

Experiential Learning Strategies Promoted in Civics Textbooks: Kinds and Distribution

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Abstract

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Background/Context: Recent scholarship shows the utility of experiential civics strategies while at the same time reporting the challenge in making these strategies ubiquitous in classrooms across the country. Currently, the more ubiquitous practice is a reliance on a textbook which is limited in its ability to promote civic participation and civic action as shown by content analysis studies. However, textbooks, when used alone, are not effective instructional vehicles and should not be treated as such. Rather, a comprehensive view of their utility should consider them as part of a curricular package that includes teachers' guides, lesson plans, activity plan packages, and other supplemental instructional material. These curricular packages are likely to contain experiential learning strategies that promote civic action and civic participation as indicated in two research studies of *We the People* (2017), a non-traditional civics textbook curriculum package developed by the Center for Civic Education.

The purpose of the study: By conducting a content-analysis of textbooks and associated supplemental curriculum materials of the most widely used civics textbooks in U.S. schools, this

study describes the potential of textbook curriculum materials to deliver meaningful experiential civics learning. The research questions are:

1. What is the nature of experiential civic strategies in textbook (and supplemental) curriculum materials?
2. How does the distribution of experiential civic strategies in textbook (and supplemental) curriculum materials differ among civic topics?
3. How do the experiential civic strategies/curricula in textbook (and supplemental) materials compare to best practices and recommendations in the civic engagement literature?
4. What is the potential role of textbook curriculum materials for making experiential civic strategies mainstream in civics classrooms?

Setting/Participants: The sample for this study is drawn from the most widely used American government and civics textbooks in the United States. The teacher-edition versions and supplemental materials for each of the four textbooks in the sample are often quite robust. Therefore, curricula material not germane to the study because of their inherent inability to utilize experiential education—such as test banks, chapter overviews, reading guides—are excluded from the data analyses.

Research design: I conducted a quantitative and qualitative content analysis. The quantitative portion of the study included descriptive statistics, exploratory analysis, and clustering. The qualitative portion of the study utilized a combination of data-driven and concept-driven coding frames to build a grounded theory of the soundness of textbook-related experiential civic education and its adherence to best practices. The quantitative and qualitative analyses were used in concert to answer the research questions.

Findings/Results: I found that teacher-edition versions of mainstream American government textbooks and their corresponding supplemental materials adequately provide experiential civics in most civic topics. Even though there was room for improvement, for the most part, these experiential civics also adhered to the best practices in their respective fields (political classroom, simulations, and action civics). These results indicate that textbooks-based resources can be used to educate students in civic participation and civic action.

Conclusions/Recommendations: The current narrative in the research literature that American government textbooks cannot suitably give students a path towards civic participation and civic action is incomplete. This study indicates that by using the teacher-edition counterpart and supplemental resources, textbooks can be viable tools of experiential civics education. Schools should begin using these underutilized resources because textbooks are institutional tools that can facilitate the mainstreaming of experiential civics.

The significance of the study: This study provides insights into the topics that are targeted for experiential learning and how they are being addressed in textbook curricula as well as topics that are being omitted from experiential treatment. The study describes the extent to which textbook curriculum materials adhere to best practices, and hence, the extent to which they help teachers to deliver experiential civics effectively. To that end, given experiential civic strategies' ability to imbue students with civic action and participation, this study ascertains the value of textbook material as a viable option for teachers who want to give their students meaningful experiences with civic action and participation.

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Definition of Terms

This is a glossary, in alphabetical order, of key terms used in this study. In those cases where terms have been adopted from other research literature, the appropriate citation has been included.

Action civics: An experiential civics education strategy where students “do civics and behave as citizens by engaging in a cycle of research, action, and reflection about problems they care about personally while learning about deeper principles of civic and especially political action” (Levinson, 2014, p. 68).

Civic action: The set of activities, buoyed by the requisite civic knowledge and civic skills, taken to participate in the civic community.

Civic engagement: The process of working to make a difference in one’s civic community through civic participation and civic action.

Civic participation: The process of partaking in the civic community by utilizing the requisite civic knowledge and civic skills.

Coding Frame: The guiding conceptual scheme for a content analysis study that encompasses the record of codes and the criteria/procedures for curating the codes.

Coding unit: Also known as the recording unit, these are the individual segments of text that will be coded. This study’s coding units are segments of text that assign students an (or a series of related) experiential civics task(s).

Cohen’s Kappa: A type of intercoder reliability coefficient to measure the agreement between the coders in a content analysis study.

Concept-driven approach: A method of developing codes by deriving categories and subcategories a priori based on previous knowledge from sources such as theory, prior research, and logic.

Content Analysis: A systematic reading of a body of texts, images, and symbolic matter, not necessary from an author's perspective or user's perspective (Krippendorf, 2013).

Context unit: The portion of the surrounding material that provides some understanding of the meaning of a given coding unit and how it's situated within the unit of analysis. Examples include chapter topic or the preceding topic.

Controversial issue/topic: An issue in which contrary views can be held without those views being contrary to reason (Dearden, 1981).

Cultural citizenship: The right of minorities, or those from marginalized communities, to be different without giving up their rights to belong to the larger society (Rosaldo, 1994).

Culturally relevant pedagogy: A teaching approach that embraces putting students' cultural background at the forefront of their education in order to engage learners whose experiences and/or cultures are traditionally excluded from mainstream school settings.

Curriculum: A series of planned events that are intended to have educational consequences for one or more students (Eisner, 2002).

Data-driven approach: Similar to grounded theory techniques, a method of developing codes by allowing the categories and subcategories to emerge from the data.

Depth of knowledge typology: A typology for understanding the level of cognitive demands and understanding required to perform an academic task.

Exhaustiveness: The requirement that each coding unit in the material is assigned to at least one category or subcategory

Experiential civic education strategies: The set of hands-on strategies for civic education where students can experience the act of doing civics. These strategies include simulations, service learning, action civics, youth participatory action research, student government, and the political classroom.

Experiential learning: A pedagogical approach that focuses on hands-on learning and reflection.

Exposure-selection model: A theory proposed by Neimi and Junn (1998) stating that students learn civics by being exposed to civics content and being motivated to select that content.

Mutual exclusiveness: The requirement that the subcategories in the coding frame are mutually exclusive.

Political autonomy: The ability of students to encounter and respond intelligently to views that are different from their own (Hess & McAvoy, 2014).

Political classroom: An experiential civics education strategy where students get hands-on practice with political deliberation with other students and collective problem solving.

Political engagement: The ability of students to deliberate current issues and the controversies they will experience outside of school (Hess & McAvoy, 2014).

Political equity: The ability of students to collectively deliberate as equals (Hess & McAvoy, 2014).

Political fairness: The ability of students to consider and reflect on the views and rights of others when evaluating policy (Hess & McAvoy, 2014).

Political literacy: The ability of students to understand the competing ideologies underlying controversial issues and divergent views about democracy itself (Hess & McAvoy, 2014).

Political tolerance: The ability of students to consider whether their personal views are consistent with the idea that objectionable dissenting voices are a healthy part of democracy (Hess & McAvoy, 2014).

Saturation: The requirement that the coding frame is constructed in a way that the coding frequency for all categories and subcategories equals one or higher.

Service learning: An experiential civics education strategy where students perform a curriculum aligned service that benefits the community.

Simulation: An experiential civics education strategy where students get hands-on civics experience through role-playing civics processes.

Student government: A student organization, in both high schools and colleges, where student members adopt a democratic form of governance to operate and make decisions pertaining to the school.

Student-edition textbook: The version of the textbook created for the student and includes resources that does not require an instructor/facilitator to carry out.

Supplemental curriculum materials: The additional teaching resources that accompany teacher-edition textbooks. These include lesson plans, activity plans, project plans, test banks, and several other pedagogical tools to aid teachers in the classroom.

Teacher-edition textbook: The version of the textbook created for the instructor/facilitator of a course that include resources such as test banks, lesson plans, activity plans, or other ideas for teaching the course.

Transformative citizenship: A construction of citizenship which includes the civil, political, social, and culture elements of citizenship and which enables students to acquire the information, skills, and values needed to challenge inequality within their communities, their nations, and the world (Banks, 2009).

Unidimensionality: The requirement that each dimension/category in the coding frame capture only one aspect of the textual content.

Unit of analysis: The subject of interest studied in a content analysis. Because four textbooks have been selected for the sample in this study, there are four units of analysis in the study.

YPAR (Youth Participatory Action Research): A branch of the action civics experiential learning strategy which involves students taking an active role in researching an issue of concern to them and taking action on the findings of their research.

Chapter 1

Problem Statement

“I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.”

Confucius (circa 450BC)

Citizenship is critical to the functioning of a republic. Over the past few decades, however, citizens’ knowledge of political matters and political processes in the nation has declined (Neimi, 2012). A study by Stern (2009) cited polls which indicate that Americans hold schools and teachers primarily responsible for the citizenship education of the country’s youth. Indeed, schools can influence citizenship. Research evidence indicates that civic courses increase knowledge, affect attitudes, and promote participation (Campbell-Patton & Patton, 2010).

Successful civic engagement and civic education encompasses a robust repertoire of tools and strategies including those of an experiential nature that enable students to *do* civics as an effective way to learn it. These experiential civics education strategies—such as political deliberations, legislative simulations, simulation voting, action civics, service learning, and student government—are powerful ways to teach students about civic participation and civic action. Despite their effectiveness, experiential civics is not the norm in U.S. public schools. The textbook is the predominant available resource in which students are expected to learn civics—including civic participation and action (Torney-Purta et. al., 2001; Tyson & Woodward, 1989; Valencia & Parker, 2015). Similar to high school history teaching (Loewen, 2009), the use of textbooks in civic teaching is predominant, at the expense of experiential methods, for both logistical and pedagogical reasons.

Experiential learning is much harder on the teacher in terms of time commitment and takes a high level of preparedness to implement successfully (Hess & Zola, 2012). Experiential learning frequently requires partnering with other organizations, either educational resource organizations, non-profit organizations, or community-based organizations, which tend to bring some logistical wrinkles. Therefore, some teachers rely on textbooks to teach civic participation and action. According to some content analysis studies (Anyon, 1978; Carroll et al., 1987; Saavedra, 2012), textbooks generally do not adequately teach civic participation and civic action. In this dissertation, I am defining civic participation and civic action according to the four strands of citizenship described in the *Civic Mission of Schools* Report which states that competent and responsible citizens (Carnegie Corporation of New York & CIRCLE, 2003):

1. Are informed and thoughtful; have a grasp and an appreciation of history and the fundamental processes of American democracy; have an understanding of public and community issues; and have the ability to obtain information, think critically, and enter into dialogue among others with different perspectives.
2. Participate in their communities through membership in or contributions to organizations working to address an array of cultural, social, and political and religious interests and beliefs.
3. Act politically by having the skills, knowledge, and commitment needed to accomplish public purposes, such as group problem solving, public speaking, petitioning and protesting, and voting.
4. Have moral and civic virtues such as concern for the rights and welfare of others, social responsibility, tolerance and respect, and belief in the capacity to make a difference (p. 4).

The use of textbooks to teach civic participation and civic action is contingent upon the extent to which they can promote the four strands of citizenship stated in the *Civic Mission of Schools*. A study by Wade and Everett (1994) indicated that civics textbooks depicted civic participation as a variety of social and political acts and encouraged students to view themselves as active participants in their present communities, rather than as adults in the future. However, Wade and Everett found that textbooks, for the most part convey the societal status quo. An earlier study by Anyon (1978) also indicated that textbooks promoted passive compliance and “safe” political behaviors while conveying the act of voting as the primary means of civic action. Carroll et al.’s (1987) study of 18 civics textbooks led them to recommend that textbooks change their emphasis from imparting knowledge to preparing students for citizenship, approach controversial topics fairly and openly, and convey to students the importance of civic actions through personal involvement. Avery and Simmon’s (2000) found that while other forms of participation such as letter writing, petitioning, and protesting were explored, it was voting that constituted the primary means of participation.

More recent studies have found similar results. A content analysis of mainstream civic textbooks by Saavedra (2012) indicate that many contemporary civics textbooks explicitly mention to the readers (i.e. the students) the goals of the textbook, many of which pertain to citizenship, but do not execute those goals. Saavedra’s analysis indicated that textbook authors try to address civic action and participation by including lists of skills that effective citizens use and ways of practicing these skills. She found two fundamental problems with this approach: (1) the texts omitted other critical skills that are difficult to address in a static book format such as deliberative skills, teamwork, and effective oral communication and (2) to effectively engage as citizens, students would almost always need to integrate the skills, not just to practice them

individually. Saavedra concluded that textbooks are not well equipped to help students practice their civic skills or to develop a meaningful, effective understanding of the value of civic participation.

Valencia and Parker's (2016) research uncovered concerns with the reliance on textbooks in their current form. They found that even though teachers frequently assigned textbook readings for homework, students rarely read the course textbook because it was too "dense", "boring," or "difficult" (p. 94). They also found that while students were accustomed to a sequential textbook-driven curriculum, students in urban and suburban schools felt there was little connection between the projects they were doing in class and the assigned textbook readings.

The content analysis studies described above by Anyon (1978), Wade and Everett (1994), Avery and Simmons (2000), and Saavedra (2012) indicate that civic textbooks are not effective in aiding with teaching civic participation and civic action. However, these studies fail to address two important elements which may shift the perspective on the utility of textbooks for teaching civic participation and civic action. These two failures, which will be subsequently explained, constitute the research gaps that my dissertation will fill. First, many content analyses of textbooks treat the textbook as a whole, rather than delineating them by topic, when addressing their utility regarding civic participation and civic action. There might be an uneven distribution within a textbook in terms of how different topics and sections address civic participation and action. In other words, some civic textbook topics and sections may be more conducive to teaching civic participation/action than others. This possibility warrants a research study so that we have more nuanced insights regarding the utility of textbooks.

There is also the question of textbooks as a pedagogical tool. Even though studies indicate an overreliance of textbooks in classroom civic education, student textbooks are not instructional vehicles for teachers, and should not be treated as such. Therefore, a more comprehensive research of textbooks as avenues for civic action/participation should incorporate teacher-editions of textbooks and textbook supplemental curriculum materials which provide teachers with pedagogical tools for how civics/government teachers can facilitate the learning of the textbook material. Citing Perkins and Grotzer's (1997) work about the difficulty of transferring theoretical learning to practical setting, Saavedra (2012) asserts that it is difficult for students to transfer knowledge about citizenship gained in textbooks into action in real life. Saavedra's assertion gives credence to the notion that simply doing a research study of student-edition textbooks as stand-alone vehicles of civic engagement may not give an accurate depiction of the utility of textbooks because many of the pedagogical tools that drives how they are used as part of the process of civic engagement have been ignored. Saavedra's observations indicate the need for a content analysis of teacher-edition textbooks, along with their supplemental curriculum materials, because these materials include pedagogical tools and civics curriculum which should be evaluated on the basis of their civic participation/action dimensions.

It is possible for textbooks, and textbook-associated curriculum materials, to positively affect students' political/civic attitudes, as exemplified by the *We the People* curriculum (Brody, 2001). Developed by the Center for Civic Education, the *We the People* curriculum provides high school students with "an innovative course of instruction on the history and principles of U.S. constitutional democracy" (Center for Civic Education, 2017, para 1). The program incorporates several experiential civic strategies such as simulations, service learning, and participating in a political classroom—the transformation of the civics classroom into a political

site where students deliberate and debate civic topics including controversial topics. In addition to Brody's (2001) research, Owens (2015) found that students using the *We the People* curriculum performed better on tests of both civic knowledge and civic dispositions compared to their peers. The civic engagement dividends yielded from the *We the People* curriculum contradicts the general research on the utility of traditional textbooks to generate various civic outcomes.

The *We the People* research studies by Brody (2001) and Owens (2015) offer sanguine prognoses about the pedagogical efficacy of a civics textbook curriculum. Such prognoses run counter to the drab outlook of conventional textbook curriculum uncovered in previously discussed research studies by Saavedra (2012), Anyon (1978), Wade and Everett (1994), and Avery and Simmon's (2000). A possible explanation for having two sets of diametrically opposed research results could be the differing sample subjects undergirding the two different sets of research studies. You have a non-traditional civic textbook package—*We the People*—and a collection of traditional student-edition civics textbooks. Unlike a static student-edition textbook that merely relays information to the reader, the *We the People* curriculum offers a critical-thinking task-focused student-textbook that teaches critical thinking and contains teacher-guides and lesson plans that foster experiential learning as well as cooperative learning. In other words, when students use *We the People*, they do civics rather than just read it, compared to traditional student-edition textbooks, which they only read.

This comparison begs the questions: Can mainstream civics textbook be effective ways to teach civic engagement and experiential education if they are used in concert with their teacher guides and supplemental curriculum materials? Is what makes *We the People* successful already present in these mainstream textbooks if these books are taken as a package along with teacher

guides and supplemental curriculum materials? The challenge of making civic textbook curriculum more engaging and more experiential may have already been met. If so, why is this not the common narrative around civics textbooks?

Research Questions

This study is undergirded by four questions: (1) What is the nature of experiential civic strategies in textbook (and supplemental) curriculum materials? (2) How does the distribution of experiential civic strategies in textbook (and supplemental) curriculum materials differ among civic topics? (3) How do the experiential civic strategies/curricula in textbook (and supplemental) materials compare to best practices and recommendations in the civic engagement literature? (4) What is the potential role of textbook curriculum materials in making experiential civic strategies in civics classrooms more common?

Research Design

The design will be a qualitative and quantitative content analysis of popular high school civics and government textbooks. A mixed method for this dissertation is appropriate because “in content analysis research, quantitative methods serve to limit the influence of the researcher’s subjectivity, while a qualitative approach allows for in-depth description and a deeper understanding of the topic under study” (Wade, 1993, p. 248). The codes that formed the basis of this study were both concept and data driven. The teacher-edition versions and supplemental material of the most widely used civic textbooks were selected as the data sources. These versions come include a myriad of curriculum materials and resources such as lesson plans, enrichment activities, project plans, and activity plans. Chapter 3 contains a comprehensive description of the methodology used in this dissertation.

Significance of the Study

A Clearer Understanding of Civics Textbook Curricula

In her seminal review of social studies content analysis research, Wade (1993) offered an informed path for scholars in the field. Before beginning a study, Wade appeals to researchers using content analysis to question the value and usefulness of their work and advises questioning the significant contributions research has to both practice in the social studies classroom and to the overall research initiatives in the social studies community. She called for social studies content analysis researchers to do more substantive work that “goes beyond simple recommendations for creative teaching or improved topic coverage” (p. 249). Her suggested research ideas include “measures likely to increase the prevalence and quality of social studies instruction” (p. 249). My study of experiential education civics curriculum in teacher-edition textbooks and supplemental material is an analysis of social studies instruction because it provides insight into the intended curriculum that is widely available to teachers across the United States. Eisner (2002) states that “unless one appraises the quality of the content and learning activities that constitute the curriculum, one has no basis for determining whether it is worth being taught” (pp. 179-180). Eisner considers textbook publishers the most influential group in curriculum development, with their influence only surpassed by that of the classroom teacher. Eisner explains this influence:

Textbooks are not typically looked on as curricula, but they are certainly important curriculum materials. In the first place, textbooks are, for many teachers, the hub around which programs are built. When a school or school district adopts a textbook in social studies, science, or mathematics, this book, de facto, defines a significant portion of the content of what students will study. Textbooks in these areas also

contain suggestions to students and teachers for supplementary activities and in this way further define what students will do in the classroom. In addition, accompanying teacher guides provide guidance to the teacher regarding the kinds of questions or issues that can be used for discussion... (p. 132)

My study is significant because textbooks have been decried in the field of civic engagement as being too static and lacking the mechanisms to properly engage students. However, as Eisner stated, textbooks are accompanied by a range of curriculum materials. Because teacher-edition textbooks contain curriculum materials and lesson plans, among which are experiential strategies, my study will assess the utility of textbooks if they are used as recommended. My study will also identify civics topics that are being targeted and those that are being ignored by the textbooks-related experiential strategies. More importantly, it will ascertain how sufficient the experiential civics strategies are in textbooks. This is essential because training teachers in experiential strategies is a daunting process (Hess & Zola, 2012). I will describe which experiential educational strategies are being used in textbook curriculum materials, which ones are lacking, and whether experiential strategies are being used in instructional effective ways. These findings will provide the civic engagement field a comprehensive depiction of the tools available for civic engagement within textbook-related curriculum materials.

Maximizing the High School Civics Classroom

This study examines how textbook-affiliated materials can facilitate civic engagement and the acquisition of civic attitudes by high school students. Finlay, Wray-Lake, and Flanagan (2010) suggest that “adolescents are a captive audience while attending school, and school is the main public institution through which young people are recruited into civic life. Thus,

adolescence represents a last formal opportunity to utilize social resources before high school graduation, after which paths diverge and there is no clear public institution that engages young adults” (p 278-279).

A study of high school experiential civics is also important because, according to Beaumont (2010), “if people are never provided with opportunities to work with others on political goals, they may never form a sense of themselves as capable political agents. Thus, a sense of political efficacy is reciprocal with concrete democratic experience and interaction” (p. 529). Hence, the high school classroom, at times, is the last safe bastion of civic engagement for many students before they enter adulthood where real life consumption of politics and civic participation can be divisive (Hess, 2009). The diversity of the high school classroom accentuates the importance of the high school civic experience. As adults, citizens can eventually choose their own social circles and the socioeconomic characteristics of those circles. However, as high school students in school classrooms, citizens may be confined to the same space as people of differing ethnicities, social classes, sexual orientations, genders, religions, political dogmas, immigration statuses, and other socioeconomic identifiers. This diversity, which can be leveraged into meaningful civic participatory pedagogy in a modeled environment, is also a unique high school opportunity not necessarily present in adulthood when people can choose who to live next to, who to work with, which social circle to belong to, which political circles to be a part of, and which political circles to avoid.

According to Parker (2012), schools are uniquely positioned to bring democracy and diversity together because schools have diverse student bodies and a diverse set of academic and social problems. Participation in experiential education in such diverse high school settings can develop civic efficacy which students can take with them into adulthood (Pasek, Feldman,

Romer, & Jamieson, 2008). Therefore, it is important to fully understand the potentials and drawbacks of a widely available tool (textbook-affiliated curriculum materials) to leverage a diverse environment for civic engagement.

Conceptual Framework

Given that this study investigated the nature of experiential education in civic textbook curriculum materials, it was essential to ground it in theories that reveal the ways in which students' civic competencies are developed in the curriculum. It was also important to ground this study in theories that describe how students' individual and collective backgrounds influence the learning of civic competencies. The applicable theories for this study are the exposure-selection model and culturally-relevant civics pedagogy.

The Exposure-Selection Model

To undergird this study, a civic engagement theory is needed to help determine how and why young people are motivated to act and participate in civic issues. Niemi and Junn (1998) proposed the exposure-selection model regarding the acquisition of civic knowledge. The model states that students should be exposed to information (mainly through their civics curriculum, home reading materials, and the media) and then be motivated to select and retain the information (mainly an individual matter, influenced by the student's interest or a desire to do well in school). For the exposure-selection model to enable the acquisition of civic knowledge, including knowledge about civic participation and civic action, the teacher-edition textbook and its associated supplemental resources should expose the students to the requisite information while simultaneously motivating them to select that information. The use of experiential education strategies should enhance both the exposure and the selection processes because experiential education makes learning dynamic, and less self-contained because those strategies

often require experiences outside of the traditional classroom environment such as partnerships within and outside the school. Experiential strategies can also provide students with a deeper level of complexity in thinking about civics because these hands-on strategies, often of long durations, create a layered learning experience that allows students to collectively experience civics and practice high-order thinking skills. Using Webb's (1997) depth of knowledge (DOK) typology, the two desired levels of cognitive demands—strategic thinking and extended thinking rather than simple recall and simple application of skills and concepts—are more plausible with experiential strategies than with traditional textbook instruction.

The exposure-selection model parallels the progressive curricular ideology reflected in the writings of theorists like John Dewey (1938). Progressivism has been interpreted differently by various scholars. Consequently, historian Lawrence Cremin (1961) cautioned against formulating a singular definition of it. For this dissertation, the version of progressivism connected to Dewey's work is rooted in elevation of the child's experience as a conduit to learning. For instance, experiencing a democratic classroom is valuable for citizenship development compared to a prescriptive civic curriculum operating within the confines of an authoritarian classroom. The exposure-selection model can be buttressed by Dewey's progressivism philosophy. First, Dewey (1902) proposes that schools use problem-centered curriculum that create *educational situations* that allow children to deal with increasingly more complex and demanding problems. These educational situations in civics classrooms, where students are wrestling with civic problems through experiential activities such as debates and simulations can enhance both exposure and selection of civic knowledge and action.

The exposure-selection model reflects the principle of continuity and interaction proposed in Dewey's (1938) seminal book *Experience and Education*. Dewey refers to

continuity as each experience a student has that will influence his or her future. He refers to interaction as the situational influences on the student's experience. Dewey posits that a student's present experience is a function of the interaction between that student's past experiences and the present situation (which includes objective conditions within the power of the educator such as civic curriculum materials). Dewey's principle of interaction makes it clear that failure of adaptation of materials to the needs and capacities of students may cause an experience to be non-educative as much as failure of the student to adapt herself to the materials. He stresses that learning should not be isolated because doing so will prevent students from extracting meaning from future experiences. Dewey's theory reinforces Niemi and Junn's (1998) exposure-selection model. The likelihood of a student to be motivated to select/retain information that she has been previously exposed to should increase when the experience of being accessing that information is educative as opposed to miseducative. Experiential education strategies, according to the research and theoretical literature, makes the experience of gaining civic knowledge more educative by focusing on participation and action. Experiential education ensures the adaptation of materials to the needs and capacities of students. These needs and capacities vary with the diversity of students in a civics classroom and are optimized with experiential civics education as described in the second conceptual framework guiding this study—culturally relevant civics pedagogy.

Presenting information in ways that motivate students to action is to contextualize knowledge in a way that personally connects to students in ways that inspires them to take action. Several scholars (Avery & Simmons, 2000; Carroll et al., 1987; Hess, 2009) have argued for the inclusion of controversial topics in social studies classes to motivate students. Controversial topics or issues can be defined as those in which “contrary views can be held

without those views being contrary to reason (Dearden, 1981) or those problems whose best solutions are open to disagreement (Lockwood, 1996). Some scholars who did content analyses of civic textbooks have lamented the lack of coverage of controversial topics in textbooks and have recommended that students study controversial issues. Experiential civic education strategies have an affinity to cover controversial topics, to make personal connections, and to invite students to civic action and civic participation. Because of these affinities, the exposure-selection theory is an appropriate framework to theorize the value of experiential civic education strategies.

Culturally Relevant Civics Pedagogy

Similar to the inequity that characterizes the academic achievement gap, there also exists a civic empowerment gap delineated along ethnic and social-class lines (Levinson, 2010; Niemi, 2012). The students at the lower end of this disparity, likely to be low-income students and students of color, often have the least influence in schools and could use the assistance of schools to obtain democratic equality. However, these students receive fewer school-based opportunities to develop their civic capacities and commitments compared to more affluent students (Kahne & Middaugh, 2009). In addition to the civic empowerment gap, Rubin and Hayes (2010) have reported that many urban youths of color have reported a notable disjuncture between the civic ideals expressed in civic texts (such as the Pledge of Allegiance and the Bill of Rights) and the actuality of their lives. Furthermore, Epstein (2001) and Cornbleth (as cited in Ladson-Billings, 2004) have described the sense of disaffection and resentment that some African American and other students of color feel toward the nation and their place within it.

The implications of this civic empowerment gap and disjuncture are serious for current and future citizenship participation of these youths in socio-culturally diverse classrooms. In

order to motivate students for civic action and participation, civic knowledge must be presented in a way that is culturally relevant to students. Citing Cottons' research, Ladson-Billings (2004) reports that, the problems described above associated with the civic education of minority groups were typically met in schools by "promulgating an agreed-upon vision of the United States as the democratic ideal rather than engage students in an understanding of the paradoxes and contradictions of the United States, its history, politics, culture, and economy" (p. 121). Ladson-Billings challenges educators to "reveal and incite the power of democratic ideals for marginalized students in U.S. schools" (p. 122) and to "help every student learn what it means to help them embrace cultural citizenship" (p. 122). Compared to traditional notions of citizenship, cultural citizenship is more holistic and captures the lived experiences of minority students and their rights to be different without revoking their rights of belonging to the larger society (Rosaldo, 1994).

Culturally relevant pedagogy affirms the role that culture plays in students' ability to learn and relate to educational institutions (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Culturally relevant pedagogy assumes that academic success or failure is intimately linked to a cultural match/mismatch between students and schools, and that students of color need more opportunities to connect with school compared to students socialized within the dominant mainstream culture. In addition to academic success, culturally relevant pedagogy gives students a critical awareness needed to challenge existing social orders and power structures which, in turn, allow students to "see themselves as part of a larger social system and recognize that their circumstances in and out of school are not entirely their own making but are shaped by social forces such as the political economy (e.g., immigration laws...)"(Journell & Castro, 2011, p. 11).

Experiential civics education strategies promotes culturally responsive pedagogy because the students who don't identify with this traditional narrative—for a myriad of reasons such as immigration status and other socioeconomic factors—are now able to see themselves in a civic narrative in which they are actively participating and on which they are critically reflecting. In describing the theory of democratic multicultural education, Amy Gutmann (2004) argued that toleration and recognition of cultures are essential in a democracy. Gutmann states that “a democracy should tolerate and recognize those cultures that are compatible with mutual toleration and recognition within and across cultural groups (p. 73).”

Gutmann (2004) asserted that recognition can be achieved through curricular design. She recommends the use of textbooks that incorporate the voices of minority groups, not as a peripheral addition, but as a primary narrative. According to Gutmann, using inclusive textbooks can be part of a deliberative atmosphere in which teachers engage students in their commonalities and differences. I hypothesize that teacher-edition textbooks are likely to contain experiential civics curriculum materials that, by design, leverage the voices of all students including minority students. Furthermore, when experiential civics learning also involves the students' local communities, such as action civics and YPAR, the benefits are even more pronounced for students who don't identify with the traditional textbook narratives (Camarota & Fine, 2008; Hart & Kirshner, 2009).

In addition to Gutman's (2004) democratic multicultural education, another complimentary theory can be used to articulates how culturally civics pedagogy can be achieved through experiential civics education. This complementary theory is Banks' (2009) theory of *transformative citizenship education*. Banks proposes transformative citizenship education as an alternative to the mainstream citizenship education that is currently in place in most Western

nations dealing with increased diversity as a result of globalization. Unlike mainstream citizenship education which is problematic due to its reinforcement of the marginalization of minority groups in the educational sphere, transformative citizenship education challenges the key epistemological assumptions of mainstream knowledge. Unlike mainstream knowledge which does not include all four elements of citizenship (civil, political, social, and culture) or includes them to a superficial degree, Banks (2009) argues that transformative knowledge is inclusive of all the citizenship elements and helps students understand their multiple and complex identities, the ways their lives are influenced by globalization, and what their role in the global world should be.

Banks employed Marshall's (1964) definitions of three of these citizenship elements—the civil, political, and social. According to Marshall, the civil element is composed of “the rights necessary for individual freedom” (p. 10). The political element is “the right to participate in the exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with political authority or as an elector of the members of such a body” (p. 11). Marshall described the social element as “the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society” (p. 11). For the social element, Marshall adds that “institutions most closely connected with it are the educational system and the social services” (p. 11), echoing progressivist message about the critical role of the classroom in shaping a student's social wellbeing. Echoing Ladson-Billings (2004) and Rosaldo (1994), Banks added the fourth citizenship element, culture, to expand Marshall's typology by arguing that the addition would be consistent with Marshall's view that “citizenship evolves to reflect the historical development of the times and expands to increase equality and social justice” (Banks, 2009, p. 305). Because

language, cultural characteristics, and the maintaining of attachments to cultural communities are important to one's identity, Banks theorized that the conception of citizenship should be expanded to include cultural rights and group rights.

According to Banks (2009), transformative citizenship education—which is inclusive of the civil, political, social, and culture elements of citizenship—gives students opportunities to attain clarified and reflective cultural, national, regional, and global identifications and to understand how these identities are constructed. In addition, because transformative citizenship education is rooted in transformative academic knowledge, it enables students to acquire the information, skills, and values needed to challenge inequality within their communities, their nations, and the world and to take actions to create a just and democratic multicultural society. Experiential civics education provides a path towards Banks' transformative citizenship education because, as described in the upcoming literature review section, experiential civics strategies are very effective in orienting students towards transformative norms of civic commitment.

Experiential civics education is rooted in immersing students in experiences that enable them to understand their role in the civic sphere and to question the status quo. Experiential civics practices such as working for political campaign, organizing community advocacy events, or engaging and pressing their local politicians on important issues give students the opportunity to challenge the status quo and to contest inequality in society. Experiential civics is also more apt—than traditional civics—to engage students in all four strands of citizenship, a barometer of transformative citizenship. Because of its non-prescriptive and non-didactic qualities, experiential civics strategies afford students the opportunity to uncompromisingly explore all four strands of citizenship. By bringing the messiness of democracy to the classroom and

weaving students' personal experiences and individuality into the process, experiential civics gives students opportunities for the civil, political, social, and culture elements of citizenship to be developed. I will use an example to illustrate how experiential civics curriculum can incorporate all four citizenship strands and, therefore, be considered transformative.

Description of an Experiential Civics Activity

In this experiential civics activity, students will simulate the confirmation process of federal judges. Some students will play the role of the prospective judges. Other students will play the role of judicial committee senators who question the prospective judges. Both the senators and prospective judges are at various points along the liberal-conservative political spectrum. To prepare for the simulation, students will be given role statements depicting the backgrounds and viewpoints of their characters. They will also be allowed to augment these roles with some of their personal preferences that are consistent with their given role statements. The simulation will mimic a real-life confirmation hearing where senators use their questioning, in an amicable or adversarial manner, to attain a sense of how the prospective judge will rule cases that come before them, particularly cases dealing with controversial topics.

This simulation described above can prospectively explore the four strands of citizenship. The civil element is explored because these confirmation hearings invariably involve some debate about the balance between the law protecting citizens while maintaining their rights necessary for individual freedom. For instance, a prospective judge's previous ruling on gun control can spark a debate in the hearing about how the rights guaranteed by the second amendment can coexist with abating gun violence in society. The political element is explored by students participating in the confirmation hearing itself. The hearing gives them hands-on experience in how elected and appointed members of the government exercise political power

that ultimately reverberates through society. Through the discussions of legal cases in the confirmation hearing, the social element is explored as students gain multiple perspectives of how various aspects of their social lives are shaped by the judicial process for better or worse. The cultural element of citizenship will also be explored. Legal cases, such as the ones that are discussed in the hearing, often showcase a legal fight for cultural rights or group rights. Such cases include fights to display a certain type of flag at the statehouse, to use a bathroom of one's own choosing, to stave off attempts to limit suffrage, and to gain access to a certain kind of learning institutions. Students will find that their cultural group, which influences their identity and sense of self, is connected to the types of legal cases, either as the dominant or marginalized group. As a result, they gain an insight into the perennial battle for cultural rights and group rights. Because all four citizenship elements are explored, this experiential civics activity can be said to promote transformative citizenship. This activity is simply one of countless possibilities of how an experiential civics classroom delivers transformative citizenship.

Summary

Compared to a didactic teaching approach using mainstream civics textbooks, the use of experiential civic education strategies is a more effective gateway to teaching about civic participation and civic action. Previous research on textbooks have not taken a holistic approach to include textbook's supplemental resources when evaluating their utility for teaching civic action and participation. Neither have these studies evaluated textbook curriculum by civic topic to see whether some topics are better resourced than others regarding civic action and participation. With the logic that experiential civic strategies are an effective avenue towards civic participation and civic action, this dissertation investigates the distribution and soundness

of the experiential civics content contained in teacher-edition textbooks and their associated curriculum materials.

This study is significant to the field of civic education because it gives clarity to the nature of experiential civics content in one of the largest drivers of civics curriculum—civics textbooks and associated supplemental materials. Educators can leverage a better understanding of this ubiquitous resource to maximize civic engagement in the high school civics classroom. Two theories are used to explain how experiential civics strategies enhances civic action and participation—the exposure-selection model and culturally relevant pedagogy. The exposure-selection model was used to posit that experiential civics strategies are effective in *exposing* students to civic action and participation in the classroom, and consequently motivates students to participate and *select* civic actions inside and outside of school. Culturally relevant pedagogy and its complementary theories—democratic multicultural education and transformative citizenship education—are used to explain how experiential civic education is better suited to leverage students’ cultures, backgrounds, and differences.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

“...We also believe in something called citizenship — citizenship, a word at the very heart of our founding, a word at the very essence of our democracy, the idea that this country only works when we accept certain obligations to one another and to future generations.”

Former U.S. President Barack Obama (Acceptance Speech to the Democratic National Convention, 2012)

Introduction

Civic knowledge is the precursor to effective civic participation in a well-functioning democracy (Galston, 2001). Consequently, it has been called upon to reverse an erosion of political knowledge among youths with reforms among which is experiential learning (Niemi, 2012). This literature review will describe experiential education and learning-by-doing as it pertains to civic education. It will also describe the various types of civics education that can be categorized as “experiential”. It will detail empirical research on the main facets of experiential civics education—simulation, service learning, action civics, student government, and the political classroom—as it pertains to civic knowledge, skill, attitudes, and participation. This chapter will also examine the possibility of mainstreaming experiential education.

Rationale for Experiential Civics Education

The watershed study by Niemi and Junn (1998), via an analysis of the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) 1988 Civics Assessment test, gave both civic educators and researchers insights into the ways in which students acquire civic knowledge in the classroom. Their recommendations, as well as the recommendation of other studies assessing the

state of civics education, can be facilitated through various forms of experiential learning. The researchers call for experiential learning in many of their recommendations. Through robust quantitative studies, Kahne and Sporte (2008) and Torney-Purta, Amadeo, & Richardson (2007) found that effective means of fostering commitments to civic participation included providing students with experiences that directly focused on civic action and political issues. Such experiences included working on service learning projects, being up-to-date with current events, being well-versed in problems in the community and ways to respond to such problems, giving students an open dialog about controversial issues and other issues that mattered to them. Kahne, Chi, and Middaugh (2006), through a quantitative quasi-experimental study of the Constitutional Rights Foundation's CityWorks curriculum, found that the curriculum along with its experiential features—such as the use of simulations, compelling role models, service learning projects—oriented students towards norms of civic commitment and provided them with greater confidence in their knowledge of social networks. The curriculum's focus on local government and problems in the students' communities also had a positive impact on the forms of social capital—community norms, trust, and access to networks and information—examined in the study.

The Carnegie Corporation and Center for Information and Research in Civic Learning (CIRCLE) issued the Civic Mission of Schools (Gibson & Levine, 2003) report, which prominently feature several experiential learning strategies as part of their recommendations to target their conceptions of competent and responsible citizens—being informed and thoughtful, organized participation in communities, political action, and having moral and civic virtues. A follow-up publication by CIRCLE and collaborators titled *Guardians of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools* (Gould et al, 2012) also featured experiential learning strategies prominently

in its six effective practices of civic education—classroom instruction, discussion of current events and controversial issues, service-learning, extracurricular activities, student participation in school governance, and simulation of democratic processes. The *Inspired to Serve* (National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service, 2020), commissioned by the United States Congress as part of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017, also made a series of recommendations for best practices in civic education that are critical to the democratic health of the nation. The best practices itemized by the *Inspired to Serve* (2020) report included engaging student in “interactive, student-led applied civics projects.” I will analyze the research literature on applied civics and experiential civics learning depicted in these consensus studies. Drawing primarily on the work of Diana Hess (2009, 2014), I will also detail how two of these proven practices such as classroom debates and deliberation of current events and controversial issues can be viewed as experiential civics.

Analysis of Empirical Literature for Each Experiential Strategy

Simulations

Simulations of democratic processes are not a new concept in civic education. Their effectiveness, both anecdotally and empirically, have been documented for many years. *Guardians of Democracy* lauds simulations’ abilities to provide students with a fictional environment that is typically difficult to find in the real world where, in addition to experiencing first-hand knowledge about the three branches of government, they also learn beneficial skills such as public speaking, teamwork, and critical and analytical thinking skills that is derived from arguing both sides of an issue. As expected, the extent of civic growth from simulation is not uniform among simulations and depends on the nature and execution of the simulation.

A comprehensive quantitative study by Bernstein (2007, 2008) of a simulation with an introductory American government college course gave a nuanced analysis of the impact of simulations on student learning and on the growth of the civic competence of young people. Bernstein's study also included simulations' impact differences between genders and among ethnic groups. Bernstein defined civic competence as students' skills and abilities to make sense of vast amounts of political information, to work with others or work in civil opposition to opposing ideas, and to develop effective strategies for political action. Bernstein found that civic competence significantly increased after students took the mandatory course that consisted of a low-tech three-day legislative simulation where they had to make/amend a policy on issues such as affirmative action, eminent domain, school prayer, and the war on terrorism. The students' gains in political knowledge, skills, and readiness to participate in politics differed along gender and racial lines. Bernstein found that African American female students consistently experienced the smallest gains in skills and felt the least qualified to participate in politics. Bernstein speculated that a form of stereotype threat (Steele, Aronson, & Kruglanski, 1995) might explain these results, and called for further research in this area to give more clarity to the racial and gender dimensions associated with simulations.

Other quantitative studies of short-term low-tech simulations have reported similar gains in civic knowledge (Baranowski, 2006; Tillotson & Puncochar, 2014). Bernstein and Meizlish (2003), in a quasi-experimental longitudinal study, revealed that gains in civic knowledge may not appear until years after the students have completed the simulation-facilitated civics course. Baranowski and Weir (2010) found that there were differences between power-role and non-power role students in a legislative simulation experience. They found that students with power roles (either those with leadership positions such as speakerships and committee chairmanships

or those that belonged to the political party in the majority) reported a greater understanding of and appreciation for the legislative process than students in non-power roles (those without leadership positions or those who belonged to the minority political party). Based on this finding, Baranowski and Weir recommended giving each student in a simulation an opportunity to play both roles.

One of the reasons well-designed simulations, whether long-term or short term, are successful in civically engaging students is their ability to cater to the multiple learning styles of students in the classroom (Bernstein & Meizlish, 2003). Lo (2015) also found that situational interest along with frequency of simulations directly predict students' commitment to vote in the future. Using interest development theory, Lo asserted that if students' simulation experiences in the classroom aid with maintaining their situational interest in political action, those same experiences might lead to the acquisition of more political knowledge and potentially political action.

In addition to simulations of the workings of the three branches of government, a different type of simulation also captures a core aspect of democratic governing—simulation voting. Simulation voting have also been shown in empirical studies to be an avenue towards civic engagement. Taking part in simulation voting or working at a poll gives students the opportunity to practice the skills associated with educated voting and feel the value of casting their ballot (Saavedra, 2012). McDevitt and Kiouisis (2004) showed that Kids Voting USA—a national nonpartisan voter education program—increased the frequency and quality of political discussions among participating students.

Along with the simulation literature discussed above, to evaluate the soundness of simulation plans, Smith and Boyer's (1996) recommendations for designing in-class simulations

will also serve as a benchmark. Smith and Boyer's make recommendations about the definition of teaching goals, the identification of key actors, the pragmatism of structural relationships, the presence of a scenario or problem statement for actors to resolve, the presence of ground rules for students, and the expectation of a debrief following the simulation.

Service Learning

Service learning typically refers to an experiential education endeavor that combines structured opportunities for learning academic skills in a school-based curriculum with volunteering along with reflection on the volunteer experience. Youth involved in service learning have a better chance of being civically engaged as adults (Youniss, McLellan, & Yates, 1997; Hart-Donnelly, Youniss, & Atkins, 2007). However, civic outcomes differ based on the type of service-learning. The most promising current and future civic outcomes are derived from civic-oriented service learning with a strong emphasis on politics compared to service learning programs that conceptualize service as a form of personal helping in the community (Torney-Purta, Amadeo, & Richardson, 2007; Beaumont, 2010; Hunter & Brisbin, 2000; Stroupe & Sabato, 2004).

Even though the politics-oriented service learning programs show promising outcomes, they are not as common as one would think given their effectiveness. According to Westheimer and Kahne (2000, 2004), many civically oriented service learning programs circumvent politics. Discussion of politics and engagement in political matters with subjective tensions is viewed by some teachers and school administrators as controversial and are avoided in schools because of fears of accusations of indoctrination (Hess, 2009; Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2010; Malin et al, 2014). The positive findings on the effectiveness of policy-based and politics-focused service learning is buttressed by McIntosh and Youniss's (2010) theory of political socialization, a

theory that stresses the value of acquiring scaffolded civic action within communities of practice that also affords young people opportunities to see and understand an issue from perspectives different from theirs.

To evaluate the soundness of the design of service-learning plans, I will make use of the theoretical ideas of Billig (2000). Billig details the expectations of sound service learning plans such as the presence of clear educational goals that require application of course content, the presence of an assessment to enhance student learning, the agency of students in selecting, designing, implementing, and evaluating the service learning project, the type of interaction and community partnerships available, and the opportunities for reflection that are embedded into the project.

Action Civics

Action civics and service learning are very similar and, at times, used interchangeably in the civic engagement literature. For most initiatives that are called action civics, however, there is a strong explicit emphasis on the acquisition of civic skills, knowledge, attitudes, and action, as compared to service learning initiatives which do not necessarily emphasize those elements. Action civics emphasizes sustained social activism. According to Levinson (2014), through action civics, students “do civics and behave as citizens by engaging in a cycle of research, action, and reflection about problems they care about personally while learning about deeper principles of civic and especially political action (p. 68).” The belief is that through experiential learning within a critical frame, youth will holistically rethink social and political possibilities while tackling the particular local problems they are concerned about. Levinson believes that action civics is effective in civically empowering youth because action civics addresses the three

basic causal components—ability or resources, motivation or engagement, and opportunity or recruitment—necessary for success.

As with service-learning, the civic orientation that is promoted by action civics initiatives varies. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) demonstrated that service learning and action civics promote one or more of the following orientations: personally-responsible citizenship, participatory citizenship, or justice-oriented citizenship. The personally-responsible citizen “acts responsible in his or her community by, for example, picking up litter, giving blood, recycling, obeying laws, and staying out of debt” (p. 241). The participatory citizen is one “who actively participates in the civic affairs and the social life of the community at the local, state, or national level” (p. 241). The justice-oriented citizen can “analyze and understand the interplay of social, economic, and political forces” (p. 242).

The justice-oriented citizen is the least commonly pursued orientation. There is a branch of action civics known as youth participatory action research (YPAR), often headed by university researchers and students, where students study social problems affecting their lives, through the lens of critical theory, and then determine solutions to rectify those problems (Cammarota & Fine, 2008; Levinson, 2014; Mirra, Garcia, & Morrell, 2016). YPAR is an experiential civic education strategy that, when implemented effectively, promotes the justice-oriented citizenship in Westheimer and Kahne’s typology.

To evaluate the strength of action civics, I will borrow partly from the service learning recommendations from Billig (2000). Because action civics and service learning have some logistical similarities, Billig’s recommendations can also apply to action civics even though they were originally conceived for service learning initiatives. However, for the action civics elements that do not overlap with service learning, the recommendations set forth by Gingold (2013) will

be used as the evaluation benchmark. Gingold's recommendations for desirable action civic components include opportunities for students to meet with public officials, opportunities for students to partake in advocacy, political, or education campaigns, and a media exposure component.

Political Classroom

According to Parker (2017), "citizens need not only comply with authorities but to become authorities, not only to obey laws but make laws, not only abide by judges' rulings but to become judges, serve as jurors, and deliberate policy with other citizens." Giving students the opportunity to deliberate is a form of experiential learning because they are practicing a critical citizenship duty in a controlled setting. Outside of the classroom, this problem-solving duty—adults deliberating—is an indispensable aspect of any well-functioning democracy, from the jury room to the local school board to the congressional committee. The political classroom is a form of experiential learning characterized by deliberation.

There is a difference between classroom deliberation and classroom discussion. Discussion-oriented pedagogy is not new in civic education. Several scholars and researchers such as Feldman et al (2007), Parker (2003, 2010), Gould et al (2012), Hart and Kirshner (2009), Hess (2009), Hess and McAvoy (2014), and Youniss (2012) have written extensively about its resourcefulness regarding civic growth and the nurturing of civic participation in a democracy. What elevates classroom *discussion*—a shared inquiry that allows students to dialogue, reason, listen, evaluate perspectives, and treat one another like political equals—into classroom *deliberation* is the presence of a collective problem-solving goal (Parker, 2003). According to Parker (2004) through deliberation, students are engaged in a dialogic practice in which they

obtain multiple perspectives on problems and disagreements over them before collectively forging an agreed upon course of action which often involves compromise.

One way to foster deliberation is for civics and government classes to increase their emphasis on contemporary politics that will invariably lead to discussion of controversial topics and debates (Niemi, 2012). In a quest to glean more methodical nuances of the political classroom, Hess and McAvoy (2009, 2014) have led a long-term study that focuses on strategies to foster democratic education through deliberation and the debate of controversial topics. Through extensive observations and interviews of several teachers covering controversial topics ranging from free speech to abortion, Hess and McAvoy has found that the school can become a place where students actively practice democracy by speaking out and learning how to listen to others, respect perspectives different from their own, and accept that diversity of perspectives is an integral part of a democracy.

Youniss (2012), evaluating Hess's (2009) work, states that this form of classroom discussion "breaks barriers that artificially separate schools, the family dinner table, television news, and other public forums. In the process, students begin to see classmates as politically interested citizens" (p. 121). What's essential about the form of classroom discussion and deliberation Hess advocates is that often it is the only opportunity for students to participate in healthy discussion where the opposition's voice is not stifled or received with animosity as in cable news and popular partisan political news consumed via the web and talk radio. Write Hess and McAvoy (2014), "teaching students to deliberate current political controversies prepares them to engage with the political world beyond school and, proponents hope, provides a foundation for thinking about controversies that will arise in the future" (pp. 6 – 7).

To evaluate the design of political classroom initiatives, I will adapt Hess and McAvoy's (2014) aims of the political classroom stemming from their decades-long research. These aims include the presence of opportunities for political equity, political tolerance, political autonomy, political fairness, political engagement, and political literacy. Political equity refers to the ability of students to deliberate as equals. Political tolerance refers to the ability of students to consider whether their personal views are consistent with the idea that objectionable dissenting voices are a healthy part of democracy. Political autonomy refers to the ability of students to encounter and respond intelligently to views that are different from their own. Political fairness refers to the ability of students to consider and reflect on the views and rights of others when evaluating policy. Political engagement refers to the ability of students to deliberate current issues and the controversies they will confront outside of school. Political literacy refers to the ability of students to understand the competing ideologies underlying controversial issues and competing views about democracy itself. These aims will be further analyzed in the coding frame which is discussed in Chapter 4.

Student Government

Participating in student government, while typically a school-wide initiative and not limited to the civics classroom, is a form of experiential learning that is proven by a long tradition of research to be effective in building civic skills and attitudes (Gould et al, 2012; Saavedra, 2012). The essence of school government, voting, campaigning, forming coalitions, negotiating, and dealing with institutional structure represents a microcosm of adult/real-world citizenship participation. Without a mandate to compromise (unlike the political classroom form of experiential civics described above) and with real (as opposed to simulated) resources and implications at stake, student government represent a form of experiential learning that translates

fairly seamlessly into the real world that students will experience upon graduating from high school.

The policy decisions that student governments make can have a lasting impact on their high school community (Saavedra, 2012). The effect that participation in student government has on students can be significant. In a longitudinal study of student government participants from 1955 to 1970 by Hanks and Eckland (1978), more than 4,000 high school students were tracked over a 15-year period and surveyed about their voting patterns and civic participation as adults. Participation in student governments and other high school organizations was found to be the strongest predictor of current membership in voluntary organizations which was found to be the strongest predictor of voting and lack of civic alienation. A study of student government participation and adult civic participation by Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) confirmed the results from decades earlier.

Typically, long-term student government initiatives are school-wide programs rather than classroom specific initiatives. While it is entirely plausible to have a classroom where the teacher institutes a long-term student government in charge of day-to-day running of the classroom, this rarely happens. What typically occurs on the classroom level is a government simulation with perhaps some real-life consequential decision-making power such as a classroom congressional body choosing the destination for a field trip from a list of options.

Mainstreaming Experiential Civics Education

In this dissertation I will ascertain the potential of readily-available experiential civics materials contained within textbook curriculum materials to aid the mainstreaming of experiential civics to more civics classrooms. The ability to make experiential civics mainstream is critical because, given the success of experiential civics education with the development of

citizenship, academic, and analytical skills, it is yet not the norm in U.S. public school social studies classrooms. This was true in 1988, according to Niemi and Junn's (1998) analysis of that year's NAEP civic assessment data, as it was true in 2010, according to Saavedra's (2012) analysis of that year's NAEP data in which she reported that most students are still taught about the workings of government and democracy through a traditional, pedagogical combination of textbooks, lecture, and worksheets. This is problematic because "given the inherently static nature of hard-copy print, textbooks are not well equipped to help students practice their civic skills or to help them understand the value of civic participation in a meaningful way" (Saavedra, 2012, p. 142). The National Commission on Military, National and Public Service (2020) also concluded that there was "the lack of exposure to high-quality civic education for students throughout much of the Nation" (p. 3).

Not only is the traditional approach less engaging to students, to the detriment of the nation's democracy, it also has negative effects on student motivation and engagement in school. Gould et al (2012) reported that a lack of experiential education contributes to the nation's dropout rates. They reported that 81% of dropouts said that they would have been more likely to remain in school if their school had offered more opportunities for experiential learning in their curriculum. In addition, a contributing factor to the dropout rate was the school's isolation from the broader community. Experiential learning strategies such as service learning, action civics, and youth participatory action research are rooted in interaction with the community and would alleviate the isolation associated with dropout rates. Given experiential civic education's success with citizenship and contributions to reducing the dropout rate, one would think there might be an urgency in making it mainstream.

Several scholars have researched the idea of mainstreaming the various forms of experiential civic learning. According to Saavedra (2012), for experiential education, or any other civic education initiative, to be successful and gain traction, institutional support is needed. In other words, experiential education has to be a district mandate, with ongoing tangible support, for it to have widespread adoption. To echo this need for institutional support, the National Commission on Military, National and Public Service (2020) recommends that state educational agencies (namely state departments of education), local educational agencies (namely school districts), schools, and nonprofit organizations to “explore ways to provide quality, research-based civic education, applied civics, and service learning to K-12 students, and to prepare teachers to teach these subjects and use these methodologies” (p. 20).

As Niemi and Junn (1998) surmised from their research, instructional materials on local governments and current issues, which are critical to some forms of experiential civics education, are often not readily available and require greater teacher preparation time compared to a reliance on textbooks. While acknowledging the difficulty of organizing experiential civic strategies by individual teachers, some researchers have engaged in advocacy research by creating case studies of experiential civics education initiatives with an agenda to communicate how these initiatives can be replicated by other groups, whether it is at the school, district, or state level. Hess and Zola (2012) give a detailed account of professional development for the implementation of three civic education initiatives, including policy-based service learning initiatives, providing a blueprint for educators who are inspired to launch similar initiatives. Hess and Zola echoed Niemi and Junn (1998) by stating that successful execution of such initiatives requires teachers to have extensive knowledge about the school’s local community which, in many cases, is not their community of residence. Success also hinges on teachers’ understanding

of public policy and how it is structured, having access to local policymakers and policy experts that can help students navigate a problem and find possible solutions, and having the pedagogical skills to facilitate a diverse classroom. To this end, the requisite professional development, with ongoing support, is warranted. However, they lament the lack of financial resources to properly fund much needed professional development. They also recommend that mainstreaming and adoption of experiential education should be accompanied by rigorous research to put these initiatives under a microscope and truly understand their inner workings and effectiveness in meeting their goals. They cite the design-experiments accompanying the AP Project, headed by Walter Parker (2011), as the “gold standard.”

The AP Project {Parker et al., 2011; Parker & Lo, 2016} included a pedagogical model called Knowledge in Action, a project-based learning (PBL) initiative which featured experiential learning such as weeks-long simulations. Pioneered in several schools, the initiative’s rigorous PBL is structured so that the projects are weaved into the course as a central component to the course rather than being peripheral. Exhibiting two important tenets of experiential civics education, the projects are authentic—in that they are related clearly to life outside of school, that is, to politics and governance of the United States—and they also specify meaningful learning as a goal. Meaningful learning is deep and adaptive, that is, differentiated and transferable to future situations. The AP Project had promising results in terms of students’ scores on AP exams. Although students expressed frustration about going to a project-based learning approach (compared to the traditional text-based curriculum they were used to), more students achieved a passing score in the AP test than traditional students. Students also scored significantly higher on the Complex Scenario Test, a measure of students’ ability to apply their understanding of the AP Government content to solve complex problems.

This dissertation contributes to the challenge of mainstreaming experiential civics education by establishing an evaluation of potentially widely available resources—the supplemental materials for textbooks. Understanding the experiential civics potential contained within a widely available set of resources is a crucial step in the conversation of mainstreaming experiential education. By understanding the distribution of these strategies (simulations, action civics, service learning, political classroom, student government) within supplemental textbook resources and the extent to which they can be used effectively will contribute some insight into the mainstreaming conversation. This dissertation can serve as a first step to that conversation. Further steps in the mainstreaming conversation about textbook supplemental material will be needed. These future studies may try to answer the following potential questions: how do civics teachers use the experiential civic strategies in textbook supplemental resources? To what extent do teachers use these resources? Do teachers use these resources effectively as prescribed? Do teachers need to be trained to use these resources as prescribed? How can the textbook adoption process be modified to ensure that the supplemental resources along with the experiential civics education strategies are disseminated properly and their benefits stressed with adopting schools and teachers?

Summary

There are four types of experiential education strategies addressed in this dissertation—simulations, service learning, action civics, political classroom, and student government. Simulation of democratic processes improved students' civic competencies, although in an uneven manner because of differentiating variables such as gender and ethnicity of the students as well as the types of roles played in the simulation. Simulations also help students sustain

situational interest in political action. There are identifiable simulation design features that determine its success such as the presence of ground rules for students.

Service learning involves a volunteer-based approach to learning an academic skill combined with a reflection element. Service-learning projects focusing on an aspect of politics have the best civic outcomes for students but are uncommon due to schools' general penchant for avoiding politics. There are specific identifiable features that enhance service learning opportunities such as the presence of clear education goals. A similar strategy to service learning, action civics, is civic activism that is sustained through a period of time. With students undergoing a cycle of research, action, and reflection, action civics can promote different type of civic orientation—personally-responsible citizenship, participatory citizenship, or justice-oriented citizenship. Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) is a branch of civics that best promotes justice-oriented citizenship given its focus on social problems. There are recommendations for successful action civics initiatives such as the presence of opportunities for students to partake in advocacy.

The political classroom is characterized by deliberation—collective problem-solving through discussion and can include controversial topics. It is considered a form of experiential learning because students are able to practice the deliberation critical to several facets of a democracy. The aims of political classroom created by Diana Hess and Paula McAvoy are used to evaluate the soundness of political classroom initiatives. The final strategy addressed in this study, student government, is usually school-wide rather than an in-class initiative. Participation in student government bodes well for future voting behavior and civic participation.

Experiential civics education is currently uncommon in U.S. classrooms even though it eclipses the traditional approach in terms of students' civic engagement as well as its

contribution to other measures of school success such as graduation rates. The given reasons, in the research literature, for its dearth ranges from lack of resources to the difficulty in implementation. This dissertation can help in determining whether experiential civics education can be mainstreamed by giving an assessment of experiential civics content in an already widely available resource.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Rationale for a Content Analysis

The research method used for this study is content analysis, a popular methodology to investigate research questions through an analysis of communication; in this case, written communication. Content analysis encompasses a “systematic reading of a body of texts, images, and symbolic matter, not necessary from an author’s perspective or user’s perspective” (Krippendorff, 2013). Content analysis is the appropriate method to investigate my research questions because content analysis helps scholars reduce material when working with lots of data such as the large amount of texts examined in this study (Schreier, 2012). Both quantitative- and qualitative-content analysis will be used as appropriate. The quantitative analysis will allow me to obtain descriptive statistics and give a statistical evaluation of the textbook curriculum materials related to the research questions. The qualitative analysis will be used to derive nuanced insights related to the research questions.

Data Sources and Sampling Strategy

According to Woodward (1982), “anything less than analyzing textbooks that were widely used in schools must result in less than reliable data” (p. 40). Hence, the textbooks that made up this study’s data sources consisted of a sample of the most popular used books in the United States. Given that publishers do not share data on their textbooks’ sales or usage, and most textbooks are sold directly to the states (Lachmann & Mitchell, 2014), an accurate way of obtaining a sample of popular textbooks is to base it on textbook adoption data for states’ department of educations and individual school districts. This sample frame was used by

Menefee-Libey (2015) to obtain the most recent editions of the 15 most widely used American government textbooks in the United States. Menefee-Libey created his sample by including any textbooks “chosen by more than two of the 22 state governments that select or recommend the use of specific high school civics textbooks” and also included “any texts chosen by large school districts outside of the 22 states already identified” (p. 428). That sampling frame resulted in the 15 most widely used civics textbooks. The most popular civics books have been established by Menefee-Libey. I narrowed down those 15 most popular books to fit the necessary criteria and scope for my study’s sampling frame. I am adopting a combination of purposeful and stratified sampling with the following criteria:

1. The textbooks in my sample must be entirely devoted to civics and American government.

While several schools teach civics as a standalone course, there is a significant number that teach it paired with economics, another social studies discipline. To accommodate this pairing, some textbooks also combine both disciplines, including some books in Menefee-Libey’s sample such as *Civics Today: Citizenship, Economics, and You* (2010) published by McGraw-Hill. Such books are eliminated from my sample because my study’s focus is exclusively civics.

2. The textbooks in my sample must be quite recent. Because schools typically enter a textbook adoption process every seven years, any textbooks older than seven years are eliminated from my dissertation sample, otherwise, the dissertation will not be applicable to textbooks currently in schools and run the risk of using dated data. My study’s objectives will not be well served if I’m researching obsolete textbooks or those on the verge of being obsolete. I updated Menefee-Libey’s sample to reflect the newest editions of the books in his sample.

After the update, any books that are still older than seven years (published before 2012), and thus facing removal from school shelves, were eliminated from my sample.

3. The textbooks in my sample must reflect a diversity of publishers. As I reduced the list of the 15 most popular textbooks, I needed to ensure that the reduced list contained textbooks from various publishers rather than a possible oversample of select publishers. An oversample of select publishers would have run the risk of skewing the study's results in favor of those oversampled publishers because textbooks from the same publisher may have similarities in how they deliver experiential civics.
4. The textbooks in my sample must represent the two versions of civics/government taught in high schools: regular high school civics/government courses and Advanced Placement (AP) government courses (a more rigorous course that gives students college-level credits). Different types of textbooks are designed specifically for these two similar but distinct courses. A balance of regular textbooks and AP textbooks in the sample is desired for two reasons. First, it prevents the results of the study from being skewed in favor of one course over the other. Second, a balance enabled me to compare how regular textbooks and AP textbooks deliver experiential.
5. The textbooks in my sample must deliver experiential learning through their teacher-edition textbook versions and accompanying supplemental resource packages. This means that a teacher who wants to use that textbook's resources to craft an experiential learning lesson for her students must be able to find all the step-by-step instructions and all that she needs within the bounds of those textbook resources and not be directed to an outside organization or consultant. This model of delivering experiential civics is desired for this study's sample because as a content-analysis study, the experiential civics content is the essence of the study.

Without access to it, I could not make any assessments or evaluation about a textbook's delivery of experiential civics. I will illustrate with one of the books on Menefee-Libey's list, *McGruder's American Government* (2016), a well-regarded textbook for AP Government published by Pearson. In its most recent edition, to deliver experiential civics in ten of the book's 14 chapters, the teacher-edition version of *McGruder's* simply directs teachers to another organization, the *Civic Action Project* (<https://crfcap.org>). While the Civic Action Project (CAP) has ample resources, *McGruder* doesn't specify to the teacher which of CAP's experiential civics resources to use or how these resources can be tailored to the specific topics covered in the textbook chapter. For 10 of the 14 chapters, the following words are repeated each time, "you may choose to do a Civic Action Project with your students ..." (Shea, 2016, p.4) before proceeding to explain what CAP is. Because they've outsourced their experiential civics, I did not include *McGruder's* in my sample because to do so would mean evaluating all the experiential civics resources from a non-textbook entity, which wouldn't be an accurate reflection of *McGruder's* resources. There are several organizations like the CAP that specialize in civics enrichment such as *The Civic Mirror* (<http://civicmirror.com/>), *Center for Civic Education* (<https://www.civiced.org/>), and iCivics (<https://www.icivics.org/>) founded by the retired U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. A different research study would be needed to evaluate how these organizations deliver experiential civics.

Using all five of these sampling criteria, I reduced the data sources to four textbooks from four different publishers equally spread between the two types of courses (regular government textbooks and Advanced Placement government textbooks). All four of the textbooks provide experiential civics rather than outsource it to another organization. All four are also exclusively

devoted to civics and government and not paired with economics. All four of the textbooks are fairly recent and are not at risk of becoming obsolete in the near future. These textbook data sources are in the table below.

Table 3.1 | Textbook Data Sources

Book Title	Author	Year Published	Publisher	Targeted Course
<i>Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy</i> , 17 th edition	George C. Edwards, Martin P. Wattenberg, and William Howell	2018	Pearson	AP U.S. Government and Politics
<i>Challenge of Democracy: American Government in a Global Politics</i> , 14 th edition	Kenneth Janda, Jeffrey M .Berry, and Jerry Goldman	2018	Cengage	AP U.S. Government and Politics
<i>United States Government: Our Democracy</i>	Richard Remy, Donald Ritchie, Lee Arbetman, Megan Hanson, Lena Scott, Street Law	2018	McGraw-Hill	American Government
<i>United States Government</i>	Contributors: Valerie Hudson, Wayne Moore, Wendy Smooth	2018	Houghton Mifflin Harcourt	American Government

The teacher-editions of the textbooks, along with their typical robust set of supplemental materials, were used as data sources because this study’s focus is on the experiential civics

resources within the supplemental materials and other student-centered activities within the textbooks. Because of the robustness of these materials, the items that are not germane to the study because of their intrinsic inability to utilize experiential education—such as test banks, chapter overviews, and reading guides —were excluded from the data. Hence, the materials chosen for this study are those that facilitate experiential civics, rather than those that simply convey civics information to students. Such textbook supplemental materials include lesson plans, activity plans, and project plans. This is further discussed in the next section on data collection.

Data Collection

I had to be strategic with the portions of the supplemental material I collected the data from because some of the materials are not designed to contain any experiential curriculum and examining them for such content would not yield any important results. Using this logic, Table 3.2 lists the textbooks and corresponding supplemental material from which data was collected.

Text that merely talks about civic action and participation is not the same as experiential education. For it to count as experiential education, students will have to be directed to engage in an experiential education activity/strategy. Sections of the book that contain such directives (which will be implemented by a facilitator or teacher) are in the table of data collection sources below.

Table 3.2 | Data Collection Sources

1. Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy (Pearson) (a) Textbook (b) Instructor's Manual
2. Challenge of Democracy: American Government in a Global Politics, 14th edition (Cengage) (a) Textbook (b) Instructor Manual
3. United States Government: Our Democracy (McGraw-Hill) (a) Teacher-Edition Textbook (b) McGraw-Hill Networks Teacher Lesson Center: A Social Studies Learning System featuring: i. Citizenship Activities ii. Government Simulations and Debates iii. Problem-Solving and Decision-Making Activities iv. Hands-On Chapter Projects v. Research and Writing
4. United States Government (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt) (a) Teacher-Edition Textbook

The two AP texts, Pearson and Cengage, do not have teacher-edition textbooks that are different from the student editions. However, they both come with an instructor's manual (which are published in electronic versions that make them more amenable to a content-analysis). The instructor manual for the Pearson textbook has six types of resources for each of the textbook's 18 chapters. Of these six types of resources, the pertinent ones for this study—the ones that

houses experiential civics resources—are the *Class Activities*, *Research Activities*, and *Participation Activities* sections. The other three sections—*Chapter Overview*, *Lecture Suggestions*, and *Suggested Readings*—do not contain experiential resources and were not examined in this study. In some cases, however, the pertinent sections do reference these non-pertinent ones. In those cases, these non-pertinent sections are essentially dealt with as context units. For the Cengage textbook, the instructor manual similarly has certain types of resources for each of the book’s chapters. The pertinent section from these resources is the *In-Class Activity* segment of the *Teaching Tools* section of each chapter in the instructor manual. This is where the experiential resources are housed.

Unlike the Advanced Placement textbooks, the two textbooks designed for regular American government courses—the McGraw-Hill text and the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt—both have teacher’s edition. The teacher’s edition textbook for Houghton Mifflin Harcourt is a one-stop-shop for teachers. All the supplemental materials are embedded within the pages of the teacher’s edition texts. In other words, the teachers using this book will find all available supplemental teaching materials, including the experiential civics resources, without having to be redirected to other documents. This teacher’s edition is also available as an electronic document, along with the hard-copy version, making it very conducive for a content-analysis study.

The McGraw-Hill text has the most robust collection of supplemental resources. It has a teacher’s edition textbook and many documents which are routinely referenced in it. Both the teacher’s edition textbook as well as the supplemental documents house experiential civics resources. All the sources in the McGraw-Hill text are also electronic.

Textbook Coding Instruments

According to Wade (1993), “content analysis researchers need to be explicit in their choice of texts, units of analysis, analytic procedures, and categories for analysis” (p. 247). I adhered to this advice because it enhanced the replicability and reliability of my study.

Types of Units

Adapted from Schreier (2012), three types of units were used in the structuring of this study: the unit of analysis, the coding unit, and the context unit.

The unit of analysis is each teacher-edition textbook and all applicable textbook supplemental material. The subject of interest in this study that were coded are the curriculum materials plans, along with tasks that are both directly communicated to students or directed to students via a facilitator, usually the teacher. This data, which is textual in nature, is found both within the teacher-edition textbook as well as the applicable textbook’s supplemental material such as lesson plans and project plans. For this study, there are four units of analysis because four textbooks are analyzed.

The coding unit (also known as the recording unit) of this textual data is a segment of text—in the textbook and supplemental material—that meets the criterion of assigning students an experiential civics education task or a series of related experiential civics education tasks. This type of segmentation of data into coding units is known as thematic segmentation (Shrier, 2012). Unlike a formal criterion where there is a predetermination of where one unit ends and another begins, because of the inherent structure of the data, thematic criterion doesn’t have any such predetermination. When using a thematic criterion, to identify a coding unit, I identified a set of related experiential civic education tasks from the unit of analysis. As an example, an elaborate two-page congressional simulation plan from the legislative branch chapter counted as

a single coding unit. A paragraph in the civil liberties chapter requiring students to write a letter on prison reform to their congressman was also considered a single coding unit. As shown by the two examples given here, I did not expect each coding unit—a task conveying experiential civics education—to be uniform. Some segments consisted of a few sentences, while others were as long as a few pages.

The context unit is the portion of the surrounding material that I needed in order to understand the meaning of a given coding unit. In a curriculum research study such as this one, the context unit for a paragraph directing a curricular task to students would be, for instance, the preceding tasks directed at students, the chapter of the book in which the task is given, or the specific type of supplemental material in which the text was found.

I will now illustrate these types of data units with actual data from my study. In the exhibit below is a class activity from the first chapter of the electronic teacher's edition of McGraw-Hill's textbook, *United States Government: Our Democracy* by Remy et al. (2018).

Exhibit 3.1 | Exemplar Experiential Activity to Illustrate Types of Data Units

Differentiate the Activity

BL AL ELL Interpersonal, Verbal Have mixed groups of students deliberate a current political or environmental issue. Encourage students to do the following: listen and talk, take turns, consider different points of view, avoid making judgments, support ideas with reasoning, and so on.

(Remy et al., 2018)

Using Exhibit 3.1 above, the unit of analysis is the textbook in which this segment of text is derived— *United States Government: Our Democracy* by McGraw-Hill. The entirety of this segment of text is considered one coding unit because it is a series of related tasks assigning

students an experiential education strategy—in this case, a deliberation activity (or political classroom activity) from the teacher’s edition textbook. The context unit for this segment of text is the information putting the deliberation activity in context such as the chapter from which it is derived—in this case, the “Foundations of Government” chapter.

The Coding Frame

To code the textual content identified in the above section on the types of units in the study, variables will have to be developed. The development of these variables, their relationship with the types of units, and how they will be organized is referred to as the coding frame. The complexity of this coding frame depended on my research questions: (1) What is the nature of experiential civic strategies in textbook (and supplemental) curriculum materials? (2) How does the distribution of experiential civic strategies in textbook (and supplemental) curriculum materials differ among civic topics? (3) How do the experiential civic strategies/curricula in textbook (and supplemental) materials compare to best practices and recommendations in the civic engagement literature? (4) What is the potential role of textbook curriculum materials in making experiential civic strategies mainstream in civics classrooms?

These four research questions determined the number of dimensions that I used to structure my material and the extent to which I subdivided these dimensions. Regardless of complexity, a sound coding frame must adhere to the requirements set forth by (Schreier, 2012): (1) *unidimensionality*—each dimension in the coding frame captures only one aspect of the textual content (2) *mutual exclusiveness*—the requirement that the categories and subcategories in the coding frame are mutually exclusive (3) *exhaustiveness*—the notion that each coding unit in the material is assigned to at least one subcategory (4) *saturation*—the coding frame is

constructed in a way that the coding frequency for all categories and subcategories equals one or higher.

Building the Coding Frame

The requirements for a sound coding frame have been described. I will now describe the groundwork for how the coding frame was created using a series of steps put forth by (Schreier, 2012).

Step 1: Selection

Given the breadth of the study's data sources, the process of selection entails determining which part of the material is relevant and which is not. All material that has a bearing upon my research questions are relevant. To differentiate between relevant and non-relevant material, for each type of resource within a textbook's set of curriculum materials, I investigated it to see if it has any experiential civics resources. If it does have some experiential civics material, then that resource is selected to be included in the list of data collection sources described earlier.

Step 2: Structuring and Generating

With the relevant materials selected, the next step consisted of deciding which dimensions I would use to describe the selected data, with subcategories generated for each dimension. To develop the dimensions and subcategories, I combined two strategies: a concept-driven way and a data-driven way. The concept-driven way derived categories and subcategories based on previous knowledge from sources such as theory, prior research, and logic. The conceptual framework and literature review sections of this dissertation were instrumental in developing the categories and subcategories for this study. To facilitate the concept-driven approach, I developed an analytical construct that informed a decision scheme that was used in

evaluating and coding the data. The appropriate analytical construct for this study is the application of standards (Krippendorff, 2013) which entails comparing a textually derived variable with a given or assumed standard for that variable and making inferences from those comparisons. Using this approach, the coding units (segments of experiential civics tasks in the textbook supplemental resources) were compared to assumed standards (various ways in which experiential civics education strategies are evaluated for efficacy and civic engagement as detailed in the literature review and conceptual framework). These standards were used to create categories and subcategories. For example, one standard to judge simulations as a viable experiential learning strategy, according to the academic literature, is the presence of simulation ground rules for students. Using this example, the derived category from this standard would be “SIMULATION GROUND RULES” with subcategories consisting of “[A] there aren’t specific ground rules for students” and “[B] there are specific ground rules for students”.

The data-driven approach, on the other hand, allows the categories and subcategories to emerge from the data. Creating additional categories and subcategories using a data-driven approach is appropriate because qualitative data is usually very rich and contain more insights than one would have anticipated. For this data-driven approach, I adapted the coding procedures—open, axial, and selective coding—used in grounded theory. The data-driven approach was performed on a select segment of the study’s sample.

Step 3: Defining

Once the categories and subcategories were identified in a concept-driven and data-driven way, they were then properly defined. Each category has four parts:

- a. A name

- b. A description. I provided some indicators, a sign that pointed to the presence of a phenomenon to describe a category. I also described the purpose of capturing that phenomenon and cited supporting academic literature when applicable.
- c. Examples: Category descriptions, even when they contained indicators, remained somewhat abstract. Some examples will be provided to illustrate the category.
- d. Decision rules: Because there were some subcategories that overlap, in these cases, decision rules told the coder which of the two overlapping categories to use. This reduces uncertainty when coding.

Step 4: Revising and Expanding

After categories were defined, it was important to take a step back and revise the coding frame in an iterative fashion until a level of saturation had been reached.

Once these four steps were implemented, a period of trial coding/pilot study was conducted to understand adjustments that needed to be made to the main study. For instance, some codes needed additional subcategories to accommodate newly discovered dimensions in the content while some codes had to be eliminated entirely because they could not be consistently implemented in a content analysis and were more suited for field observations.

Data Validity and Data Reliability

I served as the primary coder of the data. My knowledge and experience with qualitative research along with my work experience as a certified social studies teacher with significant civics curriculum content knowledge brought fidelity to the study. This type of experience has been advocated in content analysis research. According to Krippendorff (2013), “content analysts should not underestimate the importance of coders’ familiarity with the phenomena

under consideration. In order to read and interpret texts, or even observe visual images, coders need a level of familiarity with what they are looking at that usually cannot be made explicit by any instruction” (p. 128). The secondary coder was also a veteran certified social studies teacher, with a postgraduate education, who is familiar with civics content as well as content analysis. In order to maximize objectivity in the coding process, this secondary coder was not involved in the development of the coding instruments. In addition, as the primary researcher, I trained the secondary coder using the codebook I developed for the study (see appendix). There were four training sessions in all totaling approximately six hours. The codebook familiarized the secondary coder with the research and the coding frame. A pretest was conducted using a handful of coding units from the textbook sample to make sure that the coder understood the coding rules and processes.

In general terms, coding instruments are considered reliable to the extent that they yield data free from error. The calculation of *reliability* is primarily based on a ratio between the expected and observed disagreements in the coding units by the coders involved in the study. An intercoder reliability coefficient was calculated using Cohen’s Kappa where a 0.61 benchmark would be the acceptable measure of reliability (Cohen, 1960). The results of the intercoder reliability is discussed in Chapter 4 (Data Analysis and Interpretation of Results).

In addition to reliability, the coding instruments must also be considered *valid*. A coding frame is considered valid to the extent that the categories adequately represent the concepts in the research questions. Analyzing meaning always requires interpretation, whether that meaning is manifest or latent. Manifest meaning can be characterized as simple, clear, or direct—the kind of meaning on which different persons are likely to agree, whereas latent meaning is obscure and likely to be different for different readers (Schreier, 2012). To help myself and the other coder

with inferring latent meaning and assigning the segments to the right categories, I phrased my categories in conceptual terms rather than in terms of concrete indicators and examples.

I assess both the face and content validity of my coding frame. Face validity is a helpful concept especially if some of the categories are developed from the data (in other words, data-driven). To assess the face-validity of a data-driven coding frame, I used the results of the pilot coding. I started by examining my residual category or categories. If I have assigned the majority of segments to one subcategory over and above the other subcategories, this might be a sign that my coding frame is not sufficiently differentiated. Content validity was assessed by expert evaluation. My dissertation committee chair, an expert in citizenship studies and civic engagement research, examined the coding frame as it was being developed to ensure that the coding frame's categories and subcategories (described in the next section) adequately captured the concepts and phenomena under examination in the dissertation.

Codes – Categories and Subcategories

This section will introduce the codes generated in the trial coding using the four steps of the coding frame design described earlier (1. Selection; 2. Structuring and Generation; 3. Defining; and 4. Revising and Expanding). The first coding scheme during the data collection phase of the study was straightforward. To create each coding unit, as I carefully looked through each teacher-edition textbook and supplemental material, I determined the size of the coding unit and placed it appropriately into one of the four categories of experiential civics learning strategies (action civics, service learning, simulation, and political classroom) that it addressed. I decided to eliminate student government as a potential category that could be assigned to any of my coding units because, as mentioned in Chapter 2, student government is typically a school-wide initiative and was not present as an experiential learning strategy in textbooks. The closest

student government came to being present in the data sample was as a simulation lesson plan that calls for the classroom to create a short-term classroom congress to give students hands-on experience with the legislative branch.

I also coded the context units for each of these coding units. The two context units are basically the section in the textbook in which the coding unit belonged e.g. the textbook chapter title (e.g. Chapter 18 – Voting and Elections) and the textbook unit title (e.g. Unit 5 – Participating in Government). The word “unit” in textbook differs from how “unit” is used in content analysis. High school textbook publishers typically organize their textbooks by units with the units consisting of a group of related chapters. In the above example from the McGraw-Hill textbook, Unit 5 (Participating in Government) had four chapters within it, one of them was Chapter 18 (Voting and Elections). The reason for using both the chapter title and the unit title as the context units, rather than one of the two, is because some resources in my data sample are unit-specific while others are chapter-specific.

The second coding scheme was then applied to the coding units which have now been placed into one of the four categories of experiential civics learning strategies. The code categories and subcategories of each of these experiential civics learning strategies, which were derived using concept-driven and data-driven approaches during the trial coding, are displayed in the tables below. The tables are organized as follows:

The first table below, *Table 3.3*, shows the code names and which of the four experiential civic strategies to which those codes apply. Some codes apply to a single experiential civics strategy while some codes apply to two to four.

Table 3.3 | Code Names

Code Name	Experiential Civics Strategy			
	Political Classroom	Simulation	Action Civics	Service Learning
1. ACTIVITY TYPE	x	x	x	x
2. SUBJECT MATTER	x	x	x	x
3. COGNITIVE DEMAND	x	x	x	x
4. STATED DURATION	x	x	x	x
5. ESTIMATED DURATION	x	x	x	x
6. POLITICAL EQUITY	x	x	x	x
7. POLITICAL TOLERANCE	x	x	x	x
8. POLITICAL AUTONOMY	x	x	x	x
9. POLITICAL FAIRNESS	x	x	x	x
10. POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT	x	x	x	x
11. POLITICAL LITERACY	x	x	x	x
12. DEBRIEF AND REFLECTION	x	x	x	x
13. TRANSFORMATIVE CITIZENSHIP DOMAINS	x	x	x	x
14. VOICES OF MINORITY GROUPS	x	x	x	x
15. IDENTIFICATIONS OF ROLES AND ACTORS		x		
16. SIMULATION GROUND RULES		x		
17. SIMULATION ROLES		x		

Code Name	Experiential Civics Strategy			
	Political Classroom	Simulation	Action Civics	Service Learning
18. PREDETERMINATION OF SCENARIO OUTCOME		x		
19. TYPE OF CITIZENSHIP PROMOTED			x	x
20. CONTACT WITH PUBLIC OFFICIALS			x	x
21. TYPE OF CAMPAIGN			x	x
22. ACCOMPANYING EVENT			x	x
23. MEDIA EXPOSURE			x	x
24. STUDENT VOICE			x	x
25. INTERACTION WITH COMMUNITY			x	x

These second set of tables explains the details of each of the codes developed for the study. Each table has three rows—top, middle, and bottom. In the top row, written in capital letters, is the code name. In the middle row, I have expressed the code as a question to query the coding unit; in other words, how the codes will be applied to each segment of text that conveys experiential civics. The possible answers to these queries are expressed as categories and subcategories using bullet points to show the nesting relationships. These are also included in the middle row. In the bottom row, I have included a description of each code and its purpose in the study. In applicable situations, I have also cited the academic literature that provides a rationale for the codes. When applicable, I have also included the decision rules that are meant to reduce uncertainty when coding. Because there might be subcategories that overlap, the decision rules tell the coder which of the overlapping categories to use. For the sake of space and reading flow

of the dissertation, I will describe only two selected codes in Table 4 below. Please refer to the dissertation's appendix section to read the entire library of codes and their accompanying details.

Table 3.4 | Select Code Details

<u>Code Name</u> 3. COGNITIVE DEMAND
<u>Code Question Prompts, Categories, and Subcategories</u> • What is the maximum level of cognitive demand needed to complete the task? ○ [A]Level One (recall) ○ [B]Level Two (skill/concept) ○ [C]Level Three (strategic thinking) ○ [D]Level Four (Extended Thinking)
<u>Code Description</u> This code, adapted from Webb's (1997) depth of knowledge typology, captures the cognitive rigor of each of the experiential education resources. Tasks in Level One require minimal cognitive demand such as mere recall and rote memorization. Level Two's cognitive demand is an improvement, but still low, and involves simple application of a skill or concept. Level Three's cognitive demand is advanced, requiring students to do strategic thinking and to use evidence to explain their thought processes. Level Four, the most advanced cognitive demand, extends the cognitive demand from Level Three over an extended period of time. In the conceptual framework for this study (Chapter 1), I described how Niemi and Junn's exposure-selection model is used to ground this dissertation. I hypothesize that experiential civics strategies' propensity to give students Level Three and Level Four experiences will enhance the <i>exposure</i> component of the model and consequently elevate the <i>selection</i> component as

well. This code will add to the empirical robustness needed to give this hypothesis more credibility.

Code Name

26. INTERACTION WITH COMMUNITY

Code Question Prompts, Categories, and Subcategories

- What type of interaction with the community is available?
 - [A]No discernible position on interaction with the community
 - [B]Communication and interaction with the community are promoted
 - [C]Partnerships and collaborations with the community are promoted

Code Description

Adapted from Billig (2000), this code captures the extent to which service-learning and action civics initiatives give students the opportunity to engage in mutually impactful relationships with the community either through interactions incorporated within the service-learning initiative or through formal partnerships with community organizations. Being able to meaningfully interact with the community during service-learning projects can foster the development of social capital between students and adults in the community (Campbell, 2000).

Data Analysis

Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data collected using the coding instruments were analyzed using statistical software. Descriptive statistics and exploratory analysis were performed, which included cross-tabulations, associations, and clustering. Clustering is particularly popular in

content analysis because “it is based on intuitively meaningful similarities among units of analysis, and its resulting hierarchies resemble the conceptualization of text on various levels of abstraction” (Krippendorff, 2013, p. 206). The results of the quantitative analysis was used to answer the first three research questions: What is the nature of experiential civic strategies in textbook (and supplemental) curriculum materials? How does the distribution of experiential civics strategies in textbook (and supplemental) curriculum materials differ among civic topics? How do the experiential civics strategies/curricula in textbook (and supplemental) materials compare to best practices and recommendations in the civic engagement literature? The results of my study will advance the field of civic engagement by giving an assessment of the nature and quality of experiential education curriculum materials developed by commercial textbook publishers—one of the most influential groups in curriculum development.

The results will also help make recommendations for how textbooks and their supplemental materials can be used to better deliver experiential education; how teachers need to be trained on experiential civic education strategies, and which experiential civic engagement strategies are being ignored by civics textbook curriculum materials.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The results of the qualitative data analysis will help answer the first research question about the nature of experiential civics strategies in textbooks as well as the third research questions regarding how well those strategies work when compared to best practices. The results of the qualitative analysis were examined for patterns and co-occurrences as we move beyond individual units of coding and beyond results for individual categories. The process of exploring results for relationships between categories is similar to what researchers do in grounded theory methodology when they move to the stage of selective coding. Here the focus is also on the

interrelation between codes, although grounded theory methodology takes this much further than looking for simple interactions (Krippendorf, 2013). In examining the qualitative content analysis results for patterns, we ask questions such as: Do some of my categories occur together? Do some of my categories occur near each other? Are some of my categories related in specific ways? These qualitative data analysis findings are described and illustrated using continuous text, text matrices, and other appropriate interpretative strategies.

Researcher Positionality

Researcher positionality describes the backgrounds, values, beliefs, and experiences that produce the biases researchers invariably bring to their scholarship and that shape the lens that filters their work. Tetreault (1993) states that the knowledge produced by research can be seen as valid when researchers acknowledge their specific positions. It is important to identify and communicate my positionality because it provides for introspection and an openness with other scholars who read my work. The positionality statement that follows relates to the overarching concepts explored in this dissertation and speaks to my views on citizenship and civic participation as they relate to the role of the education system.

Benjamin Franklin famously quipped “a republic, if you can keep it” when questioned about the kind of government he and the other Constitutional Convention delegates had delivered after their historic gathering in Philadelphia in the summer of 1787 (McHenry, 1787). For the American experiment to endure, all citizens, *We the People*, should approach self-governing with a “fierce urgency of now”, to borrow the words of Martin Luther King Jr. (King, 1963). The United States Constitution created one of the world’s preeminent republics that was not designed to be maintained by a coterie of politicians and bureaucrats but to be ardently nurtured by the citizens of the nation. A participatory democracy is the price we pay for living in a political

system in which the masses can have the opportunity and obligation to shape their destiny rather than ceding control to those in a proverbial ruling class. A participatory democracy results in a perennial battle for an equitable distribution of opportunity and in various subjugated groups' continuous quest for equality and civil rights throughout a nation's history. Because the United States is a participatory democracy, various groups engage in meaningful collective action to address the challenges that ail the United States today, such as climate change, voter suppression, income inequality, healthcare access, mass incarceration, and gun violence. Civic participation is the fuel that keeps democracy going.

I have worked as a high school social studies teacher for a decade and taught American Government classes for a number of those years. In this capacity, I strive to instill in students the civic competencies that hopefully serve as a pathway to civic participation that is critical to a functional republic. I approach this work not only as a professional obligation but also from a sense of civic duty. This work informs my positionality as an educational researcher. I view the role of teachers and educational institutions as pivotal in creating students who will participate effectively in the civic community. Consequently, I have been a practitioner and student of the experiential civics methods that I describe in this study and have a philosophical stake in seeing these methods gain wider adoption in my adopted homeland, the United States. I understand that in the complex education system I can have only a limited influence as a teacher on the lives of my students. Numerous socioeconomic factors influence their learning and shape their civic competencies and life outcomes despite the effectiveness of my teaching.

I am an immigrant who journeyed to the United States from Nigeria as an adult and have experienced America not from a naïve perspective but with a discerning and mature mind. I see the beauty and promises in the United States as well as its imperfections, contradictions, and

paradoxes. This personal assessment has been affirmed by my social science education and intellectual pursuits which I have been privileged to attain. I believe the social studies should not subject students to a prescriptive inculcation of an idealized American story but describe the complexity, paradoxes, and quests for freedom of the diverse groups in the United States who have been denied full citizenship and structural inclusion into the nation. From an ethical and educational standpoint, I believe in the value of culturally relevant pedagogy (Gay, 2000) and multicultural education practices to capture the plurality of the United States and to equip educators with the ability to let all students effectively leverage their own learning and gain the agency to shape their futures.

Summary

Content analysis was chosen as the research method for its suitability for reducing and processing large sets of textual data. Four textbook data sources were sampled from the most popular civics textbooks in U.S. classrooms based on the adopted criteria for purposeful and stratified sampling: the textbooks must be exclusively about civics; the textbooks must be fairly recent; the textbooks must reflect a diversity in publishers; the textbooks must represent regular government classes as well as AP government classes; the textbooks must deliver experiential learning through their teacher-edition and supplemental resources rather than outsource them to an outside organization. For each textbook data source, the portions of the supplemental resources and teacher-edition textbook that contain student-centered experiential activities and projects were collected.

Three types of units were used in the structuring of this study. The unit of analysis refers to each textbook data source. Hence, there are four units of analysis in the study given that there are four textbook data sources. The coding unit, also called recording unit, is each individual

segment of text that tasks students with an (or a series of related) experiential civics task(s). The coding units are essentially lesson plans, project plans, or activity plans that engage students in experiential education. They are not uniform. Some coding units may be a few sentences while some may be multiple pages. The context unit is the portion of the surrounding material that tells us how the coding unit is situated within the unit of analysis such as the chapter topic or the preceding topic.

To build the coding frame, I used the study's four research questions to determine coding frame's categories and subcategories. Using content analysis recommendations, the coding frame adhered to unidimensionality (each coding category captures one aspect of the data), mutual exclusiveness (all the categories along with the subcategories are mutually exclusive), exhaustiveness (each coding unit is assigned to at least one category), and saturation (all categories and subcategories are used at least once). The coding frame was built by selecting the relevant materials from the data sources. Then, a concept-driven and data-driven approach were adopted to identify the coding categories and subcategories used to segment and process the data. These categories and subcategories are comprehensively defined with a name, description, examples, and decision rules. There was a period of trial coding, using a fraction of the sample, where codes were revised, with some codes added and others removed. Reliability in the coding process is ensured by using a secondary coder and attaining the benchmark intercoder reliability coefficient. Validity is attained by ensuring that categories are suitable for the study's research questions and by establishing proper protocols for interpreting manifest and latent meanings from the text. Two coding schemes were applied to the text. The first scheme established the coding unit and placed it into one of three experiential civics categories. The second scheme was

then used to categorize the coding unit into the multitude of developed categories and subcategories.

The collected and categorized data is analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively to properly explore the four research questions. On the quantitative side, descriptive and exploratory analysis are performed to understand the nature and distribution of experiential civics strategies in textbook curricula. On the qualitative side, patterns and interrelations between codes are explored to gain insights into the research questions.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis and Interpretation of Results

Before presenting the results associated with each of the research questions in the main study, I will present the results of the intercoder coefficient to establish reliability of the coding frame.

Data Reliability Results

After undergoing six hours of coder training, the secondary coder and I tested our intercoder reliability using 31 systematically sampled coding units distributed evenly between the three types of experiential strategies. That sample size constituted an acceptable proportion of the dataset needed for assessments of reliability (Grant et al., 2017). These 31 coding units were coded separately without any communication or collaboration between the two coders. The relationship between the coding agreements is summarized in Table 4.1 below. Using the statistical software, Python, the intercoder reliability coefficient Cohen's Kappa was 0.69, a satisfactory level of agreement between the two coders (Table 4.2). Both coders agreed on 549 attributes that were coded as zero, meaning that the attribute in the coding unit was not present, and both coders agreed on 903 attributes coded as one, meaning that attribute was present. There were 128 times in which Coder 2 thought an attribute was present while Coder 1 thought it was not present. There were 129 times in which Coder 1 thought an attribute was present while Coder 2 thought it was not present.

Table 4.1 | Cohen’s Kappa Coder Agreement Table

		Coder 1	
		0	1
Coder 2	0	549	129
	1	128	903

0 = attribute not present

1 = attribute present

Table 4.2 | Cohen’s Kappa Interpretation Chart

Cohen’s Kappa Score	Level of Agreement
0 — .20	Slight
.21 — .40	Fair
.41 — .60	Moderate
.61 — .80	Substantial
.81–1.0	Perfect

Now that reliability has been established, I will present the content analysis results of the main study to answer each of the study’s research questions.

Results for Research Question 1: What is the nature of experiential civics strategies in textbook (and supplemental curriculum materials)?

Table 4.3 |Distribution of Coding Units by Textbook

Textbook	Pearson	Cengage	McGraw-Hill	HMH	
# of Chapters	18	18	24	16	76 Total Book Chapters
# of coding units	135	51	385	106	677 Total Coding Units

Coding unit/Chapter	7.5	2.83	16.04	6.63	8.91 coding units per chapter
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Table 4.3 shows that there were a total of 677 coding units across the four textbooks. Averaging out how many uses of experiential civics strategies occurred in each of the chapters across those textbooks, there are approximately nine per chapter. McGraw-Hill led the way with 16 instances of experiential civics pertaining to each chapter in the book. Each chapter in the Pearson and Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) textbooks averaged seven cases of experiential civics. Cengage had the least with approximately three cases per chapter.

Table 4.4 | Distribution of Coding Units by Experiential Strategy

Textbook	Pearson	Cengage	McGraw-Hill	HMH	Total/Percentage
Political Classroom	74	35	176	58	343 (50.66%)
Simulation	26	13	113	39	191(28.21%)
Action Civics	35	3	94	8	140 (20.68%)
Service Learning	0	0	2	1	3 (0.44%)

Table 4.4 show that slightly over half of the experiential education cases in the dataset are instances of political classroom. This comes as no surprise given that political classroom, comprising classroom debate and deliberation, theoretically requires relatively less preparation time compared with other types of experiential learning—simulations and action civics which respectively account for 28% and 21% of the experiential civics cases in the dataset. This preparation time hypothesis is also confirmed in the data in Table 4.6. Service learning is a rare occurrence in the dataset accounting for three instances and less than 0.5% (Table 4.4). This could be explained by its cumbersomeness combined with its lack of natural fit with most civics subject matter.

Table 4.5 | Distribution of Coding Units by Cognitive Level

	Number (%) of coding units
Level 1	0 (0%)
Level 2	0 (0%)
Level 3	531 (78.43%)
Level 4	146 (21.57%)

Table 4.5 confirms the hypothesis that experiential civics strategies are more cognitively challenging for students with 100% being categorized as either Level 3 or Level 4 in Webb’s (1997) Depth of Knowledge (DOK) typology. Level 3 and Level 4 require students to do strategic thinking and to use evidence to explain their thought processes. Level 1 involved recall and rote memorization. Level 2 involved simple application of a skill or concept.

The next set of analyses focus on the make-up of each of the three types of experiential strategies that constitute most of the dataset—political classroom, simulations, and action civics.

Table 4.6 | Distribution of Coding Units by Duration and Experiential Strategy

	Number (%) of coding units	#/% of Political Classroom	#/% of Simulation	#/% of Action Civics	#/% of Service Learning
Short Duration	515 (76.07%)	325 (94.75%)	134 (70.16%)	55 (39.29%)	0 (0%)
Medium Duration	110 (16.25%)	14 (4.08%)	50 (26.18%)	49 (35%)	0 (0%)
Long Duration	52 (7.68%)	4 (1.17%)	7 (3.66%)	37 (26.43%)	3 (100%)

Table 4.7 – Distribution of Political Classroom Coding Units by Type

	Number of Political Classroom coding units	% of Political Classroom coding units
Deliberation	227	66.2%
Debate	116	33.8%
Total Political Classroom Coding units	343	

Starting with political classroom, Table 4.7 show that approximately two-thirds of those cases are classroom deliberations while the remaining one-third are classroom debates. It is possible that deliberation tasks exceed the debate tasks by a margin of two to one because debates require more effort and time to implement successfully. The overwhelming majority of political classroom cases (95%) can be completed in a one hour-long class period. Four percent are of medium duration and just one percent are of long duration (Table 4.6).

Table 4.8 | Distribution of Simulation Coding Units by Type

	Number of Simulation coding units	% of Simulation by coding units
Roleplay	181	94.8%
Metaphorical Activity	10	5.2%
Total Simulation Coding Units	191	

For the simulation cases, the overwhelming majority (95%) are some form of roleplay exercise while the remaining five percent are metaphorical activities (Table 4.8). Around 70 percent of simulation cases are of short duration and can be complete within a one-hour class period. Twenty-six percent are medium duration and approximately four percent are long duration (Table 4.6).

Table 4.9 | Distribution of Action Civics Coding Units by Type

	Number of Action Civics Coding Units	% of Action Civics Coding Units
Civic Contact	72	51.43%
Civic Product	32	22.86%
Civic Event	36	25.71%
Total Action Civics Coding Units	140	

Table 4.10 | Distribution of Civic Events by Type

Civic Events	Number of coding units	% of Coding Units
Outside the school	29	80.6%
Within the school	7	19.4%

The civic action cases can be grouped into one of three categories—civic contact, civic product, and civic event. Civic contact are the action civic cases in which students are tasked with contacting others to carry out their civic action. Some types of people that students were tasked to contact in the dataset included newspaper editors, state and local policymakers, mayors, congressmen, senators, public health officials, and webmasters. With civic product cases, students are required to create a product that will be used to execute their civic action. Examples of civic products found in the dataset include creating an online civics resource for immigrants, creating a public service announcement, creating brochures, and creating fact sheets for jurors. With civic event cases, students are tasked with executing their civic action through an event they help organize and run. Some examples of civic events from the study include making a multimedia presentation to the community, organizing a townhall meeting, starting a chapter of a political party at school, and organizing an activism project to combat youth voter apathy.

Of all these three types of action civics, the most frequent in the dataset was civic contact accounting for just over half of the 140 action civic cases in the dataset (Table 4.9). The other two types, civic product and civic event, account for just under a quarter and just over a quarter of the dataset respectively (Table 4.9). Once again, the strategies that take more time and resources to implement, civic product and civic event, are less frequent than the strategy that is less time- and resource-consuming, a theme that has been established in the dataset. Compared with political classroom and simulation cases, the action civics cases in the dataset take longer with two-thirds of the cases taking more than one class period to complete (Table 4.6). When broken down further, the majority of civic events, 80.6 percent, are held outside of the school while 19.4 percent are held within the school (Table 4.10).

Results for Research Question 2: How does the distribution of experiential civics education strategies in textbooks differ among civic topics?

Table 4.11 – Classification of Civic Topics

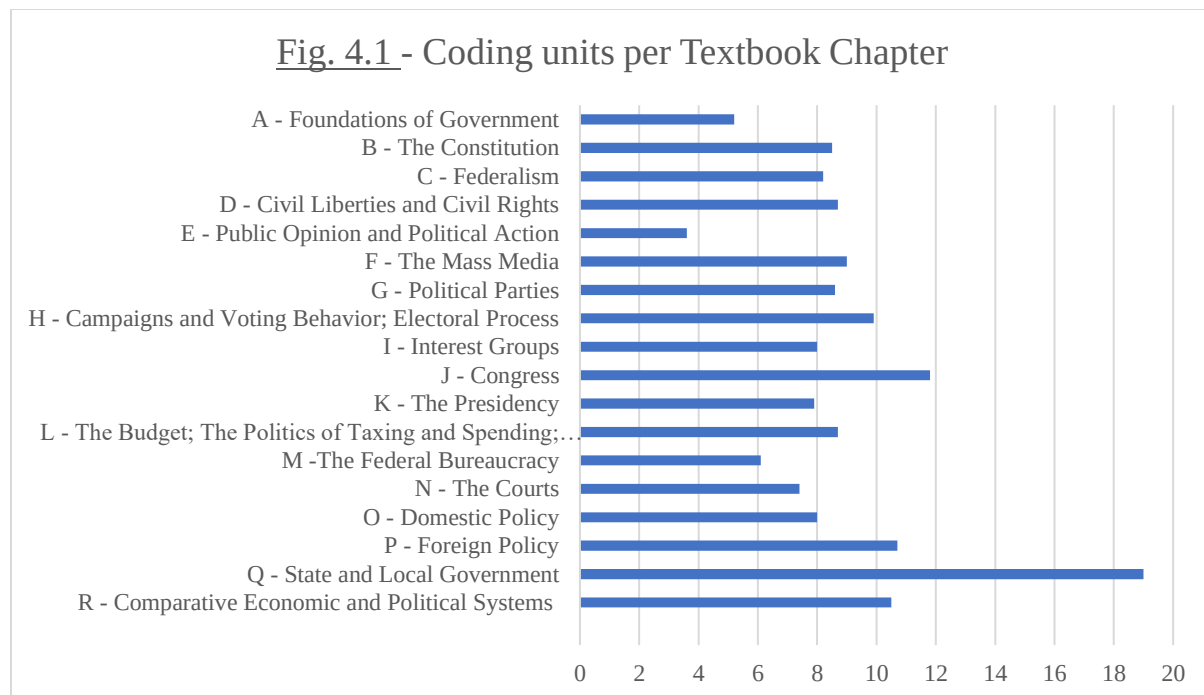
	Civic Topics
A	Foundations of Government
B	The Constitution
C	Federalism
D	Civil Liberties and Civil Rights
E	Public Opinion and Political Action
F	The Mass Media
G	Political Parties
H	Campaigns and Voting Behavior; Electoral process
I	Interest Groups
J	Congress
K	The Presidency
L	The Budget; The Politics of Taxing and Spending; Economic Policy
M	The Federal Bureaucracy
N	The Courts
O	Domestic Policy
P	Foreign Policy

Q	State and Local Government
R	Comparative Economic and Political Systems

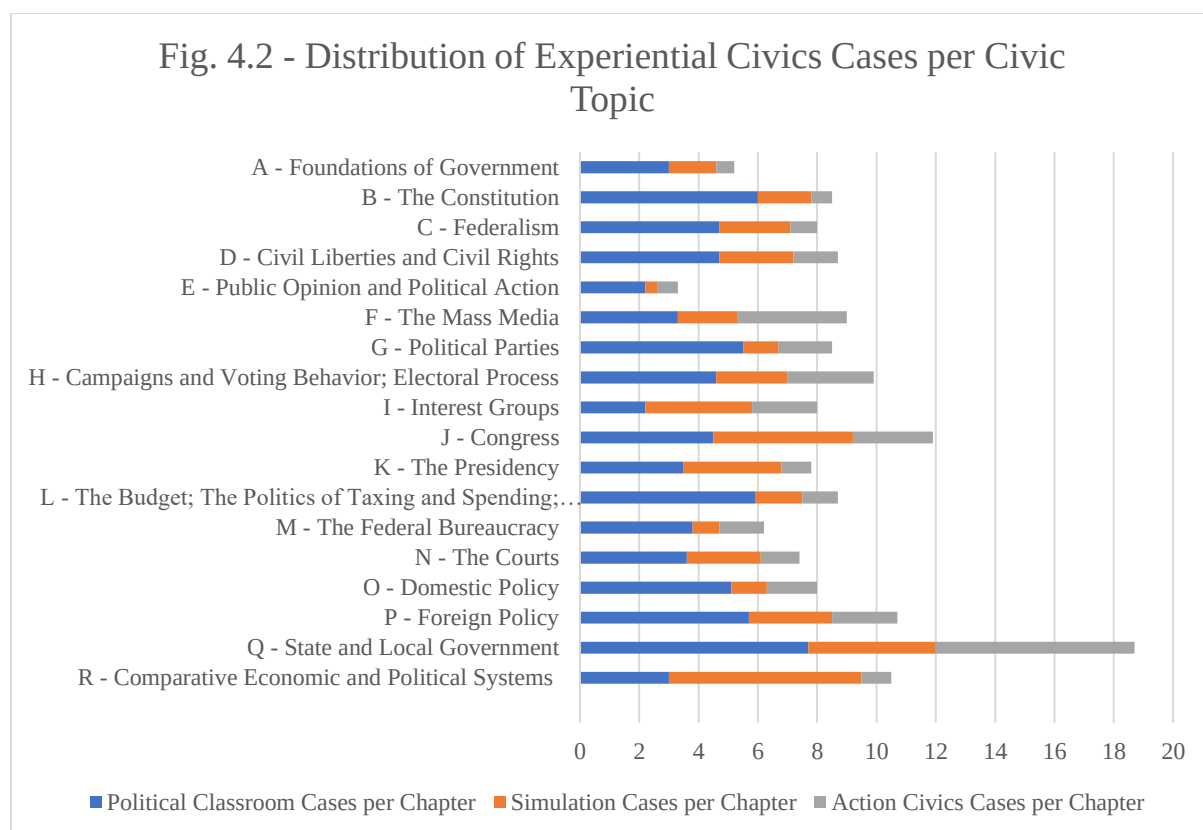
The civic topics have been categorized into 18 topics. To segment these topics, I took into account how textbooks chapters are organized and how different state boards of education distributed their American Government/Civics standards. However, these topics vary in terms of how many chapters each textbook devoted to it. Some topics have as few as two chapters devoted to American Government/Civics standards in the entire dataset while other have as many as eight chapters across the data. Because of this variability, to make meaningful comparisons between topics, the metric for comparison used was the number of coding units (experiential education cases) per chapter.

Table 4.12 – Distribution of Coding Units by Civic Topics

Civic Topic	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
Chapters across all textbooks	5	6	4.3	8.5	2.8	3	3.3	6.3	2.8	6	4.8	3.2	3.4	5.3	4.1	3.17	3	2
Total coding units across all textbooks	26	51	35	74	10	27	28	62	22	71	38	28	21	39	33	34	57	21
Coding units per chapter	5.2	8.5	8.2	8.7	3.6	9	8.6	9.9	8	11.8	7.9	8.7	6.1	7.4	8	10.7	19	10.5



Using the metric of coding units per chapter, Fig. 4.1 reveals that the textbooks in the study provided experiential civics for all topics. The average number of experiential cases for each chapter in the entire study was 8.91 cases (See Table 4.3). For the distribution of these civic topics in Table 4.12, the standard deviation between them is 3.19 cases. Most of the civic topics were within one standard deviation, meaning that they were close to the average number of 8.91 cases per chapter. This means that for 16 of the 18 civic topics, there are many options of experiential civics available for the classroom teacher to use to engage students. Topic Q (State and Local Government) was a salient outlier offering an impressive 19 cases of experiential civics per chapter. It is possible that this topic is naturally more conducive to experiential learning. Only two topics, Topic A (Foundations of Government) and Topic E (Public Opinion and Political Action) had levels of experiential civics that were less than one standard deviation away from the mean. Perhaps these two topics were not as conducive to experiential learning as the others.



Moreover, rather than looking at the number of experiential cases per topic, additional insight is revealed as we look at the type of cases for each topic. Looking at their distribution in the Figure 4.2, we can see how the civic topics also differ in terms of how much political classroom, simulation, and action civics cases are associated with each topic.

Research Question 3: How do the experiential civic strategies/curricula in textbooks (and supplemental materials) compare to best practices and recommendations in the civic engagement literature?

To answer this research question, I grouped the recommendations into three sets—best practices for all experiential strategies, best practices for simulations, and best practices for action civics.

Evaluation of Best Practices for all Experiential Strategies

The best practices in this section are applicable to all types of experiential strategies in this study. Every single experiential learning case in the dataset has been evaluated based on these practices and recommendations. The first set of these practices—political equity, political tolerance, political autonomy, political fairness, political engagement, and political literacy—have been adapted from Hess and McAvoy’s (2014) evaluation of the political classroom.

Political Equity

The presence of political equity, the provision to allow students to deliberate as equals, was difficult to discern in all but a handful of cases in the dataset (Table 4.13).

Table 4.13 | Distribution of Coding Units by Political Equity

	Number of coding units	% of coding units
No Discernible Political Equity	665	98.23%
Explicit Political Equity	6	0.89%
Implicit Political Equity	6	0.89%

For the measure to be considered explicit, the experiential civics resource will have to specifically designate students as having equal power. Implicit measures, on the other hand, are design features in the experiential civics resources that will help create an equitable power dynamic during the deliberative process. For example, in a deliberation exercise from Chapter 2 (*Origins of American Government*) of McGraw-Hill, the teacher/facilitator is asked to pair students strategically “so that students who need help will have support from their partner” (Remy et al., 2018). This arrangement may create a more even playing field between the pairs because each pair includes a student who can guide the other one as needed.

Without explicit or implicit provisions for political equity, experiential learning cases can still be implemented with adherence to political equity. An absence in a political classroom case simply means that specific instructions to the teacher or facilitator to implement political equity are not provided. A willing teacher can still take any of these cases and ensure that students deliberate as equals. The absence of instruction for political equity does not preclude its practice.

Political Tolerance

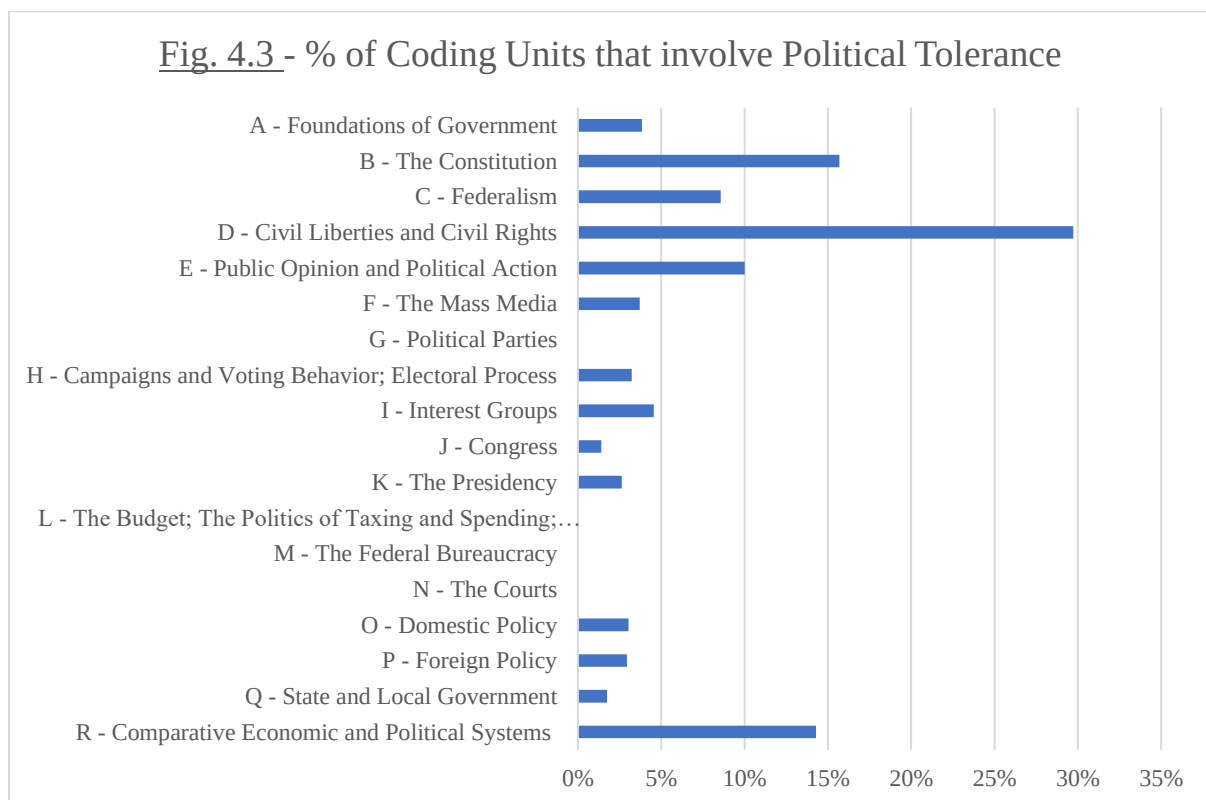
Cases that provide political tolerance require students to examine whether their views are consistent with the belief that the coercive power of the state ought not be used to unjustly outlaw or prosecute individuals or groups for holding reasonable views that others find objectionable.

Table 4.14 | Distribution of Coding Units by Political Tolerance

	# of coding units	% of coding units
No Discernible Political Tolerance	630	93.1%
Explicit Political Tolerance	17	2.5%
Implicit Political Tolerance	30	4.4%

Approximately seven percent of the cases in the dataset yielded some provision for political tolerance, with about a third of those seven percent being explicit manifestations of political tolerance rather than an implicit presence (Table 4.14). An example of explicit political tolerance can be found in an in-class activity from Chapter 4 (*Federalism*) of the Cengage textbook where students debate ways in which the Tenth Amendment to the constitution can be clarified. Specifically, students are asked to focus on clarifying the role of both the federal government as well as the role of the state government “with regard to immigration policy, abortion policy, same-sex marriage policy, education policy, and gun rights” (Janda et al.,

2018b). A debate of these focal topics is considered an explicit manifestation of political tolerance because most of them (immigration, abortion, same-sex marriage, and even gun rights) encompass historical and contemporary situations in which the state has unjustly outlawed or prosecuted individuals or groups for holding reasonable views that others have found objectionable.



Some civic topics are also more conducive to political tolerance than others (Fig. 4.3). Specifically, these four topics account for almost 80 percent of all cases of political tolerance—the U.S constitution, federalism, civil liberties and civil rights, comparative economic, and political systems. Because provisions for political tolerance are sparsely available in the other civic topics, students get a narrow context of political tolerance rather than a wide spectrum of applications if instances of political tolerance are more evenly distributed among the 18 civic

topics in the dataset. It should be noted that most of the instances of political tolerance are from political classroom. Very few are found in simulations or action civics.

Political Autonomy

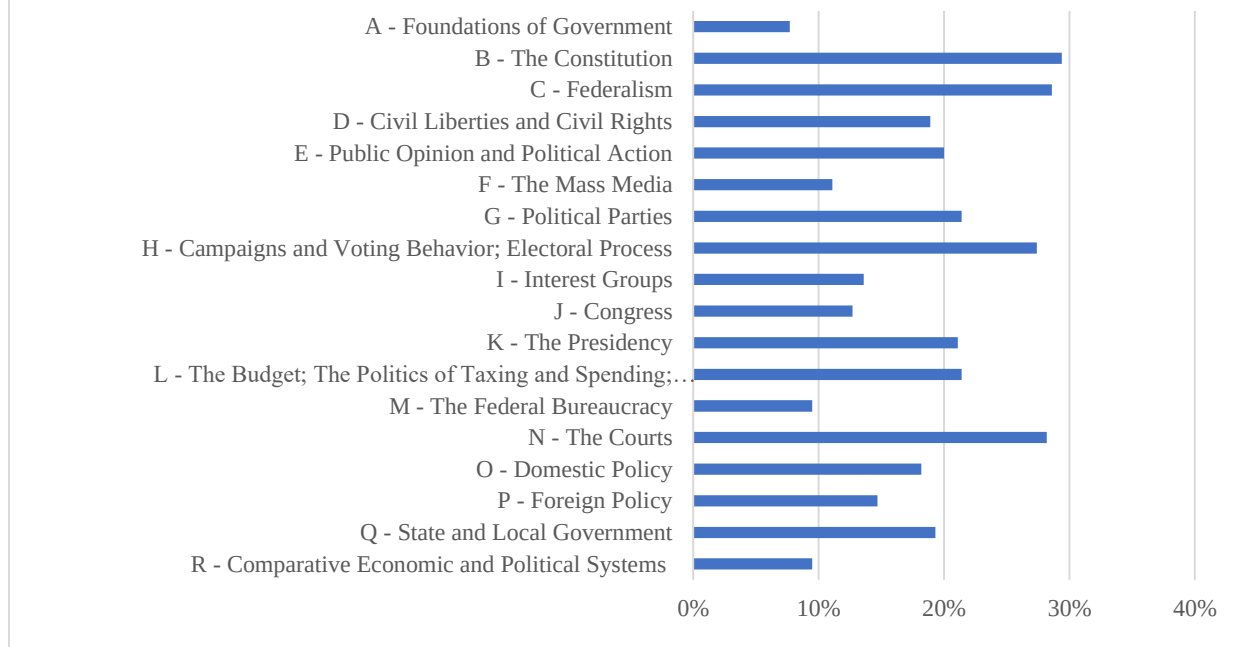
Political autonomy refers to the ability of students to encounter and respond thoughtfully to views that are different from their own. With a good number of experiential learning endeavors involving students in a dynamic and interactive environment, there are several opportunities to practice political autonomy and make their own decisions about various facets of government in response to challenges by others.

Table 4.15 | Distribution of Coding Units by Political Autonomy

	# of coding units	% of coding units
No Discernible Political Autonomy	8	1.18%
Explicit Political Autonomy	132	19.5%
Implicit Political Autonomy	537	79.32%

The high proportion (98.82%) of cases in the dataset providing political autonomy was not particularly surprising. However, most of those cases were implicit in nature, meaning that students were not specifically asked to perform those acts that are considered politically autonomy—practicing argumentation using relevant evidence in response to their views being interrogated by others who may share different views. However, those tasks could not be completed with fidelity without invariably performing those acts of politically autonomy in the process. On the other hand, those explicit manifestations of political autonomy specifically ask students to respond to their views being interrogated by others. These explicit cases make up about one-fifth of the cases in the dataset.

Fig. 4.4 - % of Coding Units that Explicitly Involve Political Autonomy



These cases of political autonomy are also distributed among all 18 civic topics in the study (Fig. 4.4)

Table 4.16 | Distribution of Political Autonomy by Experiential Strategy

	# of explicit political autonomy	As a % of each strategy
Political Classroom	121	35.3% of all Political Classroom units
Simulation	9	4.71% of all Simulation units
Action Civics	2	1.42% of all Action Civics units

Compared to simulations and action civics, cases of political classroom are more likely to have instances of explicit autonomy (Table 4.16). Political classroom cases have a higher propensity to put students in a situation where the elements of political autonomy—encountering opposing view and using evidence to counterargue those views—are built directly into the activity. An example that captures the essence of political autonomy is a debate from Chapter 8

(*The Budget: The Politics of Taxation and Spending*) of the Pearson textbook in which students either favor progressive taxation or proportional taxation and use evidence to defend their stance from criticism by the opposing side while the remaining students in the class serve as debate judges.

Political Fairness

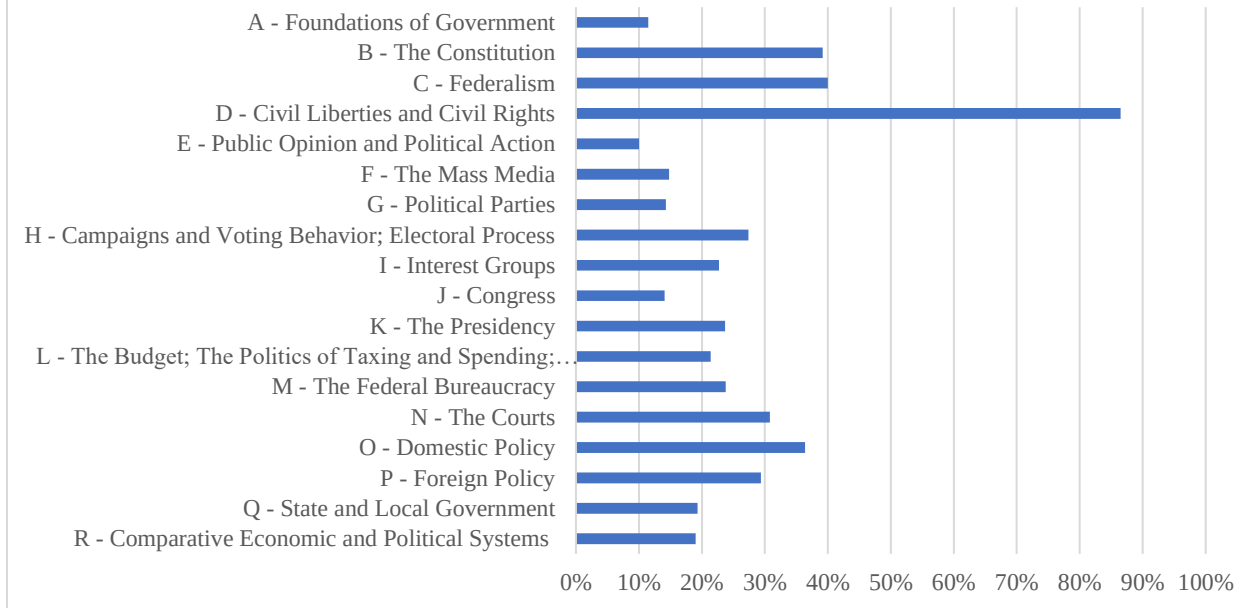
Political Fairness is the ability of students to consider and reflect on the views and rights of others when evaluating policy.

Table 4.17 | Distribution of Coding Units by Political Fairness

	# of coding units	% of coding units
No Discernible Political Fairness	4	0.59%
Explicit Political Fairness	211	31.17%
Implicit Political Fairness	462	68.24%

Political fairness was a predominant feature in the dataset with all but four of the 677 cases exhibiting political fairness. For students to perform experiential civics tasks with fidelity, they typically find themselves in positions where they consider others' views and respond to them. These implicit manifestations of political fairness make up about two-thirds of the political fairness cases in the dataset. The explicit cases made up about one-third. With explicit cases, the actions that exude political fairness are spelled out for the students. For instance, in an in-class activity from Chapter 16 (*Equality and Civil Rights*) of the Cengage textbook, students are literally asked to debate the fairness of voter ID laws from the perspective of the affected parties. Part of the instructions to the teachers reads, "Have students debate the fairness and necessity of state voter ID laws from the perspective of minority groups, senior citizens, state and local election officials, Democrats, and Republicans" (Janda et al., 2018b).

Fig. 4.5 - % of Coding Units that Explicitly Involve Political Fairness



Explicit cases of political fairness are more prevalent in some civic topics than others. It is particularly a predominant occurrence in cases dealing with civic liberties and civil rights (Fig. 4.5) given that the views and rights of American citizens is a central theme in this topic.

Table 4.18 | Distribution of Political Fairness by Experiential Strategy

	# of explicit political fairness	As a % of each experiential strategy
Political Classroom	153	44.6% of all Political Classroom units
Simulation	39	20.4% of all Simulation units
Action Civics	19	13.57% of all Action Civics units

Compared to simulations and action civics, cases of political classroom are more likely to have instances of explicit fairness (Table 4.18).

Political Engagement through Controversial Topics

With political engagement, the experiential civics cases in the dataset are being evaluated on the basis of their ability to engage students with controversial issues. As a reminder, controversial topics are those in which contrary views can be held without being contrary to reason (Dearden, 1981) or those problems whose best solutions are open to disagreement (Lockwood, 1996). Using the above definition of controversial topics, as the primary researcher/coder, I had to make the determination that coding units could be qualified as controversial topics. In some instances, the coding units spells out that a controversial topic is being covered. For instance, in a debate exercise from Chapter 8 (*State and Local Legislative Branches*) of the McGraw-Hill textbook titled “Take a Position on Primary Systems”, teachers are specifically asked to “explain to students that how best to run primaries is a controversial issue” (Remy et al., 2018) before the students embark on a four-corners debate on primaries used to elect state legislatures in their state.

Table 4.19 | Distribution of Coding Units by Controversial Topics

	# of coding units	% of coding units
Non-controversial Topic	191	28.21%
Controversial Topic	486	71.79%

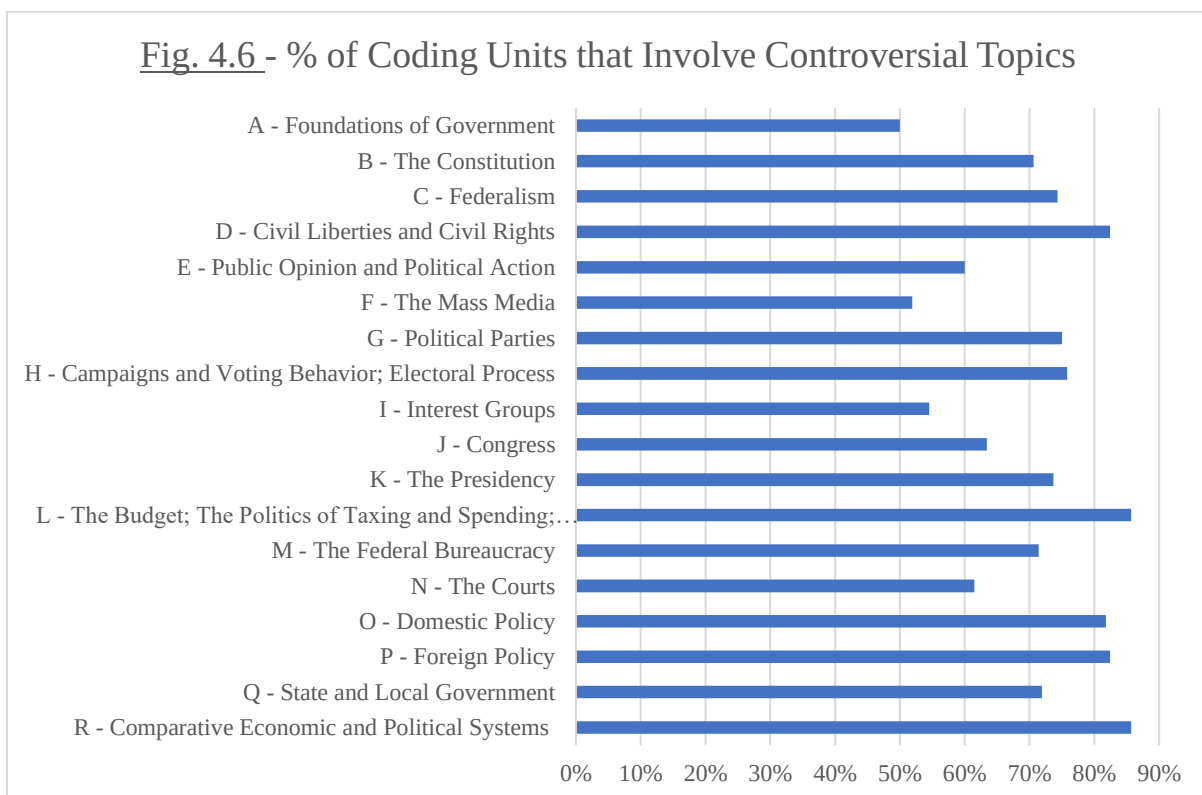
Using this definition of controversial issue, 71.79% of the 677 cases in the study dealt with a controversial issue (Table 4.19).

Table 4.20 | Distribution of Controversial Topics by Experiential Strategy

	# of controversial topics	As a % of each experiential strategy
Political Classroom	321	93.59% of all Political Classroom units
Simulation	95	49.74% of all Simulation units

Action Civics	70	50% of all Action Civics units
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Most of the political classroom cases, 93.59%, dealt with a controversial topic (Table 4.20). This was expected given that political classroom cases come in the form of deliberations or debates both of which students make evidence-backed claims in the process, claims that can be opposed to one another if they are reasonable and backed by evidence. The other two experiential civics strategies, simulations and action civics, each roughly had half of their cases engage students using controversial topics (Table 4.20).



All the civic topics had the majority of their cases cover controversial topics (Fig. 4.6). There were some controversial topics that recurred in multiple experiential civics cases throughout the data set. These included elections, access to voting, and voting rights; same sex marriage; first amendment rights; racial discrimination; climate change and protection of the

environment; minimum wage; immigration; marijuana legalization; healthcare reform; gun control; and abortion.

Political Literacy

For those cases that cover controversial topics, they could be even more engaging and educative when students are tasked with understanding the background of those controversies and the competing ideologies around them. Wrestling with this background knowledge is the essence of political literacy. As an example, a deliberation exercise from Chapter 8 (*State and Local Legislative Branches*) from McGraw-Hill gives teachers detailed instructions on how to have students deliberate the controversial topic of whether states should prosecute juvenile offenders as adults. Instrumental in this deliberation is a background and a display of arguments on both sides of the issue which students prominently use in their deliberation.

Table 4.21 | Distribution of Controversial Topics Political Literacy by Experiential Strategy

	# of controversial topics	# of controversy topics with political literacy	% of controversial topics with political literacy
Political Classroom	321	320	99.69%
Simulation	95	85	89.47%
Action Civics	70	59	84.29%
Total	486	464	95.47%

The majority of the cases in the dataset that provided political engagement through controversial topics also enabled students to gain the political literacy associated with those controversies. Compared to the other experiential strategies, almost all the political classroom cases provided students with political literacy (Table 4.21).

Political Engagement through Current Issues

The use of current issues in the classroom allows students to grapple with the real-life applications of civics concepts. These concepts range from political theories to issues affecting real people and communities in a way that makes civics come alive for students. There were different ways in which the textbooks infused current issues into the experiential learning cases. Some directly centered the experiential learning activity around specific topics that are perennial current issues of the day. The debate on hydraulic fracturing taken from Chapter 22 (*Making Social and Domestic Policy*) of the McGraw-Hill textbook is an example. Part of the instructions to the teacher reads, “In recent years, controversy has swirled around hydraulic fracturing, or fracking—a method for extracting fuel from shale deposits. Have students do research to identify the arguments for and against hydraulic fracturing” (Remy et al., 2018).

In other cases, the experiential learning activity was set up in a way that a current issue(s) would have to be used as part of the activity, even if the specific current issue was not itemized. For example, in a debate exercise from Unit 5 (*Participating in Government*) of the McGraw-Hill textbook, the teacher is given leeway in picking a controversial current event to structure a debate around. Part of the instruction to the teacher reads, “...Then assign groups with issues to debate, such as controversial current events. Each event should be assigned so that it has one group taking a ‘pro’ position and one group taking a ‘con’ position...” (Remy et al., 2018).

Table 4.22 | Distribution of Current Issues by Textbook

	Pearson	Cengage	McGraw-Hill	HMH	All books
Current Issues	75	28	169	31	303
As a % of all coding units in book	55.56%	54.9%	43.9%	29.25%	44.76%

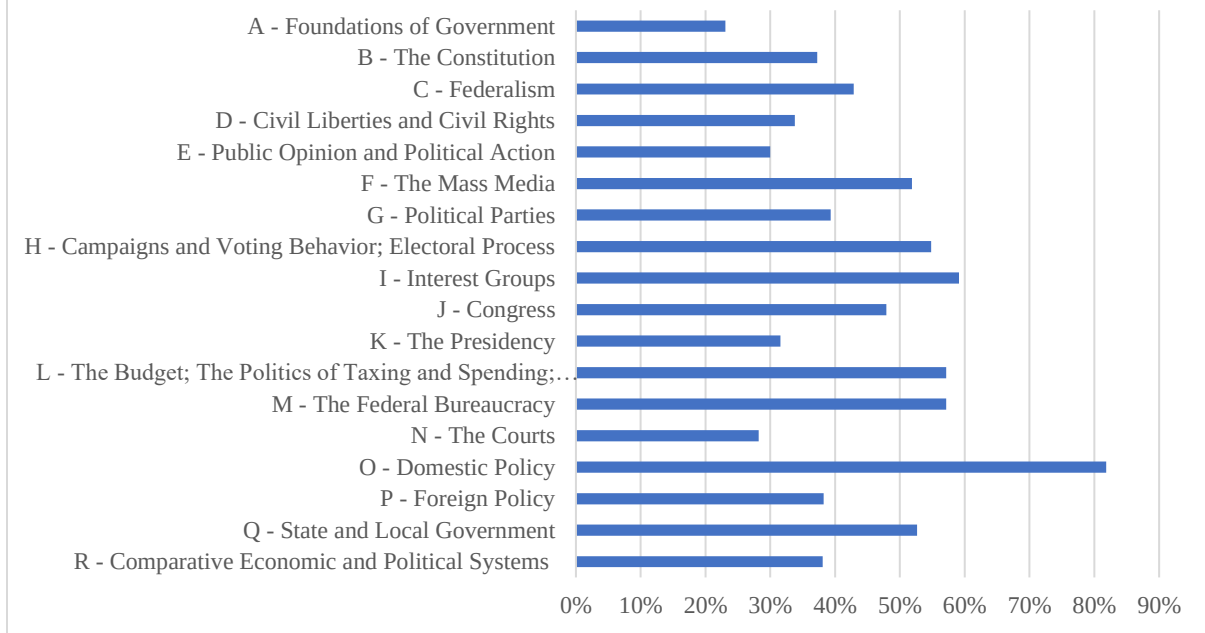
Approximately 45% of the cases in the data set used current issues as a form of political engagement. Some textbooks used them more than others (Table 4.22).

Table 4.23 | Distribution of Current Issues by Experiential Strategy

	# of current issues	As a % of each experiential strategy
Political Classroom	137	39.94%% of all Political Classroom units
Simulation	49	25.65%% of all Simulation units
Action Civics	116	82.86% of all Action Civics units

Current issues were also not uniformly distributed among the experiential learning strategies (See Table. 4.23). More than 80 percent of action civics cases used current issues compared to 40 percent and 26 percent in political classroom and simulations, respectively. Compared to political classroom and simulation, it can be hypothesized that action civics has a natural propensity to accommodate current issues into its design because of the real-life and real-time nature of action civics activities. Simulation exercises, on the other hand, must go out of their way to incorporate current events. For instance, in a simulation exercise found in Chapter 8 (*The Federal Courts and the Judicial Branch*) of the HMH textbook, students are asked to base “their scripts on an actual recent nomination” (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, issuing body, et al., 2018, p.224) as they prepare skits to show the use of senatorial courtesy in judicial nominations.

Fig. 4.7 - % of Coding Units that Involve Current Events



As far as the extent to which civic topics used current issues, there was a wide range of use (Fig. 4.7). The topic that used current issues the least, at 23%, was foundations of government. The topic that used current issues the most, at 82%, was domestic policy.

Political Engagement through Local Politics

Table 4.24a | Distribution of Local Politics by Textbook

	Pearson	Cengage	McGraw-Hill	HMH	All books
Local Politics	24	7	93	12	136
As a % of all coding units in book	17.78%	13.73%	24.16%	11.32%	20.09%

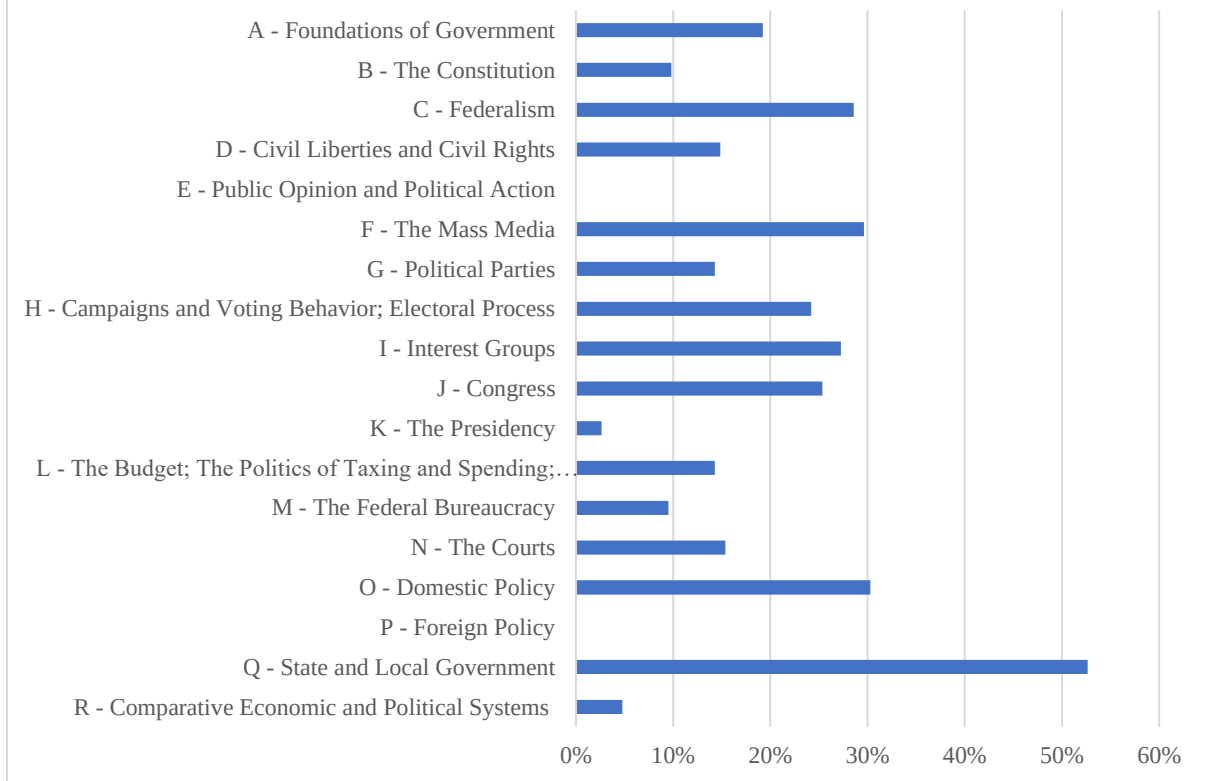
Table 4.24b | Distribution of Local Politics by Experiential Strategy

	# of Local Politics	As a % of each experiential strategy
Political Classroom	33	9.62% of all Political Classroom units

Simulation	18	9.42% of all Simulation units
Action Civics	83	59.29% of all Action Civics units

The use of local politics to engage students was only present in about one-fifth of the cases in the entire dataset (Table 4.24a). Local politics was more prevalent in action civics, at almost 60 percent of the cases, compared with political classroom and simulation which only had 9.62% and 9.42% respectively of each of their cases use local politics (Table 4.24b). The prevalence of local politics in action civics cases can be explained by relative inclination of action civics to feature connections with the community and local government. For instance, an action civics exercise in Chapter 16 (*State and Local Governments*) of the HMH textbook titled, “Writing to a Member of the State Legislature,” asks the teacher to inform students that “their opinions about making English their state’s official language should be heard” and then tasks students with reviewing “their state’s current policy regarding an official language” before directing students to write their state legislator to express their opinions about the official language in their state and to express their support of or opposition to current legislation or suggest new legislation if necessary (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, issuing body, et al., 2018, p.527).

Fig. 4.8 - % of Coding Units that Involve Local Politics



There was a wide range in the infusion of local politics among the various civic topics. Two topics, Public Opinion as well as Foreign Policy, did not have a single case using local politics. The most cases of local politics are expectedly found in State and Local Government (Fig. 4.8).

Debrief and Reflection

Reflection and debrief influence how students process their experiences and how they learn from experiential civics.

Table 4.25 | Distribution of Reflection by Textbook

	Pearson	Cengage	McGraw-Hill	HMH	All books
Reflection shared w/teacher	27	13	123	65	228
As a % of all coding units in book	20%	25.49%	31.94%	61.32%	33.68%

Table 4.26 | Distribution of Reflection by Type (with teacher and with other students)

Total Reflection with teacher	Total Reflection with teacher & other students	
228	200	87.71% percent of reflection shared with teacher also shared among students

One-third of the cases in the dataset came with a debrief/reflection component (Table 4.25). There was no uniformity among the four textbooks. The HMH textbook led the way with 61.32 percent of its cases containing a reflection component. The reflection components are always shared with the teacher or facilitator. However, in 87.71% of the cases that had a reflection component, the reflection was also shared among students, which potentially could be more engaging because students can hear each other's perspective about an experiential learning activity they just completed and the potential lessons learned (Table 4.26).

Table 4.27 | Distribution of Reflection by Experiential Strategy

	# of Reflection units	As a % of each experiential strategy
Political Classroom	95	27.7% of all Political Classroom units
Simulation	94	49.21% of all Simulation units
Action Civics	38	27.14% of all Action Civics units

Between the three experiential learning strategies, simulations led the way with almost half of the cases containing a reflection component. Action civics and political classroom each had around 27 percent of their cases come with a reflection element (Table 4.27).

Table 4.28 | Distribution of Reflection by Political Classroom Subcategory

	# of Coding Units with Reflection	Total # for each Political Classroom Subcategory	% of Reflection Units in Each subcategory
Deliberation	53	227	23.34%
Debate	42	116	36.2%
Total Political Classroom units	95	343	

When each of these strategies are broken down even further, we can see the differences between the subcategories under each type of experiential strategy. Starting with the subcategories of political classroom, the debates are more likely to come with a reflection component compared to the deliberation activities. Nevertheless, both debates and deliberations have relatively low number of cases with reflection (Table 4.28). This finding can be explained by the fact that for most deliberations and debates, a reflection component may be redundant and unnecessary.

Table 4.29 | Distribution of Reflection by Simulation Subcategory

	# of Coding Units with Reflection	Total # for each Simulation Subcategory	% of Reflection Units in each Subcategory
Roleplay	88	180	48.89%
Metaphorical Activity	6	11	54.54%
Total Simulation units	94	191	

For the subcategories of simulations, both the roleplay and metaphorical activities were approximately 50 percent for cases containing a reflection component (Table 4.29). Even though it fares better than the political classroom, the rate of reflection components for simulations can still be considered low. Reflections are more critical to a simulation than it is to a political

classroom activity. Consequently, a high majority of the simulation cases having a reflection component would have been the preferable outcome for engaging students. These reflection segments are essential in allowing students to make sense of their experiences in the simulation and articulate the learning components experienced in the simulation. For instance, in Chapter 15 (*The Federal Courts*) of the Pearson textbook, following the simulation of a circuit court decision-making process, students are tasked with a reflection centered around the simulation learning goals by being asked to “write a response discussing whether they agree with the Court’s decisions on certiorari, the reasons why the Court acted as it did, and what changes in the appealed cases might make them more or less likely to be brought up on certiorari” (Edwards III, et al., 2018b).

Table 4.30 || Distribution of Reflection by Action Civics Subcategory

	# of Coding Units with Reflection	Total # for each Action Civics Subcategory	% of Reflection Units in each Subcategory
Civic Contact	10	71	14.08%
Civic Product	9	32	28.13%
Civic Event	19	37	51.35%
Total Action Civics units	38	140	

For the subcategories of action civics, civic contact had the lowest rate of reflection at 14.08 percent, followed by civic product at 28.13%, and then civic event with a higher rate of 51.35%. The low rates of reflection for civic contact and civic product might be explained by the proposition that reflection is redundant and unnecessary for most of these cases. Civic contacts such as a letter to a congressperson and civic products such as a community online voter’s guide during an election season both go through a deliberative and introspective process as the activity

is being completed which may not require the need for a reflection upon completion. On the other hand, civic events such as volunteering for a campaign or organizing a town hall meeting, will potentially feature moments during the event itself that will need to be unpacked in a debrief or reflection session in order to maximize what students learn from the event as it pertains to the civic topic being studied.

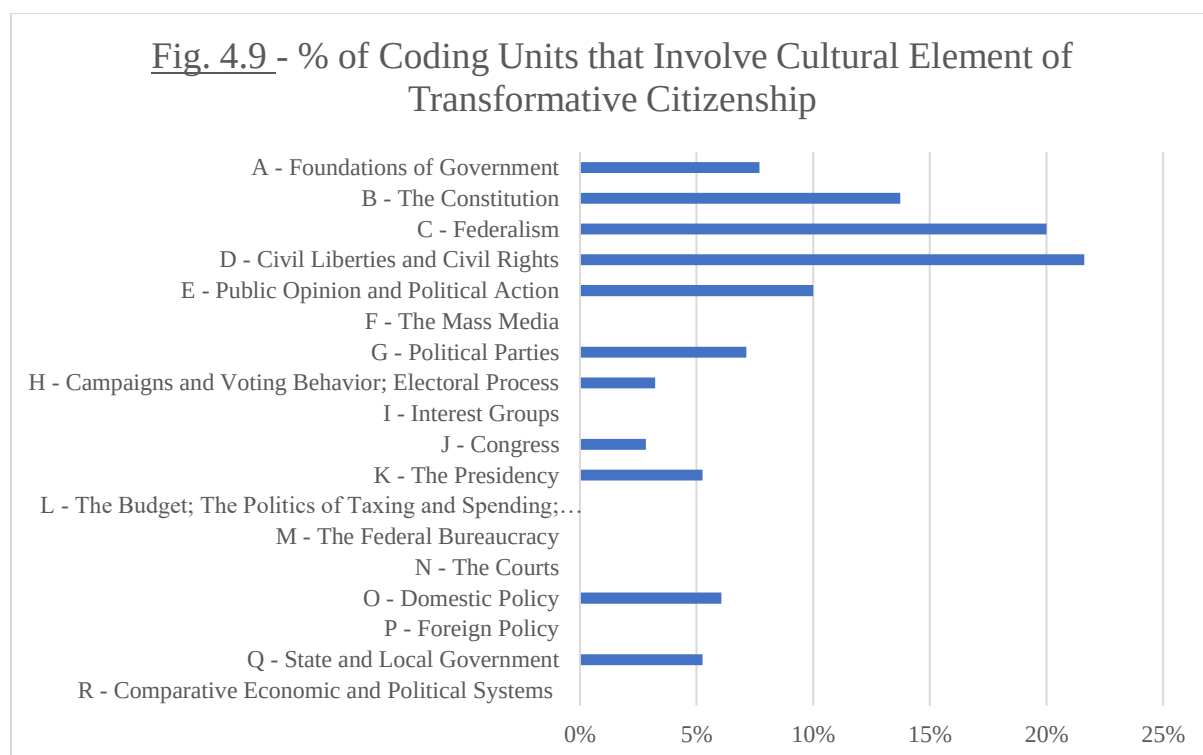
Cultural Element of Transformative Citizenship

Transformative citizenship is an inclusive form of citizenship that builds on Marshall's (1964) typology to encompass civil, political, social, and cultural elements of citizenship. The cultural element encompasses the right to be different (for instance, belong to a minority group) without revoking rights to the larger society (Rosaldo, 1994).

Table 4.31 | Distribution of Cultural Citizenship by Textbook

	Pearson	Cengage	McGraw-Hill	HMH	All books
Cultural Element	15	6	24	1	46
As a percentage of all coding units in book	11.11%	11.76%	6.23%	0.94%	6.79%

Approximately seven percent of the cases in the dataset engage students in the cultural element of transformative citizenship (Table 31).



There was a lack of uniformity among civic topics (Fig. 4.9). Several of them did not have a single case of the cultural element of transformative citizenship. Only a handful of the topics had a sizeable number of cases that engaged students in the cultural element of transformative citizenship. Leading the way were Topic C (federalism) and Topic D (Civil Liberties and Civil Rights) with one-fifth of their cases featuring the cultural element. Topic C was not expected to have many topics that explore the cultural element. Topic D (Civil Liberties and Civil Rights), on the other hand, was expected to be conducive to the cultural element. An activity titled “Deliberating the Constitutionality of a School Action” in Chapter 15 (*Constitutional Freedoms*) of the McGraw-Hill textbook showcases students engaging with the cultural element of transformative citizenship. In this activity, students are presented with a real-life issue from 2007 in which the University of Michigan at Dearborn installed footbaths in some dorm bathrooms to ensure that Muslim students could safely wash their feet before praying. Prior to the installation of the footbaths, Muslim students did not have a designated space to wash, which resulted in

puddles of water on the floor and dangerous and slippery conditions. The installation of the footbaths drew criticism from observers who argued that the university was providing too much accommodation to Muslim students. After providing students with the background, this activity from McGraw-Hill then asks students to deliberate “whether the school has violated the First Amendment by making these accommodations, or is making a constitutional adjustment to promote safety and free exercise of students’ religious beliefs” (Remy et al., 2018).

Voices of Minority Groups

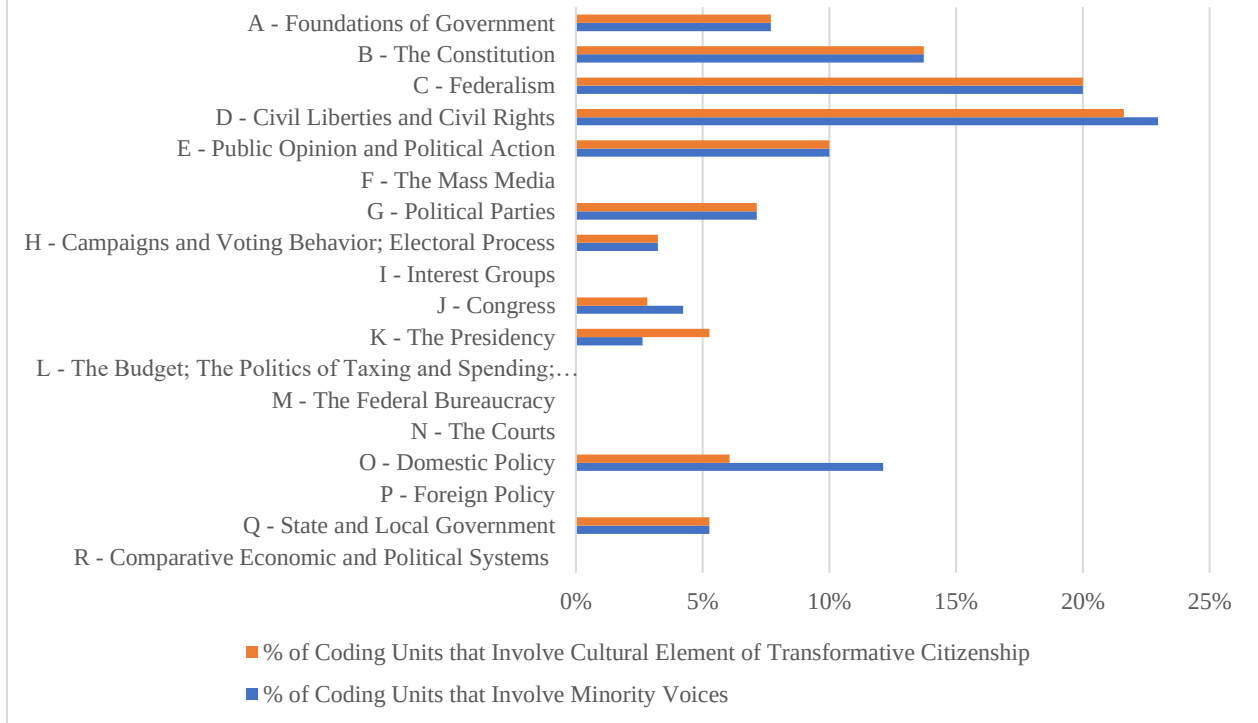
Students who may not identify with traditional citizenship narratives, particularly ethnic minority students, are more likely to benefit from experiential civics education because they actively participate in a practical manifestation of civics and reflect on their participation. Moreover, another avenue for opening doors to culturally responsive pedagogy in civics is having experiential learning cases that encompasses the voices of minority groups. That does not mean that the mere presence of minority voices guarantees cultural relevant pedagogy but it may serve as a step in that direction.

Table 4.32 | Distribution of Minority Voices by Textbook

	Pearson	Cengage	McGraw-Hill	HMH	All books
Voices of Minority Groups	13	7	25	4	49
As a % of all coding units in book	9.63%	13.73%	6.49%	3.77%	7.24%

Slightly over seven percent (7.24%) of the cases in the data sets included the voice of minority groups (Table 4.32).

Fig. 4.10 - Comparing Distributions of Minority Voices and Cultural Element of Transformative Citizneship



The distribution of these cases trended very closely with the distribution of the cultural element. They also trended very closely in their distribution among civic topics [Fig. 4.10].

Evaluation of Best Practices for Simulations

The best practices in this section are applicable to the simulations. Every simulation case in the dataset has been evaluated based on these practices and recommendation. They are described in this section.

Simulation Roles and Actors

Well-designed simulations should include role-statements and instructions that will inform students of the role they will embody in a simulation (Smith & Boyer, 1996). Without clear role statements or instructions, the simulation has a low chance of being an educative experience, especially in the hands of teachers with few years of experience.

Table 4.33 | Distribution of Simulations by Provision of Actors/Power Relationships

	Number and Percentage of coding units
Actors/Power relationships identified	186 (97.38%)
Relationships not identified	5 (2.62%)

Almost all of the simulation cases identified the actors or the power relationships in the simulation (Table 4.33).

Table 4.34 | Distribution of Simulations by Provision of Role Statements/Pertinent Instructions

	Number of coding units	% of coding units
Role statements/pertinent instructions not provided	5	2.62%
Role statements/pertinent instructions are provided	115	60.21%
Role statements creation has been tasked to students	71	37.17%

Almost all of the simulations provided role statements or the pertinent instructions that students needed to implement the simulation successfully (Table 4.34). Specifically, 60.21% provided role statements to students, while 37.17% tasked students with creating their own role statements. A simple example of provision of role statements can be found in a simulation exercise from Chapter 14 (*The Supreme Court of the United States*) in the McGraw-Hill textbook titled “Simulating a Discussion About Supreme Court Nominees”. Here the students are tasked with simulating a conference between the president and his advisers with the goal of deciding whether the next Supreme Court nominee should be from a law school other than Harvard or Yale. To either argue in favor or against nomination of Harvard- or Yale-educated nominees, the advisers as well as the president are given role statements that details the pros and cons of their

stance. Those advisors against Harvard or Yale-education nominees are given a role statement that reads:

The Court's decisions affect people who have not had the opportunity to attend elite schools. At least some of the justices should have personal knowledge of what it is like to experience economic barriers to success. That personal knowledge will help them consider the effects of their decisions on all Americans (Remy et al., 2018).

The president, on the other hand, is given a role statement that speaks to the complexity of the legal and constitutional cases that come before the court ranging in a wide array of topics and the need to ensure that the nominees have received the requisite elite education as would be provided by an institutions like Harvard and Yale Law School.

For those simulations in which the students are tasked with creating their own role statements, a good example can be found in the class activity in Chapter 2 (*The Constitution*) of the Pearson textbook. In this simulated press conference of a panel of the Founding Fathers, students are required to research the backgrounds and characters of the Founders they have been assigned in order to convey an accurate representation of the Founders and be prepared for the questioning by remaining students in the class who are acting as members of the press.

Most of the simulation cases in which students are tasked with creating their own role statements were cases of skits. An activity titled "Examining the Colonial Experience" from Chapter 2 (*Origins of American Government*) in the McGraw-Hill is one example. Here, groups of students collectively write a script and then present a skit to illustrate the relationship between the colonial experience and the Articles of Confederation. To prepare, they are asked to review some

notable grievances that were listed in the Declaration of Independence as well as answer pointed questions to help them prepare for the skit.

Table 4.35 | Distribution of Simulations by Number of Roles Assigned to Students

	Number of Coding Units	% of Coding Units
Does not address number of roles	189	98.95%
Students play only one role	0	0%
Students can play multiple roles	2	1.05%

Because the lessons student garner from a simulation experience hinges very closely on the types of roles they play, students would gain from having the opportunity to play multiple roles within each simulation exercise (Baranowski & Weir, 2010). The lessons students garner from a simulation experience depends very closely on the type of roles that students play. Hence, the more roles they play, the broader the perspectives they gain from the experience. Students, however, can still gain tremendously from just playing one role if they are able to observe the entire simulation and, in many cases, go through a reflection or debrief exercise. Playing multiple roles, however, would be an added benefit. Nevertheless, the logistical wrinkle associated with students playing multiple roles may have been a deterrence because only two simulation cases provided students with an opportunity to play more than one role (Table 4.35). One of these two cases is an elaborately written mock jury trial from Chapter 13 (*Federal and State Court Systems*) of the McGraw-Hill textbook in which students have been asked to play one or more of the available roles in the trial: judge, prosecuting attorney, defendant, defense attorney, and several witnesses.

Simulation Ground Rules

Ground rules articulate the structure and expectations needed for a simulation activity to be successful (Smith & Boyer, 1996). The lack of ground rules, not knowing the dos and don'ts, may leave participants with little direction and introduce the risk of a negative educational experience.

Table 4.36 | Distribution of Simulations by Provision of Ground Rules to Students

	Number of coding units	% of coding units
Ground rules exist	105	54.87%
No ground rules	86	45.03%

A slight majority (55 percent) of the cases in the dataset provided ground rules compared to 45 percent that did not. The mock trial from McGraw-Hill featured above in the previous section also has embedded ground rules to ensure the success of the simulated trial. These ground rules consist of a detailed list of 15 dos and don'ts in the assessment section of the simulation plan that highlights what would constitute a good simulation and what would not. Some items in this list included “The trial adheres to the case description provided by the teacher” and “Components such as opening and closing statements and witness questions are very well written and insightful” (Remy et al., 2018).

Premeditation of Simulation Outcome

At the beginning of a simulation exercise, the outcome or solution of the simulation exercise is either known or unknown to students. In those cases where the outcome is known, such as a performative skits or a reenactment of a decided court case, students' civic engagement stems from the processes and procedures they are undertaking in the simulation.

Table 4.37 | Distribution of Simulations by Predetermination of Outcome

	# of coding units	% of coding units
Outcome of simulation is previously unknown	136	71.2%
Outcome is previously known and predetermined	55	28.8%

Approximately 29 percent (28.8%) of the simulation cases fell into the category of known or premeditated simulation outcomes (Table 4.37). Students’ civic engagement in simulations can even be more pronounced when they have the power to direct hitherto unknown outcomes of the simulation through their intentional participation in those processes and procedures. Seventy-one percent of the simulation cases fell into this latter category of simulations. An example of a previously unknown outcome is featured in a simulation exercise in Chapter 5 (*The Structure of Congress*) of the McGraw-Hill textbook titled “Determining Which Bills to Be Calendared”. Here students take the roles of members of the House Rules Committee—with some being assigned to the majority party and some to the minority party to reflect the current control of the House—and simulate a committee meeting to discuss and vote on which bills will be slated for action on the House floor. The four different bills under consideration are “to build the Keystone Pipeline to carry oil from Canada to Texas”, “to repeal the Affordable Care Act”, “to bar people who have not paid their federal taxes from holding federal jobs”, and “to award a medal to four young girls killed in a church bombing in Alabama in 1963” (Remy et al., 2018). To aid their decision-making, the students have been asked to consider their party’s position on the bill, how controversial each of the bills are and how likely they are to pass to House. The decision these students will collectively take as congresspersons is one which the students cannot determine at the beginning of the simulation. More importantly, because they may have a desired outcome in

mind regarding the proposed bills, the students may be engaged more intently and participate more vigorously in the simulation in order to have their desired outcome realized.

On the other hand, an example of a simulation in which the outcome is previously known is a simulation exercise from Chapter 13 (*Federal and State Court Systems*) from the McGraw-Hill textbook. The instructions to the teacher simply reads: “Have students research a military court case and reenact it for the class. Be sure students assign each other to the roles of judges, attorneys, and defendant” (Remy et al., 2018). While a reenactment of a military court case that has already been adjudicated and decided is educational in its own right, the predetermination of the outcome may dull student engagement to an extent compared to if the outcome was unknown.

Evaluation of Best Practices for Action Civics

The best practices in this section are applicable to the action civics cases in this study. The action cases in the dataset have been evaluated on these practices and recommendations. They are described as follows.

Type of Citizenship Promoted

The civic orientation of action civics cases adapted from Kahne and Westheimer (2004) is a gauge of utility and intensity of the civic action with which students are tasked. As we move down the spectrum—personally-responsible, participatory, and justice-oriented—the consequences of students’ civic action become greater and wider in scope.

Table 4.38 – Distribution of Action Civics by Type of Citizenship

Type of Citizenship	# of coding units	% of coding units
Personally-responsible citizenship	0	0

Participatory citizenship	86	61.43%
Justice oriented citizenship	54	38.57%

There were a total of 140 action civics cases. None of them were confined to personally-responsible citizenship (Table 4.38). Approximately 61 percent (61.43%) of the action civics cases engaged students in participatory citizenship. About 39 percent (38.57%) engaged them in justice-oriented citizenship, the most impactful of the three. An example of participatory citizenship is an action civics exercise from Chapter 14 (*Making Foreign Policy*) of the HMH textbook titled “Influencing Foreign Policy”. Here students actively participate in civic affairs at the national level by writing their senators to suggest a course of action on the United States’ relationship with the United Nations. The participatory citizenship aspect of this writing endeavor is communicated at the beginning of the activity as it states, “Remind students that through their elected representatives, American citizens can influence the nation’s relationship with the UN. For example, the U.S. representative to the UN is appointed by the president and approved by the Senate” (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, issuing body, et al., 2018, p.469). Students are then guided in a discussion of recent U.S. and UN interactions and asked to assess the government’s relationship with the UN, all prior to writing their two senators.

Justice-oriented citizenship, on other hand, is featured in Chapter 18 (*Voting and Elections*) of the McGraw-Hill textbook in an exercise titled “Researching Youth Voter Apathy.” Students are tasked with researching the reasons young people don’t vote, developing solutions to tackle youth voter apathy and then organizing a service or activism project to implement their solution.

Interaction with Public Officials

By having students interact with public officials, the personnel gap between actionable policy and political theory is bridged. Moreover, when youth in action civics programs meet with influential adults, such as those serving in a public capacity, those youth help change the stereotypes about young people (Gingold, 2013). Hence both the students and public officials benefit immensely from this interaction.

Table 4.39 | Distribution of Action Civics by Interaction with Public Officials

Interactions with public officials	# of coding units	% of coding units
No contact with public officials	76	54.29%
Contact with public officials	64	45.71%

Just under half of the action civics cases, 46 percent, included contact with public officials (Table 4.39). An example of interaction with public officials is an action-civics exercise in Chapter 16 (*State and Local Government*) of the HMH textbook titled “Evaluating Public Officials”. First, students are reminded that part of informed citizenry is to monitor and evaluate the performance of public officials. Students are then asked to identify the skills needed to evaluate the performance of public officials. Once those evaluation skills are identified, students will select and research one state or local public issue and evaluate the performance of the public officials dealing with that issue. The students will then send the performance evaluation to the official as a letter or an e-mail.

Campaign Characteristics

The presence of campaigns is a desired feature of action civics (Gingold, 2013). The inclusion of campaigns puts students in a driver's seat of implementing civic action which allows them to grasp the associated mechanics and challenges.

Table 4.40 | Distribution of Action Civics by Campaign Type

Type of Campaign	# of coding units	% of coding units
No campaigns	27	19.29%
Education/advocacy campaign	107	74.82%
Political campaign	9	6.29%

A large majority of the action civics included a campaign component. Seventy-five percent involved education and/or advocacy campaigns (Table 4.40). Six percent involved political campaigns. An in-class activity from Chapter 7 (*Participation and Voting*) of the Cengage textbook is a good example of education/advocacy campaign. Either as a whole class or in groups, the activity tasks the class to decide on a local issue or service in need of attention by a city council or county commission. Once decided, in their groups, students will “focus on a method of drawing attention to the issue (using conventional participation techniques) perhaps a grassroots/social media campaign or a direct mail campaign to local officials.” They are then asked “to decide upon a final course action as a class and follow through” Janda et al., 2018b.

A good example of a political campaign, on the other hand, is featured in a participation activity in Chapter 9 (*Campaign and Voting Behavior*) of the Pearson textbook. The activity is to be carried out in an election year. Students are to volunteer for a campaign of their choice and “work for a specific official or on a campaign for or against a ballot measure”. They are asked to

“keep a journal or to write a short paper reflecting on their experience as a campaign volunteer and how that experience illustrated (or perhaps did not illustrate) the theoretical material”

(Edwards III, et al., 2018b) from the chapter.

Table 4.41 | Distribution of Campaign by Scope

Scope of Campaign	# of coding units	% of coding units
School	11	7.7%
Local	79	55.6%
National	52	36.6%

The scope of the campaigns also varied between school (7.7 percent of campaigns), local (55.6 percent of campaigns), and national campaigns (36.6 percent of campaigns)(Table 4.41).

The school campaigns were confined to school-related events. For instance, a participation activity in Chapter 4 (Civil Liberties and Public Policy) of the Pearson textbook require students to organize a student panel to educate other students in the school on the school’s speech code, its constitutionality, and any associated controversies.

Local campaigns, the most popular in the dataset, deal with issues at the community level (city or state). An activity titled “Identifying Housing Problems in the Community” from Chapter 12 (*State and Local Executive Branches*) of the McGraw-Hill textbook is an excellent example of a local education campaign. In this action civics exercise, students make presentations to community groups to educate them on housing-related problems in their community as well as the government and private programs available to address those problems. To prepare students “research may include use of Census day, interviews with city officials and representatives of civil rights organizations, visits to facilities providing services to the homeless, and discussion with private organizations like Habitat for Humanity” (Remy et al., 2018).

National campaigns, which are usually electronic in nature, have a countrywide reach. A Citizenship Activity from Unit 2 (The Legislative Branch) of the McGraw-Hill textbook features an action civics projects on the minimum wage that incorporates national campaign with the goal of mobilizing support for an increase in the federal minimum wage.

Interaction with the Media

The presence of interactions with the media means that students have a powerful platform to disseminate their action civics initiatives from their own point of view (Gingold, 2013).

Table 4.42 | Distribution of Action Civics by Media Exposure

Media Presence	# of coding units	% of coding units
No media exposure	94	67.1%
Media exposure present	46	32.9%

Approximately 33 percent (32.9%) of the action civics cases in the dataset had a media exposure component (Table 4.42). There are several ways in which the media can be involved in action civics initiatives. One way is to have students write articles in print media to publicize their action civics projects. For instance, in an exercise titled “Organizing a Candidate Forum” from Chapter 18 (*Voting and Elections*) of the McGraw-Hill text, students are asked to write articles in the local newspaper following a candidate forum they held to get to know political office candidates in an election year.

Some media involvements are more nuanced. For instance, in an exercise titled “Analyzing Presidential Media Coverage” in Chapter 9 (*The Presidency*) of the McGraw-Hill textbook students analyze the media’s coverage of the president and then contact media outlets to give them suggestions for how they can improve their coverage.

Interaction with the Community

Extrapolating from Billig's (2000) recommendations for service-learning initiatives, action civics should give students the opportunity to engage in mutually influential relationships with the community either through interactions incorporated within the action civics initiative or through formal partnerships with community organizations. The ability to meaningfully interact with the community during action civics projects can foster the development of social capital between students and adults in the community.

Table 4.43 | Distribution of Action Civics by Community Interaction

	# of coding units	% of coding units
No discernible position on interaction with community	12	8.6%
Community communication and interaction promoted	121	86.4%
Community partnerships and collaboration encouraged	7	5%

Of the 140 action civics cases, all but a dozen of them involved interaction or partnership with the community (Table 4.43).

Student Voice

Extrapolating from Billig's (2000) recommendations for service-learning initiatives, it is important for students to have input into shaping their action civics initiatives. Allowing students' input will bring a sense of autonomy and ownership that can lead to a more engaging experience. In most cases, the selection of the action civics initiative was already made for the students.

Table 4.44 | Distribution of Action Civics by Type of Student Voice

Type of student voice	# of coding units	% of coding units
No discernible position on student voice	4	2.9%
Student voice in selecting	37	26.4%
Student voice in designing	123	87.9%
Student voice in implementing	128	91.4%

In a majority of the action civics cases, students had input in the design and implementation (87.9 percent and 91.4% respectively) of the action civics initiative (Table 4.44). However, only in 26.4% of the cases did students have a choice of selecting the action civics initiative to begin with. Most of the time, the choice was already made for them.

An example of students having a choice in selecting their action civics initiative is featured in an *Advocacy* exercise from Chapter 2 (*Origins of American Government*) of the McGraw-Hill textbook. Students are asked to identify an action or policy of their state government with which they disagree and to decide on a written format that would best express their disagreement such as “a letter to a newspaper editor, an email to your state representative, a petition, or a complain to a state agency” (Remy et al., 2018).

An example of students not having a choice in selecting their action civics initiative can be found in an exercise titled “Attending a Council Meeting” from Chapter 16 (*State and Local Government*) of the HMH textbook. In this example, students will attend and address the municipal council to express their opinions about an issue important to them. Unlike the previous example in the preceding paragraph, students don’t have the luxury of choosing another format to express their opinions on this issue.

Summary

Data reliability was established by calculating the intercoder reliability coefficient, Cohen's Kappa, between myself and the secondary coder. A substantial level of reliability was reached. For the first research question on the nature of experiential civics strategies in textbooks, I found that there was an adequate number of cases of experiential civics in textbooks-based materials. However, some textbooks have more than others. The most common type of experiential strategy was the political classroom, followed by simulation, and then action civics. There was little service learning; only three cases were present in the entire sample. All the cases in the sample required advanced strategic thinking, rather than simple application of skill or concept, to complete, proving that experiential civics introduce a level of intellectual challenge and rigor to students. Experiential civics in the textbooks-based resources are categorized as follows: Political classroom features deliberations and debates; simulations features roleplays and metaphorical activities; action civics features civic contact, civic products, and civic events. For the second research question on the distribution of experiential civics among civic topics, almost all the civic topics were within one standard deviation of the mean, which can be interpreted to mean that most civic topics had an adequate number of experiential civic cases available to engage students.

The third research question about how well the experiential civics cases adhered to best practices had several results. The presence of political equity was difficult to judge in 98.23 percent of the cases. Political tolerance was detected in 6.9 percent of the cases and were mostly found in the civil liberties and civil rights chapters. Political autonomy was found in almost all the cases, but only one-fifth were explicitly stated. Those explicit cases were concentrated in political classrooms. Political fairness was also found in almost all the cases but only around

one-third were explicitly stated and were mostly concentrated in the civil liberties and civil rights topic also. Political engagement through controversial topics was found in 71.79 percent of the cases. Almost all the political classroom cases, and half of both the simulations and action civics, used controversial topics. Controversial topics were distributed well among all civic topics. Most of the controversial topics cases also gave students the opportunity to understand the background and different sides involved, the essence of political literacy. Political engagement using current issues and local politics were in 44.76 percent and 20.09 percent of the cases, respectively; action civics was mostly used as the vehicle compared with simulation and political classroom. Students could explore the cultural citizenship of others in only 6.79 percent of the cases.

For simulations, almost all the actors and power relationships were identified. Role statements were always either provided or students were asked to create them. Just over half of the simulation cases provided ground rules. For 71.2 percent of the simulation cases, the outcomes of the simulation were previously unknown to students. Theoretically, these types of cases can be more engaging due to higher student buy-in stemming from their investment in the outcome. Roughly half of the simulation cases came with a reflection or debrief component.

For action civics, in terms of civic orientation promoted, by a margin of two to one, justice-oriented citizenship was promoted over participatory citizenship. None of the cases were limited to personally-responsible citizenship. Roughly 45% of the cases gave students the opportunity to contact public officials. Most of the action civics cases had a campaign component, the majority of whom were education or advocacy campaigns. In terms of scope of campaign, local campaigns outnumbered national campaigns. Only a third of the cases gave students media exposure. More than 90% of the cases gave students the opportunity to interact with their community or form partnerships or collaborations with them. Only a few of the cases gave

students a choice of selecting their action civics initiative but most gave them a choice in designing and implementing them.

Chapter 5

Discussion

This chapter discusses the implications of the research findings as they pertain to each of the study's research questions and explains the limitations of this study. The research questions are: (1) What is the nature of experiential civic strategies in textbook (and supplemental) curriculum materials? (2) How does the distribution of experiential civic strategies in textbook (and supplemental) curriculum materials differ among civic topics? (3) How do the experiential civic strategies/curricula in textbook (and supplemental) materials compare to best practices and recommendations in the civic engagement literature? (4) What is the potential role of textbook curriculum materials in making experiential civic strategies in civics classrooms more common?

Because the findings challenge the prevailing thought about the role of textbooks in promoting civic action and civic participation, I will begin by offering prospective reasons about why this dissertation's major finding contradict the prevailing narrative about the efficacy of textbooks.

Why the Paradigm Shift

The results of this dissertation provide evidence that mainstream civics textbooks have the capacity to engage students in civic participation and civic action through embedded experiential civics education strategies. These results challenge previous research studies because my research included teacher-edition textbooks and supplemental resources. This begs the question of why these resources were not included in previous content-analysis studies in which researchers analyzed samples of stand-alone student-edition textbooks—a non-pedagogical

tool—to draw conclusions about the pedagogical efficacy of those textbooks. There are two possibilities for this decision in previous content analysis studies of mainstream civics textbooks.

One possibility is that previous researchers chose to treat student-edition stand-alone texts as a pedagogical tool precisely because they are treated as such by teachers and schools. While it was not the focus of their research, Parker and Valencia (2016) alluded to this practice in their research, finding that the extent of textbook use by the three AP Government teachers in their study was to give students assigned readings for homework in preparation for a quiz or classroom activity. However, the majority of students did not do the readings in part because they did not see the reading as critical to their success in the course or were not able to connect the readings to class projects and activities. If this use of American Government textbooks—assigning readings from it and not using the teacher-edition counterpart or supplemental resources—is common among teachers across the United States, then it justifies previous researchers excluding those supplemental resources from their studies. Consequently, those previous studies may have chosen to ascertain textbook’s ability to civically engage students because teachers unsuitably chose to use textbooks as pedagogical vehicles rather than use the actual pedagogical counterpart—the textbook’s teacher-edition version and supplemental resources.

The second possible reason that previous researchers did not include teacher-edition textbooks or supplemental resources in their content analysis studies of mainstream civics and American Government textbooks is the lack of access to these materials. There is a surprising arduousness in obtaining these materials because publishers restrict purchase or trial versions of these resources to instructors of the textbook’s content-area or other designated personnel in the school system. The resources are not simply available in the open market. When I completed this

dissertation, I was working full-time as a high school social studies teacher. After I systemically narrowed my sample size, I approached the publishing companies for access to the latest edition of the selected textbooks along with their supplemental materials. As much as the publishers were willing to support my research, it was my employment status as a social studies teacher that granted me access to the materials. When necessary, they contacted my employer to verify my employment before I was able to purchase the material or obtain a trial license. In some cases, only the school district's procurement officer could make the purchase. Publishing companies closely guard access to their resources to not only shield their intellectual property from abuse but also to ensure that tests or assignments given by teachers do not get compromised. Broad access to these materials would invite cheating students who unscrupulously acquire test or assignment answer keys. However, for researchers, these access restrictions may have served as a research barrier.

Implications of Research Findings

The implications of the findings correspond to the study's research questions. I will discuss the variation in textbooks experiential civics curriculum materials, how those materials target various civic topics, how they adhere to best practices in their respective fields, and the implications for culturally relevant pedagogy as it pertains to my conceptual framework.

Experiential Civics Education Variation Among Textbooks

All four textbooks in the sample were systematically chosen for the study because they delivered the bulk of their experiential civics inhouse rather than outsource it to a third party. There were variations in the experiential civics content in these mainstream textbooks—variations in the breadth of resources and their quality in terms of how much they adhered to best practices. Between the two regular American Government textbooks, the McGraw-Hill package

outperformed the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt package. On the AP Government side, Pearson was superior to Cengage. I expect this variation to extend to other mainstream American Government textbooks outside of this study. Even though I found that mainstream textbooks can foster civic participation and civic action through their experiential civics materials, they do so to varying degrees. The textbook adoption process that school districts go through every seven to 10 years appears even more consequential considering this variation in their experiential civics content. Textbook purchase choices can significantly alter the wealth of experiential civics resources for years to come and, in so doing, alter how students can be steered towards civic action and civic participation for years as well.

Experiential Civics in Textbooks Targeted Most Civic Topics

All aspects of civic learning can be enhanced with experiential civics. This study revealed that most topics in the American Government curriculum were adequately targeted for experiential civics. Sixteen of the 18 civics topics categories in the study had ample experiential civics to engage students. “Foundations of Government” and “Public Opinion and Political Action” were the only two topics that had a level of experiential civics less than one standard deviation from the mean. Foundations of Government—the topic that introduces students to the origins, types, and functions of government—is typically the first chapter in American Government textbooks and is usually the first topic in American Government courses as well, setting the tone for the course. It would have been better for teachers to have a choice of more than the five cases of experiential civics cases offered to cover this topic given that it may set the tone for the course. Consequently, to adequately deliver experiential learning for these two aforementioned topics, teachers who rely on textbook curriculum materials may need to use experiential civics materials they create or obtained other sources.

The promising news is that for most major topics that constitute their own chapters, these textbooks on average provided almost nine instances of experiential civics per chapter. The two leading topics that were targets for experiential civics were “Congress” and “State and Local Governments” with 12 and 19 instances of experiential civics per chapter respectively. Therefore, for most civics topics, textbooks can provide teachers with effective and engaging experiential civics activities that will give their students opportunities for civic participation and civic action. The next sections will describe how these textbooks-based experiential civics materials fare when held up against best practices in their respective domains.

The Efficacy of Experiential Civics in Textbooks

In this section, I will discuss my findings on the study’s research question dealing with how well the textbooks’ experiential civics cases adhered to best practices and recommendations in civic engagement literature. I will describe the implications of my findings.

Best Practices Based on Political Classroom Measures

All the cases in the dataset were evaluated on the dimensions of political classroom (Hess & McAvoy, 2014)—political equity, political tolerance, political autonomy, political fairness, political engagement, and political literacy—since these are elements that can be found in all three types of experiential civics cases (political classroom, simulation, and action civics) analyzed in this study. The presence of political equity—the provision to allow students to deliberate as equals—was difficult to measure in most of the cases in the study. This element can be better measured in the field, either with survey questions or with field observations, rather than with a content-analysis of experiential civic curriculum material. The reason is because the absence of specific instructions to the teacher to practice political equity does not mean that the teacher will not do it as part of effective teaching. But because there is no guarantee that good

teaching will prevail without clearly laid out instructions, it is advisable that textbook experiential civics give clear-cut instructions pertaining to political equity.

The other element of political classroom that had suboptimal frequency in textbooks experiential civics was political tolerance—the practice of students examining whether their views are consistent with the belief that the coercive power of the state ought not be used to unjustly outlaw or prosecute individuals or groups for holding reasonable views that others find objectionable. This element of political classroom promotes the democratic ideals required in a pluralist society where reasonable differences do not lead to marginalization or subjugation of any group. Only a handful, seven percent, of the experiential civics cases in my study gave the students an opportunity to practice political tolerance. The political tolerance cases were also clustered around a handful of topics that were naturally conducive to featuring cases of political tolerance, rather than an even distribution across all civic topics. Because political tolerance is critical to the health of a functioning democracy, it is advisable that textbook experiential civics not only increase cases of political tolerance, but also distribute them across a wider range of topics so that students see how it is manifested from multiple perspectives.

The other elements of the political classroom were well represented in the textbooks' experiential civics material. Political autonomy, political fairness, political engagement, and political literacy were present in the majority of the experiential civics cases. This is a very positive finding that bodes well for textbook experiential civics to facilitate civic action and civic participation. The experiential civics cases were constructed well enough to consistently give students opportunities to encounter and respond to opposing views using evidence as well as to evaluate policy while considering and reflecting on the views and right of others—the essence of political autonomy and political fairness, respectively. These elements were not only present in

the deliberations and debates that make up the activities of the political classroom, but also in simulations and action civics as well.

These textbook-related experiential civics cases also prominently engaged students using controversial topics, current events, and local politics. Not only were a wide array of controversial topics covered, but students were taught the backgrounds and the various sides of the controversies—one of the essences of political literacy. While the controversial topics were more likely to be covered in the debates and deliberations of the political classroom, as much as half of the simulations and action civics also covered controversial topics. This was a very promising finding because when action civics and simulations deal with controversial topics, an additional dimension is given to wrestling with that controversy. With the roleplay sessions of the simulation, students can develop a sense of empathy and better understand a controversy from multiple perspectives because the simulation enables them to envision the controversy from the viewpoints of the multiple stakeholders involved. Action civics cases also enhance the teaching of controversial topics because students are given the opportunity to use civic action to sway the controversy in the direction they have come to understand as just. They will endeavor to see their views on the controversy come to fruition through the tools (such as organizing a campaign, contacting their elected official, or creating an educational brochure for the community) given to them in an action civics assignment. Action civics were also a hub through which students were engaged in current issues and local politics. Compared to simulations and political classroom, action civics housed the bulk of experiential civics cases that used current issues and local politics to engage students because of their natural propensity to involve real time events and issues.

Best Practices in Simulations

The simulation exercises in the textbooks usually adhered to best practices. There were some simulation best practices that were difficult to measure in a content analysis of resources and would be best suited for a field study using survey instruments or a field observation. Therefore, those best practices were not evaluated. They include whether structural and power relationships between simulation actors were realistic and whether simulations propagate an idealize manifestation or a real-life manifestation of civic concepts.

As for the best practices that could be measured using content analysis of the simulation design, the simulation cases in the textbook experiential cases fared well. Simulation actors and power relationships were routinely identified along with role statements for students or instructions on how to create those role statements. These basic requirements were met. While it is advised to give students an opportunity to play multiple roles, this was a rarity in the textbook-based simulations, and therefore, a feature that should be improved. A slight majority of the simulations in the study came with ground rules that would ensure their success. While it is a majority, it would be advisable for even more of these simulations to come with ground rules as they communicate to the teacher and the students the expectations and processes needed for a successful simulation. Roughly half of the simulations had an attached debrief exercise in which students reflect on lessons learned from the simulation exercise and connect it to civic topic at hand. While this is encouraging, it is desirable that this number is higher because the reflection and debrief following a simulation session are critical in helping students to make sense of the simulation as it pertains to the civic topic they are learning.

One of the most promising aspects of the textbook-based simulation was the finding that a large majority of them had outcomes that would be previously unknown to students. These

types of roleplays should have a deep layer of engagement and greater buy-in from participating students compared to roleplays or skits in which students have foreknowledge and run the risk of playing out like a reenactment rather than a simulation. The fact that textbook-related simulations feature more of the ones with previously unknown outcomes is promising indeed.

Best Practices in Action Civics

On several measures, textbook-based actions civics adhered to best practices. Most of the action civics gave student the opportunity to run, or have an active role in, an education, advocacy, or political campaign. These campaigns ranged in scope from local to national campaigns. Most of the action civics cases also gave students the opportunity to interact and communicate with their community, and in some cases, even form partnerships or collaborations with community organizations. Most of the action cases also gave students a voice in designing or implementing the action civics initiative rather than it being a predetermined set of activities with them simply carrying out the motions. It is impressive that most of the textbook-based action civics featured these best-practices measures.

Almost half of the action civics cases featured an element of students communicating with public officials. About a third of the cases gave students media exposure. While these are not majorities, it is promising that some of the textbook-related action civics cases featured these best-practices measures. However, there is room for improvement. There is also room for improvement regarding how many of the action civics cases came with a debrief component in which students reflect on the lessons learned from the action civics exercise. Just over a quarter of the action civics cases were accompanied by a reflection or debrief component that can help students make better sense of their action civics in the context of the civic topic being studied.

Using the Kahne and Westheimer's (2004) gauge of the utility and intensity of civic action, all the action civics cases either promoted participatory citizenship or justice-oriented citizenship, with the participatory citizenship outnumbering justice-oriented citizenship by a ratio of roughly three to two. None of the cases were limited to personally-responsible citizenship. This citizenship break-down is an encouraging finding. While outnumbered by the participatory citizenship, that level of justice-oriented citizenship is still promising because action civics tasks featuring justice-oriented are the type that ask students to research inequities and act on their findings to create a more just society.

Experiential Civics and Culture

In the conceptual framework, I used culturally relevant pedagogy (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994) to theorize that experiential civics strategies enhance students' civic capacities because students see themselves and each other in the civic process by virtue of participating in it and critically reflecting on this participation. I argued that, in so doing, experiential civics education would expand the citizenship elements of Marshall's (1964) typology to include a "culture" element, making it transformative citizenship education (Banks, 2009). Cultural citizenship captures the right of minorities, or those from marginalized communities, to be different without revoking their rights to belong to the larger society (Rosaldo, 1994). In practice, every single time minority students go through experiential civics, they have an opportunity to exercise cultural citizenship as experiential civics affords them the agency to bring their unbridled cultural identities into acts of civic participation and civic action. This study also investigated explicit instances in which experiential civics cases required students to consider the cultural citizenship of others. Only a handful of the study's experiential civics cases, 6.8%, featured examining this cultural element of transformative education. It is worthwhile for

this figure to be higher as a more consistent look at the cultural citizenship of other groups would give student the tools and the freedom to consistently investigate their own cultural citizenship as it pertains to various aspects of civics.

Textbooks and the Mainstreaming of Experiential Civics

The fourth research question of this study asked about the potential role of textbook curriculum materials to make experiential civic strategies in civics classrooms more common. In addressing the dearth of quality civics education in the United States, both Saavedra (2012) and the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service's (2020) *Inspired to Serve* report called for indispensability of institutional support in meeting the challenges of reversing the status quo. The *Inspire to Serve* report specifically recommended that state departments of education and local school districts "explore ways to provide quality, research-based civic education and applied civics" (p. 20), and to find ways to prepare civics teachers in their proposed policies. Moreover, the report also recommends that institutions of higher education "explore ways to integrate quality, research-based civic education and service-learning methodologies into curricula, consider best practices, and prepare teachers to use service-learning methodologies" (p. 20).

This dissertation has demonstrated that in recently published teacher-edition textbooks and their supplemental resources, the breadth and pedigree of experiential civics (or as the report calls it, "applied civics") is suitable to provide students with quality, research-based civic education that have been held up to best practices. Textbooks are also a fundamental institutional tool in schools that can help fulfil the *Inspire to Serve* report recommendation that quality applied civics initiative have institutional support. As Eisner (2002) wrote, "textbooks are, for many teachers, the hub around which programs are built" (p. 43). Because the narrative of utility

of mainstream teacher-edition textbooks in meeting experiential civics demands is largely missing in the research literature, it is possible that quality of textbook-based resources only markedly increased recently. Perhaps, the textbooks in this study's sample which were all published in 2018, captured a recent development. It is feasible that the robustness of teacher-edition textbooks to include dynamic experiential civics strategies such as political classroom, simulations, and action civics in large numbers might be a recent phenomenon as textbook companies have tried to compete with other organizations that may be marketing similar products to educators.

The knowledge of the utility of mainstream teacher-edition textbooks could also be lacking in the research literature, and even lacking in schools themselves, because availability does not equate to use. Because these evidence-based experiential-civics resources are available does not mean that civics teachers are using them. Reasons for lack of use may include teachers simply not knowing about their existence, preferring to use the resources they are already used to, or simply hanging on to a prevailing false narrative that textbooks are not an avenue for engaging students in civic action and civic participation. School districts, states boards of educations, and schools will need to overcome these obstacles in order to mainstream textbook-based resources for experiential civics education. A convincing promotion campaign, coupled with professional development, are needed to get educators aboard to harness these textbook-based resources that are available.

Besides the soundness of textbook-based resources for delivering experiential civics, as evinced by this dissertation, there are other advantages for choosing the textbook-based resources over competitors (in the for-profit and non-profit sector) that provide educators with experiential civics resources. It is cost-effective because the resources are already purchased as

part of the textbook package. It also might be easier to disseminate these resources to teachers or students as needed given that these resources, which now come digitized as were all the ones in this study's sample, can be embedded into institutional digital learning portals and platforms, a standard in many school systems today. If these materials are a part of institutional digital learning portals, they will also give the textbook-based resources staying power compared to a third-party resource, which might be effective, but not part of the learning portal or only used by a handful of teachers on an ad hoc basis and may be discontinued when the teacher resigns or starts teaching a different subject, for instance. Another selling point of using textbook-based resources to deliver experiential civics is that it would increase students' propensity to read the student-edition versions of the textbooks as part of their classroom assignments, which is currently ignored by most students. Parker and Valencia (2016) found that when there is a text-task alignment—when students understood what exactly they were to learn from a textbook reading assignment and how that knowledge would be used in the classroom tasks and projects—students are more likely do their textbook reading assignments in preparation for those tasks and projects. The result would be better prepared students who would be expected to learn from those tasks and projects. The use of textbook-based experiential civics would enhance text-task alignment because the experiential civics tasks correspond to the assigned reading because they are both from the same family of resources and are designed to complement one another.

Conclusion

The portrayal of textbooks as insipid instruments incapable of giving students a viable path to civic participation and civic action is mistaken. By examining the pedagogical tools that accompany mainstream civics textbooks, their teacher-edition counterparts along with supplemental resources, this dissertation has described how these textbook-based resources can

adequately deliver experiential civics in almost all civic topics. While there is some room for improvement, the experiential civics education delivered through these textbook-based avenues adhere to many best practices in their respective fields. The need for the use of experiential civic strategies and applied civics is a perennial clarion call by concerned government and academic agencies alike who have surveyed the civic education landscape in schools and concluded that there is an urgent need for reform. This dissertation's positive findings on the utility of textbook-based civic resources establishes that a readily available institutional tool can be deployed to respond to this clarion call.

The following is a summary of the research journey I took to investigate the role of textbooks in civic engagement. I used the exposure-selection model and culturally-relevant pedagogy in the conceptual framework to theorize the mechanisms through which experiential civics strategies—such as the debates and deliberations of controversial topics in the political classroom, the roleplays and skits of simulations, the democratic decision-making of student government, and the dynamic real-life hands-on civic activities of service learning and actions civic—foster students' civic participation and civic action. In the literature review, I described the research on each of the experiential civic strategies and laid the groundwork for what constituted best practices in each of them. To assess the study's research questions on the nature and efficacy of textbook-based experiential civics material, I conducted a content analysis of four systematically chosen popular mainstream textbooks, their teacher-edition versions, and their supplemental resources. Adhering to literature on content-analysis methodology, this study, with its accompanying coding frame, was designed to ensure validity and reliability of the study's results. Some design measures included: having a university faculty expert evaluate the concept-

driven and data-driven codes of the coding frame; employing a secondary coder to establish intercoder reliability; and the use of a pilot study to refine the coding frame.

The results of the content analysis signaled that while there is room for improvement, textbook-based experiential civics education meets a lot of best practice recommendations and should not remain an untapped resource in the quest to steer student to civic participation and civic action. In the discussion section of this chapter, based on the study results, I made a series of recommendations about how textbooks-based resources can improve the quality of their cache of experiential civics. I also made recommendations about how classroom teachers can optimize the use of these resources in their current form. The forces that are inhibiting schools and educators from widely adopting textbook-based experiential civics material, or any experiential civics materials, will not be eliminated without knowing what they are. Field research needs to be done to understand these forces. Nonetheless, it is the hope that an evidence-based acknowledgement of the potential of textbook-based civic education, as expressed in this dissertation, serves as a step in answering the plea to bring experiential and applied civics to American high schools.

This dissertation has examined the intended curriculum found in American Government teacher-edition textbooks and their supplemental resources. This research gives a hopeful outlook for the use of textbook-related curriculum materials. However, how this intended curriculum will manifest in practice when it becomes implemented by classroom teachers remains to be examined. Further research in the field, both quantitative and qualitative studies, needs to be carried out to precisely identify how the curriculum is executed, its effects on student learning, and ways to optimize the curriculum to maximize student achievement. Prospective positive results from these field studies and dissemination of the results could be instrumental in

widening the adoption of such textbook-based experiential civics and potentially mainstream this institutional resource in classrooms across the United States.

Summary

The major finding of this dissertation that textbook-based materials are adequate experiential civics vehicles to teach students civic participation and civic action contradict the current research narrative about the role of textbooks because the dissertation's sample included teacher edition textbooks and supplemental resources. Prior research may have excluded these pedagogical tools either because the research was consistent with how textbooks may have been typically used in schools (without those teacher-edition version or supplemental components) or because access to those teacher-edition version and supplemental components was arduous or onerous for researchers to acquire.

Textbooks can adequately cover experiential civics. However, there is variation in the breadth as well as the quality of resources between the books in the study. Therefore, it is recommended that schools take this variation into account and select the most effective resources during the textbook adoption process. Because experiential civics targeted most topics adequately, the recommendation was that for those two topics that fell significantly below average, teachers will need to shore them up with creations of their own or from other sources. The other sixteen topics have enough experiential civics cases to fully engage students.

Recommendations were also made on how much the experiential cases adhered to best practices. Textbook-based resources need to better address political equity, as it is currently mostly indiscernible in the sample. Cases dealing with political tolerance need to be spread over more civic topics rather than clustering around only a handful of topics. Other best practices of

political classroom such as political autonomy, political fairness, political engagement (though controversial topics, current events, and local politics), and political literacy were adequately covered in the sample of my study. The simulations adhered to best practices for the most part. Recommendations for improvement included giving more students an opportunity to play multiple roles, being more consistent with having simulation ground rules, and creating more opportunities for debrief and reflection. The action civics cases did a good job giving students creative autonomy and providing opportunities to work on campaigns and interact with their communities. The ratio of justice-oriented citizenship to participatory-citizenship was sufficient. Some areas for improvement included the need for more media exposure and opportunities for reflection. Textbooks-based resources should do much better in giving students the opportunity to explore the cultural citizenship of other groups.

Based on the finding that textbooks-based resources provide experiential civic education with ample opportunities to meet best practices in many domains and based on the fact that textbooks are an institutional staple, textbook-based resources can play an important role in mainstreaming experiential civics. However, given that textbook-based resources are a form of intended curriculum, field research ought to be conducted to identify how the implemented curriculum manifests when these textbook-based experiential civics education is executed in classrooms.

Appendix 1 – Code Library

<u>Code Name</u> 1. ACTIVITY TYPE
<u>Code Question Prompts, Categories, and Subcategories</u> • What type of activities are students primarily doing?
<u>Code Description</u> This code captures the range of possible activities students have been assigned in a single coding unit. The code gives us an insight into the pedagogic design features of the experiential education strategies in textbook resources. In several cases, a single coding unit will assign students more than one activity. For instance, a coding unit on eminent domain found on page 13 of the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt textbook tasks students with three activities: research, presentation, and deliberation.

<u>Code Name</u> 2. SUBJECT MATTER
<u>Code Question Prompts, Categories, and Subcategories</u> • What is the subject matter of the coding unit?
<u>Code Description</u> The chapter topic for each coding unit already exists as a context unit. This gives us an insight into the subject matter. However, the <i>subject matter</i> code is more precise and delves deeper to capture the specific topic(s) that the coding unit is covering. For instance, to borrow from the

example above, that coding unit's specific subject matter is on eminent domain even though it's found in the chapter titled "Foundations of Government."

Code Name

3. COGNITIVE DEMAND

Code Question Prompts, Categories, and Subcategories

- What is the maximum level of cognitive demand needed to complete the task?
 - [A]Level One (recall)
 - [B]Level Two (skill/concept)
 - [C]Level Three (strategic thinking)
 - [D]Level Four (Extended Thinking)

Code Description

This code, adapted from Webb's (1997) depth of knowledge typology, captures the cognitive rigor of each of the experiential education resources. Tasks in Level One require minimal cognitive demand such as mere recall and rote memorization. Level Two's cognitive demand is an improvement, but still low, and involves simple application of a skill or concept. Level Three's cognitive demand is advanced, requiring students to do strategic thinking and to use evidence to explain their thought processes. Level Four, the most advanced cognitive demand, extends the cognitive demand from Level Three over an extended period of time. In the conceptual framework for this study (Chapter 2), I described how Niemi and Junn's exposure-selection model is used to ground this dissertation. I hypothesize that experiential civics strategies' propensity to give students Level Three and Level Four experiences will enhance the

exposure component of the model and consequently elevate the *selection* component as well. This code will add to the empirical backbone needed to give this hypothesis more credibility.

Code Name

4. STATED DURATION

Code Question Prompts, Categories, and Subcategories

- What is the stated duration of the experience?
 - [A]Duration is unstated
 - [B]Short (1 to 2 class periods)
 - [C]Medium duration (3 to 4 class periods)
 - [D]Long duration (5 or more class periods)

Code Description

This code represents how many one-hour class periods each experiential civics resource will take to implement. This code is used when the duration is explicitly stated for the teacher/facilitator.

Code Name

5. ESTIMATED DURATION

Code Question Prompts, Categories, and Subcategories

- If unstated, what is the likely duration of the experience?
 - [A]Duration is unstated
 - [B]Short (1 to 2 class periods)
 - [C]Medium duration (3 to 4 class periods)

- [D]Long duration (5 or more class periods)

Code Description

Oftentimes, the amount of time required to implement an experiential civics resource is not provided with the resource. In these cases, the coder will make an educated estimation. Both coders are veteran social studies teachers that can make duration estimations of teaching resources.

Code Name

6. POLITICAL EQUITY

Code Question Prompts, Categories, and Subcategories

- What level of political equity is afforded?
 - [A]No discernible position on political equity is present
 - [B]Measures are explicitly in place to encourage students from deliberating as equals
 - [C]Measures are implicitly in place to encourage students from deliberating as equals

Code Description

Starting with this one, the next six codes adapted from Hess and McAvoy (2014) capture the aims of a political classroom briefly described in the literature review (Chapter 2). Even though these six codes were initially designed to analyze deliberation in a political classroom (one of the four experiential civics strategies), they are also applied to the other strategies (simulation, action civics, and service learning). These other strategies often incorporate an element of deliberation and discussion in their design.

Political equity captures whether measures are in place to encourage students to deliberate as equals. For the measure to be considered explicit, the experiential civics resource will have to specifically designate students as having equal power. Implicit measures, on the other hand, are design features in the experiential civics resources that will help create an equitable power dynamic during the deliberative process.

Code Name

7. POLITICAL TOLERANCE

Code Question Prompts, Categories, and Subcategories

- What level of political tolerance is expected of students?
 - [A]No discernible position on political tolerance
 - [B]Students are explicitly asked to consider their personal preferences alongside considerations about whether their views are in line with the principle of toleration
 - [C]Students are implicitly asked to examine whether their views are in line with the principle of toleration

Code Description

The principle of political tolerance refers to the recognition that citizens should not use the coercive power of the state to unjustly outlaw or prosecute individuals or groups for holding reasonable views that others find objectionable (Hess & McAvoy, 2014). It is rare to find explicit instances of experiential civics resources requiring students to examine whether their views are consistent with the principles of toleration. Implicitly asking students to wrestle with the principle of toleration can be achieved through the design and/or subject matter of the experiential civics resource.

Code Name**8. POLITICAL AUTONOMY****Code Question Prompts, Categories, and Subcategories**

- How much political autonomy is granted to students?
 - [A]No discernible position on political autonomy
 - [B]Are students given the opportunity to encounter views that are different from their own?
 - [1]Students are explicitly given the opportunity to encounter views that are different from their own
 - [2]Students are implicitly given the opportunity to encounter views that are different from their own
 - [C]Are students given the opportunity to reflect and respond when their views are interrogated by others?
 - [0]Students are not given the opportunity to reflect and respond
 - [1]Students are explicitly given the opportunity to reflect and respond when their views are interrogated by others
 - [2]Students are implicitly given the opportunity to reflect and respond when their views are interrogated by others
 - [D]Are students given the opportunity to consider relevant evidence when reflecting/responding to their views being interrogated by others?
 - [0]Students are not given the opportunity to consider relevant evidence

▪ [1]Students are explicitly given the opportunity to consider relevant evidence when reflecting/responding to their views being interrogated by others ▪ [2]Students are implicitly given the opportunity to consider relevant evidence when reflecting/responding to their views being interrogated by others ○ [E]Are students given the opportunity to practice argumentation ▪ [0]Students are not given the opportunity to practice argumentation ▪ [1]Students are explicitly given the opportunity to practice argumentation when reflecting/responding to their views being interrogated by others ▪ [2]Students are implicitly given the opportunity to consider relevant evidence when reflecting/responding to their views being interrogated by others
<u>Code Description</u> Political autonomy captures the opportunity students are given to encounter views that are different from their own, to reflect and respond when their views are interrogated by others, to consider relevant evidence, and to practice argumentation. Because of the presence of one of these and not the others, this code has broken down all the components of political autonomy into individual pieces. Explicit manifestations of this code will essentially spell out these components of political autonomy for students while implicit manifestations will steer students towards the components of political autonomy through the pedagogical design of the experiential civics resource (the coding unit).

<u>Code Name</u> 9. POLITICAL FAIRNESS
<u>Code Question Prompts, Categories, and Subcategories</u>

- How much opportunity for fairness is given?
 - [A] No discernible position on political fairness
 - [B] Opportunities are explicitly given for students to consider and reflect on the views and rights of others when making political choices
 - [C] Opportunities are implicitly given for students to consider and reflect on the views and rights of others when making political choices

Code Description

Political fairness captures the opportunity students are given, in experiential civics resources, to consider and reflect on the views and rights of others when making political choices. Explicit manifestations of this code will essentially spell out for students to be politically fair while implicit manifestations will steer students towards political fairness through the pedagogical design of the experiential civics resource (the coding unit). Political fairness can be confused with political autonomy described in the preceding table. To distinguish between the two, political autonomy consists of students wrestling with their own views being challenged. Political fairness exists when students are considerate of the views of others.

Code Name

10. POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Code Question Prompts, Categories, and Subcategories

- What type of opportunities for political engagement are given?
 - [A] Do students deliberate controversies that they will confront outside of school?
 - [1] Students do not deliberate controversies that they will confront outside of school
 - [2] Students deliberate controversies that they will confront outside of school

- [B]Do students deliberate the outcomes of current issues?
 - [1]Students do not deliberate the outcomes of current issues
 - [2]Students deliberate the outcomes of current issues
- [C]Do students deliberate the outcomes of local politics?
 - [1]Students do not deliberate the outcomes of local politics
 - [2]Students deliberate the outcome of local politics

Code Description

This code captures whether the students are exposed to controversial topics, current issues, and local politics. Several scholars have argued for the importance of these elements to increase students' interest in political issues and democratic activities (Hess & McAvoy, 2014; Gould et al, 2012; Niemi, 2012; Avery & Simmons, 2000). Controversial topics or issues can be defined as those in which “contrary views can be held without those views being contrary to reason (Dearden, 1981) or those problems whose best solutions are open to disagreement (Lockwood, 1996). Those problems could be an empirical issue associated with civics and history or an issue associated with the examination of values stemming from public policy decision-making.

Code Name

11. POLITICAL LITERACY

Code Question Prompts, Categories, and Subcategories

- How much emphasis is placed on political literacy?
 - [A]No discernible position on political literacy
 - [B]Are students taught to understand competing ideologies underlying controversial issues?

▪ [1]Students are not taught to understand competing ideologies underlying controversial issues ▪ [2]Students are taught to understand competing ideologies underlying controversial issues ○ [C]Are students taught to understand competing views about democracy itself? ▪ [1]Students are not taught competing views about democracy itself ▪ [2]Students are taught competing views about democracy itself
<u>Code Description</u> The inclusion of controversial topics in civics classrooms is a powerful tool. A way to amplify students’ engagement with controversial topics and many other topics relating to democracy is to provide students with the background of those topics and a blueprint to understand the competing ideologies around them. This background knowledge is the essence of political literacy. The extent to which an experiential civics resource (the coding unit) aids with political literacy is what this code will capture. Examples of political literacy are a debating exercise and a political classroom resource that incorporates liberal and conservative arguments about the gun control.

<u>Code Name</u> 12. DEBRIEF AND REFLECTION
<u>Code Question Prompts, Categories, and Subcategories</u> • What type of opportunities for reflection/debrief are embedded? ○ [A]No reflection ○ [B]Reflection shared with teacher

- [C]Reflection shared between students
- [D]Reflection takes place before experiential civics initiative
- [E]Reflection takes place during the experiential civics initiative
- [F]Reflection takes place after the experiential civics initiative

Code Description

This code captures the nature of the reflection embedded into experiential civics resources. Reflection and debrief influence how students process their experiences and how they learn from experiential civics. Hence, the ways in which the reflection component is designed into the experiential learning initiative is critical to the fulfillment of the curricular objectives of that experiential learning initiative (Billig, 2000). Who the reflection is shared with as well as when it is shared (before, during, or after the experiential civics initiative) are both pedagogical considerations that influence learning outcomes. The reflection prompts and questions should also be tied to specific teaching goals and should put the experiential learning initiative into the context of the course (Smith & Boyer, 1996). In a political classroom (one of the four experiential civics strategies), while covering the 14th amendment, a debate on LGBTQ rights could begin with a reflection question that require students to wrestle with how “equal protection under the law” applies to them as teenagers before embarking on how the 14th amendment’s equal protection clause has been applied to the LGBTQ community. Reflection is also an effective way to assess students’ learning and to give the teacher crucial information about how well students have met content and skills standards. For instance, to use another experiential strategy as an example, following a simulation, students can examine the difference between simulation and reality or examine reasons for specific outcomes in their simulation.

Code Name**13. TRANSFORMATIVE CITIZENSHIP ELEMENTS****Code Question Prompts, Categories, and Subcategories**

- Are students given the opportunity to develop the cultural element of citizenship?
 - [1] No
 - [2] Yes

Code Description

This code is informed by Banks (2009) notion of transformative citizenship. Transformative citizenship is a more inclusive form of citizenship that builds on Marshall's (1964) typology to encompass civil, political, social, and cultural elements of citizenship. The civil element is composed of "the rights necessary for freedom" (Marshall, 1964, p. 10). The political element is "the right to participate in the exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with political authority or as an elector of the members of such a body" (p. 11). The social element encompasses "the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards in the society" (p. 11). Activities in an American Government class will naturally expose students to the civil, political, and social elements. However, the cultural element is not a given. The cultural element encompasses the right to be different (for instance, belong to a minority group) without revoking rights to the larger society (Rosaldo, 1994). Activities that feature the cultural element of citizenship will typically feature someone from a minority group and their pursuit of equal rights.

Code Name

14. VOICES OF MINORITY GROUPS

Code Question Prompts, Categories, and Subcategories

- In what capacity are the voices of minority groups represented?
 - [A]Doesn't address the voices of minority groups
 - [B]Addresses the voices of minority groups
 - [1]Which minority group (Black, Hispanic, Asian, LGBTQ, immigrants etc.)
 - [2]In what way is the minority group mentioned?
 - [A]A neutral narrative
 - [B]A positive narrative

Code Description

This code captures the extent to which the voices of minority groups are represented in experiential civics resources and whether those voices are represented using a neutral or positive narrative. In the conceptual framework for this study, using the theory of culturally relevant pedagogy, I argue that experiential civics education is particularly beneficial for students who may not identify with traditional citizenship narratives. These students are able to see themselves in the civic narratives afforded by experiential civics education because they are actively participating and reflecting on their participation. in this narrative. I also wanted to capture the extent to which minority voices are directly referenced in these resources. This may add another contextual layer to the culturally-relevant pedagogical underpinnings of this study.

Code Name

15. IDENTIFICATIONS OF ROLES AND ACTORS

Code Question Prompts, Categories, and Subcategories

- Are major actors in the simulation process identified?
 - [A]Major actors/power relationships are not identified
 - [B]Major actors/power relationships are identified
 - [1]Role statements unnecessary for the simulation task
 - [2]Role statements (or pertinent instructions) are not created for the identified major actors
 - [3]Role statements (or pertinent instructions) are created for the identified major actors

Code Description

This code, adapted from Smith and Boyer (1996), gauges the design of simulations in terms of creating roles/relationships for the participants and defining what those roles/relationships are. Well-designed simulations will include detailed role-statements and instruction that will inform students of the persona they should embody in a simulation. Without clear role statements or instructions, the simulation has a lower chance of being an educative experience, especially in the hands of less experienced teachers.

Code Name

16. SIMULATION GROUND RULES

Code Question Prompts, Categories, and Subcategories

- Are there specific ground rules for students?
 - [A]There aren't specific ground rules for students
 - [B]There are specific ground rules for students

Code Description

This code, adapted from Smith and Boyer (1996), will capture how often simulation resources adhere to the recommendation of having ground rules for participants. The lack of ground rules, not knowing the dos and don'ts, will leave participants with little direction and introduce the risk of a dysfunctional experience.

Code Name

17. SIMULATION ROLES

Code Question Prompts, Categories, and Subcategories

- How many roles does a student get an opportunity to play?
 - [A]Does not address number of roles students can play
 - [B]One role
 - [C]Multiple non-opposing roles
 - [D]Multiple and opposing roles

Code Description

This code, adapted from Baranowski and Weir (2010), captures whether students can play more than one role in a simulation. The lessons students garner from a simulation experience hinges very closely on the type of roles that students play. Hence, the more roles they play, the broader the perspectives they gain from the experience. Students, however, can still gain tremendously from just playing one role. Multiple roles is more like a treat. To clarify some terminology within the subcategories, *multiple opposing roles* refers to roles that may have differing values or motivations during a simulation. For example, a student who gets to participate both the prosecution and defense side during the course of a mock trial would have played multiple

opposing roles. On other hand, if a students were to play roles on the jury and as a lawyer during the course of a mock trial, that would be considered *multiple non-opposing roles*.

Code Name

18. PREDETERMINATION OF SCENARIO OUTCOME

Code Question Prompts, Categories, and Subcategories

- Is the solution to the problem or outcome of the scenario predetermined?
 - [1]The solution or outcome of the scenario is NOT known to students and NOT predetermined
 - [2]The solution or outcome of the scenario is known to students and predetermined

Code Description

At the beginning of a simulation exercise, the outcome or solution of the simulation exercise is either known or unknown to students. In those cases where the outcome is known, such as a performative skits or a reenactment of a decided court case, students' civic engagement stems from the processes and procedures that they are undertaking in the simulation. Students' civic engagement in simulations can even be more pronounced when they have the power to direct hitherto unknown outcomes of the simulation through their intentional participation in those processes and procedures.

Code Name

19. TYPE OF CITIZENSHIP PROMOTED

Code Question Prompts, Categories, and Subcategories

- What type of citizenship is promoted?

- [A]Personally responsible citizenship
- [B]Participatory citizenship
- [C]Justice oriented citizenship

Code Description

Adapted from Kahne and Westheimer (2004), this code’s purpose is to determine the civic orientation that is promoted by an action civics or service learning resource. Each of these orientations have been described in the action civics section of the literature review chapter (Chapter 2). The personally-responsible citizen acts responsible in his or her community, for example, by being employed and paying taxes, picking up litter, giving blood, recycling, obeying laws, staying out of debt, and volunteering to lend a hand in times of crisis (Kahne & Westheimer, 2004). The participatory citizen is one “who actively participates in the civic affairs and the social life of the community at the local, state, or national level” (p. 241). Examples of participatory citizenship include being an active member of community organizations and/or improvement efforts, organizing community efforts to help those in need, organizing efforts geared towards economic development or a cleaner environment, knowing how government agencies work, and knowing the strategies for accomplishing collective tasks. The justice-oriented citizen can “analyze and understand the interplay of social, economic, and political forces” (p. 242). Examples of justice-oriented citizenship includes critically assessing social, political, and economic structures to see beyond surface causes, seeking out and addressing areas of injustice, and knowing about democratic social movements and how to effect systemic change.

Code Name

20. CONTACT WITH PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Code Question Prompts, Categories, and Subcategories

- Are there opportunities to contact/meet with public officials?
 - [A]No discernible position on meetings with public officials
 - [B]Opportunities to meet with public officials exist

Code Description

Adapted from Gingold (2013), this code captures the access to public officials afforded by an action civics initiative. Gingold argues that when youth in action civics programs meet with influential adults, such as those serving in a public capacity, those youth help change the stereotypes about young people.

Code Name

21. TYPES OF CAMPAIGN

Code Question Prompts, Categories, and Subcategories

- Are there opportunities for students to partake in campaigns?
 - [A]No discernible position on campaigns
 - [B]What type of campaign is it?
 - [1]Education/advocacy campaign
 - [2]Political campaign
 - [C]What is the scope of the campaign?
 - [1]Campaign's scope is the school
 - [2]Campaign's scope is the community (local issue)
 - [3]Campaign's scope is beyond the community (beyond a local issue)

- [D]What medium does the campaign take?

- [1]Campaign is digital in nature
- [2]Campaign is non-digital in nature

Code Description

This code, adapted from Gingold (2013), captures the nature of campaigns, if any, attached to the action civics or service learning resource. Gingold listed the presence of campaigns as a desired feature of action civics. This code will capture the type, scope, and medium of such campaigns

Code Name

22. ACCOMPANYING EVENT

Code Question Prompts, Categories, and Subcategories

- What type of event accompanies the experiential civics initiative?
 - [A]No discernible position on accompanying event
 - [B]event at the school
 - [C]event at the community
 - [D]event citywide

Code Description

This code, adapted from Gingold (2013), captures the scope of any event that is attached to an action civics or service learning initiative. For instance, there could be a movie-viewing event of a film produced by students as a culmination of an action civics initiative on reducing water pollution.

<u>Code Name</u>
23. MEDIA EXPOSURE
<u>Code Question Prompts, Categories, and Subcategories</u>
• Is there any associated media exposure component? ○ [A]No discernible position on media exposure ○ [B]Opportunities exist for media exposure
<u>Code Description</u>
This code, adapted from Gingold (2013), captures the presence of any media exposure associated with an action civics or service-learning initiative. This includes all forms of media including social media. According to Gingold, the goal is for the media productions to circulate widely and to deliver content from youths' points of view.

<u>Code Name</u>
24. STUDENT VOICE
<u>Code Question Prompts, Categories, and Subcategories</u>
• How is student voice used? ○ [A]No discernible position on student voice ○ [B]Student voice is used in selecting the action civics or service-learning project ○ [C]Student voice is used in designing the action civics or service-learning project ○ [D]Student voice is used in implementing the action civics or service-learning project ○ [E]Student voice is used in evaluating the action civics or service-learning project
<u>Code Description</u>

Adapted from Billig (2000), this code captures the extent to which students have input into creating their action civics or service learning initiative. Having a voice in creating and shaping either their action civics or service learning experiences will bring a sense of autonomy and ownership that can lead to a more engaging experience.

Code Name

25. INTERACTION WITH COMMUNITY

Code Question Prompts, Categories, and Subcategories

- What type of interaction with the community is available?
 - [A]No discernible position on interaction with the community
 - [B]Communication and interaction with the community are promoted
 - [C]Partnerships and collaborations with the community are encouraged

Code Description

Adapted from Billig (2000), this code captures the extent to which service-learning and action civics initiatives give students the opportunity to engage in mutually impactful relationships with the community either through interactions incorporated within the service-learning initiative or through formal partnerships with community organizations. Being able to meaningfully interact with the community during service-learning projects can foster the development of social capital between students and adults in the community (Campbell, 2000).

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