THE ESSENTIAL CITIZENSHIP COMPETENCIES

Becoming justice-oriented citizens is a lifelong process of developing and practicing the 5 Essential Citizenship Competencies (ECCs). While each competency has its own distinct knowledge, skills, and disposition, the competencies are, in fact, interdependent.

ENLIGHTENED

ENGAGED

EMPOWERED

ETHICAL

EMPATHETIC
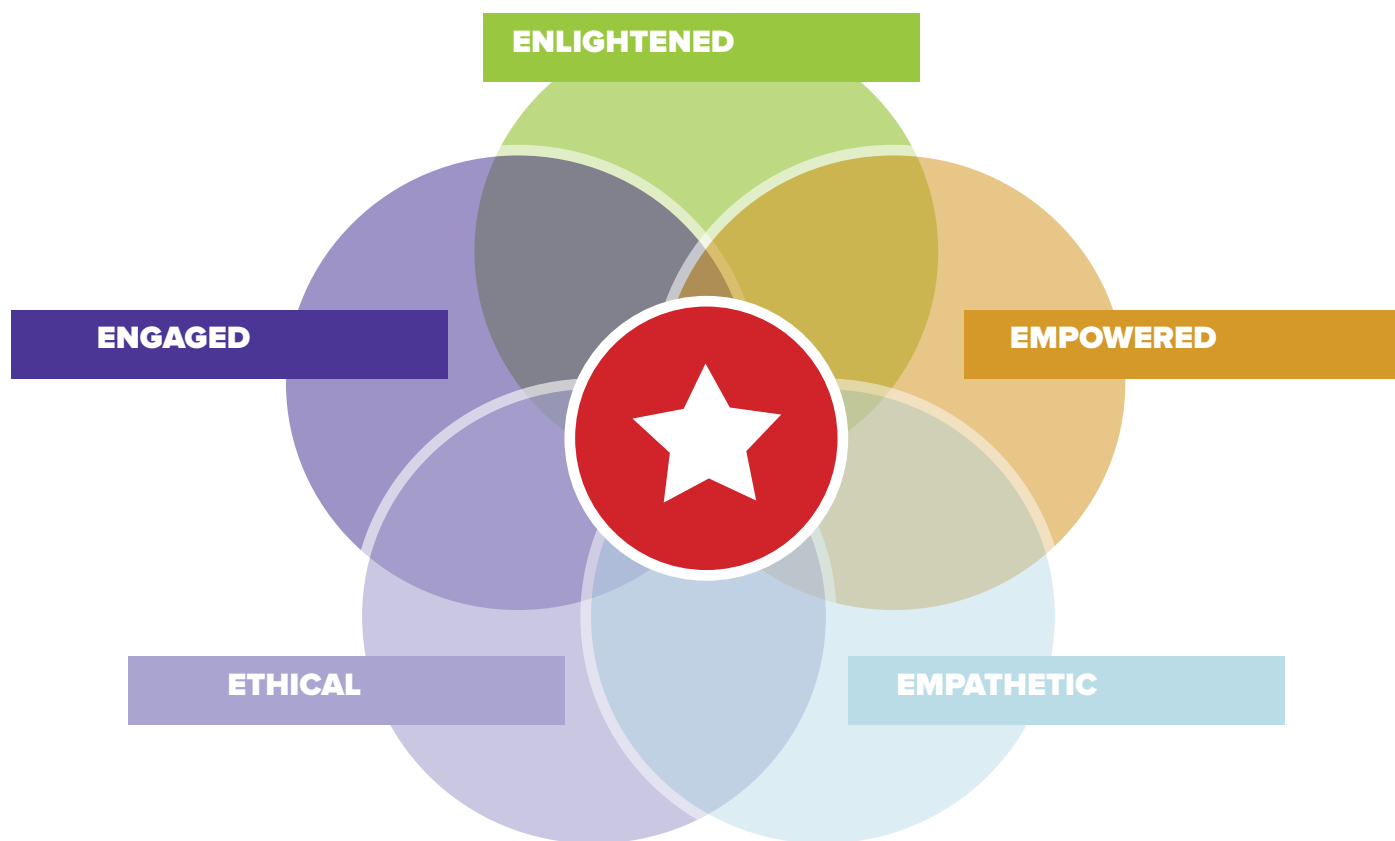
> **Enlightened** citizens assume that issues & inequities have histories and contexts & seek to understand both.
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> **Empowered** citizens assume that a complex and dynamic distribution of power is always present & investigate the sources, forms, levels, distribution & impacts of power in a given context.
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> **Empathetic** citizens seek to understand what is precious to the individuals, groups, institutions, and environments involved in and affected by an issue; they strive to reason fair-mindedly about and from diverse points of view.
>
> **Ethical** citizens can identify the rights and responsibilities inherent in a given context and evaluate the extent to which these are upheld and/or breached.
>
> **Engaged c**itizens understand their own positionality in relation to an issue and discern what they can and should do, individually and collectively, to address a root cause.

Many outcomes and issues require students to think contextually, critically, and creatively. Used together, the ECCs guide students to co-construct deep, justice-oriented understandings of questions, topics, or issues in their cross-curricular learning and their lives as active members of multiple communities.

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. If everyone does this, we end up with misunderstanding and conflict! (Adapted from Foundation for Critical Thinking," Egocentrism and Sociocentrism"   https://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/defining-critical-thinking/766)

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" of respectful problem-solving. (see Willy Ermine's article, "The Ethical Space of Engagement"   https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ilj/article/view/27669/20400)