2020

RECONCILING THE CIVICS TEST WITH INQUIRY-BASED INSTRUCTION: MAKING THE BEST OF WHAT SEEMS LIKE JUST ONE MORE THING

Jennifer Leeanna Fraker
University of Kentucky, jennifer.fraker@uky.edu
Author ORCID Identifier:
http://orcid.org/0000-0002-9779-5270
Digital Object Identifier: https://doi.org/10.13023/etd.2020.430

STUDENT AGREEMENT:

I represent that my thesis or dissertation and abstract are my original work. Proper attribution has been given to all outside sources. I understand that I am solely responsible for obtaining any needed copyright permissions. I have obtained needed written permission statement(s) from the owner(s) of each third-party copyrighted matter to be included in my work, allowing electronic distribution (if such use is not permitted by the fair use doctrine) which will be submitted to UKnowledge as Additional File.

I hereby grant to The University of Kentucky and its agents the irrevocable, non-exclusive, and royalty-free license to archive and make accessible my work in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter known. I agree that the document mentioned above may be made available immediately for worldwide access unless an embargo applies.

I retain all other ownership rights to the copyright of my work. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of my work. I understand that I am free to register the copyright to my work.

REVIEW, APPROVAL AND ACCEPTANCE

The document mentioned above has been reviewed and accepted by the student's advisor, on behalf of the advisory committee, and by the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), on behalf of the program; we verify that this is the final, approved version of the student's thesis including all changes required by the advisory committee. The undersigned agree to abide by the statements above.

Jennifer Leeanna Fraker, Student

Dr. Kathy O. Swan, Major Professor

Dr. Kristen H. Perry, Director of Graduate Studies

RECONCILING THE CIVICS TEST WITH INQUIRY-BASED INSTRUCTION: MAKING THE BEST OF WHAT SEEMS LIKE JUST ONE MORE THING

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the
College of Education
at the University of Kentucky

By
Jennifer Leeanna Fraker
Lexington, Kentucky
Director: Dr. Kathy Swan, Professor of Social Studies Education
Lexington, Kentucky
2020

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9779-5270

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

RECONCILING THE CIVICS TEST WITH INQUIRY-BASED INSTRUCTION: MAKING THE BEST OF WHAT SEEMS LIKE JUST ONE MORE THING

This dissertation consists of three articles that focus on teaching, learning, and testing in civic education. Each article provides insights into how instructional practices in teaching and learning intersect with a state-mandated civics test.

Article One, "Is the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services Test Worthy of Being Included as a High School Graduation Requirement? A Closer Look at Implications for Kentucky," is mixed methods sequential explanatory study on the implementation of the civics test requirement within two specific Kentucky school districts using student-level assessment data. Findings indicate that opportunities not only to learn civic content, but also learn it in an authentic way, increases the likelihood students will perform better on a civics assessment, such as the Naturalization Test.

Article Two, "Can the Civics Test Make You a Good Citizen? Reconciling the Civics Test with Inquiry-Based Instruction," (Fraker, Muetterties, G. Swan & K. Swan, 2019) is an exploratory article framed by the question "is there a way to teach the factual knowledge needed to pass the civics test using an inquiry approach?" The article sets the stage for further research and lays out, using the Inquiry Design Module (IDM) process (Grant, Lee, & Swan, 2017), an embedded-action inquiry blueprint to combat the struggles teachers face when trying to implement the civics test in a meaningful way.

Article Three, "Putting Inquiry to the Test: A Case of Ambitious Social Studies Teaching," is an exploratory qualitative study that used an embedded, single-case study to target one teacher's approach on how to implement a state-mandated test using an inquiry approach. This case study analysis considers the data through the lens of the key elements of questions, tasks, sources, and ambitious teaching, which revealed evidence that naturally began to tell a story about one teacher's use of inquiry to meet the requirements of the fact-based test. This study also revealed that implementing an inquiry-based approach is a highly nuanced endeavor requiring a teacher who can employ the principles of ambitious teaching.

KEYWORDS: Civics Test, Inquiry-Based Instruction, Inquiry Design Model, Civic Education, Social Studies

Jennifer Leeanna Fraker

(Name of Student)

10/28/20

Date

RECONCILING THE CIVICS TEST WITH INQUIRY-BASED INSTRUCTION: MAKING THE BEST OF WHAT SEEMS LIKE JUST ONE MORE THING

By
Jennifer Leanna Fraker

Dr. Kathy Swan
Director of Dissertation

Dr. Kristen Perry
Director of Graduate Studies

10/28/2020
Date

DEDICATION

To my boys, Brendan, Aidan, and Caidan, who remind me daily of the importance of education. Just remember that if you think you can, you will.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

While words in this section will never adequately express how truly appreciative I am, I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the many teachers, professors, and colleagues who provided support throughout this journey. In particular, I owe a huge debt of gratitude to my chair, Dr. Kathy Swan. Kathy, you truly provided educational experiences and opportunities unlike anything I could have ever imagined. More than anyone, you imprinted on me what it means to be an engaging and effective teacher. Not only would I never be where I am now without you, but I also hope you know how truly grateful I am for your friendship.

Next, I wish to thank the complete Dissertation Committee and outside reader, respectively: Dr. Gerry Swan, Dr. Ryan Crowley, Dr. Wayne Lewis, and Dr. John Nash. To begin, I want to express my appreciation of Dr. Gerry Swan, who stuck by my side over the years. Gerry, you always have been a great listener and problem solver. You have an amazing ability to look at things from the most unique perspective, and in doing so, you always pushed my thinking. Speaking of perspectives, thank you to Dr. Ryan Crowley, who probably doesn't realize how much of an impact he made on me but, in light of our current state and national context, I am forever appreciative of the insight you shared around how to think and talk about race in the classroom in a constructive and meaningful way. Last but not least, I want to thank Dr. Wayne Lewis, who not only had to deal with my professional ramblings but my scholarly ones too. Wayne, I have never met another person as passionate about education as you. You continue to shape my actions every day as I frame my thinking on how we move the needle in education to ensure all students have opportunities for high-quality learning experiences; I hope to fight the good fight with you

another day, friend. These past few years have been quite bumpy and action-packed, but each of you supported me through it all. Thank you for your encouragement; I can only hope to pay it forward one day.

I also would like to thank my tribe of friends, from work and home, who inspired me daily and kept me balanced. Finally, I would like to thank my family, who continues to tolerate and inspire me beyond belief, especially through their support, patience, and understanding during this journey. I hope one day that my children will not only appreciate the path I took but share the same love I have for education.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

Historically, civic education has been a crucial part of public education, if not the reason for, to prepare students for civic life. By the late 1800s, civic education was integral to curricula nationwide. Although historic classroom methods of rote memorization tend to be removed from today's pedagogical ideals, public schools of a century ago provide a model for placing civic learning at the center of American education (Gould, 2011). Since the inception of civic education, social studies, as a subject, carried the majority of responsibility for preparing students for future civic participation and engagement.

More recently, civic apathy, a lack of cultural literacy, and an emphasis on math and reading created an impetus to promote awareness of the need for improved civic education with policymakers, stakeholders, and the education community-at-large. Since 2014, the conversation has shifted to an understanding that without change students will not be successfully prepared to be the citizens, workers, and leaders our states need in the 21st century without change. The question remains, however, how can improved student learning be achieved in civic education?

1.2 Research Problem

The purpose of my research is two-fold. First, I wanted to explore the value and implications of having the civics test as a high school graduation requirement. Previous research on the civics test requirement focused on whether the requirement was beneficial or not. As a result, this study sought to understand the inclusion of this test and its

relationship between the required passage of the test, civic learning that results from the requirement, and students' preparation for active participation in civic life.

Second, I wanted to explore the implications of the state-mandated test further. Now a high school graduation requirement, high school teachers must help students pass the fact-based civics test. At the same time, social studies teachers are reorienting their instruction around inquiry-based practices at the center of the new social studies standards. While content is important in the inquiry process, teachers also are emphasizing disciplinary processes and inquiry skills that help students argue with evidence about thorny questions. Understandably, teachers want to implement both sets of requirements (testing and standards) but do not know if they should be teaching just the "facts" or a deeper level of understanding of civic ideas. However, little is known about how teachers are balancing these two things. Understanding how teachers can implement the state-mandated civics test with an inquiry approach would be an important contribution to the field of social studies, as well as the broad literature on inquiry.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of the main study was to develop an understanding of the implementation effects of Kentucky's civics test graduation requirement and examine a specific case of how a high school social studies teacher used the Inquiry Design Model (IDM) (Swan, Grant, & Lee, 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019) to implement state-required content. By exploring the implementation of both the test and inquiry, the study attempts to shore up this sense of incongruence around inquiry and a fact-based test. Moreover, the study

attempts to shed light on the struggles teachers face when trying to implement the civics test in a meaningful way and making the best of what seems like just one more thing.

1.4 Overarching Research Questions

The following research questions guide the studies contained in the three articles:

1. Is the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) test worthy of being included as a high school graduation requirement?
2. Is there a way to teach the factual knowledge needed to pass the civics test using an inquiry approach?
3. How do teachers reconcile high stakes civics test with inquiry-based instructional approaches?

1.5 Overview of Methodologies

In article one, the methodology followed Creswell's definition of a mixed-method inquiry as it involved the combination of quantitative and qualitative to better understand a problem than either approach cannot achieve alone (Creswell & Plano, 2007). The initial quantitative phase used data from the Digital Driver's License (DDL) (Civics Graduation Requirement License, n.d.) in order to gather information about student passage rates by looking at the number of attempts and the score per attempt per district, school, and grade. Based on the data obtained in the quantitative phase, the qualitative phase included records documenting district graduation requirements and civics test question alignment to state standards; these documents were then used to explore areas identified in the quantitative findings.

In article two, the study featured document analysis of prominent civic education-related scholarship along with an IDM (Swan et al., 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019) inquiry. Using the IDM process, the Kentucky Civics Test Inquiry (C3 Teachers, n.d.) was designed and framed by the compelling question, "Does the civics test make you a good citizen?" In article three, the study was structured as an exploratory qualitative study that used an embedded, single-case study of a high school social studies department in a mid-sized suburban school district in Kentucky to examine the implementation of the Kentucky Civics Test Inquiry (C3 Teachers, n.d.). The sources of evidence included the teacher interview, teacher artifact, observations, and student artifacts. Additionally, the teacher's use of questions, tasks, and sources, as well as the concept of "ambitious teaching," (Grant 2003, 2005) served as categories for data analysis.

1.6 Selection of Setting and Participants

In article one, two districts were selected from those that adopted the Digital Driver's License (DDL) (Civics Graduation Requirement License, n.d.) as their local board-approved test, widescale use of technology, multiple number of high schools per district, and overall diversity of the districts. District "A" (a pseudonym) was located in the central part of Kentucky, had a total student population of roughly 42,000 and 11 schools that served students in grades 9-12 (who were eligible to meet the requirements of SB 159 (2017)). District "B"(a pseudonym) was located in the northern part of Kentucky, had a total student population of roughly 20,000 and three schools that served students in grades 9-12.

While article two lays the foundation for article three, the research site for article three was chosen based on the selected teacher's experience implementing inquiries as she received training in the IDM (Swan et al., 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019) as part of her master's teacher preparation coursework, and her belief that the primary mission of social studies is to prepare informed and productive citizens. The site of the study was Yellow Jacket High School (YJHS, a pseudonym), a public high school part of a mid-sized suburban school district in Kentucky. The high school social studies teacher, Ms. Autumn Smith (a pseudonym), taught social studies in the district for three years. Her class was comprised of 24 students, 23 of whom were in grade 10 and one was in grade 11. Seventy percent of the class was White and 30% was Hispanic. Three students in the class were identified as students with disabilities.

1.7 Reporting

The reporting of my findings takes the form of three articles:

1. Is the USCIS Test Worthy of Being Included as a High School Graduation Requirement? A Closer Look at Implications for Kentucky
2. Can the Civics Test Make You a Good Citizen? Reconciling the Civics Test with Inquiry-Based Instruction (Published in *Social Education*)
3. Can the Civics Test Make You a Better Citizen? Reconciling a high stakes civics test and inquiry-based instruction

These articles address recent changes in social studies teaching, learning, and testing with a particular focus on the high school grades. Furthermore, the articles serve to illuminate

viable solutions for ambitious teachers to move away from a more traditional approach to an inquiry-based approach that fosters critical thinking and civic engagement.

CHAPTER 2. ARTICLE 1

Is the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services Test Worthy of Being Included as a High School Graduation Requirement? A Closer Look at Implications for Kentucky

2.1 Introduction

> "Knowledge of our system of governance and our rights and responsibilities as citizens is not passed along through the gene pool. Each generation of Americans must be taught these basics."
>
> —Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, 2003

Civics—the study of how government works and the rights and responsibilities of being a citizen—seems to be disappearing from studies in today's schools. Whether eroded by the effects of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), an increase in state testing or high school course requirements, students seemingly have less overall civics knowledge as evidenced by National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) civics assessment trends (The Nation's Report Card, 2014). "On the same test, less than one-third of eighth-graders could identify the historical purpose of the Declaration of Independence, and less than a fifth of high school seniors could explain how citizen participation benefits democracy" (Gould, 2011, p. 6). As today's students will be tomorrow's voters, there is a reason for concern that our young citizens will not be prepared to participate in a democratic government. According to the 2016 Kentucky Civic Health Index, "55.7% of young adults ages 18-24" (p. 8) registered to vote, the lowest rate of all Kentucky citizens. Nationally, "only 22% of millennials voted in the 2012 election and the percentage of voter participation in persons aged 18-25 continues to decline," thus, society is faced with a harsh set of realities (Millennials Civic Health Index, 2015, p.7).

"As a result of these growing concerns, the call has been raised for improvements in how students are prepared for civic life, including some measure of civic literacy and learning that will demonstrate that those students are indeed prepared for engagement in their communities and nation" (Brennan & Railey, 2017, p.1). One organization, the Joe Foss Institute, also became aware of this need and called today a crisis in democratic participation and civics education. As a result, the Joe Foss Institute launched "The Civics Education Initiative" as "a first step to ensure all students are taught basic civics about how our government works, and who we are as a nation…things every student should know to be ready for active, engaged citizenship" ("Civics Education Initiative," 2014). The Civics Initiative, along with others, focused efforts to equip students with a basic level of foundational civic knowledge through the teaching and testing of civics-related content. Since the Joe Foss Institute launched this initiative in 2014, roughly 30 states adopted a high school graduation requirement related to the passage of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Naturalization Test. In 2017, the Kentucky General Assembly passed a similar law (Senate Bill 159, 2017) requiring students to pass a civics test composed of 100 questions in order to graduate high school.

The impetus of these movements is to promote awareness of the need for improved civic education with policymakers, stakeholders, and the education community-at-large. Since 2014, the conversation has shifted to an understanding that without change students will not be successfully prepared to be the citizens, workers, and leaders our states need in the 21st century without change. The question remains, however, how can improved student learning and testing be achieved in civic education?

2.1.1 Purpose of the Study

As a result of NCLB (2001) and, more recently, the *Common Core State Standards Initiative* (2010), most empirical research on state assessments and graduation requirements has been conducted on the subjects of mathematics and reading. This study attempts to gain insight into using the USCIS test as a high school graduation requirement. Specifically, the study seeks to understand the inclusion of this test and its relationship between the required passage of the test, civic learning that results from the requirement, and preparation of students for active participation in civic life.

2.1.2 Research Questions

The main research question for this study was: Is the USCIS test worthy of being included as a high school graduation requirement? Supporting research questions included:

1. What are effective teaching and learning practices in civic education?
2. What are effective assessment practices in civic education?
3. Does the USCIS test adequately measure civic learning?

2.1.3 Significance of the Study

Preliminary research was conducted by policy groups, such as the Education Commission of the States (ECS), regarding state policies that included the adoption or use of the Naturalization Test. Further, notable civic education researchers, such as Diana Hess and Walter Parker, reviewed the test components in light of evidence-based best practices in civic education. However, research is lacking on the actual use and implementation of this test. Due to the rapid rate of adoption of this test in state policies, there is a sense of urgency to explore such a test's appropriateness in state or local educational settings. This study is unique because of its focus on implementing this requirement within specific

Kentucky school districts. The study examines student-level data obtained from a free on-line platform the district used, Digital Driver's License (DDL) (Civics Graduation Requirement License, n.d.) through the University of Kentucky.

2.2 Literature Review

"The stakes are too high for government to be considered a spectator sport," said Barbara Jordan (1976), the first African American woman to be elected to the Texas Senate. Barbara Jordan, much like many scholars, was on to something. How does a society ensure its citizens are prepared to be more than spectators? The argument for civic education assumes that citizens are capable of not only understanding basic civic knowledge but also of participating in the day-to-day actions of civic life. Arriving at defensible positions on controversial public issues—from local disposal of environmental waste to national regulation of campaign financing or whether to vote for the candidate who most consistently agrees with your positions but is not likely to win—requires interpretation, evaluation, in-depth understanding, and elaborated communication that extends well beyond traditional tests of knowledge (King, Newmann, & Carmichael, 2009).

Historically, civic education has been a crucial part of public education, if not the reason for, to prepare students for civic life. By the late 1800s, civic education was integral to curricula nationwide. Even though historic classroom methods of rote memorization are generally removed from today's pedagogical ideals, public schools of a century ago provide a model for placing civic learning at the center of American education (Gould, 2011). Since the inception of civic education, social studies, as a subject, carried the majority of responsibility for preparing students for future civic participation and

engagement. Stephen Thornton (2005) provided scholarship on the evolution of social studies as a subject, offering that social studies should be taught from the perspective of social education versus social sciences as it would be more relevant to students and it would allow for "greater opportunities for identifying relevant knowledge" (p. 7).

Similarly, Thornton (2005) claimed, "The most obvious reason for students' lack of effort in social studies is that it fails to interest them" (p. 24). This stance favors a very Deweyan outlook of ensuring subject matter is relevant to "the direct interests of life" (Thornton, 2005, p. 37). Thornton (2005) also warned that those who take the social sciences approach run the risk of teaching content that is not aligned to students' interests as it is often too lofty or scholarly; in other words, content that is lacking connections to younger students' lives. Thornton (2005) offered a provocative stance that social studies content matter concerning student's civic learning and the teacher, as an *instructional gatekeeper*, has just as much responsibility in learning outcomes.

Walter Parker also offered scholarship on the role of social studies and an account of education as citizen-making. Parker (2003) clarified that idiocy refers to a self-centered individual who is not concerned with, and essentially ignores, public engagement. He further defined idiocy as "self- and familial-indulgence at the expense of the common good" (Parker, 2003, p. 33). To avoid this and work towards more effective communities and engaged citizenry, Parker (2003) accounted for the important relationship citizenship education must have with multicultural education. Parker (2003) stated: "Democratic citizenship education seeks to teach, among other things, that diversity is a social fact, that it is a social good, why this is so, and how diversity and democracy require one another"

(p. 1). In this sense, educators must be intentional about fulfilling their purpose of teaching democracy, even across the content areas.

Additionally, Parker (2003) took this notion of citizen-making further and demonstrated that it is being done in a society where individual and group interests often conflict. To bridge the conflict of diversity and work towards enlightened political engagement, Parker (2003) suggested that deliberation is a must, as it is through deliberation that many publics and one public can come together and exist side by side. Paramount then, is the notion that schools provide students with ample opportunities to engage in deliberative discussions on public problems. As both Parker (2003) and Marge Scherer (2009) agreed, schools serve as one of the most valuable civic spaces in which to conduct deliberation because of their diverse natures. Scherer (2009) additionally affirmed that "[d]iversity in a learning network is crucial because without it we become stuck in an 'echo chamber' of like-minded voices. We must teach students to seek out 'critical friends' and voices of dissent who will respectfully challenge their thinking" (p. 201). The notion of diversity then becomes essential concerning how educators approach aspects of civic learning. In this case, educators need to provide students with opportunities to practice political discourse in an open classroom environment.

However, what we have today is a situation in which a school's focus is not concentrated in terms of efforts. One of the biggest distractors was a result of the NCLB Act (2001), which called for focused reforms in reading and mathematics. If most of a student's classroom hours during his or her K-12 experience revolve around reading or math, where does this leave citizenship education? If, as Parker (2003) claimed, "[o]ur goal is educating people for the role of democratic citizen—for walking the democratic path in

a diverse society," (p. 33) teachers then must stay true to that purpose across the curriculum and afford students a variety of opportunities in which to exercise civic skills.

Hess and McAvoy's *The Political Classroom: Evidence and Ethics in Democratic Education* (2015) is a significant work that focused on studies of both teachers and students in consideration of their impacts on citizenship education. To begin, Hess and McAvoy (2015) argued that "[o]ne of the most significant questions that we can ask about schooling is whether education can change society" (p. xiii). Amid today's general atmosphere of voter apathy, political disenfranchisement, and distrust of the government, this question is of particular importance for those in a school setting. Hess and McAvoy's (2015) question then morphs into one of how can a social studies education improve the likelihood of a more active civic life?

Furthermore, Hess (2008) argued in "Controversial Issues and Democratic Discourse" that issues-centered discussions can positively impact how students are prepared for civic life. Hess (2008) stated that "[i]ssues advocates also suggest a positive relationship between this form of instruction, interest in politics, and actual political and civic engagement" (p. 131). While Hess (2008) did not directly address how students construct their civic understandings, which might help understand how students' perspectives might change during this practice, she does propose a very Deweyan approach to engaging students in authentic experiences. This experience, therefore, allows students to practice civic skills necessary to engage in political life.

Similarly, Walter Parker (2008) wrote that "[a]mong the most interesting questions to ask of democratic citizenship education is the curriculum one: what outcomes are desired, and what is the plan for reaching them?" (p. 65). Parker (2008) argued that

"democratic citizens need both to *know* democratic things and to *do* democratic things" (p. 65). In this sense, Hess and McAvoy's (2015) account of issues discussions aligned with Parker's (2008) beliefs; through deliberation, although not its primary purpose, students are learning about the issues in a democratic manner. What Parker (2008) did not acknowledge is that, as a result of the unintended consequences of standardized testing, teachers inundate students with a deluge of dates, names and places; therefore, the 'doing' aspect of social studies gets lost. However, Parker (2008) did argue that "classroom discourse…is a promising pedagogy in the education of democratic citizens" (p.65). Consequently, this may be an area where social studies teachers will need to re-evaluate how they can convey the content more efficiently to allow for civic skill-building.

To address another view on "how to stimulate youth civic-political engagement" (p.81), Carole Hahn and Theresa Alviar-Martin (2008) discussed in their article "International Political Socialization Research" global civic education findings from the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). In summary, Hahn and Alviar-Martin (2008) argued that commonalities in civic education exist across the globe, and many factors serve to influence students' civic interests and knowledge acquisition. Directly linked to Hess and McAvoy's (2015) notion of issues discussions, Hahn and Alviar-Martin (2008) argued research findings involving classroom discussions might have direct links to student engagement. "Further, at the student level, an individual's perception of an open classroom climate for discussion was significantly related to student knowledge" (Hahn & Alviar-Martin, 2008, p. 93). While it was noted that further research samples should be obtained to account for more credible and broader generalizations, the presented findings served as a reminder that participatory civic

learning experiences have the opportunity to increase students' political interests and, therefore, the likelihood of future participation in political life.

As discussed, these works serve to clarify how social studies—the act of civic learning—can better prepare students for civic life. Through the use of more authentic and participatory experiences in a very democratic way, students can be better prepared for future civic experiences. As Walter Parker (2008) argued, in the context of globalization, we are now living in a society that is "…morphing from a 'we the people' who celebrate our diversity to a 'we the entrepreneurs' who strategically advantage ourselves on the new playing field" (p. 67). As a result, due to the nature of our continually changing cultural and political landscape, today's students need enriched experiences to minimize the effects of American exceptionalism and intolerance. Civic education, in this sense, is one step in combatting these afflictions.

2.2.1 Background on Assessment in Civic Education

Due to the targeted focus of improving student outcomes in math and reading, much research on assessment has been done in these areas. In contrast, very few studies examined what effect, if any, statewide assessments in civics and related subjects have on civic education. And to the extent that there has been any research on state-level policies regarding civic education—including but not limited to assessments—these studies have concluded that these policies have no discernible effect on civic attitudes and behavior (Campbell, 2014).

The first question policymakers may consider is if civic education should be tested. In a review of state civic education policies conducted by the Education Commission of the States (ECS), civics is not included as part of most states' high-stakes assessments

("Civic Education Policies: High School Graduation Requirements," 2016). A lack of civic assessments tied to state accountability models leaves some researchers concerned. Peter Levine (2012) argued, "Testing and accountability generally pose a dilemma for civic education. If we don't test civic knowledge and skills, they become afterthoughts in education, especially in schools where lots of kids are at risk of failing the subjects that are tested" (para. 3). Further research on state policies conducted by the ECS indicated that civic education in state accountability policies is critical in ensuring students are afforded opportunities to learn necessary civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Further, such policies likely send the message that "preparation for active, informed citizenship is the co-equal purpose of education along with preparation for higher education and career" (Baumann, Millard, & Hamdorf, 2014, p. 10).

However, when evaluating state civics assessments, one needs to consider the wide variety of what they encompass and the level of accountability for students. In some states, the civics exam has no bearing on whether a student graduates from high school. In others, graduation does not require earning a specific score on the assessment, but the assessment counts toward a grade in a Civics course. Then in others, passing the assessment is a graduation requirement (Campbell, 2014). In this sense, findings of students' civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions may not be entirely clear if performance is not incentivized as it is with other subjects tied to a graduation requirement. Further complicating analysis of student performance on state assessments is the situation where "[a]dministrators will assign better teachers to subjects with an assessment, teachers will teach those subjects more effectively, and students will exert more effort to learn those subjects" (Campbell, 2014, p. 19). In short, evaluating state assessment results revealed an

apples to oranges comparison; whereby, it is difficult to get a baseline of data when determining the effectiveness of state civics assessment policies.

The second question worth considering, which is more general, relates to what an effective civics assessment is. To get at this question, one really must pinpoint the components that constitute civic learning. Campbell (2014) asked if the assessment should only center on knowledge. If so, knowledge of what? Should civic education be defined to include the skills necessary for participation in the public square, such as public speaking and running meetings? Or, does one ask the question if civic educators should teach students to have certain dispositions, such as tolerance for differing viewpoints and a sense of civic responsibility? (Campbell, 2006). "At the very least, we are not recognizing in any comprehensive way what civic skills and competencies students are acquiring; at worst we are not providing them with the necessities to be engaged citizens of the 21st century" (Sullivan, 2013, p. 1).

Another consideration is "[t]he coherence between a test and what students know … one that both psychometricians and social studies educators are right to worry about" (Grant, 2007, p.196). In other words, how do educators find out what students really know rather than only know how well a student can guess when answering multiple choice questions. In this sense, meaningful systems of assessment and accountability are crucial for ensuring that meaningful civics education occurs in schools. Successful systems require multiple assessment measures at multiple points in time to enable educators to make well-informed decisions to improve student achievement and develop effective feedback cycles for continuous improvement efforts (Baumann & Brennan, 2017, p. 12).

Based on what research indicated about the importance of multiple assessment measures, how does one know which kind is most effective? To Grant's (2007) point, standardized assessments can provide a snapshot of what a student knows; in other words, an assessment of civic knowledge. However, that is only one component of civic learning. The Civic Mission of Schools (2003) suggested that performance-based assessments and qualitative indicators provide an important component in measuring higher-order thinking skills and a comprehensive understanding of students' progress toward developing civic skills and dispositions. Therefore, a variety of assessment tools that measure civic outcomes, as well as broader school and community outcomes, are beneficial for establishing the importance of civic education. Well-designed assessments can potentially increase students' civic knowledge, engagement, and participation. Civic learning has been shown to promote gains in students' civic literacy, attentiveness to government and politics, and the likelihood of future voting (Baumann & Brennan, 2017).

Further research is needed to determine new strategies for civics assessments to account for the challenges of evaluating students' civic skills and dispositions. "Additionally, civics needs assessments that can accommodate a diverse set of learning environments (e.g. formal classrooms, after-school programs, community settings), and the long developmental trajectories for civic learning that can span beyond a single grade year or classroom" (Sullivan, 2013, p. 1). With all of the diverse assessment measures needed to assess civic learning components, future efforts indicate a need to consider alternative methods and comprehensive systems that will more effectively reveal what students know, understand, and can do with regard to civic learning outcomes.

2.2.2 Background on the USCIS Naturalization Test

Tests, especially those tied to graduation requirements, have been a long-standing part of the education process. Over time, and partly due to legislation like NCLB (2001), testing in schools increased. What isn't clear is how much testing benefits student outcomes. As the first decade of the recent wave of educational reform crested, Stake and Rugg (1991) note that "[i]n sixty years of vast international research on school testing, the policy of emphasizing test performance in order to improve education has never been validated" (p. xx, as cited by Grant, 2014). "In the years since this accusation, the scene is hardly any clearer" (Grant, 2014, p. 129). These studies set the stage for current concern regarding the addition of testing requirements to an already overly-tested K-12 school environment.

As an additional testing requirement for high school students in the past five years, the Naturalization Test has become a topic of debate among legislators and leaders in social studies and civic education. "The Naturalization Test, as delivered to immigrants seeking citizenship, is an oral exam that requires examinees to answer only 6 of 10 (out of 100 questions) correctly" (Hess, 2015). As part of the Joe Foss Institute's Civic Education Initiative, legislators proposed similar legislation across the nation, asking states to require that high school seniors take and pass an exam based on the USCIS civics test. "These are 100 very basic questions about U.S. history, geography, and civics; questions that were specifically chosen because they constitute the bare minimum of knowledge a person needs to begin understanding how our government works and who we are as a people" (Hess, Stone, & Kahne, 2015, p. 174).

In 2015, Arizona became the first state to pass the Civics Education Initiative by requiring high school students to pass a civics test with questions drawn from the USCIS naturalization civics test to graduate. In 2016, similar legislation was introduced in Kentucky to require a civics test tied to a graduation requirement; however, it was defeated. During the 2017 legislative session, the Kentucky General Assembly reintroduced the legislation, and it passed. Senate Bill 159 reads as follows:

> Beginning in July of 2018, a student must pass a civics test composed of 100 questions in order to graduate from a public high school with a regular diploma. Each local board of education will be expected to prepare or approve an exam that must be composed of questions from the USCIS Test. Students are required to score 60% or higher and may retake the exam as many times as deemed necessary to pass the test. (Department of Education, 2017, p. 3)

Appealing to national patriotism and advocates of cultural literacy, the Joe Foss Institute significantly impacted the landscape of required state civics assessments. States who passed legislative requirements related to the naturalization test can be referenced in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 State Passage of the Civics Education Initiative

State	Effective	Graduation Requirement
Alabama	2018-2019	No
Arizona	2016-2017	Yes
Arkansas	2018-2019	Yes
Idaho	2016-2017	Yes
Kentucky	2018-2019	Yes
Louisiana	2016-2017	No
Minnesota	2017-2018	No
Missouri	2017-2018	Yes
Montana	2017-2018	No
Nevada	2017-2018	Yes
New Hampshire	2017-2018	No
North Dakota	2016-2017	Yes
Oklahoma	2018-2019	No
Pennsylvania	2020-2021	No
South Carolina	2016-2017	No
Tennessee	2016-2017	No
Utah	2016-2017	Yes
Washington	2020-2021	No
West Virginia	2018-2019	No
Wisconsin	2016-2017	No

Note. Adapted from Brennan & Riley, 2017, p. 4–5.

States who defeated or opposed the legislation primarily did so as a matter of rejecting additional mandated high-stakes testing and concerns over the proposed test's adequacy to ensure robust civic learning. The USCIS naturalization civics test was not designed as a high school civic literacy exam and involved memorizing 100 civic facts, which heightened anxieties that the requirement could drive teaching to the test and set low expectations for the development of students' civic competencies (Brennan & Railey, 2017).

Criticisms also included those from scholars, such as Carole Hahn (1999), who expressed the requirement of an additional assessment for graduation would impose unnecessary burdens on students, teachers, and schools in a time when resources are strained, especially in social studies. An assessment not aligned to state social studies standards would result in poor instruction while also violating state statute, which requires instruction aligned with the state standards (Hahn, 1999). In one study, Pam Winke (2011) studied the reliability of the Naturalization Test. Winke (2011) concluded that the test questions varied widely in difficulty and do not all reliably measure civics knowledge. Further, "the data revealed that test scores contain a construct-irrelevant variance that undermines the overall reliability and validity of the instrument" (Winke, 2011, p.331).

While Winke (2011) may have taken the stance that this type of test is not reliable nor valid in assessing civic knowledge, her research indicated a need to consider to whom and how the assessment is being administered. One issue is that the test was constructed with the intent of being administered verbally; however, to satisfy legislative requirements, local and state education agencies are modifying the construct of the test. Further research

may be needed to evaluate the most effective construct to assess students' civic knowledge in an academic setting.

Peter Levine (2015) also offered multiple articles and research related to the Naturalization Test as a graduation requirement. Levine offered this concern about the test,

> Individuals see a random sample of 10. The easiest way to prepare for it is to memorize the 100 right answers. When you see the key word "amendment," you remember to choose "27." More important than simply retaining the number 27, we should understand what the Constitution is, where it came from, and what great purposes it serves. But what are the chances that a student who knows "27" will remember it a decade later—let alone serve and protect our nation better as a result? What a good citizen should know is a challenging question. More important than simply retaining the number 27, we should understand what the Constitution is, where it came from, and what great purposes it serves. (Levine, 2015, para. 3-5)

Ultimately, if schools and districts are spending their time teaching to and testing with an instrument that assesses only a basic level of knowledge, students likely will not gain a greater understanding of why things are important, nor the skills they need to practice the skills necessary for civic life.

If civic skills and dispositions are important components of civic learning, it might stand to reason that they be assessed as part of a student's learning cycle. To take another look at the Naturalization Test in terms of what it measures, which is only basic knowledge, then one could make that argument it is not an adequate measure of civic learning. The test only measures memorized content and not actual understanding or implementation; it is too easy to pass with little study or instruction. There is also no evidence that implementing

this test would result in greater civic engagement (Feinberg and Doppen, 2010; Hess, 2015; Levine, 2015; Winke, 2011). In this sense, memorizing basic facts without understanding why things are important or the context in which they evolved defeats the intent of effective civic learning; students should be given opportunities to demonstrate their deep understanding and skills needed for an active civic life.

Conversely, Walter Parker (2006) stated a test is only a test and not to be confused with an education: “You don't fatten cattle by weighing them,” (para. 4). Even though "a test is just a test, [he thinks] the INS test will galvanize some needed attention to civic knowledge, which educators can then leverage for education: resources, curriculum, instruction, and professional development.” Leveraging the test is the subsequent challenge. The risk is that a memory test will substitute for education (Parker, 2016, para. 7–8).

In consideration of Parker’s (2016) statement, it is worth noting the role of assessment in terms of a student’s learning progression; if the Naturalization Test is an assessment of learning, then it does measure some foundation of basic civic knowledge. In this aspect, the test requirement could function as one component of a civic education program.

2.2.3 Summary

This section discussed the lack of consensus among researchers regarding the Naturalization Test's effectiveness as a graduation requirement. However, it is important to note that it is a relatively recent trend for states to adopt or use the test; therefore, data in this area is quite limited. “The first states began implementing the Civics Education Initiative test in the 2016-17 school year. Initial reports indicate extremely high passage

rates, with no more than a handful of students failing to pass the test after repeated attempts" (Brennan & Railey, 2017, p. 7). As the implementation of this requirement is so recent, much research is needed. In an effort to explore just that, this study will look at specific examples of two Kentucky districts and their implementation of the required test. In the next section, the research methods used for the study will be explained.

2.3 Methods

This section describes the methodology used for this mixed methods sequential explanatory study. The purpose of this study was to develop an understanding of the implementation effects of Kentucky's civics test graduation requirement. I currently work for the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) as a Policy Advisor in the Office of Standards, Assessment, and Accountability, a position that oversees the development, implementation, and support of all program area policies. Subsequently, there is much to learn about how the civics test graduation requirement may impact civic learning. This study will provide additional targeted feedback to the KDE, specifically around the implementation of this legislative requirement. Additionally, this project will be of interest to the social studies community regarding the unknown impacts of the civics test as part of a state accountability system.

First, the research design section will define the type of research design, the population and sample, and the procedures used for the study. Second, the data analysis section will explain all the contexts explored in the study and describe the analysis process.

2.3.1 Research Questions

The overarching research question for the study was: Is the USCIS test worthy of being included as a high school graduation requirement? Three guiding questions ensured the research question was answered:

1. What are effective teaching and learning practices in civic education?
2. What are effective assessment practices in civic education?
3. Does the USCIS test adequately measure civic learning?

2.3.2 Rationale

The decision to use qualitative methods in addition to a quantitative approach stemmed from the understanding that all research needs a foundation and that this foundation, whether explicit or not, is found in the "worldview" or theoretical framework chosen by the researcher (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Creswell (2009) argued there are common philosophical elements in worldviews and that these evolve. There is no set standard for what worldviews should be. Instead, he considered that researchers tend to categorize different worldviews by what they have in common. Rather than viewing them as rigid classifications, researchers should view them as organizational frameworks that offer differing stances.

A multi-stance approach allows the researcher to include biased and unbiased perspectives and accepts that objective and subjective data are collected and mixed, a process that enriches the research and completes it (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Finally, this methodology allows for formal and informal rhetoric by the researcher, allowing the literacy and scientific 'story' to be told (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

For this research, I will use Creswell and Plano Clark's (2007) definition of mixed-method inquiry as it involves the combination of quantitative and qualitative proves to better understand a problem than either approach can achieve alone. Support of this concept is demonstrated in this study as it afforded the use of multiple data collection tools to comprehensively study the problem. In short, using test data alone was not as telling as using qualitative data to explain the occurrences of test scores across the districts and schools.

2.3.3 Research Design: A Mixed Methods Sequential Explanatory Study

This two-phase study used a quantitative and qualitative design. Data was collected in the quantitative phase from test scores available by district and school in the online test platform, DDL (Civics Graduation Requirement License, n.d.), and the *School Report Card* (Kentucky Department of Education, n.d.) online portal. The initial quantitative phase used this data to gather information about student passage rates by looking at the number of attempts and score per attempt per district, school, and grade. Additional information also collected included demographic-related data using the *School Report Card* (Kentucky Department of Education, n.d.) online portal. The quantitative data was the foundation for the study. Based on the quantitative phase data, the qualitative phase included records documenting district graduation requirements and civics test question alignment to state standards; these documents were used to explore areas identified in the quantitative findings. A purely quantitative approach would not have adequately provided an understanding of the significance of the data. I will share the results of these data collection phases in the findings section.

2.3.4 Selection of Districts

For this study, I limited the sample districts for reasons of time and efficiency. As the data for test results were available online using the DDL (Civics Graduation Requirement License, n.d.), screening for which districts would be most useful in terms of student records was key. Yin (2014) suggested that researchers can screen a site by "querying people knowledgeable about each candidate" and advised avoiding an "extensive screening procedure that effectively becomes a 'mini' case study" (p. 91). In this sense, I used what I knew about local districts to select two on which to conduct further research.

In selecting the districts, my criteria were that they: had selected the DDL (Civics Graduation Requirement License, n.d.) as their preferred implementation method, widescale use of technology, multiple numbers of high schools per district, and overall diversity of the districts. The districts selected, who met these criteria, were "district A" and "district B" (both pseudonyms). District "A's" website indicated it was located in the central part of Kentucky, had a total student population of roughly 42,000, and 11 schools that served students in grades 9-12 (who were eligible to meet the requirements of SB 159 (2017)). District "B's" website indicated it was located in the northern part of Kentucky, had a total student population of roughly 20,000, and three schools that served students in grades 9-12. Both districts were in the top ten most populous districts in the state and required three credits in social studies in order to graduate high school. Additional demographic information for each district can be found in Table 2.2 later in this article.

2.3.5 Data Analysis

As sequential explanatory designs involve two major sequential phases of data collection, the purpose of analyzing data sequentially is so that the first database informs the second database (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). This approach aims to answer "how the qualitative findings from the districts' websites and *Civics Test Manual* (Kentucky Department of Education, n.d.) help explain the quantitative findings from the data in the DDL (Civics Graduation Requirement License, n.d.) and *School Report Card* (Kentucky Department of Education, n.d.) database.

2.3.6 Quantitative Data

The quantitative data analysis occurred during the initial phase of the study. Quantitative data was collected from the DDL and exported into Microsoft Excel. Numerical data were described using means. Statistical analysis was also conducted using Microsoft Excel. Comparisons were also made by examining the average number of test attempts and average test score per district, school, and grade level. In addition, comparisons were made by reviewing the demographics by district and school. These analyses were conducted using student scores recorded in the DDL; there were roughly 7,000 records between the two school districts.

2.3.7 Qualitative Data

The qualitative data analysis occurred during the second phase of the study. Qualitative data was collected by documents, which were interpreted to give voice and meaning around an assessment topic (Bowen, 2009). Document analysis is a social research method. It is an important research tool in its own right and an invaluable part of most schemes of triangulation, the combination of methodologies in the study of the same

phenomenon (Bowen, 2009). The approach's purpose was to give meaning to the findings from the initial phase of the study.

In this study, two sets of qualitative data were analyzed. Data gathered from district websites helped to clarify what kinds of social studies experiences students had. Other data collected from the *Civics Test Manual* (Kentucky Department of Education, n.d.) specified what civics content was being taught at what grade level and how it aligned to Naturalization Test questions. Content analysis was used to evaluate the data and look for connections to the data collected in phase one. Using this approach involved looking at district graduation policies, the social studies courses students took, and the grade level at which students took specific courses.

2.3.8 Role of the Researcher

As the sole researcher for this study, I analyzed both phases of the study. As a current Policy Advisor and former social studies teacher in two high schools in central Kentucky, I understood that my professional experiences could play a role in shaping and influencing the research study's findings. To that, I made the professional decision, based on the district's size and level of diversity, to include one of the districts with whom I was formerly employed. Hence, I vowed to make a determined effort to remain objective throughout all phases of the study.

2.3.9 Limitations

There are multiple limitations of both quantitative and qualitative data when viewed separately. In mixed methods research, the purpose is not to view them as separate data sets but rather to look at how they connect and add to the study's story. It is important to note that test data was limited due to the newness of the legislative requirement and the

time of the year the study was conducted. Revisiting this data later in the school year may serve to collect additional data, which may also skew current trends. Additionally, as student-level information was not available, more information related to specific courses students took will be needed to understand how coursework may influence test attempts or test scores.

2.3.10 Summary

This section focused on the mixed methods sequential explanatory approach of how test and demographic data intersect with the test content and district requirements. The quantitative and qualitative phases inform the overall study and provide an analytic lens for data analysis. The following two sections present the findings of the study and discussions and implications for future research.

2.4 Findings

This mixed methods sequential explanatory study examined school and district test results, and demographic information, in relation to district requirements and test content. The purpose of this study was to develop an understanding of the implementation effects of Kentucky's civics test graduation requirement. The main research question was: Is the USCIS Test worthy of being included as a high school graduation requirement? Supporting research questions included:

1. What are effective teaching and learning practices in civic education?
2. What are effective assessment practices in civic education?
3. Does the USCIS test adequately measure civic learning?

In this chapter, I present the results of my data analysis. The results are grouped into two categories: quantitative findings and qualitative findings.

2.4.1 Quantitative Findings

This descriptive research study aimed to evaluate passage rates by examining the number of attempts students took and average test scores. Specifically, during phase 1, data was collected using student-level data to explore comparisons between grade levels, schools, and districts. Once the test data was compiled, basic demographic information was included in the comparison. This information included free lunch status, reduced lunch status, no meal assistance status, race, and graduation rates.

The initial analysis confirmed what current research indicated; the majority of students passed with very few attempts. The analysis also revealed that, overall, students in both districts, in grade 11, required fewer attempts to pass the test and achieved higher test scores than did students in other grades (see Table 2.2). Further, the analysis indicated that, overall, by district, there is a correlation between the higher the percentage of free lunch students and the lower the number of attempts and the higher the test score (see Table 2.3).

Table 2.2 District Testing and Demographics Comparison

District Test Results Overview

	District "A"		District "B"	
Grade	Average Attempts	Average Score	Average Attempts	Average Score
9	1.60	81.92	1.49	81.92
10	1.65	81.26	1.24	82.99
11	1.44	83.56	1.18	89.44
12	1.70	81.60	1.70	81.60
Total	1.53	81.86	1.26	85.75

Table 2.2 District and Demographics Comparison (Continued)

District Demographic Characteristics

	District "A"	District "B"
Free Lunch	51%	35.7%
Reduced Lunch	3.6%	3.6%
No Meal Assistance	45.4%	60.7%
White (Non-Hispanic)	51.2%	80.2%
African American	22.4%	8.2%
Hispanic or Latino	16.3%	4.64%
Other	10.1%	6.9%
Graduation Rate	87.2%	94.6%

District High School Proficiency Rates in Key Subjects

	District "A"	District "B"
Reading	48.8%	55.2%
Mathematics	43.4%	53.6%
Writing	49.8%	64.0%
Science	35.4%	41.2%

Note. Information regarding test scores was collected from the DDL (Civics Graduation Requirement License, n.d.). Information related to demographics and proficiency rates were obtained from www.kyschoolreportcard.com (Kentucky Department of Education. Proficiency rates for social studies were unavailable for the 2017-18 school year as social studies was not included in the state accountability model at the high school level during this timeframe.

Once data was analyzed at the district level, data then was collected at the school level. There wasn't a correlation between the number of average attempts to pass the test and students who qualified for free lunches, nor was there a correlation between the average test score and percentage of students who qualified for free lunches. However, collectively, it was observed that if a school had a higher percentage of students who qualified for free lunches, either they were more likely to have a higher number of attempts at passing the test, or they were more likely to have a lower average test score (see Table 2.3).

Table 2.3 School Testing and Demographics Comparison Overview

	District "A"			District "B"		
School	Average Attempts	Average Score	Free Lunch	Average Attempts	Average Score	Free Lunch
1	1.83	82.32	67.0%	1.07	91.41	24.3%
2	1.85	86.05	59.3%	1.19	83.68	26.1%
3	1.17	80.48	53.8%	1.42	81.82	23.8%
4	1.46	81.33	41.1%			
5	1.26	84.62	34.6%			
6	1.15	66.48	76.3%			
7	1.45	81.72	42.0%			
8	1.29	88.45	32.5%			
9	1.87	78.66	53.1%			
10	1.90	77.53	50.3%			
11	1.43	79.80	52.8%			

Note. Information regarding test scores was collected from DDL (Civics Graduation Requirement License, n.d.). Information related to demographics was obtained from www.kyschoolreportcard.com (Kentucky Department of Education, n.d.).

Overall quantitative findings relate to best practices in civic learning. In short, equal access to high school civic learning opportunities often are not equal. This notion of inequality often is referred to as a civic opportunity gap. Low-income students generally are afforded fewer opportunities to learn about civic content, such as the political process, government structures, and so forth (Levine, 2015). Additionally, low-income students do not experience political discourse in the context of current events or controversial topics (Hess, 2015). While additional information from classroom observations or lesson plans would be needed to confirm this phenomenon with a high level of certainty, this study illustrates the possibility of a civic opportunity gap for low-income students.

Overall trends related to the number of times students took the test were inconclusive. Between both districts, less than 5% of students took multiple attempts to pass the test. Roughly 97% of those same students improved their scores on their second attempt. Interestingly, roughly 5% of the students from both districts who had multiple

attempts passed on their first attempt. Future qualitative research would be needed to determine why this is the case and what students did to improve their scores.

2.4.2 Qualitative Findings

The purpose of this qualitative phase using document analysis was to provide significance to the findings of phase 1. Once data trends were observed at the district and grade level, additional information was needed to make sense of the trends. The first step to explain the high percentage of students passing on their first attempt was a phone call to the districts asking if they required the test's administration be done in a proctored environment. Both districts confirmed they provided guidance to schools that the test should be given in a proctored setting; however, one district mentioned they could not guarantee that all classes were following this guidance. Additionally, both districts confirmed the test's administration was done within a student's social studies class. This finding may explain the high percentage of passage rates on the first attempt; however, additional information via qualitative research, such as through observation, would be needed to give more validity to this claim.

Following this, the first documents consulted, to explore why students who passed on their first attempt continued to take the test to improve their scores, were board policies housed in the *District Online Manual* (Kentucky School Boards Association, n.d.) Neither district made any changes to the model graduation requirements policy, specifically related to the Naturalization Test, and both policies read as such:

> Beginning July 1, 2018, students wishing to receive a regular diploma must pass a civics test made up of one hundred (100) questions selected from the civics test administered to persons seeking to become naturalized citizens and prepared or

> approved by the Board. A minimum score of sixty percent (60%) is required to pass the test and students may take the test as many times as needed to pass. Students that have passed a similar test within the previous five (5) years shall be exempt from this civics test. This shall be subject to the requirements and accommodations of a student's individualized education program or a Section 504 Plan. (Kentucky School Boards Association, n.d.)

As no board policy mentioned reasons for improving scores, other than to obtain a passing rate, additional qualitative research would need to be conducted via a questionnaire or observations to explain this occurrence.

The next documents reviewed were district websites. The websites did not contain additional information related to the Naturalization Test beyond its inclusion as a graduation requirement. What was interesting to note is that District "B" required all students to complete 20 hours of community service and a service-learning project (which is defended in front of a panel) in order to graduate. By giving students opportunities to "do" civics and be exposed to opportunities that broaden their perspectives, students are more likely to improve their foundational civic knowledge (Parker, 2008). These requirements may help to explain higher test scores and reduced test attempts in comparison to District "A" who did not have those requirements.

Following the review of the districts' websites was a review of district and school course guides. Social studies course selections at both districts, and even at each school, varied. However, one variable that remained constant was what course students took in grade 11, which was some level of U.S. History. This consistency, along with the nature of the course, may help to explain why students achieved higher test scores and took fewer

attempts to pass than in other grades. To further explore this option, I reviewed the *Civics Test Manual* (Kentucky Department of Education, n.d.) to determine what percentage of questions aligned to grade-level state standards. A graphical representation of the test content per grade level, or aligned to state grade-level standards, can be reviewed in Figure 2.1.

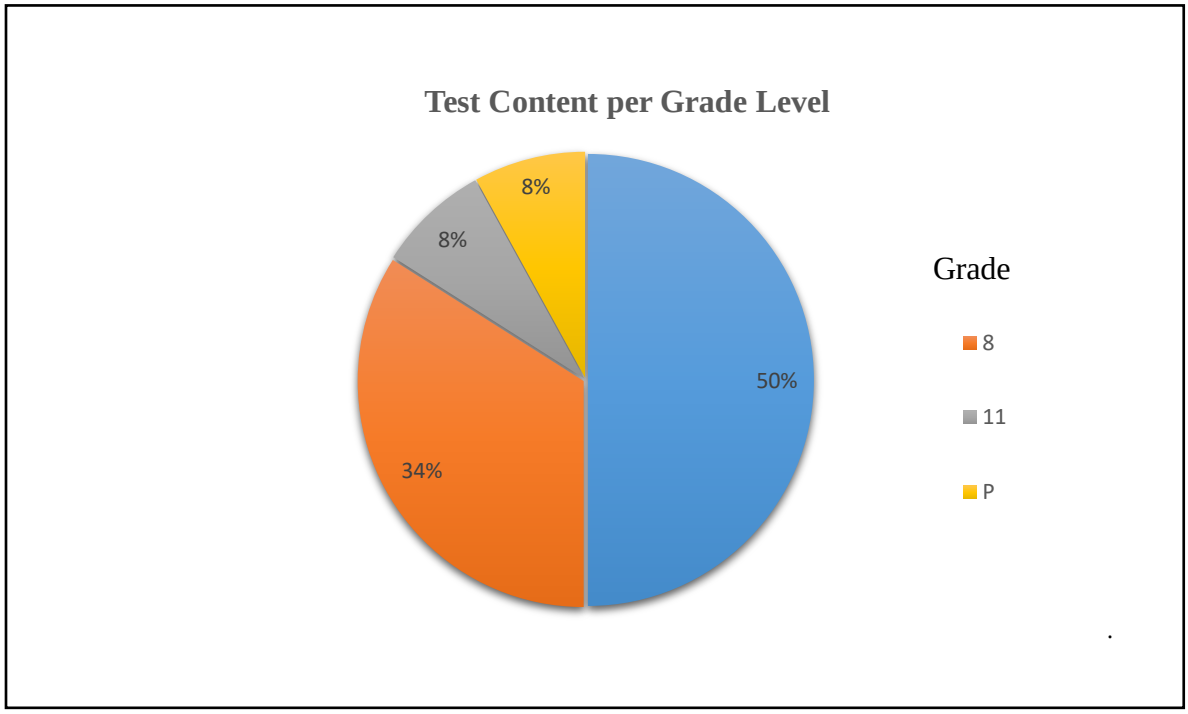


Figure 2.1 Graphical Representation of Naturalization Test Content Aligned to Grade Level Standards

It also is significant that the contents of the grade-level standards in grades 5 and 8 (denoted as "P" in Figure 2.1) that align to the test questions are foundational, meaning those concepts are expanded similarly again in grade 11. The relationship of the questions, 91% directly or indirectly relating to the content students are exposed to in grade 11, provided some insight into why students in grade 11 score higher with fewer attempts than those in other grades.

2.4.3 Summary

This section presented and discussed the quantitative and qualitative findings of the study. Furthermore, the section examined how schools and districts are implementing the Naturalization Test to explain statistical data related to students' passage rates. Consistent with a mixed methods design, the results of the quantitative data were used to inform the qualitative phase of the study. Through a careful analysis of all of the data, several explanations were presented as findings. The following section suggests opportunities to conduct further research to corroborate these claims.

2.5 Discussion and Implications

This study's main purpose was to consider if the Naturalization Test is worthy of being included as a graduation requirement. Through a mixed methods sequential explanatory approach, I examined school and district test results, along with demographic information, in relation to district requirements and test content. The purpose of this study allowed gaining an understanding of the implementation efforts related to Kentucky's Naturalization Test graduation requirement. The findings ultimately revealed an inconclusive answer to the test's worthiness as a graduation requirement. However, the quantitative findings indicated a high passage rate on a student's first attempt. The findings also indicated that students with multiple attempts generally improved their test score on the second attempt. Qualitative findings indicated students in grade 11 were more likely to obtain higher test scores and take the test fewer times. In this section, I will expand upon the study findings and discuss further concerns and implications of the study and conclude with recommendations for future research.

2.5.1 Implications

This study suggests that opportunities to learn civic content in an authentic way increase the likelihood students will perform better on a civics assessment, such as the Naturalization Test. In short, high-quality civic learning opportunities matter. The study also suggests that the higher the percentage of students who qualified for free lunch a school or district had, the more likely the student test scores would be lower or the number of attempts to pass the test would be higher compared to a school or district with a lower percentage of students who qualified for free lunches. Again, high-quality civic learning opportunities matter. It also may be worth noting that the findings of "school 6" in District "A" (found in Table 3) may reveal a difference in test usage, either as a summative (of learning) or formative (for learning) assessment. In this school, no student took the test more than once, despite a low passing score. A school's approach to treating the requirement as a matter of compliance rather than as a learning opportunity also may impact test results and should be considered.

The quantitative findings also suggested students with multiple attempts generally improved their test scores on the second time they attempted the test. However, it is not clear what students did to improve their test scores, and this information was not available as part of the qualitative research phase either. Consideration should be given to what courses students have before taking the test, how the test is administered, and the guidance given on whether to use the test as a formative or summative assessment.

The qualitative findings of the study suggested a possible correlation between service-learning and improved test scores. In the study, District "B" requires a service-learning component (service hours and/or project), which may provide students with more

opportunities to transfer their knowledge and practice the skills of citizenship; thereby, increasing the likelihood students will have higher test scores and require fewer attempts in order to achieve a passing score. Additionally, findings suggested students who were in a class that contained content aligned to that found in the test questions performed better than those in other grades/classes.

2.5.2 Suggestions for Further Research

Implementation of Naturalization Test requirements is an area that requires more study to explore potential ways schools and districts can use the test to enhance civic learning. This study indicates several possible areas for future research to address whether the test is worthy of being included as a high school graduation requirement:

1. Administration of the test in a proctored or timed environment.
2. Availability of resources during the administration of the test.
3. Multiple retakes of the test to extend student's opportunities for learning.
4. Student course work and/or learning opportunities before taking the test.

As the implementation of this requirement is so recent, much research is needed. Future studies, accounting for several years of implementation data, might also pose significance. Further, these studies could explore whether students', teachers', and administrators' behaviors change with the introduction of the new testing requirement; for example, do teacher assignments change as a result of a new graduation requirement? Further, studies could be conducted to evaluate how local schools and districts implement the requirement and the impact of various curricula and assessment practices on student outcomes. Likewise, it would be valuable to explore what happens over time to voter turnout. Overall, it could also be useful to examine the effects of the perceived importance

of civic education, whether by analyzing any future board policy changes related to civic course requirements, course enrollment data, or otherwise, when states adopt or eliminate the Naturalization Test requirement.

2.5.3 Conclusion

This study examined the worthiness of the Naturalization Test as a graduation requirement. Using a mixed methods sequential explanatory study, I analyzed student test scores, district demographics, and related information. While I found the findings didn't directly address whether the test should be a graduation requirement, they did provide some direction for future research. Given the recent adoption of such a graduation requirement, much more emphasis is needed on leveraging civic education programs to prepare students not only for the test, but also for civic life.

CHAPTER 3. ARTICLE 2

Can the Civics Test Make You a Good Citizen? Reconciling the Civics Test with Inquiry-Based Instruction

3.1 Introduction

Students' knowledge of civics is bleak. As evidenced by NAEP (2014) civics assessment data, only 23% of students performed at or above the *proficient* level on the 2014 civics assessment. Whether eroded by the effects of the NCLB Act of 2001 or the ever-shrinking footprint of social studies in K-12 schooling, educators across the political and pedagogical spectrum agree that students' lack of civic knowledge is problematic.

Two recent initiatives have tried to combat this lack of civic understanding among students. Some educators have championed the legislative efforts of the Civics Education Initiative focused on equipping students with foundational civic knowledge through testing of civics-related content. To date, roughly 30 states have adopted this 100-question multiple-choice test as a high school graduation requirement (Civics Education Initiative, n.d.). Other educators have joined the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) in championing the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework (2013), an approach for reframing the study of civics around inquiry in the hopes that anchoring citizenship in the compelling questions of social studies might help students acquire deeper understanding and operationalize civic ideas.

But many teachers are confused by the mixed signals that surround these two efforts. In our home state of Kentucky, high school teachers are required to help students pass the fact-based civics test, now a high school graduation requirement. At the same time, social studies teachers are reorienting their instruction around inquiry-based practices that

are at the center of the new social studies standards. While content is important in the inquiry process, teachers also are emphasizing disciplinary processes and inquiry skills that help students argue with evidence about thorny questions. Understandably, teachers want to implement both sets of requirements (testing and standards) but do not know if they should be teaching just the "facts" or a deeper level of understanding of civic ideas.

In this article, we tackle this tension between a fact-based civics test and the outcomes of inquiry-based instruction. We begin with a short history on the civics test and the new standards in Kentucky before turning our attention to one approach to the civics test using an IDM inquiry--"Can the Civics Test Make You a Good Citizen?" In doing so, we confront the pervasive content versus skills debate that so often balkanizes social studies educators.

3.2 The Rise of the Civics Test

As part of the Joe Foss Institute's Civic Education Initiative (2014), legislation was proposed across the nation, asking states to require high school seniors take and pass an exam based on the USCIS Naturalization Test (Civics Education Initiative, n.d.). "The test includes 100 fact-based questions about U.S. history, geography, and civics; questions that were chosen specifically because they constitute the bare minimum of knowledge a person needs to begin understanding how our government works and who we are as a people" (Hess et al., 2015). Examples of questions include: What are the first three words of the Constitution? How many amendments does the Constitution have? What is the economic system in the United States? Since the Joe Foss Institute launched the Civics Initiative in 2014, roughly 30 states adopted some sort of requirement related to the passage of a civics test (Civics Education Initiative, n.d.).

In 2017, the Kentucky General Assembly passed a law requiring students to pass a civics test composed of 100 questions in order to graduate from a public high school (Senate Bill 159, 2017). Kentucky's test is derived from the USCIS naturalization process. Students must have a passing score of 60% or higher (USCIS requires an oral examination in which immigrants seeking naturalization pass six out of 10 questions correctly) and may retake the exam as many times as needed. For Kentucky legislators, like those across the nation, the requirement was seen as a much-needed step in the right direction to addressing society's lack of basic civic knowledge. The struggle Kentucky educators now face, as a result of implementation efforts, is how they can balance this mandate with best instructional practices. In other words, it's one thing to "know" basic civics, but another to actually "do" civics.

3.3 The Rise of Inquiry

While inquiry-based learning has been around for thousands of years, the C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards codified a language around inquiry into a standards document meant to provide states with guidance for upgrading their existing social studies standards (Swan & Griffin, 2013). The most obvious difference between the C3 Framework and other standards efforts is the Inquiry Arc, "a set of interlocking and mutually reinforcing elements that move from developing questions and planning inquiries to communicating conclusions and taking informed action" (Grant et al., 2017). Many states are revising their academic standards around the core inquiry practices outlined by the C3 Framework.

Kentucky adopted new social studies standards in July 2019 (Kentucky Academic Standards, 2019). The standards place four inquiry practices, Questioning, Investigating

Disciplinary Concepts, Using Evidence, and Communicating Conclusions, at the front and center of good social studies. Based largely on the C3 Framework's inquiry arc, the inquiry practices require teachers and students to ask questions that drive student investigation of the subject matter and eliminate the "skills vs. content" dilemma in social studies as both are needed to successfully engage in inquiry. However, this shift presents a new struggle for teachers with regard to building inquiry-based curriculum: How do I teach my content through inquiry?

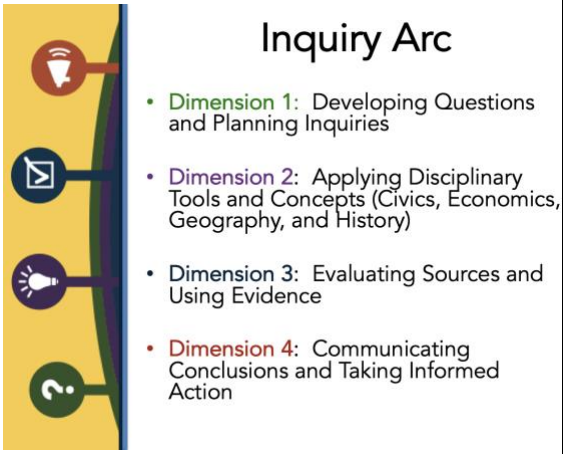
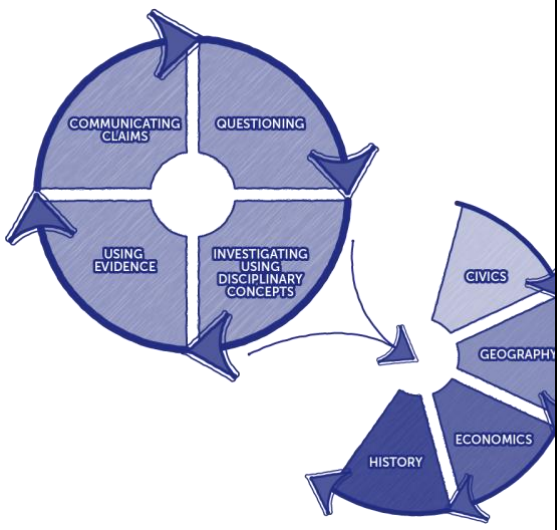
C3 Framework Inquiry Arc (2013) *College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards*	**Kentucky Academic Standards for Social Studies Inquiry Practices**
	

Figure 3.1 C3 Framework Inquiry Arc (2013) and the Kentucky Academic Standards for Social Studies Inquiry Practices (2019)

In an effort to support teachers seeking to use inquiry in their classrooms, whether designed around the C3 Framework or state standards influenced by the C3 Framework, the lead writers co-created the IDM. The IDM is a curricular scaffold for teachers and students wanting to do disciplinary inquiry. At the core of the IDM is a one-page blueprint

that articulates the questions, tasks, and sources that define a curriculum inquiry (Swan et al., 2019). Teachers using the IDM can essentially teach the entirety of the Inquiry Arc or hit on all four inquiry practices within a week's worth of instruction.

3.4 A Time of Reconciliation

So, what if there was a way to teach the factual knowledge needed to pass the civics test using an inquiry approach? Could the two be not so antithetical to one another? To explore these questions, we have been playing with such an approach. Using the IDM, we built an inquiry framed by the compelling question: Can the civics test make you a good citizen? The foundations of the inquiry – questions, tasks, and sources – frame the importance of the instructional implementation and research study.

Kentucky Civics Test Inquiry

Can the Civics Test Make You a Good Citizen?	
Kentucky Academic Standards	**HS.C.RR.2** Explain how active citizens can affect the lawmaking process locally, nationally and internationally.
Staging the Question	**What is a good citizen?** Create a mind map to list, organize, and connect associated ideas, actions, and/or people to the central concept: "good citizen."

Supporting Question 1	Supporting Question 2	Supporting Question 3
UNDERSTAND	UNDERSTAND	UNDERSTAND
What is on the civics test?	**How did the class perform on the civics test?**	**What is the most important material on the civics test?**
Formative Performance Task	**Formative Performance Task**	**Formative Performance Task**
Take the school or district's civics test.	Draft a report identifying the class' areas of strength and weakness with reference to specific questions.	Create a claim, or series of claims, supported by evidence, about whether the test should include other kinds of civic learning.
Featured Sources	**Featured Sources**	**Featured Sources**
Source A: School or district's civics test **Source B:** Civics Test from the *Digital Drivers License* (DDL) **Source C:** US Citizenship and Immigration Services, 100 Civics Questions	**Source A:** Civics Test Results Matrix from the *Digital Drivers License* (DDL) *Featured Sources from Supporting Question 1*	**Source A:** Civics Test Question Cards *Featured Sources from Supporting Question 1-2*

Summative Performance Task	**ARGUMENT | ASSESS** **Can the civics test make you a better citizen?** Construct an argument that discusses the compelling question using specific claims and relevant evidence from contemporary sources while acknowledging competing views.
Taking Informed Action	**ACT** **Do we need to keep the civics test?** Write a letter to local school district, school board, state official, or national organization about whether Kentucky should keep the civics test as a requirement for graduation.

Figure 3.2 Kentucky Civics Test IDM Blueprint

3.5 Questions

The compelling question for the inquiry— Does the civics test make you a good citizen?—frames a study of the civics exam itself and what it means to be a "good citizen." As part of the inquiry, students take the test and evaluate whether the knowledge within the test is necessary or sufficient as they consider the notion of citizenship, and more

importantly good citizenship. In other words, the inquiry puts students in the center of a policy dilemma—how do educators help students prepare for civic life and what role should the civics test play in that endeavor? In addressing the compelling question, the inquiry structures students' work as they proceed through the series of supporting questions, formative performance tasks, and featured sources. The supporting questions are sequenced to progressively build students' understandings of the civics test's content and to explore other kinds of civic learning and the role that each play in preparing students to be good citizens. The supporting questions help students break down the compelling question and, simultaneously, prepare them for the exam:

- What is on the civics test?
- How did the class perform on the civics test?
- What is the most important material on the civics test?

Understanding the civics test content, as well as how it can complement being a good citizen, illuminates the intersection between the civics test and the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and experiences needed to prepare students for informed participation in civic life.

3.6 Tasks

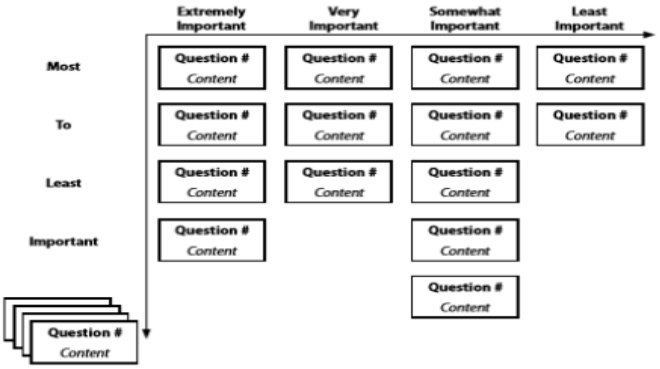
The formative performance tasks help scaffold students' evaluation of the civics test, building their understandings of its content and its potential role towards creating good citizens. To introduce students to the inquiry, the staging the compelling question task asks students to create a mind map where they connect ideas, actions, or people around the central concept "good citizen." Within the inquiry, we provided resources to familiarize teachers and students with scholarly understandings of "good citizenship." The central

criticism of the civics test is that it focuses on memorization of individual facts, rather than having students engage in civic practices. The inquiry's sources explain the dimensions of a rigorous and meaningful civic education, notably the need for teachers to develop students' civic knowledge, as well as civic skills and civic dispositions, and provide opportunities to take action in a civic experience. We selected excerpts from the C3 Framework and Westheimer and Kahne's 2003 article titled "What Kind of Citizen?" With teacher guidance, the staging task introduces students to the compelling question and bridges the concept of a "good citizen" to the remainder of the inquiry. In the inquiry, students answer the supporting questions by completing three formative performance tasks, building towards the summative argument task:

- Take the school or district's civic test.
- Draft a report identifying the class's areas of strength and weakness with reference to specific questions.
- Create a claim, or series of claims, supported by evidence about whether the exam could include other kinds of civic learning.

To answer the first supporting question, students take the school or district's civics test. The second task has them reflect upon their collective test results and draft a report identifying the class's areas of strength and weakness with reference to specific questions. The intention of this task is to have students organize the content knowledge contained within the civics test, and likewise, reflect upon areas of needed growth in order to be successful on the test. In the third task, students connect the test back to the compelling question by considering how the content helps prepare them for participation in civic life. Students deliberate and rank test questions' importance using a Kanban organizational

board. Kanban boards help visually represent information or tasks by evaluating and organizing items in relation to one another. (See Figure 3.3). These tasks prepare students for the final supporting task where they create evidence-based claims about whether the test could include other kinds of civic learning needed to be an active participant in civic life. In this inquiry, the task logic is designed to help students build their understanding of the civics test by progressively developing their assessment of its content. The task sequence prepares students to construct complex and evidence-based arguments in response to the compelling question, “Does the civics test make you a good citizen?”



What is the supreme law of the land?	What does the Constitution do?
The idea of self-government is in the first three words of the Constitution. What are these words?	What is an amendment?
What do we call the first ten amendments to the Constitution?	What is one right or freedom from the First Amendment?
How many amendments does the Constitution have?	What did the Declaration of Independence do?

Figure 3.3 Kanban Board and cards

3.7 Sources

The main source propelling this inquiry is the civics test itself. Although each Kentucky school district can create its own civics tests, all exams must be based upon the 100 questions from the USCIS Citizenship Exam (Kentucky Department of Education Civics Test, n.d.). This inquiry employs the *Digital Driver's License* online platform, a resource available to all Kentucky districts, to administer and collect results to the test (Kentucky Department of Education Digital Citizenship, n.d.). Students use the test and test result data to answer supporting questions 1, 2, and 3. To help students grapple with

the idea of a "good citizen" and the test content, the staging task includes sources that describe the test, showing both positive and negative perspectives. We included the Joe Foss Institute's reasoning for supporting civics exam legislation, noting specifically that the test's content includes the "things every student should know to be ready for active, engaged citizenship" (Civics Education Initiative, n.d.). Other sources supporting the staging task include excerpts from the Chicago Tribune and The Atlantic. Both articles provide arguments for and against the exam, specifically related to how it prepares students for active citizenship. (See Figure 3.4).

"Critics: Civics Test Not Designed to Judge High School Knowledge." —*Chicago Tribune*	"Why Civics is About More Than Citizenship." —*The Atlantic*
National Council for the Social Studies: Students should learn by doing—with teachers fostering active discussions, highlighting opposite viewpoints and encouraging them to actively learn how government works. Illinois Sen. Dennis Kruse, R-Auburn: "I think it's in the lack of basic education in our schools We've got a generation of people who don't know where we came from…. Something is not connecting, the kids, they are not connecting and retaining the information."	Fordham Foundation's Robert Pondiscio: "The more educated you are, the more likely you are to be civically engaged." Joseph Kahne in *Education Week*: "There's not any evidence base to show that this will be effective…. It's something state legislators can pass and feel good about." He argued that the testing approach to civic education is the equivalent of "teaching democracy like a game show."

Figure 3.4 Supporting Question 4 Source Excerpts

For supporting question 4, where students evaluate the test content's utility and contributions to civic learning, we provided a list of online civic education resources (e.g., iCivics, Center for Civic Education, Mikva Challenge). Teachers can pull excerpts from these resources or have students explore them on their own, considering what each says about preparing students for civic life.

3.8 Take Informed Action

After students have completed the formative and summative performance tasks and developed understandings of the civics test's content, they are ready to deepen their evaluation of the test and take informed action. Students evaluate their own district's civics test and assess the extent to which they believe the test supports preparing students to be good citizens. If students do not believe it adequately supports good citizenship, their evaluation should provide suggestions about a more authentic way for students to demonstrate civic learning. Suggestions must consider the civics test's requirements to follow the USCIS questions. Accordingly, suggestions can include ideas to supplement the test (e.g., a civic capstone project). To take informed action, students act by writing a proposal about the civics test's areas of need (or needs of civic education for the state in order to prepare students for active citizenship) to share with the local school district, school board, state official, or national organization.

3.9 To Inquiry and Beyond

In this article, we laid out an ambitious plan to combat the struggles teachers face when trying to implement the civics test in a meaningful way. In a future article, we hope to talk about how the implementation of the inquiry actually went, from both teacher and student perspectives. For now, we know many teachers in many states face the same kind of incongruence around inquiry and a fact-based test. Our hope is that this column might start a conversation about how we move with educational policy, making the best of what seems like just one more thing.

CHAPTER 4. ARTICLE 3

Putting Inquiry to the Test:
A Case of Ambitious Social Studies Teaching

4.1 Introduction

Students' knowledge of civics is bleak. As evidenced by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) civics assessment data, only 23% of students performed at or above the *proficient* level on the 2014 civics assessment (The Nation's Report Card, 2014). Whether eroded by the effects of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) or the ever-shrinking footprint of social studies in K-12 schooling, educators across the political and pedagogical spectrum agree that students' lack of civic knowledge is problematic (Brennan & Railey, 2017).

Two recent initiatives have tried to combat this lack of civic understanding among students. Some educators have championed the Civics Education Initiative's legislative efforts focused on equipping students with foundational civic knowledge through testing of civics-related content. To date, roughly 30 states have adopted this 100-question multiple-choice test as a high school graduation requirement (Civics Education Initiative, n.d.). Other educators have joined the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) in championing the C3 Framework (2013), an approach for reframing the study of civics around inquiry in the hopes that anchoring citizenship in the compelling questions of social studies might help students acquire deeper understanding and operationalize civic ideas.

But many teachers are confused by the mixed signals that surround these two efforts. In my home state of Kentucky, high school teachers are required to help students pass the fact-based civics test, now a high school graduation requirement. At the same time,

social studies teachers are reorienting their instruction around inquiry-based practices at the center of the new social studies standards. While content is important in the inquiry process, teachers also are emphasizing disciplinary processes and inquiry skills that help students argue with evidence about thorny questions. Understandably, teachers want to implement both sets of requirements (testing and standards) but do not know if they should be teaching just the "facts" or a deeper level of understanding of civic ideas.

Despite this complex landscape teachers have found themselves in, Grant (2003, 2005) suggests *ambitious teaching* can occur. Grant and Gradwell (2010) defined ambitious teachers as those who:

> a) know their subject matter well and see within it the potential to enrich their students' lives; b) know their students well, which includes understanding the kinds of lives their students lead, how these youngsters think about and perceive the world, and that they are far more capable than they and most others believe them to be; and c) know how to create the necessary space for themselves and their students in environments in which others (e.g., administrators, other teachers) may not appreciate either of their efforts. Ambitious teachers deeply understand their subject matter and they actively seek ways to connect that subject matter with the lived experiences of their students. But they often do so while facing contextual factors (e.g., state curriculum, state tests, unsupportive administrators and colleagues) that may push them in different directions (p. 9).

In this sense, Grant suggested that regardless of the challenging context in which teachers operate -- whether it be a state-mandated test or otherwise -- good or *ambitious teaching* can occur. However, with regard to the civics test specifically, little is known

about how teachers are balancing these two things. Understanding how teachers can implement the state-mandated civics test with an inquiry-based approach would be an important contribution to the field of social studies and the broad literature on inquiry.

4.1.1 Purpose Statement and Research Questions

In this article, I present an exploratory qualitative study that used an embedded, single-case study to tackle this tension between a fact-based civics test and inquiry-based instruction. The purpose of the study was to examine how a high school social studies teacher used an inquiry-based approach to implement state-required social studies content. I begin with a short history of the civics test and the new standards in Kentucky before turning my attention to an inquiry-based approach, using an IDM (Swan et al., 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019) inquiry, to meet the requirements of the state-mandated civics test. Swan, Grant, and Lee (2017) describe the IDM as a "distinctive approach to creating curriculum and instructional materials that honors teachers' knowledge and expertise, avoids overprescription, and focuses on the main elements of the instructional design process as envisioned in the Inquiry Arc of the *College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards* (2013)" (p.24). Specifically, I examine one teacher's implementation of the inquiry, "Can the Civics Test Make You a Good Citizen?" (C3 Teachers, n.d.) to meet the state requirement of the fact-based test. In doing so, I confront the pervasive content versus skills debate that so often balkanizes social studies educators.

Framing this study was the main research question: How do teachers reconcile the high stakes civics test with inquiry-based instructional approaches? Supporting research questions, using the key elements of the IDM (questions, tasks, sources – which I describe in more detail later in the article), included:

1. How does the teacher use *questions* to frame content and engage students in the civics test?
2. How does the teacher use formative and summative performance *tasks* to surface students' understanding and ideas about the civics test?
3. How does the teacher use disciplinary *sources* to create context and meaning around the civics test?

4.1.2 Significance of the Study

Studying the implementation of this inquiry-based approach to the civics test offers a unique opportunity to potentially move past the debate of whether or not inquiry should guide instruction and teach content to how inquiry can guide instruction and teach content. I end this study with a discussion of ambitious teaching in an era of political polarization and the role that ambitious teachers can plan in reconciling state mandates with an inquiry-based approach (Grant, 2003, 2005). As one of the first studies on the implementation of a state-required test using an IDM (Swan et al., 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019) inquiry, it may provide useful guidance to future studies and implications for policymakers, educator preparation programs, and in-service teachers.

4.2 The Rise of the Civics Test

Out of concern for diminished civic education in schools, one organization, the Joe Foss Institute (JFI), sought to address this educational gap and created the Institute to "teach patriotism, democracy, public service, integrity, and appreciation for America's freedoms" in schools throughout the country ("Civics Education Initiative," n.d.). The JFI launched "The Civics Education Initiative" as "a first step to ensure all students are taught basic civics about how our government works, and who we are as a nation…things

every student should know to be ready for active, engaged citizenship" ("Civics Education Initiative," n.d.). Moreover, former JFI president Lucian Spataro advocated that taking a civics test should be a requirement for all students. He (Wong, 2015) reasoned that:

> it simply serves as a first step toward getting kids' civic literacy to an acceptable level. It's part of what will inevitably be a long-drawn-out and challenging process. Spataro used similar logic in justifying the testing approach: It incentivizes teachers, he suggested, to give the subject more attention. "If it's tested, it's taught," he said.

Therefore, as part of the initiative, legislation was proposed across the nation, asking states to require high school seniors to take and pass an exam based on the USCIS Naturalization Test (Civics Education Initiative, n.d.). "The test includes 100 fact-based questions about U.S. history, geography, and civics; questions that were chosen specifically because they constitute the bare minimum of knowledge a person needs to begin understanding how our government works and who we are as a people" (Hess, Stone, & Kahne, 2015, p. 174). Examples of questions include: What are the first three words of the Constitution? How many amendments does the Constitution have? What is the economic system in the United States? Since the JFI launched the Civics Initiative in 2014, roughly 30 states adopted some sort of graduation requirement related to the passage of a civics test (Civics Education Initiative, n.d.).

4.2.1 The Rise of Inquiry

While inquiry-based learning has been around since humans starting asking questions, the C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards (NCSS, 2013) codified a

language around inquiry into a standards document meant to provide states with guidance for upgrading their existing social studies standards (Swan & Griffin, 2013). The most apparent difference between the C3 Framework (NCSS, 2013) and other standards efforts is the Inquiry Arc, "a set of interlocking and mutually reinforcing elements that move from developing questions and planning inquiries to communicating conclusions and taking informed action" (Grant, Swan, & Lee, 2017, p.3). Many states, including Arkansas, Connecticut, and North Carolina, to name a few, are revising their academic standards around the core inquiry practices outlined by the C3 Framework (NCSS, 2013).

Kentucky adopted new social studies standards in July 2019 (Kentucky Academic Standards, 2019). The standards place four inquiry practices, questioning, investigating disciplinary concepts, using evidence, and communicating conclusions, at the front and center of good social studies. Based largely on the C3 Framework's Inquiry Arc (NCSS, 2013), the inquiry practices require teachers and students to ask questions that drive student investigation of the subject matter and eliminate the "skills vs. content" dilemma in social studies as both are needed to successfully engage in inquiry (see Figure 4.1). As indicated in the standards document,

> content knowledge cannot be achieved effectively without the practice of inquiry. Neither development of the practices nor development of the knowledge and understanding within the lenses is sufficient on its own to equip young people with the knowledge and skills necessary to carry on the ideals of the founders. (2019, p. 13)

However, this shift presents a new struggle for teachers concerning building an inquiry-based curriculum: How do I teach my content through inquiry?

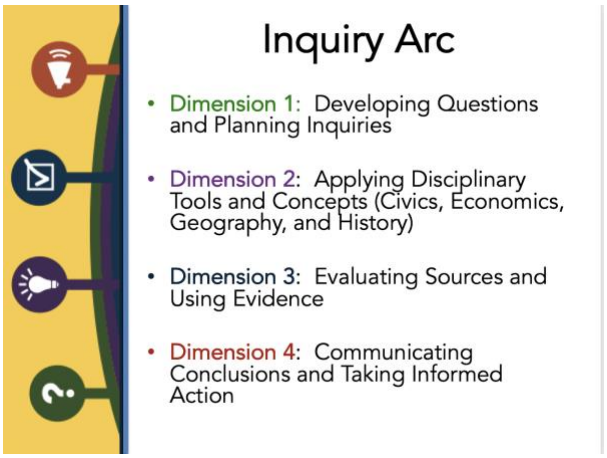
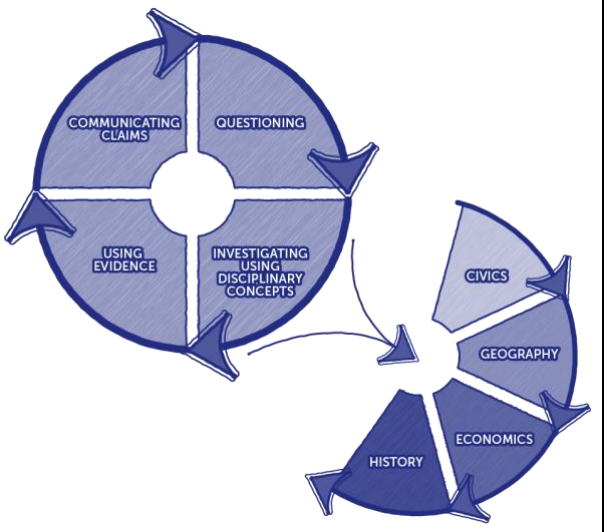
C3 Framework Inquiry Arc (2013)	Kentucky Academic Standards for Social Studies Inquiry Practices
	

Figure 4.1 C3 Framework Inquiry Arc (2013) and the Kentucky Academic Standards for Social Studies Inquiry Practices (2019)

In an effort to support teachers seeking to use inquiry in their classrooms, the lead writers co-created the IDM (Swan et al., 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019). The IDM is a curricular scaffold for teachers and students wanting to do disciplinary inquiry. At the core of the IDM is a one-page blueprint that articulates the questions, tasks, and sources that define a curriculum inquiry (Swan et al., 2015, 2017). Teachers using the IDM can essentially teach the entirety of the Inquiry Arc or hit on all four of Kentucky's inquiry practices within a week's worth of instruction. In the next section, I explain how my theoretical framework, based on the IDM, provided a structure for the research study I explore later in this article.

4.2.2 Theoretical Framework

A fundamental part of qualitative research is understanding the prominent role of theoretical frameworks and how they are present throughout all aspects of a study. Some researchers have suggested that theory emerges from research (Anfara & Mertz, 2006).

However, others suggest research is situated within at least some theoretical perspective (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). For the purpose of this study, understanding of various theories guided the research, from research design to data analysis. Accordingly, the theoretical framework for this study is based on two theories: the key elements of the IDM (Swan et al., 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019) and the concept of "ambitious teaching" (Grant, 2003, 2005).

I begin with Swan, Grant, and Lee's IDM (2015, 2017, 2018, 2019); the IDM provides a theoretical foundation for social studies inquiry focusing on the key elements of inquiry: questions, tasks, and sources. I explain these elements in detail in the following sections. The IDM is a one-page graphic presentation of the elements that define a curricular inquiry (see Figure 4.2). In this section, I discuss the IDM structure highlighting the three main foundations of the inquiry-based curriculum: 1) the compelling and supporting *questions* that frame and organize the inquiry; 2) the formative and summative performance *tasks* that provide opportunities for students to demonstrate and apply their understanding; and 3) the disciplinary *sources* that allow students to practice disciplinary thinking and reasoning.

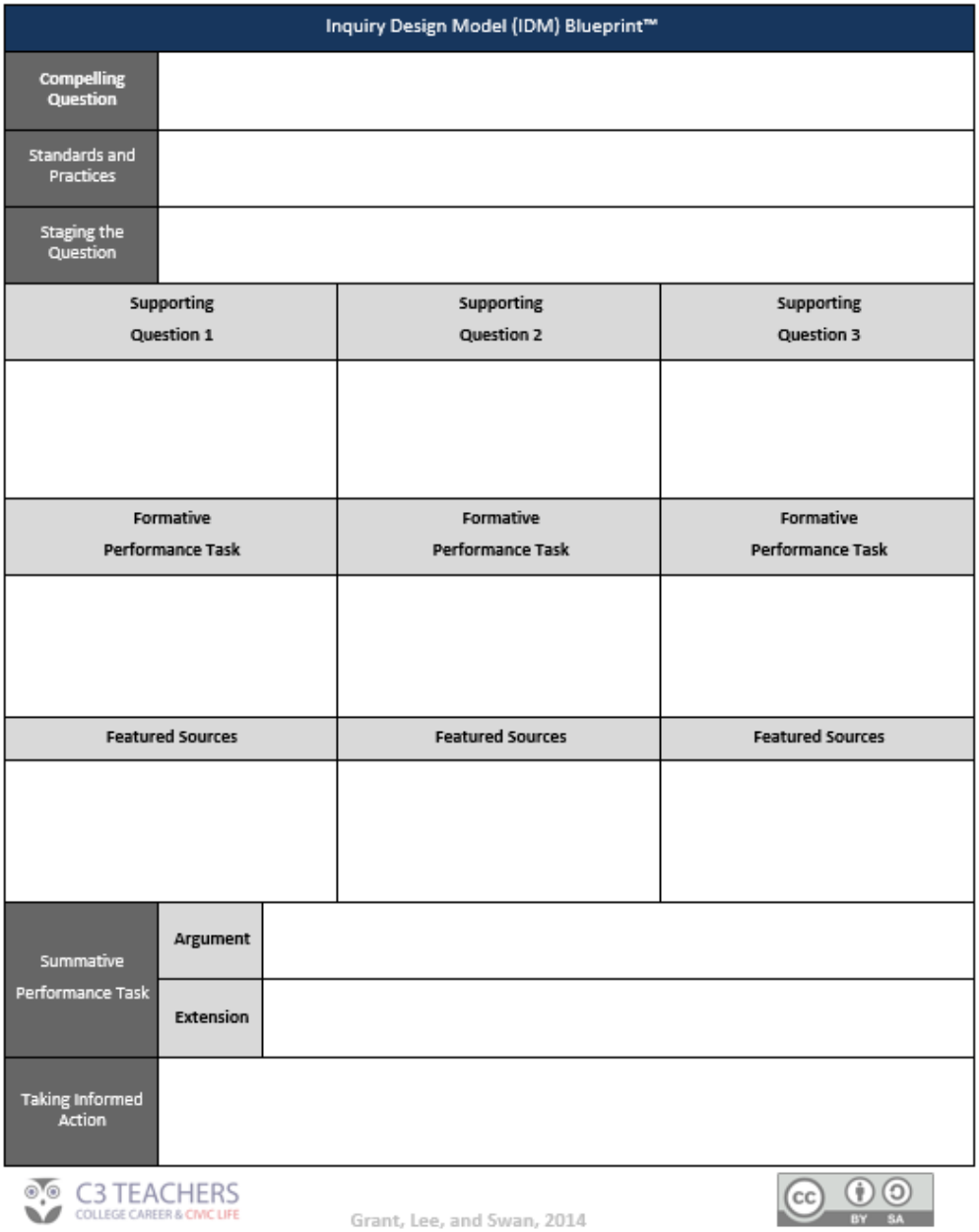


Figure 4.2 IDM Blueprint (Grant, Lee, and Swan, 2014)

Subsequently, understanding how teachers can use this inquiry-based approach to reconcile a state-mandated test remains important. When trying to do so, teachers may find themselves battling the need to align their instruction to the inquiry practices contained in state standards and the constraints associated with state and local assessments and

requirements; thus, creating the need for what Grant calls "ambitious teaching" (2003, 2005). In their research, Grant and Gladwell found that:

> Ambitious teachers deeply understand their subject matter and actively seek ways to connect that subject matter with the lived experiences of their students. They often do so, however, while factoring contextual factors (e.g., state curricula, state tests, unsupportive administrators, and colleagues) that may push them in different directions. (2010, p.2)

In this sense, Grant suggests ambitious teachers can prevail as they continue to seek out spaces in which to implement meaningful learning experiences for their students. In this study, I examine how one teacher was able to realize ambitious teaching as she created context and meaning around the state-mandated civics test using an inquiry-based approach.

4.2.3 Questions

The C3 Inquiry Arc and the IDM (Swan et al., 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019) feature compelling questions as a way to drive social studies inquiry. Swan, Grant, and Lee (2015) describe compelling questions as having two traits, rigor and relevance. They wrote,

> The key to crafting compelling questions is hitting the sweet spot between the qualities of being intellectually rigorous and personally relevant to students. Intellectually rigorous questions reflect an enduring issue, concern, or debate in social studies and speak to the big ideas of history and the social sciences…But, they also need to be worth exploring from a student angle…The key is to see within the ideas to be taught those elements that teachers know their students care about. It is not the case that students are uninterested in natural resources or supply and

demand or the New Deal. But it is the case that teachers need to pull relevant connections from those ideas to students' lives. (p. 316)

Compelling questions frame an inquiry and supporting questions build out the compelling question by organizing and sequencing the main ideas. Supporting questions follow a content logic or progression that becomes increasingly more sophisticated over the inquiry experience. Taken together, the compelling question and supporting questions provide the intellectual architecture for the inquiry as they highlight the ideas and issues with which teachers and students can engage.

4.2.4 Tasks

The IDM Blueprint (Swan et al., 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019) features a variety of formative and summative performance tasks that provide students with opportunities for learning and teachers with opportunities to evaluate what students know and are able to do. Based on the idea that assessments serve instructional and evaluative purposes, the IDM features both formative and summative performance tasks as well as extension activities and taking informed action opportunities.

Following the C3 Inquiry Arc, the IDM begins with a compelling question (Dimension 1) that is consistently answered in the form of an evidence-based argument (Dimension 4). In order to make a strong argument, students must engage with content and skills throughout an inquiry. Dimensions 2 and 3 of the C3 Framework (NCSS, 2013) help clarify the skills and conceptual knowledge that help to move students from questions to arguments. The formative performance tasks within the inquiry are designed as *exercises* intended to move students toward success in constructing a coherent, evidence-based argument. Although these tasks do not include all of what students might need to know,

they do include the major ideas that provide a foundation for their arguments. The tasks evince an increasingly complex skill progression of such that students both build and practice evidence-based claim-making skills.

Building on the purpose and structure of the summative and formative performance tasks, extension exercises highlight the alternative ways students may express their arguments. “Such activities are in keeping with the C3 Framework (NCSS, 2013) which asks students to a) present adaptations of their arguments; b) do so with a range of audiences; and c) do so in a variety of venues outside of the classroom” (IDM Generator Tutorial, 2019). Taking informed action tasks are designed so that students can civically engage with the content of an inquiry. Informed action can take numerous forms (e.g., discussions, debates, presentations) and can occur in various contexts both inside and outside of the classroom. The key to any action, however, is the idea that it is informed. The IDM, therefore, stages the taking informed action activities such that students build their knowledge and understanding of an issue before engaging in any social action. In the *understand* stage, students demonstrate that they can think about the issues behind the inquiry in a new setting or context. The *assess* stage asks students to consider alternative perspectives, scenarios, or options as they begin to define a possible set of actions. And the *act* stage is where students decide if and how they will put into effect the results of their planning.

4.2.5 Sources

Disciplinary sources provide the substance and content for an inquiry. According to Swan, Grant, & Lee (2015) teachers can use sources in three ways: “1) To spark and sustain student curiosity in an inquiry; 2) To build students’ disciplinary (content and

conceptual) knowledge and skills; and 3) To enable students to construct arguments with evidence" (p. 321). These three uses of sources correspond with parts of the IDM Blueprint (Swan et al., 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019): staging the compelling question, formative and summative performance tasks, and additional tasks (i.e., extensions and taking informed action exercises). Throughout an inquiry, students encounter sources to build their disciplinary knowledge (content and concepts) and skills (e.g., historical thinking, geographic reasoning). Additionally, the C3 Framework (NCSS, 2013) encourages shifting instructional practice to integrate disciplinary knowledge and disciplinary skills purposefully (Swan et al., 2014).

4.2.6 Summary of the Inquiry Design Model (IDM)

Overall, the IDM Blueprint (Swan et al., 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019) serves an important role; it enables teachers to build their curricula around the key elements of inquiry – compelling and supporting questions, formative and summative performance tasks, and disciplinary sources. In doing so, teachers can make connections between the content they teach within an inquiry-based approach. As the IDM is not a set of prescriptive lesson plans, the method honors teachers' autonomy and understanding of their students, so they have the space to weave together a curriculum. In short, teachers can adhere to the "IDM for its essence—questions, tasks, and sources—and treat the blueprint as a pedagogical accordion expanding and contracting based on the needs of their students as well as their curricular scope and sequence" (Swan et al., 2018, p. 133). In the next section, I discuss the study's framework to explore how one teacher used the conceptual base of the Kentucky Civics Test Inquiry (C3 Teachers, n.d.) in her classroom to implement a state social studies requirement.

4.2.7 A Kentucky Case: Inquiry-Based Instruction and State-Mandated Civics Test

The IDM, and its unique blueprint (Swan et al., 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019), aims to organize curriculum around the foundations of inquiry: questions, tasks, and sources. As such, the IDM "can operate as a curricular framework that flexes to meet the contextual needs of teachers" (Swan et al,, 2018, p. 137). The blueprint then offers teachers an opportunity to teach factual content (e.g., the content in the state-mandated civics test) within an inquiry frame (e.g., the Kentucky Civics Test Inquiry). In this study, I use the IDM's foundations of inquiry – questions, tasks, and sources – to understand one teacher's attempt to help her students pass the state-mandated civics test within an inquiry-based approach.

The social studies teacher featured in this case study implemented the IDM, Kentucky Civics Test Inquiry, featuring the compelling question: *Can the civics test make you a good citizen?* (C3 Teachers, n.d.). This inquiry embeds the civics test in one of the supporting questions and asks students to consider how the test addresses the needed knowledge and skills to prepare students for active engagement in civic life. Grounding the inquiry with the fact-based test allows students to grapple with the concepts of civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions. In the sections that follow, I walk through the methodology, findings, and implications of this research study.

4.3 Methodology

This study explored how one teacher used an inquiry-based approach to implement the state-mandated civics test. The main research question of the study was: How do teachers reconcile the high stakes civics test with inquiry-based instructional approaches?

Supporting research questions, using a lens of questions, tasks, and sources derived from the IDM, included:

1. How does the teacher use *questions* to frame content and engage students in the civics test?
2. How does the teacher use formative and summative performance *tasks* to surface students' understanding and ideas about the civics test?
3. How does the teacher use disciplinary *sources* to create context and meaning around the civics test?

This study was designed to provide insight and understanding following a qualitative approach (Merriam, 2009). Qualitative approaches are seen as well-suited for exploring new phenomena and developing hypotheses (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011; Miles et al., 2014). The novelty and uniqueness of the phenomenon under study---how teachers reconcile fact-based content using an inquiry approach--- made it well-suited to qualitative methodology. The unique nature of this case led to a small sample size, which was also well-suited to qualitative exploration.

Moreover, the study was structured as an exploratory qualitative study that used an embedded, single-case study of a high school social studies department in a mid-sized suburban school district in Kentucky to examine the implementation of the Kentucky Civics Test Inquiry (C3 Teachers, n.d.). According to Yin (2014), the term "embedded case study," typically refers to a single-case study that involves more than one unit of analysis. Case studies are characterized by the unit of analysis and, unlike other qualitative approaches, are not associated with particular data collection or analysis methods (Merriam, 2009). The embedded single-case study was used to develop explanatory

inferences about key aspects of the IDM implementation to teach the content of the civics test. For the purpose of this research, the subunits of investigation 'embedded' in the case were participant observations, the curriculum, student work samples, and a teacher interview. The subunits are described in detail later in this article.

The purpose of the study was to examine how a high school social studies teacher used the IDM to implement state-required social studies content. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) defined exploratory research as research that is "conducted in new areas of inquiry" and specified that qualitative exploratory studies "examine phenomena that have not been studied previously" (p. 53). Previous research on the civics test focused on whether the requirement was beneficial or not; thus, the study of how to implement the requirement using an inquiry approach is well suited to an exploratory design.

4.3.1 Setting of the Study

To situate the study, a single-case design was selected because it was a representative case. The site of the study was Yellow Jacket High School (YJHS, a pseudonym), a public high school part of a mid-sized suburban school district in Kentucky. This teacher agreed to participate but asked that data only be collected in her Civics class; therefore, this study focused on one teacher's implementation of the Kentucky Civics Test Inquiry (C3 Teachers, n.d.) in her Civics class. Contextually, it is important to note that YJHS is organized into subject matter departments. In addition, local school district records at the time indicated that the school enrollment was 1,244 students with a socioeconomic and racial diversity that reflected the community in which the school resides: 40.5% of the students qualified for free-and-reduced meals and the racial makeup of the student body

was 75% White, 15.1% Hispanic, 4.3% two or more races, and 5.6% other. The gender enrollment of male to female students was roughly equal, and a total of 88 students in the school were identified as those with disabilities. Furthermore, this research site was purposefully selected based on the teacher's experience with the implementation of inquiries as she received training on the IDM as part of her master's teacher preparation coursework, and her belief – which was verbally stated in her class – that the primary mission of social studies is to prepare informed and productive citizens. In the next section, I will provide additional details on the participants of the study.

4.3.2 Study Participants

The high school social studies teacher, Ms. Autumn Smith (a pseudonym), taught social studies in the district for three years. Her class was comprised of 24 students, 23 of whom were in grade 10 and one was in grade 11. Seventy percent of the class was White and 30% was Hispanic. Three students in the class were identified as students with disabilities. Prior to the study, school district and university consent protocols were followed. All study participants were informed of the research process and assured confidentiality. Ms. Smith also was informed of the nature of the interview in advance, and it was scheduled at her convenience. The interview was recorded and transcribed. Pseudonyms were applied to mask all participants' names throughout the study, though gender identification was preserved.

4.3.3 Data Sources

In approaching the research process for this case study, I carefully considered what sources of evidence could be properly recorded and validated. Yin's (2009) identification of six sources of evidence for case studies served as the basis for my decision-making. Yin

(2009) identified these six sources as documents; archival records; interviews—which he further distinguished as either in-depth interviews or focused interviews; direct observation; participant-observation; and physical artifacts. As interviews are common in case study research, I expected an interview with the teacher to serve as my primary data source. Secondary data sources used in this study were a teacher artifact (the Kentucky Civics Test Inquiry (C3 Teachers, n.d.)), direct observation (e.g., student-to-teacher interactions), and student artifacts (e.g., student work samples, outlines, and results from the civics test). Observations mainly provided context and understanding of how the teacher's interactions with the students impacted how she operationalized the IDM. Data from the student work samples and assessments were then used to corroborate information from observations and the interview, as is common in the use of artifacts in case study data collection. In the following sections, I provide contextual information on each source of evidence: the interview, teacher artifact, observations, and student artifacts.

4.3.3.1 Teacher Interview

One interview was conducted at YJHS as part of the study. During the 20-minute interview, the participant, Ms. Smith, reflected on the Kentucky Civics Test Inquiry (C3 Teachers, n.d.) she implemented with students earlier in the school year. A guided interview (Patton, 2002) or focused interview (Merton et al., 1990; Yin, 2009) approach was used to serve as a "guided conversation rather than a structured query" (Yin, 2009, p. 106). The interview's general format included asking the teacher to describe her experience with the inquiry as a whole. Specifically, Ms. Smith was asked to reconstruct, rather than remember, the inquiry experience by exploring each component of the IDM, the Kentucky Civics Test Inquiry (C3 Teachers, n.d.): staging the question, supporting questions,

formative performance tasks, featured sources, and summative performance task. This process was followed in order to gather concrete data (Seidman, 1999) and discuss the teacher's thoughts on her students' conceptual understandings and reactions to the inquiry-based learning experience. To ensure accuracy, I refrained from recording notes by hand; accordingly, the interview was recorded with a video camera and later transcribed using transcription software.

4.3.3.2 Curriculum

The next source of evidence which goes hand-in-hand with the teacher interview was the curriculum, or teacher artifact, the Kentucky Civics Test Inquiry (C3 Teachers, n.d.) (see Figure 4.3). Artifacts provide insight into the importance of the participants or setting. In this case, the focus was not an evaluation of the curriculum, but simply the curriculum's role bridging a fact-based test with an inquiry-based approach. As is with the operationalization of the IDM, "teachers play an important role in this process by engaging students in the compelling question, scaffolding their source work, and ensuring they are mastering the content and developing skills through the successive formative performance tasks" (Swan et al., 2018, p. 134). The structure of this inquiry helped me to better understand the inquiry-based teaching and learning that occurred using the lens of the questions, tasks, and sources outlined on the IDM Blueprint (Swan et al., 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019). In summary, this curricular artifact provided rich insight into how the inquiry guided instructional decision-making and framed the civics test's content and value.

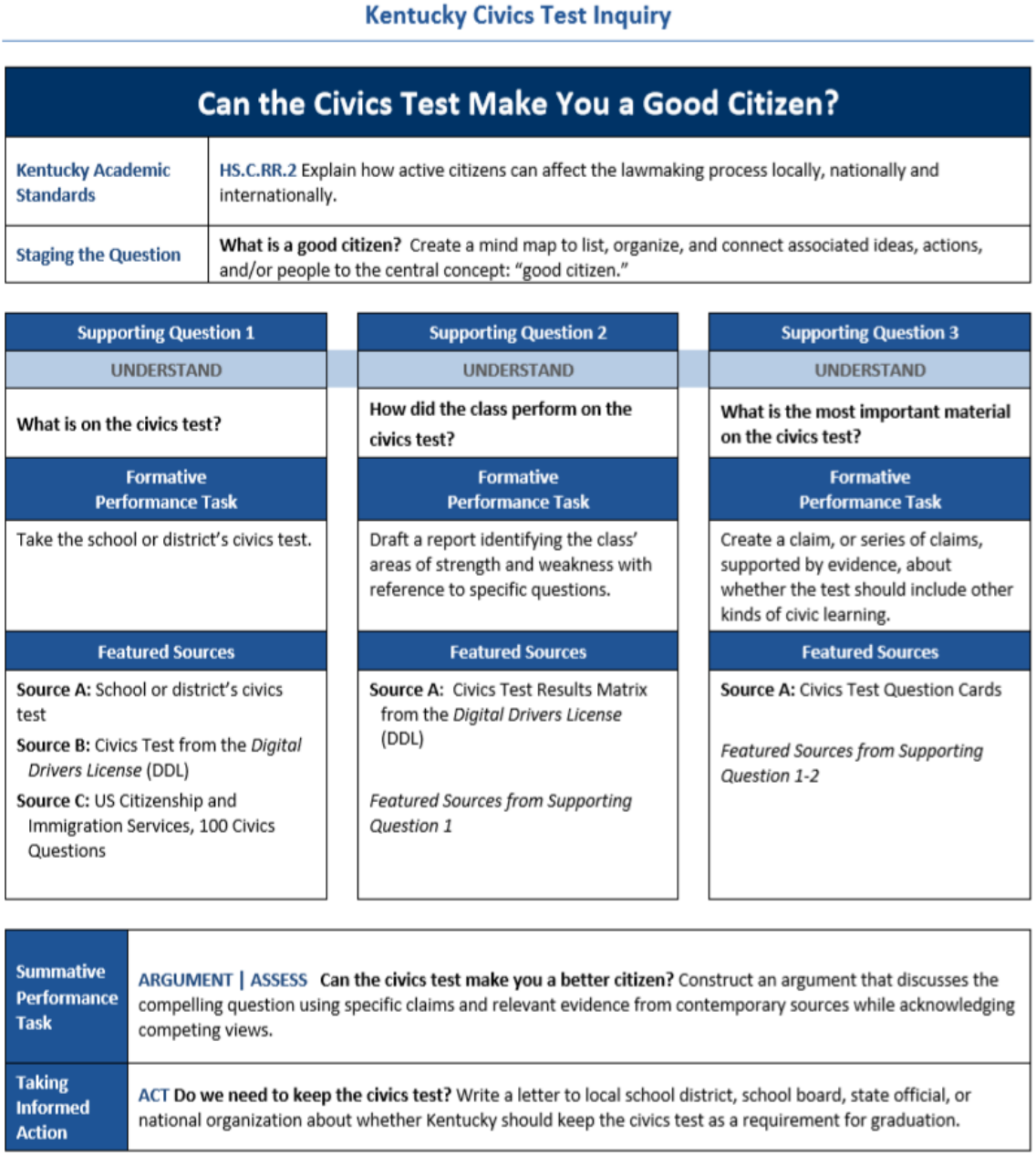


Figure 4.3 Kentucky Civics Test Inquiry (C3 Teachers, n.d.)

4.3.3.3 Observations

This study involved the observation of Ms. Smith's Civics class over the course of three class periods, the time it took to implement this IDM, and included the same group of students three times. This process helped to capture a more comprehensive account of

the case and allowed for an in-depth exploration of the teacher's implementation of each component of the IDM throughout the study. In accordance with Meriam's (2009) beliefs, observations were used as they serve as an important vehicle from which a researcher can triangulate findings from other data sources or discover new truths. Additionally, Merriam's (2009) field note protocol was used to focus the observations on the setting, actions, and the teacher's conversations and interactions with the students in her Civics class. Merriam's guidelines also were followed to include writing out field notes as soon as an observation concluded.

4.3.3.4 Student Artifacts

Student artifacts or work samples also were collected throughout the study and provided insight into students' understanding of the disciplinary content contained within the IDM. These artifacts included the formative and summative tasks students completed, along with students' results on the civics test. Furthermore, collectively, the 73 artifacts helped provide a more comprehensive answer to the main and three supporting research questions.

4.3.4 Data Analysis

The teacher's use of questions, tasks, and sources, as well as the concept of "ambitious teaching," (Grant 2003, 2005) served as categories for data analysis. I approached this study with an understanding that all data analysis is inductive and comparative following Merriam's (2009) recommendation to analyze data concurrently while collecting it. Additionally, data analysis was inductive in that the process began with making meaning from the data and ended with categories and patterns (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Using thematic analysis, the interview, field notes, and student

artifacts were coded using the categories of questions, tasks, sources, and ambitious teaching. Coding through this lens allowed me to focus on each code across data sources, revealing evidence that naturally began to tell a story about how one ambitious teacher reconciled the high stakes civics test with inquiry-based instructional approaches.

4.3.4.1 Research Validity and Reliability

This study aimed for fidelity to validity and reliability in the research in multiple ways. Triangulation across the observation field notes, interview transcript, and student artifacts helped to establish construct validity. Corroborating themes across the data sources helped to triangulate findings (Patton, 1990).

In fact, the issue of validity is of significant consideration in qualitative research because the study is focused on telling the stories of participants accurately (Merriam, 2009). Accordingly, all observations and the interview were recorded, along with the student artifacts collected, in their entirety to ensure data was complete and accurate. The reliability also was improved through the use of clear research questions and data collection instruments.

4.3.5 Limitations of this Study

The results of this single-case study will not be generalizable to all social studies departments, schools, or teachers. Keeping a narrow focus on one classroom made the amount of qualitative data more manageable and limited the breadth of data collected. Since little is known about how feasible it is to reconcile teaching the fact-based civics test through an inquiry approach, this study is focused on one case rather than a representation of all possibilities. More studies of different teachers implementing this inquiry will be needed to gain a deeper understanding of whether we can answer the research question

definitively. This study serves as the beginning of an investigation and conversation on how one teacher used the Kentucky Civics Test Inquiry (C3 Teachers, n.d.) to reinforce content through the application of knowledge and skills.

4.4 Findings

For this study, the main research question was: How do teachers reconcile the high-stakes civics test with inquiry-based instructional approaches? The study was framed further by supporting research questions that included:

1. How does the teacher use *questions* to frame content and engage students in the civics test?
2. How does the teacher use disciplinary *sources* to create context and meaning around the civics test?
3. How does the teacher use formative and summative performance *tasks* to surface students' understanding and ideas about the civics test?

Ongoing thematic analysis was applied to the case study data, and theoretical propositions and rival explanations were constantly considered. Before exploring the findings, it is important to understand the context of the teacher's classroom environment. Accordingly, I will explain this context in the next section.

4.4.1 Ms. Smith's Classroom

I begin with my general observations on the physical environment of Ms. Smith's classroom. From posters of famous Americans to maps and charts, the walls were covered with artifacts that reflected that Ms. Smith's classroom housed U.S. History and Civics classes. Additionally, the seating in the classroom was situated in rows of single desks, equally spaced between them; however, this layout did not detract from the teacher's ability

to have students work in groups effectively or engage in inquiry-based learning. After my initial observation, it was also clear that classroom management would not prevent Ms. Smith from transitioning from a more traditional classroom to an inquiry-based classroom.

To further situate the study, Ms. Smith was part of a civics professional learning community (PLC) where each teacher was shifting to inquiry-based instruction. The PLC decided to teach two IDM inquiries during the year, one in the fall and one in the spring. Because the civics test is a required assessment for students in their tenth-grade Civics class at YJHS, the PLC teachers decided to meet this requirement within an inquiry-based approach. They selected the IDM, the Kentucky Civics Test Inquiry (see Figure 3) (C3 Teachers, n.d.), featuring the compelling question, Can the civics test make you a good citizen? The authors of this inquiry wrote this description about the outcomes of the inquiry as follows:

> This inquiry leads students through an investigation of the civics test in order to consider how the test addresses the needed knowledge and skills to prepare students for active engagement in civic life. (C3 Teachers, n.d.).

All three teachers in the PLC taught this inquiry in the spring of 2020. However, only Ms. Smith's class participated in this study. It also is important to note that YJHS operated using an 80-minute class schedule rotation; therefore, Ms. Smith's Civics class met every other day. The implementation of this inquiry took place over the course of three 80-minute class periods. The research also took place over this time, and the data from the interview, observations and field notes, and artifacts encompassed my data analysis. In the sections that follow, I breakdown Ms. Smith's instruction using three claims:

1. The ambitious teacher used compelling and supporting *questions* so students could explore and determine the value of the state-mandated civics test.
2. The ambitious teacher used formative and summative performance *tasks* to meet the requirements of the state-mandated civics test and communicate their learning about what good citizenship means.
3. The ambitious teacher used primary and secondary *sources* to help students develop an understanding of the context of the state-mandated civics test and understand other ways of educating for good citizenship.

4.4.2 Claim 1: The ambitious teacher used compelling and supporting *questions* so students could explore and determine the value of the state-mandated civics test.

The teacher, Ms. Smith, implemented the Kentucky Civics Test Inquiry (C3 Teachers, n.d.) to frame the study of the civics test itself and what it means to be a "good citizen" through the use of a compelling question: Can the civics test make you a good citizen? As part of the inquiry, students took the test to evaluate whether the knowledge within the test is necessary or sufficient as they considered the notion of citizenship, and more importantly, good citizenship. In other words, the compelling question puts students in the center of a policy dilemma—how do educators help students prepare for civic life, and what role should the civics test play in that endeavor? In addressing the compelling question, the inquiry structured students' work as they proceeded through the series of supporting questions, formative performance tasks, and featured sources.

The teacher used the inquiry's three supporting questions to progressively build students' understanding of the civics test's content and explore other kinds of civic learning and the role that each play in preparing students to be good citizens. The supporting questions include:

1. What is on the civics test?
2. How did the class perform on the civics test?
3. What is the most important material on the civics test?

The teacher used additional questions to problematize the state-mandated civics test. For example, to help students grapple with the idea of a "good citizen," the staging task includes the question: What is a good citizen? Ms. Smith began the inquiry by having each student use his or her school-issued Chromebook to access the sources for the staging the compelling question task electronically via an online learning management system called Schoology. Once familiar with the sources, Ms. Smith tasked students to get into groups to define what makes a good citizen by discussing the featured sources and pulling on background knowledge about what a good citizen is. On a big piece of poster paper, the groups of students then created a mind map with the central idea, being a good citizen. From there, the students made webs while considering what makes a good citizen. In her interview, Ms. Smith recalled,

> For a lot of it, they pulled specific vocab from things that we had learned in class before. However, some of them also just kind of drew on their own opinions or things that they see in the world around them. And so that was a good mix, and it really got them to the purpose of staging the question--to get them thinking about what they were being asked. And so that was really important to kind of keep that as a thread throughout the rest of the inquiry. The purpose of staging the compelling question is to hook students and to get them curious about the compelling question and then also to kind of fill in any gaps that might exist in the terms that might be in the compelling question.

In her interactions with students, it was evident that the purpose of staging the compelling question was to hook her students and then define some terms with which they may need additional background or context. In the interview, Ms. Smith also reflected that she thought “putting it that way helped to spark their curiosity a little bit more and phrase it in a way that they’re going to be trying to investigate this and trying to figure this out as they move through the inquiry.” Her question, “What is a good citizen?” framed this initial conversation by zooming in on an idea (e.g., good citizenship) that would be critical in determining the civics test’s value.

As the class began to work through the inquiry and discuss the supporting questions, Ms. Smith’s interactions with students consistently involved telling them that there was no right or wrong answer; she reinforced that it was more important how they came to their answers using evidence. Also of significance is that Ms. Smith intentionally returned to the compelling question throughout the inquiry and referred to it as the "guiding light for the entire inquiry." Furthermore, Ms. Smith recounted that:

> . . . questions for teachers give you a starting point where you introduce the students to the question and content, and then you're always reminded that you have to go back and answer or help students so they can actually answer the question. So it's a circle. You start with the compelling question, go to each supporting question, and then at the end, you finally get to answer it. It becomes that North Star.

The role of questions in Ms. Smith’s instructional approach was undeniable. She used a compelling question to problematize the civics test. She used supporting questions to structure the investigation. And, she used additional questions to hook the students at the beginning of the inquiry. In doing so, students explored the idea of good citizenship,

the contents of the state-mandated civics test, and the value of the test in creating good citizens.

4.4.3 Claim 2: The ambitious teacher used formative and summative performance *tasks* to meet the requirements of the state-mandated civics test and communicate their learning about what good citizenship means.

In the inquiry, students answered the questions outlined above by completing a series of formative and summative performance tasks:

1. Staging the Compelling Question Task: Create a mind map to list, organize, and connect associated ideas, actions, and/or people to the central concept: "good citizen."
2. Formative Performance Task 1: Take the school or district's civics test.
3. Formative Performance Task 2: Draft a report identifying the class' areas of strength and weakness with reference to specific questions.
4. Formative Performance Task 3: Create a claim, or series of claims, supported by evidence, about whether the test should include other kinds of civic learning.
5. Summative Argument Task: Construct an argument that discusses the compelling question using specific claims and relevant evidence from contemporary sources while acknowledging competing views.
6. Taking Informed Action Task: Write a letter to a local school district, school board, state official, or national organization about whether Kentucky should keep the civics test as a requirement for graduation.

The teacher, Ms. Smith, began the staging the compelling question task by asking students to individually review the featured sources through YJHS's online learning management system, Schoology. After students read and took notes on the sources, she assigned them to groups to answer the question, "What is a good citizen?" To accomplish

this, Ms. Smith asked each group of students to create a mind map on poster paper surrounding the term “good citizen." Based on student observations, conversations indicated that students pulled on background knowledge obtained in class and their own experiences. During the student-to-student discussions, many similarities surfaced; for example, being informed, respecting others, respecting diversity, taking care of the environment, going to school, and so forth. As shown in Figure 4.4, the mind map exercise served as a vehicle for students to communicate their learning and prior knowledge of the concept “good citizen."

Figure 4.4 Staging the Question Formative Performance Task: Mind Map

It also was noteworthy that the teacher informally evaluated what students learned about what it means to be a good citizen while she observed them completing the staging the compelling question task. Ms. Smith recalled,

> While my students were constructing their mind maps in their groups, I was walking around and, for the most part, just trying to hear what my students were thinking and where their minds were. And then occasionally, I would chime in and just ask questions to push them further: What do you mean by being informed? What does that look like? Why is that important? Just to kind of get them ready to explain themselves because they were going to need to do that later in the inquiry; but, the main purpose was to just listen and hear their thinking. In the end, we went around the class, and each group presented the main ideas of their mind map.

Through the implementation of this staging the compelling question task, the teacher was able to formally and informally assess what students learned about "good citizenship."

The next formative performance task, associated with supporting question 1 (What is on the civics test?), allowed students to satisfy the requirements of the state-mandated civics test and demonstrate their understanding of the civics test content. Senate Bill 159 (2017) states that Kentucky students are required to score 60% or higher and may retake the exam as many times as deemed necessary to pass the test. While each local board of education may create or approve its own test, the approved test for YJHS was from the Digital Driver's License (DDL) (Civics Graduation Requirement License, n.d.), which included a multiple-choice version of the civics test (see Figure 4.5).

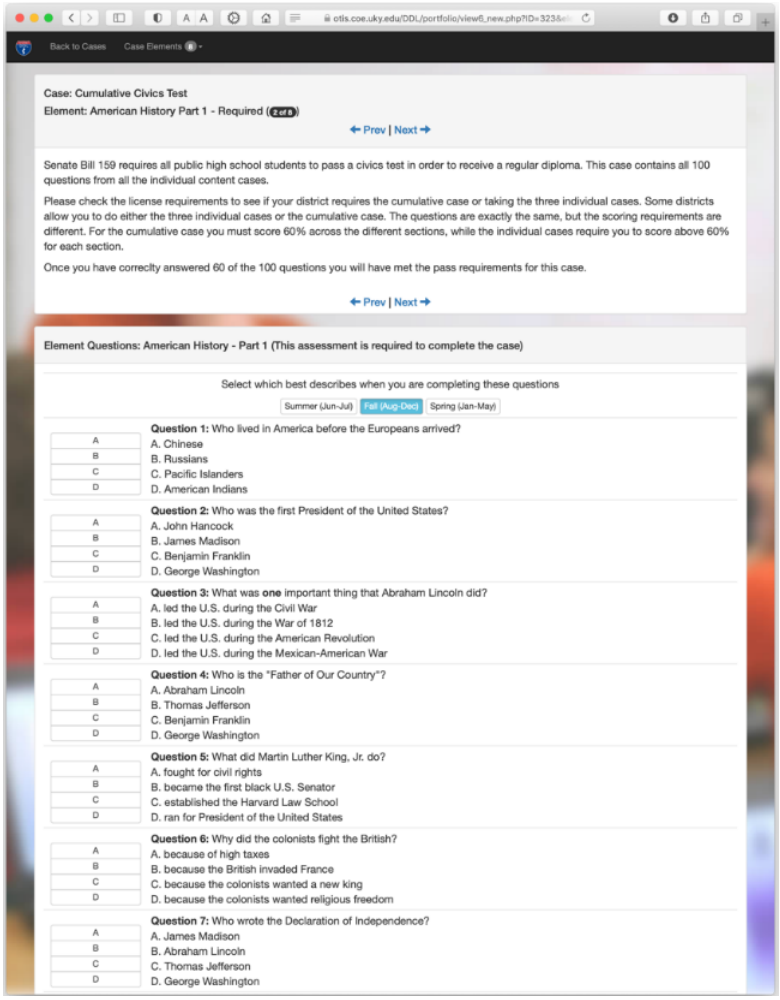


Figure 4.5 Civics Test from the DDL (Civics Graduation Requirement License, n.d.)

For context, the DDL is a free on-line platform available to schools and districts that "allows learners (whether they be students or teachers) to get exposure to concepts through cases. Learners can take the practice and evaluative exercises to both facilitate and certify their knowledge" (About the DDL, n.d.). Additionally, the DDL divides the test into three cases: American History, Geography, and Government and Economics. The DDL further divides two of the cases, American History and Government and Economics, into question sets; American History contains two sets of questions, and Government and Economics contains four sets. It is important to note that the test questions are aligned to

grade-level standards. All cases include grade-level standards Ms. Smith's tenth-grade students learned in her class or previous grades, except for the American History question sets; these questions are aligned mainly to grade 11 standards.

Consequently, to implement this task, Ms. Smith had the class take the required civics test to meet the state requirement. Test results from the DDL indicated that for the two cases, Geography and Government and Economics -- five total question sets -- 81% of the students received a passing score on their first attempt. For the two question sets included in the American History case, 55% of students received a passing score on their first attempt. These findings support that students successfully demonstrated their understanding of the civics content to which they had been exposed in Ms. Smith's class.

Just as with the first task, it was noteworthy that the teacher informally assessed student learning by observing students while they completed this formative performance task. Ms. Smith recalled,

> I walked around and kept an eye on the students as I was trying to listen for what kind of reactions they were having, verbal or nonverbal, as they were taking the civics test. And you know, some students just stayed quiet and took it, but I did hear some students sighing or kind of pulling on their hair a little bit because the initial reaction when they pulled the test up was that it was 100 questions. So, those cues are really important because by listening to that, I'm getting a little bit of an insight into what they're thinking and what's going on in their minds.

The next formative performance task, for supporting question 2 of the Kentucky Civics Test Inquiry (C3 Teachers, n.d.) (How did the class perform on the civics test?), asked students to draft a report identifying the class' areas of strength and weakness with

reference to specific questions. First, Ms. Smith projected the student data on the screen (see Figure 4.6), without listing student names, to include each question on the civics test. Next to this information, the percentage of students who answered it correctly and incorrectly was listed. Following this, Ms. Smith tasked the students to identify their discipline areas of strength and weakness and identify the strengths and weaknesses of particular questions within those categories. Through the identification process, students communicated their understanding of what areas of growth were needed to pass the state-mandated civics test successfully.

Figure 4.6 DDL Student Data (Civics Test Requirement License, n.d.)

Again, it was noteworthy that the teacher informally assessed student learning by observing students as they completed this formative performance task. Ms. Smith noted, "This process was really helpful for the investigation on supporting question 2 as students were analyzing their data and having conversations between them," which demonstrated their learning and opportunities for growth to ensure they were prepared to pass the civics test. Through their discussions, she reflected:

> They learned how in the future to not make those mistakes. And by listening to their conversations, the thing they liked to do the most was to try to figure out why, why did that matter? And, this process helped to pull it together for them.

Throughout this task, the teacher ensured that students were building the civics-based content knowledge needed to meet the requirements of the state-mandated civics test.

After this, the formative performance task for supporting question 3 (What is the most important material on the civics test?) was to create a claim or series of claims, supported by evidence that answers the supporting question. Ms. Smith assigned students to groups for this task. Initially, each group reviewed the questions on the civics test and selected five questions they considered to be the most important. Ms. Smith then had each group rank the questions from one to five, in order of importance, and asked them to be ready to justify their reasoning. Next, the teacher organized the questions into brackets, and each group argued for their top question, with some questions being repeated. Eventually, the teacher facilitated a mini-debate so the students could see which group made a better argument. Through their discussions and deliberation, the students communicated their learning about what the groups valued to be the most important

material on the civics test. The student arguments themselves most often indicated more value was placed on questions related to civic skills, or those tied to the idea of "doing" civics.

Similarly, it was noteworthy that the teacher informally assessed student learning by observing students while they completed this formative performance task. Ms. Smith shared that she was "kind of surprised they had a quick debate because they always want to debate each other." Instead, what she found was that just as much of the learning was demonstrated during small group discussions when students "had to create a claim and then use evidence to back it up." Ultimately, she understood that the students' disciplinary understanding was grown through the development of their arguments. This realization was confirmed at the end of this process when Ms. Smith had students present their arguments. When they completed this, students then evaluated the arguments of other groups and often said, "Your argument is great, but the other group made a better argument."

Additionally, the arguments students valued most were broader and tied to civic skills, or those actions and ideas students earlier identified when they answered the staging the question, "What is a good citizen?" For example, several groups shared that the most important material was related to the Constitution because they claimed understanding this "is important to know in order to build civic skills and knowledge, be engaged in civic action, and is essential to sustain democracy." In short, this formative performance task afforded the teacher space to build students' content knowledge so they could pass the required civics test and communicate their learning about what good citizenship means.

At this point in the inquiry, the teacher asked students to complete the summative task: to construct an argument that discusses the compelling question, “Can the civics test make you a good citizen?” using specific claims and relevant evidence from contemporary sources while acknowledging competing views. For this task, Ms. Smith used an outline she created for students to complete when outlining any argument (see Figure 4.7). Ms. Smith tasked students to individually write their claims about whether the test could make you a good citizen. She then asked them to introduce three pieces of evidence, along with three supports using specific evidence found from the sources in the inquiry. As they completed this argument task, students better understood the importance of having each of their opinions tied to textual evidence to support their claims; in other words, students had to provide evidence of what good citizenship means. Ms. Smith clarified that she

> chose to do outlines rather than having students write a whole essay because it makes it easy for them, especially when they're learning how to construct an argument and have very explicit evidence. It also is even easier for me to give feedback that's direct when I see their outlines.

The concise nature of the outlines also allowed students to more clearly connect the purpose of making an argument to the civics test and their evaluation of the concept "good citizenship."

When evaluating the student work samples for the summative task, the class’ arguments generally were divided. However, most students included evidence-based claims that the civics test does not make you a better citizen. Expressly, 11 students indicated the civics test does not make you a better citizen, nine supported that it does make you a better citizen, and four did not take a definitive stance. Regardless of the claim, the

supports and specific evidence each student used to complete the teacher-created outline communicated student learning about what good citizenship means (see Figure 4.7).

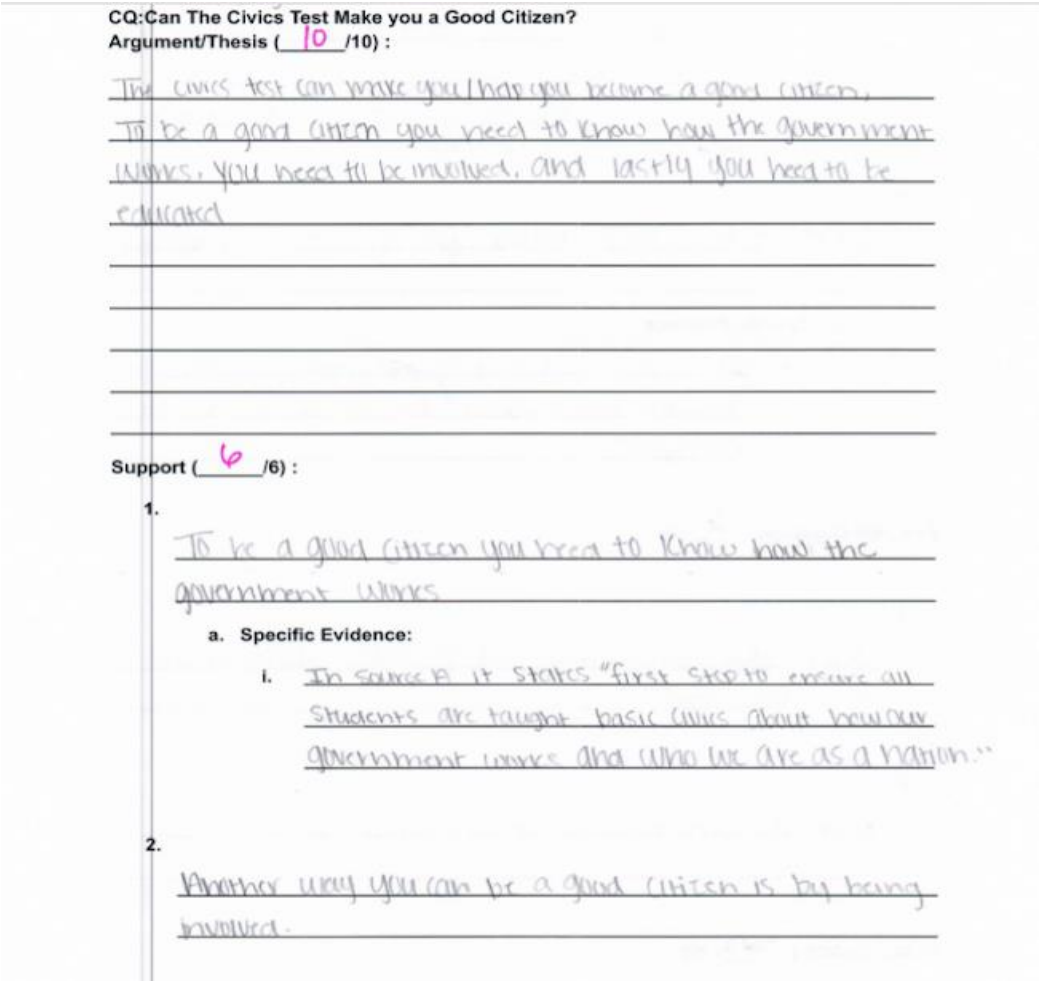

CQ:Can The Civics Test Make you a Good Citizen?
Argument/Thesis (10 /10) :
The civics test can make you/help you become a good citizen.
To be a good citizen you need to know how the government
works. You need to be involved. and lastly you need to be
educated
Support (6 /6) :
1.
To be a good citizen you need to know how the
government works
a. Specific Evidence:
i. In source B it states "first step to ensure all
students are taught basic civics about how our
government works and who we are as a nation."
2.
Another way you can be a good citizen is by being
involved.

Figure 4.7 Student Work Sample from the Summative Performance Task

The IDM's final task, taking informed action, directed students to write a letter to their local school district, school board, state official, or a national organization about whether Kentucky should keep the civics test as a requirement for graduation. While this task was included in the inquiry, it should be noted the teacher did not complete it due to time restrictions. Therefore, for this study, the summative task served as the final

assessment task. Even though this task was not completed, the enactment of the summative assessment task allowed students to progressively build their understanding of the concept of "good citizenship", the context of the civics test, and if the civics test helps students to prepare for civic life. In other words, the implementation of this IDM using the completed performance tasks enabled students to answer the compelling question, "Can the civics test make you a good citizen?"

In summary, the role of formative and summative tasks in Ms. Smith's instructional approach was irrefutable. She used formative performance tasks to help students acquire the civics content needed to perform well on the summative task. And, she used the summative performance task to allow students to construct an argument addressing the question, "Can the civics test make you a good citizen?" In doing so, students met the requirement of the state-mandated civics test and communicated their learning about what good citizenship means.

4.4.4 Claim 3: The ambitious teacher used primary and secondary *sources* to develop an understanding of the context of the state-mandated civics test and understand other ways of educating for good citizenship.

The writers of the Kentucky Civics Test Inquiry (C3 Teachers, n.d.) orchestrated sources designed to build students' disciplinary content knowledge as they progress through the inquiry. To begin, the staging the compelling question task featured three sources (see Appendix):

1. A source that came from the Joe Foss Institute, a major proponent of civics test legislation across the country. The chosen excerpt provides the organization's reasoning for supporting civics test legislation.

2. Excerpts from an article in the *Chicago Tribune*, discussing Illinois legislation for a civics test. This article presents the reasoning for and against the test, based upon the needs of students to practice good citizenship.
3. Excerpts from *The Atlantic* to include arguments for and against the test presented in the context of current concerns about civic education.

In the implementation of this part of the inquiry, Ms. Smith instructed the students to individually review these sources through YJHS's online learning management system, Schoology. Much of the class consisted of students quietly reading and analyzing the featured source information. After students reviewed the sources, the teacher assigned the students to groups in order to reflect and discuss the information. Ms. Smith recalled the sources helped students as "they pulled specific vocab from things that we learned in class" when completing the staging task. Whereby, the sources provided disciplinary content and concepts aligned to understanding other ways of educating for good citizenship, a concept that would remain a central focus throughout the rest of the inquiry.

The next set of featured sources on the IDM Blueprint (Swan et al., 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019), for supporting question 1 (What is on the civics test?), were designed to introduce students to the civics test's content and included (see Appendix):

1. The civics test created by the individual district which reflects the 100 questions from the USCIS Citizenship Exam.
2. The Digital Driver's License Civic Test resources. It includes a multiple-choice version of the civics test (see Figure 4.5).
3. "100 Civics Questions and Answers" from the USCIS. Kentucky's required civics exams must pull from this source's 100 questions.

In implementing this inquiry, Ms. Smith only used the second source, YJHS's approved test. By taking the test, students were exposed to the disciplinary content contained in the test itself. At this point in the inquiry, the exposure of the test content was preliminary; it served as a learning opportunity to develop students' understanding of the context of the state-mandated civics test.

Following, the featured source for supporting question 2 (How did the class perform on the civics test?) was the class' test results (see Appendix). In implementing this part of the inquiry, Ms. Smith used the DDL (Civics Test Graduation Requirement, n.d.) to display an electronic matrix of students' test results without using any names. Ms. Smith noted

> the digital driver's license makes it easy because it puts the percentage in either green or red. So if more than half the class missed that question, then DDL puts the question in red so we can tell right away those questions more than half of the class missed.

To complete the task associated with supporting question 2, Ms. Smith tasked students to draft a report identifying the class' areas of strength and weakness with reference to specific questions. In doing this, observational data indicated that students organized the content in the civics test in order to analyze why they missed questions. Through this process of analysis, students were observed to gain disciplinary content knowledge as they were tasked to further review the questions. Ms. Smith shared that for the students, it was "important to know why they missed a question. So after modeling how to go through that process, I then had the students work in their groups to then move further into those conversations of: why did we miss it?" This exploratory task, grounded in the

use of the featured source, served as the catalyst for developing students' understanding of the state-mandated civics test.

For supporting question 3 (What is the most important material on the civics test?), the featured sources were designed to enable students to evaluate the content within the civics test and included (See Appendix):

1. Civic test cards which were the 100 test items, using the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) civics resources (see Figure 8).
2. A list of prominent civic education resource websites.

In implementing this inquiry, Ms. Smith had students use the sources to determine the most important material on the civics test. After reviewing the sources, especially the civics test cards (see Figure 4.8), Ms. Smith prompted the students to consider the questions and ask: "Is it important? Why is it important?" When interacting with students, Ms. Smith often said, "Your answer is less important than your reasoning." It was noteworthy that students were observed citing evidence from the civic education resource websites when discussing the material with other students and made claims that the most important material was tied to the concept of "good citizenship". These websites, which the students accessed through YJHS's online learning management system, Schoology, contained information on action civics, civic engagement, recommendations for civic learning, and so forth. What was apparent through the students' conversations was that they pushed on the why questions and authentically sought to link the contents of the test questions to their definitions of what a "good citizen" is. For example, one group of students questioned, "how does knowing how many senators are in my state help me to be a better citizen?"

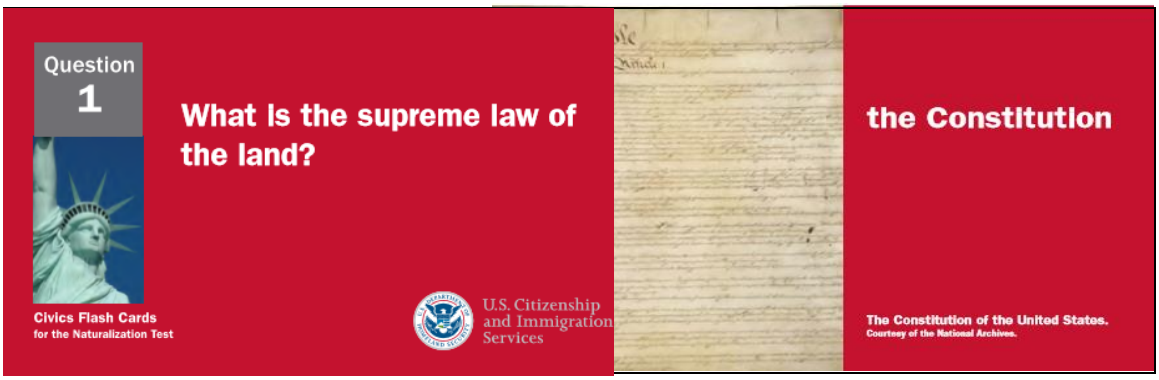


Figure 4.8 Example of Civics Test Card (USCIS, n.d.)

Further, as Ms. Smith guided student conversations, they questioned the utility of the test questions themselves. As part of this process, Ms. Smith shared that the class talked about one of the questions on the test related to

> the Senate and term limits, and the question was literally just how long does a Senator serve? When we talked about the fact that it is important to know this, students said, well maybe, but what would be more important is what are the responsibilities of a Senator or a Representative? What do they do rather than just, do they have a term limit, or what's that number of years that they serve?

The teacher's prompting of students to critically analyze the test questions led students to consider both the staging and compelling questions, "What is a good citizen?" and "Can the civics test make you a good citizen?" In doing so, students pulled information they read in the sources to claim there are other ways of educating for good citizenship and that it was more important to know about "doing civics." Students further claimed the questions were too basic and didn't push students to "be good citizens." Through the teacher's collective use of the sources, students not only gained a basic understanding of

the context of the test but also a further understanding of other ways to educate for good citizenship.

As shown above, Ms. Smith's use of sources was indisputable. She used sources to generate students' interest in good citizenship. She used sources to build students' content knowledge. And, she used sources to help students construct and support their arguments. In doing so, students were honed into the concept of good citizenship, gained an understanding of the context of the state-mandated civics test and other ways of educating for good citizenship, and built arguments addressing the question, "Can the civics test make you a good citizen?" In the next section, I will summarize the overall findings of this study.

4.4.5 Summary of Findings

Through a careful analysis of all of the case study data— the interview, curriculum, observations and field notes, and student artifacts —several themes emerged as important findings. I organized these themes into three claims centered on the teacher's use of questions, tasks, and sources as a way to learn state-required content. In addition, the study's findings suggest a commonality existed across all three claims: the *ambitious teacher* played an important role in facilitating the inquiry-based approach through the ways in which her instruction was trying to reconcile the test with inquiry. As Grant and Gradwell (2010) suggested,

> . . . ambitious teaching presumes that teachers face many conditions—subject matter, students, state policies, colleagues and administrators—all of which may confound their practices. Ambitious teachers take seriously those conditions but, in contrast to their less ambitious peers, they carve out pedagogical paths that aim toward more powerful teaching and learning (p.10).

Hence, Ms. Smith was able to realize ambitious teaching regardless of a state-mandated fact-based test that came into conflict with her aims as she was able to carve out space to implement an inquiry-based approach that made the test more meaningful for her students. In the next section, I will expand upon the study findings, the teacher's role, and explore the implications of the research, along with recommendations for future research.

4.5 Discussion and Implications

The main purpose of this study was to examine, using an embedded single-case study, how a high school social studies teacher used the IDM to implement the state-required civics test. Ongoing thematic analysis was applied to the case study data— the interview, curriculum, observations and field notes, and student artifacts. In design and analysis, theoretical propositions and rival explanations also were considered. Findings indicated that: 1) Ms. Smith used compelling and supporting *questions* so students could explore and determine the value of the state-mandated civics test; 2) Ms. Smith used formative and summative performance *tasks* to meet the requirements of the state-mandated civics test and to communicate their learning about what good citizenship means; and 3) Ms. Smith used primary and secondary *sources* to develop an understanding of the context of the state-mandated civics test and to understand other ways of educating for good citizenship. The findings of this study shed light on the benefits of using the IDM to help teachers facilitate meaningful inquiry-based learning experiences even when faced with state-required mandates. In this case study, an ambitious teacher proved that one can innovate out of the dilemma while meeting a state requirement *and* doing inquiry-based instruction.

In the sections that follow, I discuss the utility of the IDM as a curricular scaffold for social studies content and how ambitious teachers can meet state testing mandates while also engaging in inquiry-based instruction.

4.5.1.1 The Utility of the IDM

While little is known concerning how teachers in the field are implementing the IDM, the design of it was intended to be a

> distinctive approach to creating curriculum and instructional materials that honors teachers' knowledge and expertise, avoids over-prescription, and focuses on the central elements of the instructional design process as envisioned in the Inquiry Arc of the C3 Framework. (Swan et al., 2015, p. 316).

Ms. Smith's implementation of the IDM referenced in this case study suggested the relationships between and among the questions, tasks, and sources matter. However, the IDM also leaves room for teacher autonomy and is contextual in the sense that she could personalize the instruction best to meet the needs of another, different and unique, class of students. Combined with this structural feature of the IDM, this approach allows teachers to weave together learning experiences as they determine most appropriate while focusing on the core elements of inquiry. Therefore, the scaffolded approach of the IDM may afford teachers enough flexibility while providing enough of a rigorous structure to ensure students are engaged in meaningful disciplinary investigations when faced with state mandates and other requirements. Ultimately, what Ms. Smith was able to demonstrate was just that; by teaching with inquiry, it served as an approach that enabled students to think critically about the state-mandated civics test while also meeting the state requirement.

Further, the findings of this study revealed that Ms. Smith did not assume a passive role in implementing the curriculum; rather, she played an important role in student

learning. “By creating an environment in which students can engage with ideas, inquiry-based teachers create the classroom space in which responsibility for the learning shifts from teacher to student” (Grant, Swan, & Lee, 2017, p. 15). Through the implementation of the Kentucky Civics Test Inquiry (C3 Teachers, n.d.), Ms. Smith engaged her students in a way of thinking that resulted in developing understanding about the context of the state-mandated civics test and about the concept of “good citizenship."

4.5.1.2 Ambitious Teachers to the Rescue

Even though the IDM may be an approach that affords teachers curricular flexibility in a purposeful way, teachers will still struggle to balance inquiry-based instruction with local and state-required mandates. However, somewhere in the intersection of these two opposing notions, good teaching can exist. Grant (2003, 2005) calls this *ambitious teaching*. Returning to Grant and Gradwell’s (2010) definition of ambitious teaching, this study presents a teacher and the interplay of her subject matter knowledge, knowledge of her students, and the challenging context she taught in that made her an ambitious teacher.

This study found that knowledge of subject matter allowed Ms. Smith to put an inquiry-based approach in front of her students. In her interview, Ms. Smith shared:

> One of the struggles that teachers face with the new social studies standards in Kentucky, passed and adopted last year, is that they ask us to teach social studies with a bigger picture of concepts that come from social studies. When teachers turn to the standards, they don’t contain specifics, just concepts that weave throughout.

Ms. Smith understood that the standards document could not contain every civics-related term or vocabulary word. Rather, she knew that she was responsible for implementing the standards using her own content knowledge. As such, she took a non-traditional approach and used the contents of the civics test as something her students were tasked to explore.

This task afforded the students an authentic way to explore terms and concepts they had not yet discussed in class.

This study also found that knowledge of her students allowed Ms. Smith to implement an inquiry-based approach. For example, Ms. Smith found additional ways to engage her students, even within this type of approach. In the "Kentucky Civics Test" Inquiry, the formative performance task for supporting question 3 (What is the most important material on the civics test?) was to create a claim or series of claims, supported by evidence that answers the supporting question. While Ms. Smith did this, she also knew from past experiences that her students loved to debate. So, she assigned students to groups and then had them present their claims and evidence in a mini-debate type of format. Ms. Smith's knowledge of her students allowed her to personalize and implement an inquiry-based approach in a way that was meaningful for her students.

Furthermore, this study found that, in conjunction with her subject knowledge and knowledge of her students, the challenging context in which she taught made Ms. Smith an ambitious teacher. For example, the biggest obstacle Ms. Smith faced was the new state-mandated civics test requirement. In her interview, Ms. Smith shared:

> I think to achieve the goals of civic education is just how we teach our curriculum. And so, the test kind of feels like a separate entity. I think that the biggest pushback for teachers is when are we going to find time to give this? So as a social studies teacher in Kentucky, thinking about how the civics test and the new standards fit together, it's hard. They don't complement each other well.

The way Ms. Smith negotiated this challenge was to implement the "Kentucky Civics Test" inquiry (C3 Teachers, n.d.). By having the test itself serve as a source to be explored and

evaluated, the students not only engaged in inquiry but met a state requirement to take the civics test.

In summary, this study found that Ms. Smith was able to come to terms with the struggle of balancing best practices with state requirements; she did both – balanced rote memorization and inquiry – thus evincing the signs of ambitious teaching. This study also revealed that implementing an inquiry-based approach is a highly nuanced endeavor requiring a teacher who can employ the principles of ambitious teaching. However, it also showed that an ambitious teacher who implements an inquiry-based approach could afford his or her students a more meaningful and authentic learning experience. In the next section, I will further explore what these findings might mean.

4.5.2 Implications

The study suggests the IDM can guide instruction and teach content, even the content contained in a state-mandated test. Accordingly, findings indicated that the teacher's use of questions, tasks, and sources mattered as students learned about the required civics content. While the inquiry-based approach of the IDM may help ambitious teachers anchor content and facilitate meaningful learning experiences, several implications should be considered affecting policymakers, educator preparation programs, and in-service teachers.

4.5.2.1 Policymakers and the Civics Test

The study's findings support that students successfully demonstrated their understanding of the civics content they had been exposed to in the same grade level. According to the Center on Standards & Assessment Implementation, "assessments must be aligned to content and to grade-specific standards, in order to assess whether or not a student has gained the knowledge, skills, and abilities described in the standards" (2018 p.

2). Specifically, concerning the civics test's implementation, consideration should be given to more intentionally aligning the test to required standards and curriculum. As the Kentucky law currently is written, students may take the test in any high school grade level. By considering when the test questions align to grade-level state standards, policymakers—whether at the state or local level—may be able to implement a more meaningful state requirement in the appropriate grade level and best ensure student learning is aligned to the intended outcomes.

4.5.2.2 Educator Preparation Programs and Ambitious Teaching

The teacher in this study received instruction on the IDM as part of her educator preparation program. However, with the recent publication of the IDM, this may not be so common. As many states are using the C3 Framework (NCSS, 2013) to inform revised or new standards, educator preparation programs need to take heed of this change. As Swan, Crowley, and Swan (2020) noted,

> most student teachers did not experience inquiry learning as students. Instead, they were likely in classrooms dominated by the lecture, and the read-the-book, and answer-the-questions pedagogies that have long dominated our field. This apprenticeship of observation presents unique challenges but may be countered with a recognition that how we learn may shape how they teach, along with consistent modeling and support for new inquiry-based approaches. (p.100)

In turn, educator preparation programs need to be responsive to the increased demands of inquiry-based instruction as they shift from a more traditional approach. In doing so, pre-service teachers will need ample time in their coursework to focus on understanding the importance of the key elements of inquiry: questions, tasks, and sources.

As educator preparation programs equip pre-service teachers to see instruction in new ways, they also must support ambitious teaching. These programs need to embrace critical conversations on how pre-service teachers can carve out instructional spaces in light of state and local requirements to engage their students in meaningful learning experiences. In short, it's time for these programs to rethink and reconceptualize teaching and learning for their soon-to-be teachers.

4.5.2.3 In-Service Teachers and Professional Learning

This study found that teachers like Ms. Smith, tasked with implementing high stakes tests that might seem at odds with their preferred instructional practices, can do so with an inquiry-based approach. To do this, however, took prior knowledge of the principles of the IDM. However, many teachers, especially those not comfortable with the instructional shifts of the C3 Framework (NCSS, 2013), will require professional learning to better understand the IDM and how to implement inquiries effectively. The types of needed professional learning should include approaches to deeply understand the key elements of inquiry and how to pace and scaffold inquiries to help students build their capacity to ask good questions, make evidenced-based arguments, and share their conclusions in authentic ways. Ideally, professional learning also needs to push on one of the tenants of the IDM and help teachers consider how their students will take a bigger role in inquiry. Further, teachers need tools and opportunities to take risks in the implementation and realization of ambitious teaching. In short, teachers need support to make the changes demanded by new standards and instructional practices; professional learning on the implementation of the IDM can serve as one of those solutions.

4.5.3 Future Research

Implementation of the IDM is an area that requires more study to understand the potential ways teachers can use it to improve student learning, especially in the face of state mandates. Since this study focused only on one high school social studies teacher, additional studies examining how teachers reconcile the high stakes civics test with inquiry-based instructional approaches in other schools would be valuable. Ultimately, more also needs to be substantiated about whether these inquiry-based approaches are effective in knowing what students actually know. Coupling the instructional components of the IDM with how teachers assess students' disciplinary skills and knowledge could help compare the inquiry-based approach with traditional approaches across numerous indicators.

Another area for future study is that of inquiry and time constraints. One of the biggest obstacles teachers face is time. There never seems to be enough time to cover all of the state-required content and meet all of the local and state requirements, and all of this while providing high-quality learning experiences for students. Honing in on Ms. Smith's struggle to fully implement the Kentucky Civics Test Inquiry (C3 Teachers, n.d.), the length of time to implement an inquiry-based approach is notably longer and may present a concern for those looking to transition to an inquiry-based approach. In a situation where Ms. Smith could have implemented this curriculum in one class period using a traditional approach, it took her three class periods, and she was unable to complete the taking informed action task. This extended timeframe begs the question of how teachers can weave the elements of inquiry into their curricula on a more regular basis without the fear of time constraints. As a result, additional studies should include ways teachers can

increase the use of inquiry-based learning experiences in more frequent and meaningful ways.

4.5.4 Conclusion

This exploratory study examined how a high school social studies teacher used the Kentucky Civics Test Inquiry (C3 Teachers, n.d.) to reconcile the high stakes civics test with an inquiry approach. The teacher was able to use the structure of the IDM to allow her students to explore and evaluate whether the knowledge within the test is necessary or sufficient as they considered the notion of citizenship, and more importantly, good citizenship. While the findings may not be generalizable, the most significant finding may be that teachers do not need to choose between meeting a state requirement and doing inquiry-based instruction. Social studies teachers *can* be empowered to facilitate inquiry-based learning experiences that call for rigorous investigations of enduring issues or concerns. Further, the study resurfaces the concern that if schools and districts are spending their time teaching to a test, especially one that assesses only a basic level of knowledge, students likely will not gain a greater understanding of why things are important, nor the skills they need to practice for civic life. The IDM presents a viable solution for ambitious teachers seeking to move away from traditional approaches as it fosters critical thinking and civic engagement.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUDING REFLECTION

"Democratic citizens need both to *know* democratic things and to *do* democratic things" (Parker, 2008).

Schools today exist in a situation where their focus is fragmented and divided among and between many requirements and initiatives. One of the biggest distractors was a result of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) which called for focused reforms in reading and mathematics. If the majority of a student's classroom hours during his or her K-12 experiences revolve around reading or math, where does this leave civic education? What is the real purpose of school?

The content of these three articles attempts to illuminate the intersection of ambitious teaching and state mandates; and in doing so, leverage the significance of the roles of the curriculum—specifically inquiry—and teacher. Returning to Thornton's (2005) notion of teacher as *instructional-gatekeeper*, we are left with the view that teachers who engage in the practice of making citizens are in a powerful position to leverage instructional experiences in order to make them most impactful. If, as Parker (2003) claimed, "[o]ur goal is educating people for the role of democratic citizen—for walking the democratic path in a diverse society," (p. 33) teachers then must stay true to that purpose across the curriculum and afford students a variety of opportunities in which to exercise civic skills.

As discussed, these articles serve to provide clarity on how social studies can better prepare students for civic life. It is through the use of more authentic and participatory experiences in a very democratic way, students then can be better prepared for future civic experiences. Due to the nature of our continually changing cultural and political landscape, today's students need enriched experiences to minimize the effects of American

exceptionalism and intolerance. Civic education, and in this sense the IDM (Swan, Grant, & Lee, 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019), is one component helpful to combat these afflictions.

APPENDIX

1) Staging the Compelling Question Featured Sources

Source A: Civic Education Initiative, Joe Foss Institute, accessed 26 September 2019. Accessed from: https://joefossinstitute.org/our-programs/civics-education-initiative/

CIVICS EDUCATION INITIATIVE

– The 100 Facts Every High School Student Should Know

The Civics Education Initiative is simple in concept. It requires high school students, as a condition for graduation, to pass a test on 100 basic facts of U.S. history and civics taken from the United States Citizenship Civics Test – the test all persons applying for U.S. citizenship must pass.

The Civics Education Initiative legislation allows individual schools to administer the test in a way the school deems as adequate to ensure the requirements are followed. Students may take the test as many times as necessary to pass. By using this well-established test and the study materials provided, the legislation has next to no implementation costs.

The Civics Education Initiative is a first step to ensure all students are taught basic civics about how our government works, and who we are as a nation…things every student should know to be ready for active, engaged citizenship.

RESTORING CIVICS EDUCATION AND ENSURING ALL HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES ARE READY FOR ACTIVE, ENGAGED CITIZENSHIP.

Current estimates say that 46.9 percent of eligible voters did not vote in the 2016 general election—nearly half of all eligible American voters. Many experts blame a disillusionment with government and a general misunderstanding of how the process works for lackluster turnout year after year.

In 2011, the results from a civics-focused National Assessment of Educational Progress exam revealed that less than half of American eighth graders "knew the purpose of the Bill of Rights on the most recent national civics examination, and only one in 10 demonstrated acceptable knowledge of the checks and balances among the legislative, executive and judicial branches,"

The decline of civics education in schools began in the 1950s and accelerated in the 2000s as schools emphasized courses with more bearing on testing under *No Child Left Behind*.

Resulting in what Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Conner labeled the "quite crisis in education. "The practice of democracy is not passed down through the gene pool. It must be taught and learned anew by each generation of citizens," said O'Connor.

Source B: **Meredith Colias-Pete, "Critics: Civics test not designed to judge high school knowledge," *Chicago Tribune*, 25 January 2019. Excerpt. Accessed from: https://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/post-tribune/ct-ptb-education-civics-test-st-20190124-story.html**

Alarmed by a perceived lack of knowledge by teens, a state lawmaker wants to require them to take a civics test to graduate high school, a position some educators and a national group view with reservations.

[Illinois] Sen. Dennis Kruse, R-Auburn, said…"I think it's in the lack of basic education in our schools," he said. "We've got a generation of people who don't know where we came from."

…

Seeing that trend across several state legislatures, a national social studies advocacy group has opposed it – saying a one-time test cannot ensure that students will have the tools to become active and informed citizens.

The citizenship test "was not designed to measure civic literacy and learning," according to a March 2018 memo from Maryland-based National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS).

The questions were too easy and memorized answers would soon be forgotten, it said. Students should learn by doing — with teachers fostering active discussions, highlighting opposite viewpoints and encouraging them to actively learn how government works, it said.

Kruse dismissed the argument against the test, saying memorization worked fine in prior generations.

"I like critical thinking and all that," Kruse said. "Something is not connecting, the kids, they are not connecting and retaining" the information.

"On paper, it's a great idea for students to at least have the same knowledge as someone who wants to be a citizen," Hebron High School teacher Scott Eriks said via email.

"Students are already tested over these ideas," he said. "I already believe as do some of my colleagues, that students are tested enough. We do not need to be adding yet another graduation requirement on top of many others."

Source C: **Alia Wong, "Why Civics Is About More Than Citizenship," *The Atlantic*, 17 September 2015. Excerpt. Accessed from: https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2015/09/civic-education-citizenship-test/405889/**

"The more educated you are, the more likely you are to be civically engaged," the Fordham Foundation's Robert Pondiscio said in a recent seminar with education reporters. It seems that the country's public schools are failing to fulfill one of their core founding missions: to foster and maintain a thriving democracy.

This is the stated mission of the Joe Foss Institute, a nonprofit that has been making headlines for its particular civic-ed strategy. The non-partisan institute is on a mission to make passing the U.S. citizenship exam—the one that immigrants have to take to become naturalized citizens—a high-school graduation requirement in all 50 states by 2017.

…

Even though all 50 states and the District of Columbia technically require some civic education, advocates say many districts don't take those policies very seriously, and few states actually hold schools accountable for students' civics' outcomes. Just about a fourth of high-school seniors in 2014 scored "proficient" on the federal-government's civics exam.

…

The question is whether that goal will actually achieve the institute's pledged mission of civic know-how among America's future adults. The initiative has also raised concerns about what it represents. "It's an empty symbolic effort," said Joseph Kahne, a professor of education at Mills College who oversees the Civic Engagement Research Group and is a vocal critic of the Foss Institute's plan, in the seminar. "There's not any evidence base to show that this will be effective … It's something state legislators can pass and feel good about." In a recent piece of commentary for Education Week, he argued that testing approach to civic ed is the equivalent of "teaching democracy like a game show."

…

Acknowledging the exam's limitations, Lucian Spataro, a former president of the Joe Foss Institute who continues to serve on its board, reasoned that it simply serves as a first step toward getting kids' civic literacy to an acceptable level. It's part of what will inevitably be a long-drawn-out and challenging process. Spataro used similar logic in justifying the testing approach: It incentivizes teachers, he suggested, to give the subject more attention. "If it's tested, it's taught," he said.

…

Asked about the Joe Foss approach, though, [Tiffany] Shlain said she sees its point. "I think there are some things that have fallen by the wayside," she said. "Knowing about your country and about how things work—it's empowering, ultimately … My focus is different, but I think [the citizenship-test requirement] is a good thing. You have to know about how the government works in order to make change, and a lot of people don't."

2) Supporting Question 1 Featured Sources

Source A: Civics Test from the Digital Driver's License (DDL)

- Accessed from: https://otis.coe.uky.edu/DDL/launch.php

Source B: "100 Civics Questions and Answers," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

3) Supporting Question 2 Featured Sources

Source A: Civics Test Results Matrix from the DDL

- Accessed from: https://otis.coe.uky.edu/DDL/launch.php

4) Supporting Question 3 Featured Sources

Source A: Civics Test Question Cards

- Accessed from: https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/flash-cards/M-623_red.pdf

Source B: A List of Prominent Civic Education Resource Websites

- Civics Education Initiative: http://civicseducationinitiative.org/
- iCivics: https://www.icivics.org/our-story
- Center for Civic Education: https://www.civiced.org/wtp-the-program
- Mikva Challenge: https://mikvachallenge.org/about-us/ and https://mikvachallenge.org/our-work/theory-of-change/
- CIRCLE: Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement: https://civicyouth.org/guardian-of-democracy-successor-report-to-the-civic-mission-of-schools/

- Constitutional Rights Foundation: https://www.crf-usa.org/about-constitutional-rights-foundation.html

REFERENCES

2015 Millennials Civic Health Index. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://ncoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/2013MillennialsCHI.pdf

About the DDL. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://otis.coe.uky.edu/DDL/launch.php

Anfara, V. A., & Mertz, N. T. (2006). *Theoretical frameworks in qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Arizona Department of Education. (2015). *Civics Test and Administration Manual*, retrieved from https://www.azed.gov/wpcontent/uploads/2015/08/civics-test-administrationmanual_final.pdf

Baumann, P., & Brennan, J. (2017, December). *State civic education policy: Framework and gap analysis tool.* Retrieved from Education Commission of the States: https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/State-Civics-Education-Policy-Framework-and-gap-analysis-tool.pdf

Baumann, P., Millard, M., & Hamdorf, L. (2014, November). *State civic education policy framework.* Retrieved from Education Commission of the States: https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED561946.pdf

Brennan, J., & Railey, H. (2017). *The civics education initiative 2015-17.* Retrieved from Education Commission of the States: https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Civics-Education-Initiative-2015-2017.pdf

Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal, 9*(2), 27–40.

C3 Teachers. (n.d.) Retrieved from http://www.c3teachers.org/inquiries/civics-test/

Campbell, D.E. (2006). *Why We Vote: How Schools and Communities Shape Our Civic Life.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Campbell, D. E. (2014). *Putting civics to the test: The impact of state-level civics assessment on civics knowledge.* Retrieved from AEI Program on American Citizenship: http://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/2014-09-Campbell.final-template.pdf

Carnegie Corporation of New York and Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) (2003). *The civic mission of schools.* New York: Carnegie Corporation

Civic Education Policies: High School Graduation Requirements. (2016, December). Retrieved from http://ecs.force.com/mbdata/MBQuest2RTANW?Rep=CIP1601S

Civics Education Initiative. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://joefossinstitute.org/our-programs/civics-education-initiative/

Civics Graduation Requirement License. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://otis.coe.uky.edu/DDL/launch.php

Creswell, J. (2009) *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing.

Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2007). *Designing and constructing mixed methods research*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publishing.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Gould, J. (Ed.). (2011). *Guardian of democracy: The civic mission of schools.* Philadelphia, PA: Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania.

Grant, S. G. (2003). History lessons: Teaching, learning, and testing in U. S. high school classrooms. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Grant, S.G. (2005). More journey than end: A case of ambitious teaching. In O. L. Davis, Jr. & E. Yeager (Eds.), Wise practice in teaching social studies in the age of high stakes testing (pp. 117-130). Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.

Grant, S. G. (2007). Understanding what children know about history: Exploring the representation and testing dilemmas. *Social Studies Research and Practice, 2*(2), 196–208.

Grant, S. G. (2014). *History lessons: Teaching, learning, and testing in the U. S. high school classrooms.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Grant, S. G., & Gradwell, J. M. (2010). *Teaching history with big ideas: Cases of ambitious teachers*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Grant, S. G., Swan. K., & Lee, J. (2017). *Inquiry-based practice in social studies education: Understanding the Inquiry Design Model*. New York: Routledge and C3 Teachers.

Hahn, C. L. (1999). Challenges to civic education in the United States. In J. Torney-Purta, J. Schwille, & J.A. Amadeo (Eds.). *Civic education across countries: Twenty four national case studies from the IEA civic education project* (pp.583-607). Amsterdam: The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement.

Hahn, C. L., & Alvair-Martin, T. (2008). International political socialization research. In Levstik, L., & Tyson, C. *Handbook of Research in Social Studies Education* (pp. 81-108). New York, NY: Routledge.

Hancock, D. R., & Algozzine, B. (2011). *Doing case study research: A practical guide for beginning researchers*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Hess, D. (2008). Controversial issues and democratic discourse. In Levstik, L., & Tyson, C. *Handbook of Research in Social Studies Education* (pp.124-136). New York, NY: Routledge.

Hess, D. (2015, February 12). Council of State Social Studies Specialists civics discussion [Webinar]. In *CS4 Webinar Series.* Retrieved from https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B1pF6W3Zxix1Z2llcXh5ZlpxVDQ/view.

Hess, D., & McAvoy, P. (2015). *The political classroom: Evidence and ethics in democratic education.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Hess, D., Stone. S, & Kahne, J. (2015). Should High School Students Be Required to Pass a Citizenship Test?. *Social Education*, 79, 173–176.

IDM Generator Tutorial. (2019, June 21). Retrieved from http://www.c3teachers.org/generator-tutorial/

Kentucky Academic Standards, Social Studies. (2019). Retrieved from https://education.ky.gov/districts/legal/Documents/KAS_Social_Studies_2019.pdf

Kentucky Department of Education, Civics Test. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://education.ky.gov/curriculum/conpro/socstud/Pages/citizenshipassessment.aspx 14.

Kentucky Department of Education (2017). *Civics test and administration manual.* Retrieved from https://education.ky.gov/curriculum/conpro/socstud/Documents/KDE%20Civics%20Test%20Manual.pdf

Kentucky Department of Education, Digital Citizenship. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://education.ky.gov/school/diglrn/ digcitizen/Pages/default.aspx

Kentucky Department of Education. (n.d.) *School Report Card.* Retrieved from https://www.kyschoolreportcard.com.

Kentucky School Boards Association. (n.d.) *District Online Manual.* Retrieved from http://policy.ksba.org/

King, M. B., Newmann, F. M., & Carmichael, D. L. (2009). Authentic intellectual work: Common standards for teaching social studies. *Social Education, 73*(1), 43-49.

Levine P. (2012, May 3). Tennessee becomes the first state to use projects to assess civics [Blog post]. Retrieved from https://peterlevine.ws/?p=8817.

Levine, P. (2015, March 18). *Federal citizenship test: What should a good citizen really know about America?* Retrieved from https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/federal-citizenship-test-what-should-a-good-citizen-really-know-about-america.

McMillan, J. H. & Schumacher, S. (2010). *Research in education: Evidence-based inquiry* (7th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation.* San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.

Merton, R., Fiske, M., & Kendall, P. (1990). *The Focused Interview: A Manual of Problems and Procedures*. New York: Free Press.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M. & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.) Thousand Oaks CA: Sage.

National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS). (2013). The College, Career & Civic Life C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards: Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K-12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History. Retrieved from www.socialstudies.org/c3

The Nation's Report Card. (n.d.). Retrieved from www.nationsreportcard.gov/hgc_2014/#civics

Parker, W. (2003). *Teaching Democracy: Unity and Diversity in Public Life*. New York: Teacher's College Press.

Parker, W. (2008). Knowing and doing in democratic citizenship. In Levstik, L., & Tyson, C. *Handbook of Research in Social Studies Education* (pp. 65-80). New York, NY: Routledge.

Parker, W. (2016, March 10). Letter to the Council of the State Social Studies Specialists. Retrieved from https://cs4.socialstudies.org/resourcesmain/new-item4/new-item/new-item.

Parker, W. C., Mosborg, S., Bransford, J., Vye, N., Wilkerson, J., & Abbot, R. (2011). Rethinking advanced high school coursework: Tackling the depth/breadth tension in the AP US Government and Politics course. Journal of Curriculum Studies, 43(4), 533-559. doi:10.1080/00220272.2011.584561

Patton, M. Q. (1990). Enhancing the Credibility and Quality of Qualitative Studies. In *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*. pp. 652-709. SAGE Publications, Inc.

Patton, M.Q. (2002). Introduction to qualitative inquiry frameworks and patterns and themes across inquiry frameworks: Chapter summary and conclusions. In *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Scherer, M. (2009). *Supporting the whole child: Reflections on best practices in learning, teaching, and leadership.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Seidman, I.E. (1991). *Interviewing as qualitative research*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Senate Bill 159. (2017). Retrieved from https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/recorddocuments/bill/17RS/sb159/bill.pdf

Stake, R. E. & Rugg, D. (1991). Impact on the classroom. In R. E. Stake (Ed.), *Advances in program evaluation: Vol. 1. Effects of mandated assessment on teaching* (pp. xix-xxii). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press Ltd.

Standards Alignment to Curriculum and Assessment (March Update). (2018). Center on Standards & Assessment Implementation.

Sullivan, F. M. (2013, March). *New and alternative assessments, digital badges, and civics: An overview of emerging themes and promising directions* (CIRCLE Working Paper #77). Retrieved from Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement: https://civicyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/WP_77_Sullivan_Final.pdf

Swan, K., Crowley, R., & Swan, G. (2020). The Signal and the Noise: Coaching Pre-Service Candidates to Teach with Questions, Tasks, and Sources. *Social Education*, 84(2), 100-107.

Swan, K., & Griffin, S. (2013). Beating the Odds: The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies Standards. *Social Education*, 77(6), 317–321.

Swan, K., Lee, J., & Grant, S. G. (2015). The New York State toolkit and the inquiry design model: Anatomy of an inquiry. *Social Education*, 79(5), 316-322.

Swan, K., Lee, J., & Grant, S.G. (2018). Questions, Tasks, Sources: Focusing on the Essence of Inquiry. *Social Education*, 82(3), 133-137.

Swan, K., Lee, J., & Grant, S.G. (2019). *Blueprinting an inquiry-based social studies curriculum*. Silver Spring, MD: National Council for the Social Studies.

Thornton, S. (2005). *Teaching social studies that matters: Curriculum for active learning.* New York: Teachers College Press.

USCIS Civics Cards. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/flash-cards/M-623_red.pdf

Westheimer, J., & Kahne, J. (2004). What Kind of Citizen? The Politics of Educating for Democracy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 41(2), 237–269.

Winke, P. (2011). Investigating the reliability of the civic component of the U.S. naturalization test. *Language Assessment Quarterly, 8*(4), 317–341.

Wong, A. (2015). Why Civics Is About More Than Citizenship [Editorial]. The Atlantic. Retrieved from https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2015/09/civic-education-citizenship-test/405889/

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks,

CA: Sage.

Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publishing

VITA

Jennifer Leeanna Fraker

Completed Education

MA, Secondary Social Studies Education, May 2009
University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky

BA, Political Science, December 2007
University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky

Professional Experiences

2019 – Present	**Kentucky Board of Education Executive Director**, Kentucky Department of Education, Frankfort, KY
2018 – 2019	**Policy Advisor**, Office of Standards, Assessment and Accountability; Kentucky Department of Education, Frankfort, KY
2017 – 2018	**Interim Director of the Division of Program Standards**, Office of Teaching and Learning; Kentucky Department of Education, Frankfort, KY
2016 – 2017	**Policy Advisor**, Office of Teaching and Learning; Kentucky Department of Education, Frankfort, KY
2014 – 2016	**Social Studies Academic Program Consultant**, Office of Teaching and Learning; Kentucky Department of Education, Frankfort, KY
2011 – 2014	**Social Studies Teacher**, Oldham County High School, Buckner, KY
2009 – 2011	**Social Studies Teacher**, Tates Creek High School, Lexington, KY
2005 – 2007	**Divisional Digital Living Operations Manager**, CompUSA, Lexington, KY
1999 – 2005	**Regional Field Services Operations Manager**, CompUSA, Lexington, KY
1996 – 1999	**Technical Administrator**, CompUSA, Lexington, KY

Scholastic and Professional Honors

- National Association of State Boards of Education State Directors Leadership Committee Member, 2020
- Kentucky Academic Standards Publications, 2017 - 2019
- Kentucky Council for the Social Studies Steering Committee Member, 2016

- Kentucky Colonel Ambassador, Awarded by Secretary of State Elaine Walker for Work in Civic Education, 2011
- Kentucky Civic Educator of the Year Finalist, 2011

Publications and Presentations

- *"Using Technology to Conduct Virtual Board Meetings"*
  Presenter at the Education Commission of the States Annual Executive Director Conference 2020
- *"Understanding the Revised Kentucky Academic Standards"*
  Presenter at the Kentucky Education Cooperatives 2018
- *"Teaching Historical Inquiry with Objects"*
  Teaching Assistant, Smithsonian Center for Learning and Digital Access 2016
- *"Using the Question Formulation Technique in Professional Learning"*
  Presenter at the Kentucky Department of Education's Statewide Network Facilitators Meeting, Frankfort, KY 2015
- *"Reimagining Social Studies Education in Kentucky"*
  Speaker at the Kentucky Historical Society's Teacher Conference, Frankfort, KY 2015
- *"Using Questions to Drive Inquiry in History"*
  Speaker at the Green River Region's Education Cooperative and Southeast Southcentral Education Cooperative Social Studies Leadership Meeting, Bowling Green and Corbin, KY 2015
- *"Social Studies Today: the New and the Now"*
  Writer of the quarterly social studies newsletter, published by the Kentucky Department of Education 2015
- *"Considerations for Curriculum Documents: Companion Documents for KASSS"*
  Contributing Editor of the companion documents to provide suggestions for curriculum design using the Kentucky Academic Standards for the Social Studies, published by the Kentucky Department of Education 2015
- *"How to Use the Question Formulation Technique to Improve Reading and Writing in Social Studies"*
  Speaker at the Kentucky Reading Association's Conference, Louisville, KY 2014
- *"Social Studies in Kentucky"*
  Speaker at the Kentucky Council of the Social Studies Conference, Erlanger, KY 2014
- *"Breaking Bad Social Studies: The Instructional Shifts of the C3 Framework"*
  2-Day Workshop at Pimser's Meet the Challenge Conference, Lexington, KY 2014

- *"Breaking Bad Social Studies: The Instructional Shifts of the C3 Framework"*
  1-Day Workshop presented via the Teaching American History Grant (TAHG) and the Kentucky Educational Development Corporation, Lexington, KY 2014
- *"Teens in Civic Education"*
  Speaker at the University of Kentucky's Constitution Day Program, Lexington, KY 2011
- *"A High School's Journey"*
  Speaker at the Statewide Project Citizen Competition, Frankfort, KY 2011
- *"Digging through Digital Archives: the Library of Congress and You!"*
  Presenter at the Kentucky Council of the Social Studies Conference, Bowling Green, KY 2010
- *"Digital Docs in a Box"*
  Online publication of a digital moviemaking kit covering the historical topic of Transportation, accessible at www.digitaldocinabox.org 2009