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THE INFLUENCE OF IDEAS, EXPERIENCES, AND PERCEPTIONS ON CIVICS
TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES: A PHENONMENOLOGICAL STUDY

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the School of Teacher Education
in the College of Community Innovation and Education
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Summer Term
2020

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ABSTRACT

In order for democracies to survive, citizens need to be knowledgeable, active members of society. Schools in the United States, more importantly teachers, are often tasked with the responsibility to pass on the knowledge and skills to future generations. The purpose of this research study was to examine and describe how civics teachers' personal experiences, perceptions and ideas influence their pedagogical approaches. While past research has examined the attitudes and dispositions of students, as well as self-report measures of what teachers indicate they are doing in their classroom, no studies have actually observed civics teachers' pedagogical approaches. Five participants were selected to participate in interviews and observations. Lesson plans and student work samples were also collected to supplement the findings of the interviews and observations. Based on the outcome of the analysis, it was determined that the participants implemented their perception of the purpose of civics education, their perception of democratic education and their idea of a good citizen in their instructional practices.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writing of this dissertation could not have been possible without the guidance and feedback from my dissertation committee, and the support of my family and friends.

Dr. Russell, thank you for your guidance over the years, not only as a Ph.D student, but also as an undergrad. I have learned so much from you that will carry on into my future endeavors.

Dr. Waring, thank you for continuously encouraging and supporting me through out this process.

Dr. Hewitt thank you for taking the time to speak with me and offer guidance in the research areas I need improvement in.

Dr. Masyada, thank you for your constructive and detailed feedback. Your expertise in civics education guided me in the directions I needed and for that I am grateful.

To Chris Spinale, thank you for your guidance and support through the program and assisting me in my data analysis.

To Mary Dougherty, aka “the henchman”, thank you for being there for me when I flipped over a scooter, needed to vent and for assisting in my data analysis.

To Megan, thank you for always supporting me and reminding me I can do hard things.

To Joe, Jacob and Isabella. The last three years have been full of ups and downs, but I am so grateful that the three of you encouraged me to chase my dreams and supported me through this journey.

Last, but not least thank you to my mom. You have always encouraged me to chase my dreams and have believed in my abilities, even when I did not. I am forever grateful for you.

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CHAPTER 1: RATIONALE

Overview

In the summer of 2010, as part of a renewed interest in civics education, the Florida Legislature officially adopted the Sandra Day O'Connor Civics Education Act, making civics a required course in Florida for middle school students. While the passage does not specify a specific grade level the course is required for, the standards are written for seventh-grade. The passage of this act was driven by the theory that people are more likely to participate in government if they know how the government works (CIRCLE, 2014). According to Reid and Humphries (2016), there is increasing evidence that Americans do not know much about history, government, or politics, the very subjects taught in a civics classroom. In a survey conducted by the Annenberg Public Policy Center (2016), researchers revealed that Americans have little knowledge when asked basic questions regarding the structure and function of the United States Government. Only a little more than a third of those surveyed could name all three branches of government. The same Annenberg Survey was given in 2011. Comparing the results from the 2016 survey to the 2011 survey showed a decline in knowledge of our government's functions between 2011 and 2016. If the Annenberg survey is an accurate representation of what most citizens know, then schools are not doing their jobs.

The end of the American Revolution marked a new era of the United States' experiment with self-government. With this new government came the need for citizens who would participate in keeping the new republic alive. Scholars of that time, such as Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, saw the need for an educational system that would develop a sense of patriotism and nationalistic values in their future citizenry. Instruction that promoted "moral training, training for citizenship, judgement and the imagination" was encouraged (Hooper &

Smith, 1993, p. 14). Thomas Jefferson felt that history and geography were important subjects for a basic education (Cremin, 1980). Adding to those subjects, Jefferson also felt people seeking higher education should receive additional instruction in subjects relating to politics and nations' laws. What eventually would be called social studies would soon emerge but not without debate, dialogue, and change.

Over the years, different terms are used to describe the educational experiences that deal with the task of educating our future citizens. The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS, 1994) defines the primary purpose of social studies education as “helping young people make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world” (p. 1). Barr, Barth, and Shermis (1977) define social studies' primary purpose should consistently focus on democratic citizenship education. Additionally, they mention that historically the traditions of social studies practice included: citizen transmission, social science, and reflective thinking. Citizenship transmission was the most popular practice, “which focuses on the purpose of developing democratic citizens in the American society” (Barr, Barth & Shermis, 1977, p. 19). Later, in 1996, for the 75th Anniversary of the National Council for the Social Studies, Barth described social studies' nature as improving social welfare, meeting student needs for problem-solving, and developing democratic citizens. Many researchers mention there is a widespread agreement social studies aims to prepare young people to possess the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for active participation within society (Barr, Barth, & Shermis, 1977; Fullinwider, 1991; Longstreet, 1985; Marker & Mehlinger, 1992; Shaver, 1977; Thornton, 2005; Westheimer & Kahn, 2004). Essentially, the researchers are referring to the purpose of civics or citizenship education.

Ochoa-Becker (2007) echoes that social studies have the common goal to strengthen the young's capacity so they can be productive citizens when they are adults. Schools were created to prepare young people to be knowledgeable, engaged in their communities and politics, and committed to the public good (CIRCLE, 2003). If the goal of education, more specifically social studies, is to produce citizens, then the curriculum and pedagogical approaches found in classrooms should mirror those goals (Kahne & Westheimer, 2003).

Levinson (2007) mentions that civics education was reduced in recent decades due to school officials increasing instruction to improve skills in reading and mathematics, or to avoid controversies over civics curriculum. The introduction of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) shelved civics and other social studies education to focus on reading and math skills. Four years later, in 2013, the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), along with the Carnegie Corporation of New York, also indicated that civics education was in decline. All the blame cannot fall on No Child Left Behind, however. Some of the controversial content that comes with civics education is often avoided by teachers and schools to avoid criticism that often accompanies discussion of those topics (CIRCLE, 2003). Journell (2017) argues that controversial topics help individuals develop their own political identities. Parker (2010) claims that schools offer the ideal setting to develop the skills and dispositions required for civic discourse, but Journell (2017) points out that schools are offering few opportunities to engage in civil discourse regularly. The decline of the inclusion of social studies in the curriculum, civics specifically, has impacted future generations' knowledge of our government, as indicated by the numbers reported in the Annenberg survey (2016).

Reid and Humphries (2016) show additional evidence to this concern by reporting only twenty-three percent of the eighth-graders surveyed in 2014 scored at or above proficiency in civics. If future generations are not aware of how our government works, what will that mean for our republic's continuation? Boyd-Pitts (2016) adds that it is essential to realize that without basic knowledge of the structure of the nation's government, people are unlikely to understand more complex and fundamental concepts, such as the role of checks and balances, separation of powers, and judicial review.

Civics in Florida

In July of 2010, the Florida Legislature passed the Sandra Day O'Connor Civics Education Act, making civics a required course for all of Florida's public middle school students.

Florida's civics legislation:

- Required the administration of an end-of-course assessment in civics education
- Specified requirements for course grades and course credit
- Required that the reading portion of language arts curriculum includes civics content for all grade levels
- Required that students pass the civics education course for promotion to high school (www.floridahouse.gov).

Initially, the law required the students to pass the course and test to advance to high school (Delander, 2014). It has since been revised so that the assessment counts towards thirty-percent of the student's overall grade, and the student must pass the course successfully to advance to high school. Additionally, student performance on the exam weighs into school grades. While

there are 40 civics benchmarks, four are not tested due to being experimental, such as those requiring students to do service learning or participating in mock trials.

Florida is referred to as the “trendsetter” (Sawchuck, 2019) with the passage of the Sandra Day O’Connor Civics Education Act and is one of the few states to stress civics at the middle school level. Most states begin formal civics education at the high school level, often only requiring it to be a semester-long (Sawchuck, 2019). With the increased interest in social studies, specifically civics, many states began attaching standardized testing to the courses. According to Shapiro and Brown (2018), 17 states require some sort of exam in order for students to graduate. While standardized testing is debated often among critics, Campbell and Niemi (2016) used NAEP data to address whether state-level civics exams impact student’s knowledge. In their research, Campbell and Niemi (2016) found that state-level civics exams seem to impact students’ civic knowledge positively. The only downfall is that state exams typically involve multiple-choice questions and do not involve any assessment requiring students to participate in some civic action. Tennessee took their civics test a step further and made it a project-based assessment to include a more hands-on approach to engage students in more real-world scenarios (Delander, 2014). Critics argue that testing requirements can lead teachers to “teach to the test” or students to pay more attention to the subject, knowing that they have to pass the test to move on. Sawchuck (2019) mentions there might be some truth to that argument since Florida’s testing scores have risen to 70 percent of students passing the exam since its implementation.

Problem Statement

Public education is an essential part of democratic societies. Dinkelman (1999) describes the significance that schools play in promoting a democratic society. He shares:

The relationship between democracy and public schooling has been an enduring theme in U.S. educational and social theory. Among the many changes that have been put before schools in this country, perhaps none have had such long-standing rhetorical appeal as has the responsibility of preparing the nation's young to inherit their role as citizens in a democratic polity. (p.4)

If the goal of social studies education, more specifically civics education, is to prepare future citizens to be productive members of society (Barr, Barth, & Shermis, 1977; NCSS, 1994; Westheimer & Kahn, 2004), merely adding a civics course does not ensure teachers are delivering quality instruction. According to Bradshaw (2012), no matter how thoughtful and thorough the curriculum, policies, or procedures are, “democratic education ultimately takes place between teachers and students” (p. 1). Teachers are the ones who implement the curriculum, teach about democracy and perspectives regarding democratic citizenship (Goodlad, Sodler, & McDaniel, 2008). Teachers, especially civics teachers, play a vital role in preparing students for their role as engaged citizens, and research about what they do daily is often missing from the conversation.

While researchers have shown what methods improve the likelihood that students will become civically engaged, no previous researchers have thoroughly observed what is occurring in civics classrooms (CIRCLE, 2002; Quigley, 1999). If teachers are tasked with instructing students how to engage civically, then it is imperative to examine and understand how civics

teachers conceptualize democratic education, develop perspectives about democratic education, and implement their ideas and experiences into their pedagogical practices.

Purpose and Significance of the Study

Overall, the aim of the study is to capture and provide insight into civics teachers' lived experiences as they prepare the next generation of citizens. Past researchers have indicated what instructional methods tend to increase civic and political engagement (CIRCLE, 2003; NCSS, 2013) in the future, however, other than self-report measures (Jacques, 2016), not many researchers have observed civics teachers in the classroom to determine if what is being self-reported is happening (Carey, 2017; Journell, 2017; Masyada, 2013). Understanding and describing how civics teachers' ideas, perceptions, and experiences influence their instructional practices can help policymakers and educational leaders understand the needs of our civics educators and policy considerations for civics education in the future.

In order for our democracy to thrive, our citizens must be knowledgeable and ready to participate once they reach adulthood. To do this, schools must provide students with opportunities to learn about and engage in lessons and skills that will enable them to be productive members of society. The significance of the study is that the data collected will add insight to the field by reporting what instruction occurs in civics classrooms through observations, interviews, and document analysis. This information provides awareness of how our future citizens are trained.

Conceptual Framework

The purpose of democratic education is to develop students' skills and dispositions, so that they can be active and productive members of society (NCSS, 1994; Kahne & Westheimer,

2006; Ochoa-Becker, 2007). Students are not born with the innate ability to function productively in society. Instead, it must be nurtured throughout one's youth (Kahne & Sporte, 2008). John Dewey (1916) explains that schools are how those dispositions are formed. Gutmann (1987), expanding on Dewey's (1927) original ideas of preparing youth to be active within society, states:

A democratic theory of education focuses on what might be called "conscious social reproduction," or the ways in which citizens are or should be empowered to influence the education that, in turn, shapes the political values, attitudes, and modes of behavior in future citizens. (p. 14)

This 'conscious social reproduction,' or how information is passed on to future generations, is not, as Gutman states in a later interview, "mindless reproduction, but rather mindful change over time" (Sardoc, 2018, p. 248). However, too often, the discussion of democratic education concentrates on the politics and systems, overlooking the individual teachers who are ultimately responsible for educating future citizens (Bradshaw, 2012). Teachers are on the frontline of this 'conscious social reproduction' because they are the ones implementing the curriculum, teaching about democracy and perspectives of democratic citizenship (Goodlad, Solder, & McDaniel, 2008). In *Democratic Education*, Gutmann (1987) continues this argument by stating:

A discussion of democratic education, therefore, must not lose sight of the role of educators-citizens whose religious, political, and social commitments have already been shaped by their early education. Theorists who claim that a democratic society can be transformed by reforming the education of children often overlook or explicitly bypass

the role of citizens in educating the next generation. (p. 49)

While Parker (2003) describes teachers from all content areas as “stewards of democracy” (p.xvii), scholars frequently describe social studies as the core of effective democratic education (Cuenca, 2010; Hahn, 2001; Parker, 2010). Carpenter (2013) also highlights teachers’ roles in preparing students to better understand democracy and engage them in democracy:

We need to better prepare our students with a broader understanding of what democracy entails. Since democratic citizenship is not in our DNA, teachers need to develop understanding of values within students (p. 21).

In 2002, to help in the revival of civics education, The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), and The Carnegie Corporation of New York teamed up to discuss how to revive the civics curriculum. After a series of meetings between the organizations and the group of the nation’s leading scholars released a report titled *The Civic Mission of Schools* (2003). This report identified six promising practices that would offer exciting and relevant curriculum for schools and teachers use in the classroom. The six promising practices are:

1. Provide instruction in government, history, law, and democracy.
2. Incorporate discussion of current local, national, and international issues and events in the classroom.
3. Design and implement programs that allow students to apply what they learn through performing community service.
4. Offer extracurricular activities that provide opportunities for young people to get involved in their schools and communities.

5. Encourage student participation in school governance.
6. Encourage students' participation in simulations of democratic processes and procedures (p.6).

These practices, discussed in more detail in Chapter 2, offer teachers a way to empower or influence students' political values, attitudes, and modes of behavior, as Gutman (1987) refers to in her theory of democratic education.

Using a qualitative approach, drawing on the democratic ideas and theory of Gutman (1987), and the six promising practices to civics education (CIRCLE, 2003) as a guide, allows for an investigation of how civics teachers' ideas, perceptions, experiences are influencing their pedagogical practices and thus investigating the way future generations are learning what it means to be a democratic citizen.

Research Questions

1. In what ways do civics teachers implement their perspectives and experiences into their pedagogical practices?
2. How are civics teachers' ideas about democratic education reflected in their pedagogical methods?

Experience as a Civics Teacher

Seven years before entering the Ph.D. program, I was employed as a middle school teacher. Five of those years were teaching civics. When I first began teaching, civics was just passed as a new requirement for middle schools in Florida. I remember hearing the teachers complain that they did not even have a textbook to use. Two years later, I was placed in civics due to half the social studies department being terminated or moved. Lucky for me, there was a

textbook adopted by this point. The first couple of years, I followed exactly what my colleague was doing, since she had taught this before.

I feel my K-12 experiences had more of an impact on my teaching than my personal experiences. My mom did not register to vote until the 2016 election, yet I registered as soon as I was 18. I remember my eighth-grade teacher bringing in the voting machines to vote for student council. She was very creative and energetic in the way she taught us. We wrote letters to our Senator, John Mica at the time and participated in teen court. We had to do community service and collected cans for the local foodbanks. Sure, we did textbook work and took notes off the overhead projector, but it was the other experiences that had a lasting impact. That was the kind of teacher I wanted to be, even if it took a few years to get there.

As a civics teacher, I wanted to show, rather than tell my students what it means to be a citizen. I employed some of the same pedagogical approaches my eighth-grade teacher did (voting machines, letters to congress, etc.). I worked with academic coaches to improve my delivery and think outside the box. I sought out training that would help me learn and understand the material better. When the county did not offer anything, I looked outside the district, attending workshops wherever I could. I went and observed other civics teachers to see how they were doing things. At the encouragement of one of my college professors, I joined professional organizations and went to their conferences. I looked for resources beyond the textbook to provide students with the best possible experience while trying to keep up with the curriculum guide and make sure my test scores were decent. I wanted to create an experience for students that would get them excited to about history, government and all the things that go along with being a citizen, much like the few teachers did for me. My thought process was that

during the school year I had the power to potentially impact 140 plus future citizens, in about 180 school days and I had to use every tool in my toolbox to do so.

Assumptions

Since all the participants in the study will be current civics teachers in the identified Central Florida School Districts and have been teaching civics for at least four years, it is assumed that the teachers have been exposed to a variety of instructional practices to utilize in their classrooms. Additionally, since the civics course is state-mandated, it is also assumed that study participants are well aware of the curriculum requirements that come with the responsibility of teaching the civics course.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into five chapters using the traditional academic format. In Chapter 1, a brief introduction and overview of the study are presented. Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature relevant to the proposed study. Chapter 3 discusses the methodology used to answer the research questions. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study, based on the methodology. Finally, Chapter 5 presents a discussion based on the findings.

Definition of Terms

- *Civics Education* refers to the curriculum provided by the state of Florida and includes 36 standards teachers must cover before the end of course exam.
- *Democracy*: Democracy is more than a form of government. It is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experiences. The mode of associated living, as a shared, communicated experience applies to the school classroom first, and second to the family (Dewey, 1916)

- *Democratic Citizenship*: Someone who has knowledge of democratic processes, possesses skills for civic engagement, and possesses democratic values and respect for individual and group identities as well as concern for the greater good (Kahne & Westheimer, 2006)
- *Education for democracy*: Type of education that fosters democratic ideals in the classroom characterized by discussion, deliberation, debate, and decision-making process (Parker, 2001)

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE

Civics education is not a new concept. When establishing the new government for the United States, the Founding Fathers knew it was essential to have an educated citizenry (Cremin, 1980; Duncan, 2011). Maintaining a republican form of government is no easy task, so one of the long-recognized education goals is the teaching and encouraging of the development of civic skills and attitudes among the nation's youth. From the late nineteenth century to the 1960s, civic education was an essential part of K-12 curricula (Evans, 2004).

Horace Mann also saw the importance of educating the nation's youth. His Common School Movement sought to produce the republican citizenry needed to sustain our Republic and educate the workforce to grow its economy (Warder, 2015). Using his position as a Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, Mann used tax dollars to ensure every child could receive primary education. Mann believed that public schooling was essential to good citizenship, democratic participation, and social well-being (Mann, 1846).

Years after Mann, John Dewey (1916) voiced his ideas relating to the importance of democratic education. Dewey believed that people learned best through experience rather than having knowledge passed on verbally. These experiences, Dewey (1916), would allow children to go from "candidates" to full members of society. He writes:

This transmission occurs by means of communication of habits of doing, thinking, and feeling from older to the younger. Without this communication of ideals, hopes expectations standards, opinions, from those members of society who are passing...social life could not continue (p.5).

Dewey (1916) believed that a child's educational career should offer them experiences that prepared them to be democratic citizens. Schools should provide a variety of ways for students to practice what it means to be a citizen. Dewey felt it was important to remind students that citizens are more than just voters and needed to interact with their communities and contribute those values of life (Carpenter, 2006).

What is Civics Education?

Over the years, different researchers have used terms or phrases to capture and describe the educational experiences that pertain to developing democratically minded citizens. According to Butts (1988), civic education "means explicit and continuing study of the basic concepts and values underlying our democratic political community and constitutional order" (p.184). Doyle and Shenkman (2016) think civics education aims to develop knowledgeable, responsible citizens whose actions both at home and within their community reflect the values and principles of our nation's government. Campbell, Levinson & Hess (2012) say that "civic education should help strengthen and sustain a civil society in which young people participate as citizens and learn the skills, knowledge, and values they need in the broader public sphere" (p.55). According to former Secretary of Education Arne Duncan (2011), when civics education is done well, it "equips students with the skills they need to succeed in the 21st century the ability to communicate effectively, to work collectively, to ask critical questions and to appreciate diversity" (para. 31). Nevertheless, it was not until the late 1990s that many educators began to notice after the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) showed that America's students did not have significant knowledge of civics.

The National Council for the Social Studies (1994) first published national curriculum standards, which aimed to provide a framework for improving teaching and learning experiences at all levels of schooling. NCSS described social studies as “an integrated study of the Social Sciences and Humanities to promote civic competence- the knowledge, intellectual processes and democratic dispositions required of students to be active and engaged participants in public life” (p.1). Civics education is perceived to develop functional citizens who engage and participate. Kahne and Westheimer (2006) defined a “good citizen as someone who has knowledge of democratic processes, who possesses skills for civic engagement, democratic values, and respect for individual, group identities and concern for the greater good for society” (p.2).

Schools are considered one of the essential socialization agents that might play a role in youth civic engagement. They can systematically transmit civic norms and values to the entire population of young people (Bayram Özdemir et al., 2016). Teachers, especially civics teachers, are tasked with helping students come into their role as future citizens. However, Westheimer and Kahne (2003) pointed out that there is no consensus among the U.S. public school systems regarding civic education goals. Public school students are “no more in agreement on what good citizenship means than are teachers, policymakers, and politicians” (Westheimer & Kahne, 2003, p. 10).

Civics Education Through the Years

Pre-1960’s civics curriculum was primarily delivered through textbooks and classroom lectures that focused on civic knowledge (Evans, 2004). There were no lessons or curriculum programs that encouraged students to do anything but regurgitate information fed to them in the

classroom (Evans, 2004). During this time, three basic courses were standard: American Government, Civics, which emphasized individuals' role in their communities, and Problems of Democracy, which involved discussing current events (Levine, 2012).

Quigley (1999) mentions that "modern" civic education as a recognized and discreet curriculum began a century ago to Americanize the waves of immigrants who arrived in the United States and ensure they were assimilated into American culture. According to Schwartz (2001), citizen education was an essential purpose for schools:

The only way to keep a democracy from slipping into corruption, tyranny, and degeneration was the careful education of all its participants. Every citizen had to be aware of his/her rights and responsibilities; every citizen also had to be a decent person. New citizens not only had to be familiar with America's new laws but had to actively participate in their preservation. (Schwartz, 2001, p. 220-221)

Several community projects emerged in the late 1940s and early 1950s (Stern, 2010). Prompted by the Detroit Race Riots, the Detroit Citizen Education Study conducted between 1945 and 1953, aimed to implement a problem-solving approach to teaching citizenship education. The research study included eight Detroit area schools and focused on topics such as democracy's meaning and practice and improving human relationships (Evans, 2004). Another project that emerged during this time was the Civic Education Center at Tufts University. Their project aimed at providing stimulating materials for teachers to use. The result was a series of pamphlets that focused on social issues and civic education. According to Evans (2004), the largest and most important project was the Citizenship Education Project (CEP) from Teachers College at Columbia University. The CEP provided materials and resources for teachers at

participating schools. The resources first designed for students in twelfth grade but later expanded to include grades 7-12. The resources were designed to help students tie knowledge and action together. The project's demise came on the account that the project relied on teachers who attended the training to spread the wealth of knowledge to other teachers, and therefore the project failed to reach its intended objective of changing citizenship education programs in all schools across the United States (Evans, 2004).

The events of the 1950s and 1960s led to a curriculum reform dubbed "the new social studies" (Stern, 2010). Public unrest over the civil rights movement, Sputnik's launch, and the Vietnam War sparked a renewed interest in civics education (Quigley, 1999). The launching of Sputnik in 1957 made policymakers in the United States question school curriculums, including social studies, for the lack of preparation and identification of citizenship and civic participation (Quigley, 1999).

The new social studies movement also produced curriculum programs that encouraged students to think critically, interact with their peers, and work within their community. One curricular project to come out of the movement was the Harvard Social Studies Project. The project was designed to teach students to examine and analyze controversial issues through discussion and argument. The project consists of 28 units presented in pamphlets and covered a wide variety of social studies issues ranging from The American Revolution, Rights of the Accused, Moral Reasoning, and Community Change (Stern, 2010). Each unit consists of various situations and scenarios that students must examine and analyze to conclude and defend their positions and offers a variety of instructional approaches for teachers to implement in their classroom.

A project similar to the Harvard Social Studies Project was the curriculum created by Harold Burlak and his St. Louis Social Studies Center. The center had three purposes:

- 1: to create and maintain a social studies center
- 2: to prepare, revise and disseminate an elementary social studies curriculum under the heading the Elementary Social Studies Project
- 3: to serve as a research partner into the field of social science education (Stern, p.135)

The curriculum provided by the center encouraged students to think critically and analyze contemporary issues. The first through sixth-grade curriculum allowed students to investigate various social issues faced by their community. The center also broke away from traditional textbook methods of answering questions at the end of the chapter. Instead, it provided students with the opportunity to participate in role-play scenarios, simulations, and discussions.

Due to the number of curriculum projects developed during the new social studies, many projects did not make it past the community projects were developed in. Many techniques from the new social studies movement can be traced to today's civics curriculum, encouraging students to participate in democratic practices as a part of their citizenship training.

The 1983 Federal Department of Education's report, *A Nation at Risk*, mentions that for our country to function, our citizens need to be able to come to a common understanding on complex issues, often with no notice and based on conflicting or incomplete evidence. In order to do this, schools must ensure that students get a fair opportunity to develop and use their minds well and that with guidance, they can mature to be prepared for responsible citizenship and gainful employment (U.S. Department of Education, 1983).

New courses made appearances as civics education began making a stronger comeback thanks to a push by governors and state legislatures. States adopted several experiential learning courses with titles such as “law-related education” and “citizenship” education courses. These courses offered students hands-on experiences, such as participating in mock-trials (Fiske, 1987). Teachers from around the country were implementing activities such as voting in actual voting booths, attending trials, and then voting on the verdict or holding in-class debates on various issues. According to Boyer (1983), civics had been neglected in recent years, so students did not have a basic understanding of how the government works.

Birchell and Taylor (1986) mentioned that during the 1980s, the social studies curriculum at the elementary level, including civics, went “back to basics.” Their comparison of two sets of textbooks, one from 1969-1972 and the other from 1979-1982, found that “greater emphasis was placed on the study of American government, civics, and citizenship in texts published during the 1979-82 period compared with the 1969-72 editions” (p.81). The “back-to-basics” movement, described by Brodinsky (1977), emphasized five areas for the social studies curriculum: American history; geography, which included map skills; civics and government, reading and skill development; and teaching of traditional values, attitudes and beliefs. The “back-to-basics” movement slowly replaced the curriculum and ideas emphasized during the new social studies movement. As Birchell and Taylor (1986) suggested, the developments made in the new social studies movement may be “further diminished in future elementary social studies curricula if the current conservative, political climate exists” (p.82).

According to Quigley (1999), a student could graduate high school in 1996 without taking a course in civics. Despite this, the 1990s saw several significant developments in civics

education, such as the Campaign to Promote Civic Education and the development of CIVITAS: A Framework for Civic Education, both of which can still be found today as a part of the Center for Civic Education.

The Campaign to Promote Civic Education had two goals. The first was to reaffirm the civic mission of schools, meaning that schools had an obligation to educate young Americans about their rights and responsibilities as citizens and reaffirm the Founding Fathers' commitment to making democracy education the mission of public education. The second goal is to encourage states and school districts to devote attention to civic education from kindergarten to twelfth grade (Soule & McConnell, 2006). According to Hinde (2008), the campaign was in response to the U.S. Department of Education's 1998 Civics Report Card to the Nation (U.S. Department of Education, 1999), and other studies that showed American youth lacked basic civic knowledge.

CIVITAS: A Framework for Civics Education is a comprehensive K-12 curriculum model for civics education and encourages participation in political and civic life within the students' communities. The framework, separated into two parts, promotes the civic knowledge, skills, dispositions, and commitments they feel is necessary for students to evolve into productive citizens. The first explains the rationale and purpose of the framework. The second lists the important goals and objectives and is split into three segments civic virtue, civic participation, and civic knowledge.

The Six Promising Practices

Quigley, (1999), reported that after a series of shocking surveys, Americans showed they do not know the basic roles and functions of their government. Since then, many non-profit

organizations began to assist in providing curriculum materials to assist teachers in educating our future citizens. As mentioned previously, The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) and the Carnegie Corporation of New York held a series of meetings that brought together some of the nation's leading scholars in civics education. The goal? To determine the state of civic learning and engagement and offer recommendations on areas that could be improved. Their report, titled *The Civic Mission of Schools*, stated that civics education was in decline, and the NCLB focus of high stakes testing was not necessarily to blame. Budget cuts, teachers getting in trouble discussing controversial topics in the classroom, and experimenting with different ways to teach civics education in the classroom could also have a factor in the decline. The report also listed six promising practices to assist teachers in delivering quality civics instruction in their classrooms. Classroom instruction on history, government and law, discussion of current events, and controversial issues, service learning, simulations of democratic processes, participating in school governance, and extracurricular activities all contribute to the high-quality civic instruction listed by the report.

The first practice requires schools to provide instruction in history, government, and the law (CIRCLE, 2003). While most of the schools in the United States meets this criteria, the authors of the report want to go beyond the traditional regurgitation of facts students learn from the textbook (Guilfoile & Delander, 2014). While it is essential to know *how* the government is structured, students should also learn *why* the government is structured that way and how their lives relate. As Dewey (1916) would encourage, students need to find a way to experience or relate to the information they are learning through a hands-on or experimental approach. Young

people who are knowledgeable in politics are more likely to vote, and contact, or participate in their government than those students who are not (Delli, Carpini & Keeter, 2006).

The second practice, discussing current and controversial issues, is often left out of the civics curriculum (Guilfoile & Delander, 2014). Discussion of these events and issues can help students understand others' views and give students the opportunity for healthy discourse with their peers. Issues such as immigration, gun laws, or racial profiling are topics they may encounter later in life. Discussion helps students develop the democratic skills and dispositions needed for civic engagement (Hess, 2009).

Service-learning, the third practice, can boost both academic and community engagement (Baumann, 2012). Service-learning is an experimental approach that engages students in their learning and identifies and addresses issues within their school or community (Guilfoile & Delander, 2014). Service-learning projects can deal with a variety of topics such as bullying, homelessness, and hunger. Service-learning projects can occur at any level, such as collecting food or supplies at the elementary level or creating a plan of action to solve a community problem at the middle or high school level.

The fourth practice encourages schools to offer extracurricular opportunities for students to engage in. These activities can include Future Farmers of America (FFA) or Key club that involve students working with their peers and community members. Other activities, such as yearbook or school newspapers, encourage students to improve their writing and communication development (Guilfoile & Delander, 2014). Being part of a club or organization can help students feel connected and vital (Kirlin, 2008). Students involved in extracurricular

organizations are generally more likely to stay in school and be engaged as an adult than those who are not (CIRCLE, 2003).

The fifth practice encourages student participation in school governance (CIRCLE, 2003). School governance could come in forms such as student councils or student advisory boards. These allow students the opportunity to practice democratic processes and have their voice heard or make real and meaningful change within their schools (Guilfoile & Delander, 2014). Students who know how to make their voice heard will be equipped to do so later in life. Students who participate in school governance have a higher likelihood of volunteering for political activities and other forms of civic participation, such as voting (CIRCLE, 2003).

The last of the practices calls for students to simulate democratic processes (CIRCLE, 2003). Mock trials and elections allow students to practice skills such as teamwork, analytic thinking, and public speaking (Guilfoile & Delander, 2014). According to *The Civic Mission of Schools* (2003), simulations of the voting process, mock trials, and legislative deliberation increase a student's heightened political knowledge and interest.

In addition to listing the six promising practices to civics education, the committee made recommendations for schools, school officials, and policymakers to improve civic education. Recommendations included more funding for creating and implementing new curricula based on the six promising practices outline in the report and for administrators in schools to allow and support teachers to discuss controversial issues and current events in the classroom.

Despite the committee's recommendations and listing the six promising practices, many students still learn about civics through the traditional textbook, lecture, and worksheet method. In the 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation Survey, 41 percent of students surveyed

responded that the civics curriculum they experienced focused on the Constitution and how the government works. Thirty percent of students surveyed mentioned the curriculum they received focused on great American heroes and the American government system virtues. In comparison, Jenkins et al. (2006) state that 86 percent of NAEP eighth grade teachers admitted to using textbooks at least once a week. Even more concerning is that 53 percent of the teachers reported daily use of the textbook. Saavedra (2012) decided to examine what information was in textbooks about citizenship since students typically get their information from there. Her conclusion was, “textbooks are chock-full of information *about* citizenship” (p. 142).

What Kind of Citizen?

Westheimer and Kahne (2004) further discuss how students should be equipped for citizenship by asking, “what kind of citizen do we need to support an effective democratic society?” (p. 239). Their research led them to discover three visions of citizenship. The first refers to the personally responsible citizen. This type of person acts responsibly within their community, obeys laws, pays taxes, and volunteers (Kahn & Spote, 2004). A curriculum that promotes personally responsible citizens emphasizes honesty, integrity, and self-discipline to build character and personal responsibility within the individuals. This type of citizenship requires surface knowledge of how the government works and the duties and responsibilities of being a citizen. Students understand how the government works, why it was designed that way, and contribute to societal order and progress. The second type of citizen described by Westheimer and Kahne (2004) is the participatory citizen. A participatory citizen is an active member within their community, often organizing efforts to help those in need, such as food or clothing drives. A curriculum that emphasizes participatory citizens focus on teaching students’

skills they will need to run community efforts, such as how to run a meeting. The last type of citizen Westheimer and Kahne (2004) describe is the justice-oriented citizen. Citizens who are justice-oriented seek out areas of injustice and critically analyze political, social, and economic structures to determine the causes. Skills from the six promising practices promote these types of citizens.

Civic Education Initiatives

Several non-profit organizations have stepped up to offer additional curricular materials for teachers to use in their classrooms. Each of them offers students opportunities to learn and engage in practices that will help them develop skills needed to be active citizens. Role-playing, games, discussions, debates, and national competitions are just some of the activities that students are engaged in when teachers implement these materials.

iCivics was created in 2009 by former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. For decades civics education had been excluded from school curricula, and O'Connor felt the repercussions were undeniable (iCivics, n.d.). iCivics is a web-based educational tool that offers teachers materials to cover topics related to civics, such as the three branches of government and individual rights. Their online game platform allows students to take a Supreme Court Justice role to help decide a dress code case or assume the role of a representative of Congress and go through the process to pass a law. Justice O'Connor has that for the curriculum to be effective, "twenty-first century civic education must not only be hands-on; it must also meet students where they are- and where they are is online." (iCivics, n.d.).

While incorporating lessons online is valuable and engaging to students, they also need to experience what civics looks like offline. Other organizations assist with that. Street Law, Inc.

Provides teachers with materials and resources to implement mock trials, oral arguments, and opportunities for students to work collaboratively to deliberate issues that have faced the court throughout its existence. Their lessons stay up to date with the current cases and offer students the ability to go through what the justices go through when granting cert or deciding a case.

We the People promotes civic competence and responsibility among upper elementary and secondary students. The text and interactive strategies equip students with the knowledge to participate in the culminating activity- a mock congressional hearing. Students become experts on a series of questions relating to what they have learned in civics and defend their responses in front of local volunteers, typically judges and attorneys. They are allowed to have prepared notes for their first defense but are not allowed to have notes for the judges' follow up questions. Students must showcase their learning and voice their opinion, if asked, or apply what they have learned to scenarios presented to them. This curriculum allows students to work in teams, practice their public speaking skills, and practice being an informed and active citizen.

Project citizen has students research a local issue by having students identify and research a problem and the draft and present solutions to fix or correct the issue. The interdisciplinary curriculum is designed for middle and high school students and promotes local and state government participation. Students must present their proposals and recommendations, usually at a city council meeting or local competition. State and national competitions are held to bring students from all over the nation together to showcase their work. This activity also allows students to practice being an informed and active citizen.

More recently, many organizations have begun to work together to make civics a priority in social studies. CivXNow is a coalition of about 90 organizations, headed by iCivics. Their

plan? To revise social studies standards to prioritize civics and then align tests to those standards. Also, CivXNow would like to see an improvement in teacher training and opportunities for our nation’s youth to be heard, and the school and local government levels (Sawchuck, 2019).

The Role of the Teacher

Despite all the resources available to teachers, that does not ensure they will use it. Since there is such great emphasis on civics education, it is safe to assume that social studies teachers, specifically civics teachers, serve an essential role in nurturing our future citizens. The quality of civics education a student receives is essential. Macedo et al. (2005) note that the social studies curriculum too often teaches students *about* citizenship and government rather than including the necessary skills to become active citizens themselves. In analyzing several states’ standards, Journell (2017) found that few standards were designed to stimulate discussions of political issues or encourage students to participate in the political process actively. To continue, Journell (2017) points out that most standards relating to civics focus on describing the structure and functions of the government at the federal and state levels and informing students what a “good” citizen looks like. Not to mention, most frameworks or guides that schools offer for teachers put a time limit on how long it should take teachers to teach that particular unit or topic. Frameworks or guides typically leave little time for teachers to break away from the script and dive into more in-depth deliberations or more meaningful discussions.

According to the National Council for Social Studies (NCSS), high-quality civic education should grant young people “strong tools for, and methods of, clear and disciplined thinking in order to traverse successfully, the worlds of college, career, and civic life” (2013, p.

15). Bachen et al. (2015) believe successful teaching methods for civics include: projects involving service learning and problem-solving, discussions of current events in an open classroom environment, and face to face simulations of civic activities such as mock trials. Students should realize that not everyone will share the same opinion and disagreeing in a respectful manner is important. Kahne and Sporte (2008) also find specific kinds of civic learning opportunities increase students' civics participation. Including activities, such as field trips to the local courthouse, state capital, or holding a mock election, can encourage students to participate when they become adults. Additionally, Kahne, Crow, and Lee (2013) note that different instructional choices may foster different types of political engagement. Just as no two people will participate or believe the same way, no two teachers will have the same exact teaching style and instruction method. How a teacher chooses to present the information could affect what type of citizens students become and how those citizens will participate when they are of age. A passive teacher who lectures day-to-day will not produce the same citizens as a teacher who offers students the ability to examine controversial issues or participate in hands-on activities that will benefit their community. Hodge (2002) mentions that instructional strategies should encourage democratic ways of thinking and promote informed and active citizenship within students. According to Manning and Edwards (2014), the belief is that increased knowledge results in more interest and capacity to participate and thus will increase participation amongst young people. Additionally, Lin (2015) believes that active participation within the school and community can help adolescents understand political and social concepts.

Teachers determine what content and experiences students have access to and how both are presented to the students (Thornton, 2005). Teachers considered to be of high quality will not produce the same results as teachers who are not (National Research Council, 2001).

Chapter Summary

Since the early days of our nation's Republic, the primary purpose of social studies, and school in general, was to develop democratic skills needed to maintain our form of government. The role of the teacher in this development is crucial. Understanding their views and experiences related to democratic education and how those views are implemented into their instructional practices ensures maintenance. As Gutman (1987) and others have mentioned, teachers have an important role as the delivery method for the democratic skills students will eventually need when they become full-fledged members of society. Many organizations have stepped up to assist teachers, but whether or not the teacher utilizes those resources is their decision. Ultimately, it is the teacher who decides what type of citizens they will produce.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Study

According to a survey given by the Lou Frey Institute (Jacques, 2016), and based on the six promising practices (CIRCLE, 2003), civics teachers indicated they use various instructional practices in their civics classrooms. Approximately 94% of the teachers who responded to the survey said they discuss current events at least once or twice a month. Fewer teachers, 38%, said their classes participated in debates. Even fewer teachers indicated that their classes have experienced participating in a mock trial or have had members of the community visit their classrooms. These types of instructional practices have been identified to provide quality civics education for our future generations. If these experiences for students help them become engaged citizens, why are more teachers not implementing them into their classrooms? Could it be the teachers do not feel they are relevant? Or is it because the teachers do not have experience doing those activities themselves? This study aims to capture and describe five civics teachers' lived experienced to see how they are preparing the next generation of citizens. Through a series of data collections methods, the field will gain insight into what is occurring in civics classrooms and help guide future research on civics education.

Research Questions

1. In what ways do civics teachers implement their perspectives and experiences into their pedagogical practices?
2. How are teachers' ideas about democratic education reflected in their pedagogical methods?

Research Design

Qualitative research is more concerned with the depth of information and concentrating on each participant's thoughts and experiences (Creswell, 2013). A phenomenological research design will be applied to describe how civics teachers' perspectives and experience influence their pedagogical practice and resources used in the classroom. This research design observes the reality of the participants involved, which, in this case, will describe the instructional methods used by current civics teachers in Florida and their reasoning behind it. Patton (2002) describes phenomenology as "thoroughly capturing and describing how people experience some phenomenon- how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others" (p.104). Creswell (2013) and Rossman (2006) describe phenomenology as one of the best ways of interpreting a person's or group's lived experience for an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon and express the participants' accounts. Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) describe phenomenology as "the study of the world as it appears to individuals" (p.495).

Research Setting

The research for this study occurred in one Florida school district. For the sake of anonymity, I will refer to it as Marshall County. The county's is home to 553,284 residents. The county is predominantly Caucasian at 75%; 15% of the population is Hispanic; and 10% are African American (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). The county is home to 66 public schools within the district that service roughly 63,000 students. Five teachers from two middle schools within the school district participated in the study.

Middle school ABC is a Title 1 on the west side of Marshall County and is home to 1,162 students. The majority of the students are Caucasian at 48%, while 36% are Hispanic, and 13% are African American. In comparison, middle school XYZ is on the east side of Marshall County and home to 1,207 students. Middle school XYZ has a smaller minority population, with 81% of students being Caucasian, 8% Hispanic, and 8% African American.

Research Participants

Since the goal of qualitative research is to interpret or describe the lived experiences of the participants, participants in this study will be selected through a purposive, snowball sampling method and will consist of current Civics teachers in Florida. Polkinghorne (2005) stated:

The qualitative research employs a purposeful sampling in which the researcher intentionally selects participants who could serve as providers of significant accounts of the phenomenon of collective experiences. This nature of the selection of the participants will deepen the understanding of the central phenomenon in the study and provide information-rich cases for study. Those cases can provide substantial contributions to filling out the structure and character of the experience under investigation (p.140).

While Patton (2002) informs that there are no rules of sample size in qualitative research, Creswell (2013) and Leedy and Ormrod (2010) suggest a phenomenological study should have between 5 and 25 participants. Teachers had to meet the following requirements to participate:

1. Be a current civics teacher
2. Teach at least four civics courses
3. Have a minimum of four years of teaching experience

4. Consent to participate in observations and interviews

According to Jacques (2016), there are approximately 2,100 Civics teachers in Florida, who on average, teach 4-5 sections of Civics classes. Since most middle schools in Florida have approximately three teachers who teach civics, based on the number of students enrolled in the school, multiple school locations were used to get the desired number of participants for this study. Participants were recruited through an email invitation. The email invitation described the research, selection criteria, and contact information if they were interested in participating. Participants were also asked to forward the email to other colleagues who might also want to participate.

All participants met the criteria established, with teaching experience ranging from seven years to eighteen years. While many did not start in civics education, they eventually found their way there and all hold the necessary certifications in order to be able to teach it. Of the five participants, one was male, and the rest were female.

Data Collection

Before collecting any data, I received approval from the University of Central Florida Internal Review Board (IRB). Based on county guidelines, principals must give permission to observe their teachers, so I also received permission from the principals of the school where the teachers were located. Once gaining approval from all the necessary parties, I scheduled a date with the participants to conduct the observations and interviews. The methods of data collection were interviews, observations, student work samples, and lesson plans. All data were collected during school hours.

Observations were conducted in each of the teacher's classrooms. Creswell (2013) suggests identifying who or what to observe, when and for how long. Additionally, Creswell (2013) suggests that the observer should identify the role they will take, such as whether they will be seen or not seen by the participants involved. In this instance, I was visible in the classroom to observe instructional practices used by the teachers during the class periods I observed. As seen in Appendix C, the observational protocol (Creswell, 2013) was used to gather data about classroom set up and information regarding the lesson for the day. Below the description of the classroom, I typed a script for the lesson. During this script, I was more concerned with what the teachers said or how they responded to students, so I did not record everything mentioned by the students.

Depending on the teacher's schedule, interviews either took place before or after the observations. According to Moustakas (1994), the phenomenological interview should utilize an informal and interactive process with open-ended questions and comments. Questions used during the interview were prepared beforehand. The questions were open-ended in order for participants to be able to explain their prior experiences, perspective, and other items that may influence their pedagogical choices. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. The interview protocol created by Creswell (2013) was used to record the data from the interviews (see appendix A). In addition to recording the interview, Creswell (2013) suggested that placing sufficient space between the questions in the protocol form allows the researcher to take notes during an interview and go over responses. Each interview was recorded and later transcribed.

Most interviews were done face to face, with a few follow up questions asked over a virtual meeting for a few participants. All observations were conducted in person, while lesson

plans were collected during the interviews and observations. Student work samples were examined during observations but were not removed from the classroom. While some research suggests using data triangulation to ensure the validity of the information collected during the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), others (Yin, 2003 as cited in Creswell, 2013) suggest using a wide variety of sources to increase the reliability. More than three data sources were used in order to describe the classroom experience fully.

Data Analysis

Patton (2002) describes the purpose of phenomenological analysis as seeking “to grasp and elucidate the meaning, structure and essence of the lived experience of a phenomenon for a group of people” (p.482). Creswell (2013) describes a simplified analysis of Moustakas (1994), where the researcher must first begin with a full description of his or her experience with the phenomenon. By offering transparency, the researcher can address their own biases and provide more validity to the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

The next step is to transcribe the interviews. After the initial transcriptions, I highlighted significant statements (Creswell, 2013). Moustakas (1994) refers to this process as ‘horizontalization.’ These significant statements were placed in an analysis framework created in Excel 2016 to assist in identifying categories of data. Patton (2002) suggests having more than one person take a look at the data to see how themes emerge between the readers, something he refers to as “analytical triangulation” (p.464). Two additional analysts assisted in examining the interview data in order to increase its reliability. These analysts were graduate students and former social studies teachers. In addition to the interviews, significant statements were also taken from the scripts recorded during observations. The significant statements from both the

interviews and observation scripts were grouped into themes. Patton (2002) suggests that several data readings may be necessary before interviews can be coded entirely. Lesson plans and student work samples were used to identify what instruction occurs when the researcher is not present. Data from these sources will complement the information provided during the interviews to describe the teachers' experience.

Together the themes from the interviews and observations, along with evidence from lesson plans and student work samples, were used to write the "textual description," also known as the "what" the participants of the study experienced. This description includes verbatim examples (Creswell, 2013). After explaining "what" the participants experience, I wrote the description of "how" the participants experienced the phenomenon. These two descriptions will be combined to form the composite description. This passage is referred to as the "essence" of the experience (Creswell, 2013).

Trustworthiness of Research Findings

There were several methods used to ensure the trustworthiness of my research findings. First, I used multiple data sources to validate the data I collected. Each of the data collected was analyzed to formulate themes. Using interviews, observations, lesson plans, and student work samples, I validated the research findings. Information provided during the interviews was supported during observations and lesson plans. Student work samples also provided evidence of support.

I used bracketing to set aside my experiences and biases with the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). I did not want my experiences, opinions, and feelings as a civics teacher to hinder the

research process. Once I noted my personal experiences in Chapter 1, I was able to move forward.

Finally, I asked colleagues to examine the research questions and significant statements from the participants to look for themes. The significant statements from the interviews were examined by the inter-raters or inter-coders, as referred to by Creswell (2013). Any discrepancies were discussed in order to reach consensus. The two analysts were graduate students in the social science education doctoral program and former social studies teachers. Each analyst received the codes independently, and then their findings were compared with those of the researcher. Final themes were achieved through a consensus.

Ethical Considerations

Because the researcher was a teacher employed in the research setting, and participants in the study were also employees, procedures were put in place to protect the research participants' identities. While interviews were conducted during school hours at the participants' worksites, pseudonyms of the school sites and teachers were given to protect their identities. Data from the interviews, including transcription and audio files, and observations were stored on a password-protected laptop and in a password-protected file. The only demographics collected from the participants were education background, certification, and the number of years teaching. Participants were not compensated for their participation in the study. All audio from this study was deleted upon completion of the final report.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I described the methodology used to collect and analyze the data. Since phenomenology is designed to describe the participants lived experiences, I explained the

analysis process I utilized in order to be able to explain the “essence” of the phenomenon. After coding the data, I used the themes to describe how civics teachers’ ideas and experience influence their pedagogical choices.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Introduction

If the goal of civics education is to produce future citizens who are productive within society (Barr, Barth & Shermis, 1977; NCSS, 1994; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004), merely requiring students to take a civics course does not ensure this will happen. Those who teach this course must deliver quality instruction that students can take into adulthood. What Gutman (1987) refers to as “conscious social reproduction” (p.14) refers to how the current generation is influencing education and empowering our future generations. Bradshaw (2012) mentions that no matter how well the curriculum is written, it is ultimately left up to the teacher to pass on citizenship knowledge.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to capture the lived experiences of a few civics teachers and describe how these experiences, perspectives, and ideas influence their pedagogical practices. Purposive, snowball sampling was used to select five participants who met the criteria outlined in Chapter 3. Data was collected through interviews, observations, lesson plans, and student work samples. To protect the identities of the participants, pseudonyms were used. Chapter 4 presents the study’s findings, organized by themes, relative to the understanding of the following research questions:

1. In what ways do civics teachers implement their perspectives and experiences into their pedagogical practices?
2. How are teachers’ ideas about democratic education reflected in their pedagogical methods?

Chapter 4 first begins with participant descriptions comparative to answering the research questions. What follows is the thematic descriptions that emerged during data analysis.

Although each participant provided narratives unique to their experiences, significant thematic

elements connected the five teachers. First, I will share my findings on how each teacher described what they feel the purpose of civics education is. Second, I present my findings on the theme in which the participants describe their definition of democratic education and their idea of a good citizen. The last theme to emerge was the challenges civics teachers face. When appropriate, I will comment on how the participants' lesson plans, student work samples, and the observations play into each theme and narrative. Collecting this data gave me further insight into how the participants' experiences, ideas, and perceptions influence their pedagogical practices.

Participant Descriptions

A brief description of the participants was provided in Chapter 3. A more detailed description is provided in this chapter. Methodologically, I asked about their backgrounds, not only to break the ice during the interviews but also to determine if their upbringing or K-12 experience had any impact on the way they teach civics.

Two of the participants started on the path towards education when going to college. Lisa and Jackie knew from the start that teaching was in their future. Jackie comes from a long line of educators. Her grandfather was a teacher and later a headmaster, and both her parents were also educators. She has always had a love for history but briefly changed her college major to math education, since she did not like the number of essays she had to write in the history courses. In fear of losing her scholarship, she had to switch back to the social sciences, eventually earning her education degree. Even though she holds certification to teach social studies, she taught language arts and reading several years before finally making it back into the department. Currently, she is teaching civics, with two classes of ancient world history.

Lisa, while not from a long line of educators, was influenced by several teachers throughout her K-12 experience and knew pretty early on that she wanted to be a teacher. As a child, she always enjoyed playing school, where she, of course, was the teacher. Lisa attended college where she graduated with her B.S. in social science education. She moved to the area with her now-husband, who was also a teacher. She holds a certification in Middle Grades 5-9 and Social Science 6-12. Even though she had to start out teaching Language Arts, she has been teaching civics for the last 5 years.

The other three participants were led down that path through a series of life circumstances. For example, Bonnie followed in her father's footsteps and enlisted in the army before attending college. Having always enjoyed school, after the army, she decided the right career path would be going into teaching. Later, Bonnie earned her master's degree at the encouragement of her godmother, who was an elementary school teacher. She holds many certifications such as Social Science 6-12, a reading endorsement, and ESE certification. She has taught many different social studies classes, eventually landing in civics. While she teaches a split schedule, she loves teaching civics.

Mike, influenced by a series of coaches encountered throughout his K-12 experience, went into coaching after college. Realizing coaching would not provide a steady income, he went to work building animatronics for local theme parks. After a series of life events, marriage, and kids, Mike realized he needed a steady income that did not require too much travel. Mike took over as a long-term sub for his wife while she was on maternity leave. It was at that moment that he realized teaching was where he should be. He got certified and began his

teaching career. Eight years later, he is currently teaching a full load of civics courses at XYZ Middle School. He holds certification in both Social Science 6-12 and Physical Education.

Karen comes from an extremely close family, comparing them to the Brady's because they still have dinner together every Sunday. Her dad was a union president for a while, working as a local air traffic controller. Her mom worked in the school system, both as a substitute and a paraprofessional. After a series of ups and downs, losing her full-ride scholarship to college, marriage and starting a family led to her going back to school. While in college for the second time, she began tutoring her sister's friend, which made her realize that teaching might be fun and more realistic than running a record label. Originally going to school for literature, based on the influence of a high school teacher, Karen landed the role of civics teacher the year she had to teach a split subject. Enjoying the curriculum so much, she asked for it the next year and has not looked back. She is certified to teach both ELA and Middle Grades Integrated.

Table 1 Participant Demographics

Participant	Gender	Teaching Experience	Courses Taught	Highest Degree	Certifications
Bonnie	Female	20 years	Civics and U.S. History	Masters	Social Science 6-12 K-12 Reading ESE Endorsement
Karen	Female	10 years	Civics	Bachelors	ELA 6-12 Middle Grades 5-9
Mike	Male	8 years	Civics	Bachelors	Middle Grades 5-9 Physical Education K-12
Lisa	Female	9 years	Civics	Bachelors	Social Science 6-12
Jackie	Female	18 years	Civics and World History	Masters	Social Science 6-12 K-12 Reading 5-9 ELA Gifted Endorsement

Theme: Perception of Civic Education

In this section, I explore how each teacher perceives the purpose of civics education. The sub-narratives are organized and discussed based on each participant.

Karen

Karen did not miss a beat when asked to describe her thoughts on the purpose of civics education and seemed passionate about her explanation. According to Karen, there is no one-

size-fits-all approach. Throughout the interview, her discussion kept going back to the importance of teaching kids their roles as future citizens.

The idea is we have to prepare kids to be citizens. And there is a lot of different ways that looks. But bottom line all of these kids are going to be voting. They have to be able to read and write. They have to be able to use critical thinking skills. And then they have to be a contributing member of society.

Karen's belief that kids need to be able to read and write is evident in her pedagogical practices. During the observation, while covering civics content related to the media's role, she was encouraging students to use their literacy strategies implemented throughout the year. Reminding her students at the beginning of the lesson to be prepared to mark up the text, and then went through the first paragraph of what they were reading to show examples of how it should be done. Students then continued reading and marking the text in partners, often discussing what each student highlighted and why.

When asked to describe what pedagogical practices civics teachers should focus that aligned with her definition of civic education, Karen stated:

I think the right answer to that question would be to tell you Socratic seminars, critical thinking, and in-depth rigor. All those buzzwords are amazing, but...they have to have the surface learning so that they can do the in-depth stuff.

Continuing her discussion, she reiterated the importance of focusing on literacy strategies to help struggling readers and for students to be able to analyze information. She mentioned she tries to do many hands-on activities and primary sources as "humanly possible." Most of her lesson planning involves looking at the county's curriculum map and mapping out what topics she will

cover and how long those topics should take. From there, she organizes packets of information students will receive at the beginning of each unit. These packets provide information and other activities or worksheets to complete as they move through the unit. As mentioned previously, she tries to implement Socratic seminars and other hands-on activities, but the lesson plans provided seemed to focus on the surface learning mentioned during her interview, with literacy strategies incorporated when necessary.

Jackie

Jackie comes from a tightknit family, with her parents and brother living within the same county. Her parents will often come to help her at the beginning of the school year to set up her classroom and get things organized and will sometimes drop off lunches or dinner when Jackie has to stay after school for activities. She tends to talk about her family often, including her new stepchildren. Through conversations with Jackie, it is apparent she strives to be a good role model for everyone she encounters. Even when talking about challenging students, she finds positivity in the situation. When providing her thoughts on the purpose of civics education, she mentions the lack of knowledge on how to participate in society. Jackie explains:

It is one of those real-life skills people tend to overlook. They need to have a clue as to what they should and shouldn't be able to do. Not to mention, the whole idea behind our government is that we are supposed to be involved citizens. If they don't have a clue, then how are they going to be involved and how are they going to hold the government accountable at different levels.

For Jackie, part of being involved means knowing what is going on in the world, so she tries to incorporate current events into her lesson whenever she can. She feels this helps students relate

better to the content they are covering. This year, some students have even been joining her during lunch to discuss current event topics that they have heard about or researched. Jackie mentions she tends to focus on the national level when talking about current events, although she mentioned some state-level news on the day I observed her. She further explains that the national news is typically what her students hear about, so that is where she focuses. On her social media platforms, Jackie will share news stories relating to what is going on globally, often having done her research about the story and the source providing the story before posting. She encourages her friends, family, and even students to do the same or offer a counterargument, but to be sure to do their research before sharing a source.

Jackie did not describe a specific type of pedagogical practice relating to her idea of the purpose of civics education. Instead, she mentioned again the importance of bringing in current events and stories that students can relate to. From the observation and lesson plans, Jackie tends to prefer direct instruction, often using power point to deliver the material.

Bonnie

Bonnie's family always stressed the importance of education to her. This could be because her parents were not able to complete school or go on to college. When her mother passed away, her godmother, who was a teacher, continued stressing that importance. During her K-12 experience, she remembers one teacher, Mr. Rutherford, who would put them in groups to work and think through scenarios, often competing with other groups. Bonnie always had a love of history, after listening to her dad's stories relating to World War II and eventually enlisting in the military herself. She understands the critical role of civics education, often conveying that to her students. Bonnie explains:

Quoting Lincoln, you can't have a government for the people, by the people without informed citizens. We are getting our students that we serve today prepared to be citizens. So, when they become adults, they understand their civic duty. They need to understand their obligations, responsibilities, and rights.

Bonnie is reminded about the people who fought for her right to vote, not only as an African American but also as a female. Without people like Martin Luther King, Jr., and the suffragettes, she would not be able to participate like she encourages her students to do. Bonnie states:

We can't have a democracy without the people being able to freely vote and make their own choices based on what's going on in that particular time. Providing experiences to students, such as the group we took to Tallahassee. They were able to see the Senate and House of Representatives. They were seated in the Florida Supreme Court.

Bonnie was part of the teachers who took the seventh graders to Tallahassee. This trip allows them to visit various places in the state capitol and see their state government in action. They were visiting locations such as the Florida Supreme Court, Governor's Mansion, and the Old and New Capitol Buildings. Bonnie feels this was an excellent experience for those students since they can visit the places seen in the textbooks and see government officials in action. She mentioned it was justifying hearing the students answer questions about the court system's functions because it was something they had taken away from lessons in the classroom.

Bonnie mentions she tries to incorporate a variety of lessons so that students learn the material and get the chance to apply that knowledge. Bonnie uses multiple resources to provide her students with as many experiences as she can, something she feels other civics teachers should do as well. For example, Bonnie and her colleagues organized a mock election for the

students to simulate the voting process with the same machines used in actual elections. Bonnie mentioned the students enjoying the experience, with a few mentioning they could not wait to do it when they were older.

Mike

While Mike did not give much information about his family life, other than where he grew up and went to school, he does understand the critical role he plays as a civics teacher. Much like the teachers who influenced him, Mike knows that his actions and the relationships he builds with his students can have a lasting impact on them. During his observation, it was evident he had taken the time to get to know his students, often using that to his advantage. Mike feels civics teachers should practice what they preach. If they are trying to prepare future citizens to be engaged, then teachers should be engaged themselves.

We are trying to prepare them to be citizens. We are trying to prepare them to do the right thing, to be functioning members of society. Everybody is a different case because everybody has a different view. Voting is not the only part of civic education. We try to teach community involvement. We stress the importance of education so that they know what is going on in the world.

Starting the class period, Mike mentioned the homework assignment that students had to complete the night before. Students were told to watch tv and count the number of ads they saw. The purpose of that was to show the way companies or organizations can influence things. He tries to show them how things that they learn in the class are a part of their everyday lives, even if they do not realize it yet.

However, we have a very limited amount of time to teach these kids all they need before they turn 18. We are teaching them about the law, about what their rights are, and at the same time, need them to understand and grasp concepts such as propaganda and biased media.

When asked if we were teaching kids too young, Mike mentioned that is not necessarily the case, but that students should continue to learn about civics until they reach adulthood. Not just one year and then hope it sticks with them throughout their lives.

Mike again mentioned that civics teachers need to know what is going on in the world, and while a basic educational degree is necessary, a more specialized degree might be best. Mike mentions that when he was first asked to teach civics, he was not an expert. It took working with other civics teachers to build up that foundation and feel comfortable to do interactive lessons and discussions within his classes. He feels that civics teachers should get students working together and talking as much as possible. Socratic seminars and hands-on experiences should also be incorporated into their lessons. Even though the “dog and pony” show is what people come to expect, students still need to learn the background or “surface” knowledge before participating in those kinds of activities. Mike knows those “buzzword” activities are important, but also feels learning the facts is just as important. His lesson plans and activities are similar to his colleagues that teach at his school, giving the indication they plan together. Student work samples indicate students receive packets at the beginning of each unit with information and lessons they will complete as they progress through the unit. I asked Mike about his planning process and what resources he uses. “As a PLC we start with the curriculum map and go from there.” The curriculum map does not dictate specific lesson plans but does

give a time frame for how long teachers should spend on each unit or organizing principle and what content should be covered during that time. Mike is left to utilize various resources, such as the textbook and iCivics, to create the packets students receive.

Lisa

Lisa grew up in a small town with a close family. The town she lived in had one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school. Lisa had the same social studies teacher for seventh and eighth grade. His teaching style had a small influence on how she teaches and things she incorporates into her lessons. Her views on the purpose of civics education reiterate what the other participants have already mentioned:

I think having students take civics is just a way to set a foundation for them to be more responsible and informed citizens. Then they can kind of build on that as they get older. They know how they can contribute. They know their rights and what is OK and what isn't OK. They just make more informed decisions and actions.

Lisa also feels that talking about current events is important. In middle school, she remembers her teacher showing them channel one news and then discussing it. This is something that stuck with her. She is careful about what topics she brings up, though, knowing that some students might not be mature enough or have enough knowledge to speak on the topic.

Lisa stresses the importance of civics teachers providing “relevant and real-life examples” as much as possible. These real-life examples could be done throughout the subjects, but she feels it is really imperative to do in civics. The civic knowledge most emphasized in her class deals with the functions and structure of the government. She feels that students knowing which branch does what and which level (Federal, State, or Local) would handle issues is

important. For most students, she feels like the knowledge stops after thinking the president handles everything. This was evident the day that I observed her. She was having students place powers, such as collecting taxes and maintaining the post office, into a Venn Diagram. Students were given the power and then had to place it at the correct level. If students got them wrong, they discussed why it was wrong and then the level that the power should go under. Lisa feels it is important to show them what the local and state levels are responsible for because they tend to have the most impact on their lives.

Lesson plans and student work samples indicate students receive a menu or learning plan that contains activities students must complete prior to taking the summative assessment. Typically, the learning plan items are worksheets that cover information or notes students must fill in using Nearpod. Sprinkled in between the Nearpod notes and worksheets, gallery walks, or other simulations occur that offer students the ability to discuss and interact with one another. Lisa will also introduce new concepts as a whole group or review material students should have learned if following along on their learning plan, much like she was doing the day I observed her.

Theme: Conception of Democratic Education and the Good Citizen

During the interviews, I asked participants to describe their ideas on the purpose of democratic education. Many of their answers were similar to their conceptions of civics education. Some participants even repeated the same thing, just in a different way. Sub-narratives are presented by each participant.

Karen

Karen's views on the purpose of democratic education were similar to those she mentioned when describing the purpose of civics education:

Sometimes you look at these kids, and you're like, oh, my gosh, they're going to be voting. So, they have to be able to read and write and use critical thinking skills. And then they have to be able to be a contributing member of society.

Karen mentions it's essential to give them enough skills to be that will allow them to be a positive contribution to society when they are older. Again, she mentions that there are "different paths" for that. Karen reiterates the importance of teaching students the surface knowledge and literacy skills so that later than can get to the "in-depth stuff."

Karen's idea of a good citizen is "a person who stays informed about what's going on around them, tries to create a positive environment and community, and participates in their community." Knowing that there are many "different paths" to citizenship, she tries her best to give her students the tools to be the best citizen they can be.

According to Karen, it is vital to show students that she performs her civic duty and participates in the government. For example, when she received a jury summons in the mail, she brought it in to show her students and discuss the summons' contents. As a class, they compared her summons to the one found in the textbook. After serving on the jury, she brought in her letter of thanks, signed by the judge. She then discussed her experience with each class. She was excited that her students were so interested in her experience and the case itself.

I asked Karen to describe what types of civic knowledge is emphasized most in her class. She responded with "participation and to stay educated and informed." Karen gives the students

at her school the opportunity to participate. Sponsoring her school's Student Government Association (SGA), she provides students who participate with leadership skills, community services opportunities, and other activities. She mentions that this is not the only club to do this. Other teachers sponsor clubs, such as the Future Farmers of America (FFA) or the Red Cross Club giving students additional opportunities for extracurricular activities. The more the school offers, the more students they will likely be able to reach.

Bonnie

Bonnie has been interested in history all her life and understands the value and importance of being informed and having the opportunity to vote. She mentions this several times throughout our interview, so when I asked her what she felt the definition or purpose of democratic education is, her response did not surprise me.

We want them to be informed. We want them, whether it's the local level, the state level, we want them informed citizens, or when they go to vote, they are well aware of their choices. We cannot have a democracy without the people being able to freely vote to make their own choices based on what's going on at that particular time.

Bonnie's idea of a good citizen is someone "who respects the rights of others, obeys the rule of law, and be informed about the world around them." Bonnie discusses that she takes her son with her when she votes, to encourage him when he is of age to do the same. She wants him to realize the importance of voting because he would not have been allowed to do that at one point in time. She includes this example when she discusses voting rights and aspects of citizenship with her students.

The day I observed Bonnie, one of the stations involved a political cartoon of Andrew Jackson in which he was dressed like a King. During her discussions with the groups, she questioned why someone would draw Andrew Jackson like a king. After responses, she would remind students on the principle of the Rule of Law. Based on this principle no one is supposed to be above the law, according to the Constitution. She asked one group, “would you want Trump dressed like that?” The other stations involved examining documents or quotes relating to the three branches of government, with questions to guide students in their discussions.

When asked to describe what types of civic knowledge are emphasized most in her class, her response included several statements such as “the purposes of government,” “political foundations,” and “principals of American democracy.” These buzzwords are typically found in the curriculum map, which Bonnie does mention guides her planning process. In addition to using the curriculum map as her guide, she does seek outside resources for lessons, such as iCivics or her colleagues.

Jackie

Jackie’s idea of a good citizen is someone who “pays attention, researches as needed (instead of just paying attention to ads or media outlets that are basically propaganda mills) and participates in our government.” Again, she goes back to her practice of tying in the curriculum to what is going on in the world. Jackie believed that if she made the connections personal and related it to what kids may experience in their lives, then they can better understand it and then practicing it when they are older. She also consistently reminds her students to look at the sources of information they encounter, reminding them that some people have hidden agendas, so it is important to do the research.

I asked Jackie to describe or define the purpose of democratic education. She responded with, “an education that provides students the background knowledge of the inner workings of their government and what they as citizens need to do in order to ensure our democracy continues.” In conversations with Jackie, it is evident that she tries to embody the role of the good citizen and her beliefs of what democratic education is. She does her research when she does not know who is behind a source and encourages others to do the same. She participates by voting in elections and pays attention to what is going on in the world. Her motto is if she is telling her students to do this when they are older than she should be doing it now. When asked to describe what civic knowledge is most emphasized in her classroom, she again went back to her belief on the importance of staying informed on current events and the world around them.

Mike

Mike’s answer to describing the purpose of democratic education is not entirely similar to his response on the purpose of civics education but does continue his position on preparing students to be citizens later on in life.

Would you say a direct democracy or a representative democracy? Because you just people's views on what they feel democracy is different. It's one where I think that a lot of people would be able to get a have a voice in what they feel their educational needs or values or what should be. But we are here to provide them with that basic service.

This basic service Mike refers to provides students with the background knowledge on citizenship and the government’s function, which he does throughout the year in his classroom.

We're trying to prep them to be a citizen. We're trying to prep them to do all the right things. We've got to get them to be a functioning member of society. So, it depends on

what that person's view is. Or who you're trying to teach. Everybody's a different case and everybody has a different view of what they think that is. Some people would say that, hey, this is a democracy. I could do what I want.

Mike provides information to clear up the misconception of everyone “doing what they want” when discussing the Constitution.

Mike’s perception of a good citizen is “someone who is informed of the world around them and participates in government things, like voting.” Going back to his discussion about the purpose of civics education, he recaps that students need to be made aware of what is expected of them when they reach adulthood. Mike states, “they should pay attention to what is going on around them, they should be knowledgeable on whose running for office, so they can make the best decision possible for themselves.” During his observation, Mike discussed what a Political Action Committee (PAC) does. He also discussed the importance of understanding who is funding these PACs and where their money is coming from. He encouraged students to ask their parents if they knew what a PAC was. Mike also discussed other organizations, such as AARP and the NRA, to inform students that the organization will back candidates that the organization feels is best for their agenda.

Mike indicated that the civic knowledge most emphasized in his classroom. He responded with “just getting them to know their rights and what they need to do when they are older.” Lesson plans and student work samples indicate that Mike does provide information on the obligations and responsibilities of citizens. Students are made aware what rights are protected and limited under the Constitution and what can be done to elected officials should they not obey their constitutional oath.

Lisa

Lisa connected her ideas on democratic education to the purpose of civics education but took it a step further. Both of her perceptions indicate the responsibility of creating informed and active citizens.

Teaching students what it means to be a citizen and how their government works. They need to not only know what they should do as a citizen but why. They need to know how the government works and what they can do if they don't like something that is happening.

When I asked Lisa to provide an example of how she does this in the classroom, she mentioned the recent dress code requirements initiated by the school district. Once students learned of their right to petition, some students began circulating a petition to end the dress code.

Eventually, one popped up online as well. Lisa found it interesting that they took something from her class and used it so quickly, even if the district did not do anything about it. She used it as a learning experience, informing her students that not everything changes right away.

Sometimes it takes years and large groups of people to enact change.

Lisa feels a good citizen is "someone who follows the law and is an informed and active voter." When I asked how that is reflected in her lessons, she mentions that there are several units throughout the provided curriculum map that inform students of these topics. At the beginning of the school year in which students learn about their responsibilities and obligations of citizenship. Also, students learn about how people become citizens. I asked Lisa if there was an opportunity for students to participate in the rights and responsibilities they were learning about, and she provided the following example:

Each year the civics team brings in the voting machines for students to simulate the voting process. Typically, it is for our student council elections, but depending on the time, we may also hold a mock presidential election for students to pick who they would choose.

In another unit regarding the Bill of Rights, she gives students scenarios to test their knowledge on whether or not rights have been violated. She feels that providing them with real-life scenarios or examples helps them better understand their role as future citizens. This past year, the state representative for the area also paid a visit to the school to provide a lesson on the law. Information presented to the middle school students included what would happen if they were caught with controlled substances or involved in sexting. Lisa mentions the material and information were good, because it pertained to information that citizens should be aware of, but the delivery was unengaging for the students.

Theme: Challenges

The theme of challenges arose during the interviews when participants mentioned different ways their instructional practices could be affected. Issues such as parents' dislike of the curriculum, time constraints, and a rigorous curriculum can impact the way the participants teach. While some participant's challenges are similar to each other, each experienced the challenge in their own way. The narratives are presented by challenge, with each participant's perception or experience with that particular challenge.

Challenge: Curriculum is too Difficult for students.

Karen

Karen feels one of the biggest challenges civics teachers face is the curriculum, and the level it is written at. While she does not disagree with the content the students should learn, she does notice that it can be difficult for students to understand.

The curriculum is highly rigorous. You have to train them to be thinkers instead of memorizers. They have to be able to connect concepts...we were mad at King George for suspending our right to a jury trial and that led to the creation of the judicial branch in the Constitution, and the right to a trial by jury in the Bill of Rights.

Karen mentions again the importance of including literacy strategies into her lessons because many of her students do not read on grade level, yet are expected to take the same end-of-course exam. She gives the example of reading the Declaration of Independence in class. It takes four days to read through it because of the reading level of the document is at a high school or college level, and some of her students are on a fourth-grade reading level.

Bonnie

Bonnie also feels that the civics curriculum can be challenging, especially for lower-level students. “In the beginning it would be a challenge if they don’t quite understand what civics is.” Bonnie continues by mentioning that then throughout the course, students learn that foundation but not without struggles along the way. She finds some concepts, such as the Rule of Law or Enlightenment Thinkers, are very difficult for students to understand. Bonnie feels that those topics are hard for students to grasp, continuing, “maybe I am not presenting it in a good way for them.”

“It would be challenging or disappointing if they didn’t take what they’re learning into adulthood because we want them to be informed. They are our future.” She hopes that her students take what they learned from her class and use it in the future. She reminds them several times throughout the year that the information they learn in this class will carry with them throughout their lives.

Mike

Mike recognizes that all teachers face challenges, but through our discussions it was apparent that he also feels the curriculum can be challenging for students. For him, getting seventh grades, who are 12 and 13, to understand concepts even some adults still have not figured out and pique their interest in events that happened well before their time.

On top of giving them a subject that is at high school or college level, that melts their brains, it turns them into mashed potatoes. You’re trying to teach them about a document written over 200 years ago, in a language that they don’t understand.

Mike, again, reiterates why he and his colleagues implement literacy strategies often. With the text’s difficulty, teachers need to give students the tools to be able to break those texts down and help them understand it.

Lisa

Lisa feels that on top of the typical troubles all teachers face, such as classroom management issues and time constraints, she feels civics teachers are faced with other issues as well. Lisa discussed that some of the topics or concepts civics teachers must teach are above grade level. For Lisa, deciding how far to go into a topic can be challenging before losing their interest or engagement. Concepts, such as foreign policy, do not seem exciting to 12 and 13-

year-olds and not something they will typically remember unless they already have an interest in it. For some topics, Lisa mentions, “kids don’t understand what it is and why it is important.” When they do hear about it, most middle schoolers do not appear mature enough to handle it.

During the time North Korea was in the news, several kids were joking that we were going to war with them, and they might get drafted. While it led to some good conversation in the classroom, a few more mature students were irritated at those students for making jokes. They were aware of the possibility that wars could happen.

Lisa continues by mentioning that typically anything to do with the current president is a joke to most students or they bring it up to get attention from other students. Anything with the current president can be considered a “sticky subject,” so it just takes moderating how far things go.

Jackie

While Jackie did not specifically mention the curriculum being too rigorous, she did mention having to go back on certain topics to remediate or create additional activities. She would constantly modify lessons, materials, or other activities to meet the needs of her lower-level students. She would create word banks for questions or crosswords or break down texts into chunks so students could understand the concept better.

Challenge: Remaining Unbiased when presenting information

Jackie

Jackie feels one of the biggest challenges that teachers face is presenting both sides of the arguments or stories. Teaching in a diverse school, there are multiple perspectives and personalities that Jackie encounters in her classroom.

Making sure you are unbiased when you are presenting. When talking about current events, you may be aware of your side, so to speak, sees the issues, but you also have to have knowledge of how the other side sees it, so that you come off as sounding unbiased.

During lessons, she tries to present information from both sides so that students not only can have all the information and is also careful to hopefully not upset anyone. Jackie feels it is easy to digress on the side that she feels strongly about but does not want her views to impact the way students think or ruin any type of relationships she has built up. She tells her students up front that she will not discuss whom she votes for or what political party she aligns with because she wants them to make those decisions independently.

Lisa

Lisa understands the importance of making sure her students stay informed about the world around them, but that does not come without challenges.

Trying to incorporate current events, but in a purposeful way without digressing into this side or that side. Trying to stay objective and making sure they are understanding it and can converse about it in a way that is meaningful. You have to tread lightly with certain topics, and not just political things, but a variety of things without pressing certain buttons.

When asked about treading lightly on issues, Lisa mentions that some parents will push back on issues or assignments they do not like or feel comfortable with. For example, a few years ago, during the election, Lisa and her colleagues tried to show students about public opinion polls. Students were asked to take home five surveys and have adults fill them out anonymously and

bring them back in. Students would later graph the data and then discuss how various organizations would use that data. There was so much parent push back that the teachers decided it was not worth the hassle and went a different direction.

Mike

Mike feels civics teachers can have trouble “trying to get kids to seek out the truth in the day of misinformation.” Living in the 24-hour news cycle is challenging because kids only see what comes through on their social media feed. “It’s a very difficult subject matter for them. Kids have a lot of preconceived notions or preconceived opinions that may go against the middle lines. A lot of parents will step in without getting the facts themselves.” During our interview, he mentions that kids come into class with preconceived notions on topics based on something they read or heard their parents say. Mike mentions it can be difficult to get them to look at different sources or look at things objectively, rather than just taking someone’s word for it. Propaganda and the role of the media just happens to be the topic of discussion during Mike’s observation.

Challenge: Not enough Targeted Training for Civics Teachers

Jackie mentions the need for more training. “We need more targeted content-based workshops for teachers, civics teachers in particular.” The district in which she works does not offer many, other than going over the curriculum map each year or offering sessions for teachers to share ideas. She would like to see more workshops in the district targeted at ways for civics teachers to cover the content. However, she does not seek training outside the districts since those typically occur during the summer or holidays. “The workshops we do get offered typically involve ideas related more to ELA or math.”

Like her colleagues, Lisa, too, wishes there were more trainings offered for civics teachers. She knows of outside resources, such as the Florida Joint Center for Citizenship or iCivics. However, Lisa wishes the district would provide the same amount of resources they do as other tested areas. She continues by mentioning that since civics scores are so important, that administration and the district should want to provide civics teachers with as much training and resources as possible. Math and Science often have academic coaches there to help their teachers and social studies, including civics, do not unless the schools find other ways to fund them. Lisa has looked outside the district for additional trainings, but has only attended “a few”.

Karen mentioned briefly about the trainings offered in the district targeted at civics teachers. “There isn’t much,” she explains. Noting the few they have at the beginning of the school year, “those are more like break-out sessions, rather than in-depth training though”. Karen indicates she prefers facilitating the breakout sessions rather than attending them. She mentions that even during the early release trainings (ERPLs), she will hold sessions for teachers to come to her school, rather than traveling anywhere.

Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter, I provided the themes that emerged from the data analysis. The interview and observational data analysis led to the emergence of three themes: perception of civics education, perception of democratic education and the good citizen and challenges faced teaching civics. Despite their various backgrounds and experiences, each participant shared similar ideas and faced similar challenges. In the next and final chapter, I examine how each teachers’ lived experience pertains to the research questions.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine and describe how civics teachers' experiences, perceptions, and ideas influence their pedagogical choices. This chapter includes the discussion of the findings of the following research questions in relation to the literature review:

1. In what ways do civics teachers implement their perspectives, ideas, and experiences into their pedagogical practices?
2. How are teachers' ideas about democratic education reflected in their pedagogical methods?

After discussing the findings, the chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations and implications of the study, areas for future research, and a brief summary.

The main focus of the research study was civics teachers in Florida. I utilized interviews, observations, lesson plans, and student work samples to answer the research questions. After collecting data, interviews were transcribed and analyzed to look for themes. I enlisted the help of two doctoral students to analyze the interview data to promote the data's trustworthiness. The themes that emerged from the data analysis were "conception of civics education," "perception of democratic education and the good citizen," and "challenges." Lesson plans, observations, and student work samples were used when necessary to confirm statements from the interviews.

Conceptual Framework

Amy Gutman's (1987) Theory of Democratic Education and CIRCLE's (2003) Six Promising Practices to Civics Education guided this study's framework. In her theory, Gutman (1987) recognizes the important role teachers play in the development of educating the next

wave of citizens. Calling it “conscious social reproduction” Gutman (1987, p.14) points out that it should not be “mindless reproduction, but mindful change over time” (Sardoc, 2018, p.248). Schools, more importantly civics teachers, should not just force out information and hope students remember it later on in life.

The six promising practices provide schools and teachers with an adaptable roadmap to ensure they are providing the tools and skills necessary to be contributing members of society, rather than just regurgitators of knowledge. That is not to say that civic knowledge is not important. After all, the first promising practice is for schools to offer civics education. However, as pointed out by Guilfoyle and Delander (2014), students should know how the government is structured and why it is structured that way. The rest of the promising practices, as discussed in chapter 2, offer participatory pieces for students to be actively involved in their civic education.

Discussion of Findings

Based on previous research, high-quality civics instruction involves pedagogical practices that include service-learning, problem-solving, discussion of current events, and simulations, such as mock trials (Bachen et al., 2015; Kahne & Spote, 2008). Just as no two teachers teach the same way, Kahne, Crow, and Lee (2013) indicate that different instructional choices may develop different types of political engagement in students. If the goal of civics education is to produce knowledgeable, informed, and active citizens, then the curriculum and pedagogical practices should mirror that (Barr, Bath & Shermis, 1977; NCSS, 1994; Westheimer & Kahne, 2003). The following discussion is broken into three parts: what civics teachers are doing, how they are doing it, and what that means.

What are Civics Teachers Doing?

According to Dewey (1916), schools are the means to develop and nurture students' skills and dispositions to be active members of society. As Gutman (1987) mentioned, it is important to realize that teachers play an essential role in the nurturing processes. These teachers have already developed skills, dispositions, and ideas based on the education they have received. Those teachers are then tasked to pass on that knowledge to the next generation. While states and school districts may provide curriculum or guides, it is ultimately up to the teacher to decide how that material is presented. Examining what civics teachers are doing and how they are doing it is essential to understand what that means for our future citizens and the health of our democracy.

Civic knowledge based on perceptions

In their description of the purpose of civics education, all participants felt that as civics teachers, their job is to prepare students to be future citizens. This includes informing them of their rights, responsibilities, and obligations that they will encounter when they reach of age. This coincides with past research, which identifies the purpose of civics education is to develop knowledgeable, responsible citizens who participate both at home and within the community (Campbell, Levinson & Hess, 2012; Doyle & Shenkman, 2016). Former Secretary of Education Arne Duncan (2011) says that when done correctly, civics education gives students many skills to succeed in the 21st-century. These skills, according to Duncan (2011), include the ability to “communicate effectively, work collectively, ask critical questions, and appreciate diversity” (para. 31).

The participants' ideas regarding democratic education were very similar to their explanation of the purpose of civic education. Participants described democratic education as preparing students to perform their civic duties, such as voting, later on in life. However, several scholars believe there is more to democratic education than just being informed and voting. For example, Bennis (n.d.) describes democratic education as teachers creatively engaging students and offer students a voice in learning opportunities. Bennis (n.d.) continues by mentioning there is no conventional curriculum and the change for shared decision making within the schools. Ochoa-Becker (2007) adds to the discussion by stating that democracies need citizens who are "informed, thoughtful, and constructive critics of public policies and practices" (p. 4). This is on top of being informed, loyal, and law abiding. She describes democratic classrooms as safe spaces where students are not afraid to share when they disagree with issues and offer suggestions for discussion topics. While the participants' perception of democratic education is evident in their practices, based on the descriptions of previous research, it appears participants' lack knowledge of what the full scope of democratic education entails.

The participants' definition of democratic education translates to their description of the characteristics of good citizens. Participants describe citizens who are knowledgeable of the inner workings of their government, participate within their communities, and vote. In their research, Westheimer and Kahne (2004) attempted to highlight three types of citizens that are embodied in programs across the nation. The descriptions the participants provided of their idea of the good citizen fall into two categories described by Westheimer and Kahne (2004). The personally responsible citizen is one who follows the law, volunteers within their community,

and pays taxes. The second is the participatory citizen who is more active within their community.

These ideas of civics and democratic education and their perception good citizens are evident in the participants' pedagogical practices. For example, during his interview, Mike mentioned that it is essential for students to be informed, since they will be voting someday. During his lesson he stressed to his students, the importance of "knowing who is funding these PACs" when deciding about voting for candidates. During her observation, Karen explained to her students about bias and political party platforms. Asking students if they have heard the terms "left-winged and right-winged," going on to explain how Republicans are often considered right-winged and Democrats are left-winged.

The participants lean heavily on knowledge of civics and practices when describing civic education and the good citizen. This ties into the first promising practice, which is for schools to offer courses history, government, and the law (CIRCLE, 2003). Florida's civics course touches on all three of these, focusing more on our government' structure and function and why it was designed that way. While there are participatory pieces within the curriculum map, they are often skipped over due to those standards not being tested on the End-of-Course Assessment (EOCA). All participants indicated they use the curriculum map as their starting source when deciding what information to cover. The majority of the information covered is the "surface" knowledge a few participants mentioned as important. Of course, having surface knowledge is important to understand more complex issues (Boyd-Pitts, 2016). Teachers are guided by the curriculum map provided by the district. Teachers are given direction on what standards to teach and how long they have to teach it due to the EOCA in the spring. This leaves little room for the

teachers to branch out or go in-depth. The EOCA is not necessarily a bad thing, as Campbell and Niemi (2016) have found that state-level exams positively impact student civic knowledge.

When providing students with the civic knowledge they need, teachers at Middle School XYZ focus on also providing students with literacy strategies in order to break down complicated documents or subjects that they cover during the course. Karen mentions that these students need to be able to read and write, it is essential to include these activities. During their observations, Mike and Karen demonstrated this by having students mark text out of their packets. While students were sitting in groups in both classes, they were merely discussing what they had marked, rather than working collectively to solve problems.

Sporadic Simulations of Democratic Processes

As some participants indicated during the interviews, their students do have the opportunity to simulate some democratic processes. For example, teachers from Middle School ABC invite the county elections team out to assist in their student council elections. Students can simulate the voting process with the actual voting booths and ballot counter used in local and national elections. According to the Civic Mission of Schools (2003), simulations of the voting process can heighten political interest. Participants also indicated they had used mock trials in class to simulate court proceedings. However, it depends on time constraints whether they are can implement those experiences often. Teachers from Middle School XYZ did not indicate any specific democratic processes. However, they did mention using collaborative activities, such as Socratic seminars, allowing students opportunities to listen to and discuss different points of view. (Journell, 2017). Karen specifically mentioned sharing here experience serving jury duty, believing that civics teachers should “practice what they preach.”

Discussions of Current or Controversial Issues

Lisa and Jackie indicated that they both introduce and discuss current events with students in their classes. Discussion of current events is also listed as one of the six promising practices (CIRCLE, 2003) and an opportunity for teachers to develop their students' democratic skills and dispositions (Hess, 2009). In her interview, Lisa mentioned that one of her middle school teachers showed them the news and then would have discussions with the class. This lesson stuck with her and now she uses similar tactics in her classroom, showing that her past experiences influence the way she teaches her students. Jackie's belief that citizens should be informed drives her to connect lessons to what is occurring in the world at that moment. Even though these two teachers mentioned they discuss current events, they also mentioned that they do omit some topics because of the students' maturity level or fear of parent pushback (Journell, 2017).

Offering Students Extracurricular Activities

The schools within the research setting provide opportunities for students to participate in extracurricular activities. Organizations offered include clubs like Student Government or Student Councils, FFA, FCA, and the Red Cross Club. Participation in these extracurricular activities can help students feel a sense of belonging and offer them opportunities to participate in community service or service-learning projects (Kirlin, 2008). However, the students who can participate in them must attend before or after school activities, often leaving out students who do not have adequate transportation to or from school. Even though the six promising practices promotes extracurricular activities, this is not tested area on Florida's EOC. So, other than a small stipend, teachers have no motivation to volunteer their time. Participants of the study who

currently volunteer or have volunteered their time to sponsor the club, do so because they know the benefit the experience has on the students.

How are They Doing it?

Through observations, interviews, lesson plans, and student work samples, participants gave a glimpse into what occurs in their classrooms. How the participants make the decisions to include information, activities, or simulations is also important.

Planning Process

When planning how to inform their students of this knowledge, participants indicated they first go to the curriculum map for guidance. The curriculum map is based on organizing principles and standards outlined by Florida's Legislation regarding the requirement of civics in middle school. The teachers use this as their starting point to determine the content they will cover and how much time they should spend covering it. For example, Karen describes starting with the curriculum map and deciding "how we want to teach the standard." Karen and her team, including Mike, look at what they did previously and determine if it worked or not. If "tweaks" are needed, they make the change and then move on. Once they have an idea for that unit, they will gather the necessary activities to compile the packet together. Mike also mentions that they look at test scores and where the students struggle to determine if a lesson was successful or not.

Teachers at Middle School ABC mention they, too, rely on the curriculum map for guidance. Once they realize what standards they will cover for that unit, the team sees what resources are available. Lisa mentions that while the textbook is available, she does not use it as much as other sources such as iCivics or Junior Scholastic. She looks at what activities are

available and then uses those to create or add to the learning menus. Jackie mentions that she sometimes “just goes on YouTube to find videos that are out there that I think students would find engaging and remember better.” Jackie also mentions relying on her PLC and using the resources they have created. Bonnie mentions that several of the lessons she has used came from ideas she has received from other teachers or learning walks.

Professional Development

Participants indicated they do seek out training to improve their practice, but the options are limited within their county. Lisa feels that since civics involves an EOCA, it deserves as much attention as the other high-stake areas. Typically, the training offered in the county only review the curriculum map or offer teachers a brainstorming session to share ideas. Bonnie mentions that even though she gets some good ideas, she feels this is a time for teachers to “gloat about their test scores.” On the other hand, Karen tends to be the one who offers these types of sessions. She feels it is a good idea for teachers to share ways to cover the standards. “Teachers who attend these sessions often leave with a few good ideas.” Despite the limited county options, the participants did not indicate they look for any outside the district. Many teachers do not like to give up their summers or breaks to attend workshops.

What Does This Mean?

While participants indicated they were not familiar with the six promising practices, parts of the practices are still being implemented in some fashion. Teachers, even though they utilize the curriculum map as a guide for what to teach and when, they are still deciding how to present the material, and the activities students will complete. This is important to note for two reasons. The first is that because teachers rely on the curriculum map for guidance, policymakers

influence what occurs in civics classrooms. If it is not in the curriculum map, teachers may not cover it. Second, since teachers are the ones who decide how to present the material, they are going to present it based on their perceptions and experiences. Based on the participant responses, their K-12 experiences have more of an effect on their practices than their upbringing did. For example, Lisa mentioned her middle school teacher showing them the news. Now that she is a teacher, she will show her students CNN 10, which is a shortened version of the top stories from around the world. Karen and Mike believe in the importance of teaching students literacy strategies, so they focus on including them throughout their lessons.

Teachers are still relying on direct, teacher-centered instruction with worksheets or packets to supplement the information they present in class. Students are receiving few, sporadic opportunities to practice democratic processes. Primarily delivering instruction through lectures or worksheets does not ensure students will remember the information the teacher presented to them. Doing this creates the “mindless reproduction” Gutman (1987) warned that democratic education should not be. Students need to learn and practice those skills that will carry them into adulthood. Sticking with this method of instruction could be due to the curriculum map’s restraints or the lack of training offered to civics teachers.

Teacher lesson plans did not give much insight into what pedagogical practices occur in the classroom outside the observations. While the teachers are planning and covering the required material, they are not creating lengthy, detailed lesson plans. Lesson plans included mapping out topics using a calendar or writing on the curriculum map when they will cover the material and how. These teachers have also been teaching civics for quite a few years and know the material well, so they may not feel the need to write out detailed lesson plans. Depending on

the school, the principal may not require detailed lesson to be turned in, and if they do, it is hard to know if there is a required format or not.

Teachers still tiptoe around current or controversial issues due to fear of parent pushback, despite research indicating that discussing those events is beneficial to students (CIRCLE, 2003; Hess, 2004; Journell, 2017). Schools offer the ideal setting to develop the skills and dispositions required for civic discourse, but schools are offering few opportunities to engage in these civil discourses on a regular basis, which some participants indicated (Journell, 2017; Parker, 2001).

There is a need for more training offered to civics teachers. While there is training at the national level by various organizations, not many teachers are interested in giving up their summers or breaks to attend these trainings out of state. If school districts want to make sure their teachers are implementing the strategies shown to boost civic knowledge and participation, then they should provide professional development opportunities that encourage these pedagogical methods. If teachers are implementing their ideas and experiences into their pedagogical practices, then districts should provide ways for teachers to expand their ideas and experiences.

Limitations

Due to COVID-19 and the closure of schools, I was only able to observe five teachers. This small sample size makes it hard to generalize across the population of civics teachers. The closing of schools also limited the ability to observe the teachers more than once. While the data was sufficient to answer the research questions, the sample size will be hard to generalize across the field. Also, observations were scheduled beforehand, so participants knew when I would be observing them. My presence could cause the teachers to be more energetic or involved than the

days I was not observing them. I was also present in the classroom during observations, and while not observing student behavior, it could have affected how students did or did not participate.

Implications

The results of the study offer implications for each party responsible for the education of our future citizens and is broken up by each member below.

Implications for Civics Teachers

Civics teachers, or any social studies teacher, will be able to identify ways in which their ideas influence their pedagogical approaches and educate future citizens. With this, they will be able to identify areas in which they struggle to provide experiences for students, such as discussing current or controversial issues. Teachers can then seek out training, resources, or assistance in order to improve their practice. Teachers can also pursue ways to offer students the ability to simulate democratic processes, such as voting or participating in community service activities.

Implications for Teacher Educators

Teacher preparation programs have the responsibility to help foster the skills of future educators. If the idea is to get social studies teachers, specifically civics teachers, to encourage future students' development of skills and dispositions, then the teacher preparation programs should model that. Future educators should be made aware of how their views and experiences can later impact their pedagogical choices. Courses should offer students the opportunity to engage in simulations and mock democratic activities themselves, so they experience it as a

student and see it modeled by their professors. Additionally, elementary programs should model how to implement skills and dispositions early on and not just cover social studies topics through worksheets.

Implications for Policymakers

Since all the participants followed the standards and organizing principles set forth by legislation passed and curriculum guides created by their district, policymakers should consider adding more real-world examples and opportunities for experiential learning. Just providing content in one course does not ensure students will retain the information. Policymakers sure also work collaboratively with the teachers, since they are the ones who ultimately decide how to present the material.

Future Research Considerations

Florida is unique by having their civics requirement in middle school and one of the only states to have an end-of-course exam attached to it, opening the door to several future research options. Replicating this study to examine more teachers would be beneficial. Including more observations and focus groups could add additional, valuable data that could offer more insight into what influences civics teachers' pedagogical choices.

Since this research study focused only on middle school civics classrooms, examining other levels, such as elementary and high schools could be one avenue. Part of the legislation passed by Florida's Legislature included a requirement for elementary schools. Future research could examine if any civics instruction is occurring and if it is, what does it look like.

Additionally, how are high schools reviewing or adding to the information students have already learned, if doing it at all?

A mixed-methods approach could examine how teachers' pedagogical choices lead to student performance on the end-of-course exam. Since the EOCA only provides quantitative data, looking at the content students struggle with is also an option. A longitudinal study could examine if civics courses are even making a difference. Since Florida offers its course in middle school, it would be interesting see what sticks with students by the time they reach adulthood and can participate more.

Final Thoughts

The participants in this study showed that their experiences and ideas influence their pedagogical choices, answering the first research question. Believing the purpose of civics education is to create informed and active citizens, lessons created by the participants focused more on teaching *about* citizenship while giving students few opportunities to practice it. This could be due to the demands of teaching a subject area tied to a high-stakes exam.

The second research question indicated that while the teachers' perception of democratic education was evident in their practices, prior research indicates that the teachers do not have the entire concept of democratic education. These teachers are not alone in their thoughts, however. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) point out that philosophers, historians, and political scientists have long debated the conceptions of citizenship and democratic education. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) mention that even the work of John Dewey himself has not led to a resolution, giving the indication this will continue to be debated.

APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Institutional Review Board
FWA00000351
IRB00001138
Office of Research
12201 Research Parkway
Orlando, FL 32826-3246

EXEMPTION DETERMINATION

January 6, 2020

Dear Allison Sheridan:

On 1/6/2020, the IRB determined the following submission to be human subjects research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review:	Initial Study, Category 2
Title:	Influence of ideas, experiences, and perceptions on civics teachers' pedagogical approaches: A phenomenological study.
Investigator:	Allison Sheridan
IRB ID:	STUDY00001228
Funding:	None
Grant ID:	None

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made, and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request so that IRB records will be accurate.

If you have any questions, please contact the UCF IRB at 407-823-2901 or irb@ucf.edu. Please include your project title and IRB number in all correspondence with this office.

Sincerely,

Racine Jacques, Ph.D.
Designated Reviewer

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol: Civics Instructional Methods

Time of interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Description of project:

Questions:

1. Tell me about your background. Where did you grow up? Anything you want to share with me.
2. Tell me about your background in education. Why did you become an educator? Why civics?
3. Tell me about your experiences during your K-12 schooling? Are there any teachers or lessons that you still remember?
4. How would you define Democratic education?
5. What do you think the purpose of civics education is?
6. What pedagogy of teaching do you think that civics teachers should mostly emphasize to enrich ideas of democratic citizenship?
7. What types of civic knowledge are most emphasized in your class and why? How is this determined?
8. How do you think social studies teachers should be prepared to teach democracy or democratic citizenship in diverse classroom in the U.S. schools?
9. Could you describe any challenges in teaching ideas about democratic citizenship?
10. Tell me about your planning process-what guides your planning? What resources do you use?
11. Have you ever realized or thought of taking any courses or trainings to be more effective?

APPENDIX C: OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

<i>Descriptive Notes</i>	<i>Reflective Notes</i>
Classroom Layout	
Instructional method # 1 used	
Instructional method # 2 used	

APPENDIX D: STUDENT WORK SAMPLE 1

Name: _____

Period: _____

OP#1- Citizenship Learning Plan

Menu Extension Lessons/Activities: Be sure to note the date and description of any additional learning.

Date	Description

Menu Directions: For this round of menu activities, you will go through one topic at a time by completing both activities in each row. After each row, there will be a knowledge check. ***CHECK IN WITH [REDACTED] AFTER EACH ROW!**

<p>I. U.S. Citizenship and the 14th amendment 2.1</p> <p>* You MUST complete all activities in this row. * Once completed see [REDACTED] for a Knowledge Check before moving on.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>1. Citizenship Nearpod and Notes- Use technology to access Nearpod to complete the Cornell Notes and answer all the questions within.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>2. Textbook Graphic Organizers: Use the Civics textbook to accurately complete the graphic organizers about citizenship.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>3. 14th amendment Questions: Use the resource on the 14th amendment to answer the 10 questions.</p>	<p>Time for a knowledge check! See [REDACTED] _____ - score</p>
<p>II. Responsibilities, Obligations, and Rights of Citizens 2.2</p> <p>* You MUST complete all activities in this row. * Once completed see [REDACTED] for a Knowledge Check before moving on.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>1. Responsibilities and Obligations Gallery walk: Complete the chart by visiting the posted gallery walk stations.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>2. Citizenship Levels/Ted's Big Day Read Ted's Big Day and fill out the organizer that goes with it.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>3. Citizenship Scenarios: Read the scenarios and decide how you should respond.</p>	<p>Time for a knowledge check! See [REDACTED] _____ - score</p>
<p>Enrichment Activity</p> <p>* Once finished with the required activities above, complete the enrichment activity.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Citizenship Flyer: Use the rubric provided and the notes you've acquired on this menu to create a flyer or brochure about U.S. citizenship. Be sure to make include all required information in a visually appealing manner.</p>			

Things to remember:

- Do not wait until the last minute to complete the activities. You must self-regulate your time.
- Even if you are late or absent, you are still required to complete the work...even if they are technology based.
- **When all activities are finished, turn in all required pages stapled with this check-off list on top.**

APPENDIX E: STUDENT WORK SAMPLE 2

Success Criteria

Organizing Principle # 1 (Unit 1)

Citizens of the United States of America have certain rights, duties, and responsibilities.

By the end of this unit I will be able to:

1. Define the term "citizen", and identify the legal means of becoming a United States citizen. (**SS.7.C.2.1**)
2. Evaluate the obligations citizens have: to obey laws, pay taxes, defend the nation, and serve on juries. (**SS.7.C.2.2**)
3. Compare the different forms of government (direct democracy, representative democracy, monarchy, oligarchy, autocracy, socialism, and communism) (**SS.7.C.3.1**)

Vocabulary	3 Ways to U.S. Citizenship
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Citizen: a member of a community who owes loyalty to a government in exchange for protection. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Citizenship: the rights and duties of citizens <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Civics: the study of rights and duties of citizens <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Duty: an action <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Government: the ruling authority for a community <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Natural Born: being born in the U.S., in a U.S. territory or to parents who are U.S. Citizens. <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Naturalization: The process a foreign-born person goes through to become a U.S. citizen. <input type="checkbox"/> 8. Oath: a solemn, formal declaration or promise <input type="checkbox"/> 9. Public Policy: the decisions and actions a government takes to solve problems in the community. <input type="checkbox"/> 10. Refugee: a person who left their home to escape war, persecution by the government or natural disaster. <input type="checkbox"/> 11. Right: something that is allowed or given to an individual (example: right to an attorney) <input type="checkbox"/> 12. Selective Service (Draft): federal agency that requires men 18-26 to register for possibility of military service <input type="checkbox"/> 13. Alien: a foreign-born resident of the U.S. who has not been naturalized <input type="checkbox"/> 14. Common Good: the benefit and well-being of all citizens within a community <input type="checkbox"/> 15. Law of Blood: born to parents who are U.S. citizens (considered a natural born citizen) <input type="checkbox"/> 16. Law of Soil: being born on U.S. Soil or territory (considered a natural born citizen) <input type="checkbox"/> 17. Immigrant: an individual who moves permanently to a new country <input type="checkbox"/> 18. Obligation: An action you are required to perform. (Example: paying taxes, serving in court) <input type="checkbox"/> 19. Petition: a formal request for government action <input type="checkbox"/> 20. Responsibility: an action you are not required to perform, but should. (Example: voting) <input type="checkbox"/> 21. Democracy: a form of government in which the people rule <input type="checkbox"/> 22. Monarchy: a form of government in which a king or queen rules <input type="checkbox"/> 23. Republic: a form of representative democracy in which citizens choose their lawmakers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 1. I can explain that the 14th Amendment defines citizenship. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. I can describe the two ways a person can be a Natural Born citizen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Law of Blood (born to U.S. mom or dad) <input type="checkbox"/> Law of Soil (born on U.S. ground) <input type="checkbox"/> 3. I can explain the process of how a non-citizen goes through the Naturalization Process to become a U.S. Citizen. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Live in U.S. 5+ years legally <input type="checkbox"/> 18+ years or older <input type="checkbox"/> Read, write, speak English <input type="checkbox"/> Be of good moral character <input type="checkbox"/> Pass a citizenship test <input type="checkbox"/> 4. I can list and define the ways to lose U.S. Citizenship. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Expatriation (give away citizenship) <input type="checkbox"/> Denaturalization (lie during naturalization process) <input type="checkbox"/> Treason or Rebellion (overthrow gov't) <p style="text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;">Common Good</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 1. I can list and define examples of a responsible citizen (should do) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ex: vote, attend civic meetings <input type="checkbox"/> 2. I can list and define examples of obligations of a citizen. (must do) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ex: pay taxes, obey the law
	<p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">Rights of U.S Citizens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 1. I can explain the following rights are only for U.S. Citizens: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Vote in elections <input type="checkbox"/> Hold government jobs <input type="checkbox"/> Carry a U.S. passport <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Constitutional Protections: No Bill of Attainder, No Ex Post Facto Law, & No suspension of Habeas Corpus

APPENDIX F: STUDENT WORK SAMPLES 3

OP #6 Scavenger Hunt

Federalism and Role of Government



The Federal System was created to define the role of the national, state, and local governments.

By the end of this organizing principle you will be able to:

- Identify the relationship and division of powers between the federal government and state governments. (SS.7.C.3.4)
- Compare concurrent, enumerated, reserved, and delegated powers as they relate to state and federal government.
- Analyze the issues related to the Tenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

Super Duper Important Vocabulary Terms & Concepts

Textbook: Pages 354-403 (chapters 13 & 14) – YES, answers are in order!!!!

Federal & State Powers: p 354

- In a federal system, the national government and the state governments share and divide powers.

States in the Constitution: Using p. 355 under the heading "States in the Constitution" explain each section within Article IV (4).

Article IV (4)

- Section 1:** States must respect legal actions taken by other states.
Provide an example:
- Section 2:** Each state will treat the people of other states equally.
Provide an example:
- Section 3:** Land cannot be taken from any state to make a new state without it's State's approval. Two states cannot be joined into a new state unless they agree.
- Section 4:** Promises each state a Republican form of government. It also vows to protect that government against an enemy attack or revolt.

Sharing and Diving Powers p356-357

- The key to federalism is the way the Constitution assigns powers. Some powers are given ONLY to the federal government. The federal government (national/central) has 3 kinds of powers:
 - expressed powers are those LISTED in the Constitution. Most of these powers are given in Article I, Section 8.

APPENDIX G: STUDENT WORK SAMPLE 4

Comparing Constitutions

10/10 = 100%

Use the chart on the U.S. and Florida Constitutions to answer the questions about both documents.

1. Which Constitution is more specific and detailed?

Florida

2. How many Articles are there in the Florida Constitution?

12

3. What is Florida's list of rights called?

Declaration of Rights

4. Compare the structure of government at the U.S. and State level (how are they similar?)

they both establish the three branches but at different levels

5. What are two examples of specific provisions in the Florida Constitution?

State lottery transportation

6. Which Constitution establishes public education?

Florida

7. Which Constitution has more amendments?

Florida

Based on this number, which most likely has a simpler amendment process, the U.S. or Florida?

Florida

8. How often is the Florida Constitution reviewed for changes?

Every 20 years

9. Who approves legislation at the state level?

Governor

10. What is the Capital of Florida?

Tallahassee

APPENDIX H: SAMPLE LESSON PLANS

January

Civics

Layout table

2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5 Bell ringer for the week: circle map – constitutional principles	6 Review rules and procedures Rules, etc, quiz	7 Circle map – constitutional principles	8 Finish circle map	9 Begin tree map – 3 branches of government	10 Know the Law presentation <small>CODE RED: changed schedule</small>	11
12 Bell ringer for the week: 3 branches of government	13 Vocab quiz Continue tree map	14 Finish tree map Begin OP 5 scavenger hunt	15 Finish & Review scavenger hunt Cornell Notes – Congress (nearpod)	16 Review for the quiz Cornell Notes – Congress (nearpod)	17 Quiz – 3 branches and foundations "Congress in a Flash" Legislative Branch Functions worksheet	18
19 Bell ringer for the week: Congress, Our Legislative Branch	20 DR. KING DAY No school	21 "Congress in a Flash", crossword	22 Legislative Branch Functions worksheet finish and review Begin video worksheet	23 Finish Leg. Venn worksheet Functions worksheet finish and review – Legislative branch	24 Review worksheets How a Bill Becomes Law - video - worksheet	25
26 Bell ringer for the week: Checks and Balances	27 Amendment Process - video - worksheet - flow map	28 Review for legislative branch summative	29 Legislative branch summative <small>CIRCLE MAP – WHAT SHOULD A PRESIDENT BELIEVE?</small>	30 EXECUTIVE BRANCH	31 EXECUTIVE BRANCH	

APPENDIX I: PERMISSION TO OBSERVE TEACHERS



HERITAGE MIDDLE SCHOOL

1001 Parnell Court
Deltona, Florida 32738
(407) 688-9513 ~ (386) 575-4113
Fax: (407) 708-0020

Thomas Vaughan
Principal

Nicholas Fidance
Principal Intern
Dr. Stephanie Owens
Assistant Principal
Pamela Robinson
Assistant Principal

June 30, 2020

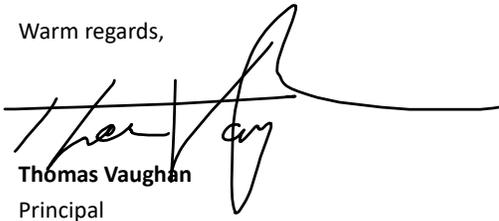
University of Central Florida
P.O. Box 160000
Orlando, FL 32816

To whom it may concern,

This letter is being written as confirmation that Ms. Allison Sheridan had permission from me to observe teachers/classrooms on our campus during the 2020 school year in support of her dissertation.

Feel free to reach out anytime if you need any further clarification.

Warm regards,



Thomas Vaughan
Principal

Vision Statement

The Spirit of Heritage Middle School embodies a community of students, parents, and staff working together. We believe in providing a secure and student-centered environment that empowers all to soar to the highest levels of personal and academic excellence.

APPENDIX J: PERMISSION TO OBSERVE TEACHERS

Allison Sheridan

February 9, 2020 at 9:22 AM

AS

Question

To: mkleader@volusia.k12.fl.us

Good Morning Mr. Leader,

My name is Allison Sheridan and I am currently a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Central Florida. I also teach seventh grade at Heritage Middle School in Deltona. I am currently working on my dissertation and need to observe Civics teachers in order to see if how their previous experiences influence their pedagogical approaches. Mr. Triboletti and Ms. Keeran have agreed to participate, pending your approval of me coming to observe them. Please let me know as soon as possible if you mind, so that we may work something out with our schedules.

If you have any other questions or concerns, I would be happy to answer them.

Thank you,

Allison Sheridan

Leader, Michael K.

February 10, 2020 at 8:04 AM

ML

RE: Question

To: Allison Sheridan

Approved. I look forward to seeing you at NSBMS.

Michael Leader
Principal
New Smyrna Beach Middle School
Your Hometown School
Catch the Stingray Fever

-----Original Message-----
From: Allison Sheridan <Allison.Sheridan@ucf.edu>
Sent: Sunday, February 9, 2020 9:22 AM
To: Leader, Michael K. <mkleader@volusia.k12.fl.us>
Subject: Question

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of Volusia County Schools. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and are expecting the information or have verified with the third party and/or Customer Support at ext. 20000, option 2 that the content is safe.

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