

THE ESSENTIAL CITIZENSHIP COMPETENCIES:

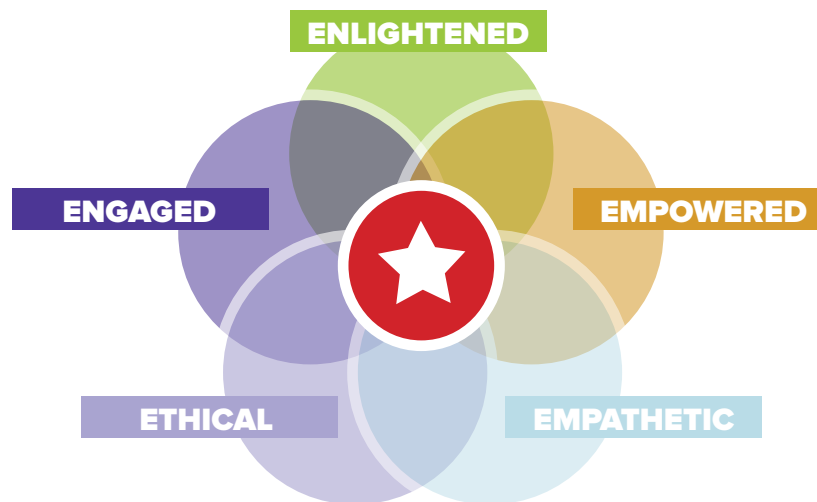
The Journey and the Destination of Justice-Oriented Citizenship Education

Many outcomes, situations, and issues require students to think contextually, critically, and creatively.

The Essential Citizenship Competencies (ECCs) support this thinking.

There are 5 ECCs, each with its own knowledge, skills, and disposition.

Used together, they guide students to a deep, justice-oriented understanding of a question, topic, or issue.



I/WE

- **INVESTIGATE** the history and context of issues.
- **EXAMINE** power - its sources, forms, and implications.
- **SEEK**, understand, and reason fairly from multiple points of view.
- **EVALUATE** rights and responsibilities.
- **TAKE ACTION** that targets root causes.

WHY ARE THE ECCS AT THE HEART OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION?

When faced with a new question, issue, or situation, our minds like to make sense of things rapidly! Here's the problem: If we trust the answer that comes quickly and first, we may be convinced of it because we've always believed it, or because it's in our selfish interest to believe it (Egocentrism and Sociocentrism, Foundation for Critical Thinking).

If everyone does this, we end up with misunderstanding and conflict! Here's the solution: if we use the ECCs, we can understand the question, issue, or situation more deeply, and enter into an "ethical space" (Willy Ermine) of respectful problem-solving.

ECC QUESTIONS TO GUIDE THINKING

ENLIGHTENED

Citizens assume that issues have histories and contexts and seek to understand both.

- What are the Who? What? When? Where? Why? of this situation / dilemma / issue?
- What led to this?
- What are the most important things we need to know to understand this situation?
- How can we find out?

EMPATHETIC

Citizens assume that power matters and investigate the sources, forms, levels, (re)distribution, and impacts of power in a given context.

- Who has power in this situation? How do you know?
- Who doesn't have power in this situation? How do you know?
- What kind(s) of power are involved here, and how does one get or lose it?
- What are the implications of the power distribution for those involved and affected?

EMPATHETIC

Citizens assume that there are multiple points of view and seek to understand and reason fairly-mindedly about and from each of them.

- Who are the individuals, groups, institutions, & environments involved in or affected?
- How does each one experience and view this situation, problem, or issue?
- What is most precious to each one? Why?

ETHICAL

Citizens assume that rights and responsibilities exist in every context and examine which are upheld and which are breached.

- What rights do people have? What is the source or basis of these rights?
- Are these rights protected or threatened? How? With what consequences?
- What responsibilities do people have? What is the source or basis of these responsibilities?
- Are these responsibilities being met or ignored? How? With what consequences?

ENGAGED

Citizens assume that they have agency and influence and take individual and collective actions which target root causes of inequities. (option: use the GRASPS Planning Tool to engage in these questions)

- What are the root sources and causes of this problem?
- What needs to change? Why?
- What strategies will best support this change?
- How will we evaluate the impact of the actions we take to address the issue?



Sherry Van Hesteren (2019)

THE ESSENTIAL CITIZENSHIP COMPETENCIES (ECC) WRAP

The ECC Wrap supports individuals and groups to apply the ECC questions to a question, issue, or problem.

As thinkers progress through Enlightened, Empowered, Empathetic, and Ethical, they create the knowledge and sensitivities needed to Engage.

When they are done, they can turn to the GRASPS Citizenship Education planning tool to determine how to respond to the issue at hand! (PDF version available in resources)

ENGAGED

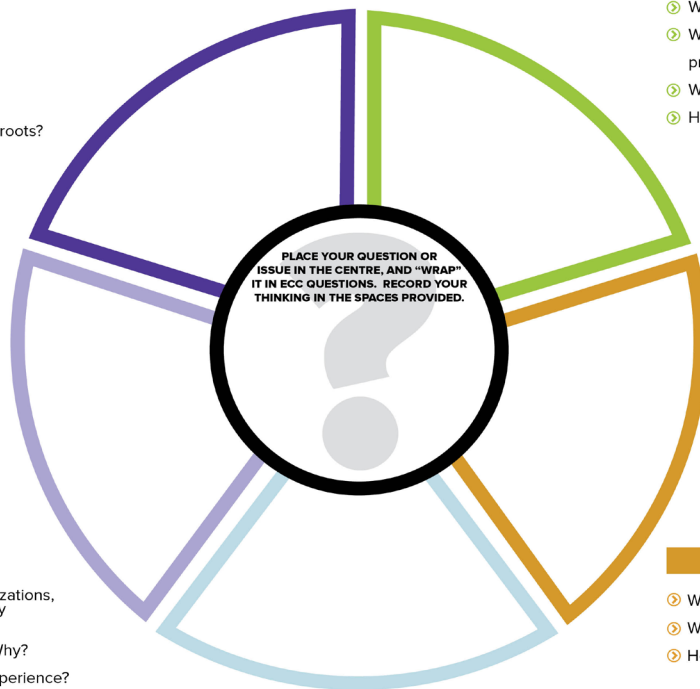
- ④ What actions do / could people, organizations and institutions take?
- ④ With what implications?
 - positive and negative
 - intended and unintended
 - immediate and long term
- ④ Which actions target the problem at its roots?

ETHICAL

- ④ What are the rights involved?
- ④ Whose are they?
- ④ What are the responsibilities involved?
- ④ Whose are they?
- ④ Are they being upheld or broken?

ETHICAL

- ④ Who are the individuals, groups, organizations, and environments directly and indirectly involved and affected?
- ④ What is most important to each one? Why?
- ④ What benefits and harms does each experience?



ENLIGHTENED

- ④ Let's start with the 5Ws !
- ④ What led to this ?
- ④ What are the key signs and symptoms of the problem?
- ④ What are the root causes?
- ④ How can we find out?

EMPOWERED

- ④ What kinds and levels of power are involved?
- ④ Who has it? Who doesn't? Why?
- ④ How is power gained? Lost?