

COMPONENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE U.S. CIVICS AND GOVERNMENT CURRICULUM

by

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of the requirement for the degree
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to develop an effective U.S. civics and government curriculum for secondary level students that is designed to increase civic knowledge, intellectual and participatory skills, and positive civic dispositions.

The literature in this study indicates that America's founders believed education was the key to preserving a successful democracy. However, Americans do not seem to be learning what they should about civics and government in school. There is a need to reevaluate and improve civics education in America.

People who find U.S. civics and government education important examine how pedagogy can more successfully address this issue. In an effort to assist American educators to effectively teach students about civics, The National Assessment Governing Board constructed a framework to describe civic competency. Scholars indicate that there are three essential parts to U.S. government and civics education: civic knowledge, intellectual and participatory skills, and civic dispositions.

Data was collected via questionnaire from eighth and twelfth grade U.S. civics and government teachers from the Paradise Valley Unified School District. The questionnaire consisted of four portions: Demographics of Respondents, Civic Knowledge, Intellectual and Participatory Skills, and Civic Dispositions. Respondents were asked to provide their name, school, age, gender, and years of experience teaching U.S. civics and government.

Suggested national standards and correlating state standards for U.S. civics and government were listed for the civic knowledge portion of the questionnaire.

Respondents were asked to indicate which state standards they teach by circling “yes” or “no” by each standard. Respondents were given the opportunity to add up to two objectives for each question.

The intellectual and participatory skills portion listed three skills and correlating state standards. Respondents indicated if they employ such skills by circling “yes” or “no.”

The civic dispositions portion of the questionnaire used Likert scale questions. Respondents indicated each habit’s importance in their curriculum by using a scale, ranging from “not at all important” to “very important.” Respondents were given the opportunity to add up to two examples of activities for each subheading.

Findings include the fact that most eighth and twelfth grade U.S. civics and government teachers surveyed from the Paradise Valley Unified School District teach the suggested national standards and Arizona state standards. Further, most teachers surveyed find the five civic dispositions to be an “important” or “very important” part of their curriculum. Finally, all respondents included explanations of various concepts they find important to teach, which serves to enhance their instruction. The study creates a framework for developing an effective U.S. civics and government curriculum.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the Lord, Who gave me the strength and motivation to complete it, and to my husband, Jeff, and my children, Lacie and Braden, who patiently and lovingly supported me.

“I can do everything through Him who gives me strength” (Philippians 4:13).

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CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

The United States Constitution is “the supreme law of the land” (U.S. Constitution, Article VI, Section 2). It is the document against which every law, every judicial decision, every right, and every responsibility of U.S. citizens is measured. It was, at its inception, a radical new idea for government.

The U.S. Constitution was drafted in 1787, ratified in 1788, and put into effect in 1789. The original document was brief, having fewer than 5000 words. When it was drafted, the U.S. Constitution consisted of the Preamble, or the introductory paragraph, stating the document’s six goals, and the seven Articles or elements. Articles I, II, and III explain the powers and limitations of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the government, respectively. Article IV describes the relations between and among the states. Article V provides for making amendments or changes to the Constitution. Article VI lists general provisions or miscellaneous items. Article VII explains the process for ratification. The first ten amendments, The Bill of Rights, were added in 1791. Since then, seventeen more amendments have been ratified.

George Washington wrote a letter to Mrs. Catherine Macaulay Graham in 1790, stating that “[t]he establishment of our new government seemed to be the last great experiment, for promoting human happiness, by reasonable compact, in a civil society”

(image 293). This “last great experiment” has survived and thrived for over two hundred years.

Development of the Problem

There appears to be a lack of substantive U.S. Constitution curriculum available to educators to adequately instruct students. What is available seems to be insufficient. Hodge explains that “...[c]ivic education in schools is important for the survival of our constitutional democracy. Effective civic education is the primary means for teaching and learning the democratic values that undergird our system of ordered liberty, which provides majority rule with protection of minority rights. However, assessments of civic learning suggest that our educational programs fall short of desired levels of achievement among a majority of learners” (p. 3). Baldi, et al (2000), Hodge (1988), Rosen (2000), and Civic Responsibility (2000) declare that national assessments indicate American students generally have a shallow comprehension of civics information.

Need for the Study

A number of America’s founders, such as George Washington (1789), Thomas Jefferson (1816), and James Madison (Meyers, 1973), stressed the importance of education in preserving a successful democracy. Campbell (2001) reports, “Indeed, ‘producing better citizens’ was the original justification for creating America’s public schools” (p. 1). Campbell (2001) relates that a 1996 Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll indicates 86 percent of Americans surveyed report they feel “‘preparing students to be responsible citizens’ is a ‘very important’ purpose of the nation’s schools...”(p. 1).

Many state constitutions assert that a key objective of public education is to create effective citizens (Chaddock, 1999). Many American public schools, however, do not teach civics, and in fact, nineteen states do not require any civics education at all (Chaddock, 1999). Chaddock (1999), Hodge (1988), and Rosen (2000) agree that when civics is taught, it is often not taught effectively or that not enough time is devoted to the subject.

There is a need to study the components of effective U.S. civics and government education in order to develop an effective U.S. civic and government curriculum. For the continued health and well being of our civil society, it is important to effectively educate our students about U.S. civics and government. It is vital that our students understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to develop an effective U.S. civics and government curriculum for secondary level students that is designed to increase civic knowledge, intellectual and participatory skills, and positive civic dispositions.

Research Question

What are the components of an effective U.S. civics and government curriculum for secondary level students that is designed to increase civic knowledge, intellectual and participatory skills, and positive civic dispositions?

Definition of Terms

All terms except for “civic disposition,” “civic knowledge,” “effective U.S. civics curriculum” and “intellectual and participatory skills” are defined by Encarta Dictionary, 2001, Microsoft Corporation, <http://dictionary.msn.com>.

arbitrator - somebody who has the power and authority to settle a dispute or decide an issue (internet, np)

article - a section of a legal document that deals with a particular point (internet, np)

assimilate - to integrate somebody into a larger group, so that differences are minimized or eliminated, or become integrated in this way (internet, np)

citizenry - the citizens of a place or area collectively (internet, np)

civic - connected with the duties and obligations of belonging to a community (internet, np)

civic disposition – “the traits of private and public character essential to the preservation and improvement of American constitutional democracy” (Civics Subject Information, 1998, p. 2)

civic knowledge – “draws heavily on the 1994 National Standards for Civics and Government developed by the Center for Civic Education and covers the broad range of content that forms the basis of civic understanding” (Civics Subject Information, 1998, p. 2)

cynicism - cynical attitude, beliefs, character, or quality (internet, np)

democracy - a country with a government that has been elected freely and equally by all its citizens; a system of government based on the principle of majority decision-making (internet, np)

disconcerting - making somebody feel uneasy confusion and dismay (internet, np)

forbearer - ancestor, especially one who died a long time ago (internet, np)

intellectual and participatory skills – “those skills of mind and action that allow individuals to apply civic knowledge to good effect” (Civics Subject Information, 1998, p. 2)

legitimate - complying with the law, or under the law (internet, np)

pedagogy - the science or profession of teaching (internet, np)

proficient - having a high degree of skill in something (internet, np)

ratify - to give formal approval to something, usually an agreement negotiated by somebody else, in order that it can become valid or operative (internet, np)

substantive - with practical importance, value, or effect; substantial in amount or quantity (internet, np)

superficial - with little significance or substance (internet, np)

systematically - carried out in a methodical and organized manner (internet, np)

undergird - to provide something with support or reinforcement of any kind (internet, np)

CHAPTER TWO

THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Chapter two presents information concerning the components of effective civics and government education, the need for effective civics and government education, and the results of effective civics and government education.

The Components of Effective U.S. Civics and Government Education

Chaddock (1999) explains, “We’re looking at a civic disconnect in this country, and the question is: How can pedagogy narrow the divide” (p. 1)? In an effort to assist American educators effectively educate students about civics, The National Assessment Governing Board constructed a framework to describe civic competency (Civics Subject Information, 1998). Patrick (1997) states:

Participatory skills and civic disposition in combination with essential civic knowledge and intellectual skills constitutes a complete conception of civic education, which is a model for American students and their teachers. Students who master the knowledge and skills outlined in this framework document will have a greater sense of the effective and responsible roles they can play as citizens of the United States of America. (p. 3)

The first component of civic competency is civic knowledge. “The framework’s civic knowledge component draws heavily on the 1994 National Standards for Civics and Government developed by the Center for Civic Education and covers the broad range of

content that forms the basis of civic understanding” (Civics Subject Information, 1998, p.

2). The content component is summarized by five questions:

- I. What are civic life, politics, and government?
- II. What are the foundations of the American political system?
- III. How does the government established by the Constitution embody the purposes, values, and principles of American democracy?
- IV. What is the relationship of the United States to other nations and to world affairs?
- V. What are the roles of citizens in American democracy? (Civics Subject Information, 1998, p. 2)

When using the National Standards for Civics and Government model, there is a great body of civics information. Davis and Fernlund (1995) suggest “...that the content of civics needs to be carefully and systematically presented” (p. 4). They go on to explain that civic “...problems and issues are most effectively presented in current, often personal ways, using real life examples and cases” (p. 4). Davis and Fernlund (1995) also believe “...it is important to present substantive content in a way that challenges but does not overwhelm” (p. 4). Hodge (1988) says that civic education “means explicit and continuing study of the basic concepts and values underlying our democratic political community and constitutional order” (p. 1). Damon (2000) stresses, “To foster in our young a positive identification with their civil society, we need to give them compelling reasons to become attached. We must begin by telling students about the best of our traditions and the finest episodes in our history and why so many of their forbearers cherished those traditions enough to devote and even sacrifice their lives to preserve them” (p. 2).

The second component of civic competency is intellectual and participatory skills. “The intellectual and participatory skills component covers those skills of mind and action that allow individuals to apply civic knowledge to good effect” (Civics Subject

Information, 1998, p. 2). Patrick (1997) asserts, “Intellectual skills enable students to learn and apply civic knowledge in many and varied roles of citizens. These skills help citizens identify, describe, explain, and analyze information and arguments, as well as evaluate, take, and defend positions on public issues. Participatory skills enable citizens to monitor and influence public and civic life by working with others, clearly articulating ideas and interests, building coalitions, negotiating compromises, and managing conflicts” (pp. 2-3). The intellectual and participatory skills component is summarized by three objectives:

- Identifying and describing
- Explaining and analyzing
- Evaluating, taking, and defending positions (Civics Subject Information, 1998, p. 2)

Intellectual and participatory skills among students are vital to becoming effective citizens. Campbell (2001) explains, “Past studies have found civic activity while young to be a ‘pathway to participation’ in adulthood” (p. 3). Baldi, et al (2001) concur: “Students who participated in meetings or activities sponsored by any type of organization, even if they participated only a few times a month, had higher civic knowledge than students who did not participate at all. Participation in extracurricular activities sponsored by a school or community organization was positively related to civic achievement” (p. 1). Kim and Parks (1996) agree: “Active learning methods have been shown to be the most effective and the most likely to produce active citizens” (p. 2). Chaddock (1999) reminds Americans: “We’ve all but forgotten that public participation is the very soul of democratic citizenship. When you get involved in something meaningful, you make your life count” (p. 3). Schachter (1999) asserts, “An active citizenry is essential for agency performance and ... education is the key to improving

citizen interest; schools must stop teaching about civics and start having students participate in civic activities” (p. 1).

The third component of civic competency is civic dispositions. The term civic dispositions “refers to the traits of private and public character essential to the preservation and improvement of American constitutional democracy” (Civics Subject Information, 1998, p. 2). Patrick (1997) explains that civic dispositions “refers to the inclinations or ‘habits of the heart,’ as Alexis de Tocqueville called them, that pervade all aspects of citizenship” (p. 3). The component of civic dispositions is summarized by five objectives:

- Becoming an independent member of society
- Assuming the personal, political, and economic responsibilities of a citizen
- Respecting individual worth and human dignity
- Participating in civic affairs in an informed, thoughtful, and effective manner
- Promoting the healthy functioning of American constitutional democracy (Civics Subject Information, 1998, p. 2)

The Need for Effective U.S. Civics and Government Education

America’s founders believed that education was the key to preserving a successful democracy. George Washington said in his annual address to Congress on January 8, 1789, “...Every valuable end of Government is best answered by the enlightened confidence of the people: and by teaching the people themselves to know and to value their own rights” (image 125). Thomas Jefferson wrote in a letter to Charles Yancy (1816), “If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be” (image 734). Meyers (1973) relates that James Madison wrote in 1822:

A popular Government, without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a Prologue to a Farce or a Tragedy; or, perhaps both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance; and a people who mean to be their own Governors, must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives....

Learned Institutions ought to be favorite objects with every free people. They throw that light over the public mind which is the best security against crafty & dangerous encroachments on the public liberty. They are the nurseries of skilful Teachers for the schools distributed throughout the Community. They are themselves schools for the particular talents required for some of the Public Trusts, on the able execution of which the welfare of the people depends. They multiply the educated individuals from among whom the people may elect a due portion of their public Agents of every description; more especially of those who are to frame the laws by the just & equal spirit of which the great social purposes are to be answered. (pp. 437-438)

Drisko (1993) asserts, "Knowledge protects liberty, and liberty is the cornerstone of democracy. No government 'of the people [and] by the people,' can succeed unless the people are prepared with both the knowledge and the will to be self-governing. Our schools must ensure that each generation of young people develops the knowledge so essential to 'a people who mean to be their own governors'" (p. 2).

America has a rich history of valuing civics education. Bahmueller (1995) explains:

It has been recognized since founding of the American republic that education has a civic mission—to foster the development of informed, responsible, and humane citizens who participate in democratic governance and are committed to the values and principles of constitutional democracy as practiced in the United States. In this view, the well-being of a free society ultimately depends on the character of its citizens—on their moral and civic capacities and virtues, on their willingness to fulfill their roles competently as the ultimate arbiters of the purpose and direction of the body politic of which they are members. (p. 1)

Campbell (2001) reports, "Indeed, 'producing better citizens' was the original justification for creating America's public schools" (p. 1). Schachter (1999) explains, "Pre-1920 reports of the American Political Science Association (APSA), the National Education Association (NEA) and the Bureau of Municipal Research (BMR) among

others argue that improving civic education is necessary to combat cynicism and declining public engagement” (p. 1). Americans still agree that civics education is vital. “In a 1996 Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll, 86 percent of Americans reported that they feel ‘preparing students to be responsible citizens’ is a ‘very important’ purpose of the nation’s schools...” (Campbell, 2001, p. 1).

There is a need to reevaluate and improve civics education in America. Surprisingly, “Many public schools don’t even teach civics. While many state constitutions say that a major purpose of education is to produce effective citizens, in fact, 19 states require no civic education of any kind” (Chaddock, 1999, p. 1). Of the schools that are providing civic education, some researchers suggest that those education programs are sub par. Chaddock (1999) asserts, “Part of the problem is that even when civics is taught, it’s often not taught well” (p. 2). Hodge (1988) maintains that “assessments of civic learning suggest that our educational programs fall short of desired levels of achievement among a majority of learners” (p. 3). He further explains, “There is substantial evidence that more than half of young Americans lack knowledge, attitudes, and skills that leading civic educators believe they should have in order to be responsible citizens of a constitutional democracy. The superficial knowledge that young Americans have about government, constitutional history, and law is reflected in their civic attitudes” (p. 2). Rosen (2000) agrees, saying, “A recent National Assessment of Educational Progress Report Card revealed that students have only a superficial knowledge of civics (e.g, only 38% of eighth-graders knew that Congress makes laws)” (p. 1). The National Assessment of Educational Progress Report card also reports that

“75 percent of high school seniors aren’t ‘proficient’ in civics” (Civic Responsibility, 2000, p. 1).

Students’ lack of proficiency appears to be due to a lack of civics education. Hodge (1988) explains, “Students’ achievement of civic knowledge is related to the number of courses taken, the breadth and depth of topics studied, and the amount of time spent on lessons and homework” (p. 2). However, the results from the International IEA Civic Education Study found that “the majority of U.S. ninth-graders typically spent less than 1 hour a week on social studies homework” (Baldi, et al, 2001, p. 1). Further, Rosen (2000) explains that “...civics is a subject usually taught only in grades 4, 8, and 12, in conjunction with American government” (p. 1). He goes on to emphasize that “...to be meaningful, civics should be taught in every grade, everyday by teachers who understand the importance of civic education in the lives of their students” (p. 1). Baldi, et al (2001) reinforce the argument by saying, “Students who studied social studies in school almost every day had higher scores on all three civic achievement scales [of the International IEA Civic Education Study] than students who studied social studies once or twice a week or even less frequently” (p. 1). The National Standards for Civics and Government (1994) explains why more schools do not require that more time be spent in civics classes: “Inattention to civic education stems in part from the assumption that the knowledge and skills citizens need emerge as by-products of the study of other disciplines or as an outcome of schooling itself” (www.civiced.org/stads_toc_intro.html).

Kim and Parks (1996) assert that the “...lack of understanding may inhibit students’ motivation to participate in civic activities” (p. 1). Rosen (2000) explains, “...studies indicate that student interest in politics and government are at an all-time low”

(p. 1). Chaddock (1999) puts it this way: "What's driving calls for change is a growing concern that American students don't value citizenship. Johnny doesn't vote. Or bother to learn useful information about public life. Or grasp why a democracy might be worth fighting for. At a time when Americans are crisscrossing former communist states with advice on how to develop democracy, they're losing a generation at home. And experts say that poor teaching may be part of the problem" (p. 1). She goes on to explain, "Fewer than 1 in 3 young people (18 to 20 years old) voted in the [1996] presidential election" (p. 2). Rosenthal (2000) adds:

Voting has been on the decline for four decades now, and young people are especially uninterested. ... The attitudes of American youth on politics, citizenship, government and voting are explored in the New Millennium Project of the National Association of Secretaries of State. When it comes to participating in the democratic process or feeling connected to citizenship, politics and government, the disinterest of young people is frightening. (p. 1)

Damon (2000) agrees: "Voting among 18-24 year olds, their interest in political campaigns, even their willingness to run for school offices, have all declined sharply over the past twenty-five years" (p. 2). And what if young people do vote? "The results [of the National Assessment of Educational Progress] are disconcerting to education experts, since half of the seniors tested were already 18, and nearly all will be of voting age by election time. 'What these young voters know and don't know about civics and government will have an impact on all of us through the way they carry out this crucial responsibility of citizenship,' Diane Ravitch, a former assistant secretary of education, told the Washington Post" (Civic Responsibility, 2000, p. 1).

The Results of Effective U.S. Civics and Government Education

Effective U.S. civics and government education results in increased civic knowledge, intellectual and participatory skills, and positive civic dispositions on the part of students. “The preservation of American constitutional democracy depends upon a well educated citizenry participating actively in public affairs. To be well educated means not only to have knowledge about government and society, but also to possess the skills and civic dispositions necessary for effective participation” (Civics Subject Information, 1998, p. 1).

Social science researchers indicate that effective U.S. civics and government education for our students today is vital for the health and well being of our American democracy tomorrow. Civics educators believe that “in a democracy, the source of all authority—the legitimate basis of all power—is the collective body of the people, the citizens of the polity” (Patrick, 1999, p. 1). Patrick (1997) further states, “Sound civic education, the effective preparation of citizens to fulfill their responsibilities to sustain and enhance self-government, is an essential condition of an enduring constitutional democracy” (p. 3). In light of this assertion, the Sun-burst newsletter (1994) reports, “[W]e simply must have significant and direct civics content in ... school” (p. 4). Drisko (1993) states, “The most important mission of education in the United States is to support and strengthen our democratic way of life” (p. 1). Riley (2000) declares, “We need to teach children about history, civic responsibilities and government.... Learning about democracy helps children to become caring citizens who will make our nation stronger” (p. 1). Rosen (2000) asserts, “Civic education must be considered central not only to American education but to the well-being of our democratic society” (p. 3). Weiss, et al

(2001) emphasize, “As we move into the twenty-first century, our nation looks to its youth for confirmation that the government established over 200 years ago will remain relevant, vital, and strong” (p. 1). Patrick (1997) maintains, “A constitutional democracy, such as the United States of America, requires informed, effective, and responsible citizens for its maintenance and improvement” (p. 3). Hodge (1988) states that “...civic education in schools is important for the survival of our constitutional democracy. Effective civic education is the primary means for teaching and learning the democratic values that undergird our system of ordered liberty, which provides majority rule with protection of minority rights” (p. 3).

Summary

Chapter two presents information regarding the components of effective U.S. civics and government education, the need for effective U.S. civics and government education, and the results of effective U.S. civics and government education. Americans have believed since the country’s infancy that civics education is essential. Effective U.S. civics and government education is vital to a healthy, functioning democracy. However, there is a need to reevaluate and improve civics education in America. Effective U.S. civics and government education results in increased civic knowledge, intellectual and participatory skills, and positive civic dispositions on the part of students. In an effort to assist American educators effectively educate students about U.S. civics and government, The National Assessment Governing Board constructed a framework to describe civic competency (Civics Subject Information, 1998).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to develop an effective U.S. civics and government curriculum for secondary level students that is designed to increase civic knowledge, intellectual and participatory skills, and positive civic dispositions. Historical research, including The National Assessment Governing Board (1998), Civics Subject Information (1998), the 1994 National Standards for Civics and Government, the Center for Civic Education, and Patrick (1997), indicates that these components are important for effective U.S. civics and government education.

Research Design

The research design used for this study was descriptive research. Merriam and Simpson (2000) report, "The central focus of descriptive research is to examine facts about people, their opinions and attitudes" (p. 61). "Its purpose is to systematically describe the facts and characteristics of a given phenomenon, population, or area of interest" (p. 61).

A questionnaire was distributed to thirteen eighth grade U.S. civics and government teachers and twelve twelfth grade U.S. civics and government teachers in the Paradise Valley Unified School District for this study. The questionnaire included a section on demographics about the respondents, and three sections related to the three

main components of effective U.S. civics and government education: civic knowledge, intellectual and participatory skills, and civic dispositions.

The focus of the civic knowledge portion of the questionnaire was to discover which suggested national standards and correlating state standards and are taught in the curriculum currently used. The focus of the intellectual and participatory skills portion of the questionnaire was to discover if respondents employ activities that incorporate the skills of identifying and describing, explaining and analyzing, and evaluating, taking, and defending positions. The focus of the civic dispositions portion of the questionnaire was to identify which of five civic habits respondents utilize as part of their curriculum and to what extent.

The questionnaire was designed to compare what is thought to be the three main components of effective U.S. civics and government education, to what is currently being taught, thus creating a framework for developing an effective U.S. civics and government curriculum.

Population

The population for this study was thirteen eighth grade U.S. civics and government teachers and twelve twelfth grade U.S. civics and government teachers who teach in the Paradise Valley Unified School District. Teachers were not chosen according to gender. Questionnaires were sent to teachers at the following middle schools: Desert Shadows, Shea, and Vista Verde. Questionnaires were sent to teachers at the following high schools: Horizon, North Canyon, Paradise Valley, and Pinnacle.

Eighth and twelfth grade U.S. civics and government teachers were chosen because those are the grades when students are taught U.S. civics and government.

Assumptions and Limitations

It is assumed that resources cited in research are correct. It is assumed that respondents understood questions similarly. It is assumed that respondents answered questions honestly.

A limitation of this study is the geographical area where the respondents teach. The study is limited to twenty-five respondents from one school district and seven schools. Another limitation is the number of surveys completed and returned.

Instrumentation

The instrumentation for gathering data was a questionnaire consisting of four sections. A questionnaire was distributed to thirteen eighth grade U.S. civics and government teachers and twelve twelfth grade U.S. civics and government teachers in the Paradise Valley Unified School District for this study. The questionnaire included a section on demographics of the respondents and three sections related to the three main components of effective U.S. civics and government education: civic knowledge, intellectual and participatory skills, and civic dispositions.

The focus of the civic knowledge portion of the questionnaire was to discover which suggested national standards and correlating state standards are taught in the curriculum currently used. Suggested national standards and correlating state standards for U.S. civics and government were listed. Respondents were instructed to circle "yes"

or “no” to indicate if they taught the standards listed. Space was provided following questions to add up to two other objectives that they, as teachers, might also include under each of the five subheadings.

The focus of the intellectual and participatory skills portion of the questionnaire was to discover if respondents employ activities that incorporate the skills of identifying and describing, explaining and analyzing, and evaluating, taking, and defending positions. Respondents were to indicate if they employ such skills by circling “yes” or “no” next to state standards that correlated to the three intellectual and participatory skills.

The focus of the civic dispositions portion of the questionnaire was to identify which of five civic habits respondents utilized as part of their curriculum and to what extent. Respondents were to indicate each habit’s importance in their curriculum by using a Likert scale response, ranging from “not at all important” to “very important.” Respondents were given the option to add up to two examples of activities for each subheading that they, as teachers, might employ in their curriculum.

Procedure

The questionnaire was distributed to thirteen eighth grade U.S. civics and government teachers and twelve twelfth grade U.S. civics and government teachers who teach in the Paradise Valley Unified School District. The questionnaire was sent out on Monday, February 25, 2002. A letter was included explaining the purpose of the questionnaire. Respondents were thanked in advance for their assistance, and explained that their expertise was highly valued. The questionnaire was collected by Friday, March

8, 2002. Self-addressed stamped envelopes were provided for respondents. The questionnaire was analyzed by grouping, comparing, and contrasting answers. Original examples offered by respondents of civic knowledge, intellectual and participatory skills, and civic dispositions were compiled. Respondents were promised a copy of the results as a motivator to complete the survey.

Method of Analysis

Suggested national standards and correlating state standards for U.S. civics and government were listed for the civic knowledge portion of the questionnaire. Respondents were asked to indicate which state standards they teach by circling “yes” or “no” by each standard. Respondents were encouraged to add up to two objectives they teach for each question. Results were to indicate which standards are being taught and which are being neglected in the Paradise Valley Unified School District. Respondents’ added objectives were to indicate what other pieces of information teachers in the Paradise Valley Unified School District find valuable in U.S. civics and government education.

The intellectual and participatory skills portion listed three skills and correlating state standards. Respondents indicated if they employ such skills by circling “yes” or “no.” Results indicate respondents employ activities that incorporate the skills of identifying and describing, explaining and analyzing, and evaluating, taking, and defending positions.

The civic dispositions portion of the questionnaire used a Likert scale response for this set of questions. Respondents identified each habit’s importance in their curriculum

by using a scale, ranging from “not at all important” to “very important.” Respondents were encouraged to add up to two examples of activities for each subheading.

Data was analyzed by grouping and comparing like answers. Like answers indicate current trends in U.S. civics and government education in the Paradise Valley Unified School District. Original examples offered by respondents of civic knowledge and civic dispositions were compiled and indicate what activities and applications teachers in the Paradise Valley Unified School District find valuable in civics education.

This study presents findings regarding the three main components of effective U.S. civics and government education. It indicates the extent to which state standards in U.S. civics and government education are being taught, what other objectives are valued by teachers, current trends in civics education, and what activities and application are valued by teachers. The study creates a framework for developing an effective U.S. civics and government curriculum.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Demographics

The data presented below is the result of compiling information from a group of three eighth grade U.S. civics and government teachers from the Paradise Valley Unified School District and is presented in Table I. Additionally, data is presented from a second group of teachers, eight twelfth grade U.S. civics and government teachers from the Paradise Valley Unified School District. The twelfth grade data is found in Table II.

The group of eighth grade teachers consisted of two females and one male. Experience teaching eighth grade U.S. civics and government ranged from four to fourteen years. The group of twelfth grade teachers consisted of three females and six males. Experience teaching twelfth grade U.S. civics and government ranged from one to thirty years.

The survey for eighth grade teachers contained twenty-six questions. The survey for twelfth grade teachers contained thirty-four questions. Both questionnaires included sections of personal demographics of teachers, civic knowledge, intellectual and participatory skills, and civic dispositions. The survey was distributed to determine the extent to which state standards in U.S. civics and government education are being taught, what other objectives are valued by teachers, current trends in civics education, and what activities and application are valued by teachers.

Findings

Table I demonstrates responses by eighth grade U.S. civics and government teachers regarding topics taught concerning civic knowledge.

Table I: Eighth Grade U.S. Civics and Government

Civic Knowledge

Questions	Yes	No
1. Suggested National Standard: What are the foundations of the American political system?		
I teach the following: Describe political philosophies and concepts of government that became the foundation for the American Revolution and United States government (Arizona State Standard 2SS-E3).	3	0
I teach the following: Identify concepts of government as expressed in the United States Constitution and explain the powers granted to the three branches of government and those reserved to the states (Arizona State Standard 2SS-E4).	3	0
2. Suggested National Standard: How does the government established by the Constitution embody the purposes, values, and principles of American democracy?		
I teach the following: Identify and describe a citizen's fundamental constitutional rights (Arizona State Standard 2SS-E5).	3	0
3. Suggested National Standard: What are the roles of citizens in American democracy?		
I teach the following: Explain the obligations and responsibilities of citizenship (Arizona State Standard 2SS-E7).	3	0
I teach the following: Explain the significance of famous speeches to the duties of citizenship (Arizona State Standard 2SS-E8).	3	0
4. Suggested National Standard: What are civic life, politics, and government? (There are no Arizona state standards that specifically apply to this suggested national standard.)		
I define the following: civic life	2	1
I define the following: politics	3	0
I define the following: government	3	0
5. Suggested National Standard: What is the relationship of the United States to other nations and to world affairs. (There are no Arizona state standards that specifically apply to this suggested national standard.)		
6. The following Arizona state standard does not apply to any suggested national standard.		
I teach the following: Describe the structure, functions, and powers of the Arizona state and local governments and their relationship to the federal government (Arizona State Standard 2SS-E6).	1	2

Table II demonstrates responses by eighth grade U.S. civics and government teachers regarding topics taught concerning intellectual and participatory skills.

**Table II: Eighth Grade U.S. Civics and Government
Intellectual and Participatory Skills**

Questions	Yes	No
1. Identifying and describing		
I teach the following: Describe political philosophies and concepts of government that became the foundation for the American Revolution and United States government (Arizona State Standard 2SS-E3).	3	0
I teach the following: Identify concepts of government as expressed in the United States Constitution and explain the powers granted to the three branches of government and those reserved to the states (Arizona State Standard 2SS-E4).	3	0
I teach the following: Identify and describe a citizen's fundamental constitutional rights (Arizona State Standard 2SS-E5).	3	0
I teach the following: Describe the structure, functions, and powers of the Arizona state and local governments and their relationship to the federal government (Arizona State Standard 2SS-E6).	1	2
2. Explaining and analyzing		
I teach the following: Explain the obligations and responsibilities of citizenship (Arizona State Standard 2SS-E7).	3	0
I teach the following: Explain the significance of famous speeches to the duties of citizenship (Arizona State Standard 2SS-E8).	3	0
3. Evaluating, taking, and defending positions (There are no state standards that correspond to this item.)		

Tables I and II show that eighth grade U.S. civics and government teachers surveyed in the Paradise Valley Unified School District teach nearly all of the suggested national standards and correlating state standards. There was one "yes" response and two "no" responses on Arizona State Standard 2SS-E6: "Describe the structure, functions, and powers of the Arizona state and local governments and their relationship to the federal government." There was two "yes" responses and one "no" response on the

suggested national standard, defining “civic life.” Respondents answered “yes” to all other suggested national standards and correlating state standards.

Table III demonstrates responses by eighth Grade U.S. civics and government teachers regarding the importance civic dispositions in their curriculum.

Table III: Eighth Grade U.S. Civics and Government

Civic Dispositions

Civic Dispositions or Habits	Not At All Important	Not Very Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
1. Becoming an independent member of society	0	0	0	2	1
2. Assuming the personal, political, and economic responsibilities of a citizen	0	0	0	1	2
3. Respecting individual worth and human dignity	0	0	0	1	2
4. Participating in an informed, thoughtful, and effective manner	0	0	0	2	1
5. Promoting the healthy functioning of American constitutional democracy	0	0	0	0	3

Table III indicates that eighth grade U.S. civics and government teachers surveyed in the Paradise Valley Unified School District found each of the five Civic Dispositions “important” or “very important” to teach. Two teachers found disposition one, “becoming an independent member of society,” “important” and one found it “very important.” One teacher found disposition two, “assuming the personal, political, and economic responsibilities of a citizen,” “important,” while two found it “very important.”

One teacher found disposition three, “respecting individual worth and human dignity,” “important,” while two found it “very important.” Two teachers found disposition four, “participating in an informed, thoughtful, and effective manner,” “important,” while one found it “very important.” Three teachers found disposition five, “promoting the healthy functioning of American constitutional democracy,” “very important.”

Table IV demonstrates responses by twelfth grade U.S. civics and government teachers regarding topics taught concerning civic knowledge.

Table IV: Twelfth Grade U.S. Civics and Government

Civic Knowledge

Questions	Yes	No
1. Suggested National Standard: What are the foundations of the American political system?		
I teach the following: Explain the philosophical foundations of the American political system in terms of the inalienable rights of man and the purpose of the government (Arizona State Standard 2SS-P1).	9	0
I teach the following: Analyze why and how the United States Constitution was created by the framers (Arizona State Standard 2SS-P3).	9	0
I teach the following: Analyze the structure, powers, and roles of the legislative branch of the United States government (Arizona State Standard 2SS-P4).	9	0
I teach the following: Analyze the structure, powers, and roles of the executive branch of the United States government (Arizona State Standard 2SS-P5).	9	0
I teach the following: Analyze the structure, powers, and roles of the judicial branch of the United States government, including landmark United States Supreme Court decisions (Arizona State Standard 2SS-P6).	9	0
2. Suggested National Standard: How does the government established by the Constitution embody the purposes, values, and principles of American democracy?		
I teach the following: Analyze the historical sources and ideals of the structure of the United States government (Arizona State Standard 2SS-P2).	8	0
I teach the following: Analyze the division and sharing of power within the federal system of government (Arizona State Standard 2SS-P7).	8	0

Questions Continued		Yes	No
I teach the following: Analyze the rights, protections, limits, and freedoms included in the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights (Arizona State Standard 2SS-P8).		8	0
3. Suggested National Standard: What is the relationship of the United States to other nations and to world affairs?			
I teach the following: Compare the United States system of politics and government to other systems of the world (Arizona State Standard 2SS-P11).		7	2
4. Suggested National Standard: What are the roles of citizens in American democracy?			
I teach the following: Demonstrate skills related to the duties and obligations of citizenship needed to participate in America's government (Arizona State Standard 2SS-P10).		8	0
5. Suggested National Standard: What are civic life, politics, and government? (There are no Arizona state standards that specifically apply to this suggested national standard.)			
I define the following: civic life		7	2
I define the following: politics		9	0
I define the following: government		9	0
6. The following Arizona state standard does not apply to any suggested national standard: I teach the following: Analyze the structure, power, and organization of Arizona's government as expressed in the Arizona Constitution (Arizona State Standard 2SS-P9).		4	5

Table V demonstrates responses by twelfth grade U.S. civics and government teachers regarding topics taught concerning civic knowledge.

Table V: Twelfth Grade U.S. Civics and Government

Intellectual and Participatory Skills

Questions	Yes	No
1. Identifying and describing		
I teach the following: Compare the United States system of politics and government to other systems of the world (Arizona State Standard 2SS-P11).	7	2
2. Explaining and analyzing		
I teach the following: Explain the philosophical foundations of the American political system in terms of the inalienable rights of man and the purpose of the government (Arizona State Standard 2SS-P1).	9	0
I teach the following: Analyze the historical sources and ideals of the structure of the United States government (Arizona State Standard 2SS-P2).	8	0
I teach the following: Analyze why and how the United States Constitution was created by the framers (Arizona State Standard 2SS-P3).	9	0
I teach the following: Analyze the structure, powers, and roles of the legislative branch of the United States government (Arizona State Standard 2SS-P4).	9	0
I teach the following: Analyze the structure, powers, and roles of the executive branch of the United States government (Arizona State Standard 2SS-P5).	9	0
I teach the following: Analyze the structure, powers, and roles of the judicial branch of the United States government, including landmark United States Supreme Court decisions (Arizona State Standard 2SS-P6).	9	0
I teach the following: Analyze the division and sharing of power within the federal system of government (Arizona State Standard 2SS-P7).	8	0
I teach the following: Analyze the rights, protections, limits, and freedoms included in the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights (Arizona State Standard 2SS-P8).	8	0
I teach the following: Analyze the structure, power, and organization of Arizona's government as expressed in the Arizona Constitution (Arizona State Standard 2SS-P9).	4	5
3. Evaluating, taking, and defending positions. (There are no state standards that correspond to this item.)		

Tables IV and V show that twelfth grade U.S. civics and government teachers surveyed in the Paradise Valley Unified School District teach nearly all of the suggested national standards and correlating state standards. There were seven “yes” responses and two “no” responses for Arizona State Standard 2SS-P11: “Compare the United States system of politics and government to other systems of the world.” There were seven “yes” responses and two “no” responses for the suggested national standard, defining “civic life.” Respondents answered “yes” to all other state standards and suggested national standards, except one. There were four “yes” responses and five “no” responses for Arizona state standard 2SS-P9: “Analyze the structure, power, and organization of Arizona’s government as expressed in the Arizona Constitution.” Regarding this standard, one respondent explained, “I teach portions of this in [government]. This area is covered in our Arizona history/contemporary issues courses and talked about some in American History. As a one semester course, we are limited in time on what and how long we spend on any one topic.” One respondent did not give an answer for Arizona State Standards 2SS-P2, 2SS-P7, and 2SS-P8.

Table VI demonstrates responses by twelfth grade U.S. civics and government teachers regarding the importance civic dispositions in their curriculum.

Table VI: Twelfth Grade U.S. Civics and Government

Civic Dispositions

Civic Dispositions or Habits	Not At All Important	Not Very Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
1. Becoming an independent member of society	0	0	0	5	4
2. Assuming the personal, political, and economic responsibilities of a citizen	0	0	0	3	6
3. Respecting individual worth and human dignity	1	0	1	2	5
4. Participating in an informed, thoughtful, and effective manner	0	0	0	3	6
5. Promoting the healthy functioning of American constitutional democracy	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	0	3	5

Table VI shows that most twelfth grade U.S. civics and government teachers surveyed in the Paradise Valley Unified School District finds each of the five Civic Dispositions “important” or “very important” to teach. Five teachers find disposition one, “becoming an independent member of society,” “important,” while four find it “very important” to teach. Three teachers find disposition two, “assuming the personal, political, and economic responsibilities of a citizen,” “important,” while six find it “very important” to teach. One teacher finds disposition three, “respecting individual worth and human dignity,” “not at all important,” while one finds it “somewhat important, two

find it “important,” and five find it “very important” to teach. Three teachers find disposition four, “participating in an informed, thoughtful, and effective manner,” “important,” while six find it “very important” to teach. One teacher indicates that that disposition five, “promoting the healthy functioning of American constitutional democracy,” is “not at all” to “not very important,” while three find it “important” and five find it “very important.”

Eighth grade U.S. civics and government teachers surveyed from the Paradise Valley Unified School District offered concepts relating to the suggested national standards that they find important to teach. The five suggested national standards are written in the form of a question to be answered by the teacher and students. Suggested national standard one reads, “What are the foundations of the American political system?” One teacher explains that it is significant to teach about “propaganda/spin doctoring of politicians.” Another teaches “types of governments, i.e. monarchy, dictatorship, etc. and [the] writings of Locke and Montesque.”

Suggested national standard two says, “How does the government established by the Constitution embody the purposes, values, and principles of American democracy?” One teacher explains the “election process” to the class. Another says, “I conduct a 2-3 week moot court unit completely run by the students.” A different teacher explains the “Bill of Rights and what rights we as citizens are guaranteed [and] the separation of powers.”

Suggested national standard three says, “What are the roles of citizens in American democracy?” One teacher explains “voting and participation” and “[Martin Luther King, jr.’s] ‘I Have a Dream’ speech.”

Suggested national standard four reads, “What are civic life, politics, and government?” One teacher encourages “participation as a citizen in the political process” and teaches the “role of political parties” and “types of government systems.”

Suggested national standard five says, “What is the relationship of the United States to other nations and to world affairs?” One teacher teaches “comparative governments” and explains that “one semester of world geography ties in with this.” Another teacher utilizes “current events each week, CNN Newsroom and various news magazines, which have [a] national and international focus.”

Civic disposition one is “becoming an independent member of society.” One eighth grade U.S. civics and government teacher encourages “learning critical thinking skills by analyzing editorial cartoons and newspaper articles for current events.”

Civic disposition three is “respecting individual worth and dignity. One teacher uses the “Classroom of Difference Program.”

Civic disposition four is “participating in an informed, thoughtful, and effective manner.” One eighth grade teacher reinforces this when students are “following basic campus and classroom rules.”

Twelfth grade U.S. civics and government teachers surveyed from the Paradise Valley Unified School District offered concepts relating to the suggested national standards that they find important to teach. The five suggested national standards are written in the form of a question to be answered by the teacher and students. The first suggested national standard reads, “What are the foundations of the American political system?” One teacher concentrates on “intense study on the Constitution—why it is a living document!” Another teacher utilizes a “Supreme Court decisions Power Point

assignment” and discusses the “structure of [the] national and Arizona court system.”

Another teacher uses “in-depth analysis of Supreme Court cases” and “mock trials.” That

teacher also discusses “congressional hearings” and utilizes the “‘We the People’

format.” A different teacher finds it important to teach about “public opinion: polling,

media, editorialism and political parties” and also concentrates on “civil liberties/rights.”

Another commented on suggested national standard one by saying there should be

emphasis on “more state and local government” and “less emphasis on 1960s issues.”

One teacher explores the “role of political parties” and the “role of the media.” A

different teacher discusses “comparative governments” and the “Bill of Rights and other

civil rights.”

The second suggested national standard says, “How does the government established by the Constitution embody the purposes, values, and principles of American democracy?” One teacher emphasizes “first amendment rights, fourth amendment, and federalism.” Another teacher finds it important to explain the “Bill of Rights—heavily concentrated.”

The third suggested national standard reads, “What is the relationship of the United States to other nations and to world affairs?” One teacher replies, “Suggest another course of comparative government be offered!” Another teacher simply says, “limited discussion.” A different teacher discusses “mainly a comparison to [the] British system and [a] brief, but overlapping, comparison to system[s] which restrict individual liberties.” Another teaches the “importance of our foreign policies towards other nations.” Finally, one teacher offers “differences between capitalist and communist governments” and “methods of diplomacy.”

The fourth suggested national standard says, “What are the roles of citizens in American democracy?” One teacher responds, “voting” and “jury duty.” Three teachers find “voter registration” important. One teacher teaches “involvement in [the] voting process by having students work as student clerks in city elections.” Two teachers explain “how to become a U.S. citizen” and “immigration and naturalization.” One teacher finds it important to teach about “voting,” “support of freedom of thought,” and “jury duty.”

The fifth suggested national standard says, “What are civic life, politics, and government?” One teacher explains the “concept of politics as it relates to today’s diverse society.” Another teacher discusses “utilization of votenet.com” and “analysis of political ideologies and political socialization factors.” Finally, a different teacher explains “reasons for government,” “advantages of citizen participation,” and “appropriate uses of power.”

Twelfth grade U.S. civics and government teachers surveyed from the Paradise Valley Unified School District offered concepts relating to civic dispositions that they find important to teach. The first civic disposition is “becoming an independent member of society.” One teacher demonstrates this with an “emphasis on education and how it will aid in gaining this independence.” Another teacher utilizes “voter registration” and “current event discussion.” Still another uses “discussions of traffic” and “studies of plea-bargaining and juvenile hall.” A different teacher uses “volunteerism” and “simulations.”

The second civic disposition is “assuming the personal, political, and economic responsibilities of a citizen.” One teacher uses “daily discussions on current events and

why it is important to be actively involved.” Two teachers discuss “voter registration.” One teacher encourages “knowledge of the legal system.” A different teacher utilizes “current events” and “case studies (10 major crimes).” Another teacher encourages “volunteerism” and uses “simulations.”

The third civic disposition is “respecting individual worth and human dignity.” One teacher commented on this disposition by saying, “always discuss equality and respect for others.” Another teacher utilizes “civil rights activities” and engages “rules of respect and acceptance of others.” A different teacher enjoys “studying diversity.”

The fourth civic disposition is “participating in an informed, thoughtful, and effective manner.” One teacher responded and explained that they use “class discussions” and “Socratic seminars.” A different teacher utilizes “role play/simulations” and “discussions/debates.” The same teacher utilizes “essays on various topics.” Another teacher uses “participation in political activism.”

The fifth civic disposition is “promoting the healthy functioning of American constitutional democracy.” One teacher utilizes “analysis of editorials [regarding] civic duty” and “letters to Congress.” A different teacher uses “role play/simulations.” Another teacher encourages students to “be critical consumers of the media.”

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study is to develop an effective U.S. civics and government curriculum for secondary level students that is designed to increase civic knowledge, intellectual and participatory skills, and positive civic dispositions.

The literature in this study indicates that America's founders believed education is the key to preserving a successful democracy. However, Americans do not seem to be learning what they should about civics and government in school. A recent National Assessment of Educational Progress Report Card, reported in 2000, reveals that students have only a shallow knowledge of civics. It indicates, for example, that 75 percent of high school seniors are not 'proficient' in civics.

There is a need to reevaluate and improve U.S. civics and government education in America. Surprisingly, many public schools do not teach civics. Many state constitutions say that a main goal of education is to create effective citizens. However, nineteen states require no U.S. civic or government education. Of the schools that are providing civic education, some researchers suggest that those education programs are sub par.

People who find U.S. civics and government education important examine how pedagogy can more successfully teach America's children. In an effort to assist

American educators to effectively teach students about U.S. civics and government, The National Assessment Governing Board constructed a framework to describe civic competency. Scholars indicate that there are three essential parts to U.S. government and civics education: civic knowledge, intellectual and participatory skills, and civic dispositions.

Data was collected via questionnaire from eighth and twelfth grade U.S. civics and government teachers from the Paradise Valley Unified School District. The questionnaire consisted of four portions: Demographics of Respondents, Civic Knowledge, Intellectual and Participatory Skills, and Civic Dispositions. Respondents were asked to provide their name, school, age, gender, and years of experience teaching U.S. civics and government.

Suggested national standards and correlating state standards for U.S. civics and government were listed for the civic knowledge portion of the questionnaire. Respondents were asked to indicate which state standards they teach by circling “yes” or “no” by each standard. Respondents were given the opportunity to add up to two objectives for each question.

The intellectual and participatory skills portion listed three skills and correlating state standards. Respondents indicated if they employ such skills by circling “yes” or “no.”

The civic dispositions portion of the questionnaire used Likert scale questions. Respondents indicated each habit’s importance in their curriculum by using a scale, ranging from “not at all important” to “very important.” Respondents were given the opportunity to add up to two examples of activities for each subheading.

The questionnaire was distributed to thirteen eighth grade U.S. civics and government teachers and twelve twelfth grade U.S. civics and government teachers who teach in the Paradise Valley Unified School District. The questionnaire was sent out on Monday, February 25, 2002. A letter explaining the purpose of the questionnaire accompanied it. Respondents were thanked in advance for their assistance. It was explained that their expertise is highly valued. The questionnaire was collected by Friday, March 8, 2002. Self-addressed stamped envelopes were provided for respondents. The questionnaire was analyzed by grouping, comparing, and contrasting answers. Original examples offered by respondents of civic knowledge, intellectual and participatory skills, and civic dispositions were compiled. Respondents will receive a copy of the results as a motivator to complete the survey.

Findings include the fact that most eighth and twelfth grade U.S. civics and government teachers surveyed from the Paradise Valley Unified School District teach the suggested national standards and correlating Arizona state standards. Further, most teachers surveyed find the five civic dispositions to be an “important” or “very important” part of their curriculum. Finally, all respondents included explanations of various concepts they find important to teach, which serves to enhance their instruction.

Conclusions

It can be concluded that by and large, teachers surveyed in the Paradise Valley Unified School District teach the suggested national standards and Arizona state standards. Most also find it “important” or “very important” to teach about and encourage the five civic dispositions. Many teachers employ interesting and engaging

ways to teach U.S. civics and government. The one item that seems to be neglected by twelfth grade teachers is Arizona State Standard 2SS-P9: “Analyze the structure, power, and organization of Arizona’s government as expressed in the Arizona Constitution.” This appears to be due to lack of time available and the fact that it is covered, if briefly, in other courses.

With a few exceptions, Arizona state standards correspond well with these three elements: the five suggested national standards, the three intellectual and participatory skills, and the five civic dispositions. The fourth suggested national standard has no Arizona state standard for eighth grade or twelfth grade. That suggested national standard is “What are civic life, politics, and government?” The third intellectual and participatory skill has no state standard for eighth grade or for twelfth grade. That skill is “evaluating, taking, and defending positions.”

There is one Arizona state standard that has no suggested national standard. For eighth grade, it is Arizona State Standard 2SS-E6: “Describe the structure, functions, and powers of the Arizona state and local governments and their relationship to the federal government.” For twelfth grade, it is Arizona State Standard 2SS-P9: “Analyze the structure, power, and organization of Arizona’s government as expressed in the Arizona Constitution.” One eighth grade teacher said that they do not teach it, while the other said yes, “but [I] do not have time and materials to get into all of it.” Four twelfth grade teachers teach the state standard, and four do not. One who does not commented, “Concentrate only on American national government and federalism. No details on Arizona state government.” Regarding this standard, one respondent explained, “I teach portions of this in [government]. This area is covered in our Arizona

history/contemporary issues courses and talked about some in American History. As a one semester course, we are limited in time on what and how long we spend on any one topic.” One respondent did not give an answer for Arizona State Standards 2SS-P2, 2SS-P7, and 2SS-P8.

Recommendations

It is recommended that any U.S. civics and government curriculum include these three elements: the five suggested national standards, the three intellectual and participatory skills, and the five civic dispositions. With a few exceptions, Arizona state standards correspond well with the three elements. It is recommended Arizona state standards address the fourth suggested national standard: “What are civic life, politics, and government?” It is further recommended that Arizona state standards address the third intellectual and participatory skill: “evaluating, taking, and defending positions.” It follows that a curriculum should be developed to be used by teachers in Arizona that fully addresses these three elements: the five national standards, the three intellectual and participatory skills and the five civic dispositions.

Arizona State Standards 2SS-E6 for eighth grade and 2SS-P9 for twelfth grade regarding Arizona state government should be reconsidered. U.S. civics and government teachers either do not teach the information or do, but find it difficult to teach it thoroughly. It is recommended that Arizona state government may be highlighted briefly in a U.S. civics and government curriculum, but should be taught in detail as a separate course.

It is recommended that further study be devoted to state government curriculum and how it might be part of or excluded from U.S. civics and government curriculum. The study should determine suggested elements for a state government curriculum. It should also find out if thoroughly covering the state government curriculum enhances or detracts from the U.S. civics and government curriculum, taking into account the limited time provided for teaching.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE: FOR TEACHERS OF 8TH GRADE U.S. GOVERNMENT/CIVICS

Questionnaire: For Teachers of 8th Grade U.S. Government/Civics

Part I: Demographics of Respondents: Tell me about you.

Directions: Please complete questions 1-5 by filling in the blanks.

1. Name: _____
2. School: _____
3. Age: _____ 4. Gender: _____
5. Years of experience teaching 8th grade U.S. government/civics: _____

Part II: Civic Knowledge:

A nation-wide committee comprised of more than three thousand teachers, scholars, parents, elected officials, and representatives of business and industry were surveyed regarding U.S. government and civics education. The committee determined that there should be five national standards for civics and government education and published them as the "National Standards for Civics and Government." The five suggested national standards are stated in the form of a question below. The Arizona state teaching standards for 8th grade U.S. government and civics are listed under the suggested national standards to which they apply. The Arizona state teaching standards are listed in this way in order to show which suggested national standards they support.

1. Suggested National Standard: What are the foundations of the American political system?

Directions: Please indicate the Arizona state standards that you teach as part of your curriculum by circling yes or no.

Yes / No, I teach the following: Describe political philosophies and concepts of government that became the foundation for the American Revolution and United States government (Arizona State Standard 2SS-E3).

Yes / No, I teach the following: Identify concepts of government as expressed in the United States Constitution and explain the powers granted to the three branches of government and those reserved to the states (Arizona State Standard 2SS-E4).

- **Optional: Please list up to two more concepts that you teach for the suggested national standard to indicate what you find important to teach.**

2. **Suggested National Standard:** How does the government established by the Constitution embody the purposes, values, and principles of American democracy?

Directions: Please indicate the Arizona state standard that you teach as part of your curriculum by circling yes or no.

Yes / No, I teach the following: Identify and describe a citizen's fundamental constitutional rights (Arizona State Standard 2SS-E5).

- **Optional: Please list up to two more concepts that you teach the suggested national standard to indicate what you find important to teach.**

3. **Suggested National Standard:** What are the roles of citizens in American democracy?

Yes / No, I teach the following: Explain the obligations and responsibilities of citizenship (Arizona State Standard 2SS-E7).

Yes / No, I teach the following: Explain the significance of famous speeches to the duties of citizenship (Arizona State Standard 2SS-E8).

- **Optional: Please list up to two more concepts that you teach for the suggested national standard to indicate what you find important to teach.**

4. Suggested National Standard: What are civic life, politics, and government?
(There are no Arizona state standards that specifically apply to this suggested national standard.)

Please indicate the terms that you define as part of your curriculum by circling yes or no.)

Yes / No, I define the following: civic life

Yes / No, I define the following: politics

Yes / No, I define the following: government

- **Optional: Please list up to two more concepts that you teach for the suggested national standard to indicate what you find important to teach.**

5. Suggested National Standard: What is the relationship of the United States to other nations and to world affairs? (There are no Arizona state standards that specifically apply to this suggested national standard.)

- **Optional: Please list up to two more concepts that you teach for the suggested national standard to indicate what you find important to teach.**
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6. (The following Arizona state standard does not apply to any suggested national standard. **Please indicate if you teach the state standard by circling yes or no.**)

Yes / No, I teach the following: Describe the structure, functions, and powers of the Arizona state and local governments and their relationship to the federal government (Arizona State Standard 2SS-E6).

Part III: Civic Dispositions:

According to the project management team for the National Assessment of Education Progress in Civics, it was determined that civic knowledge was interrelated with civic dispositions, which are characterized by one's proclivity to operate as a responsible citizen, participating in civic affairs. Alexis de Tocqueville called these civic dispositions the "habits of the heart."

Directions: Please indicate the importance in your curriculum by circling the appropriate number below, following each disposition or habit.

1= Not at all important 2= Not very important 3= Somewhat important
4= Important 5= Very Important

1. Becoming an independent member of society

1 2 3 4 5

- **Optional:** Please list up to two activities you use to encourage this civic disposition.

2. Assuming the personal, political, and economic responsibilities of a citizen

1 2 3 4 5

- **Optional:** Please list up to two activities you use to encourage this civic disposition.

3. Respecting individual worth and human dignity

1 2 3 4 5

- **Optional: Please list up to two activities you use to encourage this civic disposition.**

4. Participating in an informed, thoughtful, and effective manner

1 2 3 4 5

- **Optional: Please list up to two activities you use to encourage this civic disposition.**

5. Promoting the healthy functioning of American constitutional democracy

1 2 3 4 5

- **Optional: Please list up to two activities you use to encourage this civic disposition.**

Thank you for your help!

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE: FOR TEACHERS OF 12TH GRADE U.S. GOVERNMENT/CIVICS

Questionnaire: For Teachers of 12th Grade U.S. Government/Civics

Part I: Demographics of Respondents: Tell me about you.

Directions: Please complete questions 1-5 by filling in the blanks.

1. Name: _____
2. School: _____
3. Age: _____
4. Years of experience teaching 12th grade U.S. government/civics: _____
5. Gender: _____

Part II: Civic Knowledge

A nation-wide committee comprised of more than three thousand teachers, scholars, parents, elected officials, and representatives of business and industry were surveyed regarding U.S. government and civics education. The committee determined that there should be five national standards for civics and government education and published them as the "National Standards for Civics and Government." The five suggested national standards are stated in the form of a question below. The Arizona state teaching standards for 12th grade U.S. government and civics are listed under the suggested national standards to which they apply. The Arizona state teaching standards are listed in this way in order to show which suggested national standards they support.

1. Suggested National Standard: What are the foundations of the American political system?

Directions: Please indicate the Arizona state standards that you teach as part of your curriculum by circling yes or no.

Yes / No, I teach the following: Explain the philosophical foundations of the American political system in terms of the inalienable rights of man and the purpose of the government (Arizona State Standard 2SS-P1).

Yes / No, I teach the following: Analyze why and how the United States Constitution was created by the framers (Arizona State Standard 2SS-P3).

Yes / No, I teach the following: Analyze the structure, powers, and roles of the legislative branch of the United States government (Arizona State Standard 2SS-P4).

Yes / No, I teach the following: Analyze the structure, powers, and roles of the executive branch of the United States government (Arizona State Standard 2SS-P5).

Yes / No, I teach the following: Analyze the structure, powers, and roles of the judicial branch of the United States government, including landmark United States Supreme Court decisions (Arizona State Standard 2SS-P6).

- **Optional: Please list up to two more concepts that you teach for the suggested national standard to indicate what you find important to teach.**

2. **Suggested National Standard**: How does the government established by the Constitution embody the purposes, values, and principles of American democracy?

Directions: Please indicate the Arizona state standards that you teach as part of your curriculum by circling yes or no.

Yes / No, I teach the following: Analyze the historical sources and ideals of the structure of the United States government (Arizona State Standard 2SS-P2).

Yes / No, I teach the following: Analyze the division and sharing of power within the federal system of government (Arizona State Standard 2SS-P7).

Yes / No, I teach the following: Analyze the rights, protections, limits, and freedoms included in the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights (Arizona State Standard 2SS-P8).

- **Optional: Please list up to two more concepts that you teach for this suggested national standard to indicate what you find important to teach.**

3. Suggested National Standard: What is the relationship of the United States to other nations and to world affairs?

Yes / No, I teach the following: Compare the United States system of politics and government to other systems of the world (Arizona State Standard 2SS-P11).

- **Optional: Please list up to two more concepts that you teach for this suggested national standard to indicate what you find important to teach.**

4. Suggested National Standard: What are the roles of citizens in American democracy?

Yes / No, I teach the following: Demonstrate skills related to the duties and obligations of citizenship needed to participate in America's government (Arizona State Standard 2SS-P10).

- **Optional: Please list up to two more concepts that you teach for this suggested national standard to indicate what you find important to teach.**

5. Suggested National Standard: What are civic life, politics, and government? (There are no Arizona state standards that specifically apply to this suggested national standard.)

Please indicate the terms that you define as part of your curriculum by circling yes or no.

Yes / No, I define the following: civic life

Yes / No, I define the following: politics

Yes / No, I define the following: government

- **Optional: Please list up to two more concepts that you teach for this suggested national standard to indicate what you find important to teach.**

6. (The following Arizona state standard does not apply to any suggested national standard. **Please indicate if you teach it by circling yes or no.**)

Yes / No, I teach the following: Analyze the structure, power, and organization of Arizona's government as expressed in the Arizona Constitution (Arizona State Standard 2SS-P9).

Part III: Civic Dispositions

According to the project management team for the National Assessment of Education Progress in Civics, it was determined that civic knowledge was interrelated with civic dispositions, which are characterized by one's proclivity to operate as a responsible citizen, participating in civic affairs. Alexis de Tocqueville called these civic dispositions the "habits of the heart."

Directions: Please indicate the importance in your curriculum by circling the appropriate number below, following each disposition or habit.

1= Not at all important 2= Not very important 3= Somewhat important
4= Important 5= Very Important

1. Becoming an independent member of society

1 2 3 4 5

- **Optional:** Please list up to two activities you use to encourage this civic disposition.

2. Assuming the personal, political, and economic responsibilities of a citizen

1 2 3 4 5

- **Optional:** Please list up to two activities you use to encourage this civic disposition.

3. Respecting individual worth and human dignity

1 2 3 4 5

- **Optional: Please list up to two activities you use to encourage this civic disposition.**

4. Participating in an informed, thoughtful, and effective manner

1 2 3 4 5

- **Optional: Please list up to two activities you use to encourage this civic disposition.**

5. Promoting the healthy functioning of American constitutional democracy

1 2 3 4 5

- **Optional: Please list up to two activities you use to encourage this civic disposition.**

Thank you for your help!

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