Promoting Adolescent Girls’ Civic Engagement and Activism

Supplemental Readings:


Online Resources:

1. The SPARK Movement [www.sparksummit.com](http://www.sparksummit.com): This is a girl-centered activist movement designed to challenge sexualization of girls and women in the media. SPARK offers a curriculum designed for older girls and young women to explore ways to become media activists.
2. Taking back girl power: Lyn Mikel Brown at TEDxDirigo: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LCLz6OZnK5o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LCLz6OZnK5o)
3. Girls for A Change: [www.girlsforachange.org](http://www.girlsforachange.org): Girls For A Change (GFAC) is a national organization that inspires girls to have the voice, ability and problem solving capacity to speak up, be decision makers, create visionary change and realize their full potential.
Sample Class Exercise:

Engage your students in a discussion of the book chapter by having them complete a sample of the questions used in the research study:

Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements:

1. It is important for me personally to engage in activism to promote social change.

   1           2        3        4
   Strongly       Disagree   Agree     Strongly

   Disagree           Agree

Please explain your answer for question #1: _______________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

2. I feel confident in my ability to engage in activism to promote social change.

   1           2        3        4
   Strongly       Disagree   Agree     Strongly

   Disagree           Agree

Please explain your answer for question #2: _______________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
Engagement in Activism Behaviors

How many times in the past YEAR have you engaged in the following behaviors?

1. Assisted with a group engaged in community problem solving?
   Never  Once  Two-four times  Five or more times

2. Participated in a fund-raising activity for an organization (like a run/walk/ride or dinner/show)?
   Never  Once  Two-four times  Five or more times

3. Volunteered for a non-profit organization?
   Never  Once  Two-four times  Five or more times

4. Volunteered for candidate or political organization?
   Never  Once  Two-four times  Five or more times

5. Voted in an election (school, local, state, federal)?
   Never  Once  Two-four times  Five or more times

6. Made a financial or material (e.g. donating items like clothes, books) donation to a campaign or non-profit organization?
   Never  Once  Two-four times  Five or more times

7. Engaged in a protest or boycott?
   Never  Once  Two-four times  Five or more times
Discussion Questions:

1. How were your responses different from or similar to the responses in Brinkman’s study? How do your responses compare to your own activism in high school?
2. From what sources do you think girls learn to be politically active? What sources do you think depress girls’ political activism? How would you design a study to test these hypotheses?
3. Do you think the sources that drive political participation differ for women in different racial and ethnic groups? Have students choose a particular racial and ethnic group or another minority group and outline the factors that might drive participation and compare and contrast to whites.
4. If you were to design a program for girls’ activism in a local high school – what types of activities might you include? Why?
5. What issue do you think would motivate girls at your college/university to become politically active?