



AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

Summary of Civil Discourse Project

PROJECT TEAM

Mary Brabeck (Lead), Joanne Broder, Ray Cross, Richard Denur, Beth Doll, Evelyn Hunter, Lars Johnson, Rob McEntarffer, Jennifer McFadden, Breeda McGrath, Kyndra Middleton, Olivia Moorehead-Slaughter, Sara Rimm-Kaufman, Kathryn Wentzel, Sheila Young, Nicole Barnes, Joan Freund, Micah Gottlieb, Maha Khalid, and Rena Subotnik

RATIONALE AND BACKGROUND FOR THE PROJECT

The current state of discourse in the United States is a cause for concern among many people. In response, the American Psychological Association's (APA) Coalition for Psychology in Schools and Education and APA's Ethics Committee have created several resources to help middle and high school educators and students develop the values and skills of civil discourse. Drawing from theory and research, the materials that were developed are made available through the APA website at no cost.

THE PROBLEM TO BE ADDRESSED

Founded as a democratic republic, the U.S. has always engaged in controversy and vigorous debate. The plurality of religions, cultural heritages, languages, and beliefs represent a diversity that has been a strength of the U.S. However, our history also has often been marked by political enmity, rather than courteous compromise. Many have decried the state of discourse in the United States (e.g., Boatright et al., 2021; Bybee, 2020; Conn & McGuire, 2012; Herbst, 2014; 2010/2020; Lee et al., 2023; White et al., 2023). Social media inflames the dialogue among people with different points of view. From acrimonious email and social media posts, to incendiary blogs and partisan radio and television, civility has been in a decline (Sloan, 2023). According to Hawkins and colleagues (2018), our current social milieu can be characterized as "tribal" and polarized (Hawkins, et al., 2018).

Some fear that our current breakdown in civil discourse, the ability to respectfully discuss complex issues, leads to loss of faith in our institutions (Timmer, 2021) and puts our democracy at risk (Carese, 2023; Leskes, 2013; Levitsky & Ziblatt, 2018). In a major study about the state of civic life in the United States,

Lvitsky and Ziblatt (2018, p. 4) found that "In the era of social media and partisan news outlets, America's differences have become dangerously tribal, fueled by a culture of outrage, and taking offense. For the combatants, the other side can no longer be tolerated, and no price is too high to defeat them. These tensions are poisoning personal relationships, consuming our politics, and putting our democracy in peril."

It is important to note that, as Lvitsky and Ziblatt acknowledge, while the media often emphasize our polarities, differences in views about complex issues and moral decline may be less pronounced than many think (Mastrioianni & Gilbert, 2023). Many U.S. citizens believe that there are great differences between Republicans and Democrats, leading to concerns about our ability to bridge these differences. However, data indicate people's views are more similar than different in key areas such as gun control, reproductive health, and climate change (Boatright et al., 2021; Kleinfeld, 2023; Vanderbilt Unity Poll, 2023; Westfall, et al., 2015). Perceived polarities may be exacerbated by partisan media and some politicians (Kleinfeld, 2023). Civil discourse, because it promotes better understanding, may help illuminate the similarities in people's views. Leskes (2013) advocates using "civil discourse as a tool of democracy" (p. 2).

On September 7, 2023, the George W. Bush Presidential Center and 12 other Presidential Centers issued a statement on Strengthening our Democracy (Kramer, 2023) that urged all U.S. citizens to "engage in civil dialogue." They noted that "When united by our founding ideals, Americans should reaffirm the importance of democratic values, civic responsibility, *civility*, and a pluralistic society." Emphasis added. This statement marked the first time a bipartisan statement was issued collectively by the presidential foundations and centers, garnering widespread coverage from news outlets such as the Washington Post, New York Times, and AP News. Calling for compassion, tolerance, and pluralism the institutions declared that "*Civility and respect in political discourse*, whether in an election year or otherwise, are essential." Emphasis added.

THE CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES OF K-12 SCHOOLS

Schools are not immune to societal trends leaning toward intolerance (Smagorinsky, 2023). Teachers face the dilemma of interacting with their students about various complicated issues that students encounter in the media, at home, or from peers and struggle to help students talk across differences (Fay & Levinson, 2017). Recently, the American Academy of Political and Social Science (White et al., 2023) noted that in the U.S., too often a “pernicious political climate has limited the ability of many school communities to discuss—let alone prepare students to address—pressing social challenges that require civic reasoning, discourse, and engagement skills to take action” (p.10.). Regrettably, these interactions sometimes escalate to violence. In a survey of 14,966 participants, McMahon and colleagues (2022) reported a high number of instances of verbal and threatening violence directed at educators from students, parents, colleagues, and administrators during the COVID-19 pandemic. This fear of aggression has led some educators to leave the field, attenuating the number of professional and experienced teachers available to our students (McMahon et al., 2022).

Educators from K-12 to higher education are often caught in the middle of the public’s disputes about how to teach about sensitive issues such as gender and race (Young & Friedman, 2022). Many states have passed policies restricting how teachers can discuss current events or controversial topics. According to a 2023 survey conducted by Rand, 80% of teachers in states with restrictions and over 50% of teachers in states without restrictions, are choosing to curtail discussions of political and social issues in class (Woo et al., 2024).

Noting the need for schools to equip students with the skills and dispositions to discuss complex issues across differences, the National Academy of Education issued, “Educating for Civic Reasoning & Discourse” (2021). The authors of the report defined civic discourse as “how to communicate with one another around the challenges of public issues in order to enhance both individual and group understanding. It also involves enabling effective decision making aimed at finding consensus, compromise, or in some cases, confronting social injustices through dissent. Finally, engaging in civic discourse should be guided by respect for fundamental human rights” (Lee et al., 2021, p. 3). Likewise, The American Academy of Political and Social Science (2023) has called for civic education that develops interpersonal and intrapersonal abilities and skills for participating in an American democracy (Hillygus & Hobein, 2023).

THE SEARCH FOR VALUES AND HABITS OF MIND THAT BOLSTER DEMOCRACY

Since de Touqueville’s (1840), observations on Democracy and America, several scholars have sought to identify the relationship between civic values and the virtues, habits of heart and of mind (Bellah, et al., 2007; MacIntyre, 1981) that undergird efforts in the U.S. to work across differences. Recently, Costa and Kallick (2024), in Habits of Mind: Strategies for Disciplined Choice Making claimed that the intellectual habits that they

identify, “transcend all subject matters commonly taught in school. They are characteristic of peak performers, whether in homes, schools, athletic fields, organizations, the military, governments, churches, or corporations. They are what make marriages successful, learning continual, workplaces productive, and democracies enduring” (last page, third from last paragraph). They identified 16 habits of mind that successful people use when they are confronted with complex problems.

Likewise, in his introduction to the special issue of the journal, *Political Theory*, Bush (2017) noted that the virtue of intellectual humility ensures that one is not over-confident while intellectual courage leads one to speak the truth (Applebaum, 2020). And Israel (2020) suggests that intellectual humility, which includes respect, openness to new ideas, and flexible thinking can help with conflicted and challenging discussions. The authors of the report Educating for American Democracy and the Roadmap to Educating for American Democracy (2021) describe what they call the civic values and virtues needed to overcome polarization and loss of confidence in political institutions. These values include reflective patriotism, civic honesty, civic duty, toleration, respect, dignity, civil disagreement, civic friendship, courage, and justice. These discussions of civic and civil virtues informed our understanding of civil discourse and are further addressed in the section below on defining civil discourse.

The goals and values of *civic* discourse and *civil* discourse are related, and sometimes the terms are used interchangeably. Civic discourse typically refers to discourse about public matters or matters relevant to a democracy. The word “civic” refers to a citizen, a city, citizenship, or affairs of the public or community and civic discourse is communication related to a community or a city. It can include actions such as voting, volunteering, protesting, building coalitions. Civil discourse refers to the ways that a conversation occurs, how people treat each other and their ideas, and the norms of behavior for debate, discussion, and dialogue. Civil discourse is defined further below.

THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF PSYCHOLOGY TO CIVIL DISCOURSE

Psychology has a lot to offer those seeking solutions to our lack of civility and inability to discuss complex issues with respect (Plante, 2016). First, psychology can help us understand what impedes civil discourse. Psychological research on cognitive distortions shows how our blind spots (Bazerman & Tenbrunsel, 2011) can impede our capacity to engage in civil discourse. Too often, we fail to listen and over-estimate how extreme other people’s views are (Collins, 2020). Owing to confirmation bias (Wason, 1960), we gravitate toward information that confirms what we already believe and avoid information that challenges our views. We often perceive these blind spots in others but remain oblivious to them in ourselves, believing that our opinions are unbiased, fair, and fact-based, while dismissing other perspectives as emotionally driven or illogical. This intolerance for diverse points of view, may lead to interactions that are tense, stressful, and possibly harmful.

The learning sciences, including neuroscience, are important in informing educators regarding how students learn and how people develop capacities to engage in reasoning about value complexities and ethical matters, and how people acquire empathy for others across the developmental span. Psychology has shown that children and youth are able to understand complex constructs such as empathy, fairness, reciprocity, and social norms (Lee et al., 2023). Thus, it is reasonable to assume that students are also capable of civil discourse.

Psychology has also taught us that the ability to engage in ethical and moral reasoning develops gradually during the school years and can be cultivated by educators. Hillygus and Holbein (2023) identify some of the noncognitive skills, interpersonal and intrapersonal abilities, necessary for adolescents to engage in democracy: emotion regulation, behavioral control, delayed gratification, empathy, social recognition, and social problem solving, skills involved in successful engagement in civil discourse. And psychologists have identified the social-emotional skills of human interactions and shown they can be developed from an early age (e.g., Rimm-Kaufman, 2021).

SOME DEFINITIONS OF CIVIL DISCOURSE

The notion of civil discourse dates back to the Stoic first century philosopher, Epictetus, who praised Socrates for always engaging in civil discourse with his interlocutors: "Now this was the first and chief peculiarity of Socrates, never to be irritated in argument, never to utter anything abusive, anything insulting, but to bear with abusive persons and to put an end to the quarrel" (*Discourses*, 2.12).

Members of [The Civil Discourse Lab at the University of New Hampshire](#), note that civil discourse is not the absence of conflict. They write, "We believe in a civility that invites constructive conflict, and gracious contestation-- a civility that sincerely seeks to understand and learn from one another in creating a just world." In the book, *Defense of Civility*, James Calvin Davis, noted the value of "the exercise of *patience, integrity, humility and mutual respect* in civil conversation, even (or especially) with those with whom we disagree" (2010, p. 159). Emphasis added.

In 2011, a group of national leaders who met at the Supreme Court, defined civil discourse as "robust, honest, frank, and constructive dialogue and deliberation that seeks to advance the public interest" (Brosseau 2011). Leskes (2013) describes civil discourse occurring among people who, "undertake a serious exchange of views; focus on the issues rather than on the individual(s) espousing them; defend their interpretations using verified information; thoughtfully listen to what others say; seek the sources of disagreements and points of common purpose; embody open-mindedness and a willingness change their minds; assume they will need to compromise and are willing to do so; treat the ideas of others with respect; avoid violence (physical, emotional, and verbal)" (pp 2-3). For Herbst (2020, p. 4-5), "Civility is best thought of as an asset or tool,

a mechanism, or even a technology of sorts... Focusing on strategic civility provides a way to analyze our political environment effectively and, at the same time, avoid inconclusive debates about whether civility is on the rise or decline." Herbst argues that viewing civility and incivility as strategic assets, skills, or behaviors, rather than cultural norms, shifts the focus away from judging people or events as civil or uncivil. As Herbst writes, "Civil people can say uncivil things and uncivil people can be civil." (p. 10). And seeing civility through a psychological lens, as "states" and not "traits," means that civil discourse involves changeable, teachable skills or behaviors that can be acquired through instruction and practice. Beats, Weaver, and Brazendale (2020) argue that civil discourse "is commonly characterized as language that has the following attributes: respect for others, productive, truthful, involves listening, avoids hostility and direct antagonism, and impersonality of reporting."

Teachers have made significant contributions to our understanding of civil discourse, as they have developed strategies and curricula to teach students productive discourse strategies. For example, in [Civil discourse: classroom conversations for stronger communities](#), Jo Schmidt and Nichelle Pinkney (2022) provide middle school and high school educators with specific strategies for building civil discourse in the classroom. They claim that "Civil discourse is an alternative to either avoidance or fighting" and base their work on virtues of courage, understanding, belonging, and empathy. They provide specific activities to practice civil discourse in the classroom (also see Schwartz, & Ritter, 2019).

Several education groups have defined civil discourse for K-12 students, such as:

Educators 4 Social Change: "Civil discourse occurs when people participate in a discussion on highly debated issues intended to promote greater understanding."

Facing History and Ourselves: "Engaging in civil discourse means bringing your mind, heart, and conscience to reflective conversations on topics that matter, in ways that allow you to extend your understanding in dialogue with others."

The Kirkwood School District: "Teaching into civil discourse often requires students to engage with complex and potentially controversial issues, especially as they move into upper elementary, middle, and high school."

Civil discourse is explicitly included in the National Council for Social Studies standards. [The College, Career, and Civic Life \(C3\) Framework for Social Studies State Standards: Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K-12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History](#), "acknowledges civil and democratic discourse within a diverse, collaborative context as both a purpose and outcome of a strong, meaningful, and substantive social studies education." (p. 21).

The APA Civil Discourse Materials

GOALS OF THE PROJECT AND DEFINITION OF CIVIL DISCOURSE

Our overarching goal is to improve discourse in K-12 schools. To achieve this goal, we developed tools for students and educators to use as they work to promote civil discourse in themselves, their classrooms, and their schools. For the purposes of this project, we define civil discourse as *conversation about important but challenging issues that incorporates the values of caring, compassion, kindness; humility; integrity; mutual respect; and the ability to engage honestly with others' perspectives.*

THE VALUES OF CIVIL DISCOURSE

To identify the values of civil discourse, we drew from the literatures on 1) theory and research on the intellectual and civic values, as well as habits of heart and mind that undergird a democratic society, 2) work that suggests ways to educate students for a democracy, 3) theory and research on the behaviors that are identified with civil discourse 4) the APA Ethical Principles in the existing and proposed APA Code.

After reviewing the literature on the intellectual and civic values, habits of heart and mind, that undergird a democratic society, we identified the following values of civil discourse and their definition.

- **Benevolence:** Beneficence is manifest in compassion, kindness, and being helpful to others without expecting any personal gain.
- **Honest Perspective Taking:** Honest perspective-taking is the ability to listen, consider, understand, and appreciate other peoples' opinions and values that are different from and sometimes opposed to one's own.
- **Humility:** Humility is recognizing one's limits, learning from others, and keeping an accurate (not over- or under-estimated) sense of one's accomplishments and worth. It involves acknowledging our imperfections, mistakes, or gaps in knowledge, without shaming or embarrassing ourselves or others. There are three categories of humility: Intellectual (understanding we can learn from others); Moral (recognizing we all make mistakes); Personal (recognizing we are part of a group or community).
- **Integrity:** Integrity is being honest, truthful, and acting in ways that are guided by one's personal values and ethical principles.
- **Mutual Respect:** Mutual respect is manifested by reciprocity in demonstrating that everyone's contributions are valued (by offering considered feedback, both positive and constructive), by keeping one's word, and by holding high expectations

for yourself and others.

Following the advice of a middle school reading specialist who reviewed our draft self-reflection document, we revised the definitions for students as follows:

- **Caring, compassion, kindness:** We show caring, compassion, and kindness when we do something for the benefit (good) of someone else without expecting anything in return.
- **Honest Perspective Taking:** We engage in honest perspective taking when we are open to listening, thinking about, working to understand, and considering ideas, opinions, and values that might be different from our own.
- **Humility:** We show humility when we value the strengths, viewpoints, and wisdom of others. We work to be aware of our biases, am open to learning from others, and acknowledge that we all make mistakes.
- **Integrity:** We show integrity when we are honest, true to our values, and we demonstrate a high standard of trustworthiness.
- **Mutual Respect** I show mutual respect when I give and receive feedback that is constructive, helpful, and considerate of others and show high expectations for myself and the group.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CIVIL DISCOURSE RESOURCES

While we began by identifying the civic virtues and habits of mind that are needed for respectful dialogue, we refocused on the behaviors or discrete skills associated with those values, that can be taught to improve civil discourse. Some of the attributes and behaviors identified in the literature on civil discourse are more operationalizable than others. We tried to operationalize all the terms we used as we drew from work of psychologists to identify the behaviors associated with civil discourse.

Working in teams of two, each team identified the behaviors associated with one of the five values defined above and reported the following:

- List of behaviors associated with civil discourse when individuals demonstrate these behaviors, including "do's and don'ts."
- List of behaviors when individuals interact with others (interpersonally), including "do's and don'ts."
- Identification of the contextual factors that need to be in place (e.g., in the classroom, in the school, in the PTA, etc.) for the optimal development of civil discourse.

We decided to focus on the behaviors that could be taught and encouraged, rather than the "thou shalt not's" or the "don'ts." We decided we want to encourage self-reflection about developing behaviors associated with civil discourse, rather than evaluation of students or teachers. Our goal is more formative

than evaluative, and we understand that teachers are looking for tools that encourage self-reflection.

We developed a paper to describe the context that is necessary for civil discourse to flourish. And for each value, we identified relevant materials for educators, teachers, school leaders, and parents to use both for themselves and to help middle and high school students learn to engage in civil discourse.

REVIEW OF THE CIVIL DISCOURSE MATERIALS, REVISIONS, AND FINAL DOCUMENTS

We asked a group of social studies teachers who were working on civil discourse to review the student self-assessment and they suggested that we go further in identifying specific observable behaviors in language that students understand.

We asked another group of educators to identify “red flags” or challenges they encountered when having discussions about sensitive topics. Language such as “critical race theory,” “equity, diversity, inclusion,” and “socialism” have become “red flag” words that educators work to avoid (Benson, 2022; Sachs, 2022). We acknowledged the need to be “politically neutral” in our language. We asked educators to help us know if the phrase “civil discourse” was itself a “red flag” in their geographical locations, and within their specific political context, and were assured it is not. We then piloted the educators’ tool with a small group of educators and adults who are in doctoral programs preparing to become educators. We piloted the middle and high school tool in a middle school classroom and a high school classroom.

The project has been endorsed by the members of the 2023 Ethics Committee and the members of the 2023 Coalition members. Based on the feedback from these various groups, we revised our Civil Discourse self-reflection tools and developed the following resources, which will be available without charge through the APA Coalition for Psychology in Schools and Education website. The site contains the following:

1. **The Guided Self-Reflection Rubric and Action Plan for Educators** is the tool that teachers and students will use to assess development of civil discourse skills. The Guided Self-Reflection Rubric and Action Plan for Educators includes (1) definitions of the five values associated with civil discourse, (2) a list of each of the behaviors associated with each value, (3) a self-assessment of each behavior, and (4) a self-designed plan for increasing the use of each behavior.
2. **The Guide to Improving Civil Discourse in the Classroom and Self-Assessment for Middle/High School Students**
We modified the language and conducted a readability assessment to make sure it was appropriate for middle and high school students.
3. **The Context Needed for Civil Discourse** describes and offers recommendations about the context that is neces-

sary for development of civil discourse in schools. It is important to acknowledge that successful civil discourse is dependent on the context. School leadership may be more or less committed to the development of civil discourse. Parents may be more or less involved and committed to civil discourse. Using the behaviors suggested in the self-assessments may be more difficult because of how a student is feeling at any given time. This document suggests what educators can do to build a context for civil discourse.

4. **A list of references** which informed the project from each of the values groups
5. **A list of online teaching resources** for developing the skills of civil discourse that group members identified.

REFERENCES

- The American Academy of Political and Social Science (2023)
- Applebaum, B. (2020). When Incivility Is a Form of Civility: Challenging the Comfort of Willful Ignorance. *Educational Theory*, 70(6), 717-730. <https://doi.org/10.1111/edth.12458>
- Bazerman, M. H., & Tenbrunsel, A. E. (2011). *Blind spots: Why we fail to do what's right and what to do about it*. Princeton University Press.
- Beets, M.W., Weaver, R. G., & Brazendale, K. (2020). *Daring to share requires intentional and collective commitment to civil discourse* *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 17(46).
- Bellah, R. N., Madsen, R., Sullivan, W. M., Swidler, A., & Tipton, S. M. (2007) *Habits of the Heart, With a New Preface: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*. University of California Press.
- Benson, (2022). How Schools Officials Avoid ‘Red Flag Words’ that Will Upset Parents. *The American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family, and Property*.
- Boatright, R., Stryker, R. & Allred, K. (2021). Research Brief No. 6: Political Polarization. NICD Research Brief No. 6. Retrieved January 22, 2024 from <https://nicdresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2022/09/Brief-6-Polarization-071521-revision-2-1.pdf>
- Bush, S. S. (2017). (2017) *Intellectual Virtue and Civil Discourse*, *Political Theology*, 18(2), 91-94, doi:10.1080/1462317X.2016.1243355
- Bybee, K. J. (2020). *How Civility Works*, Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.
- Carese, P. (2023). *Civic preparation of American youth: Reflective patriotism and our constitutional democracy*. *ANNALS, AAPSS*, 705, 36-52. doi:10.1177/00027162231192166
- Collins, H. K. (2020) *When listening is spoken*. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 47, 01402.
- Conn, M. A. & McGuire, T. B. (2012). *New York abstains “courteously”: Essays on civil discourse and civic responsibility*. Lanham: University Press of America.
- Costa, A. L., & Kallick, B. Habits of mind: Strategies for Disciplined Choice Making. *The Systems Thinker*. Retrieved from <https://thesystemsthinker.com/habits-of-mind-strategies-for-disciplined-choice-making/> Jan. 10, 2024.
- Davis, J. C. (2011). *In Defense of Civility: How Religion Can Unite America on Seven Moral Issues that Divide Us*. Westminster John Knox Press.

- Fay, J. & Levinson, M. (2017). Teaching democracy in polarizing times. Educational Leadership. ASCD.
- Hawkins, S., Yudkin, D., Juan-Torres, M., & Dixon, T. (2018). Hidden tribes New York: More In Common. Retrieved from <https://hiddentribes.us/> in August, 2023.
- Herbst, S. (2014). Civility, civic discourse, and civic engagement: Inextricably interwoven. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, 18(1), 5.
- Herbst, S. (2010/2020). Rude democracy: Civility and incivility in American politics. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/nyulibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=570542>
- Hillygus, D. S. & Hobein, J. B. (2023). Refocusing civic education: Developing the skills young people need to engage in democracy. *The Annals of the American Academy*. AAPSS, 705, 73-94.
- Kleinfeld, R. (2023). Polarization, democracy, and political violence in the United States: What the research says. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- Kramer, D. J. Strengthening our Democracy (2023), Joint statement of Presidential Foundations and Centers across the United States. Retrieved Jan 3, 2024 from <https://www.bushcenter.org/publications/reaffirming-americans-commitment-to-a-more-perfect-union>
- Israel T. (2020). Beyond your bubble: How to connect across the political divide. Washington DC: American Psychological Association.
- Lee, C. D., Nasir, N. S., & Immordino-Yang, M. E. (2023). What the sciences of human learning and development tell us about civic Reasoning and discourse. *The Annals of the American Academy*. AAPSS, 705, 54-70.
- Leskes, A. (2013). A plea for civil discourse: Needed, the academy's leadership. *Liberal Education*, 99(4). Retrieved from <https://www.marshall.edu/academic-affairs/files/A-Plea-for-Civil-Discourse.pdf> on February 3, 2022.
- Levitsky, S., & Ziblatt, D. (2018), *How democracies die*. New York: Crown
- Mastroianni, A. M., & Gilbert, D. T. (2023). The illusion of moral decline. *Nature*, 618, 782-789. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-023-06137-x>.
- MacIntyre, A., (1981). *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*. South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press.
- McMahon, S. D., Anderman, E. M., Astor, R. A., Espelage, D. L., Martinez, A., Reddy, L. A., & Worrell, F. C. (2022). Violence against educators and school personnel: Crisis during COVID. Policy Brief. American Psychological Association.
- National Academy of Education (2021). Educating for Civic Reasoning and Discourse Retrieved January 3, 2024 from <https://naeducation.org/educating-for-civic-reasoning-and-discourse-report/>
- Plante, T. G. (2016). Is Civility Dead in America? Psychology Today Retrieved January 10, 2024 from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/do-the-right-thing/201607/is-civility-dead-in-america>
- Rimm-Kaufman, S. E. (2021). SEL From the start: Building skills in K-5. New York: W. W. Norton & Co.
- Sachs, J. (2022). Steep Rise in Gag Orders, Many Sloppily Drafted. PEN America. Retrieved January 27, 2024 from <https://pen.org/steep-rise-gag-orders-many-sloppily-drafted/>.
- Schmidt, J., & Pinkney, N. (2022). *Civil discourse : Classroom conversations for stronger communities*. Corwin Press.
- Schwartz, L., & Ritter, D. (2019). Civil discourse in the classroom: Simple approaches to tough conversations. American Association of University Professors.
- Sheahan, L. (2007, September 13). Know Before You Go: Back to School 2007. FIRE. Retrieved January 20, 2024 from <https://www.thefire.org/know-before-you-go-back-to-school-2007/>
- Sloan, K. (2023). Civility is on the decline, ABA civics poll finds. Reuters. Retrieved Jan.20, 2024 from <https://www.reuters.com/legal/government/civility-is-decline-aba-civics-poll-finds-2023-04-27/>
- Smagorinsky, P. (2023). Talking and listening for civic engagement. *English Journal*, 112(3), 57-63.
- Timmer, A. A. (2021). Toward a civil discourse: Introduction. *The Journal of Appellate Practice and Process*, 21(2), 241-244.
- Tocqueville, A. de. (1840/2000). Democracy in America. Ed. and trans. Harvey Mansfield and Delba Winthrop. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Vanderbilt Project on Unity and American Democracy, (2023). The Unity Pole Retrieved Jan. 2024 from <https://news.vanderbilt.edu/2023/07/17/vanderbilt-unity-poll-reveals-significant-approval-of-legislative-compromise-despite-continued-pessimism-about-national-unity/>
- Wason, P. C. (1960). On the failure to eliminate hypotheses in a conceptual task. *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 12, 129-140.
- Westfall, J., Van Boven, L., Chambers, J. R., & Judd, C. M. (2015). Perceiving political polarization in the United States: Party identity strength and attitude extremity exacerbate the perceived partisan divide. *Perspectives in Psychological Science*, 10 (2), 145-158 doi:10.1177/1745691615569849
- White, G. et al., (2023). Civic Education in a time of democratic crisis. *Annals AAPS*, 705, 7-15. doi:10.1177/00027162231190539
- Woo, A., Kiliberti, M. K., & Steiner, E. D. (2024). Policies Restricting Teaching About Race and Gender Spill Over into Other States and Localities: Findings from the 2023 State of the American Teacher Survey. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2024.
- Young, J. C. & Friedman, J. (2022) America's censored classrooms. PEN America. Retrieved Feb. 2, 2024 from <https://pen.org/report/americas-censored-classrooms/>