TEACHING CIVICS for JUSTICE ILLINOIS

Critical Civics Toolkit:

An overview of critical Civics and Service-Learning education in K-12 schools.

Towards a Critical Civics Education

Too often young people in K-12 schools, particularly those in high school, are framed as civically disengaged. We critique this falsehood, and take the stance that young people are absolutely civically engaged—they are asking questions about their lives and communities, consuming information about their inquiries through various forms of sourcing, analyzing their worlds deeply, and committed to taking action to transform their lives, and the lives of others for the better.

What if Civics and Service Learning classrooms were spaces to cultivate students' curiosities about their worlds? Spaces to investigate their queries using social science methods? And spaces to take action?

Might the world be a better place? Might our communities be more communal? And might young people in K-12 Civics classrooms have opportunities to show us just how civically engaged they are?

Young people are already civically engaged! Imagine if we made room for and supported their questions and desires for transformation.

What is Critical Civics?

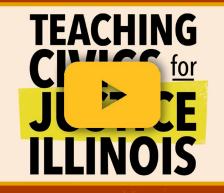
A critical Civics education is rooted in the understanding that students in all schools and grades are already civically engaged.

They are...

- asking rich questions about their own, and others' lives.
- collecting and sharing information with various communities, often at the touch of a button.
- imagining worlds beyond the current.

What if Civics education started with the questions young people are asking about the world and their place in it? How might Service Learning create space(s) for students to actualize their dreams about a more just world? While that may not seem so critical, we say it is because traditional Civics often fails to recognize and build from the civic engagement that young people are engaging in outside of schools.

Watch this introductory video:



A Critical Civics* education is comprised of four areas:



Community-Rooted and Responsive

Critical Civics educators and students engage in partnership with the people, resources, and spaces within local communities to inquire about, and act on, their worlds.

Student-Led and Teacher-Supported

Critical Civics puts students at the forefront of their civic learning and civic engagement. Teachers are not absent in these situations; they support their students' inquiries and actions through motivation, skill-development, and resourcing (among other emergent needs).





Standards-Inclusive

Critical Civics links inquiry-based learning skills, civics standards, service learning requirements, and aspirations for a more just world.

Reflective

Critical Civics creates reflective space(s) for students and teachers to celebrate their accomplishments and make revisions for the future.



În your own	words define critica	al Civics educatio	n:	
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		K. Ziewanie		

Illinois' move towards Inquiry and Justice in Social Science

In 2019, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) began the process to revise the Social Science Standards. The revised Illinois Learning Standards for Social Science were officially adopted for implementation during the 2022-2023 school year. The inquiry-based and disciplinary skills within the standards, alongside the Illinois Inclusive American History Mandates have the potential to create culturally sustaining and justice-centered teaching and learning experiences in K-12 Social Science classrooms in Illinois. Like the NCSS C3 Framework, the revised Illinois Learning Standards for Social Science are driven by the four core areas of inquiry-based learning that seek to create learning situations for K-12 students across the state of Illinois to take ownership of their learning.

The Illinois Learning Standards for Social Science also draw explicit attention to the need for teachers and students to recognize, articulate, and analyze how perspective and systems of power influence and impact inequities and social transformation.

The Illinois Learning Standards for Social Science *Inquiry Skills* (which complement the Illinois Learning Standards for Social Science *Disciplinary Skills*) are composed of four core areas:

- 1. recognizing perspective and articulating identities,
- 2. developing questions and planning inquiries,
- 3. evaluating sources and using evidence, and
- 4. communicating conclusions and taking informed actions.

Reflection

What are the aims of your Civics classroom? Curriculum?

How do your current Civics practices support learning in the four core areas of the Illinois Learning Standards for Social Science?

In what ways is inquiry-based learning a paradigm shift for you? For your students?

What possibilities does inquiry-based learning hold for your students' learning? For your teaching?

Types of Inquiry

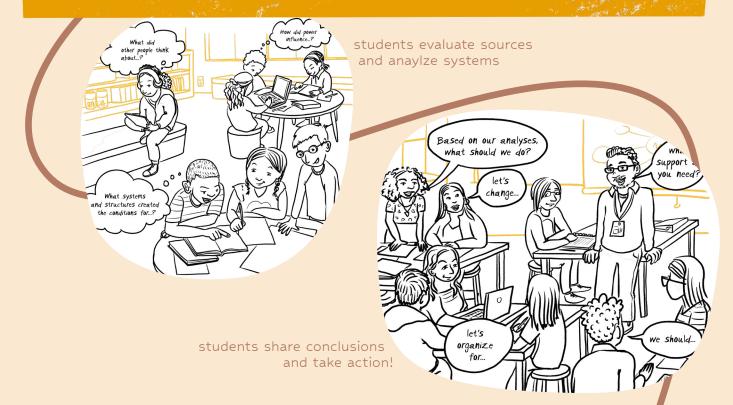
Preparing students for inquiry is a process. While the Illinois Learning Standards for Social Science call for student-driven inquiry in all grades (K-12), teachers can, and do, play a role in the facilitation of students' questions, relevant data collection, emergent analyses, and transformative actions. Table 1 details the teachers' role across several scaffolded stages of inquiry. As you move from left to right, you will notice that students take on more responsibility and agency in the inquiry process. Each type of inquiry (structured, controlled, guided, and free) is determined by the role(s) of the teacher and students. Use this table to consider and plan for the facilitation of inquiry-based learning.

	Structured Inquiry	Controlled Inquiry	Guided Inquiry	Free Inquiry
Recognizing perspectives and articulating differences	Teacher engages in reflection of how their own biases influence their practice. Teacher analyzes curriculum for inclusion of multiple perspectives, and for opportunities for students to analyze systems of power.	Teacher and students engage in reflection of perspectives, power, inequity, and justice. Teacher and students engage in reflection related to their biases. Teacher scaffolds/models this experience for students. Teacher and students analyze curriculum for inclusion of multiple perspectives, and for opportunities for students to analyze systems of power.	Teacher supports students in reflection of perspectives, power, inequity, and justice. Teacher and students engage in reflection related to their biases. Teacher scaffolds/models this experience for students. Teacher and students analyze curriculum for inclusion of multiple perspectives, and for opportunities for students to analyze systems of power.	Teacher supports students in reflection of perspectives, power, inequity, and justice. Students engage in reflection related to their biases.
Developing questions and planning inquiries	Teacher provides inquiry question and guides students through inquiry. Teacher gathers and vets resources for investigation.	Teacher provides menu of inquiry questions for students to choose from. Teacher provides 2-3 resources for each essential question.	Teacher provides 1 or more inquiry questions. Students, with teacher support, gather and vet resources for investigation.	Students create inquiry questions. Teacher is resource/ partner/ supporter. Students gather and vet resources for investigation. Teacher is a resource/partner.
Evaluating sources and using evidence	Teacher models evaluation of sources, and students reproduce analytical methods. Teacher models claim development and provides examples for students. Students reproduce methods shared.	Teacher models evaluation of sources, and students reproduce analytical methods. Teacher models claim development and provides examples for students. Students reproduce methods shared.	Students, with support of teacher, develop and enact evaluative methods. Students, with support of teacher, develop claims using analyses of evidence.	Students develop and enact evaluative methods. Students develop claims using analyses of evidence.
Communicating conclusions and taking informed action	Teacher chooses student action and/or performance task.	Teacher chooses student action and/or performance task.	Students choose common action and/or performance task.	Students choose actions and/or performance tasks (can be unique).

Table 1: Teachers Role Across Stages of Inquiry



What does it mean to support FREE INQUIRY in Civics classrooms and learning experiences?



Revised Learning Standards for Civics

Since 2016, **Civics** has been a graduation requirement in Illinois. at least one semester [of high school] must be civics, which shall help young people acquire and learn to use the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will prepare them to be competent and responsible citizens throughout their lives. Civics course content shall focus on government institutions, the discussion of current and controversial issues, service learning, and simulations of the democratic process. (*Illinois School Code*, Sec 27-22)

According to the Illinois State Board of Education, **service learning** addresses the idea of taking informed action upon learning; service learning MUST connect to the content within the classroom. This could take the form of a traditional service project in civil society and/or advocacy for public policy at the local, state, or federal levels of government. Service learning does NOT refer to having students gather community service hours or volunteering. (*Illinois School Code, Sec 27-22*)

What is the relationship between Service Learning and Critical Civics?

While Service Learning is not required to be completed within Illinois Civics courses, we believe that the core areas of Critical Civics still apply. Like they do for Civics, the core areas of critical Civics support inquiry-based and justice-centered Service Learning opportunities for students. Service learning should, like Civics, offer students opportunities to ask questions about local issues relevant to them. And like Civics, service learning should cultivate students' Civic skills while sourcing information and taking action relevant to their queries. No matter where Service Learning takes place, we hope that, like Civics, it can be community rooted & responsive, student-led & teacher supported, standards inclusive, and reflective.

As part of the 2019 standards revisions the Civics standards were also revised. Take a moment to review the standards relevant to your grade level on the next pages and consider:

What possibilities do the revised Civics standards hold for your students' learning? For your teaching?

How can free inquiry create student-led pathways to reach these standards?

	K - 12 CIVICS Disciplinary Concepts					
Topics	Grades K - 5					
	Kindergarten: My Social World	First Grade: Living, Learning, and Working Together	Second Grade: Families, Neighborhoods, and Community	Third Grade: Communities Near and Far	Fourth Grade: Our State, Our Nation	Fifth Grade: Our Nation, Our World
utions	SS.K.CV.1. With guidance and support, identify the roles of individuals and leaders and their responsibility to meet the needs of different people and communities.	SS.1.CV.1. With guidance and support, explain how individuals who live, learn, and work together make important decisions, and the effect that these decisions have on a variety of diverse communities.	SS.2.CV.1. With guidance and support, identify features and functions of governments.	SS.3.CV.1. Explain how families, workplaces, organizations, and government entities interact and affect communities in multiple ways.	SS.4.CV.1. Explain the roles and responsibilities of government officials at the local, state, and national levels and investigate how the roles and responsibilities of government have changed over time.	SS.5.CV.1. Explain the roles and responsibilities of government officials at the local, state, and national levels and investigate how the roles and responsibilities of the three branches of government have changed over time.
Civic and Political Institutions				SS.3.CV.2. Using evidence, describe how people have strived to improve communities over time to achieve equitable outcomes, practices, or policies.	SS.4.CV.2. Define democracy and explain how limited participation affects the political representation of multiple groups.	SS.5.CV.2. Examine the origins and purposes of rules, laws, and key provisions of the U.S. Constitution and investigate the impact they had/ have on multiple groups of people SS.5.CV.3. Compare and contrast the U.S. government to other global governments in their structure and systems of governing with consideration for their impact on equitable
Participation and Deliberation: Applying Civic Virtues and Democratic Principles	Begins in Grade 4				SS.4.CV.3. Identify core civic virtues and democratic principles that guide governments, society, and communities.	None in Grade 5
Processes, Rules, and Laws	SS.K.CV.2. With guidance and support, identify reasons for rules and explain how rules establish responsibilities and roles for various settings.	SS.1.CV.2. Identify reasons for rules and explain how rules establish responsibilities and roles, and their effect on one's own and other groups and communities.	SS.2.CV.2. With guidance and support, describe how communities can collaborate to accomplish tasks, establish roles and responsibilities, and achieve equitable outcomes for the community.	None in Grade 3	SS.4.CV.4. Using evidence, explain how rules, regulations, and laws alter or transform societies and how people from multiple communities influence and experience this transformation.	SS.5.CV.4. Using evidence, explain how policies are developed to address public problems and concerns and achieve equitable outcomes.

	K - 12 CIVICS Disciplinary Concepts				
Topics	Grades 6 - 8				
	Less Complex (LC)	Moderately Complex (MdC)	More Complex (MC)		
	SS.6-8.CV.1.LC. Identify different types of citizenship and immigration statuses of individuals in the United States and the different rights and roles (e.g.,	SS.6-8.CV.1.MdC. Describe and analyze the roles of political, civil, and economic organizations from a national to local scale in impacting multiple individuals	SS.6-8.CV.1.MC. Evaluate the powers and responsibilities of individuals, political parties, interest groups, and the media; how these have changed over time; and the impacts on multiple communities.		
itutions	voters, jurors, taxpayers, military, protesters, and officeholders) based on citizenship or immigration status.	and communities.	SS.6-8.CV.2.MCa. Analyze how the application of laws and the protection, granting, or denial of individual and collective rights have impacted participation and powers of various groups of people.		
Civic and Political Institutions		S.6-8.CV.2.MdC. Explain the origins, functions, and structure of government with reference to the U.S. Constitution, Illinois Constitution, and other systems of government and how they have impacted multiple groups of people.	SS.6-8.CV.2.MCb. Synthesize how the changes over time in the application of laws and granting or denial of rights have impacted governments, public officials, and bureaucracies at different levels in the United States, U.S. territories, and tribal nations within the United States.		
Civic	SS.6-8.CV.2.LC. Describe the origins and purposes and impact of governing documents and policies (e.g., U.S. Constitution, Illinois Constitution, laws, treaties, and international agreements) and synthesize their application and impacts on multiple groups of people with how they have changed over time.	No standard.	No standard.		
d Deliberation: Virtues and Principles	SS.6-8.CV.3.LC. Identify the means used by individuals and groups to either maintain or change powers and protect, grant, or deny rights of individuals and communities in societies.	SS.6-8.CV.3.MdC. Analyze the origins, purposes, and processes connected to maintaining or changing powers and how individuals and societies protect, grant, or deny rights.	SS 6-8.CV.3.MC. Explain how granting rights for individuals or communities does not reduce the ability of other individuals or communities to exercise the same rights and evaluate how efforts to maintain systems or initiate change within societies have worked for or against the benefit or oppression of multiple groups.		
Participation and Delibera Applying Civic Virtues ar Democratic Principles	SS.6-8.CV.4.LC. Analyze the relationships among democratic principles, civic virtues, special interests, and perspectives to the ideas and principles contained in the constitutions, laws, treaties, and international agreements of the United States and other countries.	SS.6-8.CV.4.MdC. Analyze and synthesize ideas and principles contained in the founding and governing documents and practices of the United States, U.S. territories, and tribal nations within the United States.	SS.6-8.CV.4.MC. Evaluate and critique deliberative processes regarding the development and application of governing documents and policies and how they have changed over time.		
Processes, Rules, and Laws	SS.6-8.CV.5.LC. Identify the impact of specific rules and laws (both those that are in effect and proposed) on multiple individuals and communities in relationship to the intended issues they were meant to address. Analyze cause-and-effect relationships of issues that resulted in specific rules and laws	SS.6-8.CV.5.MdC. Analyze the perspectives and positions of multiple individuals and communities impacted by specific rules and laws (both actual and proposed); the equitable application of rules and laws; and consequences for not abiding by rules and laws historic and contemporary settings.	SS.6-8.CV.5.MC. Develop and evaluate procedures for making decisions in historic and contemporary settings (e.g., school; civil society; or local, state, or national governments).		

	K - 12 CIVICS Disciplinary Concepts
Topics	Grades 9 - 12
utions	SS.9-12.CV.1. Distinguish between the rights, roles, powers, and responsibilities of individuals and institutions in the political system and analyze the marginalization of multiple groups and perspectives in that system.
Civic and Political Institutions	SS.9-12.CV.2. Evaluate the opportunities and limitations of participation in elections, voting, and the electoral process, and the impact disenfranchisement has on these processes.
nd Polit	SS.9-12.CV.3. Analyze constitutions, laws, and agreements to determine the degree to which they achieve justice, equality, and liberty.
Civic a	SS.9-12.CV.4. Evaluate the U.S. Constitution's ability to establish a system of government with power, responsibilities, and limits, and explain how the U.S. Constitution has evolved/changed over time and is still debated.
Participation and Deliberation: Applying Civic Virtues and Democratic Principles	SS.9-12.CV.5. Analyze civic dispositions, democratic principles, constitutional rights, and human rights and their impact on personal interests and multiple perspectives.
rights, and human rights and their impact on personal interests and metallic perspectives. SS.9-12.CV.6. Identify and explain how political parties, the media, and interest groups both influence and reflect social and political interests. SS.9-12.CV.7. Compare and contrast the democratic concepts and pri	
Part Deliber Civi Demo	SS.9-12.CV.7. Compare and contrast the democratic concepts and principles inherent to the U.S. system of government.
les,	SS.9-12.CV.8. Analyze the methods individuals can use to challenge laws to address a variety of public issues.
Processes, Rules, and Laws	SS.9-12.CV.9. Evaluate public policies in terms of intended and unintended outcomes and related consequences on different communities, including the marginalization of multiple groups.
Pro	SS.9-12.CV.10. Explain the role of compromise and deliberation in the legislative process.

Reflection

What do the revised Civics standards ask of you? Your students?

Which of these are you most comfortable facilitating? Which of them are most uncomfortable for you?

How might these standards be met through free inquiry?

What learning/unlearning might you engage in to best support the implementation of these standards?

Glossary

Action: the real-life application of a student-driven inquiry. This may come in several ways: a community project, a student-written research paper, or other unique forms of engagement.

Affirmation: a term of support and acknowledgment.

Ancestral: derived from ancestors. These forms of knowledge and practice can be rooted in both familial and fictive kinship relationships with people from the past.

Authentic Curriculum: a curriculum that stays true to student-led and student-driven inquiry. Oftentimes, an authentic curriculum leads to a lifelong connection between the student and the lesson.

BIPOC: acronym referring to Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color.

Community: the near (or far) surrounding people, cultural practices, and wisdom that people interact with on a daily basis. Each student's community may look vastly different based on their existence.

Community responsiveness: community-responsive pedagogical practices advance the work of critical pedagogy and culturally responsive pedagogy by centralizing a community's context in the education of children and youth (Communityresponsive.org).

Community rootedness: Relationships, practices, and knowledge that emerge from, and grow within, communities.

Disenfranchisement: act of being deprived of rights, power, or privileges.

Dominator culture: societies rooted in beliefs and practices that reproduce hierarchy, domination, and power imbalance.

Enclosure: termed introduced by Damien Sojoyner to illuminate the ways that systems of oppression limit (or enclosure) life and the ability to be well.

Feedback: the quality suggestions that can be gained from your administration, fellow teachers, or the students in your classroom.

Intentions: the desired outcomes of your teaching practices regarding what you hope students will be able to engage in/do.

Intersectionality: the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

Kasserian Ingera (translation: and how are the children): a traditional Swahili greeting shared by Maasai warriors of Kenya and Tanzania. This greeting centers the most important responsibility of society: to protect and cultivate youth well-being. It reflects a communal belief that the well-being of young people reflects the well-being of society as a whole. When all of the children are not well, the society is not well.

Marginalized: communities that are treated as insignificant and/or peripheral.

Oppression: the exercise of authority or power in a burdensome, cruel, or unjust manner.

Partnership culture: societies rooted in beliefs and practices that value and utilize each member's unique wisdom, experiences, and contributions.

Power: the capacity to influence, lead, dominate, or otherwise have an impact on the lives and actions of others in society. The concept of power encompasses but is not limited to, the notion of authority. (Britannica)

Praxes: what Paulo Freire defines as continuous reflection and action.

Primary Resource: the first-hand accounts that secondary sources are built upon. These are texts that are as close to the original experience as possible and can include letters, photographs, newspaper reports from an eyewitness or someone who interviewed them, laws, and oral histories.

Secondary Resource: materials that offer interpretations of first-hand accounts and often synthesize information from many different sources to create a coherent narrative. These can include books, reports, academic articles, films, YouTube videos, and web exhibits.

Glossary

Squad: a team or group of people committed to similar aspirations.

Standards: the base and guidance for education. For the purposes of this module, we'll be using the revised Illinois Learning Standards for Social Science.

Student Driven: action and instructions that come from a student's own exploration of the content rather than following the direct instruction of a teacher.

Student-led Inquiry: driven by authentic questions and grounded in a cycle of making meaning, investigation, synthesis, and reflection. (redesignu. org).

Systemic Oppression: systemic oppression is systematic and has historical antecedents; it is the intentional disadvantaging of groups of people based on their identity while advantaging members of the dominant group (gender, race, class, sexual orientation, language, etc.)." (National Equity Project)

Systems: systems can include the assumptions, behaviors, attitudes, and everyday practices that work to aid in the negative or positive interactions a student may face.

Teacher-Student Partnership: the act of seeing students as equals in the process of developing their journey to and through critical civics.

Theory: a system of ideas that helps to explain the mechanisms of teaching and its effects on students' learning. (link.springer.com)

Traditional Civics: often defined as "the study of the way in which a local government works and of the rights and duties of the people who live in the city." (Cambridge) But often neglects the original and complex lives of the very people a community is made up of. Generally, a very generalized idea of the "duties" of the "average man."

Unlearning: the intentional act of reevaluating and improving teaching practices based on student needs. Often involves letting go of past assumptions and methodology.

Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR): a form of action research that positions students as researchers engaging in inquiry and action.





Resources

Readings

A PBL (project-based learning) approach to questioning (by Andrew Miller)

Asset and Action-Based Approaches to Civic Learning (report by Mizuko Ito and Remy Cross)

Braiding Sweetgrass (book by Robin Wall Kimmerer)

Breaking Down Forms of Power (a short article from Medium)

<u>Civic Engagement in Communities of Color</u> (book by Kristen Duncan)

From Inquiry to Action (by Steven Zimelman)

Inquiry to Action Framework (by Chicago Public Schools)

Land as teacher: Understanding Indigenous Land-Based Education (blog by Unesco Canada)

Leading the Shift from a Dominator to Partnership Culture (blog by Riane Eisler & Lucy Garrick)

Lens of Systemic Oppression (National Equity Project)

Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Chapter 1 (book by Paulo Freire)

Powerful Practices (developed by Chicago Public Schools)

Social Identities and Systems of Oppression (from the NMAAHC Smithsonian)

The 3 Faces of Power (from TheGrassrootsPowerProject.org)

The Intersection of Our Place Stories and Place-Based Learning (by Micki Evans and Erin Sanchez)

Transforming Schools to Serve Our Children Well (blog by Linda Darling-Hammond)

What Does It Mean to Think Historically (by Bruce VanSledright)

Multi-media

Community and Cultural Wealth in Social Studies (video by the Social Studies Network)

Community and Life in Social Studies (podcast featuring Y'Shanda Rivera)

Community Responsive Education (website)

Community Responsiveness (video by Jeff Duncan-Andrade)

In Lak'ech: You Are My Other Me (Ed Talk by Magnolia Landa-Posas)

Just Seeds Graphics (by Just Seeds)

<u>Kasserian Ingera: How are the Children</u> (video podcast with Joy Degruy & Bahia Overton)

Overview of Inquiry-Based Learning in Social Studies (video from the Social Studies Network)

Using AI to Generate Research Questions (video)

What is Intersectionality? (video by Peter Hopkins)

Why Inquiry-Based Learning in Social Studies? (video from the Social Studies Network)

Resources

Curriculum

Berkeley's YPAR Hub

Civic Life Project (by National Council for Social Studies)

<u>Civic Online Reasoning</u> (by the Digital Inquiry Group)

Community Mapping (Curricular resource by Iain McIntyre)

Connecting Past And Present With Primary Sources

Evaluating Online Sources

Facing History and Ourselves Civic Education

Helping Students Build Better Research Questions (by Hunter College library)

Illinois Humanities - Envisioning Justice

<u>Inquiry With and In Community Toolkit</u> (by the Social Studies Network)

<u>Institute for Humane Education Lesson Plans & Teaching Resources</u>

Key Questions for Media Literacy (by the New York Times Learning Network)

<u>Learning for Justice Window and Mirror Activity</u>

Lesson plan: Characteristics of effective research questions (by Brianne Markowski & Rachel Dineen)

StoryCorps Connect teacher toolkit

The Stases as Research Method (from Hunter College, CUNY)

Towards Inquiry and Inclusion in Social Studies Toolkit (toolkit from the Social Studies Network)

Window and Mirror Graphic Organizer

Zinn Education Project Teaching Materials

Primary and Secondary Resources

Chicago Defender Archives

Illinois Digital Archives

Illinois State Archives

Library of Congress

National Museum African American History Archive

University of Illinois Archives

Organizations

Chicago Votes

City Bureau

Learning for Justice

Mikva Challenge

Newberry Library Teacher Programs

Right Question Institute

UIC's Institute for Policy and Civic Engagement





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