

## **Research Methods: Improving Citizen Understanding through Research**

An Online Educational Module Based on  
the Citizen-Driven Performance Measurement Project  
Sponsored by  
The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation

### **Teaching Notes: Citizen-Initiated Campaign Performance Evaluation: Lessons from Straphangers' Campaign**

**Class Use Objectives:** This case utilizes a questionnaire to capture citizen satisfaction with the transit service. In addition, the case demonstrates to student's ways to encourage and foster citizen input in government decision making. Instructors may utilize this case to familiarize students with how citizen involvement may be encouraged and institutionalized.

**Pre-Requisites:** Familiarity with citizen surveys, citizen participation, and performance measurement.

**Discussion Questions:** Here are some questions that highlight key issues in the case and are likely to foster meaningful discussion among students might include:

1. What type of research design would you set up for the Straphangers' Campaign? Why? What type of data should they focus on? Who should collect the data?
2. Have the students identify a dependent variable in this study and five independent variables? Have the students operationalize the variables.
3. Are citizens involved in management decisions in Newark? If so, what is their role? Have the students suggest ways to improve citizen participation.
4. Have the students develop five hypotheses for this case.
5. What challenges are associated with testing the five hypotheses?

**Activities:** These are suggested classroom activities appropriate for small groups of students.

1. Check the Internet to see if any other communities have citizen driven initiatives. Have the students compare these programs. In addition, have them tell how the programs were structured and executed.
2. Provide feedback and recommendations to Straphangers' Campaign on how to improve the transit service. Have the students identify things that they could do better.

3. Have the students design a survey for Straphangers' Campaign to measure transit service. Have them present their surveys before the class. Have the groups not presenting critique the survey.