

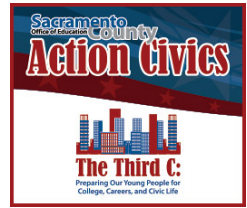
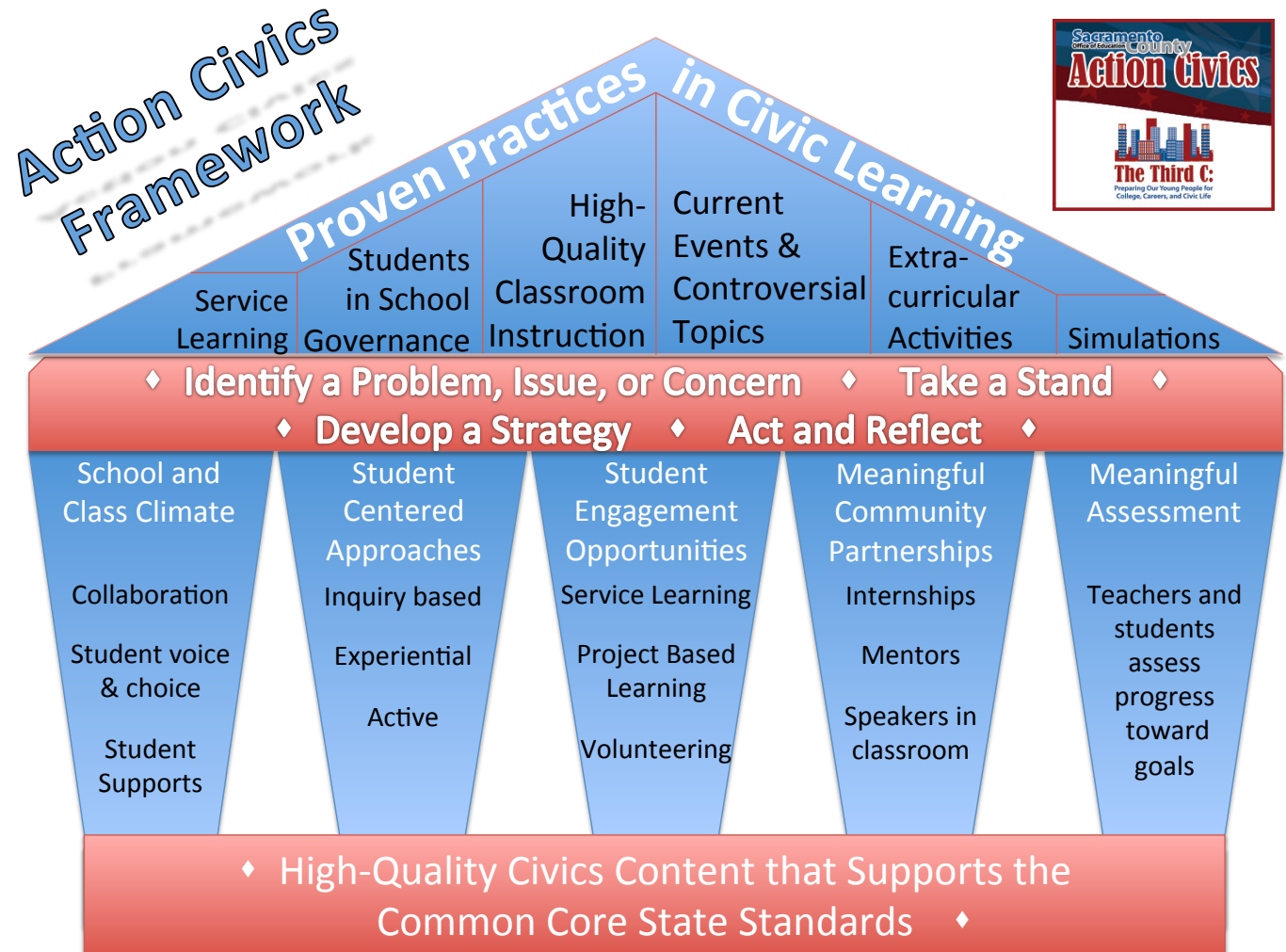
**The Action Civics Process:** The following is a short list of strategies, tools, and resources, *identified by teachers for teachers* to help their students along the five steps of the Action Civics Process. This is not an exhaustive list. Whatever strategy or resource you use, **it is critical that the student is the center of the experience.** Tap into what students care about; their passions and concerns will help to ensure that they stay invested throughout the project. The teacher’s role throughout the Action Civics process is to facilitate the learning experience. Initially lead discussions and then transition to student-led. Serve as the expert, and when you’re not, help connect students to individuals or organizations that can help them find the information. And most important, **DO NOT SACRIFICE YOUR CONTENT!** It is not “I can do Action Civics or teach my content.” The Action Civics Process a venue or context in which to teach your given content.

**HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE**

The strategies, resources, and activities listed here were all identified by teachers. Their task in creating these lists was simple: *“Looking at each step of the Action Civics Process, identify all of the ways you currently work with students or have worked with students to...”* That is why so many of the items listed are simply good pedagogy; Action Civics is a process that simply organizes the most engaging and effective strategies and resources in the context of supporting students in their efforts to be an active and informed citizen in their community. Many of these strategies and activities are content neutral, meaning that they can easily be applied to any curricular area. In this way, you can use this guide as a way to engage in cross-curricular projects with your colleagues in other departments.

While this is an organic process that is not truly linear, the Action Civics Process steps should be followed in succession (students cannot develop a strategy to address an issue they have yet to identify!). Through the reflection process, students will revisit their previous steps to ensure fidelity to their desired outcomes.

As you work with students through this process, use this guide as just that- A GUIDE. Consider the examples identified here and reflect on your own process. Identify a set of resources for each step of the process (from what you currently use and ones listed here) and use them. Test them, modify them, reflect on them, and decide if they are appropriate for your current group of students. If one strategy is not as successful as we would like, tweak it, shift it, or employ another. This is exactly the process we want our students to engage in, and it’s a process that will ensure they possess the skills to be successful in college, career, and civic life.



## **IDENTIFY A PROBLEM, ISSUE, OR CONCERN**

The cornerstone of any Civic Action project is an issue, problem, or concern identified by students. This issue MUST reflect students' passions and concerns. If not, it is simply another assignment that they **HAVE TO DO**. By ensuring student voice, choice, and passion in the identification of an issue, student will engage in a project that they **GET TO DO**. The difference is great; Student selection of the focus and direction of a Civic action project provides a more meaningful context and vested interest in the learning experience.

### **Suggested Strategies, and Resources**

- Use a mind map
- Draw your ideal community, compare to your real one
- Use a map to have students identify where they live and what assets are around them
- Walk about the neighborhood and take pictures of assets and concerns, civic amenities
- "Plus/Delta" exercise
- Brainstorm current issues –and assets
- Review data about the neighborhood (gather from internet sites- Census, Data.com, healthy cities.org)
- Conduct a survey
- Find out what KIDS CARE about
- YELL, Project Citizen, and Issues to Action activities
- Current Events
- Panel of Local Stakeholders
- "Five why's" activity—getting to the root of the problem
- Suggestion box (suggestion cards)
- Bug Board (What bugs me)
- Student initiative dialogue
- Brainstorm after reading the news

**How do I currently help my students identify problems, issues, or concerns?**

**How will I work with students to identify a problem, issue, or concern?  
Strategies, activities...**

**Reflection questions for this step of the process...**

## **TAKE A STAND**

Once identified, students must determine their stance on the issue. While often times students feel strongly for or against a given issue, this step of the process requires students to examine all sides, being open to the possibility that they previously held stand might shift in light of research or other considerations. A big part of this step also requires students or project teams to answer the question, “**So what?**” They may feel very strongly for or against something, but what are they going to do about it? Change a law or policy? Raise public awareness of an issue? In short, what is the **ACTION** part of the Civic Action project?

### **Suggested Strategies, and Resources**

- Create a research Topic - debate various topics to select the one that has the most support
- Around the topic, develop vision, mission and goals, and then hone research questions
- What do you know, what do you want to know
- Identify ways to research solutions to your issue- focus groups, surveys, interviews, town hall meetings, photo voice, internet research
- Four Corners Activity
- Follow up surveys (to determine people’s feelings)
- Socratic Seminar/ Philosophical Chairs
- Pro/Con T-chart
- Brainstorming Claims (to determine all sides’ views)
- “Who has the power?” activity to address your issue
- Research both sides
- Self Reflection: “Where do I stand?”
- Journal to capture personal views on the issue
- Hands on/ interactive investigation
- Mock (or real) debate
- Gallery walk of the research and sides

**How do I currently help my students take a stand on an issue?**

**How will I work with students to take a stand on an issue?  
Strategies, activities...**

**Reflection questions for this step of the process...**

## **DEVELOP A STRATEGY**

Students have identified an issue, chosen their “side”, and determined the “So what?”. Now they must determine which strategies they’ll use to meet their goals. Write a letter or editorial? Create a Public Service Announcement? Speak at a City Council Meeting? In this step of the process students will identify a multitude of strategies they and their team could use to get meet their project goals, determine which are most appropriate and effective, and create tangible plans to enact their chosen strategies.

### **Ways to Identify a Strategy**

War Board

Civic Action Card Sort (LACOE)

Research how others solved the same (or similar) problem

Determine the best practices associated with the issue

Identify/ define the limitations (resources, level of change needed)

Determine: “Is this a Service or Advocacy Project?” and select a strategy that’s appropriate to your end result.

Establish the “So what?” of your project- What is it that you want to accomplish?

Identify who has power to impact your issue-are they allies or opponents

Interview stakeholders who can provide feedback on the solutions students have come up with- to test their ideas

Use tools from <http://acceleratedactionplan.com/> to scope the project/issue

### **Sample Strategies**

Present to a board

Create a service project

Create a web page

Engage in a mock city council meeting

Create a Public Service Announcement

Public protest

Organize a volunteer program

Draft legislation/ Develop a set of recommendations

Hold a rally

Create a social media campaign

**How do I currently help my students develop a strategy to address an issue?**

**How will I work with students to develop a strategy to address an issue?  
Strategies, activities...**

**Reflection questions for this step of the process...**

## **ACT:**

This is where the rubber meets the road. Having come this far in the process, students are now ready to engage the community using the strategies they believe will be most appropriate and effective to meet their project goals. A critical question for teachers at this point is, *“How can we help students act on their strategy?”* A lot of teacher support during this step lies in us working with students on the skills necessary for them to effectively interact with the public. Teaching and providing students opportunity to practice their speaking and presentation skills is one of our most critical concerns during this step. Also, as many of our students are just beginning to engage with their peers and “elders” through their Civic Action project, another critical support we can provide for students is the wealth of community contacts and resources we have accumulated over the course of our career. Whether through organizations that can give students a venue to dispense their information, or those that can provide students with real world internships, we are a vital link between our students and the community.

**How do I currently help my students act on a strategy to address an issue?**

## **NOTES...**

## **ACT: HOW CAN WE (TEACHERS) HELP STUDENTS ACT ON THEIR STRATEGY?**

- Identify Facilitate backwards planning or mapping, Use project planning tool <http://acceleratedactionplan.com/>
- Determine if you are building awareness, changing policies or engaging in activism (YELL)
- Teach students presentation skills
- Teach the skills necessary to market/message their ideas—create social media and messaging strategy
- Storyboard the project
- Create a timeline
- Checklist of necessary actions
- Asset Mapping: Who can help us implement?
- Help teams assign roles and responsibilities
- Monitor team progress; Hold all teams accountable
- Help teams create a project calendar
- Role play with students to prepare for their ‘real world’ action
- Establish a database of partners and resources that can support projects
- Teach students how to make cold calls/ interact with the public
- Coordinate resources that could be used to support multiple projects
- Advertise projects to the community
- Help students create a project Website (or tap into colleagues who can)
- Establish and maintain norms for student action and interaction

**Reflection questions for this step of the process...**

## **REFLECT**

This is not really one 'step' in the Action Civics process; rather reflection is something that students (and teachers) should engage in regularly throughout each step of the way. At every step students should reflect upon their decisions and choices. Not to second guess, but to ensure that they remain true to the project goals identified. Often times we allow the process to take on a life of its own, even though it might lead us down a less than productive path. Simple reflection questions along the way can help students avoid costly tangents or bird walks. Another thing to note is that reflection should not solely focus on the end product. While it is important to assess whether or not the ultimate objective was realized (policy change, increase information flow, etc.), it is equally important for students to reflect on their journey through the project. Both as an individual learner and a team member, reflection on the way decisions were made, and work was accomplished can teach critical lessons to students.

**How do I currently help my students reflect on their work? Not just the end result, but also the process?**

**How will I work with students to reflect on their learning? Strategies, activities...**

## **Suggested Strategies, and Resources**

KWL Chart  
Personal Log  
Lesson learned and Dreams conceived activity  
"Plus/Delta" for the project AND teamwork  
Look at data  
Solicit feedback from the stakeholders involved  
List early identified goals- what was /wasn't met?  
Write an essay  
Socratic Seminar about the project and process  
Debrief session- Unpack the action  
Create a document or graphic showing the impact of your actions  
ORID method to debrief (one example here: <http://pacific-edge.info/2010/08/orid/> )  
Debrief the process and the project/learning

**Reflection questions for this step of the process...**