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A framework for assessing adolescent-focused, active citizenship programs in the context of global competence

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Abstract

Although the terminology and approaches may vary, opportunities to engage in 'real world' active citizenship programs are recognised as an essential element of citizenship education. Such programs are seen as opportunities to develop and practise the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and actions deemed essential for participation as an effective local and global citizen. It is also recognised that adolescence is a pivotal time for developing such knowledge, skills, values and attitudes and that exposure to citizenship activities at this stage of development can determine civic engagement in adulthood. The difficulty is in providing effective and developmentally appropriate opportunities for active citizenship in an already crowded school year. This article reinforces why adolescence is a key period for developing the attributes of active local and global citizenship and provides a framework, and the research behind it, to assist educators in evaluating adolescent-focused, active citizenship programs.

Introduction

The principle that citizens can and should actively engage in and contribute to the society in which they live dates back to the Greek origins of participatory democracy and centres on the notion of the common good (Black, 2017; Gordon & Tudball, 2017; Peterson, 2016). According to Print (2007), participation of citizens in this way is "the very raison d'etre of democracy" (p. 327). Through such participation, citizens "enlarge their own freedom and interests to include others, resulting in a form of democratic life that respects both individual and mutual purposes" (Sparks, 1997, p. 79).

Drawing this principle of active or participatory citizenship together with the cosmopolitan conception of global citizenship (Alviar-Martin & Baildon, 2016; Osler & Starkey, 2005; Reimers, Chopra, Chung, Higdon, & O'Donnell, 2016; Walsh, 2017) builds a picture of citizens who are willing and able to participate in and contribute to society at local, national and global levels, citizens who are globally competent (OECD, 2016; Reimers et al., 2016; Reysen & Katzarska-Miller, 2013; UNESCO, 2015). A review of international and domestic educational research, policy and curricula identifies that this type of global competence requires four interconnected domains of attributes: knowledge and understanding; skills;

values and attitudes; and action (ACARA, 2012a; Lilley, Barker, & Harris, 2017; OECD, 2018; Oxfam GB, 2015; Reimers et al., 2016; UNESCO, 2015).

By its nature, the action domain of global competence brings together the other three domains. In order to possess the desire to act, people need to hold values and attitudes that focus on a common humanity; respect for each other and the environment; and a desire to work together for the common good (Peterson, 2016; Reimers et al., 2016). To act effectively, people also need knowledge of globalisation and global issues and how these issues impact their local community, as well as understanding how local actions have global implications (British Council, 2017; Education Services Australia, 2008; OECD, 2016; Oxfam GB, 2015; Reynolds et al., 2015; UNESCO, 2014).

To be able to engage and contribute, people also need relevant cognitive and socio-emotional skills such as the ability to analyse and think critically and creatively in order to appraise meaning and solve problems, as well as self-knowledge and self-awareness, the ability to be adaptable and manage uncertainty, empathy and the ability to see others' perspectives, and the ability to communicate and work with others from all cultures and backgrounds, including the ability to resolve conflict in a peaceful manner (Cogan & Derricott, 2000; OECD, 2016, 2018; Oxfam GB, 2015; UNESCO, 2015). Like all skills, some will come more naturally to some people than to others but all skills, cognitive and social, can be taught (Main & Pendergast, 2017) . Like any skill however, mastery comes from the opportunity to practice the skill in real world contexts (Hattie, Biggs, & Purdie, 1996; Huang, 2017).

It is this opportunity for practice in the real world that is the focus of this article. In a crowded curriculum, there is no time for busy work and little point in tokenistic (Hart, 1992) inclusion of students in activities that have little or no educational or developmental benefits. However, there is significant consensus in the research, curricula and policy documents that there should be an active component to citizenship education (OECD/Asia Society, 2018; Schulz et al., 2017; UNESCO, 2017). At the global level, acknowledgement of the need for action can be seen in Dimension 4 of the OECD PISA framework: "Take action for collective well-being and sustainable development" (OECD, 2018, p. 11) and in the

objective of SDG 4.7 that "all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development" (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2015).

In Australia, the aspiration of Goal 2 of the Mparntwe (Alice Springs) Declaration is that all young Australians should be "active and informed members of their community" (Education Services Australia, 2019, p. 6). This sentiment is echoed in the aim of the national Civics and Citizenship curriculum to develop in students "the capacities and dispositions to participate in the civic life of their nation at a local, regional and global level and as individuals in a globalised world" (ACARA, 2015). The three-dimensional nature of the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2012b) with its key learning areas, three Cross Curriculum Priorities (CCPs) and seven General Capabilities (GCs) also reflects a commitment to fostering the knowledge, cognitive and socio-emotional skills, values and attitudes identified as necessary for effective and informed citizenship.

Both local and international reviews indicate, however, that educators are unsure how to appropriately incorporate the knowledge and skills inherent in the Australian CCPs and GCs into their curriculum, pedagogy and classroom practice and how to provide authentic active citizenship experiences beyond classroom debates or school elections (Donnelly & Wiltshire, 2014; Price-Mitchell, 2015; Schulz et al., 2017). The introduction of the OECD PISA global competence assessment in 2018 appears, as is often the case with PISA assessments (Cobb & Couch, 2018; Rautalin, Alasuutari, & Vento, 2019; Sjoberg, 2016), to have given rise to new professional development initiatives in various states of Australia that specifically focus on upskilling educators in curricula, pedagogical and whole-of-school approaches to fostering students' global competence. These initiatives are however in their infancy and there is no data as yet available as to the impact they are having on educators and/or their students. There is also no data yet on the degree to which such suggested approaches incorporate real world, active citizenship experiences.

Given the need to avoid tokenism and busy work and teacher uncertainty in this field, how do schools and teachers determine whether an active citizenship project will be beneficial to their students, whether it is developmentally appropriate to the age group, and whether

it provides real opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes needed for effective local and global citizenship? This article presents a framework, and the research behind it, designed to assist educators in posing these questions to determine the effectiveness of adolescent-focused, active citizenship projects.

Defining active citizenship

Despite historical and contemporary emphasis on the importance of participation, active citizenship continues to be a contested term lacking one agreed definition and often used liberally in a variety of contexts further diluting its meaning (Black, 2017; Nelson & Kerr, 2006; Schulz et al., 2017). One way in which the term active citizenship can be given clarity is to distinguish it from associated terms such as volunteering, or more recently, service learning. Although volunteering and service learning are aspects of active citizenship, not all volunteering or service learning involves citizenship.

Volunteering is understood as planned, pro-social behaviour that occurs within a specific context or situation to the benefit of others (Marzana, Vecina, Marta, & Chacon, 2015). Volunteering becomes citizenship under specific conditions. These conditions are when the volunteers are: (a) well-briefed on the whole context or issue so they can develop knowledge and understanding; (b) given opportunities to make key decisions and take responsibility for organising their actions; and (c) offered the opportunity to reflect on their actions and the outcomes of their endeavours (Nelson & Kerr, 2005). An example of the differentiation between volunteering and active citizenship was emphasised in a study of the approaches taken with volunteers by fifteen local councils (Kenny, McNevin, & Hogan, 2008). The study identified that those councils that framed their interactions with their volunteers in terms of active citizenship shifted the power relationship from volunteer management to a structure whereby the community members themselves were granted more agency to identify and address issues as equal participants.

Service learning also involves participating in organised activities which benefit the community (OECD/Asia Society, 2018). As with volunteering, service learning becomes active citizenship depending on the degree of knowledge, authority and responsibility given

to the participants. This definition of active citizenship contrasts to the types of projects often offered in traditional structures such as schools where projects are often identified and designed by others, such as teachers, and the participants are simply allocated tasks or roles.

Why adolescents?

The framework presented here was specifically developed to assess active citizenship programs targeted at adolescents. The modern concept of adolescence emerged in the early 1900s however contemporary literature recognises ongoing debates as to the cultural influences shaping the period and what age range it covers (Bahr, 2017; Connell, 2013; Dent, 2011). For the purposes of this framework, adolescence is defined as the period from the onset of puberty, approximately age 10, concluding about or prior to the age of eighteen (Bahr, 2017). In the context of citizenship, this boundary means that adolescents do not have a formal political voice in terms of the right to vote so must make their voice heard in other ways. UNICEF (2011) describes adolescence as "an age of opportunity for children, and a pivotal time for us to build on their development in the first decade of life, to help them navigate risks and vulnerabilities, and to set them on the path to fulfilling their potential" (p. 2). This description identifies three key aspects of adolescence relevant to this framework: that adolescence is a 'pivotal time'; that it is a period with inherent risks; and that it is a time of direction or path seeking.

Challenges and opportunities in adolescent physiological changes

There is enormous diversity among adolescents as to the pace at which they go through the changes inherent in adolescence and the intensity of the impact these changes have on their lives (Bahr, 2017; Caskey & Anfara, 2014; UNICEF, 2011). The most obvious change during this period of development is the onset of puberty and the resultant physical changes. Most of these changes are beyond the scope of this article, however, physical changes and the rate at which they occur can contribute to the way adolescents interact with others, due to self-consciousness and sensitivity about their physical abilities and appearance (Caskey & Anfara, 2014; Dent, 2011; Whatman, 2017). This aspect of development needs to be taken into consideration in any programs, including active citizenship programs, that involve adolescents having to interact and work with others,

particularly new people outside their usual circle, and where physical activities may be involved.

The second element of physiological development that needs to be considered in the contexts of active and global citizenship is the changes in brain development that occur during this period. New medical technologies have enabled the study of the synaptic pruning that occurs during adolescence which results in adults having more streamlined and less numerous sets of connections than children (Bahr, 2017; Caskey & Anfara, 2014; Dent, 2011; Nagel, 2013). The 'use it or lose it' principle (Dent, 2011; Hilton & Hilton, 2017; Nagel, 2013) asserts that which synaptic connectors are pruned or solidified depends on which stimuli and experiences the adolescent is exposed to during this period. This principle alone provides a substantial argument for adolescents being provided with opportunities to actively engage in their communities (local and global) to widen the nature of their experiences and give them exposure to different contexts and perspectives.

Other research on adolescent brain development however adds a note of caution to the opportunities and experiences offered to adolescents. Brain scanning during this period indicates that there is preferential use of the amygdala, associated with emotions, and that the frontal cortex, identified for planning and strategic thought is not yet fully developed (Bahr, 2017; Caskey & Anfara, 2014; Dent, 2011). It is suggested that this imbalance between the two areas of the brain may explain why adolescents tend to be impulsive and take risks (Fuller, 2011). This combination of synaptic pruning and the relative development of various parts of the brain and brain function would suggest that the citizenship experiences offered to adolescents need to provide a balance between new, challenging and stimulating experiences and safe and supportive environments.

The expanding and egocentric nature of cognitive development

Adolescence is also a period of great cognitive change when most young people move from concrete thinking to a more metacognitive level of being able to analyse, problem solve and think about their thinking in more abstract ways (Bahr, 2017; Caskey & Anfara, 2014; Connell, 2013; Dent, 2011). Like all adolescent changes, the rate and degree to which this occurs varies greatly between individuals; however, it is a pattern that is sufficiently

generalised to warrant acknowledgment in this context as it means that the adolescents become capable of thinking beyond the given (Connell, 2013). In considering their potential as active and global citizens, this development means that adolescents can reason abstractly, considering various possibilities and perspectives and imagining alternatives (Connell, 2013; Hilton & Hilton, 2017). As identified earlier, the ability to think critically and creatively and consider a range of perspectives in order to address issues and solve problems is an important attribute of global citizenship (OECD, 2018; Oxfam GB, 2015; Robinson, 2011; Zhao, 2012).

The adolescence research shows that associated with cognitive development is an interesting juxtaposition whereby the students tend to be highly curious and interested in issues beyond their personal experiences whilst also becoming increasingly egocentric (Caskey & Anfara, 2014; McQueen, 2011). In the context of active and global citizenship, this juxtaposition presents both an opportunity and a challenge; while it provides potential to engage adolescents in global issues, the literature suggests that this would need to be done in such a way that the adolescents see the relevance of the issue to themselves (Price-Mitchell, 2015; Schulz et al., 2017; White & Wyn, 2013). The balance between broader interests and egocentrism needs to be a consideration in developing adolescent-focused, global citizenship programs as it indicates that the programs or issues in which the adolescents have an opportunity to engage would need to be generated by them in order to spark their interest and participation. This does not mean that every aspect of every program needs to be handed over to the adolescents as the brain development literature, outlined in the previous section, identifies that guidance and supportive environments are still required (Dent, 2011; Fuller, 2011; Hilton & Hilton, 2017; Nagel, 2013). It does however highlight the importance of ensuring that the adolescents involved in any active citizenship program need to have a genuine say in the structure and intent of the program and the issues it addresses.

Adolescent social development: the search for identity and belonging
The search for identity and belonging is a very complex process that occurs in adolescence, involving adolescents trying out different roles and persona. Who am I as a person? Where do I fit in my family, in my peer group, in my school, in my sporting or social club, in my local

and global communities? These questions are identified as central to this period of development (Caskey & Anfara, 2014; Dent, 2011; Padilla-Walker & Carlo, 2017; UNICEF, 2011; White & Wyn, 2013).

As part of this identity search, adolescents tend to move away from acceptance of family priorities and values, question authority, and gravitate towards their peers (Caskey & Anfara, 2014; Dent, 2011; White & Wyn, 2013). This does not mean that family is no longer important however the adolescent starts to seek wider social interactions and belonging to a particular peer group becomes very important (Bailey et al., 2016; Caskey & Anfara, 2014; White & Wyn, 2013). Providing opportunities to explore roles and questions of identity and belonging provides another argument for community-based, active citizenship experiences that give adolescents the opportunity to interact with people their own age whilst working towards a common goal.

Bandura (2002) explains that role models are important at any age however he considers them particularly significant in adolescence when identity formation is so fluid. It is therefore essential that adolescents have exposure to positive role models outside of their immediate family context. One way to achieve this is by providing active citizenship opportunities in community contexts. Studies show that the nature of the adolescents' relationships with adults in these contexts can provide positive social and developmental benefits as well as influencing their citizenship attitudes and behaviours in later life (Chapman, Deane, Harre, Courtney, & Moore, 2017; Marzana et al., 2015; Padilla-Walker & Carlo, 2017; Price-Mitchell, 2015; Zaff, Boyd, Li, Lerner, & Lerner, 2010).

Adolescent traits and experiences as indicators of adult attitudes and behaviours
In addition to the developmental and social benefits of active citizenship experiences for adolescents, studies also indicate that these experiences can influence adolescents' behaviour and attitudes in later life (Finlay, Wray-Lake, Warren, & Maggs, 2015; Kanacri et al., 2014; Padilla-Walker & Carlo, 2017; Price-Mitchell, 2015; Zaff et al., 2010). In their analysis of adolescent future values, defined as their beliefs about what will matter to them in the future, Finlay et al. (2015) found that civic responsibility positively predicted adult civic behaviours and hedonistic privilege negatively predicted civic behaviours. Their

conclusions underscored the long-term importance of values formed during adolescence and the need to pay attention to how adolescents are thinking about their futures. Finlay et al. (2015) attribute these conclusions to the predictive nature of formative values on adult behaviour and the associated links with long-term social and health benefits.

In their longitudinal studies of prosocial behaviours, Padilla-Walker and Carlo (2017) and Kanacri et al. (2014) found that, in contrast to the image of adolescents as 'narcissists', they show increasing prosocial behaviour towards both peers and strangers from early through middle adolescence. Both studies highlighted the fact that social interactions, such as volunteering, during this period appear to contribute actively to the development of positive personality traits in emerging adulthood.

Adolescents as citizens

The previous section has explained why offering adolescents opportunities to engage in active citizenship is developmentally appropriate however this perspective alone can lead to a deficit model of adolescents, emphasizing adult attributes they lack or have yet to develop rather than what they can offer to their communities now (Bahr, 2017; Robinson, 2011; White & Wyn, 2013). This perspective often results in adolescents either not being offered an opportunity to contribute or in their voice not being heard.

Despite the key principles of citizenship that all citizens are equal; that all adolescents are citizens of a nation state by birth or naturalisation; and, subsequently, that they are global citizens by virtue of their common humanity, the idea of adolescence as a period of transition often results in a perception that young people lack the social maturity to be recognised as full citizens. Osler and Starkey (2005) claim that young people are "viewed as citizens-in-waiting who need to be inducted into their future role … they are seen as needy individuals whose incompetence needs to be addressed" (p. 38).

This view of adolescents as citizens-in-waiting can deny them an effective voice and the opportunity to participate fully in discussing and addressing issues that affect them. This contrasts to the perspective outlined in the Convention on the Rights of a Child that young

people should have the right to be heard on matters affecting them and for their view to be given due weight according to their age and maturity (UNICEF, 1990). It also means that communities and those in positions of power do not have the opportunity to hear the voice of youth. Most citizenship rights, particularly the right to vote, are not available until at least the age of eighteen, effectively excluding adolescents. Osler and Starkey (2005) argue that this influences young peoples' ability to be heard, as politicians may not feel any pressure to prioritize the interests of a group who are not entitled to vote.

The research presented here offers substantive arguments as to the importance of providing adolescents with opportunities for active citizenship in terms of their educational and developmental needs, the potential to shape their adult civic engagement, and in acknowledging their role as citizens now, with a voice that needs to be heard. However, with the constraints of a crowded curriculum, competing priorities in the school year and endless opportunities available to engage in community groups and issues at local, national and global level, how do school principals and classroom teachers determine which active citizenship programs are best suited to meet the needs of their students? Following is a framework, and the research behind it, designed to assist in this evaluation process.

A framework to assess active citizenship programs

The framework presented here draws on two existing frameworks for evaluating active citizenship programs, one international and one Australian. The first of these was developed by Nelson and Kerr (2005, 2006) as a result of data collected from 14 countries, including Australia, through a questionnaire survey and discussions at an international seminar. In addition to examining definitions of active citizenship and the way active citizenship is framed in education policy, their research examined: the implementation measures that turn active citizenship policies into effective practice; and the issues and challenges associated with this implementation (Nelson & Kerr, 2005, 2006). Of particular relevance to the framework presented in this article, was Nelson and Kerr's fifth question (2006, p. iv) which asked: "How can active citizenship be achieved and what are its outcomes?".

The following elements for evaluating active citizenship programs were drawn from the Nelson and Kerr study (2005, p. 19). Does the active citizenship program:

- Generate a clear sense of aim, intention and purpose;

- Develop an awareness of issues;

- Create a desire to act;

- Aid an ability to make judgments and decisions;

- Encourage direct peaceful action;

- Create a climate for the combination of individuals/ideas;

- Encourage reflection on decisions, actions and work undertaken?

The second framework for analysis of active citizenship programs incorporated into the framework presented in this article was developed by Heggart (2015). This framework was considered relevant as it was formulated from an active citizenship program, *Justice Citizens,* that emphasised developing adolescents' knowledge and sense of agency about issues that were local to their community. Heggart, as both the teacher and researcher, was directly involved with the students in developing and implementing the project. It is therefore argued that Heggart's framework has a strong empirical basis.

The following elements were drawn from Heggart's framework:
- Does the program foster community partnerships?

- In what ways is the program situated in the real world?

- Does the program provide exit points for students to pursue their own interests and passions at its conclusion?

- Does the program provide the participants with transferable skills?

- Does the program demonstrate a clear sense that its purpose is to develop social activism? (It is important to note here that Heggart defines his use of social activism to include civil action such as volunteering and awareness raising.)

Ensuring active citizenship programs meet the needs of adolescents

The framework presented in this article then combines the identified elements of these two active citizenship frameworks with the developmental characteristics of adolescents previously outlined. These characteristics have been included in the framework to ensure that the focus is specifically on programs that meet the developmental needs of adolescents. The particular elements identified were:

- Ensuring that the local or global issues in which the adolescents have an opportunity to engage are directly relevant to them, to allow for the balance between egocentrism and curiosity about the wider world inherent in this age group (Caskey & Anfara, 2014; Price-Mitchell, 2015; Schulz et al., 2017; White & Wyn, 2013)

- Ensuring that the adolescents have a genuine voice in the development, implementation and outcomes of the program, meaning that their views and ideas should be heard, and if possible incorporated, and that the adolescents should see that this is the case and feel empowered to speak up and have input (Manning & Ryan, 2004; Marzana et al., 2015; White & Wyn, 2013)

- Ensuring the program provides a balance between structure and flexibility, allowing for adolescents' need for boundaries whilst accommodating their impulsive and idealistic nature (Bahr, 2017; Caskey & Anfara, 2014; Fuller, 2011; Nagel, 2013)

- Ensuring that the program facilitates opportunities for engagement with positive role models outside of the family and school contexts to accommodate the adolescent need for broader social input and the possibility for experimentation with modeling, preferably modeling of the attributes of active, global citizenship (Chapman et al., 2017; Marzana et al., 2015; Padilla-Walker & Carlo, 2017)

- Ensuring that the program provides a safe and supportive environment that allows risk taking so that the adolescents' desire to experiment and take risks and their impulsive nature can be accommodated without the possibilities of physical or psychological harm that may be present in other contexts (Bahr, 2017; Dent, 2011; Fuller, 2011; Nagel, 2013)

- Ensuring that the program provides a balance between challenges and problem solving and opportunities for success so that it engages and stimulates the adolescents' developing brains and gives them opportunities to develop their problem solving skills while offering opportunities to build self-esteem and self-efficacy by achieving successful outcomes (Bahr, 2017; Caskey & Anfara, 2014; Connell, 2013; Hilton & Hilton, 2017).

The Framework

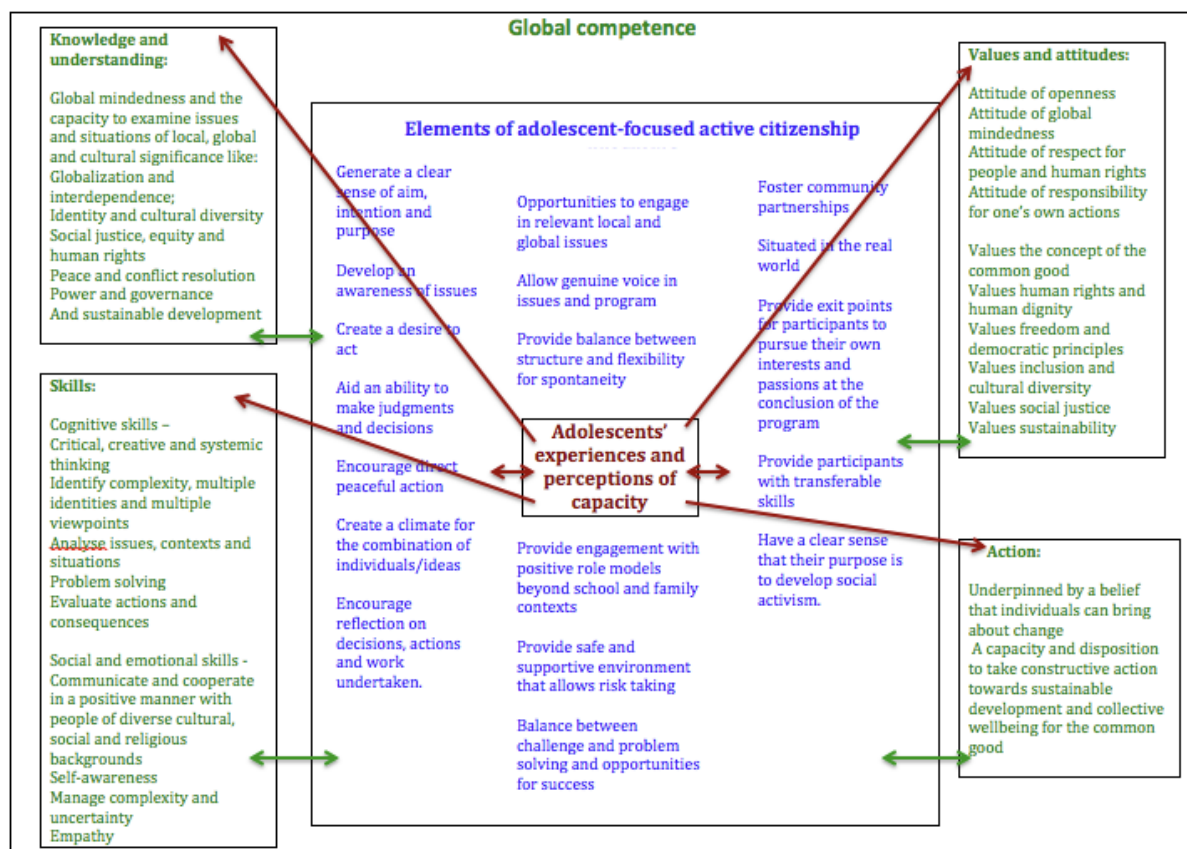Figure 1 presents the resultant framework:

Figure 1: Framework for assessing adolescent-focused, active citizenship programs in the context of global competence

The framework places the adolescents' experiences of participation in any active citizenship program and their perceptions of any capacities gained from that involvement at the very centre. The maroon, double-headed arrows between the adolescents' experiences and perceptions and the elements of adolescent-focused, active citizenship programs acknowledge that the participants do not come to the program as blank slates. The arrows signify that they bring with them their prior experiences in family, school and other cultural and societal contexts and their perceptions of their current capacities at the time they begin the program.

The section of the framework, highlighted in blue, surrounding the adolescents' experiences combines all the elements that Nelson and Kerr (2005, 2006) and Heggart (2015) identified

as important in active citizenship programs with the developmental characteristics of adolescents.

The outer section of the framework, highlighted in green, outlines the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes, and action deemed necessary for global citizenship. The attainment of these attributes is identified as global competence, so the section is labeled with this title. Again double-headed arrows are used to indicate that the level of global competence of the creators and facilitators of such programs would influence the design and implementation of the programs and, it is theorized, the programs would influence the global competence of the participants. Whether or not a particular active citizenship program fosters the adolescent participants' global competence, in terms of their knowledge, skills, value and attitudes and actions, is indicated in the framework by the inclusion of large single-headed arrows from the adolescents' experiences and perception of capacity to the attributes of global competence.

Applying the framework, its potential and limitations

The above framework was first applied, as part of a doctoral research project, to evaluate the structure, activities and outcomes of a youth advisory council (YAC) (Menzie-Ballantyne, 2018). As participation in the YAC involved a two-year commitment from the 12 to 17 year-old members and the researcher was engaged as a participant observer throughout the target cohorts' term in office, there was a substantive body of data collected. Using this framework enabled an analysis of that data that highlighted both positives and negatives in terms of the effectiveness of elements of the program. It was established, for example, that although the YAC program provided opportunities for the adolescents to reflect and act on issues they identified as important, the action component was predominantly undertaken in their own school environments. The adolescents appeared to have little voice or opportunity to engage in these issues in the 'real world', even in terms of identifying the issues to the Council to which the YAC was attached. The resultant discussion that emanated from this finding, as to the balance of real-world exposure in such programs versus the provision of a supportive, active citizenship training ground, is beyond the scope of this paper but exemplifies the important conversations this framework can initiate.

The framework also offers potential for assessment of active citizenship programs within the new educational focus on global competence. As outlined previously, the introduction of the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2015), particularly Goal 4, in 2015 and the launch, in 2018, of the OECD's PISA global competence framework and assessment (OECD, 2018) have invigorated emphasis on education for global citizenship and global competence and this is already having an impact on domestic educational policy, curricula and teacher professional development. The inclusion of the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and actions, identified from the literature as essential for global competence, in the framework provides an additional layer of evaluation of programs.

In the case study of the YAC, the researcher was able to interview the adolescents at the conclusion of their term. The framework was then used to compare any knowledge, skills, values, attitudes or actions reported by the adolescents with the identified global competence attributes. Given many external factors would have influenced the adolescents' development during their time in the YAC, reports regarding the acquisition of knowledge and skills and/or variations in values or attitudes were only included if the adolescents themselves attributed these changes to their YAC experiences. Educators using the framework to assess the potential of active citizenship programs in developing global competence would need to apply a similar caveat.

It is acknowledged that in the YAC case study, the researcher had substantive time and data for applying the framework enabling an in-depth analysis of the program, its activities and impacts. School-based educators would have neither this time nor quantity of information. It is argued, however, that the questions inherent in the framework could be asked of program facilitators, previous student participants and/or other educators and used to examine documentation related to suggested programs, thereby enabling a similar type of analysis albeit on a significantly lesser scale. Given there are few research-based frameworks available for evaluating the effectiveness of active citizenship programs and little, if any, that are specifically adolescent-focused, such analysis could at least provide a starting point for educators wishing to assess the suitability of proposed programs.

Given the initial trial of the framework involved its application to the YAC, a self-nominated, two-year, community-based program, it is understood that the data gathered was framed by motivated students in a community context, separate from any particular school. It will therefore be important to test the framework in other contexts, particularly school-based contexts, and with other students, particularly less motivated and/or disengaged students.

Conclusion

This article has highlighted the importance of offering opportunities for active citizenship to adolescents to meet their educational and developmental needs; to help shape their future civic engagement; and to recognise their voice as current citizens. The article also acknowledges the difficulties in finding time and space for such opportunities in the crowded school year and the lack of teacher confidence in this area. It highlights the importance of finding the right opportunities among a plethora of community groups and issues, opportunities that are both educationally and developmentally appropriate. It is the perspective of the author that the framework presented here, blending two established active citizenship frameworks with the developmental needs of adolescents, provides educators with a comprehensive tool that can be used to design and/or evaluate the appropriateness and effectiveness of adolescent-focused, active citizenship programs, particularly those with the intent of building students' global competence.

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