

YOUTH TURNOUT UP SHARPLY IN 2004

CIRCLE analysis shows that young people turned out to vote in the 2004 presidential election at a level not seen for more than a decade. Currently, the most accurate estimates of youth turnout range from 42 to 47 percent for 18-24 year olds and 48 to 52 percent for 18-29 year olds. Table 1 compares youth turnout estimates using both the National Election Pool (NEP) state and national exit polls and a vote tally as reported by the Associated Press two days following the presidential election.¹ For more information see CIRCLE Fact Sheets "Youth Voting in the 2004 Election" and "Youth Voter Turnout 1992 to 2004: Estimates from Exit Polls" which can be downloaded from www.civicyouth.org.

While exit polls indicate that the under thirty share of the total vote stayed about the same as in 2000, at around 17 percent, their turnout rate went up from 2000 by at least five percentage points. Overall, turnout increased dramatically this year.

BATTLEGROUND STATES AND NEW VOTERS PLAYED A LARGE ROLE IN THE TURNOUT INCREASE

Youth voter turnout was especially high in the battleground states. In initial estimates, CIRCLE put youth turnout at 64% in the battleground states, up 13 percentage points from 2000. Young voters were the only age group to prefer the Democratic ticket over the Republican, albeit by a fairly narrow margin of 54 percent to 45 percent for those under 30.

TABLE 1: YOUTH TURNOUT ESTIMATES, NEP STATE AND NATIONAL EXIT POLLS

AGES 18-24					AGES 18-29				
Year	Aggregated State		National		Year	Aggregated State		National	
	Turnout	Votes Cast (in millions)	Turnout	Votes Cast (in millions)		Turnout	Votes Cast (in millions)	Turnout	Votes Cast (in millions)
2004	47%	11.6	42%	10.3	2004	52%	21.1	48%	19.5
2000	36%	8.6	37%	8.7	2000	42%	16.6	43%	16.8
1996	32%	7.2	35%	7.2	1996	38%	14.9	39%	15.6
1992	48%	10.3	50%	10.3	1992	53%	20.4	54%	20.9

¹ CIRCLE turnout estimates are based on the NEP national and state exit polls as well as the AP vote tallies two days after the election. At this time, exit polls are the only source of data for estimating youth voter turnout; however, they may not be the best data source for comparing the turnout of different age groups over time. More information about youth voter turnout will be available in 2005 when the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey November Supplement is released.

An important point to note about current youth turnout estimates is that they all rely on NEP exit polls, and there are two ways of calculating turnout from the exit polls. Each state has an exit poll and there is a separate national exit poll. Therefore, youth turnout can be calculated by aggregating all 50 state exit polls along with the District of Columbia poll or it can be calculated using the national exit poll. CIRCLE has estimated turnout using both sources.

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CIRCLE

The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement

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According to Dr. Mark Hugo Lopez, CIRCLE Research Director, "Not only did more young people vote in this election, but many of them voted for the first time." About 8 million of the under-30 voters, or 42 percent, voted for the first time. They represent 64 percent of the 13 million first-time voters.

YOUNG VOTERS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE SAME VOTING ISSUES, BUT EXPRESS DISTINCT ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Young voters generally had the same concerns as older voters. Of the under-30 voters, for example, 22 percent said "moral values" were the most important issue, the same percentage as all voters. But on some prominent issues, they differed dramatically. Notably, 41 percent favor gay marriage, compared to 25 percent of all voters. They were 12 percentage points more likely than older voters to identify as liberal, and seven percentage points less likely to call themselves conservative. Voters under 30 were also 10 percentage points more likely to believe that "government should do more to solve problems."

COLLEGE STUDENTS VOTED AT HIGHER RATES, FOUND VOTING EASY AND BACKED KERRY

Shortly after the election, CIRCLE also released the first post-election survey of college students with three quarters of students saying they had voted. College students chose John Kerry over George W. Bush by 55 to 41 percent. Much of Kerry's support among college students came from those who identified as Independent. Independent college students preferred him by 62 to 27 percent. The poll toplines, a press release, and a summary Fact Sheet can be downloaded from CIRCLE's Web site (www.civicyouth.org).

Both partisan and non-partisan groups helped get college students to the polls, especially in the battleground states. Almost half (47%) of all students – and 57 percent of those who attend college in a "battleground" state – said they were contacted by a political party during the campaign. Of those contacted, 56 percent voted for Kerry, while 39 percent voted for Bush. Moreover, close to half (46%) said they were encouraged by their colleges or a group at their college to register.

Despite concerns that college students would face barriers when casting their votes, nearly nine in ten reported that they thought

CIRCLE (The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement) promotes research on the civic and political engagement of Americans between the ages of 15 and 25. Although CIRCLE conducts and funds research, not practice, the projects that we support have practical implications for those who work to increase young people's engagement in politics and civic life. CIRCLE is also a clearinghouse for relevant information and scholarship. CIRCLE was founded in 2001 with a generous grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts and is now also funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. It is based in the University of Maryland's School of Public Policy.

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voting was easy. Less than four percent said they tried to register but were unable to do so. Less than 1 percent claimed that they went to the polls but were not allowed to vote.

One possible reason for the infrequent voting problems may be that many college students chose to register and vote in their hometowns. Two-thirds of students opted to register in their hometowns and vote either in person or by absentee ballot. The further along in school students are the more likely they are to prefer to be registered using their college address. About one-fifth of students who registered at home reported that they would prefer to register in their college town. Moreover, the poll found that students who registered in their college town were more likely to vote than those registered at their home address.

The poll of 1,200 college students was designed by Professor Richard Niemi of the University of Rochester and Professor Michael Hanmer of Georgetown University, with the assistance of John Della Volpe, whose firm Schneiders/Della Volpe/Schulman conducted the survey, and by David King of Harvard University. It is among only a few studies of college students that includes students living both on and off campus. Funding was provided by CIRCLE. ■

2004 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION POLLS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

There are several organizations who have sponsored polls of young people during and after the 2004 presidential election. Following are a few of the polls with links to the results.

Post-Election Polls

The Emerging Electorate Survey: What Young Americans Say About the 2004 Election

November 9-10, 2004

<http://www.declareyourself.org/>

The survey was conducted by Global Strategy Group and Luntz Research Companies on behalf of Declare Yourself. A nationally representative sample of 1,201 18 to 29 year-olds was interviewed by phone on November 9 and November 10, 2004. The overall margin of error is plus or minus 2.8 percentage points.

The Pace University/Rock the Vote New Voter Study Post-Election Exit Survey

November 4-11, 2004

<http://www.pace.edu/PacePoll>

The poll was fielded nationwide and by telephone among 520 new registrants since 2000. The findings are statistically significant within a $\pm 4.3\%$ margin of error at a 95% level of confidence. Respondents were randomly selected from a list of new registrants in 43 states and the District of Columbia.

The Vanishing Voter Survey by the Joan Shorenstein Center at the Kennedy School

November 3-7, 2004

<http://www.vanishingvoter.org/Releases/release111104.shtml>

A nationwide telephone survey of 1,010 adults conducted November 3-7, 2004. The survey has a sampling error of $\pm 4\%$. The Vanishing Voter Project is a study by the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

Pre-Election Polls

The Harvard Institute of Politics College Student Polls

http://www.iop.harvard.edu/research_polling.html

Since 2000, the Institute has been conducting frequent polling of America's college students. The surveys—generally one is published in the fall semester and one in the spring semester—track students' political views and seek to understand what drives these new voters.

Ipsos/GENEXT Polls (fee for access)

<http://www.ipsos-na.com/news/pressrelease.cfm?id=2411>

The Newsweek.com/GENEXT Poll is conducted by Ipsos-Public Affairs. The polls are mainly of registered voters age 18-29.

MTV Choose or Lose: PRElection Poll

September 8-13, 2004

http://www.civicyouth.org/whats_new/index.htm

The poll was conducted by CBS News on behalf of MTV and The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning & Engagement (CIRCLE) among 876 18 to 29 year-olds by telephone from September 8-13, 2004. The margin of error for this survey is $\pm 3\%$. These respondents were part of nationwide representative sample identified in households previously interviewed by CBS News Polls.

National Youth Survey 2004

November 17-24, 2003

http://www.civicyouth.org/research/products/national_youth_survey2004.htm

CIRCLE, in collaboration with the Center for Democracy and Citizenship at the Council for Excellence in Government, released a survey of 1,000 Americans between the ages of 15 and 25. The survey was conducted by Democratic pollsters Lake Snell Perry & Associates and Republican pollsters The Tarrance Group. It was in the field November 17-24, 2003, and has a margin of error of ± 3.1 percent.

RESEARCH ROUNDUP

The Research Roundup column highlights recent research findings commissioned or generated by CIRCLE. Also included is an update on new CIRCLE products such as Fact Sheets, Survey Articles, Research Articles, Research Abstracts, Bibliographies,

THE BENEFITS OF OPEN DISCUSSION IN SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSROOMS

A new CIRCLE Working Paper by David Campbell explores the relationship between classroom environment and civic outcomes in high school students. Campbell, an Assistant Professor of Political Science at Notre Dame, asks whether students are more affected by the quantity of social studies instruction they receive or by the quality of that instruction - measured in this case by student perceptions of classroom culture. He finds a correlation between student perceptions of an open classroom environment and both civic knowledge and expected civic participation. Campbell takes his investigation to a deeper level and explores the relationship between racial diversity and open classroom culture. He finds that high school students who attend racially diverse schools are less likely to report open classrooms; it seems that discussions of diverse or controversial opinions are more likely to occur in racially homogenous classrooms.

Campbell bases his analysis on data from the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement or IEA Civic Education Study (CES). The CES is a school-based survey administered in twenty-eight participating nations. In the United States, ninth-grade students from 124 schools were sampled in the fall of 1999. Students were asked a broad range of questions measuring: the number of hours they spent in social studies or civics classes, their ability to interpret democratic concepts and principles, their perceptions of open classroom culture, their intent to vote, and their likelihood of participating in politics, community activities, and illegal protests.

In order to guard against the possibility that the most civically aware students would be the most likely to perceive open classrooms, Professor Campbell considered a student's individual perception of his or her classroom as well as the classroom's average score for open environment. The full methodology is explained in the Working Paper.

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS MATTER

Campbell finds that the amount of time students spend in social studies classes does indeed correlate with their civic knowledge and their predictions for future civic engagement. However, he finds an even stronger correlation between student perceptions of open classroom environment and the intention to participate. A student's individual perception of their classroom's culture is strongly correlated with his or her expectations of vot-

ing, participating in politics, and being active in their communities. The aggregate measure of a classroom's openness, on the other hand, is strongly correlated with civic knowledge. In fact, when Campbell controls for open classroom environment, the

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relationship between hours of social studies instruction and civic knowledge is no longer statistically significant. "The bottom line is...quality trumps quantity", explains Campbell. "The degree to which political and social issues are discussed openly and respectfully has a greater impact on civic proficiency than the frequency of social studies class."

CREATING RESPECTFUL CLIMATES

The study also considers whether racially diverse classrooms are more or less likely than homogenous classrooms to encourage open discussion. Campbell finds an inverse correlation between racial diversity and open discussion. In other words, black students are more likely to report open discussion when they attend majority-black schools and the same is true for white students.

According to Campbell, "Adding the potentially combustible dimension of a racially diverse student body likely only makes teachers more reluctant to hold such discussions." He adds that teachers should not be blamed for their reluctance, but suggests more can be done in schools to create respectful climates. "Teachers will only feel free to hold stimulating discussions when administrators and parents support them in their efforts to do so."

The complete Working Paper can be found on the CIRCLE Web site at www.civicyouth.org. ■

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BUILDING SUSTAINED CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AMONG YOUNG ADULT MINORITIES: HOW ORGANIZED GROUP MENTORING AND KINSHIP COMMUNITIES MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Survey data suggest that young minorities are less likely to vote, volunteer, and feel that they can make a difference in their communities¹. However, few studies have been able to provide concrete way to eliminate this disparity. A new exploratory study by Diann Cameron Kelly of Adelphi University, begins to fill in this research gap by asking a group of economically disadvantaged, high achieving persons of color about their interpretation of “civic engagement.”

The study suggests that when families and caregivers—or kinship communities— fail to provide examples of civic and political participation, youth mentoring organizations can serve as an additional critical resource for helping young people meet the cognitive, affective, and behavioral benchmarks that seem to result in sustained civic engagement. According to Dr. Cameron Kelly, “Being engaged in civil society is an ideal goal for every citizen. The dif-

tion, how do you define it” to “how would you characterize your level of commitment to serving others.”

Analysis of the online journals revealed that respondents held three different notions of civic engagement. First, they had a cognitive notion of civic engagement. Cognitive concepts include things such as commitment to service, feeling that you can make a difference in the community or through the political system, and beliefs surrounding parents’ involvement in youth program activities. Interestingly, only three respondents felt that their parents actively participated in the activities that shaped their education

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and lives during their adolescence. Another concept, affective notions, included things such as satisfaction with service or one’s political affiliation. Finally, behavioral notions included things such as performance of service, philanthropy and voting.

BUILDING BLOCKS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

While the study is exploratory in nature, some findings have interesting implications for programs trying to encourage civic engagement and for future research. For one, the study suggests that caregivers and mentors play a key role in the developmental process in which the three notions of civic engagement are developed. According to Dr. Cameron Kelly, “respondents who were educated to pro-social civic behaviors with caregivers and mentors who modeled civic behaviors and commitments were more likely to exhibit strong civic identity, positive feelings toward service and politics, and a sustained desire to remain involved in service.”

Additionally, the study finds that civic knowledge can be gained through a variety of venues. For the young people in the study, civic knowledge was not only learned in the classroom, but was also imparted through interactions with caregivers, youth mentoring programs, and school programs. Dr. Cameron Kelly concludes that, “Civic engagement is a reciprocal relationship between the individual member of a social group and society. Caregiving environments and youth organizations and community groups must see themselves as schools for democracy where the maturing youths have increased opportunities to enjoy participatory equality

ficulty arises when maturing youths have little or no viable examples of civic and political participation. When a parent or caregiver is not fully engaged in traditional civic systems in society, their children will not be as well. Thus, youth organizations and mentoring programs become additional critical resources to ensuring a generation is fully engaged in all aspects of our society.”

VIEWS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The qualitative study included 13 young adults between the ages of 20 and 27 who had participated in a group mentoring program during their childhood and shown high levels of civic engagement in their early adult lives. The participants were asked to keep a detailed online reflective journal of their civic experiences from adolescence to young adulthood. The journals included 32 open-ended questions such as “what do you think of political participa-

2. See CIRCLE Fact Sheet “Civic Engagement Among Minority Youth.” The Fact Sheet can be downloaded from http://www.civicyouth.org/research/products/fact_sheets.htm#9

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in our nation.”

Finally, the report stresses that to the young people in the study, civic engagement is more than political knowledge, political efficacy, a high level of altruism, and so on. It is about young people seeing themselves as valuable members of the community and the community in turn seeing the importance of young people to the community. The author concludes, “[Civic engagement] is also a formal, consistent statement by the young citizen to society-at-large saying ‘I am a valuable member of my environment, and society, in turn, agrees.’”

The full report, “CIRCLE Working Paper 25: Civic Views of Young Adult Minorities” can be downloaded from CIRCLE’s Web site at http://www.civicyouth.org/research/areas/race_gender.htm ■

The American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF) announces the release of *Restoring the Balance between Academics and Civic Engagement in Public Schools*.

The report questions the No Child Left Behind Act’s focus on core academic subjects at the expense of the public school’s equally important role: preparing students to be engaged and effective citizens. The report is the product of a year of discussion with policymakers, education practitioners, community groups, parents, and youth from across the nation.

To order the report, *Restoring the Balance between Academics and Civic Engagement in Public Schools* (56 pp.), please send \$5 per copy (includes shipping/handling) to AYPF, 1836 Jefferson Place, NW, Washington, DC 20036. An online version of the report will be available soon at www.aypf.org.

DEFINING THE CIVIC OUTCOMES OF YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

New research suggests that youth development programs designed to encourage civic activism can help otherwise marginalized youth become active participants in institutions and decisions that affect their lives. The research looked at two types of programs that encourage civic activism and suggests that when compared to traditional youth development programs (e.g., those focused on arts, community garden projects, youth leadership development, community service, etc.), these programs produce important differences in the way young people develop civically.

The research was conducted the Social Policy Research Associates. According to the authors, “While much existing research documents youths’ marginalization from civic participation and society because of their race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, and immigrant status, we wanted to draw attention to ways that youth organizing and identity support programs enable young people to act upon their desire to change the forces that relegate them to the margins.”

YOUTH PROGRAMMING MODELS

The study is based on findings from nine Youth Leadership Development Initiative (YLDI) programs. Eight “traditional” youth development organizations served as a comparison group. The YLDI programs utilized one to two key programming strategies—identity support and youth organizing.

These YLDI program models are unique in several ways. The first program model, identity support, is built around specific identity groups (usually related to either racial, ethnic, gender, or sexual identity) and focuses broadly on civic awareness and connectedness. The second model, youth organizing, encourages young people to assert their political voices on issues that most affect them; this model focuses more on social action. Additionally, YLDI programs strive to put young people, as opposed to adults, in the leadership positions.

DIFFERENCES IN PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Data was collected using both quantitative and qualitative methods and analyzed using a non-traditional method in which the youths’ experiences in the programs were measured against a scale that ranged from insufficient to optimal. Dr. Cao Yu notes that, “This method of analysis allowed us to see what proportion of the youth in a program are having experiences that reach the highest ‘optimal’ standard and what proportion might be having experiences that do not meet the standard of being developmentally rich or in other words are ‘insufficient.’” The researchers looked at two types of outcomes: (1) developmental outcomes like civic activism and (2) support and opportunity outcomes such as having a supportive relationship and physical and emotional safety.

Looking at the developmental outcomes, the researchers found significant differences between the three different types of programs. For example, higher proportions of youth in both identity support and youth organizing programs reported optimal levels

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on the indicators of civic activism than youth in traditional programs (see Table 2). According to Dr. Cao Yu, "We know that many traditional youth development organizations provide only limited opportunities for youth to participate in community service types of activities. Given the lack of emphasis on this area of programming, the findings here are consistent with our expectations that fewer youth in traditional settings have attained the civic activism outcomes measured in this study." In general, when looking at the opportunity and support outcomes, greater percentages of youth in YLDI programs than in traditional youth development programs reported experiencing optimal levels of supports and opportunities.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

In addition to collecting data on the outcomes of the different types of programs, the authors collected qualitative data to try to determine why the programs produced different outcomes. Based on interviews and focus groups, the researchers conclude that much of the measured success of the YLDI programs may be due to well-trained staff, time and resources.

Providing adequate training to staff seems to go a long way in helping young people develop the civic skills necessary for adulthood. According to the report, "The staff of the YLDI programs

approaches their work with older adolescents with much deliberation. They have thought through key issues such as power imbalances between adults and youth, what roles youth can and should play in their organizations and community, and the skills and supports youth need to be effective leaders."

Another key to success is that the YLDI programs allowed adequate time for young people to play lead roles. The authors recommend, "Organizations that seek to support increased youth involvement in decision making need to assess if they are willing and able to slow down their processes so that youth can play an authentic role."

Finally, the researchers found that the YLDI programs had adequate resources that enabled them to have a clear and focused approach. The resources allowed them to provide low staff to youth ratios, develop close mentoring relationships, and population-specific curriculum, all of which contributed to a positive experience for the youth.

The full report "CIRCLE Working Paper 23: A Comparative Analysis of Community Youth Development Strategies" can be downloaded from

http://www.civicyouth.org/research/areas/race_gender.htm ■

TABLE 2: DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES BY AGENCY TYPES

	I. Identity Support YLDI Agencies (n=145)		II. Youth Organizing YLDI Agencies (n=65)		III. General Youth Development Comparison Agencies (n=257)		
	Insufficient	Optimal	Insufficient	Optimal	Insufficient	Optimal	
Civic Activism Overall	34%	33%	18%	42%	52%	20%	***
Civic Action	28%	30%	15%	42%	42%	19%	***
Efficacy/ Agency	10%	46%	6%	40%	23%	26%	***
Community Problem Solving	11%	33%	3%	37%	23%	20%	***
Identity Development Overall	2%	55%	6%	34%	21%	16%	***
Affirmation	1%	62%	3%	46%	20%	21%	***
Exploration	12%	42%	14%	31%	38%	12%	***
Coping Overall	12%	67%	14%	63%	18%	58%	ns
Positive Coping	10%	54%	9%	49%	21%	49%	ns
Negative Coping	15%	59%	15%	55%	15%	53%	ns

*** Significant differences between groups at .001 ** Significant differences between groups at .01 * Significant differences between groups at .05

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NEXT STEPS: KEEPING YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGED IN POLITICS

Young people voted in the 2004 election at the highest rate in at least a decade. So now that the presidential election is over, what can organizations do to keep young people interested and active in the political arena? Two CIRCLE reports suggest that political parties and new technology can play important roles in engaging young people in upcoming state and local elections.

WHAT POLITICAL PARTIES CAN DO IN NON-PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

Most political parties recognize that they can make a big difference in getting young people involved in politics. However, a recent CIRCLE study by Dr. Daniel M. Shea and Dr. John C. Green found that many parties with good intentions do not have specific programs designed to attract young voters.

As a follow-up to this report, Drs. Shea and Green conducted interviews with a few dozen political party leaders who seemed to be doing innovative work to attract young voters. The report, entitled "The Fountain of Youth: Political Parties and the

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Mobilization of Young Americans," highlights concrete examples of what different political party organizations are doing to engage young people in elections throughout the year. Following are just a few of the lessons they learned through these interviews.

Lesson #4: Give Young Volunteers Meaningful Work: In Hillsborough County, FL the local Republican party offers an internship program for 10 to 15 area high school students during each election cycle. The interns and other young volunteers are integrated into the party's activities, participating in a range of activities that include fundraisers, rallies, literature drops, telephone banks, and much more. According to the party Chairwoman Margie Kincaid, "There is no substitute for hands-on experience, but the work has to be significant. Like everyone else, young people want to do things that matter."

Lesson #6: Make Use of Different Outreach Technologies: The local Democratic party in Ventura County, CA found that technology is opening up new avenues of communication between the

party and college groups and other younger citizens. The party uses e-mails and posts on Yahoo groups to announce speakers of particular interest to students and younger citizens. Young people are also being brought in to help "jazz up" the party's Web site. According to the County Party Chair Sharon Hillbrant, "Their ideas are much more innovative. You have to be able to know what the kids are doing, and they have so many more innovative ideas than we do."

About the authors: Professor Daniel M. Shea is currently the Director of the College Center for Political Participation at Allegheny College. Professor John C. Green is of the Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics at the University of Akron.

USING INTERACTIVE TECHNOLOGY TO INCREASE INTEREST

Research by Dr. Shanto Iyengar also suggests that new interactive technology is helping to bring young people into the political process during non-presidential elections. During the 2002 gubernatorial race, researchers at Stanford University tested whether presenting campaign information in an interactive, entertaining manner increases youth political interest, efficacy, and participation.

To test this hypothesis the researchers conducted a randomized experiment where students were divided into three groups—two treatment groups and a control group. The first treatment group received an "adult" version of a CD containing extensive information about the 2002 California gubernatorial election in an e-book format. The second treatment group received a "youth" version of the CD with the same information contained in the adult version but supplemented with a variety of interactive games, contests and quizzes.

While the sample was somewhat limited in size and location, the experiment did yield findings that suggest that interactive technology can increase youth participation in gubernatorial races. The researchers found that young people who used the interactive, youth version of the CD voted at a higher rate and showed more interest in the campaign than the control group. Moreover, the CD seems to have helped to close the age gap in voting. For example, total turnout in the 2002 gubernatorial election was 36 percent. Among youth in the Youth CD condition, the level of turnout was similar -- 33 percent. Moreover, turnout among 18-

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24 year olds was up 14 percentage points since 1998, the last off-year election for which the Federal Election Commission has compiled age differences in turnout. According to the authors, "Given the typical shortfall in turnout among the young, the fact that turnout in the youth CD treatment nearly matched statewide turnout is revealing of the power of the treatment."


The research was conducted by Shanto Iyengar and Simon Jackman of Stanford University. The complete findings can be found in "CIRCLE Working Paper 24 Technology and Politics: Incentives for Youth Participation." 

TABLE 3: EFFECTS OF CD TREATMENT BY AGE GROUPS

Outcome	Age	Youth CD Effect?	Adult CD Effect?
<i>Turnout</i>	All Ages	Turnout increased 11 percentage points*	
	18-25	Turnout increased 18 percentage points**	
	26-30		
<i>Political Interest</i>	All Ages	Interest increased by 7 percentage points*	Interest increased by 5 percentage points*
	18-25	Interest increased by 9 percentage points**	
	26-30		
<i>Political Efficacy</i>	All Ages		
	18-25		
	26-30		Political Efficacy increased by 6 percentage points+
<i>Civic Duty</i>	All Ages		
	18-25		
	26-30		Civic duty increased by 5 percentage points+

**p>.01, *p<.05, +p<.10

CIRCLE FACT SHEETS

- ≡ **Attitudes of Young People Toward Diversity** (February 2005) summarizes young people's attitudes toward three groups that are sometimes targets of intolerance: gays, immigrants, and racial minorities.
- ≡ **How Individuals Begin Volunteering:** (January 2005) gives a breakdown of how volunteers initially become involved in volunteer activity by state and age group.
- ≡ **Youth Voter Turnout 1992-2004: Estimates from Exit Polls:** (January 2005) estimates youth voter turnout in the 2004 election for 18-24 year olds and 18-29 year olds.
- ≡ **Youth Voting in the 2004 Election** (November 2004) provides information about issues that were important to young voters, their political preferences, and gives early estimates of youth voter turnout in the 2004 election.
- ≡ **College Students and the 2004 Election** (November 2004) offers findings from the first post-election survey of college students after the 2004 presidential election.
- ≡ **Youth and Adult Voter Turnout: 1972-2000** (September 2004) compares turnout for 18-24 year olds & 18-29 year olds to that of older voters.
- ≡ **The 2004 Presidential Election and Young Voters** (October 2004) provides information about young voters and their interest in the 2004 presidential election.

RESEARCH TO PRACTICE

From Research to Practice, a column dedicated to recognizing successful “bridges” between researchers and practitioners, reports on research with practical implications for youth civic engagement. Additionally, it presents concrete examples of how practitioners have applied this research to encourage the participation of young people in civic and political life.

YOUTH-LED RESEARCH: INDIANAPOLIS STUDENT RESEARCHERS INVESTIGATE THEIR SCHOOLS

What would

it take for every high school student to be successful in school? The question has been asked by teachers, school administrators, and education researchers around the country. And now, it is being asked on a daily basis by high school students in Indiana's most urban school district – Indianapolis Public Schools. With support from a CIRCLE Youth-Led Research grant, students in five public high schools are investigating what students think will best enable them to learn. The student research teams operate in partnership with CELL (Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning) at the University of Indianapolis and with VISTA volunteers through the Harmony/VISTA Service Learning Demonstration Project. Each of the five schools has at least one full-time VISTA volunteers serving as a mentor to about ten student researchers. All of the student researchers receive a stipend for their work. Toya Cosby, a researcher at Northwest High School, described her first encounter with the research project: “I heard about it from the VISTA at my school. And, to be honest, the money drew my attention. But, by the end of the semester I knew it was real serious and I had forgotten all about the money...As a student, I know something about what goes around in school, and this project gave me a voice.” Student researchers are able to harness their “inside” knowledge about their schools to ask pointed questions of their peers; questions that they hope will yield lessons not just for students, but for teachers and school administrators.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The researchers have structured their project design in order to identify factors related to their and their fellow students' success and motivation. Specifically, they are asking questions about school climate, the supportiveness of teachers and other students, school size, and the extent to which students are included in school decisions.

All five of the participating high schools have received funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to begin conversion to small schools. Thus far, the schools have established small learning communities that emphasize different topics or subjects; IPS' new small school conver-

sions are scheduled to open their doors in August 2005. Student researchers hope to assess how and if these changes in school structure have impacted all students, and whether the changes have had the desired effects.

Before student researchers began collecting any data, all five teams went through joint trainings. Ruth Green, Senior Research Fellow at CELL, designed training exercises to introduce students to research concepts. According to Green, “A lot of initial work was on the responsibility of research and the differences between opinion, fact, and judgment - which I don't think the students had been exposed to before.” Combining the training with hands-on practice made lessons on the responsibility of research come to life. “These concepts became real through applying them in a context with personal meaning for the students...that's when they identified themselves as ‘real researchers.’”

In order to collect a variety of data, the research teams have opted for a three-part methodology. First, they administered a student and teacher survey in all five schools. Next, they solicited student input and opinions through “informal data collection” activities. For example, they held “chalk talks” where they left an open question to students on a blackboard. Throughout the week, students contributed their thoughts and responses, and the final product was transcribed. Finally, the researchers will conduct interviews with classmates to ask more in-depth questions.



RESEARCH TO PRACTICE

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

The Indianapolis student researchers surveyed a total of 4,200 students in five public high schools. In the process they created one of the most comprehensive local data sources on student attitudes. Amanda Carter, a student researcher at Emmerich Manual High School, said some of their findings came as a surprise. "People didn't know what was going on. Teachers thought students were prepared for college, but they had no idea how many were actually dropping out." The survey found that a strong majority of students - over 70% - intended to pursue some college. While this seemed to reflect a real desire on the part of students, it conflicted with IPS educators who estimate the drop-out rate to be as high as 65%. Among the students surveyed only 2% predicted they would drop out of high school. The researchers unveiled other surprising findings including that the majority of students do not have an adult in the school who knows anything about their home lives and most think there is too much disrespect among students.

BRINGING IN THE EXPERTS

As a result of their work, students were invited to present their findings to principals, teachers, parents, and key school administrators. Toya Cosby recalls that when her team heard about the presentation opportunity they were nervous. "At first we were like, 'how are we going to do this.' But we were ready." According to researcher Quentin Vaden from Arsenal Technical High School, "The teachers asked us a lot of questions - a lot of "why" questions. But to me, they were easy to answer. We had it all down." In fact, the students did have the facts down, and

the presentations were something of a role reversal in terms of expertise. Explains Megan Howey, State Director of the Harmony/VISTA Service Learning Demonstration Project, "So many teachers' minds were changed that day by students. It was powerful because the student researchers started with the facts and teachers couldn't accuse them of biases because they had the data...It made the teachers want to change and made the kids really think about the true purpose of schools."

In spite of their findings, the work of the student research teams is far from over. Student researchers are in the process of drafting interview questions as a follow-up to their survey. And, in the process, they are working with the Indianapolis Public Schools department of educational programming to create a documentary of their project. Students will be involved in the creative design and editing, and of course, their work will be the main feature. ★

LESSONS FROM ADULT MENTORS

- ≡ Get buy-in from the school district you are working with.
- ≡ Identify district resources and partners; for example the district's department of educational programming.
- ≡ Don't be afraid to broaden a project using full-time VISTA volunteers: national service can be a tool to support youth voice and youth-led research.

LESSONS FROM YOUTH-LED RESEARCHERS

- ≡ Be willing to learn what you don't know.
- ≡ Make sure you listen.
- ≡ Be committed & dedicated.
- ≡ Know what you're talking about.

(Compiled by student researchers: Toya Cosby, Daryl Jones, Erica Shovan, and Quentin Vaden).

GRANTS

Our Grants column provides valuable information on the CIRCLE grant application process. An up-to-the-minute list of funded proposals on youth civic engagement, their authors, and supported institutions is also included.

YOUTH-LED RESEARCH

One unique area of CIRCLE's research portfolio is youth-led research. Last year, CIRCLE hosted a youth-led research grant competition which was met with much enthusiasm. We received nearly 100 letters of inquiry and awarded grants to four separate youth teams. This competition was initially funded through a grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts. A generous grant from the Cricket Island Foundation is funding a second competition for youth-led research. We will announce winners of the second competition in early May. Be sure to visit www.civicyouth.org to view the list of new grantees! If you have questions about the competition email Carrie Donovan at carried@umd.edu.

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