmonious learning environment through understanding and exercising civics and citizenship values.

In your consideration of the three case studies, you will be asked to reflect on how you would:

• identify opportunities for student participation in the classroom
• prepare students for taking responsibility for democratising their learning environment
• engage students in the decision-making processes that facilitate their participation in the classroom
• ensure that civics and citizenship values are explicit in your teaching and learning environment.

**Civics and citizenship education focus**

This module emphasises civics and citizenship education knowledge, skills and dispositions that can be fostered in the classroom, specifically:

• engaging with values that are important to Australian democracy and social cohesion and considering ways in which they can be enacted by individuals or groups to achieve common goals
• developing knowledge and skills in collective decision making, informed action and working together for the common good to support or counter the behaviours and/or actions of individuals or groups
• defining and exercising personal and shared rights and responsibilities associated with being a citizen within a classroom context
• exercising a responsibility for establishing fair processes and procedures for participation and group decision making
• developing an awareness of how values underpin the processes and procedures for participation
• fostering a willingness to participate through agreed processes and procedures
• developing a propensity to take action to bring about positive change
• building a capacity for leadership in the decision-making process
• having an awareness of self-held beliefs and values, and how these are informed, challenged and altered by interactions with others.
Reflect

Before proceeding further, reflect on current strengths, areas for development, questions that you may have, and ideas in terms of the knowledge, skills and dispositions required to provide a learning environment that values and supports student participation in classroom decision making.

You may wish to begin a reflective journal or create a ‘parking lot’, which can be added to as you engage with this and other modules.

Reflective journals are useful learning tools. You can use your journal to record, illustrate or challenge ideas within the professional learning package.

A parking lot is a graphic organiser that can be used to record your strengths, questions, areas for development and ideas.

Democratic classroom

Although we teach about democracy, we rarely practice it in our schools and classrooms. ... Creating caring classrooms and supportive schools will improve opportunities for students to become citizens rather than tourists. ... Tourists simply pass through without involvement, commitment or belonging. ... In places where people respect them and care about them as individuals, students can learn to become informed and involved members of our democratic society.

H Jerome Freiberg, educator and author (1996)

Classrooms are some of the most frequently visited communities, and the places where students spend a great deal, if not most, of their time. They are places where students ought to feel safe and confident to engage in the learning experience; but they also need to be environments for which students can take responsibility. Having students take responsibility for their learning environment entails fostering in them the civics and citizenship skills and dispositions for participation, for decision making and leadership, and inviting them to engage with their values and those of others in their immediate community. This creates purposeful, authentic learning opportunities for students, where their participation has real implications for their environment, and clear connections to their values.

Empowering students to make classrooms democratic places for learning engages them in making choices about their environments, in weighing-up competing demands and priorities, and designing processes by which conflicting points of view and interests might be transformed into an agreed, collective purpose. The skills that students develop in managing classroom behaviour, negotiating the curriculum, establishing learning goals and deciding on assessment criteria are thus relevant to the workplace and their communities beyond the school.

When students take responsibility for creating their learning environment, they are bringing their values to bear on the classroom – their community. In a democratic classroom, they are making decisions and designing decision-making processes that simultaneously reflect their values as individuals, engage the values of participation, and promote the values of the community they seek to create or maintain. The values of the individual, of participation and community are the three dimensions of civics and citizenship values.
Civics and Citizenship Values

Democratic classrooms provide students with opportunities to understand and apply democratic processes through explicit teaching, modelling and exercising the three dimensions of civics and citizenship values – the values of participation, the values of the individual and the values of the community.

Values of the individual

Students are aware of their own values, behave morally and ethically towards others, and use their values to inform their positions on issues and in choosing solutions to problems.

They understand that their values can inform their actions, and that they might be challenged by the values of others, or that they sometimes might have to choose between competing values. In decision-making contexts they act with integrity, honesty, and compassion, have respect for the views of others, and critically assess group decisions against their values and the common good. Students acknowledge the positive qualities in others that they admire and wish to develop further in themselves.

Values of participation

Students view themselves as part of a classroom community and, as such, view any problems or issues, at least in part, to be their own which to help resolve. They have the motivation and seek the knowledge and skills to make a difference and take action to positively influence the classroom environment. They engage with the responsibility of shared decision making, and demonstrate values such as perseverance, cooperation, inclusion and fairness in the interests of the common good or in the pursuit of justice and equality for a single individual.

Values of the community

Students are actively involved in creating the kind of classroom community to which they wish to belong and contribute. They are aware that a community is based on shared understandings of agreed values and principles, and collectively take responsibility for maintaining those values and principles, through their behaviour as a group and towards each other. With their teacher, they co-establish classroom rights, responsibilities, roles and expectations which affirm the values of their community, and ensure that their learning environment provides opportunities for all and is free from negative peer pressure and unnecessary distractions. They collectively acknowledge and celebrate the efforts and successes of individuals and the class.
Reflect

Use a Y-chart to record the key characteristics of a democratic classroom.

- What does it look like?
  How might the students behave?
- What does it sound like?
  How might the students interact?
- What does it feel like?
  What might be the students’ attitudes?

Draw a large Y on a piece of paper, or in your reflective journal if you are keeping one, and label it as shown. Record your responses. Use a highlighter to identify the student behaviours, interactions and attitudes that are currently apparent in your classroom.

A Y-chart is a graphic organiser that assists the user in recording what might be seen, heard and felt.

Reflect/Collaborate

If you are undertaking a collegial learning activity, use a think-pair-share activity to complete the following tasks.

- Identify the knowledge, skills and dispositions listed in the civics and citizenship education focus (page 7) that can be addressed within the context of a democratic classroom. Share your responses with your colleagues.
- Brainstorm a list of civics and citizenship values that are important to Australian democracy; for example, fairness, equality, responsibility and integrity. Use your list to annotate the civics and citizenship values that are evident in the democratic classroom. Share your annotations with your colleagues.
- Classify the values on your list into the three dimensions – individual, participation and community. Add to each dimension if needed. Are there any overlapping values? What conclusions can you draw from this list?

A think-pair-share activity enables learners to ‘think’ first, then to ‘pair’ with another learner to exchange ideas. The pair then presents to the group, allowing diverse ideas to be collated.

*Reflect/Connect

View your state or territory’s curriculum documents related to civics and citizenship education. Identify the sections that are relevant to developing students’ knowledge, skills and dispositions for participation. Use different colours to highlight connections that you can make between the curriculum documents and each of the three dimensions of civics and citizenship values for a democratic classroom – the values of participation, the values of the individual and the values of the community.

Consider the following questions. If you are using a reflective journal, record your responses.

- Thinking about your state or territory’s curriculum documents, what opportunities could a democratic classroom provide for your students to learn about and apply civics and citizenship values?
- How does your current practice and program support students to exercise the kind of civics and citizenship values that underpin the democratic classroom?
- How might your students use what they are learning and the skills and dispositions that they are developing one year from now? Five years from now? Ten years from now?
Case studies

One of the challenges for civics and citizenship education is making it real for students – that things really do matter. One of the best ways of beginning to approach this is to demonstrate democracy in the classroom. One of the challenges for teachers is to devise and implement ways of creating democratic communities on a daily basis.

Lucas Walsh, Faculty of Education, Monash University (2001)

Case study 1
(T–6 school in a rural area outside of Darwin, Northern Territory)

Case study 1 is a Year 5/6 class from a school that has a population of 350 students. The school’s values include accepting responsibility and respect for self and others.

Using play to develop participatory knowledge, skills and dispositions

The context for learning about civics and citizenship values was based on a fictitious township that was once a thriving community but was fast approaching ‘ghost town’ status. The townspeople needed to make crucial decisions regarding the future social, political, economic and industrial direction of the town.

In their roles as townspeople, the students worked in cooperative small groups to research government operations, political systems, town planning, the development of rules and laws and the values required to actively participate in civic life. They also worked with a series of guest speakers to inform their thinking including representatives from local government, emergency services, the defence force and wildlife rescue. This approach to teaching and learning was typical of the teacher’s regular practice. In previous years, the teacher had students set up their own community as part of an Earn and Learn program.

The role-plays provided students with opportunities to gain experience in decision-making processes that challenged them to question, resolve conflicts and explore the concepts of equity and justice. It also provided the students with opportunities to explore how decision makers need to balance the needs of the majority with the needs of minority groups. The knowledge and skills acquired enabled students to apply their understanding to the roles, rights and responsibilities of ‘classroom citizens’. In everyday situations, the students understood and could articulate how decisions, choices, opportunities and issues of conflict affected them and their classmates.

Reflect/Collaborate

Referring to the three dimensions of civics and citizenship values for a democratic classroom (page 9), use a highlighter to identify the values of participation, the individual and the community being developed in each of the three case studies below. If you are undertaking a collegial learning activity, consider dividing up this task by focusing on one of the following and sharing your findings:

- the civics and citizenship values of participation, the individual and the community evident in a single case study
- the civics and citizenship values of participation, the individual, or the community across the three case studies.
The role-plays and subsequent application to daily classroom experiences also assisted students in addressing key framing questions from the Northern Territory Curriculum Framework’s EsseNTial Learnings, specifically:

- Who am I and where am I going? (inner learner)
- What is possible? (creative learner)
- How do I connect with and relate to others? (collaborative learner)
- How can I make a useful difference? (constructive learner).

Case study 2
(8–12 school in the Pilbara region, northern Western Australia)

Case study 2 is a Year 9 class at a senior high school. The school has approximately 700 students representing around sixty different cultural groups. Many students come from homes where English is their second language. Indigenous students make up nearly 40 per cent of the school’s student population. The school’s motto reflects its core values of care, courtesy, respect and responsibility.

The classroom parliament

As part of a study of the parliamentary process and the senate committee system, the Year 9 class participated in a series of role-plays. To prepare for the event, the students brainstormed topics that were relevant to them, and which they thought would be interesting to research and debate in their classroom parliament. The teacher reported that students were generally willing to participate in classroom activities such as these although faculty-based pressure to ‘get through the curriculum’ came at the expense of providing students with opportunities to be involved in democratic processes beyond that of classroom parliamentary role-plays.

After some initial class work, the students worked in groups to develop a script and allocated various roles such as prime minister, leader of the opposition and independent members of parliament. Roles such as the whip and speaker of the House of Representatives were also delegated. The classroom furniture was arranged to resemble the House of Representatives. An issue that the students selected was then debated. The key understandings that were derived from the Western Australian Outcomes and Standards Framework – Natural and Social Systems and Active Citizenship – for the classroom parliament included:

- individuals’ rights and responsibilities as active citizens within a civil society
- formal processes of democracy have political, legal and civic components
- the Constitution protects civic components of a democracy, which provides a voice for people and possible collective action.

The teacher reported that the students gained an understanding of how important individuals are to Australia’s democratic process. The students understood that being a responsible citizen in Australia means that they have a say on how Australia is run and, as individuals, they had the right to voice their opinions.

The positive feedback from students prompted the teacher to hold regular classroom parliamentary sessions that focused on making decisions about classroom-based issues. The continuing nature of the classroom parliament provided an ongoing forum where students’ decisions were valued and where the needs of the group were addressed. The teacher saw this as an important departure from previous years when the classroom parliament was simply a one-off event that involved role-play. The students were now empowered with real decision-making roles about the sorts of things that mattered to and affected them. The teacher noted that there was a heightened sense of classroom cohesion and respect between students. The teacher put this down to the fact that students had regular opportunities to develop their participatory skills and continually revisited the knowledge they had gained about the democratic process.

A trip to Canberra, partially funded through the Parliament and Civics Education Rebate (PACER), enabled students to see the federal parliamentary process in action and to make important connections between the Parliament of Australia and their classroom parliament with regard to the way decisions are made.
Case study 3
(7–12 school in the north-western suburbs of Melbourne, Victoria)

Case study 3 is a Year 8 class at a secondary school on the urban fringe of Melbourne. The school has approximately 600 students. The school’s mission is to provide experiences that promote academic excellence and personal growth. Its values include respect, responsibility, inclusion and participation.

Building a harmonious learning environment

The learning environment of the Year 8 Humanities class was far from harmonious in the beginning. Students were involved in physical and verbal fights and failed to accept each other for their differences. The majority of students had academic abilities that ranged from average to high performing. The class also had students with intellectual disabilities and physical impairments. The teacher reported that there was a ‘tradition’ of making few contributions to classroom activities. The behaviour of the Year 8 class was out of step with the school’s values. The teacher acknowledged that the teaching of civics and citizenship had been relegated to a three-week unit of work where the students studied Australian democracy and its civic institutions. The unit was content focused and there were limited opportunities for students to practise the democratic processes they had been studying and participate in classroom-based decision making. The teacher decided to revisit civics and citizenship and focus on teaching and modelling civics and citizenship values and the qualities of good citizens in a democratic society.

In order to understand the qualities of good citizens and the civics and citizenship values that good citizens exercise, the teacher involved the students in some preliminary discussions and class work about what a democracy was and the values that underpin it. The local member was invited to talk to students about the importance of civics and citizenship values to Australia’s democracy.

The students then brainstormed a list of civics and citizenship values that they believed to be important for a democratic society and used the school’s values as a point of reference. In groups of three, the students used an X-chart to unpack the values they had listed. For each quadrant of the X-chart, the students were asked to record:

- What does the civic value look like in daily life?
- What does civic value sound like in daily life?
- How does the civic value feel like in daily life?
- What practical examples of the civic value can be applied in the classroom?

The students were then provided with an opportunity to contribute responses to the X-charts created by other groups. A digital camera, markers and coloured paper were used to create a display of civics and citizenship values in action within the classroom. The posters were hung up around the room in which students had the majority of their classes.

The posters were then used to create a class constitution that detailed the rights and responsibilities of class members – including the teacher – in the classroom, in the school and in the community. The students felt a great deal of ownership for their constitution and kept one another accountable for the rights and responsibilities they had established. The teacher used 20 minutes of a double period once a fortnight to check on how the constitution was working and that student behaviour remained aligned to the core civics and citizenship values that they had identified.

The teacher noted a change in the classroom culture, in particular the depth of thought and level of classroom participation in decision making. Previously disengaged and apathetic students were now enthusiastic, eager to contribute to classroom discussions and sought to encourage and support students with particular learning needs. The teacher also noted a positive change in the level of maturity displayed by students, which gave the teacher the confidence to provide students with opportunities to make decisions about curriculum content to be covered, how work was to be presented and to contribute to assessment criteria. The students shared what they had learnt with their friends in other classes who were keen to establish their own classroom constitutions.
Reflect

For each case study, reflect on the purpose (aim or goal), the process (program or series of structured related activities or tasks) and the strategies (actions or steps) the teacher used for creating democratic spaces in the classroom. If you are using a reflective journal, record your responses to the following questions.

- **Purpose**: What was the purpose of establishing a democratic space in the classroom? Why might the teacher have decided on this as the purpose?
- **Process**: What process was selected as the vehicle for fulfilling the purpose? Why might the teacher have chosen that process as the vehicle?
- **Strategies**: What strategies were employed to support the process? Why might the teacher have selected those strategies?

Reflect/Collaborate

Use de Bono’s six thinking hats to evaluate the three case studies from a range of perspectives. If you are undertaking this task as a collegial learning activity, consider dividing up the task by focusing on one of the following and sharing your responses:

- a single case study from the perspective of each of the six thinking hats
- the perspective of one or two thinking hats in relation to the three case studies.

**The facts (White hat):**
- What was achieved in terms of participatory knowledge, skills and dispositions?
- How were civics and citizenship values (individual, community and participation) demonstrated?

**Feelings/Beliefs (Red hat):**
- How did the attitudes of teachers and students change over time? What caused the change?
- What might be the beliefs about civics and citizenship education held by the teachers?

**Benefits (Yellow hat):**
- How are the students being prepared for their current lives as family, community and classroom members?
- How are they being prepared for their future lives?

**Caution (Black hat):**
- What concerns might the teachers have initially had for working in this way?
- What obstacles or barriers might the teachers have faced?

**Creativity (Green hat):**
- How might the teachers have overcome possible obstacles or barriers?
- What other programs for schools could have achieved similar results?

**Organising (Blue hat):**
- What steps might the teachers have taken in planning for the classes?
- How could the teachers extend their classroom programs further?

The six thinking hats is a thinking and reflective tool that assists the user in viewing a topic or issue from a range of perspectives. The tool was created by Edward de Bono.
Drawing conclusions

You now have the opportunity to relate your experiences with the three case studies to your classroom context. The following tasks will assist you in applying what you have learnt from the case studies so that you are better placed to establish and maintain a democratic classroom. You will engage in a comparison of your classroom practice with the classroom practices in the case studies, develop an appreciation for how the teachers in the case studies achieved their success and overcame challenges, and how you can apply or adapt their strategies based on your classroom context.

Reflect

Use a Venn diagram to compare your classroom with the classrooms in the case studies in terms of:

- beliefs about, and opportunities for, student participation in decision making
- opportunities for students to understand and exercise civics and citizenship values
- the positive short-, medium- and long-term costs and benefits of student participation for students, the teacher and the classroom program.

A Venn diagram can help you make comparisons. Similarities are shown in the overlapping area and the differences are shown in the areas that do not overlap.

*Reflect/Connect

Use a bone diagram to detail the state of the classrooms in the case studies in terms of teacher practice, programs and the students’ predispositions for participation prior to the implementation of a democratic classroom. Record your responses in the circle labelled ‘Before’. Then describe the classroom after a democratic classroom was established in the circle labelled ‘After’.

List the driving and preventing forces that were apparent. Record the strategies (stated or implied) that the teachers used to maximise the driving forces and overcome or limit the preventing forces.

Use this tool to assist you in defining the current and desired future state of your classroom in terms of teacher practice, programs and your students’ predispositions for participation. When drawing the bone diagram for your classroom, replace the words ‘Before’ and ‘After’ with ‘Current’ and ‘Future’.

A bone diagram is a graphic organiser that assists the user in recording the current state and the desired future. It assists in the identification of factors that may drive (driving forces) and prevent or slow (preventing forces) the establishment and maintenance of a program.

*Reflect/Connect

The teachers in the case studies used a model of Plan, Do, Study and Act (PDSA) to approach the establishment and maintenance of their democratic classrooms. Record your responses for each of the following questions.

- **Plan:** What student needs, opportunities and challenges were implied or explicitly stated in the case studies? If this was your classroom, how would you have planned for the students’ needs? How would you have maximised the opportunities and minimised the challenges? What links could you have made to your state or territory’s curriculum documents?

- **Do:** What processes were implemented and strategies employed to support the creation and maintenance of democratic spaces in the classroom? If you were in the situations outlined in the case studies, what process would you have implemented and which strategies would you have employed? Provide reasons for your answers.

- **Study:** What changes did the teachers note in their students’ attitudes and behaviours? How did the students’ civic knowledge improve? If you were the classroom teacher, what indicators of success would you have looked for?

- **Act:** How was the initial program extended? How would you have extended the initial program to provide ongoing opportunities for student decision making within the day-to-day running of the classroom?

Use the PDSA model to assist you in developing and maintaining a democratic classroom for your students.
Scenarios for implementation

Opportunities exist for students to engage with civics and citizenship values on a regular basis in their classrooms. There are many ways for students to participate as active and engaged members of their classroom community. Three possible scenarios for implementation are:

- giving students responsibility for their learning environment
- exploring competing civics and citizenship values in the classroom
- resolving classroom conflicts in constructive ways.

Exploring competing civics and citizenship values in the classroom

Students’ understanding of civics and citizenship values can be strengthened through the exploration of competing values. Competing values are a consequence of seemingly diametrically opposed values positions; for example, the interests of the individual versus the common good. Students need to come to the realisation that values are not absolute; rather there are times when values will need to be qualified in a democratic classroom and in society, generally.

Examples could include:

- a classroom competition where the fastest student receives a ‘handicap’ based on previous performances to create a more even playing field, rather than treating all students as having equal ability
- modifying assessment criteria so less able students can achieve success and more able students are challenged, rather than using the same assessment criteria with all students regardless of ability.

Resolving classroom conflicts in constructive ways

When engaging students in conflict resolution, redress for the transgressed needs to be balanced with the opportunity for the transgressor to take responsibility for their actions and repair the hurt (physical, social or emotional) they have caused. In this way, the dignity of the ‘victim’, the classroom community and that of the wrongdoer might be restored. Traditionally, conflict resolution between students looked at what classroom rules were broken, who broke the rules and the handing down of an appropriate consequence by the teacher. Classrooms that seek to have students participate in the conflict resolution process ask students to identify who has been hurt by an action or series of actions, how that hurt can be repaired and whose responsibility it is to repair the hurt.

Examples could include:

- peer mediation and conferencing programs
- restorative justice programs.

Giving students responsibility for their learning environment

Kath Murdoch and Jeni Wilson, Faculty of Education, University of Melbourne, emphasise the importance of providing authentic opportunities for students to learn about negotiation, collaboration and active participation in classroom decision making. To provide opportunities for student decision making, they suggest posing questions to students about their learning environment. They note that student responses can lead to ‘...the negotiation and establishment of a wide range of arrangements for student learning. Students value being asked these questions, but the real benefits come from teachers showing how their responses are listened to and acted upon.’

Questions could include the following.

- What rules do we need to establish to ensure that the classroom operates fairly and smoothly?
- How could we set up the classroom’s physical environment? Shared and independent learning spaces are needed – how can we achieve this?
**Construct/Implement**

What level of student participation in decision making is desirable or optimal in your classroom context? What do you expect this level of participation to achieve in terms of student knowledge, skills and dispositions? Who are the key stakeholders that might assist/support you in establishing and maintaining the degree of democracy you have decided on? Key stakeholders may include students, their parents or guardians, colleagues and the principal. Develop and implement a communication plan for bringing stakeholders on board, drawing on the skills and expertise of others and addressing any underlying concerns.

**Construct/Implement**

Make a list of the opportunities that currently exist within your classroom program for student participation in decision making in an ongoing capacity. Research external programs available to schools that could be used to support or extend your program; for example, classroom parliaments, Tribes learning community and restorative justice programs. (See ‘Resources’ for program details.) Decide on the process that best suits your classroom context. Begin your cycle of Plan, Do, Study and Act.

**Construct/Implement**

If you are undertaking this task as a collegial learning activity, use a think-pair-share activity to brainstorm a list of strategies that need to be considered to support the learning environment for a democratic classroom. Turn your ideas into a checklist for you and your colleagues to use. Strategies could include:

- arranging for students to sit on chairs in a circle to ensure that all members of the class can be seen
- having a physical object to hold, such as a plush toy or koosh ball, to direct students’ attention to the person speaking and ensure that only one person speaks at a time.

**Monitoring progress/Measuring success**

The monitoring of student progress in the area of civics and citizenship education is designed to measure students’ civic knowledge and understanding, and the development of skills and dispositions regarding participation in decision making. Teachers can also monitor their own progress as they move towards more democratic learning environments and measure the success that such environments achieve.

**Self-monitoring by students**

Self-assessment and monitoring support students to take responsibility for their learning and empowers them to make decisions about the civic knowledge they need to acquire, skills they need to master, civics and citizenship values that need exercising and dispositions to be developed. Self-monitoring tools (see page 20) might include:

- capacity matrix
- two stars and a wish
- learning caterpillars.
Auditing your practice and program

The results of the teacher practice and program audit has the capacity to reveal strengths and areas for development in terms of creating and maintaining a democratic learning environment. As a result of being involved in the audit, teachers can focus on improving their practice and program which has the potential to result in a more engaged, student-centred classroom that enhances opportunities for student responsibility and participation.
### Auditing your practice and program

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<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
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<tr>
<td>I take the time to get to know my students and build positive relationships built on trust and mutual respect on both an individual and collective basis.</td>
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<td>I demonstrate that I value and support student participation by listening to and acting on students’ suggestions when it is possible and practical to do so.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I co-establish rules and agreed modes of behaviour and interaction with my students to ensure that the classroom operates fairly and smoothly.</td>
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<td>I seek student input when setting up the classroom’s physical environment keeping in mind the room’s limitations and the need for shared and independent learning spaces.</td>
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<td>I provide opportunities for students to negotiate tasks after core content is covered, make decisions about who they can work with and how work is to be presented, and contribute to the writing of assessment criteria.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I employ a range of self-monitoring tools to empower students to monitor and make decisions about their learning. I encourage students to participate in self- and peer-assessment using the same assessment criteria that I use to make judgements about student progress and achievement.</td>
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<td>I use conflict between students as an opportunity for them to develop and practise the skills of negotiation to achieve consensus or resolve differences in constructive ways.</td>
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<tr>
<td>My program supports the notion that all students are leaders by developing their skills and providing a range of roles and opportunities for them to exercise their capacity to lead.</td>
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<tr>
<td>My program supports student participation in decision making in an ongoing capacity through forums such as classroom meetings, conventions and parliaments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I create a classroom learning environment that promotes the enactment of the nine Values for Australian Schooling.</td>
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- Fair Go
- Integrity
- Doing Your Best
- Respect
- Freedom
- Responsibility
- Care and Compassion
- Honesty and Trustworthiness
- Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion
Self-assessment, monitoring and reflection tools for older students

Capacity matrix
Students shade the appropriate boxes as they monitor their progress (from awareness to understanding to application) in the acquisition of civic knowledge and skills and enactment of civics and citizenship values. They list evidence to support their self-assessment.

Quadrants
Students stand in a corner of the room to show their level of agreement on an issue or democratically made decision.

Learning triangles
Students detail the civic knowledge and skills they have developed and record changes in their feelings, attitudes, actions and behaviours.

Continuums
Students stand along a line to show their level of understanding and commitment to a democratically made decision or their perceived level of participation in decision making.

Self-assessment, monitoring and reflection tools for younger students

Traffic lights
Students shade the traffic lights to indicate their level of understanding of civics and citizenship concepts.

Emoticons
Students circle the emoticon that best represents how they are feeling about their involvement in decision making.

Two stars and a wish
Students indicate two areas of strength or improvement (stars) and an area for future development (a wish) with regard to their participation in decision making.

Learning caterpillars
Students add segments to the caterpillar’s body in recognition of civic knowledge they have acquired, skills they have mastered or civics and citizenship values they have exercised.
Resources

The following resources and organisations may be helpful in creating opportunities for creating democratic spaces in the classroom.

Extending opportunities for student participation in decision making

- Classroom Parliament, Parliamentary Education Office, Do It Yourself role-play in the classroom
- Tribes Learning Community www.tribes.com
- The Victorian Association for Restorative Justice
  www.varj.asn.au/rp/education.htm
- Earn and Learn by Rob Vingerhoets, Della sta Publishing, Mount Waverley, 1993

Opportunities for negotiating the curriculum and presenting student work

- ‘Negotiating the curriculum with students: a conversation worth having’, Education Quarterly Australia, Autumn 2006, Curriculum Corporation
  www.eqa.edu.au/site/negotiatingthecurriculum.html
- Howard Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences
  http://thomasarmstrong.com/multiple_intelligences.htm

Discovering Democracy units (online):
The Australian Nation

- The People Make a Nation (Upper Primary)
  www1.curriculum.edu.au/ddunits/units/up3nation-glance.htm
- Democratic Struggles (Lower Secondary)
  www1.curriculum.edu.au/ddunits/units/ls3struggles-glance.htm
- Making a Nation (Middle Secondary)
  www1.curriculum.edu.au/ddunits/units/ms4making-glance.htm

The Discovering Democracy units were originally distributed as kits to all primary and secondary schools throughout Australia in 1998.

Discovering Democracy Australian Readers

The Discovering Democracy Australian Readers explore civics and citizenship concepts using contemporary and historical written and visual texts. The books consist of a range of text types from a variety of cultural perspectives and periods. Focus on text types involving the theme: Citizens and Public Life.

- Australians All! Australian Readers Lower Primary
- Australian Readers: Middle Primary Collection
- Australian Readers: Upper Primary Collection
- Australian Readers: Lower Secondary Collection
- Australian Readers: Middle Secondary Collection

The Australian Readers were originally distributed to all primary and secondary schools throughout Australia in 1999. Australians All! Australian Readers Lower Primary was distributed in 2001.

Other teacher resources and reference material

- Parliament and Civic Education Rebate (PACER) – National Capital Education Tourism Project
  www.ncetp.org.au
- Discovering Democratic Values: Teaching and learning civic values (DVD), Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2004
- Discovering Democratic Values: Teaching and learning civic values, Civics and Citizenship Education website
  http://cmsstage.curriculum.edu.au/cce/discovering_democratic_values_teaching_and_learning,9477.html
- Nine Values for Australian Schooling, Values Education website
  www.civicsandcitizenship.edu.au/verve/_resources/9_point_values_with_flag_only.pdf
- How to succeed with Creating a Learning Community by Kath Murdoch and Jeni Wilson, Curriculum Corporation, Carlton South, 2005
  www.curriculumpress.edu.au/main/goproduct/12246
Module 2 – Beyond the Classroom

Outcomes
At the completion of this module you will be able to:

• conceive of your school context as a setting for meaningful student participation
• identify the potential in your school community for the exercise of civics and citizenship education values, skills and knowledge
• create and implement authentic civics and citizenship learning experiences for students using their experiences in the school community
• use students’ civics and citizenship knowledge, values, skills and dispositions as a means to inform and strengthen democratic practices in your school community.

Purpose
Students’ experiences and participation in the school community can be used to achieve and extend civics and citizenship learning outcomes in the curriculum. The school community and its environment provide authentic and meaningful learning experiences for students, and they effectively reinforce the schools’ civics and citizenship curriculum. Students might apply the civics and citizenship values (as outlined in Module 1), knowledge and skills developed in the classroom in the school setting, and they ought also to be encouraged to draw on those experiences in their interactions with the curriculum. Committing the school to a civics and citizenship program has the potential for creating a ‘virtuous circle’ between the civics’ values, knowledge, skills and dispositions acquired in the classroom, and its participatory effect on the students’ immediate community, their school.

Aims
The aims of the module are to:

• empower you to consider the school as a setting where students can participate in authentic decision making
• assist you to identify opportunities for effective civics and citizenship learning experiences in your school
• encourage you to consider the civics and citizenship skills that can be fostered in school communities
• inform you through the use of school case studies about the links between the curriculum and students’ experiences in the school community
• equip you to implement a civics and citizenship program that includes student participation in the life of their school.

Structure and content
This module identifies the civics and citizenship education outcomes that students are able to achieve through their involvement in their school communities. It contains case studies in which teachers and students have identified issues in the school that could be addressed through student participation and leadership, and underscores the close links between opportunities for student participation and the civics and citizenship curriculum.

The learning model outlined in the introduction will facilitate your engagement with this module by constructing the learning experience for you. At key points, you will be asked to engage with the content of a section by referring to the learning model. Designated sections (*) of the learning model will assist you in constructing your own school program for student civics and citizenship participation beyond the classroom.
Through your engagement with the learning model you will be required to consider the reasons for student participation in their school communities, to work through three case studies in which schools created opportunities for student civic and citizenship participation, to reflect on your school’s approach and the opportunities it provides for student participation in decision making, and to develop ways of assessing that participation.

The case studies focus on:
- reducing truant behaviour in disengaged students (a targeted group of students)
- creating student leadership teams (a year level of schooling)
- empowering all students to make decisions and make a difference (whole school).

In your consideration of the three cases studies, you will be asked to reflect on how you would:
- identify opportunities for student participation beyond the classroom
- create effective civics and citizenship programs that provide opportunities for all students to demonstrate and practise civics and citizenship understandings and skills
- ensure that students are active citizens of the school community and have their ideas and opinions routinely sought and respected
- make connections between students’ civics and citizenship knowledge, and their experiences in the school community.

**Civics and citizenship education focus**

This module emphasises civics and citizenship education skills, dispositions and knowledge, specifically:
- recognising and understanding key features of Australian democracy
- developing a critical understanding of the values and principles that underpin Australia’s democratic institutions
- identifying the rights and responsibilities of citizens in Australia’s democracy
- developing and exercising the skills of active citizen participation
- applying civics and citizenship knowledge to authentic decision making
- developing an awareness of how values underpin the processes and procedures for participation
- exercising a responsibility for establishing fair processes and procedures for participation and group decision making
- building a capacity for leadership in the decision-making process
- having an awareness of self-held beliefs and values, and how these are informed, challenged and altered by interactions with others.
Reflect

Before proceeding further, reflect on current strengths, areas for development, questions that you may have, and ideas in terms of the knowledge, skills and dispositions required to provide a democratic environment that values and supports student participation in decision-making beyond the classroom.

You may wish to begin a reflective journal or create a ‘parking lot’, which can be added to as you engage with this and other modules.

Reflective journals are useful learning tools. You can use your journal to record, illustrate or challenge ideas within the Professional Learning Package.

A parking lot is a graphic organiser that can be used to record your strengths, questions, areas for development and ideas.

Democratic participation in school

The core values for a democratic society first of all have to be a belief that everyone has the right to participate. We’ve seen through history, societies where only the rich or the well educated have participated. We believe that everyone should participate.

– John Hirst, Chair, Civics Education Group (2005)

Schools in which students have the opportunity to participate in decision making in an organised, structured way, such as through student representative councils, are reinforcing students’ civics and citizenship knowledge, and having a positive effect on their attitudes towards civic participation in the wider community. While students might acquire civics and citizenship knowledge and understandings in the classroom, these understandings are incomplete without an avenue for practice and an opportunity to apply them in authentic situations. Through their participation in the processes and procedures of whole school decision making, students are applying and demonstrating an understanding of their civics knowledge and are, in the process, acquiring civics and citizenship skills, such as representation, deliberation, negotiation and persuasion, all of which are part and parcel of participatory and leadership capacities in students.

Encouraging democratic participation in the school means charging students with the responsibility of making decisions that affect their learning environment, and encouraging and trusting their perspective and voice in matters to do with the curriculum, school behaviour policies, the values of the school and the school vision. While student representative bodies might become involved in other civics related matters of their choosing, such as community outreach, service learning projects and fundraising, these should not substitute for their core role, that is, the provision of student voices in the management of the learning environment.
Student representative councils typically involve a group of students, often one student from each class, being elected to represent their classmates on matters to do with improving school life. Student representative councils are based on a committee structure and use democratic process to represent the school’s student body in decision making. School parliaments, on the other hand, are based on Australia’s system of government with students being elected to various parliamentary positions such as prime minister, deputy prime minister and various ‘portfolio ministries’. School parliaments aim to mirror Australia’s democratic and representative practices. They follow parliamentary procedures, such as moving and debating motions, and voting on their acceptance.

Participating in authentic decision making in schools conveys to students that the concepts and principles that they have learnt in the expressed curriculum are applicable and attainable in their school and in the community. Schools that encourage meaningful participation by students ensure that there is no ‘hidden curriculum’, that students do not receive the message that participation is an elitist pursuit, something that is not immediately relevant to their lives, or worse, ineffectual.

In an attempt to address the inequities highlighted by Holdsworth, schools might choose to consider student representative councils as just one of the avenues for participating in school decision making rather than the only avenue. Student representative councils can be complemented by other student initiated groups or committees. Depending on their range of interests, smaller targeted groups of students might be invited to join a ‘taskforce’ to inquire into and provide recommendations on particular issues or concerns of the school community that directly affect them. A third forum for student participation in school decision making is the establishment of student action teams. Unlike the student representative councils and targeted working groups, student action teams may be set up as an open forum where student inclusion is on the basis of an expression of interest. The student action teams can be set up to identify a school issue that needs to be addressed and is of concern and relevance to the students and then set about taking appropriate action to resolve or minimise the issue. Student action teams may also have a futures-oriented approach where preemptive action is taken around student interests such as sustainability or issues such as student wellbeing.

Roger Holdsworth, Senior Research Associate at the Australian Youth Research Centre, University of Melbourne, raises an important issue for schools to consider regarding student representation on school committees. He notes that, ‘...even with the best of intentions (these arrangements) can only represent a minority of students within the school. Unfortunately, the way that many schools structure those (representations), is that students who already are relatively advantaged in the school get to play those sorts of decision-making, leadership and participatory roles. It reinforces the inequities within the system.’
Reflect/Collaborate

Ask yourself, ‘Why is student participation in decision making in schools important?’ Each time the question ‘Why’ is answered, ask ‘Why’ again. Continue to ask ‘Why?’ until you are satisfied you have arrived at the real reason why student participation in decision making in schools is important. If you are undertaking a collegial professional learning activity, share your reason with your colleagues.

*Reflect/Connect

View your state or territory’s curriculum documents related to civics and citizenship education. Use different colours to highlight connections that you can make between the curriculum documents’ knowledge, skills and dispositions and democratic participation in schools (that is, decision-making, leadership and participatory roles).

Use a marking system to indicate the knowledge, skills and dispositions that can be practised and applied by some, most and all students; for example, one asterisk for some students, two asterisks for most students and three asterisks for all students.

Apply a different marking system to indicate the frequency with which the knowledge, skills and dispositions can be practised and applied; for example, one tick for rarely, two ticks for sometimes and three ticks for usually.

Reflect

Reflect on the quality and quantity of opportunities for students to meaningfully participate in decision making at your school. Have the ‘inequities within the system’ been addressed at your school so that all students have opportunities to participate in making decisions regarding school life? Do the opportunities at your school send a clear message to students that participation is inclusive, relevant to their lives and effectual?

On a scale of 1 to 10, record a rating for your school in terms of the provision of student opportunities for decision-making, leadership and participatory roles. You may like to record separate ratings for the opportunities in terms of quality, quantity, inclusiveness, relevance to students’ lives and effectiveness or simply an overall combined rating. Provide reasons for the rating or ratings that you have recorded.

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<tr>
<td>Low quality</td>
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<td>Few opportunities</td>
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<td>Elitist, irrelevant, ineffectual</td>
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Case studies

Educational practices play an important role in preparing students for citizenship. Schools that model democratic values by promoting an open climate and invite students to take part in shaping school life are effective in promoting both civic knowledge and engagement.

– Judith Torney-Purta, Chair, International Steering Committee for IEA Civic Education Study (1999)

The following case studies showcase different ways in which schools have developed programs that complement their existing student representative councils by extending opportunities for a greater number of students – or students traditionally overlooked – to participate in school leadership and decision-making roles.

Case study 1

(P–9 school in an inner western suburb of Melbourne, Victoria)

Case study 1 is a P–9 school that has a population of approximately 250 students. The school’s philosophy is that every student in every classroom has the opportunity to thrive, learn, achieve and reach their full potential.

The case study is from Roger Holdsworth, Civic and Citizenship Education: Extended Professional Development Program Stage 2.

Reducing truant behaviour in disengaged students (targeted group of students)

The school was concerned about the number of students ‘skipping classes’ and the frequency with which this was happening. Knowing that student attendance was a prerequisite for improved participation and educational outcomes, the student welfare coordinator decided to pilot a project that sought to involve students in an investigation about why students skipped classes, the sorts of activities they did when they were absent from class and what steps could be taken to improve the situation. Rather than approach students who held positions of responsibility within the school, such as representatives from the student council, the student welfare coordinator decided to seek the advice of a group of Year 9 students that had a history of truant behaviour. The students’ disengagement was used as a vehicle for engaging them with their school community through their participation in the pilot project.

The students were provided with leadership training. The training equipped them with the knowledge and skills to complete their investigation and report back to the school community, including the principal, staff and school council, with their findings. It was noted by staff and the students themselves that their profile had been raised, in a positive way, within the school and that they now felt a sense of responsibility to be role models and attend classes they had previously missed. The students commented that the trust that had been lost between them and their parents as a result of their truant behaviour had since been restored.

Reflect/Collaborate

As you read the three case studies, record your thoughts about democratic participation in school and highlight any questions that you have. Draw up a four-column PMIQ table. Label the columns ‘Pluses’, ‘Minuses’, ‘Interesting’ and ‘Questions’. Record your responses in the table. If you are undertaking a collegial learning activity, consider recording responses for a single case study and then sharing your responses with some colleagues.

A PMIQ is a graphic organiser that assists the user in recording the Pluses (positive aspects), Minuses (negative aspects), Interesting points (neither positive nor negative) and Questions.
The group of students went on to rewrite the school’s welfare and discipline policy which was eventually accepted by the school council. The students were given the opportunity to take on responsibility and were publicly recognised for their contribution. The school reported that the majority of the previously disengaged group of students involved in the pilot project went on to finish their secondary schooling.

**Case study 2**

(7–10 school in an outer western suburb of Melbourne, Victoria)

Case study 2 is a new secondary school consisting of approximately 80 Year 7 students. The school’s vision is to provide students with every opportunity to make the most of what life has to offer, to strive to be their very best and in so doing to be just to themselves and to others.

**Creating student leadership teams**

(a year level of schooling)

In recognition of the fact that traditional ideas about student leadership would need to be redefined, the Year 7 coordinator worked with staff to provide the entire Year 7 student body with opportunities to lead, represent peers and to participate in decision making. The Year 7 students worked with staff to establish the belief that all students could be leaders through their actions in both the classroom and the schoolyard, in their support of their school mates and through their involvement in extracurricular activities.

All students in the pioneering Year 7 cohort were involved in one of eight leadership groups. The groups included recycling, publishing, caring for the environment and the student representative council. The purpose of the shared-leadership approach was to teach all students leadership, cooperation and negotiation skills and provide them with opportunities to practise these skills through their active participation.

Class work focused on developing students’ understanding of the rights and responsibilities of young citizens. In particular, the class work emphasised the principles and values associated with living in a democracy, in particular a sense of service, freedom, responsibility and leadership. The students were trained in correct meeting procedures including the setting of agendas and the recording of minutes. They were also coached on how to actively listen and have discussions using a ‘for’ and ‘against’ approach. The knowledge gained from the classroom was then transferred to the students’ understanding of their responsibilities as members of the school community and as community leaders. Leadership group members were equipped with the skills to communicate effectively with their fellow students in order to represent the interests of the entire student body.

The shared approach to student leadership and decision making enhanced the opportunities for students to participate in a wide variety of activities associated with school life. The students were able to explore how they, as young responsible citizens, could actively make the school community a better place through the application of their leadership skills and ensuring that their responsibilities were met.
Case study 3
(R–7 school in a south-western suburb of Adelaide, South Australia)

Case study 3 is an R–7 primary school with approximately 550 students. The school’s values are respect, tolerance, responsibility and participation. The school is committed to involving students in the decision-making process and developing students’ whole potential.

Empowering all students to make decisions and make a difference (whole school)

The school’s scope and sequence chart detailed the units of work to be covered at each level of schooling. The chart included civics and citizenship-based units of work as part of the school’s two-year curriculum cycle. Teacher planning based on the scope and sequence centred on the principles that underpin the Discovering Democracy units. This ensured that the students developed civic knowledge appropriate to their year level.

An established student representative council operated at the school and consisted of a student from each class being elected to the council. The school organised for staff from the Electoral Education Centre to visit the school and run sessions on the voting process. Students were then given ballot papers and used polling booths that had been donated to the school from past state and federal elections.

Through a process of gentle encouragement over a number of years by the school’s librarian, the school made the decision to broaden the active citizenship experiences it was providing so that all students would have opportunities to be involved in decision making as well as opportunities to be actively involved in making a difference to the school community. While the school continued to operate its student representative council, the council was to be just one of the avenues in which students could have a voice.

Student forums, of which the student representative council was now just one, met fortnightly to discuss and implement school and community initiatives. The forums provided students with an opportunity to put classroom-based civic knowledge into practice. The forums were dubbed ‘Student Power’ by the students as they believed that they had been empowered to make decisions and were making a difference to their school. Unlike the student representative council where students were elected, the Student Power forums involved students submitting an expression of interest to be involved. All students that submitted an expression of interest for joining a forum were provided with a place on its decision-making committee.

The Student Power forums began with students identifying a need or a purpose for their group. The groups were steered and run by the students with a teacher acting as a mentor. Students were exposed to how different organisations were run and why it was necessary to have democratic decision making, voting, consensus and collaboration. The teachers were in-serviced in how to be effective mentors and how to ‘take a step back’ so that the student forums remained student-centred with regard to decision making and participation.

Examples of the Student Power forums included:

- animal welfare (where student committee members improved the school’s natural vegetation and habitats to encourage the numbers and diversity of wildlife and birds at the school)
- friends of the library (where student committee members assisted in the smooth running of the library and the running of activities such as the chess club)
- positive play (where student committee members set up activities in the hall at lunchtime so students who felt ‘lost or lonely’ had somewhere to play and someone to play with).

Teachers and parents noted that since broadening the opportunities for student participation beyond that of a traditional student representative council that the students were more articulate and confident, had a better understanding about how the school ran and the courage to stand up for the things that they believed in.
Reflect/Collaborate

Use Bloom’s revised taxonomy to assist you in interrogating the case studies. If you are undertaking this task as a collegial learning activity, consider dividing up the task by focusing on one of the following and sharing your responses:

- a single case study from the perspective of each of the six levels of thinking
- the perspective of one or two levels of thinking in relation to the three case studies.

Remembering

- What were the purposes, processes and strategies for student participation in decision making?
- What knowledge, skills and dispositions did the students have the opportunity to practise and apply?

Understanding

- How did the school charge its students with the responsibility of making decisions?
- Why might the school have chosen its particular approach to student participation in decision making?

Applying

- How might the students use the participatory knowledge, skills and dispositions in their current lives both inside and outside school?
- How might they use them in their future lives?

Analysing

- What are the similarities and differences between the approaches to student participation in decision making?
- What evidence is there to suggest that there was a high level of student engagement in decision making?

Evaluating

- How could the school have monitored the success of their programs?
- What indicators might the school have looked for to indicate the programs were successful?

Creating

- What steps would you suggest the schools take to create programs that are sustainable in terms of student decision-making?
- What could be done to extend or enhance the students’ decision making, leadership and participatory roles?

Bloom’s taxonomy was developed by Benjamin Bloom and is based on a six-level classification of cognitive development. Bloom’s taxonomy was revised in 1999, by a team headed by Lorin Anderson, with the changing of nouns to verbs and the reversal of creating (formerly synthesis) and evaluating in the continuum.

Reflect

On a scale of 1 to 10, record a rating for each case study in terms of its provision of student opportunities for decision making, leadership and participatory roles. You may like to record separate ratings for the opportunities in terms of quality, quantity, inclusiveness, relevance to students’ lives and effectiveness or simply an overall combined rating. Provide reasons for the rating or ratings that you have recorded.

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<td>Low quality</td>
<td>Few opportunities</td>
<td>Elitist, irrelevant, ineffectual</td>
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<tr>
<td>High quality</td>
<td>Multiple opportunities</td>
<td>Inclusive, relevant, effectual</td>
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Drawing conclusions

You now have the opportunity to relate your experiences with the three case studies to your school context. The following tasks will assist you in applying what you have learnt from the case studies so that you are better placed to extend or enhance democratic participation at your school. You will make comparisons between your school and the schools presented in the case studies via tasks such as Socratic questioning, creating a flow chart and completing a SWOT analysis.

Reflect/Connect

Use Socratic questioning to explore student participation in decision making in greater depth. Make comparisons between your school and the schools presented in the case studies of good civics and citizenship practice.

Questions that clarify student participation
- What are the most important issues related to student participation in decision making at your school? Were these evident in the case studies?
- How does student participation in decision making relate to student engagement and wellbeing?

Questions that define assumptions about student participation
- What assumptions might teachers in the case studies have made about their school contexts when developing programs that promote student participation in decision making?
- What assumptions can you make about your school context?

Questions that explore the implications of student participation
- How might the teachers in the case studies have responded if a colleague said that the curriculum was already crowded enough without trying to add student participation programs?
- How would you respond if a similar situation arises at your school?

Questions that consider perspectives about student participation
- From which perspective might the schools in the case studies have approached student decision making?
- From which perspective does your school approach student participation in decision making?

Questions that probe positive consequences of student participation
- How might the opportunities for decision making, leadership and participation have positively impacted on the students in the case studies?
- How could similar opportunities positively impact on your students?

Questions that question bigger issues of student participation
- What bigger issues does student involvement in matters such as curriculum, school behaviour policies, the values of the school and the school vision raise for teachers and their schools?
- How can these issues be addressed?

The taxonomy of Socratic questions is non-linear and does not follow a pattern although the categories of questions build on one another.
Reflect

The schools in the three case studies made a number of decisions and undertook a series of actions, steps and tasks to successfully implement their programs. Make a list of the decisions, actions, steps and tasks implied or explicitly stated in each case study. Use this information to create three flow charts. If you are undertaking this task as a collegial learning activity, consider dividing the task up between your colleagues. What do the three flow charts have in common? How are they different?

You might like to complete this task using a visual thinking and learning tool such as Inspiration or SmartDraw. (See ‘Resources’ on page 41 for details.)

Use the flow chart approach to assist you in planning and implementing programs that promote democratic participation at your school.

A flow chart details the process or stages of a project or program. Typically a flow chart begins and ends with rounded rectangles to indicate the start and end points, has parallelograms to indicate decisions and actions, rectangles to indicate tasks and processing steps and arrows to flow or sequence events.

Reflect/Connect

Use a SWOT analysis to identify the civics and citizenship Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for creating democratic participation at your school. What strengths, weaknesses, opportunities or threats does your school share with those in the case studies?

A SWOT analysis identifies:
- internal factors (strengths, weaknesses)
- external factors (opportunities, threats)
- positives (strengths, opportunities)
- negatives (weaknesses, threats).
A model for implementation

A whole school approach to planning and implementing programs that provide avenues for students to practise and apply civics and citizenship knowledge and understandings requires careful consideration. It will involve co-opting colleagues, having a clear idea about the kind of program you want to create, an analysis of the opportunities available and the challenges to be faced. It will also involve establishing clear and attainable goals, setting timelines, identifying the human, physical and financial resources required to realise the school’s programs and breaking the program up (if required) into smaller, achievable projects. It will also include monitoring changes in students’ attitudes and behaviours, the effect the program has on the school and the progress of the actual program itself and finding appropriate ways to acknowledge and celebrate successes. The setting of new goals will also require consideration as part of the cyclical nature of the whole school approach. Most importantly, schools need to consider how they will actively engage students at each stage of the process.

The following model supports schools to establish and maintain a culture of democratic participation.

Students
The students are at the centre of the whole school approach for student participation beyond the classroom.

What are their needs? What are their interests? How could you find out? What are the school and community contexts in which students learn and live? How will the students actively participate at each stage of the process of the whole school approach?

Championing
In some schools it only takes one or two people to get the ball rolling in terms of a whole school approach for creating a democratic school environment. If you are undertaking this professional development module it is likely that you are one of your schools’ champions of civics and citizenship.

Are there any like-minded colleagues or students who believe that all students have the right to participate to help you champion the cause? What level of support can the school’s leadership team provide?

Envisioning
Working with others to establish a clear, shared vision of whole school student participation is an important and necessary step in understanding the purpose for such an initiative.

What does a democratic school look like, sound like and feel like? Why is it important that all students are provided with opportunities to participate? What is the vision? How will this approach meet their needs and cater for their interests? How will the vision be communicated to students, parents and colleagues? When will it be communicated?

Analysing
Spend some time analysing the school’s current situation and other programs at your school that have achieved desirable results so as to increase the likelihood of achieving success with your initiative.

What is the current level of student participation? Is there a need for change? What are the benefits and costs of changing? What are the benefits and costs
of remaining with the status quo? What successful school programs can you learn from? Why were they successful? What were the programs’ initial barriers and obstacles? How were they overcome?

Goal setting
Establishing goals will help you to set a path and to plot a plan of action. It also will enable you to determine the level of success that you, your colleagues and students have achieved.

Start with the context of the school. Ensure that the goals for whole school student participation are realistic. Over what time frame do you aim to achieve your goal – several terms, several years? What are the short-, medium- and long-term goals?

Resourcing
Resources can make or break a program – some are freely available and plentiful while others may be costly and scarce. Resources and funding can be sourced from within the school and wider community, through grants and partnerships with organisations. Making connections and collaborating with other schools in your region or cluster may also widen the available pool of resources and social capital.

What programs are operating in neighbouring schools that you can learn from? What online resources are available? How can outside organisations provide support? Is there any professional development on offer? Are there any national, state or local grants or programs for which to apply? Can local organisations provide in-kind support? Are time allowances needed to develop and implement a plan of action? When will the school program be run – in class or out of class time? Does the current school timetable allow for a whole school student participation program? Are physical resources required to support the program? What are they? How will time allowances and physical resources be funded? How will new staff be in-serviced?

Implementing
The implementation of a program requires a systematic approach that is clear and understood by everyone involved. Large programs may need to be broken up into smaller projects and have a staggered implementation so as to make the program achievable.

How can students be supported to make links between the civics and citizenship knowledge and understandings learned in class to enhance democratic participation in school? How can students’ experiences with democratic participation in school be used to support classroom-based civics and citizenship knowledge and understandings? What steps are required to put the plan of action into practice? What roles can students play in planning for implementation? How can any of the inequities within the current approach to student participation at the school be overcome? Will the action plan begin by targeting particular students, a particular class or a particular year level? What needs to be done to ensure that the approach is clear and understood?

Monitoring
Monitoring progress allows you to keep a check on how the program is tracking with regard to achieving its goals. It will enable you to intervene and make adjustments as required. In addition to monitoring the program itself, changes in students and the school culture can also be tracked.

What will be monitored? How will progress be monitored? How will you know if the whole school approach has made a difference? What indicators will you look for to indicate the programs were successful? Has there been a change in student attitudes and behaviours? Can students make connections between their participation and their understanding of democratic processes? How will students be involved in the monitoring process?

Reflecting and Celebrating
Creating a successful democratic and participatory student program takes time, commitment and effort. Spend some time reflecting on and celebrating your achievements.
What are the successes? How will you communicate them within and beyond the school community? How will the success be celebrated? What roles will students play in the reflection and celebration of the program? When will the celebrations occur – at key milestones or at the conclusion of a project? How will the momentum be sustained?

Setting new goals
The cyclical nature of the model for student participation beyond the classroom involves the setting of new goals in order to create a sustainable program that enhances school life.

What are the next steps? What still needs to be achieved? What needs to be done to ensure that the program and its projects are ongoing? How can the program be extended? What connections can be made beyond the school?

The following tasks will assist in planning the implementation of a program that supports students’ democratic participation in school. You will ascertain the level of support for all students to participate in leadership and decision-making roles, engage in developing a vision for your program and endeavour to learn from other successful programs in order to apply similar strategies and approaches. You will set goals, brainstorm the resources you require, research ways they can be acquired and develop, through a clear set of steps, decisions regarding implementation.

Please note
• Unlike establishing a democratic classroom environment or creating opportunities for students to participate in the wider community, both of which have shorter timelines (days, weeks and months) and more immediate results, a whole school approach to students’ democratic participation is a long-term proposition (terms, semesters and years) with results that may need to be viewed as part of long-term trends.
• Tasks associated with Monitoring, Reflecting and Celebrating, and then Goal Setting, as outlined, will be addressed later in Monitoring progress/Measuring success.

*Collaborate

Students
Survey students to find out what their needs or interests are in terms of student leadership, decision-making and participatory roles. Decide whether you will complete a census (a survey of the entire student population) or a sample (a survey of representative groups of the student population). Conduct the survey, then collate and analyse the results.

Championing
You may already know like-minded people who would be interested in creating opportunities for democratic participation in school; however, there may be others of whom you are unaware. Brainstorm a list of strategies for finding like-minded individuals at your school and gauge their level of commitment; for example, use a consensogram. Ask, “How committed would you be to a program that created opportunities for all students to participate in leadership and decision-making roles at our school?” Have people record a number on a sticky note in increments of 10% and stick them on a wall or piece of flip chart paper. Encourage people to record their names on the sticky notes so they can be contacted later to form a committee or working party. This task can be completed by both colleagues and students.

A consensogram is a tool that enables the organiser to gauge the commitment to a proposed project and provides a visual representation of the level of support or opposition.
*Collaborate

Envisioning
Use a Y-chart to assist you in developing a picture of how your school could be in the future in terms of democratic participation. What might democratic participation beyond the classroom look like? What might it sound like? What might it feel like? Record each response on a separate sticky label. Then categorise the list of responses. Condense the ideas and express them in a simple statement.

A Y-chart is a graphic organiser that assists the user in recording what might be seen, heard and felt.

Analysing
Use a force-field analysis and a case study of one of your school’s successful programs to help you identify the factors that may drive, or prevent or slow, the development and implementation of democratic participation in the school. Use the deactivating forces column to record the possible strategies for overcoming or pre-empting the preventing forces. Draw up a three-column table. Record the following headings in your table: Driving forces, Preventing forces and Deactivating forces.

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<th>Driving forces</th>
<th>Preventing forces</th>
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A force-field analysis enables the user to identify forces that can strengthen and support a program, and forces that can weaken or slow a program, and strategies for overcoming or minimising these.

*Collaborate/Construct/Implement

Goal setting
Set SMART goals for democratic participation by students in the school. Remember, you might need to break your program up into smaller, achievable projects. The goals for democratic participation need to be:

- Specific: What do you want to achieve?
- Measurable: What evidence will be collected to support goal attainment?
- Action-oriented: How will you achieve the goal?
- Relevant: Why is the goal important?
- Time-specific: Over what time period will the goal be achieved?

Resourcing
Use a tool such as a lotus diagram to brainstorm a list of possible resources. Draw up a grid as shown and label the categories of resources in the central squares; for example, ‘Human resources’, ‘Organisations’, ‘Physical resources’, ‘Online resources’, ‘Time’, ‘Local grants and programs’, ‘State/Territory grants and programs’ and ‘Commonwealth grants and programs’. Research the contact details of people, programs and organisations, current funding opportunities and places where physical resources can be borrowed or purchased and online resources can be accessed. (See ‘Resources’ on page 40 for details.) Think of creative solutions for how issues related to time can be overcome and/or financed.

A lotus diagram enables the user to divide broad topics or issues into smaller, easily identifiable components or categories.
Implementing

Develop a flow chart (or an action plan) to detail the process or stages and the decisions to be made for your school’s project or program. Remember to record the person or people responsible for the tasks at each stage, who else will be involved, the resources you will be using and when the tasks are to be completed.

Student knowledge and skills

Curriculum-based approaches to assessing student knowledge and skills about democratic processes and how to participate in decision making include:

- quizzes about the key features of Australian democracy
- projects or assignments about voting, elections and representation
- modelling, role-plays and simulations that demonstrate an understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizens in Australia’s democracy.

Observational and anecdotal school data

School-based data regarding the opportunities for students to participate and their dispositions for participation include:

- the number of students involved in student leadership and participatory roles
- the number and range of student leadership and participatory roles on offer to students
- a willingness to actively participate in student leadership and participatory roles in the classroom and at the school revealed through student interviews.

School measurement data

Although there may be no direct connection between the school’s overall quantitative and qualitative data and student leadership and participation programs, schools might see such initiatives as contributing factors or indicators of successful school performance. School measurement data for consideration include:

- school attendance records: an increase in attendance/decrease in truancy
- student attitudinal surveys: an increase in student connectedness to school and student morale
- student behaviour data: a decrease in the incidence of intimidation and bullying, including cyber-bullying.

Auditing your practice and program

The results of the teacher practice and program audit has the capacity to reveal strengths and areas for development in terms of actively supporting student leadership roles and democratic participation in student decision making. As a result of being involved in the audit, teachers can focus on improving their practice and program.
Reflect

Use the Auditing your practice and program tool (page 39) to monitor your practice and program in terms of providing opportunities for your students to develop the knowledge and skills to lead and dispositions to participate in school-based decision making. Each statement needs to be considered in the light of your classroom context and the age of the students. Those factors influence the degree to which particular statements can be applied and appropriately addressed. Reflect on how you could work on the areas of your practice or program that require attention.

Implement

Monitoring

Review the approaches listed for monitoring progress and measuring success (page 37) and add any additional approaches you know. Decide on which approaches best suit your program and your school context. Identify the points in time when you will employ the approaches for gathering evidence to monitor progress and measure the success of student participation in decision making. Implement the approaches.

*Collaborate/Implement

Reflecting and celebrating

Reflect on what has been achieved and celebrate the successes with students, parents and colleagues. If you are undertaking a collegial learning activity, use a think-pair-share activity to brainstorm a list of ways your successes could be celebrated and promoted in the school and wider community.

A think-pair-share activity enables learners to ‘think’ first, then to ‘pair’ with another learner to exchange ideas. The pair then presents to the group, allowing diverse ideas to be collated.

Setting of new goals

After achieving your initial goal, set a new SMART goal. Remember the goal needs to be Specific, Measurable, Action-oriented, Relevant and Time-focused.

Reflect

After completing the first cycle of the whole school approach for student participation beyond the classroom, reflect on the rating you gave in terms of the opportunities for students to meaningfully participate in decision making at your school at the start of this module.

On a scale of 1 to 10, record a new rating for your school in terms of the provision of student opportunities for decision-making, leadership and participatory roles. You may like to record separate ratings for the opportunities in terms of quality, quantity, inclusiveness, relevance to students’ lives and effectiveness or simply an overall combined rating. Provide reasons for the rating or ratings that you have recorded. Is there a difference in the ratings? What do you attribute the new rating or ratings to?
### Auditing your practice and program

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I make explicit connections between curriculum that illustrates democratic processes and the work students undertake as part of leadership teams and representative councils.

I identify examples of improvements to school life that are a direct result of student participation and use them as case studies when teaching about civics and citizenship.

I provide time in class for students to discuss school-based issues and develop ideas for further consideration when representatives convene for leadership and council meetings.

I create opportunities in my classroom for students to develop a range of leadership styles and skills that can be transferred to their roles as representatives and effective team members.

I engage my students in a range of decision-making tasks that are increasingly complex and involve competing civics and citizenship values so they are equipped with the skills for making difficult decisions on committees and councils.

I actively seek the support of colleagues/support colleagues who are extending student leadership and participatory roles at my school.

I promote the use of community resources to teach students about nominating for election, voting and representation as an authentic and purposeful context for learning about democratic processes.

I promote student leadership and student participation in decision making as part of the school’s vision for developing an active and responsible student body.

I actively contribute to a school environment that promotes the enactment of the nine *Values for Australian Schooling*:

- Fair Go
- Integrity
- Doing Your Best
- Respect
- Freedom
- Responsibility
- Care and Compassion
- Honesty and Trustworthiness
- Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion
Resources

The following resources, programs, forums and organisations may be helpful in creating democratic spaces in the school and provide opportunities for active student participation in decision making.

**Student leadership programs and forums**
- Young Leaders Program  
  www.youngleadersprogram.com.au
- National Student Leadership Forum  www.nslf.org.au
- National Youth Week  www.youthweek.com
- Australian Youth Forum  www.thesource.gov.au
- The Wellspring: Youth Leadership Opportunities in Australia and at the United Nations (UN)  www.alanwu.org
- National Schools Constitutional Convention  

**Student Representative Councils**
- Charter for Student Representative Councils  
  (NSW Department of Education)  
- Just like us (NSW Department of Education)  
- SRC: A practical guide for student leaders and teachers  
  (NSW Department of Education)  
- SRC Toolkit (NSW Department of Education)  
- Student Leadership Framework for Primary Schools  
  (NSW Department of Education)  
- Student Voice. A historical perspective and new directions (Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development)  
- Victorian Student Representative Council  
  www.vicsrc.org.au/news

**Australian Electoral Commission**
- Democracy Rules: An electoral education resource  
- Democracy rules: Counting your vote  
  (Student animation and interactive)  

**Discovering Democracy units (online): Who rules?**
- Stories of the People and Rulers (Middle Primary)  
  www1.curriculum.edu.au/ddunits/units/mp1stories-glance.htm
- Should the People Rule? (Lower Secondary)  
  www1.curriculum.edu.au/ddunits/units/ls1people-glance.htm

The Discovering Democracy units were originally distributed as kits to all primary and secondary schools throughout Australia in 1998.
Discovering Democracy Australian Readers

The Discovering Democracy Australian Readers explore civics and citizenship concepts using contemporary and historical written and visual texts. The books consist of a range of text types from a variety of cultures and periods. Focus on text types involving the theme: Citizens and Public Life.

- Australian Readers: Middle Primary Collection
- Australian Readers: Upper Primary Collection
- Australian Readers: Lower Secondary Collection
- Australian Readers: Middle Secondary Collection

The Australian Readers were originally distributed to all primary and secondary schools throughout Australia in 1999. Australians All! Australian Readers Lower Primary was distributed in 2001.

British Broadcasting Commission (United Kingdom)

- School Democracy
  www.bbc.co.uk/schools/citizenx/local/democracy/animation.shtml
- School Democracy: Teaching and learning materials
  www.bbc.co.uk/schools/citizenx/teachers/democracy/lessonplan_index.shtml

Other resources

- Inspiration www.inspiration.com/Inspiration (Free trial)
- SmartDraw www.smartdraw.com (Free trial)

The Le@rning Federation

Access to The Le@rning Federation’s digital content is through your educational body’s licensing agreement with Education Services Australia.

- Take a vote: democracy
  (Digital resource identifier: L1032)
Module 3: Participation in the Community

Outcomes
At the completion of this module, you will be able to:
• reflect on your current civics and citizenship practice and identify areas for extension
• make real world connections for student learning through the civics and citizenship curriculum
• make links between students’ citizenship practices and their civic knowledge
• design a civics and citizenship curriculum that includes opportunities for civics and citizenship participation.

Purpose
Citizenship participation is an existing dimension of students’ lives, rather than something to which they need to graduate. Students who feel they have control over their lives, and the events that affect them, are more willing to participate in communities during their school life and then into adulthood. In this module you will be assisted to make links between the school and its communities by creating opportunities for ‘real world’ educational outcomes for students. In doing so, you will be empowered to provide students with opportunities for purposeful and constructive participation in their communities. Throughout this module you will be encouraged to reflect on different kinds of citizenship (local, national and global), to think about different kinds of communities, and different kinds of participation and/or activism available to your students.

Aims
The aims of the module are to:
• assist you in making connections between stories of good practice and your own school and community contexts
• encourage you to draw conclusions from your learning experiences in this module for your own practice in creating opportunities for student participation in their communities
• provide you with a foundation to create your own program for student civics and citizenship participation.

Structure and content
This module identifies the civics and citizenship education outcomes that students develop through their involvement in communities beyond their schools, and contains case studies of teacher practice in civics and citizenship education. Connections are made between classroom learning and the exercise of citizenship skills and dispositions in school communities.

The civics and citizenship focus of the module outlines the dispositions that students are able to develop or hone by becoming active participants in their communities. You will be required to bear these in mind when interrogating the case studies and developing your own opportunities for student participation in their communities.
Your engagement with this module will be facilitated by the learning model outlined in the introduction. The learning model structures engagement with the module, and constructs the learning experience for you. Designated sections (*) of the learning model will assist you in constructing your own program for student civics and citizenship participation in their communities. You will be required to consider the reasons for student participation in their communities, to work through three case studies in which teachers created opportunities for student civic and citizenship participation, to reflect on your own practice and the opportunities in your curriculum for student participation in their communities, and to develop ways of assessing that participation.

The focuses of the case studies are:

- fundraising to support HIV affected and infected orphans in Africa
- working with a town’s historical society to restore local historical artefacts
- participating in public forums considering a proposal for change in the local area that will impact on the environment and the community.

In your consideration of the three cases studies, you will be asked to reflect on how you would:

- identify student interests and dispositions for participation
- build connections between students’ existing levels of participation and the curriculum; and connections between the curriculum and opportunities for students to participate in their communities
- explore opportunities for student participation in their communities.

**Civics and citizenship education focus**

This module emphasises civics and citizenship education skills, dispositions and knowledge, specifically:

- creating and sustaining an interest in the world – social, political and environmental
- fostering a willingness to participate in communities – local, national and global
- raising awareness of social and political issues to make informed choices and decisions
- developing a propensity to take positive civic action to bring about change
- understanding the importance of working collaboratively for the common good to support or counter the behaviours and/or actions of individuals, business and governments
- building a capacity for leadership in the decision-making process
- having an awareness of self-held beliefs and values.
Reflect

Before proceeding, reflect on your current strengths, areas for development, questions that you may have, and ideas in terms of the skills, dispositions and knowledge required to implement a community participation program. You may wish to begin a reflective journal or create a ‘parking lot’, which can be added to as you engage with this and other modules.

Reflective journals are useful learning tools. You can use your journal to record, illustrate or challenge ideas within the Professional Learning Package.

A parking lot is a graphic organiser that can be used to record your strengths, questions, areas for development and ideas.

Student participation in their communities

‘From the standpoint of the child, the great waste in the school comes from his inability to utilize the experiences he gets outside the school in any complete and free way within the school itself; while, on the other hand, he is unable to apply in daily life what he is learning in school. That is the isolation of the school, its isolation from life.’

John Dewey, American philosopher and educational reformer (1938)

Over seventy years later, the issue raised by John Dewey, of connecting our students to the real world, remains a concern for many teachers in contemporary classrooms. Is civics and citizenship education a possible pathway for resolving this issue, particularly through community participation programs? After all, one of the key goals of civics and citizenship programs is to equip students with civic knowledge and understanding and improve their citizenship dispositions so they, as citizens, can participate in society. Perhaps the key for successfully engaging students with their communities, in part, comes from the realisation that students are not ‘future citizens’; rather they are citizens now who can make significant contributions to their communities today.

In order for students to understand the world in which they live and to participate in the building of strong communities, schools’ participation programs need to draw upon students’ knowledge of their communities as well as that which is of interest and is meaningful to them. Suzanne Mellor, Senior Research Fellow with the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) notes that, ‘Students never have any trouble telling you about an issue or concern that is important to them. They never have any trouble telling you why they would like it addressed.’
Successful programs capitalise on students’ personal experiences, the media and popular culture to present students with real scenarios and practical problems with which they can engage. Schools need to be active in seeking out opportunities where students can actively demonstrate and extend their participatory skills within their communities such as interacting with local government and participating in awareness raising campaigns, fundraising and service learning (for example, volunteering and community service projects). While community participation programs are often drawn from state and territory curriculum documents, they also need to be set within the broad social context in which students live and go to school so as to be purposeful and of value to their current and future lives.

According to Roger Holdsworth, Senior Research Associate at the Australian Youth Research Centre University of Melbourne, ‘We need to look for ways to connect our students to real outcomes. Often the work of students sees no outcome except for the teacher. For example, an assignment, a project, a survey about a community issue. But the only person who sees it is the teacher. The only purpose is to hand it in and get a tick. We need to get our students involved in real things, doing real roles about things they see as important – that have a broader community value that goes beyond the teacher.’

Reflect

What social, political and environmental issues or concerns have meaning and value to your students? Consider ways that you could find out. Make a list of your students’ issues and concerns. The issues or concerns may have a local, national or global context.

Collaborate

If you are undertaking a collegial learning activity, use a think-pair-share activity to brainstorm a list of specific opportunities that exist for students to actively demonstrate and extend their participatory skills in ways that have a ‘broader community value’ (that is, have value beyond the classroom or school).

A think-pair-share strategy enables learners to ‘think’ first, then to ‘pair’ with another learner to exchange ideas. The pair then presents to the group, allowing for diverse ideas to be collated.

*Connect

View your state or territory’s curriculum documents that are related to civics and citizenship education. Use a highlighter to identify the sections that are relevant to student participation in their communities. Draw up a three-column table. Label the columns ‘Curriculum’, ‘Student issues and concerns’ and ‘Opportunities for participation’. Fill in the table by collating your responses for this and the previous two tasks.
Case studies

The following case studies showcase different ways in which students can be engaged in their communities, and highlight the different opportunities that might exist in the curriculum for making connections to communities beyond the school.

Reflect/Collaborate

Referring to the civics and citizenship education focus on page 7, use a highlighter to identify the skills, dispositions and knowledge being developed in each of the three case studies below. If you are undertaking a collegial learning activity, consider dividing up this task by focusing on one of the following and sharing your findings:

- the skills, dispositions and knowledge evident in a single case study
- a single skill, disposition or understanding across the three case studies.

Case study 1

(P–12 school in the northern suburbs of Melbourne, Victoria)

Case study 1 is a Year 4/5/6 class at a P–12 school with approximately 1,000 students. The school prides itself on its graduating students leaving with the skills and desire to make a difference to their communities in relation to global and local issues.

Supporting Africa’s HIV/AIDS affected and infected orphans

In 2002, the Year 4/5/6 class was watching the ABC1 television news program for upper primary and lower secondary students, Behind the News. The program presents students with current events and issues that are relevant to their world. One particular show aired a segment that exposed students to the plight of children starving in Africa. During a class meeting later that week, one student suggested that the class do something about the issue. A vote was taken and it was unanimously decided that the class would help a group of children like the ones seen on the program through a fundraising effort.

At the time, students were completing an integrated unit on enterprise education and involved in a whole-school literature focus that had a fantasy theme. While there had been no plans to formally address civics and citizenship in the program, the teacher decided to capitalise on the students’ interests and desire to make a difference to the lives of others by aligning this new focus with the existing learning outcomes for the term. The students were to design, make and market a confectionary-type product similar to that in their literary focus Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. The teacher also used contacts and arranged for students to be addressed by a nurse who had recently returned from volunteering at a camp for HIV/AIDS affected and infected orphans in Zimbabwe. At a second class meeting, the students voted that the money would be donated to the camp.
Realising that if they raised more money they could help more children, the students suggested that the other senior class also be involved in the fundraising efforts. This suggestion was agreed to with the support of the other teacher. The students wrote to the school council to seek approval for the fundraiser. The council was so impressed with the students’ commitment that it pledged a $250.00 donation. The students were involved in drafting a letter home to parents explaining the fundraiser and the plight of the children in Africa who they were planning to support.

The students raised an impressive $217.00 on the day and this was combined with the school council donation. Media coverage resulted in a number of neighbouring schools also making a series of small donations. The school decided that the camp for HIV/AIDS affected and infected orphans would be the subject of annual fundraising. Through out-of-uniform days, canteen meal deals, ongoing school council donations and staff luncheons, the school has raised over $5,000.00 to date.

The project provided opportunities for students to:

- reflect on their values and their responsibilities as global citizens
- participate in processes such as decision making and voting related to a real issue
- develop the skills and dispositions to engage with an issue and interact with their community and take action to effect positive change.

Case study 2
(R–12 school in rural South Australia)

Case study 2 is an R–12 school with approximately 170 students and is situated on the Eyre Peninsula in South Australia. The town of just over 600 inhabitants has a lively civic and sporting life. An important part of the town is its historical society, which has established and runs a pioneer village museum. The historical society maintains many archives relating to the settlement of the district, its inhabitants and civic organisations.

The Local History Project

For many years, the school’s Year 9 students have worked with the town’s historical society to research the history of the district and its inhabitants. They also undertook restoration projects for pieces of agricultural machinery such as a 1920s milk cart.

The school’s Local History Project aimed to:

- give students a significant role as active citizens of their community in a visible and tangible way
- build an awareness of how the history of rural Australia is shaped by overcoming hardship through perseverance, resilience and ingenuity
- recognise how ordinary people can be active, creative and engaged citizens
- develop lifelong skills in literacy and numeracy and skills in research conventions that can be applied in practical ways.
The Local History Project gave students insight into what could be achieved when people worked together. It raised their awareness of how ordinary people could be active citizens, through the efforts of the students themselves as well as their research about the lives of ordinary people who overcame hardship and built a community. As an ongoing project, the students were able to read the research completed by their own parents, many of whom were former students of the school. The Local History Project enabled students to make an active, visible contribution to their community and their families.

The completed projects were presented to town dignitaries including the mayor and representatives of local bodies, such as the Country Fire Service, parents and friends. The projects were then maintained by the historical society as part of its permanent records and were made available for study to members of the general public. The students were involved in the planning and implementation of the restoration project presentations. The success of the restoration projects was reported in the local press.

From a curricular perspective, the Local History Project drew from all four strands of South Australia’s society and environment strand – Time, continuity and change; Place, space and environment; Societies and cultures; and Social systems. The students’ assessment involved learning logs, meeting stated assessment criteria and an oral presentation to the community at the end of the semester. The success of the program was measured by the students, community members (through the use of questionnaires) and teachers.

Case study 3
(P–10 school in northern Queensland)

Case study 3 is a P–10 school located on Queensland’s Cooloola Coast between Bundaberg and Noosa Heads. The school has a population of approximately 500 students with around 25 per cent of the student population being made up of secondary students. The local community relies mainly on fishing and tourism industries. The school uses its location to create learning opportunities that are worthwhile and meaningful to its students.

Marina development versus the environment

When a proposal to develop and extend the local marina was made, a Year 9 unit of work was devised to develop the students’ ability to uncover multiple perspectives on a local issue and reach a negotiated and reasoned conclusion.

Students took on the role of local councillors and worked in groups to consider the proposal by a company to develop the area. They ascertained the needs and wants of locals in order to develop a vision for the future of their community. The students used this information together with statistics supplied by a regional development organisation and local planning legislation to develop a set of prioritised and weighted criteria with which to assess the proposal.

The students then booked speakers to present at two forums – one in favour of the proposal to develop the marina and the other against. The speakers that argued the case for or against the proposal included the developer; their environmental scientist; representatives from the chamber of commerce; local beach, net and recreational fishermen; and a representative from a community environmental preservation group.

The students discovered that much of the development was either on crown land or below the high water mark and therefore fell under the jurisdiction of the Department of Transport. The groups used their criteria to decide whether the proposal should be passed by council and reached a justifiable decision. The students invited the mayor and local member of parliament to a presentation of their research, findings and recommendations.
The mayor and the member of parliament assured students that their opinions were important and that, as representatives, they had sought to understand them and take their concerns to council and state parliament. So impressive was the students’ understanding of the community and its context, and the impacts of the proposed development, that the mayor invited the students to submit their assignment work as a formal submission to council and to be present when the marina proposal came before council.

Feedback from community members involved suggested that the unit was a great success. Students felt much more comfortable in articulating their opinions as they knew that their work was contributing to their own community’s future development. The parents reported that the sense of empowerment within their children had improved dramatically through the learning experience.

The unit of work was drawn from the Queensland studies of society and environment strands of Place and space; and Systems, resources and power. It also focused on a number of ‘big questions’ for students including:

- What is our preferred vision of the future?
- What does our community value?
- How does local government make decisions when there are a variety of contradictory but compelling arguments from different stakeholders?

If you are undertaking a collegial learning activity share your responses. What evidence (stated or underlying) is there in the case studies to support your responses?

**Construct**

Use a Venn diagram to compare the precepts contained in the three case studies. A precept is an underlying teaching or principle that underscores the key messages and deeper learning that has taken place. What do the three case studies have in common? If you are using a reflective journal, record your findings.

A Venn diagram can help you make comparisons. Similarities are shown in the overlapping area and the differences are shown in the areas that do not overlap.

**Reflect/Collaborate**

Record responses for each of the following questions.

- What beliefs about teaching and learning might the teachers who facilitated the three case studies have? What civics and citizenship education dispositions are demonstrated?
- How are the students being helped to make sense of the world in which they live and to act effectively in that world? How are they being taught to influence political and social systems for the benefit of society?
- What considerations might the teachers have made in relation to their students’ backgrounds and the social contexts in which the students live and go to school?

A SWOT analysis identifies:

- internal factors (strengths, weaknesses)
- external factors (opportunities, threats)
- positives (strengths, opportunities)
- negatives (weaknesses, threats).
Drawing conclusions

You now have the opportunity to relate your experiences with the three case studies to your community context. Drawing conclusions will help you to identify the key messages – guiding principles, beliefs, values and assumptions – that were woven through the three case studies and led to their success.

The following tasks will assist you in applying what you have learnt from the case studies so that you are better placed – in terms of your knowledge, skills and confidence – to develop and implement a community participation program for your students. You will engage in tasks such as creating a rationale for finding opportunities for student participation, considering the steps involved in planning and implementing a program and completing a SWOT analysis for a unit of work or topic that you are about to implement or have implemented in the past.

Reflect/Collaborate

If you had to report back on the five key messages to someone who had not read the case studies, what would you want them to know? Provide a reason or reasons why each key message is important. Which of the key messages are apparent in your practice and/or programs? If you are undertaking a collegial learning activity share your key messages and reasons.

Use the key messages to create a rationale for finding opportunities for students to participate in their communities. Refer to the rationale when you are evaluating a unit of work or topic for implementation.

Reflect

Record responses for each of the following questions.

- What assumptions might the teachers have made about their students’ backgrounds, their interests and the things that were important to them? What assumptions can you make about your students? How might you use these assumptions when developing a community participation program for your students?
- Why might the teachers have selected the historical society and the proposed marina development as the focus for their programs? Which aspects of your students’ community could be used as a focus for a unit of work or topic?
- How was the media used as a stimulus and as a means for recognising the work of students in the case studies? Which contemporary events or current issues could be used as launching pads for a community participation program for your students?
Construct

A successful community participation program requires planning. What steps might have been used to plan the activities showcased in the three case studies? At what point might the teachers have referred to their state curriculum documents – at the beginning or at the end of the planning? Why might this be an important consideration? Consider the steps that may have been common to developing and implementing the programs.

Use a vertical blending process to record the nine most important steps that the teachers may have taken. If you are undertaking a collegial learning activity, share your vertical blending process. Are the steps similar or different?

Use this tool to assist you in developing and implementing your own community participation program for your students.

A vertical blending process shows a progression or a sequence of steps employed to complete a task such as planning a unit of work or topic. The process is used to obtain clarity in the steps and to communicate these steps to others.

Reflect/Connect

Use a SWOT analysis to identify the civics and citizenship Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for a unit of work or topic that you are about to implement or have implemented in the past. What strengths, weaknesses, opportunities or threats do you have in common with the case studies? Annotate the unit or topic by pinpointing the opportunities that exist for individuals to influence social or political systems for the benefit of the community.

If you are new to teaching or do not have a unit of work or topic on hand, go to the ‘For teachers’ section of the Civics and Citizenship website and complete the SWOT analysis on a lesson plan that you could integrate into your program.

www.civicsandcitizenship.edu.au/cce/teaching_and_learning_activities,9023.html
Scenarios for implementation

When considering how to engage students in a community participation program, Roger Holdsworth, Senior Research Associate at the Australian Youth Research Centre University of Melbourne recommends Student Action Teams. He describes them as ‘teams of students who, as part of their school curriculum, adopt a community issue that they care passionately about, research it, decide what needs to be changed or improved, and take action to achieve that. These teams are:

- purposeful: the learning that takes place is seen by students to have immediately useful purposes
- productive: the work that students do produces practical and significant outcomes over and above individuals’ own learning, and beyond the classroom.’

Examples of purposeful and productive topics, activities and projects that have the potential to expand on the work illustrated in the three case studies and capitalise on the power of student action teams include the following.

Valuing the community
- Recognising the work of local community ‘heroes’
- Engaging in cross-age support programs for younger and older people
- Using online projects that connect students to social issues within their communities and have them respond with positive action; for example, CIVICS: Youth Volunteerism and Service (See ‘Resources’ for the iEARN Australia online projects website).

Caring for the environment
- Participating in activities such as Clean Up Australia Day, Streamwatch and FrogWatch
- Joining an environment restoration/protection group
- Using online projects that help students to measure their carbon footprint and suggest ways to reduce it; for example, OF(2): Our Footprints, Our Future! (See ‘Resources’ for the iEARN Australia online projects website).

Acting on global issues
- Fundraising for the International Red Cross (or similar)
- Raising awareness for Amnesty International, including writing letters that seek to bring about universal human rights
- Using online projects that aim to free the world from hunger and malnutrition; for example, Feeding Minds Fighting Hunger (see ‘Resources’ for the iEARN Australia online projects website).

Developing and implementing a successful community participation program that is both purposeful and productive involves a number of key factors. These factors include having an awareness of your current practice and the needs of your students and the things that they value, having an implementation plan, being forearmed with strategies for overcoming or minimising barriers and having a strong network of community contacts so as to develop partnerships between the school and the broader community.

The following tasks will assist you in auditing your current practice and programs, creating a tool to find out about your students in relation to community participation, preparing an action plan and a document that will help you identify the factors that may help you to drive your program, and the factors that may prevent or slow it down. Importantly, you will consider strategies that will help you to overcome or minimise the negative factors. You will also employ strategies for building a network of contacts from which you and your students can draw.
Reflect

Use the Auditing your practice and program tool (page 54) to monitor your program and practice in terms of providing opportunities for your students to participate in the local, national and/or global community. Each statement needs to be considered in the light of your school context and the age of the students. Such factors influence the degree to which particular statements can be applied and appropriately addressed. Reflect on how you could work on the areas of practice that require attention.

Construct/Implement

What are your students’ attitudes towards community participation programs? What are the sorts of things that they value and believe to be important? Are they currently involved in programs outside of school hours? Develop an auditing tool similar to the Auditing your practice and program tool that you could use with your class to find out.

Construct /Collaborate

Build a network of contacts for the purpose of developing partnerships between the school and the broader community. Use a tool such as an affinity diagram to brainstorm and categorise a list of possible contacts. If you are undertaking a collegial professional learning activity, complete this task in a group. You might also like to complete this task with your students to broaden your list of potential contacts further. Also, refer to the websites listed in the ‘Resources’ section under the heading ‘Collaborating with schools, cultural institutions and the local community’.

Record each known or possible contact for a unit of work or topic on a separate sticky label. Then categorise the list of contacts. Consider recording the list of contacts and their details electronically as a database to form a ready-reference.

An affinity diagram is a tool for gathering and synthesising large amounts of information.

*Construct/Implement

Create an action plan for a community participation program. Draw up a four-column table with the following headings: What are the tasks? Who will complete the tasks? When will the tasks be completed? What resources are needed? Refer to the vertical blending process you developed on page 51 to assist you in developing your action plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are the tasks?</th>
<th>Who will complete the tasks?</th>
<th>When will the tasks be completed?</th>
<th>What resources are needed?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

An action plan is a written document that describes the steps, people and resources (physical, human or financial) needed to develop and implement a program. The action plan also details when a task is to be completed.

*Reflect/Implement

Use a force-field analysis to help you identify the factors that may drive and prevent or slow the development and implementation of your community participation program. Use the deactivating forces to record the possible strategies for overcoming or pre-empting the preventing forces. Draw up a three-column table with the following headings: Driving forces, Preventing forces and Deactivating forces.

Example

Driving force – finding an issue that is meaningful and engaging for students; Preventing force – not having the background knowledge about civic institutions to educate students about how to effect positive change; Deactivating force – seeking out a member of staff who has background knowledge about civic institutions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Driving forces</th>
<th>Preventing forces</th>
<th>Deactivating forces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Auditing your practice and program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I publicly acknowledge students who actively contribute to their local, national or global community through their participation in community, volunteer or environmental activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I promote participation in Australia’s social, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity in my classroom through the celebration of cultural, local, community and national days.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I draw upon community resources (people and places) when implementing programs and units of work in order to promote their value and to connect students with their communities.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I integrate contemporary social, political and environmental issues into new or existing curriculum programs and units of work for my students.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I foster understanding and acknowledgement of the value of Indigenous cultures so my students can contribute to, and benefit from, reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I provide time for students to read newspaper articles and/or watch or listen to news-based television and radio programs, being mindful to present more than one point of view, and follow these up with opportunities for substantive discussion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I arrange for my students to collaborate on community and/or global projects with students from other schools (locally, nationally or globally) through the internet.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I explore avenues for my students to develop the knowledge and practice the skills for addressing issues of local, national or global significance in order to effect positive change.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I create a learning environment that promotes the enactment of the nine <em>Values for Australian Schooling</em> within and beyond the boundaries of the school fence.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Fair Go*  
*Integrity*  
*Doing Your Best*  
*Respect*  
*Freedom*  
*Responsibility*  
*Care and Compassion*  
*Honesty and Trustworthiness*  
*Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion*
Monitoring progress/Measuring success

The monitoring of student progress in the area of civics and citizenship education is designed to measure students’ civic knowledge and understanding and improve their citizenship dispositions regarding participation in society.

Formal approaches to assessing student knowledge about how to effect change include:

- letters written to members of parliament, local government and editors of newspapers that articulate a balanced and informed opinion about an issue
- quizzes about civic institutions and the strategies that individuals can employ to influence social and political systems for the benefit of society
- research projects that detail findings about an issue and make subsequent recommendations
- modelling, role-plays and simulations that show a depth of understanding about the positive impact student actions can have in relation to an issue
- action plans with evidence of their implementation such as photographs and newspaper reports.

However, measuring the success of student participation in the community can be problematic, as more formal assessment techniques may not reveal what should be a student-driven initiative. Measuring student participation requires less formal approaches for gathering evidence which may include the following.

- Learning logs with students reflecting on their successes and challenges regarding their involvement in a community participation program. Consideration of strategies for capitalising on the successes and strategies for overcoming the challenges next time, or what could have been done differently and why, may also form part of the log. Students could also be asked to reflect on how they have applied their civic knowledge to the community participation program to effect positive change.
- Portfolios that contain student-selected letters of appreciation and certificates of recognition from community organisations.
- Pre- and post-interviews with students (facilitated by students) to gauge the degree to which they feel they have the capacity or power to participate in their communities and make a difference (efficacy).

- Feedback from parents and members of the community through short surveys.
- Rubrics for self- and peer-assessment of students’ ability to work in teams. Ideally, the criteria for the rubrics can be developed in consultation with the students. Participation pie charts may be used as a visual alternative or to complement the self- and peer-assessment rubrics, as students reflect on the participation levels of group members and justify their assessments. For example:

![Participation Pie Charts]

### Implement

Review the approaches listed above, and add any additional approaches you have thought of. Decide which approaches best suit your students and the context of your community participation program. Identify the points in time when you will employ the approaches for gathering evidence to monitor progress and measure the success of the community participation program. Implement the approaches.

### Reflect

During and at the conclusion of the program reflect on the effectiveness of the approaches you have decided to use. Were you able to continuously monitor progress and therefore intervene if required? Did the approaches capture the level of the program’s success? Are there other approaches that could have been more useful to you as the teacher?

If you are using a reflective journal, record your responses.
Resources

The following resources and organisations may be helpful in creating opportunities for student participation in their communities.

Collaborating with schools, cultural institutions and the local community

- Community Builders NSW – Get Organised
- Get involved in your community
- Parent and Community Department of Education Tasmania
  www.education.tas.gov.au/school/parents
- Strategic Partnerships Program
- School Industry Partnership
  www.transit.dest.gov.au

Exploring local, national and global issues

- APEC Education
  www.apeceducation.edu.au/apec
- Behind the News
  www.abc.net.au/news/btn
- Global Education
  www.globaleducation.edna.edu.au/globaled/go
- Central Queensland’s Problem-Based Learning Web Portal
  www.pbl.cqu.edu.au
- iEARN Australia (Online projects for primary and secondary students)
  www.iearn.org.au/projecttr.htm
- National, State and Territory Human Rights teaching and learning material
- Newspapers and their role in teaching civics in the classroom
  www.civicsandcitizenship.edu.au/cce/default.asp?id=9342
- Youth at the United Nations

Supporting non-government organisations

- Amnesty International
  http://sant.amnesty.org.au
- International Committee of the Red Cross
  www.icrc.org
- Oaktree Foundation
  www.theoaktree.org/Splash.aspx
- Stir
  http://stir.org.au/stir
- World Vision – Forty Hour Famine
- Wilderness Society
  www.wilderness.org.au

Celebrating local, national and international days

- Civics and Citizenship Education events calendar
- Education Network Australia (Edna) events calendar

Discovering Democracy units (online):
Citizens and Public Life

- Joining In (Middle Primary)
  www1.curriculum.edu.au/ddunits/units/mp4join-glance.htm
- People Power (Upper Primary)
  www1.curriculum.edu.au/ddunits/units/up4power-glance.htm
- Getting Things Done (Middle Secondary)
  www1.curriculum.edu.au/ddunits/units/ms6done-glance.htm

The Discovering Democracy units were originally distributed as kits to all primary and secondary schools throughout Australia in 1998.
Discovering Democracy Australian Readers

The Discovering Democracy Australian Readers explore civics and citizenship concepts using contemporary and historical written and visual texts. The books consist of a range of text types from a variety of cultures and periods. Focus on text types involving the theme: Citizens and Public Life.

- Australian Readers: Middle Primary Collection
- Australian Readers: Upper Primary Collection
- Australian Readers: Lower Secondary Collection
- Australian Readers: Middle Secondary Collection

The Australian Readers were originally distributed to all primary and secondary schools throughout Australia in 1999. Australians All! Australian Readers Lower Primary was distributed in 2001.

The Le@rning Federation

Access to The Le@rning Federation’s digital content is through your educational body’s licensing agreement with Education Services Australia.

- The night of the bilby (Digital resource identifier: L908)
- Cartown (Digital resource identifier: L1345)
- Indigenous rights (Digital resource identifier: L9518)
- Discovering Democracy: Democratic Struggles (Digital resource identifier: L9519)
- Demons at drivetime: Rally for justice (Digital resource identifier: R7371)
- The last whale (Digital resource identifier: R7084)
- Franklin Dam (Digital resource identifier: L362)
- Discovering Democracy: Human Rights (Digital resource identifier: L9522)
References


