

CityWorks Evaluation Summary

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CityWorks Evaluation Executive Summary

Interviewer: What are your feelings about government and politics?

Student 1: It's boring.

Interviewer: When you say it's boring, what's boring about it?

Student 1: The subject matter.

Student 2: Yes, very true.

Student 1: It's not just the work. It's what the work is about. We don't care about it.

-High school seniors from a traditional government classroom.

Interviewer: Has this class changed the way you think about government?

Student 1: Entirely. Before this, I didn't care about government.

Student 2: Exactly.

Student 1: I was just like; it's not part of my business. I'm living my life, they can -- they make the laws. I'll follow the laws. Fine. But now, it's like I know why the laws are here and how they make the laws.

Student 2: And how can you change them if you want to...

-CityWorks students

This report summarizes findings from our study of the Constitutional Rights Foundation (CRF) CityWorks curriculum. This high school government curriculum was designed to respond to growing recognition of the need to promote commitments and capacities associated with civic engagement. Our data consists of pre/post surveys from CityWorks classes and control classrooms. We also observed classrooms and collected interview data through focus groups.

- We found ($p < .05$) that the CityWorks curriculum promoted greater commitments to Participatory Citizenship, Justice Oriented Citizenship and Interest in Service than non-CityWorks classes. We can say with 90% confidence ($p < .10$) that the CityWorks curriculum promoted greater commitments to Personal Responsibility, Knowledge of Social Networks, Leadership Efficacy and Civic Efficacy than non-CityWorks classes.
- Data also indicated that Cityworks fostered greater gains in knowledge than traditional classrooms as measured by the content assessment.
- We found that participating in simulations, service learning, and exposure to role models all increased students' sense of their capacities and commitments. Of these, simulations and exposure to role-models had the broadest impact.
- We found that opportunities to "learn about aspects of society that need changing" and opportunities to "work on issues that matter to students" had broad positive impact on students' sense of their capacities and commitments.