



## **Generation Citizen and Student Efficacy**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report presents results from a research investigation conducted on behalf of Generation Citizen (GC), a charitable organization that places college student volunteers (“Democracy Coaches”) in urban schools to implement an action civics curriculum alongside classroom teachers. The program aims to cultivate civic engagement and ultimately close the civic engagement gap between historically marginalized communities and their more advantaged counterparts.

GC contracted with Glass Frog Solutions to undergo a study aimed at better understanding how students involved in the GC program gain “efficacy” or confidence that they can impact civic and governmental processes and that those in leadership positions will be responsive to their demands and requests. This report draws on data conducted at several points during students’ participation in the GC program thus seeks to answer three questions:

1. What was students’ efficacy like at the time they started working with GC?
2. Did students’ efficacy change over the course of their time in the GC program?
3. Which elements of the GC program appear to impact student efficacy?

## **METHODOLOGY**

We conducted interviews with 13 students participating in the GC program in New York City and Boston. At each wave, we asked questions about students’ ideas about civic participation and their experiences in the GC program, seeking to uncover whether students’ ideas about their own capabilities were changing and whether certain elements of the program were associated with these changes. We also sought to ask questions that were similar enough at each wave that students’ responses could be compared over time.

All interviews were conducted by trained interviewers in a private setting outside of the classroom. Interviews were recorded and transcribed and then analyzed. For the analysis, we sorted the interviews by student and then, for each student, we read through the interviews one at a time and took detailed notes on initial ideas about civic activity and efficacy and how these ideas and the nature of their responses changed over time. From there, we aimed to induce a pattern in students’ responses and to uncover consistencies in the stories and accounts they shared.

## **CONCEPTUALIZING & MEASURING STUDENT EFFICACY**

For our purposes, we distinguish between two types of political efficacy: internal and external. We define internal efficacy as one’s feeling that s/he understands the political process sufficiently and has sufficient skill to exert influence on this process, whereas external efficacy is defined as one’s confidence that governmental systems and public officials themselves are responsive to citizen concerns and requests. These concepts are related but distinct and students might have different feelings about their

own knowledge and abilities versus how they will be received by members of an elite power structure. Our study asked questions to gauge both internal and external efficacy among students.

## FINDINGS

*Question 1: What was students' efficacy like at the time they started working with GC?*

With some exceptions, most students in this sample entered the GC program with the feeling that they have a say in what goes on in their schools and, to a lesser extent, their communities. Nearly all students felt like students can, in principle, make a difference in their communities and more than half of these students felt like they could lead a group that would bring about social change.

Students' feelings about the responsiveness of public officials were mixed and somewhat ambivalent. A minority of students felt public officials actually care about what they think; others were unsure or even felt that officials do not care. Most students in the sample felt very strongly that the teachers and administrators in their schools were both supportive and responsive to their needs and requests.

Notably, most students who reported having high levels of internal efficacy had very little previous experience working on social, civic, or governmental issues. Their confidence in their own ability to effect change was more of an abstraction, rooted in strong ideas about how things *should* be rather than in actual experiences with how things are. That students would be able to impact civic and governmental processes seemed patently obvious to some students, given what they have been told by their teachers and learned in their history classes. For instance, when asked to elaborate on why they feel people like them have a say in what goes on in their schools or communities, students responded with statements like, "It only takes one person to actually do something to take a step forward" and "There have been so many incidents throughout history where one person made a huge difference; even if it's something as minor as picking up trash on a sidewalk, it makes a difference." While these statements are not untrue, few students provided any evidence that these statements were borne out of experience rather than ideas. Some pointed to other students in their school who had managed to effect change (e.g., by enacting a school uniform policy), but acknowledged that they had never been involved in this type of activity themselves.

Moreover, despite claims by the majority of students that they would be able to lead a group in an effort to enact civic change, most students demonstrated fairly low knowledge of how they would go about doing this. We asked students at baseline to describe a problem in their community or school that needed to be addressed and then articulate their plan to solve this problem. Most students were able to describe a problem, but few students could articulate a plan.

This was also true for some students reporting high external efficacy, particularly when asked about the responsiveness of public officials to their needs. In most cases, their belief in the responsiveness of public officials was not grounded in any real experience.

*Question 2: Did students' efficacy change over the course of their time in the GC program?*

Overall, self-reported levels of internal efficacy did not appear to change markedly from baseline to the end of the semester. Responses to questions about external efficacy revealed once again that many students were still ambivalent about whether public officials really care about what they think, but that most students felt that principals, teachers, and other people in their schools do care.

By the end of the program, students' responses to other interview questions revealed that they were starting to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to ground their previously abstract feelings of efficacy. Rather than simply agreeing or disagreeing with abstract principles, students were beginning to be able to identify how and why they would be able to make their voices heard. Importantly, even some students who seemed to feel that public officials or school officials would not be responsive to them were still able to point to shifts in their own mindsets and skillsets.

*Question 3: Which elements of the GC program appear to impact student efficacy?*

Our data suggest three components of the Generation Citizen curriculum that played a central role in encouraging change among students in this sample: the GC program as a "template," learning by doing, and participation in Civics Day.

*GC program as a "template"*

By the end of their time with the program, many students conceded that, though they had previously felt that students *could* bring about social change, they would not have known how to do something like that before GC. Notably, as the previous analyses make clear, most of these students did not lack idealism and confidence, but rather the tangible civic, organizational, and leadership skills to actually turn their idealism into action. For some students, the GC program as it unfolded in their classroom acted as a template for how they might undertake a similar project in the future. When asked at the end of the program if they felt they could lead a GC-type project on their own, students noted that they would just replicate what they learned in their GC classes.

*Learning by Doing*

Observing the Democracy Coaches in action provides a framework that students can replicate. However, actually working on the activities associated with their projects allows them to practice certain skills in a low stress, collaborative setting. As mentioned, working within the "step by step" framework described above, students began to gain experience in organizing and following through with a plan. With little prompting, many students were also able to point to specific tasks they worked on that helped bolster their confidence that they could lead a project aimed at creating social or civic change.

*Civics Day*

Students who attended Civics Day were excited to share their memories of the day and talk about how their group performed. Some of these students also pointed to Civics Day as being a turning point in their general enthusiasm for the class and, somewhat surprisingly, as an experience that increased both

internal and external efficacy. Whereas other programmatic components (discussed above) served to increase students' skills and knowledge of how to tackle large projects, attending Civics Day appeared to impact their mindsets and attitudes about the value of their civic efforts. Two factors were at play here.

First, many students who attended Civics Day were excited that adults from the "real world" had responded positively to their ideas. These students reported that the responsiveness and encouragement from the judges at Civics Day served to validate their efforts and bolster their confidence in the value of their projects.

Notably, the impact here appeared to be on students' sense of external efficacy. Seeing that adults cared about and were engaged in their projects strengthened students' feelings that their efforts all semester were not in vain. The lesson was, if they work hard, they may really be able to impact people's ideas and decisions.

Attending Civics Day also may also have an impact on students' internal efficacy. Students who attended Civics Day were motivated by observing their peers in action. By seeing that other students had worked hard on their projects and had started reaching some of their goals, students started to see what was possible for them.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

This section draws on the findings presented above to present some recommendations for how GC can further build efficacy among students in its classrooms.

### **(1) Simplify and clarify a step-by-step framework for setting a goal, organizing a team, and implementing civic change.**

While there are many different ways of creating social change, students were quick to point to the GC program as providing a template for how they might effect social or civic change on their own. This template resonates with many students who see it as a type of formula for future activities. We therefore recommend that GC continue to develop and refine a template that provides a step-by-step framework for setting a goal, organizing a team, and enacting civic change. This framework should be comprehensive enough that it covers all of the steps necessary for organizing and completing a project, but also simple enough that students with little previous civic experience will be able to adopt it with little problem.

Democracy Coaches should be instructed to make it clear that the framework can be used not only for tackling other school projects, but extracurricular projects as well. The curriculum should provide examples for how this is possible, possibly in the form of a one-page handout showing a flow chart plotting the steps toward creating social change.

**(2) Use carefully selected baseline metrics to identify efficacy levels among students and then use carefully designed activities to build efficacy accordingly.**

Every student (and class) enters the GC program with a different set of skills, attitudes, and beliefs. Though GC collects baseline survey data from students, these data are used for evaluation purposes and not to identify and address student needs. We recommend working to develop a handful of simple metrics to be collected at baseline that will enable program directors and Democracy Coaches to gauge efficacy among students and then implement activities designed to build efficacy, particularly among students showing very low levels at baseline.

**(3) Continue to provide opportunities for positive interactions with adult professionals and public officials.**

Many students expressed ambivalence about whether public officials would be responsive to their needs. This ambivalence did not really change over the course of the semester. We believe this may be partly attributed to a lack of experience interacting with politicians and public officials. Indeed, students who did have prior experiences in this area were more likely to point to these experiences as reasons why public officials might care about their ideas and needs. We therefore recommend that GC work to cultivate relationships with local officials and then encourage those officials to meet with students during the semester and learn about their ideas. Similarly, students may even benefit from meeting with local officials at the beginning of their projects to learn more about the types of concerns they deal with daily and to reinforce that they are interested in students' ideas.

We further recommend that the program continue to create built-in opportunities for students to meet and share their ideas with adult professionals both inside and outside their schools. It could be beneficial, for example, for students to meet with these professionals a week or two prior to Civics Day to get "real world" feedback and to have additional exposure to adults.

**(4) Encourage Democracy Coaches to select and groom some low efficacy students to attend Civics Day**

All students who attended Civics Day cited it as a positive if not transformative experience for them. Most students who attended the event were already somewhat engaged in the project and therefore Civics Day served to boost their interest and motivation. However, students on the margins—those who are only sometimes engaged or those whose interest in the project fluctuates over the semester—may also benefit tremendously from attending the event. We recommend that Democracy Coaches be instructed to select and groom at least one low efficacy student from each class to attend Civics Day. They will have the chance to see what their peers have been working on and it may serve as the moment where they finally see the value of what their class has been working on all semester.

## GENERATION CITIZEN AND STUDENT EFFICACY

This report presents results from a research investigation conducted on behalf of Generation Citizen (GC), a nonprofit 501(c)(3) charitable organization that places college student volunteers (“Democracy Coaches”) in urban schools to implement an action civics curriculum alongside classroom teachers. The program aims to cultivate civic engagement and ultimately close the civic engagement gap between historically marginalized communities and their more advantaged counterparts.

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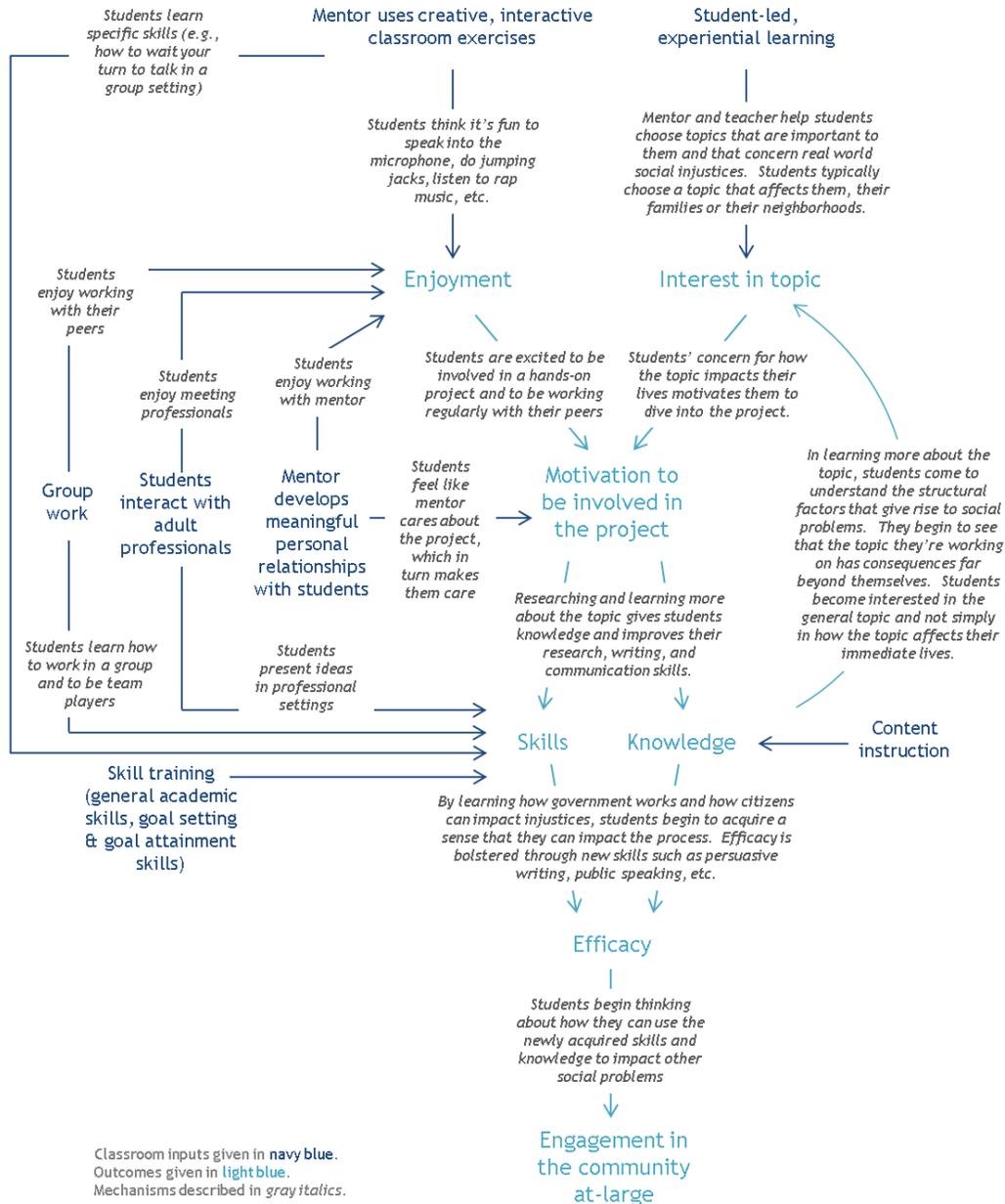
To answer our questions, we draw on interviews conducted at several points during students’ participation in the GC program in their classrooms. This report begins by describing these methods in greater detail and then provides a discussion of how we conceptualized and measured efficacy for this project. The remainder of the report is framed around the three questions presented above. In each case, we draw on students’ responses during each interview wave to answer the questions. We conclude the report with several recommendations for how GC can refine existing programmatic components to bolster student efficacy going forward.

## EFFICACY & THE GC THEORY OF CHANGE

The primary purpose of the project is to better understand the process by which engaging students in the GC curriculum encourages them to become more confident in their ability to effect civic change as well as their confidence that those in power will respond positively to their efforts. This confidence, otherwise known as “efficacy,” is a central component of the GC theory of change model. Specifically, the program works to give students the skills, knowledge, and mindsets to effect change, which are hypothesized to build efficacy and ultimately promote civic engagement and participation.

In Spring 2012, GC commissioned a study aimed at better understanding the connection between GC’s programmatic inputs and its desired student outcomes. The study’s final report, [An Evaluation of the Mechanisms Linking Generation Citizen’s Classroom Inputs to Student Outcomes](#), drew on data from student interviews to outline the mechanisms linking inputs to outcomes. Among the findings, the report showed that learning how government works and how individuals can bring about change gives

Figure 1. Linking Generation Citizen classroom inputs to student outcomes. Source: [An Evaluation of the Mechanisms Linking Generation Citizen’s Classroom Inputs to Student Outcomes](#) (Spring 2012).



students the confidence that they too can effect change. This newfound confidence is further bolstered as students learn the skills that might aid in this process, including persuasive writing, critical thinking, and public speaking. A visual representation of how student efficacy fits into GC’s overall theory of change is shown in Figure 1.

The 2012 study was conducted at one point in time, as students were concluding the GC program. Moreover, its aim was to provide a general overview of how the program produces outcomes among students. Thus, while it was able to uncover some broad insights into how the program builds efficacy, we were unable to learn much about whether and why students' confidence in their ability to create social or civic change might grow over the course of their time with the program. As we discuss below, the present study conducted interviews at several points in time with students as they worked their way through the program and therefore can offer more informed insights into how student efficacy changed during their time in the program and how the GC program gave rise to that change.

### METHODOLOGY

We conducted interviews with 13 students participating in the GC program in New York City and Boston.<sup>1</sup> We randomly selected classrooms from the roster of classrooms working with the program in the 2012-2013 academic year. We then asked teachers in these classrooms to ask two to three students from their class if they would be interested in participating. We told teachers to select neither their best or worst students, but rather students they felt were fairly typical of students in their school.

In New York City, we conducted interviews with nine students involved in the program in Fall 2013. We interviewed the students at four points in time: once before the program started, twice during the semester they were involved with the program, and then again after the program had ended. We also re-interviewed seven of these students at the end of the academic year to ask follow-up questions about their memories and final impressions of the program. In Boston, we conducted interviews with four students at four points in time—once before the program began and then three subsequent times. Two students were involved in the half-year program. Two students were involved in the program for the full academic year; however, one of these students dropped the GC class after the second interview and the other had very low attendance at the end of the year and was thus unavailable for the final interview. We still include these students in the final sample because they participated actively in the program and shared important insights throughout the year, but we were unable to include them in the analysis of changes on the “pre/post” efficacy measures presented below.

At each wave, we asked questions about students' ideas about civic participation and their experiences in the GC program, seeking to uncover whether students' ideas about their own capabilities were changing and whether certain elements of the program were associated with these changes. We also sought to ask questions that were similar enough at each wave that students' responses could be compared over time.

The questions were aimed both at directly and indirectly measuring students' ideas, mindsets, and knowledge. For instance, we asked students directly about their interest and engagement in their GC class and projects, but we also asked questions aimed at eliciting how nuanced their interest in and understanding of the class was—e.g., did they know their Democracy Coaches' names? Could they talk

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<sup>1</sup> We started with 16 students, but two of the students transferred out of their Generation Citizen class and two students had such low school attendance that they either failed to show up for interviews or, if present, were unable to offer informed thoughts on the program.

about the purpose of GC and about the topic and goals of their projects? Moreover, we asked students whether they had any prior civic experience and about any skills and knowledge they felt they were gaining during their time with GC; yet we also tried to gauge their actual civic skills and know-how with open ended questions about how they might go about addressing civic problems on their own (or as part of a team).

Table 1 provides an overview of the types of questions we asked at each wave. Copies of the interview guides can be found in Appendix A.

All interviews were conducted by trained interviewers in a private setting outside of the classroom. Interviews were recorded and transcribed and then analyzed. For the analysis, we sorted the interviews by student and then, for each student, we read through the interviews one at a time and took detailed notes on initial ideas about civic activity and efficacy and how these ideas and the nature of their responses changed over time. From there, we aimed to induce a pattern in students' responses and to uncover consistencies in the stories and accounts they shared. That said, even in this small sample, there was considerable variation in students' experiences, ideas, and attitudes about civic change. Though our accounting of the results presents a coherent picture of student efficacy, to the extent possible, we also try to analyze and explain variations in responses.

Table 1. Timing and general topics covered at each interview wave.

Interview	Timing	Types of questions
Baseline	Before program began	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Levels of internal and external efficacy</li> <li>• Ideas about social change in school and community</li> <li>• Plans for how they might bring about social change</li> <li>• Previous civic or political experience</li> </ul>
Follow-up 1	Approx. one-third of way through program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement in GC program, indicated by: ability to describe what GC is, description of Democracy Coach and his/her role, discussion of what class has talked about to date.</li> <li>• Interest in program</li> <li>• Whether they feel like they're learning new things</li> <li>• Enthusiasm about the program</li> </ul>
Follow-up 2	Approx. two-thirds of way through program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Description of Democracy Coach and his/her role</li> <li>• Engagement in project: whether student can describe the topic and goal of the project and whether they feel they're contributing; overall interest in the project's topic</li> <li>• Ability to carry out a project like this on their own</li> <li>• Enthusiasm about the program</li> </ul>
Follow-up 3	At end of program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement in project: whether student can describe the topic and goal of the project; overall interest in the project's topic</li> <li>• Levels of internal and external efficacy</li> <li>• Ideas about social change in school and community</li> <li>• Plans for how they might bring about social change</li> <li>• Ideas about their ability to effect change</li> <li>• How working on GC project prepared them to effect change</li> </ul>
Follow-up 4 (only in NYC)	Five months after program ended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General memories of the program</li> <li>• Memories of the Democracy Coach</li> <li>• Knowledge or skills GC helped them acquire</li> <li>• Future plans for civic involvement</li> </ul>

## CONCEPTUALIZING & MEASURING STUDENT EFFICACY

For our purposes, we distinguish between two types of political efficacy: internal and external. We define internal efficacy as one's feeling that s/he understands the political process sufficiently and has sufficient skill to exert influence on this process, whereas external efficacy is defined as one's confidence that governmental systems and public officials themselves are responsive to citizen concerns and requests. These concepts are related but distinct and students might have different feelings about their own knowledge and abilities versus how they will be received by members of an elite power structure. Our study asked questions to gauge both internal and external efficacy among students.

To understand changes in students' *internal efficacy* over the course of their time with the program, we asked students three questions during the first interview and again right after they completed the program:

1. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "People like me don't have any say about what goes on in my school or in my community."<sup>2</sup>

Students were asked whether they agree with this statement by responding on a scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." They could also state that they were unsure. They were then asked to explain, in their own words, why they chose that response.

2. Do you think students your age can make a difference in the way things work in your school and community? Or is political activity something that's better to wait to do when you're an adult?
3. Are you someone who could easily lead a group and get involved? Or do you feel like you should leave the political activity to others and get involved in something else? Or are you somewhere in the middle?

Students were asked to answer yes or no to both questions and then provide a brief justification for their responses.

To gauge students' *external efficacy*, we asked students two questions about the extent to which they believed people in power care about them and would be responsive to them:

1. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "Public officials don't care much about what people like me think."
2. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "Principals, teachers, and other people in charge in my school don't care much about what people like me think."

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<sup>2</sup> This question and the external efficacy questions were adapted from items on the National Election Study questionnaire. This first question is often used as a measure of external efficacy (though there is some debate over whether it better measures internal or external efficacy). We felt that it served as an indicator of students' perceptions of themselves and their own power and therefore include it as a measure of internal efficacy.

For both questions, students were asked whether they agree with this statement by responding on a scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” They could also state that they were unsure. Once again, they were then asked to explain why they chose that response.

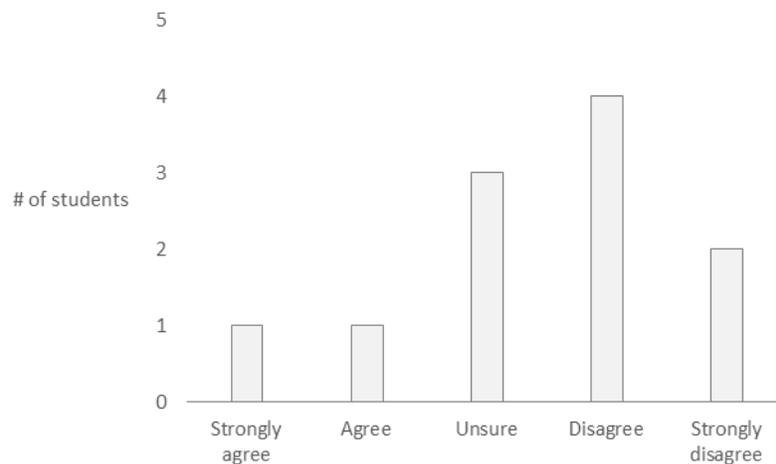
## FINDINGS

*Question 1: What was students’ efficacy like at the time they started working with GC?*

### Internal efficacy

As mentioned above, during the baseline interview, we asked students questions to gauge their internal efficacy. Figure 2 shows the distribution of students’ responses at baseline to the statement: “People like me don’t have any say about what goes on in my school or in my community.”

Figure 2. Distribution of students' baseline responses to statement: "People like me don't have any say about what goes on in my school or in my community."



Overall, students’ responses were mixed. More than half of the students (6 out of 11) disagreed or strongly disagreed, indicating they felt that students *do* have a say in what goes on in their schools and communities. Three students were unsure of how to respond because of the way the question was worded; each of these students pointed out that they felt like they had a say in what happened in their schools, but not necessarily in their communities. Finally, two students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. These students, both of whom were high school seniors, indicated that it was their experiences at school that led them to feel this way. One student claimed, “The administration knows our problems, but nothing is done,” while another added, “I just don’t think the adults here listen to what the kids have to say and I think that this is like an adult place.” As we’ll discuss below, both students seemed to feel like the problem was rooted in a lack of responsiveness among school administrators, suggesting that the issue might be better characterized as a deficit of *external efficacy* rather than internal efficacy.

Students in the sample also overwhelmingly (9 out of 11) supported the general statement that students can make a difference in the way things work in their schools and communities and a majority of students (7 out of 11) saw themselves as being able to lead a group and create change in their schools and communities. As we discuss below, in their responses, very few of the students pointed to specific skills they have or experiences they previously had that would prepare them to assume a leadership role in a social change effort like this.

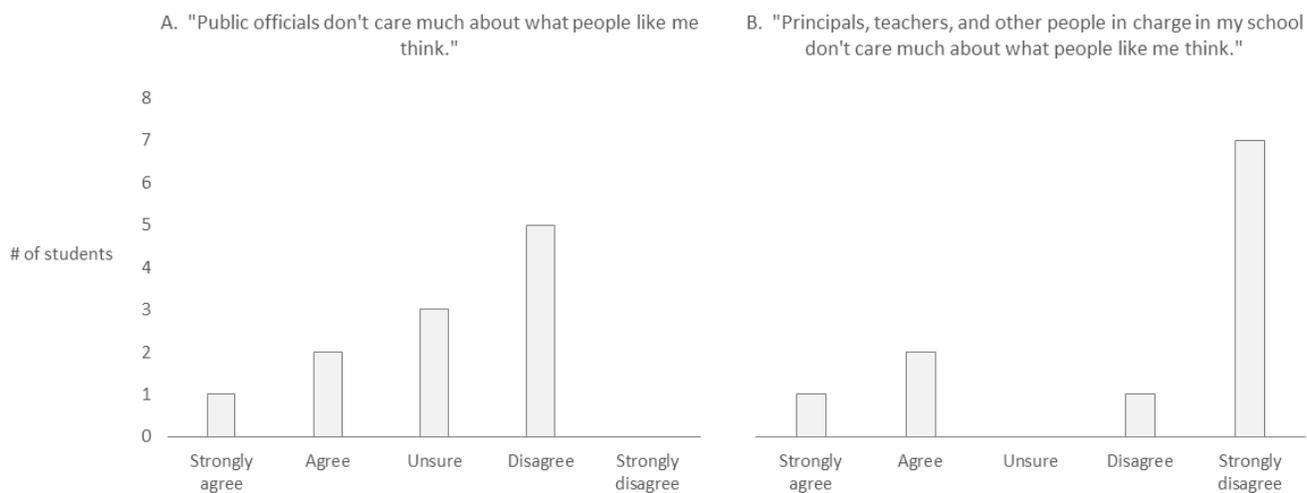
Students who stated they would not feel comfortable leading a group offered a variety of justifications, including that they were too shy, they would not want to shoulder all of that responsibility, or they would feel more comfortable as part of a team (rather than as the leader of the team). Only one student indicated that he felt he lacked the experience to lead a social change effort, though he acknowledged that he may be able to do it if he received a lot of advice along the way.

To summarize, with some exceptions, most students in this sample entered the GC program with the feeling that they have a say in what goes on in their schools and, to a lesser extent, their communities. Nearly all students felt like students can, in principle, make a difference in their communities and more than half of these students felt like they could lead a group that would bring about social change.

External efficacy

At the baseline interviews, we also asked students questions to gauge their external efficacy. Figure 3 shows the distribution of students’ responses at baseline to the statements “People like me don’t have any say about what goes on in my school or in my community” and “Principals, teachers, and other people in charge in my school don’t care much about what people like me think.”

Figure 3a and 3b. Distribution of students' baseline responses to statements of external efficacy.



Students' responses to the first statement (shown in Figure 3A) were mixed and somewhat ambivalent. Five out of 11 students disagreed with the notion that public officials do not care about what they think (Figure 3A). Three students indicated they were unsure, meaning they could think of issues to which public officials might be responsive as well as issues to which they might not be responsive, or they felt like it depended too much on the specific public official.

Three students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. One of these students offered, "I've never really spoken to or seen anybody from senate or anything come here yet...We're not exposed to that kind of stuff." Another girl suggested that public officials would be unlikely to listen to someone of her age, race, and socioeconomic position. "No one is going to listen to me," she said.

I'm young, still in high school. I'm poor. Like who would listen to me? Especially because I can't walk up to Obama and tell him, 'Oh, you should legalize gay marriage or unlegalize it or whatever.' He's not going to listen to me. He's just going to pat me on the shoulder and walk away, like I don't matter....Basically, I feel like they don't care what [African Americans] have to say at all. Just because our President is black, it doesn't mean that the white people in Congress are going to give a hell what we think. They don't.

The majority of students (eight out of eleven) felt very strongly that the teachers and administrators in their schools were both supportive and responsive to their needs and requests. Most students could offer clear examples. "They definitely listen to the things we say," one high school senior offered.

Recently there was a meeting with the captains of all the winter sports. I'm a captain. [The meeting] was about us getting the whole school involved in athletics. And they really wanted us to give them ideas about ways to improve things and have more team spirit.

A high school senior at another school agreed. "Everybody has a say in the school," she suggested.

Even if it does not go the way you want, they will give you the amount of respect and time you deserve to hear your opinion and your thoughts on it, and most of the time whatever a student says normally ends up happening...And our principal is like wonderful. You can just go to him and pitch him an idea and he will actually take it into consideration. I've seen action actually happen through that.

Still, as mentioned above, some students felt school officials were not adequately interested in or responsive to their needs. Three students agreed or strongly agreed that principals, teachers, and other people in their schools don't care much about what they think. Two of these students cited examples of times when school officials had seemingly acted unilaterally to enact a policy, like school uniforms or removing a beloved school dance, against the wishes of the students. The third student suggested that she felt let down by her school, which had offered her little support in navigating the college application process and little assistance in finding advanced coursework outside of her school (this particular student was forced to take trigonometry twice because her school did not offer any courses more advanced than that).

### Grounded vs. Abstract Efficacy

Most students who reported having high levels of internal efficacy had very little previous experience working on social, civic, or governmental issues. Their confidence in their own ability to effect change was more of an abstraction, rooted in strong ideas about how things *should* be rather than in actual experiences with how things are. That students would be able to impact civic and governmental processes seemed patently obvious to some students, given what they have been told by their teachers and learned in their history classes. For instance, when asked to elaborate on why they feel people like them have a say in what goes on in their schools or communities, students responded with statements like, “It only takes one person to actually do something to take a step forward” and “There have been so many incidents throughout history where one person made a huge difference; even if it’s something as minor as picking up trash on a sidewalk, it makes a difference.” While these statements are not untrue, few students provided any evidence that these statements were borne out of experience rather than ideas. Some pointed to other students in their school who had managed to effect change (e.g., by enacting a school uniform policy), but acknowledged that they had never been involved in this type of activity themselves.

Moreover, despite claims by the majority of students that they would be able to lead a group in an effort to enact civic change, most students demonstrated fairly low knowledge of how they would go about doing this. We asked students at baseline to describe a problem in their community or school that needed to be addressed and then articulate their plan to solve this problem. Most students were able to describe a problem, but few students could articulate a plan. In most cases, students suggested they would “talk to the principal” or “hold an assembly,” but their plans were vague and lacked a clear strategy for addressing the problem at hand. For instance, one student suggested that a major problem in her school was that it lacked certain elective courses that she felt all students in her school should take. “I do think they need to raise the budget in the school,” she said. When asked how she might go about doing this, she replied, “I have no idea. I just, I don’t know how I would say to them that we just need a better budget. I don’t know why our budget is so low. Maybe if I knew that, then it would be easier to fix.”

In some cases, students’ own responses confirmed the incongruence between what they felt they *should* be able to do and what most students could or would *actually* do. When asked whether students her age could make a difference in the way things work in her school and community, one student responded, “Yes, because we’re human and our voice counts and if we see something and we don’t like it, we stand up and try to make a quick change.” This reveals the “abstracted efficacy” discussed above. However, when pressed on this moments later, she added, “I think it’s better to wait [to make political decisions] because we have our heads in all these other things and we’re not really into politicians right now...I don’t watch the news, I don’t read the newspaper and all that.” Another student with a strong sense of efficacy similarly noted, “We just don’t pay attention. Like me, I’m so young, I don’t go home and read the newspaper or watch news.”

This was also true for some students reporting high external efficacy, particularly when asked about the responsiveness of public officials to their needs. In most cases, their belief in the responsiveness of

public officials was not grounded in any real experience. For example, when asked whether she agrees or disagrees that public officials don't care about her needs, one student said,

I feel like they wouldn't have the job they have if they didn't have some form of sympathy or they didn't care. So they obviously care if they are willing to put up with their job...It's just that some of them may not have the wisest way of showing it.

When the interviewer asked this girl if she had ever reached out to a public or political official, she said no, but that she hoped to one day.

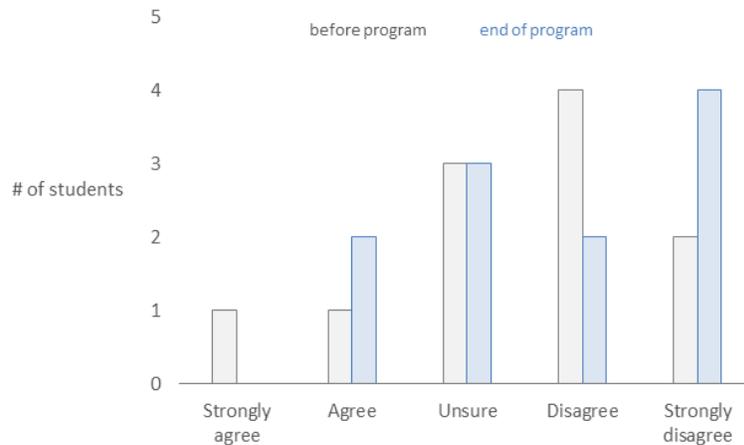
With this in mind, there were a handful of students in the sample whose efficacy was borne out of a combination of optimism and real life experiences. One student was the President of the Student Council and had been involved in several youth leadership programs. Another had served on her student council previously and still another had been part of a youth committee aimed at educating the city council about teen health policies. These students were better able to point to prior experiences as their reasons for believing public officials would be responsive. For instance, when asked whether she agreed that public officials don't care much about what people like her think, the girl who had participated on the youth committee said, "I disagree. Like I said, when I did the [youth committee], the city councilman seemed really interested in what we were saying and he liked the fact that students actually showed interest in what's going on in their community and were trying to change it." For these students, positive experiences with school and public officials had shaped their confidence in the responsiveness of those in power.

*Question 2: Did students' efficacy change over the course of their time in the GC program?*

#### Internal efficacy

Just after students had completed the GC program, we met with them again and asked the same questions identified above. Overall, self-reported levels of internal efficacy did not appear to change markedly from baseline to the end of the semester. Figure 4 shows the distribution of responses to the first statement ("People like me don't have any say about what goes on in my school or in my community") at both baseline and at the end of the program. Overall, the same number of students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, though the number that strongly disagreed (as opposed to just agreeing) increased. None of the students changed their positions dramatically, meaning that no students moved from agreeing to disagreeing (or disagreeing to agreeing) with the statement.

Figure 4. Distribution of students' responses at baseline and end of program to statement: "People like me don't have any say about what goes on in my school or in my community."



By the end of the program, all of the students agreed that students could make a difference in their schools and all but one student felt that students could make a difference in their communities. Compared to baseline, the same share of students (7 out of 11) said they would feel comfortable leading a group.

### External efficacy

At the end of the program, we also asked students to respond again to questions about the responsiveness of public officials and school officials. Responses to the first statement ("Public officials don't care much about what people like me think.") were slightly *more* negative by the end of the semester, with more students unsure or agreeing with the statement than before the program began (see Figure 5A). Due to the small sample and the heterogeneity of responses, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions about changes over time in students' external efficacy. However, it appears from students' responses and their accompanying explanations that they were not noticeably more negative at the end of the program but rather still ambivalent about how public officials would respond to them. This ambivalence is highlighted in Table 2, which shows each student's response to this question at baseline and then at follow-up. The table shows that students' responses did not change qualitatively over the course of their time in the program. Moreover, while some students felt at the end of the program that public officials would never respond to them, many were careful to point out that it depends both on the public official and on the issue at hand and some suggested that public officials might not care what they as individual people think, but may be responsive to an organized group.

We feel that both students' ambivalence and the stagnancy in their responses over the course of the program could be linked to a lack of encounters with public leaders outside of the school setting. In

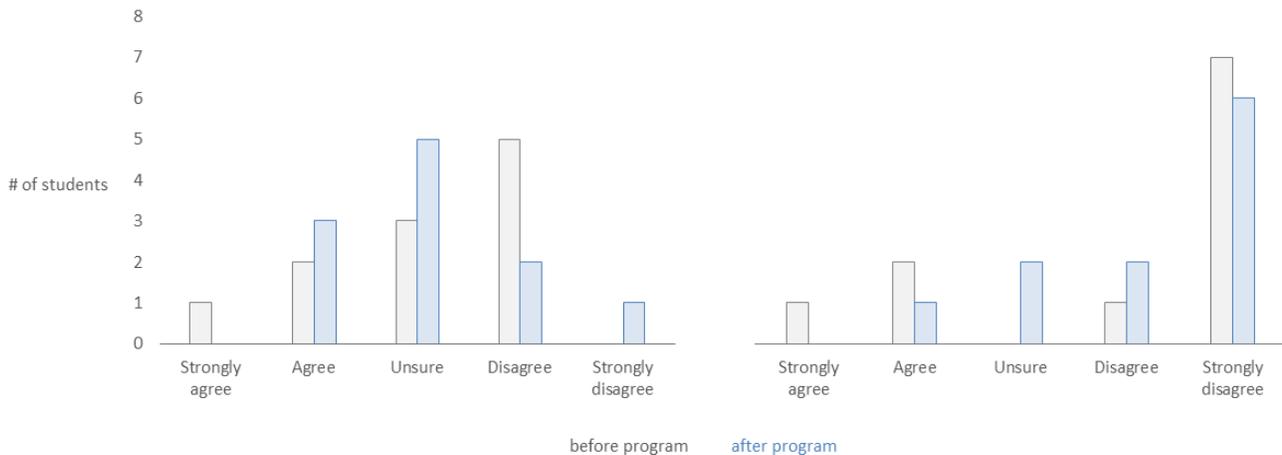
Table 2. Students’ responses before and after participating in GC to following statement: “Public officials don’t care much about what people like me think.” Students’ explanations are paraphrased.

Student	Before GC		After GC	
	Response	Explanation	Response	Explanation
1	Agree	I agree because I’ve never seen any politicians come here.	Agree	Feels like politicians “yes” you do death and then nothing happens.
2	Strongly agree	No one will listen to me. I’m still young and in high school. (Also cites race and socioeconomic status as reasons why.)	Agree	Politicians don’t pay attention to people without a lot of money. It would take a lot more time and effort to get them to listen to me.
3	Disagree	Mr. _____ told us that all we have to do is put effort in and we can make things better.	Disagree	I think they care because they care about our future.
4	Disagree	They wouldn’t have that job if they didn’t care.	Disagree	They want to help people because they are people with families, too.
5	Neutral/unsure	Not sure. Feels politicians could be interested because teens have a lot of problems.	Neutral/unsure	Some would and some wouldn’t. I’m in-between.
6	Agree	They don’t care what people say. They just want to do it their way.	Agree	Too busy. Would only listen if I got a group together.
7	Neutral/unsure	I’m in between. It depends on who they are.	Neutral/unsure	Not sure. Depends on public official.
8	Disagree	They’re doing the best they can, but can’t address everything. In my prior experiences, though, I’ve seen that they do really care.	Neutral/unsure	They do listen, but don’t always have the time to address every concern. I also have seen that they care in my previous experiences.
9	Disagree	I know they care because of my previous experiences.	Strongly agree	I know they care because of my previous experiences.
10	Neutral/unsure	I don’t really know about public officials. I think if a group of people got together, they might listen.	Neutral/unsure	Public officials like to hear our opinions, but they have their own ideas and they’re more likely to go with their own ideas.
11	Disagree	I think they respect everyone’s opinions. But I guess it would depend on the politician.	Neutral/unsure	It’s mixed. Some do a good job. Others don’t think kids are mature enough.

Figure 5a and 5b. Distribution of students’ responses at baseline and end of program to statements of external efficacy.

A. "Public officials don't care much about what people like me think."

B. "Principals, teachers, and other people in charge in my school don't care much about what people like me think."



short, most students did not have many experiences during GC that would have prompted them to dramatically change their views on this. We discuss this further in the Recommendations section.

Responses to the second question (“Principals, teachers, and other people in charge in my school don’t care much about what people like me think”) were more positive at the end of the program than at the beginning (see Figure 5B).

### Grounding efficacy

As summarized above, by the end of the program, students’ responses to the internal efficacy questions had not changed markedly, while responses to the external efficacy questions were more mixed. That said, students’ responses to other interview questions revealed that they were starting to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to ground their previously abstract feelings of efficacy. In other words, rather than simply agreeing or disagreeing with abstract principles, students were beginning to be able to identify how and why they would be able to make their voices heard. Importantly, even some students who seemed to feel that public officials or school officials would not be responsive to them were still able to point to shifts in their own mindsets and skillsets. These shifts were revealed in the data in a few different ways.

First, some students suggested that, whereas before they might have been intimidated to try and work on a big project to make a difference in their communities, by the end of their time with GC, they felt like they had a much better sense of what they would need to do. One student explained during his final interview,

If we want to have a say and get something done, I feel like—as long as you just put some effort into it—we can get it done or we can have a say. It just involves a little bit of effort. I think it’s actually not as hard as it may appear to be.

Later in the conversation, he elaborated,

I just think I’ve learned a lot about what it means to get involved and how it’s simpler than I might imagine. I used to think that it takes so much work and there’ll be so many battles along the way that things wouldn’t work. But really, from what I’ve learned, it isn’t too hard to get an idea, make a good plan, and if it’s solid and you talk to somebody who has authority. Whether it be a principal or a politician, I think you can find somebody who will listen to you and help you without too much effort, if you put in the time to put together a good plan.

This theme of learning how to bring an issue to the attention of people in power was very salient among students as they talked about what they learned from being in GC. “[GC] showed me that I have to seek out certain people to get things done,” another student explained. “Like, before, I didn’t even know who was in charge of certain things at our school...It has helped me to research information to find out who is in charge and who is better to go to [in order to] get a response.” Still another student added, “Back in the summer, I would have been like alright, first of all, there is no way anybody is going to listen

to me. If I wanted to do something [now], I would know how to go about doing it and to bring it to the attention of other people. In the summer, I wouldn't have known how to do anything."

Over the course of their time in the program, some students also showed improvements in their ability to articulate a plan for how they might bring about change. We asked students both at their baseline interviews and in the interviews at the end of the program if they could think of something about their school or community that they would want to change and, if so, how they might go about doing it. In many cases, students' responses at baseline were fairly vague and typically lacked detail. By the end of their time with the program, some students began to offer more nuanced, detailed, step-by-step plans. Consider, for instance, how the responses of one 12<sup>th</sup> grade student changed over the course of the semester. When asked at baseline what issue she would want to address, she responded, "I wasn't told until last month of my junior year about the SATs and I feel like we should have been taking SAT prep before we started sophomore year." When asked how she would address this problem, she said,

I would talk to the principal. I'll go straight to the principal and talk about it, and probably the Board of Education so that they can make the school do better in those things."

Notably, this is not an unfeasible approach and, to her credit, she acknowledges the importance of involving people in power positions. However, she claims to want to tackle the issue alone and does not articulate any real plan other than talking to school and district administrators. In contrast, when asked the same question at the end of the semester, she offered a more detailed plan. "There needs to be healthier places because it's like just Wendy's and McDonald's and Burger King and you can't find anything like organic and stuff like that," she replied when asked what she would want to change about her school or community. Her plan to address the issue continued as follows,

First I would do something online. I would have to make a page on Facebook or Twitter or something like that to get the word out. Then I will make flyers and post them around and give them out to people. Then I will have people sign a petition and then we will have to take it to our District person. And I am in District 15, I believe. And then we will have to go to the meetings that they have there. They hold a meeting every few months. And then we will have to speak about what we want to change and then, if they agree with us, they will help us change it.

In the latter case, this student's response involves not only talking to people in positions of power, but it also involves a step-by-step plan, an effort to create a group to address the problem, an awareness of local structures of governance, and an acknowledgement that there are well-established channels for addressing grievances (i.e., petitions, district meetings, etc.). Though her response is not perfectly comprehensive, it shows significant growth in awareness of how she would go about creating change.

*Question 3: Which elements of the GC program appear to impact student efficacy?*

Whereas students in the sample began Generation Citizen feeling like they *could* theoretically change things for the better in their school or community, few could describe how to do this or how their experience and skills had prepared them to do it. Rather, their feelings of efficacy appeared to be

rooted in abstract notions of grassroots change and democracy that had been imparted to them over the years by teachers and possibly family members. By the end of the semester, these feelings had not changed significantly, but by this time they were able to draw on their experiences in their Generation Citizen class to cite examples of how they could enact change. In other words, their feelings of efficacy were becoming grounded in real experiences.

Our data suggest three components of the Generation Citizen curriculum that played a central role in encouraging change among students in this sample: the GC program as a “template,” learning by doing, and participation in Civics Day.

### *GC program as a “template”*

By the end of their time with the program, many students conceded that, though they had previously felt that students *could* bring about social change, they would not have known how to do something like that before GC. Notably, as the previous analyses make clear, most of these students did not lack idealism and confidence, but rather the tangible civic, organizational, and leadership skills to actually turn their idealism into action. For some students, the GC program as it unfolded in their classroom acted as a template for how they might undertake a similar project in the future. When we followed up with students a few months after the GC program ended, one student described this template explicitly:

I remember our school, our class getting together to decide on one topic to work on to better our community. We chose police brutality and they gave us like step by step instructions of what we should do, and, in case we have any other projects, how we should go about it and how to present our work in like an understandable way for other people who would like to help us with our projects.

When asked at the end of the program if they felt they could lead a GC-type project on their own, other students also noted that they would just replicate what they learned in their GC classes.

Democracy Coaches were central in presenting this template to the class and modeling how a project could be organized and enacted. “The mentors showed us all the different tactics to use in how to organize something and set your goal,” one student explained. “I’m more prepared for the simple fact that I watched [our Democracy Coach],” another 12<sup>th</sup> grade student offered.

She gave the lessons and I’m the type of person that if I see it will know how to do it. Watching her conduct class, I know it’s like an outline...[If I had done something like this in the summer,] it would be like a complete mess to be honest. It was like I knew what I wanted [my classmates] to do, but how would I go about getting them to do it? Now that I see [our Democracy Coach] doing it, it’s like, okay, I know how to talk them through it so I can help them understand.

Some students even gave very specific examples of how they were using what they saw in the classroom to shape their approach to other social and civic activities. “We are taking [the Democracy Coaches’] ideas because we are in charge of our senior trip, senior prom, and the yearbook and fundraisers,” one student offered. “We are trying to replicate what they do...in the way we run our meetings.”

### *Learning by Doing*

Observing the Democracy Coaches in action provides a framework that students can replicate. However, actually working on the activities associated with their projects allows them to practice certain skills in a low stress, collaborative setting.

As mentioned, working within the “step by step” framework described above, students began to gain experience in organizing and following through with a plan. “It was just right there, outlined plain and simple,” one student explained as she described how GC helped her learn to organize. “If you want to get something done, you just follow these simple steps...It’s very easy. We thought we had to do all this work and all this research, but every day in class we did it bit by bit.”

With little prompting, many students were also able to point to specific tasks they worked on that helped bolster their confidence that they could lead a project aimed at creating social or civic change. “While we had Generation Citizen, I took more of a leadership role,” one 12<sup>th</sup> grade student explained.

I know that I can take everybody's ideas and put it together. Like when we were doing the poster, I designed how the poster would be setup. I took everybody's suggestions. They wanted to throw in testimonials, they wanted to write about our four groups. I told them we will write about our project, we will ... [show] the root cause and I told them we should put our four groups right underneath it.

Other students pointed to specific skills that they felt made them more capable of implementing a project on their own in the future. Many pointed to the collaborative skills they gained, while others similarly suggested that the program helped them see the value of working as a team. One student pointed to his improved time management skills. Others stated that they gained presentation skills and how to break large projects down into smaller tasks.

Some students suggested that, though they and their classmates had technically learned many of these skills in other classes, GC offered a chance to put them into practice. “I feel like we learned researching and presenting and all that stuff with Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ already and with Generation Citizen, it was kind of like practice.”

### *Civics Day*

The GC program culminates in an event called Civics Day where students who have been working with the program in their classrooms meet to present their projects to GC staff and an invited panel of judges who circulate the room and evaluate students’ presentations. Prizes are awarded for top presentations and students who are selected to attend get a chance to see what their peers at other high schools have been working on and spend the day outside of the traditional classroom setting.

Students who attended Civics Day were excited to share their memories of the day and talk about how their group performed. Some of these students also pointed to Civics Day as being a turning point in their general enthusiasm for the class and, somewhat surprisingly, as an experience that increased both internal and external efficacy. Whereas other programmatic components (discussed above) served to

increase students' skills and knowledge of how to tackle large projects, attending Civics Day appeared to impact their mindsets and attitudes about the value of their civic efforts. Two factors were at play here.

First, many students who attended Civics Day were excited that adults from the "real world" had responded positively to their ideas. These students reported that the responsiveness and encouragement from the judges at Civics Day served to validate their efforts and bolster their confidence in the value of their projects. "I am so passionate about [our project] now," one student explained.

Because like before it was just an idea, so of course I was like lazy...And then we went to Civics Day and we met another IT guy who is very good at organizing web pages and he actually gave us his card...He will assist us anytime. We also had another one of our judges who has a program [in his high school] similar to the one we are trying to create, so he told us to look it up to help our ideas. He was another one who was willing to support us.

So it's like actually moving in motion. It is so exciting. We would like to present [our idea] to our principal and our guidance counselors because it was nice to see they were really interested.

Another 12<sup>th</sup> grade student who had expressed lukewarm feelings about the program all semester explained why going to Civics Day played such a vital role in changing her mind about the program. "Doing the project is different from actually going to [Civics Day] and explaining your project because then you see how interested people are and how they want to like actually help you," she suggested. "If I didn't go, [I'd just be] like, alright, this is over, I am done with this. I am going to pass the class. That's it." When pressed on why connecting with the judges at Civics Day made such a difference, she responded, "Because then you actually see in people's eyes that you change their mind. You are inspiring them to actually care about what you are talking about." In other words, the responsiveness of the judges made this particular student feel like her efforts all semester were justified because her project had been effective at changing people's minds.

Notably, the impact here appeared to be on students' sense of external efficacy. Seeing that adults cared about and were engaged in their projects strengthened students' feelings that their efforts all semester were not in vain. The lesson was, if they work hard, they may really be able to impact people's ideas and decisions.

Attending Civics Day also may also have an impact on students' internal efficacy. Students who attended Civics Day were motivated by observing their peers in action. By seeing that other students had worked hard on their projects and had started reaching some of their goals, students started to see what was possible for them. In one student's words, "When we went to [Civics Day], actually seeing people put time into their projects and stuff is like, wow, if they could do that then I could too." A student from a different class concurred. "I was so happy to go to Civics Day. I wasn't even going to go. I am glad. It changed my life," she said.

Because you wouldn't expect the difference it makes. Like me, I kind of in the beginning didn't take it as seriously as I do now. But once you get to the point where you are actually making

things happen, then it's just a great feeling, you know. And, again, going to Civics Day and seeing all these kids be so active and so for their cause and like wanting to be so passionate about what their goal is. It's amazing.

In short, participating in Civics Day showed students in the program what their peers had been working on and what their impact had been. This reinforced students' motivation and prompted them to realize that they too can make an impact.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

This section draws on the findings presented above to present some recommendations for how GC can further build efficacy among students in its classrooms.

### **(1) Simplify and clarify a step-by-step framework for setting a goal, organizing a team, and implementing civic change.**

While there are many different ways of creating social change, students were quick to point to the GC program as providing a template for how they might effect social or civic change on their own. This template resonates with many students who see it as a type of formula for future activities. We therefore recommend that GC continue to develop and refine a template that provides a step-by-step framework for setting a goal, organizing a team, and enacting civic change. This framework should be comprehensive enough that it covers all of the steps necessary for organizing and completing a project, but also simple enough that students with little previous civic experience will be able to adopt it with little problem.

Moreover, some students showed great awareness of the generalizability of the framework they used in the GC class and, as described above, could even point to instances where they had applied the framework in other settings. Other students did not immediately recognize this (or did not talk about it or suggest indirectly that they recognized it). Thus, Democracy Coaches should be instructed to make it clear that the framework can be used not only for tackling other school projects, but extracurricular projects as well. The curriculum should provide examples for how this is possible, possibly in the form of a one-page handout showing a flow chart plotting the steps toward creating social change. Democracy Coaches should use this chart to structure the class project, but also provide several examples of how the template could be used outside of class.

**(2) Use carefully selected baseline metrics to identify efficacy levels among students and then use carefully designed activities to build efficacy accordingly.**

Every student (and class) enters the GC program with a different set of skills, attitudes, and beliefs. Though GC collects baseline survey data from students, these data are used for evaluation purposes and not to identify and address student needs. We recommend working to develop a handful of simple metrics to be collected at baseline that will enable program directors and Democracy Coaches to gauge efficacy among students and then implement activities designed to build efficacy, particularly among students showing very low levels at baseline.

As an example, GC can administer a very short survey that asks students the extent to which they agree with certain statements aimed at measuring internal and external efficacy (e.g., “I have strong leadership skills” or “Principals and teachers in this school care about what I think.”). In classrooms with low levels of overall external efficacy, Democracy Coaches may then want to focus on creating several structured opportunities for students to interact with adult professionals and public officials (we discuss this in more detail below).

Democracy Coaches may even consider steering particular students into certain groups based on their responses. Students who agree, for instance, that principals, teachers, and school administrators are not responsive to student needs may benefit enormously from participating in an activity that requires them to present their plan to (and hence have a positive interaction with) a school principal. Similarly, students who suggest they are “not the leader type” might benefit from being given a small, well-defined opportunity to act in a leadership role.

**(3) Continue to provide opportunities for positive interactions with adult professionals and public officials.**

Many students expressed ambivalence about whether public officials would be responsive to their needs. This ambivalence did not really change over the course of the semester. We believe this may be partly attributed to a lack of experience interacting with politicians and public officials. Indeed, students who did have prior experiences in this area were more likely to point to these experiences as reasons why public officials might care about their ideas and needs. We therefore recommend that GC work to cultivate relationships with local officials and then encourage those officials to meet with students during the semester and learn about their ideas. Similarly, students may even benefit from meeting with local officials at the beginning of their projects to learn more about the types of concerns they deal with daily and to reinforce that they are interested in students’ ideas.

Furthermore, students who attended Civics Day were excited about the experience of sharing their ideas with the judges and receiving positive feedback from them. This finding echoed a finding from the Spring 2012 report, which suggested that students benefited tremendously from interacting with adult professionals over the course of the program. Thus, we further recommend that the program continue to create built-in opportunities for students to meet and share their ideas with adult professionals both

inside and outside their schools. It could be beneficial, for example, for students to meet with these professionals a week or two prior to Civics Day to get “real world” feedback and to have additional exposure to adults.

It may be prudent to instruct judges at Civics Day that students are excited about getting their feedback and that they should not be bashful about offering their insights and/or assistance to students. Rather than being intimidated by the adults, the students were energized by outsiders’ interest in their projects.

Notably, these encounters may be particularly important for low-efficacy students; however, other students will benefit from these encounters as well, as interactions like this reinforce the idea that people in positions of authority can find students’ ideas compelling.

#### **(4) Encourage Democracy Coaches to select and groom some low efficacy students to attend Civics Day**

All students who attended Civics Day cited it as a positive if not transformative experience for them. However, most students who attended the event were already somewhat engaged in the project and therefore Civics Day served to boost their interest and motivation. Indeed, some students explained that the reason they were chosen to go to Civics Day is that they were among the most engaged students in their class. Certainly classes will want to send their most motivated students to Civics Day.

That said, students on the margins—those who are only sometimes engaged or those whose interest in the project fluctuates over the semester—may benefit tremendously from attending the event. We recommend that Democracy Coaches be instructed to select and groom at least one low efficacy student from each class to attend Civics Day. They will have the chance to see what their peers have been working on and it may serve as the moment where they finally see the value of what their class has been working on all semester.

## APPENDIX: INTERVIEW GUIDES

## GENERATION CITIZEN STUDENT EFFICACY PROJECT: Interview Guide 1

1. I want to start by talking a little bit about your experiences at school.
  - a. Are there things about your school that you think could be better?
  - b. What kind of things do you think could be better?
  - c. Let's talk a little more about \_\_\_\_\_. Suppose one day you decided that you had had enough and you wanted to fix this problem. You were going to do something about \_\_\_\_\_.
    - i. Now, a lot of times these problems are overwhelming to fix, which is why they're problems in the first place. Do you feel like you would know what to do to fix the problem? It's totally okay to say no. We're just trying to get a sense of your ideas.
    - ii. How would you go about addressing the problem? If you want, you can take a few seconds to think about it.
      - Probe. Encourage them to explain. Ask why they chose this route. Why they thought it might be the best approach.
  - d. Have you ever been involved in an effort to change something like this either in your school or community? Can you describe it?
  - e. Some people feel like they're too shy to get involved and make a difference, while others feel like they don't know enough or wouldn't know what to do. And then there are other people who feel like they'd be really good at leading a group and creating change in their schools or communities. Everyone feels a little differently about whether civic and political activity is right for them.
    - i. How would you characterize yourself? Are you someone who could easily lead a group and get involved? Or do you feel like you should leave the political activity to others and get involved in something else? Or are you somewhere in the middle? Remember, there are no right or wrong answers here. We just really want to learn more about your ideas.
2. Now I'm going to give you three statements, one at a time, and I want to hear your reaction to them. I'll first ask you to say whether you agree or disagree with them and then I'd like you to talk a little bit about why you gave that response.
  - a. Statement 1: People like me don't have any say about what goes on in my school or in my community.
    - i. Would you say you strongly agree with this statement, kind of agree, you're not sure, you disagree, or you strongly disagree?
    - ii. Why do you feel this way?
  - b. Statement 2: Public officials don't care much about what people like me think.
    - i. Would you say you strongly agree with this statement, kind of agree, you're not sure, you disagree, or you strongly disagree?

- ii. Why do you feel this way?
  - c. Statement 3: Principals, teachers, and other people in charge in my school don't care much about what people like me think.
    - i. Would you say you strongly agree with this statement, kind of agree, you're not sure, you disagree, or you strongly disagree?
    - ii. Why do you feel this way?
- 3. Do you think students your age can make a difference in the way things work in your school and community? After all, most high school students can't vote. And most high school students don't know local politicians. Is political activity something that's better to wait to do when you're an adult?
  - a. PROBE: Why do they feel this way?
- 4. Do you have any family members or close family friends who have been involved in civic or political activities like registering people to vote, leading a protest, signing a petition, etc.?
  - a. [If YES] Can you describe these activities?

**GENERATION CITIZEN STUDENT EFFICACY PROJECT: Interview Guide (Interview 2)**

*[After turning recorder on] Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. We went through the consent process last time we met, so let's get started on the questions.*

- 1) I'd like to start by talking about what you're working on in class right now.
  - a. Can you tell me what you're learning in the class that Miss/Mr/Mrs/Ms \_\_\_\_\_ teaches?
  - b. [If they don't mention GC] Someone from Generation Citizen comes in each week to work with your class, right?
    - i. What do you call this person? A mentor? A teacher?  
[Note to interviewer: they are actually called Democracy Coaches, but I'm curious about how tuned into this the students are]
      1. Do you know his/her name?
  - c. Can you describe in your own words the purpose of the Generation Citizen program?
    - i. [if student isn't sure what you mean, follow up:] What does Generation Citizen hope you will learn as a result of being in their program?
  - d. Are the activities and lessons you do with Generation Citizen different from the activities and lessons you do in your other classes?
    - i. How? [probe for specifics]
  - e. How does the Generation Citizen teacher/mentor/coach [use the language they used] present the lesson plans?
    - i. Do they lecture to the class? Do they show videos? Is there a lot of group work?
    - ii. Does the way the Generation Citizen teacher/mentor/coach [use the language they used] presents the lesson plans differ from the way your teachers present material in your other classes?
- 2) The Generation Citizen curriculum focuses a lot on social issues.
  - a. Which social issues have you talked about in your class?
  - b. Has your class chosen a social issue that you'll work on over the course of the semester?
    - i. [if yes]
      1. What did your class decide on?
      2. How did your class decide on it?
        - a. Were you happy with the topic your class chose?
          - i. Why (why not)?
        - b. Did you have a different topic in mind?
          - i. What was it?
    - ii. [if no]
      1. Are you in the process of choosing a topic now?
      2. Which topics are you considering?
      3. Do you have a topic that you would prefer to work on?
      4. How are you choosing the topic?

- a. Does the teacher decide? Do you get to decide? Do you vote on it?
- 3) Do you find your Generation Citizen class more or less interesting than your other classes? It's okay to say less interesting. We just want you to be honest.
  - a. Why? What makes it more/less interesting?
- 4) Do you feel like you're learning more, less, or about the same from this class compared to your other classes?
  - a. Can you explain what you mean?
- 5) Have you been able to do certain activities or learn certain skills with Generation Citizen that you wouldn't have had a chance to do (or learn) in other classes?
  - a. What types of activities/skills (e.g., writing, collaborating with other students, reading critically, presentations, networking, etc.)?
- 6) Do you feel excited to be a part of the Generation Citizen program?
  - a. Why/why not?

*Thank you for your time and thoughtful responses. We'll be back in November to talk to you more about your experiences with Generation Citizen.*

**GENERATION CITIZEN STUDENT EFFICACY PROJECT: Interview Guide (Interview 3)**

*[After turning recorder on] Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. We've been through the consent process, so let's get started on the questions.*

- 1) Remind me of the name of the Generation Citizen person who comes in and works with your class.
  - a. How would you describe [NAME]?
  - b. Does [NAME] do the same things as a teacher?
    - i. In what ways is he or she similar or different from a teacher?
- 2) I'm interested in learning a little more about the Generation Citizen project your class is working on in [TEACHER'S NAME]'s class this semester.
  - a. I know we talked a little bit about this last time, but can you tell me about the topic your class decided on?
  - b. Why did your class feel the project was important?
  - c. What is the specific goal of the project?
  - d. Can you explain, step by step, the things your class will need to do to reach this final goal?
    - i. How are roles and responsibilities broken up for the project?
  - e. Do you think your class will reach that goal? Why or why not?
    - i. Do you think anyone or anything will stand in the way of you reaching this goal?
  - f. Do you feel like you are contributing to this project?
    - i. If so, how? What types of things have you specifically worked on?
- 3) Think back to how you felt about this project when you first started working on it. Do you feel like you are more or less interested in the topic now than you were when you started working on it?
  - a. Why?
- 4) I want to switch gears a bit and ask a couple of questions about your confidence in your ability to implement social change on your own.
  - a. Do you think you would be able to organize and implement a project like this on your own? Again, it is totally okay to say no. Most kids your age would struggle to do a lot of these activities on their own. We're just curious about how you see yourself.
    - i. Why? Why not?
    - ii. What might prevent you from carrying out a project like this on your own?
  - b. Are there some activities you'd be better at doing than others?
    - i. Can you explain a little bit which activities you feel you would be better at?
    - ii. Are there activities you feel you would struggle with?
  - c. Think back to three months ago—let's say, over the summer. Do you think you're more or less prepared to implement a project like this than you were then?
    - i. Why?
    - ii. [INTERVIEWER: follow up with questions about what's different now vs. before, what have they learned? DO NOT ASK ABOUT GENERATION CITIZEN IN

PARTICULAR. LET THEM ATTRIBUTE ANY OF THEIR NEW SKILLS/KNOWLEDGE TO GENERATION CITIZEN (OR NOT). DON'T PUT WORDS IN THEIR MOUTHS.]

- 5) Now, we asked you a question last time about how likely you would be to recommend the Generation Citizen program to your friends. We'd like to ask you the same question again. On a scale of 0 to 10, how likely would you be to recommend the program to your friends? A 0 means you wouldn't recommend it at all and a 10 means you think it's a fantastic program and you'd definitely recommend it. Where do you stand at this point in the semester?
- a. [If same as last time, end interview.]
  - b. [If different from last time (in either direction)]:
    - i. That's interesting. Now, last time you gave a score of \_\_\_\_\_. Why did your score change over the course of the month? [e.g., why are you enjoying the program more/less now than you were in October?]

*Thank you for your time and thoughtful responses. We'll be back in December to talk to you more about your experiences with Generation Citizen.*

**GENERATION CITIZEN STUDENT EFFICACY PROJECT: Interview Guide (Final Interview)**

*[After turning recorder on] Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. We've been through the consent process, so let's get started on the questions.*

1. Let's start today by talking a little bit about your class project.
  - a. Can you remind me again what the GOAL of the project was?
    - i. Did your class reach this goal?
      - (if class hasn't completed project) Do you think your class will complete the project?
    - b. Think back to how you felt about this project when you first started working on it. Do you feel like you are more or less interested in the topic now than you were when you started working on it?
      - i. Why?
2. Have you been able to do certain activities or learn certain skills with Generation Citizen that you wouldn't have had a chance to do (or learn) in other classes?
  - a. What types of activities/skills (e.g., writing, collaborating with other students, reading critically, presentations, networking, etc.)?
3. We're also interested in some of your general thoughts about your experiences at school and in your community.
  - a. Are there things about your school or community that you think could be better?
    - i. What kind of things do you think could be better?
  - b. Okay, now suppose your principal [or if student gives a community problem, your city councilor] put YOU in charge of addressing this problem of \_\_\_\_\_.
    - i. How would you go about addressing the problem?
      - [If they stumble, let them know they can take their time and think about it.]
      - [If they say they wouldn't be able to address the problem by themselves, push them by saying that the first step might be to assemble a team of people. Then ask them to continue to describe what they would do.]
      - Can you explain why you chose to approach the problem this way? For example, why did you decide to \_\_\_\_\_?
  - c. There are some people who would really like to take on a project like this, while others might feel like they're too shy or wouldn't know exactly what to do.
    - i. What about you? Do you see yourself as someone who could lead a group and make social change? Or do you feel like others are better leaders and organizers than you? Or are you somewhere in the middle? Remember, there are no right or wrong answers here. We just want to learn more about your ideas.

4. Now I'm going to give you three statements, one at a time, and I want to hear your reaction to them. I'll first ask you to say whether you agree or disagree with them and then I'd like you to talk a little bit about why you gave that response.
  - a. Statement 1: People like me don't have any say about what goes on in my school or in my community.
    - i. Would you say you strongly agree with this statement, kind of agree, you're not sure, you disagree, or you strongly disagree?
    - ii. Why do you feel this way?
  - b. Statement 2: Public officials don't care much about what people like me think.
    - i. Would you say you strongly agree with this statement, kind of agree, you're not sure, you disagree, or you strongly disagree?
    - ii. Why do you feel this way?
  - c. Statement 3: Principals, teachers, and other people in charge in my school don't care much about what people like me think.
    - i. Would you say you strongly agree with this statement, kind of agree, you're not sure, you disagree, or you strongly disagree?
    - ii. Why do you feel this way?
5. Do you think students your age can make a difference in the way things work in your school and community? After all, most high school students can't vote. And most high school students don't know local politicians. Is political activity something that's better to wait to do when you're an adult?
  - a. PROBE: Why do they feel this way?
6. Do you feel that working on this project has better prepared you to get involved in your community? It's okay to say no. We're just curious about how students feel.
  - a. Why or why not?
7. Now, we've asked you the last couple times we met about how likely you would be to recommend the Generation Citizen program to your friends. We'd like to ask you one last time.
  - a. On a scale of 0 to 10, how likely would you be to recommend the program to your friends? A 0 means you wouldn't recommend it at all and a 10 means you think it's a fantastic program and you'd definitely recommend it. Where do you stand now that the program is over?
    - i. Why did you give this final score?

*Thank you for your time and thoughtful responses. We are considering the possibility of following up with students in the spring to find out how you're doing and what you are up to. Would you be interested in participating in an additional interview sometime in the spring?*

**GENERATION CITIZEN STUDENT EFFICACY PROJECT: Spring 2013 Follow-up Interview**

1. I'd like to start just by talking briefly about your memories of your time with the Generation Citizen program. Can you share with me what you remember from your experience with the program? It's okay if you don't remember a lot. Just share with us what stands out in your mind the most.
2. Do you remember the name of the person from Generation Citizen who worked in your classroom?
  - a. Do you remember anything else about him/her?
3. What was your most memorable experience with the program?
4. Did you go to Civics Day?
  - a. [IF NO]: How did your class decide who got to go to Civics Day?
  - b. [IF YES]: Can you tell me a little bit about that?
    - i. How did your class decide who got to go to Civics Day?
5. Do you remember much about the project you worked on in your Generation Citizen class?
  - a. Can you tell me about the goals of the project?
  - b. Did you or your class continue with the project after the end of the class?
    - i. [IF NO]: Why do you think that is?
    - ii. [IF YES]: What did you work on after the class was over?
      1. Did you finish the project?
6. Can you describe three things you feel like you learned or got better at during your time with Generation Citizen?
  - a. [IF NECESSARY]: Even if you feel like you were already good at many of the things you worked on in that class, what do you feel like you got better at?
7. Are there lessons from Generation Citizen you feel like you can take with you as you leave high school?
8. We are really interested in understanding more about whether students feel they can make a change in their own school or community if they discover something they feel is wrong or unjust. Do you feel like you could do this? It's okay to say no.
  - a. In what ways could a program like Generation Citizen help you become better at this? [Even if they say they're already good at this, push them to say 1 or 2 ways that GC could help them become better]
9. Do you think you will ever be involved with a movement to create change?
  - a. What are the obstacles to getting involved in projects or movements like this in the future?