

QUESTION 10

DEMOCRACY BEYOND ELECTIONS

Education, civil discourse, youth participation, and accountable AI

What does democracy require between elections?

Democracy has to be practiced every day.

VIRTUAL NORTH AMERICAN STUDENT CONGRESS – Satyam Sood – Texas A&M University

Democracy must be practiced every day

Elections authorize government. Daily democratic practice keeps it accountable.

01

EDUCATE

Teach civic knowledge,
media literacy, and
judgment

02

DELIBERATE

Use evidence and rules for
productive disagreement

03

EMPOWER

Give young people real
roles, budgets, and
responses

04

GOVERN AI

Require transparency,
privacy, audits, and human
accountability

DEMOCRATIC HEALTH CHECK

Can people understand public
issues?

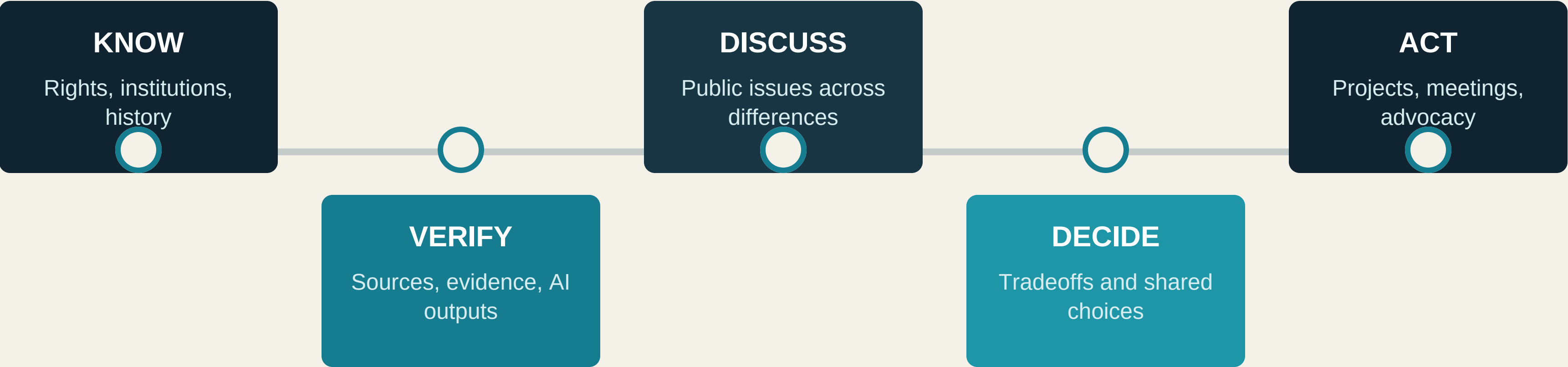
Can they challenge leaders with
evidence?

Can youth influence real
decisions?

Can citizens tell when AI informs
or manipulates?

Civic education should move from facts to practice

Students need knowledge, judgment, and repeated civic practice.



WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE

simulations, local research, community interviews, and participatory projects

RESULT

Knowledge + judgment + practice = informed citizenship

Students need an honest history of who had power

Democratic ideals become credible only when exclusion and resistance are visible.



Civil discourse is structured disagreement

It is not forced agreement or polite silence.



GROUND RULES

- Equal speaking time
- Common source packet
- Correction without humiliation
- The goal is better conflict that can still produce action.

AI can widen participation, but only with safeguards

The democratic question is not whether AI exists, but who controls it and who can challenge it.

RISKS

What can go wrong

- Synthetic misinformation
- Microtargeted persuasion
- Hidden bias
- Loss of privacy

PUBLIC VALUE

What AI can support

- Translation and access
- Simpler public documents
- Organized community feedback
- Support for disabilities

SAFEGUARDS

What institutions must require

- Label synthetic content
- Keep sources traceable
- Protect personal data
- Test for bias
- Allow human review and appeal

GOVERNING PRINCIPLE

AI may assist judgment. It should not make final democratic decisions.

Youth participation matters when it changes outcomes

Voice becomes participation when young people can point to a decision that changed.

2.8%

of parliamentarians are
age 30 or younger

\$1M

allocated each year
through Boston's youth
budgeting process

FOUR WAYS TO SHARE REAL POWER

01

Seats on boards and committees

02

Youth assemblies with agenda power

03

Participatory budgets

04

Written public responses from leaders

MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION TEST

Meaningful participation includes authority, resources, and a visible result.

A practical agenda connects learning to power

The strongest reforms connect learning, discussion, decision-making, and oversight.

01	SCHOOLS	Teach civic history, media literacy, AI literacy, and public problem-solving
02	COMMUNITIES	Normalize structured forums, youth councils, and local projects
03	GOVERNMENT	Give youth formal seats, budgets, authority, and public responses
04	AI SYSTEMS	Require disclosure, privacy, audits, human review, and appeal

SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- Informed participation
- Disagreement without dehumanization
- Visible youth influence
- Accountable technology

FINAL ANSWER

Democracy lasts when citizens learn, deliberate, share power, and govern AI.

This is democracy beyond elections.

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03 UNESCO AI ETHICS

Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence

<https://www.unesco.org/en/legal-affairs/recommendation-ethics-artificial-intelligence>

04 OECD AI AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

AI in civic participation and open government

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05 INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

Youth participation in national parliaments: 2023

<https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/reports/2023-10/youth-participation-in-national-parliaments-2023>

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Youth Lead the Change

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THANK YOU