The Practice of Politics has Changed: Redesigning Civic Education for the digital age

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Democracy is precarious
Civic Knowledge: Low and Unequal

Scored Below Basic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>50%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

NAEP 2010
Political and Civic Engagement: Low and Inequitable

18–29 years old

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>% Voted in 2012</th>
<th>% Volunteered</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS Grad</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No HS Degree</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>26.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td></td>
<td>14.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>HS Grad</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No HS Degree</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

2012 Current Population Survey
Civic Ed, not just more, different
Digital media is now central to politics

- How money is raised
- How people are mobilized
- Where people get information
- Where youth voice concerns
## 5 New dynamics in the digital age

- Fewer gatekeepers
- Powerful social networks
- Individual choice
- Digital tools
- Participatory culture
What are Participatory Politics?

- Meant to address issues of public concern
- Practiced through social networks
- Not guided by deference to elites or formal institutions
The Arab Spring Facebook Revolution

Egyptian protesters hold placard which thanks Facebook for enabling the protestors raise their voice. Photo – Richard Engel/NBC
What did Martha do?
- Builds on what youth already do

Participatory Politics are key for youth
Are Participatory Politics worth attending to?

Do many youth actually engage this way?

Do youth who tweet about politics, vote?

Is there a digital divide?

Is there a role for education?
Survey of 2,920 American youth aged 15-25
Conducted between February and June 2011

Principal Investigators:
Cathy Cohen, University of Chicago
Joseph Kahne, Mills College

Research Team:
Ben Bowyer,
Chris Evans,
Ellen Middaugh,
Jon Rogowski
Are Participatory Politics an important dimension of politics?

% of 15-25 Year Olds

- Any Participatory Act: 41%
- Voted / Intends to Vote: 41%
- Any Other Political Act: 44%

Trends in online Participatory Politics

- Posted PICTURES or VIDEO online about a political or social issue?
  - 10% in 2008
  - 21% in 2012

- Posted political news for friends or others to read on a social networking site?
  - 13% in 2008
  - 32% in 2012

- Started or joined a political group, or group supporting a cause on a social networking site?
  - 14% in 2008
  - 26.2% in 2012

- Posted comments on a website or blog about a political or social issue?
  - 23% in 2008
  - 29.6% in 2012

% of 18-25 Year-Olds
Will Participatory Politics become an alternative to traditional politics?

Political Activity among Young People

- Engage in both participatory politics and institutional politics: 37%
- Disengaged politically: 34%
- Only engage in participatory politics: 4%
- Vote and engage with political institutions only: 25%

Will Participatory Politics become an alternative to traditional politics?
Does Digital Social Capital link to or distract from Civic and Political Engagement?
Are youth participatory politics structured by the digital divide?

% Doing at Least One Participatory Political Act

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Income</th>
<th>Doing at Least One Participatory Political Act</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; $25K</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25k-$50k</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50k-$75k</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75k-$100k</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100k+</td>
<td>47%</td>
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</table>

Core practices of politics are different in the digital age
Research and investigation is significantly different

“Don’t believe everything you read on the Internet just because there’s a picture with a quote next to it.”

—Abraham Lincoln
Youth get the challenge

“Would people like you and your friends benefit from learning more about how to tell if the news and information you find online is trustworthy?”

Yes
84%
Dialogue is significantly different

How to start an argument online:

1. Say something
2. That’s about it
Circulation and Production is significantly different in the digital age

45% got news in the past week from Twitter or FB posts of family and friends

49% got news in past week from newspapers and magazines (online and off)
Mobilization is significantly different in the digital age.
Implications
One option, let youth learn on their own
Or try to stop it

Students bring phones every day:

- 76% Schools allow phones in class
- 65% Schools totally forbid phones

Students have texted in class:

- 71% Schools allow phones in class
- 58% Schools totally forbid phones

Pew Report 2010
Redesign Civic Education

- Attend to changed political practice.
- Attend to need for new learning opportunities.
Looking forward to your:

Thoughts

Questions

Comments

for more information:

http://ypp.dmlcentral.net/
civic education for the digital age

More information on this and other network projects: http://ypp.dmlcentral.net
4 Teams, 3 Cities

Los Angeles
- MAPP at USC (Media, Activism & Participatory Politics project)
- Institute for Multimedia Literacy at USC

Oakland
- Oakland Unified School District
- National Writing Project
- CERG at Mills College

Chicago
- The Good Participation Project at Harvard
- Facing History and Ourselves
- Black Youth Project
- Chicago Public Schools
The Quality/Efficacy of democratic institutions

Number of Bills passed:

61

Number of Bills introduced in the 2012 Congress:

3,914
Global warming is caused by human activity

- Democrats: 75%
  - No College Degree: 52%
  - College Degree: 27%
- Republicans: 31%
  - No College Degree: 19%
  - College Degree: 31%
Does redesign change all the fundamentals?

- The principles of democratic education.
- The significance of inequality, diversity, root causes of problems.