PERCEPTIONS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF CIVIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN A SUBURBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

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PERCEPTIONS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF CIVIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN A SUBURBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

to the faculty of the Department of

ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

of

THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

at

ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY

New York

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Submitted Date March 26, 2020

Approved Date March 26, 2020

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ABSTRACT

PERCEPTIONS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF CIVIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN A SUBURBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

Sheena Rachel Jacob

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to explore and develop an understanding of teachers and coordinator perceptions of a civic education and to analyze how the program was implemented in a suburban school district. This qualitative case study explored the experiences of one school district’s civic education program and was informed by interviews, observations and documents. The researcher interviewed a K-12 social studies coordinator and two teachers. The researcher also observed four civic education classes within the school district. Finally, the researcher analyzed documents that comprised the syllabus for the 12th grade Civic courses, student work from 12th grade Civics courses, and activities and lessons from 5th grade classes. The specific research questions were: (1) What are the perceptions of the implementation of a civic education program, for the K-12 social studies curriculum, in a suburban school district?, and (2) How is the civic education program in K-12 social studies implemented? The study conclusions identified the following themes: civic engagement which incorporates student activities within allotted instruction time and outside of school time that promotes students’ active participation and collaboration with local and school officials on issues concerning students and community, civic identity and commitment which involves
implementing a program where all stakeholders (building and central administrators, teachers, community members) are all committed and supportive, civic knowledge which involves the ability to understand what civics means and to implement the curriculum within the time allotted for the subject social studies to be taught, and civic contexts/structures which involves having students demonstrate the ability and commitment to collaboratively work across and within community contexts and structures to achieve a civic goal. From the study’s conclusions, it is evident that the allocation of appropriate and sufficient resources, in addition to district and community support, is essential to ensure that civic education is successfully implemented in K-12 schools. Future research can add to these findings by exploring how districts can implement a K-12 civic education curriculum for all students, including analyzing short- and long-term effects of implementing such a program at the local, state, and national levels.
DEDICATION

First and foremost, I would like to thank God for giving me the strength, knowledge, and understanding to conduct this research study and to persevere and complete it satisfactorily. Without His protection and blessings, this achievement would not have been possible.

To my husband, Binu Jacob, and children, Jayden Thomas, Lillian Ann, and Addison Rachel Jacob, thank you for being supportive and patient as I pursued and completed my doctorate program. I pray that one day you will read this and be proud of your wife and mommy and understand why Mommy missed so many fun family events and activities. All four of you are the core that keeps me one; each of you inspires me to achieve and strive for excellence.

To my parents, your support and unconditional love have motivated and kept me going through the ups and downs of this process. I am forever grateful to have parents and grandparents that love my children unconditionally.
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Chapter 1
Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to explore and develop an understanding of teachers and coordinator perceptions of a civic education in a suburban school district and to analyze how the program was implemented in that school district. This qualitative case study explored the experiences of one school district’s civic education program and was informed by interviews, observations and documents. The researcher interviewed a K-12 social studies coordinator and two teachers whom the curriculum coordinator oversees. The researcher also observed four civic education classes that the social studies curriculum coordinator implemented that promoted civic education. Finally, the researcher analyzed documents that comprised the syllabus for the 12th grade Civic courses, student work from 12th grade Civics courses, and activities and lessons from 5th grade classes. The specific research questions are as follows:

Research Question #1: What are the perceptions of the implementation of a civic education program, for the K-12 social studies curriculum, in a suburban school district?

Research Question #2: How is the civic education program in K-12 social studies implemented?

This study used James Youniss’ (1997) civic theory approach where good civic education is experiential and provides opportunities for civic engagement amongst youths, Lev Vygotsky’s (1978) zone proximal development where the emphasis is activism and engagement within the learning process which produces stronger productivity, and John
Dewey’s (2018) hands on approach learning where students are successful in learning through active participation.

The study was founded upon the literature review which explored the following: the role of civic education, the emphasis on civic education within the New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework, and the implementation of civic education through engagement using the major themes from James Youniss (1997), Lev Vygotsky (1978), and John Dewey (2018): social interaction, the zone proximal development, and hands on approach learning.

Less than 30% of fourth-, eighth-, and 12th-grade U.S. students were proficient in civics, and a significant gap persists among racial and ethnic groups (McClure, p. 1, 2017). The National Assessment Educational Progress also reported a decline in the overall civic knowledge of high school seniors from 2006 and 2010 in the United States, and a survey of 1,416 adults by the Annenberg Public Policy Center (APPC) showed that only one-third of those surveyed could name the three branches of government, and one-fifth of respondents thought that a 5-4 Supreme Court ruling would be sent back to Congress for consideration (McClure, p. 1, 2017). These results are alarming, and emphasis on civic education in schools has increased tremendously at the local, state, and national levels. The National Council for Social Studies (2013b) stated:

As Thomas Jefferson, Horace Mann, John Dewey and other great educators understood, public schools do not serve a public so much as create a public. The goal of schooling, therefore, is not merely preparation for citizenship, but citizenship itself; to equip a citizenry with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed for active and
engaged civic life. The National Council for the Social Studies firmly agrees with this premise and believes that no other subject area is better suited to achieve this essential goal in schools than the social studies (Revitalizing Civic Learning in Our Schools, 2013, p.1).

Incorporating civic education within school districts involves curricula elements such as courses and resources and programs such as guest speakers, assemblies, projects, and portfolios to help students understand, engage, and participate in civic activities at the local, state, and national levels. Research has indicated that by implementing civic education, schools can assist students with understanding their roles and responsibilities at the local, state, and national. For instance, according to National Center for Education Statistics (2001),

…Public knowledge of government and civic life has long been considered central to the endurance of the United States as a democratic republic. Thomas Jefferson held that an uneducated citizenry was a contradiction in terms. John F. Kennedy, recalling the old saying that the course of civilization is a race between catastrophe and education, insisted that in a democracy such as ours “we must make sure that education wins (National Center for Education Statistics, 2001, p.3). Students taught to be accountable for their actions and to understand their role in a government are more inclined to actively vote and to be part of elections if they feel that their vote counts and if their voices will be heard in the political, social, and economic aspects of their nation. According to Rose and Gallup (2000), the public considered preparing students to be responsible citizens to be the most important goal of public schools, surpassing preparing youths to be economically self-sufficient, promoting cultural unity, or improving social conditions. The literature has indicated that
implementing civic education in school districts can empower U.S. youths to become active and productive citizens.

The purpose of this study was to develop an understanding of teachers and coordinator perceptions of a civic education in a suburban school district and to analyze how the program was implemented in that school district. This study aimed to add to literature on civic curriculum implementation and inform educators implementing civic curriculum in similar contexts about potential best practices. Since the study was informed partially by interviews with a coordinator, a role which can have different meanings in different school districts, understanding the role of the coordinator in this school district is important. The role and responsibility of a K-12 social studies coordinator in this school district is to act as curriculum specialist and leader of the department, and to oversee the social studies program within the school district. A curriculum specialist is seen as an expert of the subject matter, and, in this research, the curriculum specialist is an expert in social studies. This expert is in charge of aligning the curriculum, assessments, social studies programs, and professional development to the New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework curriculum and standards. As such, interviewing the coordinator is especially appropriate in helping the researcher meet the research goals of this study.

Using the New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework along with Youniss (1997), Vygotsky (1978), and Dewey (2018), the active learning approach will assist with understanding the perception and implementation of such a program. Teaching students to be accountable for their actions and to understand their role in government may influence them to participate in government by practicing their right to vote during
elections, by participating in community events that support the political, social, economic needs of a community, state, or nation, and by voicing their individual concerns on a larger scale.

Throughout the study, the researcher used Youniss’ (1997) civic theory approach, and its implications include the concepts that:

- The course of civic development depends on the institutions that provide political opportunities for youth.
- Good civic education is experiential, and the valuable experiences are political (involving collaboration and conflict).
- The context around institutions matters, so, for instance, civic education should be different for poor and rich kids.
- Often, recruitment leads to experience, which develops beliefs and values. (This is importantly different from the common assumption that people hold values, which lead them to engage or not engage. For example, turnout statistics are usually interpreted as a manifestation of apathy or ignorance, rather than an outcome of weak recruitment.)

In addition, the researcher used Lev Vygotsky’s (1934) zone of proximal development, which provides “a conceptual basis for explaining the five basic tenets of cooperative learning: positive interdependence, face-to-face interaction, individual accountability, small-group and interpersonal skills, and group self-evaluation” (Doolittle, 1997, p.84-85), as a framework to support the idea that the more active and engaged students are at a local, state, and national level, the more likely it is that they will be productive participants within the political, social, and economic aspects of society.
Purpose of Study

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to develop an understanding of teachers and coordinator perceptions of a civic education in a suburban school district and to analyze how the program was implemented in that school district.

Civic knowledge and public engagement are at all-time lows, according to Shapiro and Brown (2018, p. 1). The authors stated:

A 2016 survey by the Annenberg Public Policy Center found that only 26 percent of Americans can name all three branches of government, which was a significant decline from previous years. Not surprisingly, public trust in government is at only 18 percent and voter participation has reached its lowest point since 1996. Without an understanding of the structure of government; rights and responsibilities; and methods of public engagement, civic literacy and voter apathy will continue to plague American democracy. Educators and schools have a unique opportunity and responsibility to ensure that young people become engaged and knowledgeable citizens…” [The 2016 election] brought a renewed interest in engagement among youth, only 23 percent of eighth-graders performed at or above the proficient level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) civics exam, and achievement levels have virtually stagnated since 1998 (p.1).

Research has also indicated that K-12 school districts have increased the focus on math and literacy, and, as a result, civic education, social studies, science, and other subjects have become less of a priority (Shapiro & Brown, 2018, p.1). Consequently, civic education experts have suggested that allowing students to further study civic education will help students become active participants at local, state, and national levels. It will also achieve “successful citizenship and transformative citizenship education,” (Banks, 2015, p.152). James A. Banks (2015) mentions in “Failed Citizenship, Civic Engagement and Education” that successful citizenship supports the idea that successful or effective citizenship socialization (p.152) and transformative citizenship education
recognize and validate the cultural identities of students while helping them acquire the knowledge and skills required to function effectively in the civic culture of the nation, as well as to challenge racial, social class, and gender inequality. Civic Education promotes the following:

- Globalization
- Civic Responsibility
- Learning from the Past
- Assimilation
- Embracing Diversity
- Respect
- Open Communication
- Advocacy of Truth

The purpose of this study was to develop an understanding of teachers and coordinator perceptions of a civic education in a suburban school district and to analyze how the program was implemented in that school district. Emerging themes were identified using a case study methodology. The specific research questions are as follows:

**Research Question #1**: What are the perceptions of the implementation of a civic education program, for the K-12 social studies curriculum, in a suburban school district?

**Research Question #2**: How is the civic education program in K-12 social studies implemented?

This qualitative study explored the perceptions on civic education that a social studies coordinator has using a case study methodology. The researcher interviewed a K-12
social studies coordinator, two teachers under the supervision of the social studies coordinator, observed classes at the secondary and elementary levels that support the civic education curriculum that is emphasized in the New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework, and examined documents that support the civic education classes observed.

**Theoretical Framework**

The New York State K–12 Social Studies Framework is designed to prepare students for college, careers, and civic life with rigorous courses aligned to New York State Learning Standards (New York State Education Department, n.d.). Social studies is intended to promote civic competence through the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities. In the school program, social studies provides coordinated, systematic study that draws upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, belief systems, and sociology, as well as upon appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences (New York State Education Department, n.d.). The primary purpose of social studies, adapted from the NCSS definition, is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world.

Students should:

- develop an understanding of concepts and key ideas through inquiry, analysis of primary and secondary source documents, and disciplinary skills and have students practice being assessed on their comprehension of key ideas and conceptual understandings, as well as social studies practices; and
• be instructed across the K–12 spectrum by using a cohesive set of themes, key ideas, and concepts.

Meanwhile, districts and teachers should continue to have decision-making power over how to teach and illustrate key ideas and conceptual understandings to promote student comprehension.

New York State Department of Education uses the New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework to encourage teachers to be facilitators, and their lessons should focus on student-centered activities and learning. The New York K–12 Social Studies Framework supports the following skills, or social studies practices, that represent the social science and historical thinking skills that students should develop throughout their K–12 education in order to be prepared for civic participation, college, and careers:

Similar to the Mathematical Practices within the Common Core Learning Standards, the Social Studies Practices should be infused with the Social Studies content contained within the Key Ideas and Conceptual Understandings. The Practices were created based on the existing New York State Social Studies Learning Standards, the National Geography Standards, the historical thinking skills articulated within the new Advanced Placement World History Curriculum Framework, the Disciplinary Tools of Dimension 2 of the C3 Framework, National Council for the Social Studies Standards, and Habits of the Mind published by the National Council for History Education (New York State Education Department, n.d.)

The Six Social Studies Practices include the following:

1. Gathering, Interpreting and Using Evidence
2. Chronological Reasoning and Causation
3. Comparison and Contextualization
4. Geographic Reasoning
5. Economics and Economic Systems
6. Civic Participation

This type of knowledge is included in an additional section where the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework the IDM and has integrated a section titled “Taking Informed Action” (NCSS, 2013a).

The New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework, specifically the civic education component, helps students to become well versed and empowers them to have a voice in the political, social, and economic aspects of their lives. NCSS (2013) defined civics as:

In a Constitutional Democracy, productive civic engagement requires knowledge of the history, principles, and foundations of our American democracy, and the ability to participate in civic and democratic processes. People demonstrate civic engagement when they address public problems individually and collaboratively and when they maintain, strengthen, and improve communities and societies. Thus, civics is, in part, the study of how people participate in governing society. Because government is a means for addressing common or public problems, the political system established by the U.S. Constitution is an important subject of study within civics. Civics requires other knowledge too; students should also learn about state and local governments; markets; courts and legal systems; civil society; other nations’ systems and practices; international institutions; and the techniques available to citizens for preserving and changing a society. Civics is not limited to the study of politics and society; it also encompasses participation in classrooms and schools, neighborhoods, groups, and organizations. Not all participation is beneficial. This framework makes frequent reference to civic virtues and principles that guide participation and to the norm of deliberation (which means discussing issues and making choices and judgments with information and evidence, civility and respect, and concern for fair procedures). What defines civic virtue, which democratic principles apply in given situations, and when discussions are deliberative are not easy questions, but they are topics for inquiry and reflection. In civics, students learn to contribute appropriately to public processes and discussions of real issues. Their contributions to public discussions may take many forms, ranging from personal testimony to abstract arguments. They will also learn civic practices such as voting, volunteering, jury service, and joining with others to improve society. Civics enables students not only to study how others participate, but also to practice participating and taking informed action themselves (p.31).

In this study, the researcher explored the perception that a social studies coordinator has of civic education and how the leader implement civics education in his school district.
The research indicated whether his perception supported the idea that civic education helps students to become active participants at local, state, and national levels.

According to the Center for American Progress:

…The policy solution that has garnered the most momentum to improve civics in recent years is a standard that requires high school students to pass the U.S. citizenship exam before graduation. According to this analysis, 17 states have taken this path. Yet, critics of a mandatory civics’ exam argue that the citizenship test does nothing to measure comprehension of the material and creates an additional barrier to high school graduation. Other states have adopted civics as a requirement for high school graduation, provided teachers with detailed civics curricula, offered community service as a graduation requirement, and increased the availability of Advance Placement (AP) U.S. Government classes (Shapiro & Brown, 2018, p.1-2).

The goal of teaching civic education effectively is to equip students with “the knowledge, skills, and disposition necessary to become informed and engaged citizens” (Shapiro & Brown, 2018, p. 1–2). Also, civics is different from history; increasing history courses and service requirements support students’ knowledge and skill sets, but civics education provides students with the agency to apply these skills (Shapiro & Brown, 2018, p. 2).

When looking back to educational theorists, Dewey (2018) advocates for schools to reflect that of society. In The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education (1964), Lawrence Cremin writes how Dewey criticized,

…the old school for the passivity of its methods and the uniformity of its curriculum. The education center of gravity had too long been “in the teacher, the textbook, anywhere and everywhere you please except in the immediate instincts and activities of the child himself. The essence of the new education, Dewey observed, was to shift this center of gravity back to the child. His natural impulses to conversations to an inquiry, to construction, and to expression were now seen as natural resources, as the “the universal capital” of the educative process (Cremin, 1964, p.118-119).
Dewey argued that schools should facilitate and enrich each child individually but at the same time incorporate technical information and discipline that has been emphasized in previous reforms in education. Dewey believed in universal schooling. He thought universal teaching was a vital step in the more extensive process of democratization, “but one that would be robbed of social meaning without a concomitant transformation in the nature of schooling itself” (Cremin, 1964, p.126). Dewey believed that democracy would be achieved only as schooling was “…popularized in character as well as clientele, and hence in the reform of education, he saw the first and foremost work of an intentionally progressive society” (Cremin, 1964, p.126).

Comparing Dewey’s (2018) inquiry-based learning and democratic education to the New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework IDM, it is evident how the two are similar and support the idea of implementing K-12 civic education. In Figure 1, Dewey’s inquiry model reflects on the learning process. The process promotes planning (identify an inquiry), retrieving (develop and gather resources to support the inquiry), processing (choose pertinent information and make connections and inferences), creating (create a product), sharing (communicate with the audience), and evaluating (evaluate the product/inquiry).
When comparing John Dewey’s (2018) inquiry base learning to the C3 Social Studies Framework (inquiry design model), one can note the similarities.
The C3 inquiry design model promotes compelling questions, essential questions, supporting questions, and resources that reflect upon primary and secondary sources. Students are encouraged to grapple with these resources and understand, analyze, and evaluate historical content and support their understanding by using historical evidence. The historical evidence the students use will answer the supporting questions, essential questions, and compelling questions. Students are also encouraged to do an action piece (taking informed action) or an extension activity (summative performance task) to further their understanding. The C3 framework is an extension of Dewey’s (2018) ideology of inquiry-based learning.

Implementing a civic education in a K–12 program not only aligns with New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework and the C3 framework, but it also supports
students in learning ideologies such as Dewey’s (2018) inquiry-based learning to support democratic education and the ASCD whole child approach. Figure 3 demonstrates what happens when all ideologies come together. Students will become global citizens who will support all levels of community, local, state, and national levels.

Figure 3: Shifting the Perception of Educational Leaders and Implementing K-12 Civic Education will support global and national citizens, Chart from Sheena R. Jacob (2018).

Importance of the Significance of the Study

As this nation developed, the Founding Fathers believed that participation in government is a vital attribute for democracy and freedom. They had left their native
countries and migrated to this land for the freedoms that the U.S. Constitution provides to all American citizens. To protect these civil liberties, they encouraged future generations to understand their roles and to recognize how they could benefit our nation and, through their actions, can influence others across the world.

The research aimed to provide social studies educators with an understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of implementing civic education in a school district. In addition, the study aimed to provide suggestions to successfully incorporate civic education in their schools. Research linking extracurricular activities and school-sponsored events will enhance civic engagement and future political participation (Youniss, 1997). The literature has found that some activities, such as debates, student governments, and school newspapers, develop participation skills to be used in politics and civic life (Neimi & Chapman, 1998). Teaching students to be accountable for their actions and understand their role in government may influence students to participate in government by (Youniss, 1997):

- practicing their right to vote during local, state, and national elections;
- actively participating in organized community events that support the political, social, and economic needs; and
- expressing their ideas and voicing their concerns by participating in events that will support the system of checks and balances that our Founding Fathers have incorporated as they developed this nation into the United Stated of America.

**Connection with Social Justice and/or Vincentian Mission in Education**

The Vincentian Center for Church and Society’s mission facilitates interdisciplinary research and reflection on Catholic social teaching, social justice, poverty, advocacy, and
the relationship between science and religion. In this study, the researcher explored the perceptions and implementation of civic education to promote curriculum leaders to reassess their own perceptions and implementations of curricula, school programs, and student activities that focus on civic education. The research encourages further discussions and studies that provide effective ways to assist youths in becoming responsible, open-minded, and critical thinkers who place value on society and individual needs without discriminating or taking advantage of other people. Banks (2015) stated:

Successful or effective citizenship socialization occurs when individuals who live within a nation-state internalize its basic values and symbols, acquire an allegiance to those values and are willing to take action to actualize national values and to protect and defend the nation-state if its endangered (Banks, 2015, p.152).

By promoting and encouraging civic education, schools will teach students about their responsibilities in a community and in a nation. Students will be taught to be accountable for their actions, to understand their role in a government, and will be more inclined to actively vote and be part of elections if they feel that their vote counts and if their voices will be heard in the political, social, economic aspects of a nation.

In addition, at the national level, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, (ASCD) whole child approach works to promote schools, systems, and policies that help education students to become, “knowledgeable, emotionally, and physically healthy, civically active, artistically engaged, prepared for economic self-sufficiency, and ready for the world beyond formal schooling” (Griffith & Slade, 2018, p. 36). By conducting this research, the researcher attempted to observe such implementation of civic education programs within a school district to support this
social–emotional learning piece and possibly empower students to become well-rounded individuals as they exit from the K–12 school system.

**Research Questions**

*Research Question #1:* What are the perceptions of the implementation of a civic education program, for the K-12 social studies curriculum, in a suburban school district?

*Research Question #2:* How is the civic education program in K-12 social studies implemented?

**Design and Methods**

**Research Design and Data Analysis**

The methodology used in this study was qualitative, with a case study research design. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), “a type of design in qualitative research that may be an object of study as well as a product of the inquiry” (p. 96). The authors defined *case study* as a qualitative approach

…in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, documents, and reports) (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p.96-97).

Qualitative researchers interview and observe participants to gain a deeper understanding of the participants in ways that cannot be captured by quantitative measurements, such as surveys or other instruments. Case study methodology is best used to understand the participants’ feelings, perceptions, and understandings of the topic being researched. Consistent with Creswell and Poth, the ultimate purpose of qualitative methodology is to understand how individuals understand their surroundings. In this study, the researcher
dove deeply into a suburban school district by relying on the principles of qualitative research and naturalistic inquiry. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated:

…naturalistic inquiry is always carried out, logically enough in a natural setting, since context is so heavily implicated in meaning. Such a contextual inquiry demands a human instrument, one fully adaptive to the indeterminate situation that will be encountered. The human instrument builds upon his or her tactic knowledge as much as if not more than upon propositional knowledge and uses methods that are appropriate to humanly implemented inquiry: interviews, observations, document analysis, unobtrusive clues, and the like. Once in the field, the inquiry takes the form of successive iterations of four elements: purposive sampling, inductive analysis of the data obtained from the sample, development of grounded theory based on the inductive analysis, and projection of next steps in a constantly emergent design (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.187-188).

By relying on qualitative analysis, in which the researcher studies individuals, programs, and events in their natural settings, the researcher got a better understanding of what Bogdan and Biklen (2007) called

…human behavior and experiences. They seek to grasp the process by which people construct meaning and to describe what those meanings are. They use empirical observation because it is with concrete incidents of human behavior that investigators can think more clearly and deeply about the human condition (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 43).

Qualitative research is appropriate for this study because the researcher got to collect and view the data more extensively through interviews, observations, and document analysis.

**Qualitative Studies**

*Naturalistic inquiry* is often used to refer to qualitative research methodology. The purpose of naturalistic observation is to watch while people, events, and naturally occurring phenomena exist without altering the situation (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), qualitative researchers do not see themselves as collecting facts of human behavior because qualitative
researchers “understand human behavior as too complex to do that and see the search for cause and prediction as undermine their ability to grasp the basic interpretive nature of human behavior and the human experience” (p. 43). As a result, qualitative research maintains advantages by providing a more accurate understanding of the participants, curriculum, events, and programs that will, in turn, provide concise understanding for the research.

The researcher investigated detailed information regarding teachers, programs, curriculum, resources, and school events. Therefore, establishing trust will be vital. The naturalistic inquiry, through which a researcher studies people, events, and phenomena, has been challenged by positivists and quantitative researchers stating that the inquiry approach lacks validity, reliability, and objectivity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 289–331). To address these concerns, the researcher used the following techniques to increase the credibility of this research:

1. A prolonged period of engagement
2. Thick Description
3. Ensure dependability
4. Ensure confirmability

**Participants**

The researcher interviewed a total of three participants: one K–12 social studies coordinator and two teachers. Each participant was interviewed a total of three times. In addition, the researcher observed four civic education classes. Finally, the following types of documents were analyzed: the syllabus for the 12th grade Civic courses, student work from 12th grade Civics courses, and activities and lessons from 5th grade classes.
Procedures

For the interest of this study, the researcher visited “Pacific School District,” the pseudonym for the district where the study was conducted. The researcher obtained permission to enter the district to collect all required data (see Appendix A for Permission for Entry). Once the researcher received confirmation via email, the researcher commenced data collection around interviews, observations and document analysis.

Consistent with entry procedures outlined in Bogdan and Biklen (2007) regarding gaining access, the researcher approached the K–12 social studies coordinator to conduct this study. As Bogdan and Biklen stated, “no two schools systems are organized the same. Most have specific procedures to follow” (p. 84). In Pacific School District, permission and access was granted by central administration and building administration in the school district.

Definition of Terms

Civic/Community Contexts

Organizations, movements, campaigns, a place or locus where people and/or living creatures inhabit, which may be defined by a locality (school, national park, non-profit organization, town, state, nation) or defined by shared identity (i.e., African-Americans, North Carolinians, Americans, the Republican or Democratic Party, refugees, etc.). In addition, contexts for civic engagement may be defined by a variety of approaches intended to benefit a person, group, or community, including community service or volunteer work, and academic work (Inquiry and Analysis VALUE Rubric, 2009).
Civic Education

This involves curricula elements such as courses and resources, programs such as guest speakers, and assemblies, projects, and portfolios that urge students to understand, engage, and participate in civic activities at the local, state, and national levels.

Civic Engagement

This involves participation, “…working to make a difference in the civic life of communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make the difference…promoting the quality of life in a community throughout both political and non-political processes” (Ehrlich, 2000, vi).

Civic Identity and Commitment

When one sees her or himself as an active participant in society with a strong commitment and responsibility to work with others towards public purposes (Inquiry and Analysis VALUE Rubric, 2009).

Civic Life

The public life of the citizen concerned with the affairs of the community and nation as contrasted with private or personal life, which is devoted to the pursuit of private and personal interests (Inquiry and Analysis VALUE Rubric, 2009).

Communication Skills

Listening, deliberation, negotiation, consensus building, and productive use of conflict (Inquiry and Analysis VALUE Rubric, 2009).
**Culturally Responsive**

This is being aware of multiple perspectives that reflect on diverse group of cultures and influence understanding, learning environment, and engagement.

**Failed Citizenship**

As Banks (2015) stated:

Citizenship socialization is unsuccessful and fails when individuals who are born within the nation or migrate to it and live within it for an extended period of time do not internalize the values and ethos of the nation-state, feel structurally excluded within it, and have highly ambivalent feelings toward it. Racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious groups that are victims of failed citizenship experience political alienation, have ambivalent national identities, and feel structurally excluded and politically separate within their nation-state. These groups also lack political efficacy and have low levels of political engagement and political participation in the polity (Banks, 2015, p.152).

**Government**

The formal institutions of a society with the authority to make and implement binding decisions about such matters as the distribution of resources, allocation of benefits and burdens, and the management of conflicts (*Inquiry and Analysis VALUE Rubric*, 2009).
Inquiry Design Model

This process promotes planning (identify an inquiry), retrieving (develop and gather resources to support the inquiry), processing (choose pertinent information and make connections and inferences), creating (create a product), sharing (communicate with the audience) and evaluating (evaluate the product/inquiry).

Politics

A process by which a group of people, whose opinions or interests might be divergent, reach collective decisions that are generally regarded as binding on the group and enforced as common policy. Political life enables people to accomplish goals they could not realize as individuals. Politics necessarily arises whenever groups of people live together, since they must always reach collective decisions of one kind or another (Inquiry and Analysis VALUE Rubric, 2009).

Service-Learning Class

A course based educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity and reflect on the experience in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of personal values and civic responsibility (Inquiry and Analysis VALUE Rubric, 2009).

Social Studies Leaders

These are administrators who supervise and oversee a building or district social studies departments and are perceived as curriculum specialists.
Successful citizenship

According to Banks (2015):

Successful or effective citizenship socialization occurs when individuals who live within a nation-state internalize its basic values and symbols, acquire an allegiance to those values, and are willing to take action to actualize national values and to protect and defend the nation-state if it is endangered (Banks, 2015, p.152).

Transformative citizenship education

This validates the cultural identities of students while helping them to attain the knowledge and skills required to function effectively in the civic culture of the nation as well as to challenge racial, social class and gender inequality.

Whole Child Approach

This promotes schools, systems, and policies to help students become knowledgeable, emotionally and physically healthy, civically active, artistically engaged, prepared for economic self-sufficiency, and ready for the world beyond formal schooling.
Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Framework

Civics education in the K–12 curriculum will assist students with understanding their role and responsibility in a community and in a nation. Teaching students to be accountable for their actions and to understand their role in a government may influence them to participate in government by practicing their right to vote during local, state, and national elections, actively participating in organized community events that support the political, social and economic needs, expressing their ideas, and voicing their concerns by participating in events that will support the U.S. system of checks and balances.

An American educator and pioneer of multicultural education, Banks (2015) stated how nations with citizens not assimilating and not actively involved in their nation’s political, social, and economic aspects are positioned to exhibit a “failed citizenship” (p. 152). To shift this outcome, educators must drive the growth in successful citizenship by promoting civic education within the K–12 curriculum and embedding civic education within the school culture. Banks stated:

Racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious groups that are victims of failed citizenship experience political alienation have ambivalent national identities and feel structurally excluded and politically separate within their nation-state (Banks, 2015, p.152).

Thus, these citizens turn to various groups that provide an environment of acceptance and a sense of purpose or meaning for their existence. Unfortunately, some of these diverse groups include local and national gangs, terrorist organizations, and extremist groups. In contrast, those individuals who feel structurally involved and politically joined with their
nation believe that they can participate in the political, social, and economic aspects and can contribute to their nation’s success and growth. Banks confirmed:

Successful or effective citizenship socialization occurs when individuals who live within a nation-state internalize its basic values and symbols, acquire an allegiance to those values and are willing to take action to actualize national values and to protect and defend the nation-state if its endangered (Banks, 2015, p.152).

To reposition how nations fall under a failed citizenship Banks stated,

Schools can help victims of failed citizenship by enabling them to attain a sense of structural inclusion into their society and nation, political efficacy, and higher levels of political engagement and participation (p.153).

To achieve this, Banks (2015) agreed that each school should have a district-wide goal that incorporates civic education in order to help students understand their role and responsibility in a community and in a nation. Students are thus taught to be accountable for their actions and to understand their role in a government. Students are, therefore, more inclined to vote and to be part of elections if they feel that their vote counts and that their voices will influence the political, social, and economic aspects of their nation.

When promoting and encouraging civic education, we must include “culturally responsive teaching that promotes structural inclusion because it gives public recognition and civic equality to the cultures and languages of marginalized students in the community” (Gutmann, 2004, 71-96).

Being sensitive to the cultural perspective and assimilating all students into civic education is vital for students to have a sense of meaning or purpose in their country.
Banks (2015) made a distinction between mainstream citizenship education and transformative citizenship education:

Mainstream citizenship education is practiced in most schools in the United States…mainstream citizenship education reinforces the status quo and the dominant power relationships in society. To help students acquire knowledge, values, and skills needed to become politically engaged and to reduce failed citizenship, citizenship education must be transformative citizenship education (Banks, 2015, p.154).

He argued for schools to embed civic education by using the transformative citizenship education approach:

Transformative citizenship education recognized and validates the cultural identities of students while helping them to attain the knowledge and skills required to function effectively in the civic culture of the nation as well as to challenge racial, social class and gender inequality (Banks, 2015, p.154).

Civic education needs to be implemented in a K–12 curriculum, which must not just support a concept but empower students to participate in local, state, and national levels. Civic education should support transformative citizenship; by doing so, schools endorse a culture that sustains cultural responsiveness and invites students to challenge themselves to become active participants of their community.

Milner (2017) noted the importance of understanding how to become effective educators among students from diverse backgrounds. Students’ diverse backgrounds may involve their race, gender, religion, socioeconomic status, and sexuality. Milner wanted to identify and appreciate diversity by encouraging educators to engage with their students’ communities and to recognize “that these young people come to school with significant intellectual and cultural assets” (p. 88–89). Educators often forget that some students have a range of factors that might prevent them from being academically
successful in the classroom. Yet, these same students bring forth success in areas that might be difficult areas for educators to teach, such as empathy, multicultural perspectives, resilience, patience, humility, and tolerance.

Milner (2017) strongly recommended that education should honor and build on students’ cultural assets, and, by doing so, educators should “learn about and expand their community knowledge” (p. 88–89). Millner suggested that education should be advanced over schooling, and, to do this, it is necessary to focus and practice his five community outreach responsibilities:

- **Community Learning** - Educators understand a student’s everyday learning environment and how this can factor into his/her learning experience in the classroom.
- **Community Immersion** - Educators will benefit by living within the community; educators’ can develop a trust between themselves and their students’ community; preparation and planning of lessons can be more effective because living within the community helps educators create lessons to which students can connect.
- **Community Engagement** - Educators should be active members of their students’ community; observing, participating, engaging in their students’ community will assist with learning how the community works and impacts his/her students.
- **Community Attendance** - Educators arrive to students’ everyday activities such as, games, birthdays, celebrations; attending these events would promote a
level of care, trust, and an opportunity to open a line of communication between parents and educators.

- Community Investment- Educators reach out to local businesses and promote an economic relationship between school and community. Educators, community, and a school would become more united and grow together in a positive way

Educators being involved and becoming active members of their students’ community is vital. Millner (2017) noted:

… Although teachers' practices may be complex and less than perfect, there are no neutral spaces in the work of teaching—educators are either working for equity or they are working against it. In this respect, building a knowledge base about the community is a central part of working in schools: It gives you a better understanding of the students and shows that you value their background and are on their side (Millner, 2017, p.88-89).

It is vital to build knowledge and a working relationship with the community. Banks’ (2015) and Millner’s (2017) ideologies support a strong and engaged school-community relationship. To support and maintain such a relationship will encourage a school district to implement civics education and uphold a strong emphasis on the New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework.

**New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework**

Christine Radez (2018) reported that the New York State Education Department stated:

It is our responsibility to provide students with a meaningful high school education that prepares them for competitive employment and civic participation. Civics education empowers students to make informed decisions that will create a better future. There is research and evidence that suggests that we are in a national civic crisis where most Americans are not civically engaged (Radez, 2018).
Looking at the New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework, Standard 5 is titled, *Civics, Citizenship, and Government* with the following description,

“Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the necessity for establishing governments; the governmental systems of the United States and other nations; the United States Constitution; the basic civic values of American constitutional democracy; and the roles, rights, and responsibilities of citizenship, including avenues of participation” (New York State Education Department, n.d.).

The New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework supports schools and requires them to promote civic education through curriculum by grade level (kindergarten through twelfth grades). Overall, amongst all grade levels, the framework encourages New York State K-12 schools to support and promote civic ideals and practices that focuses on the following (New York State Education Department, n.d.):

1. Basic freedoms and rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democratic republic
2. Role of the citizen in the community and nation and as a member of the global community
3. Civic participation and engagement
4. Respect for diversity
5. Civic ideals and practices in countries other than our democratic republic
6. Struggle for rights, access to citizenship rights, and universal human rights

According to NYSUT (2019), in previous elections such as those in 2014, New York State ranked 47th in the nation in voter turnout (28.8%), with some estimates of participation by communities of color at about 10%. Annenberg Public Policy Center (2017) of the University of Pennsylvania reported that more than half of Americans (53%) incorrectly think it is accurate to say that immigrants who are here illegally do not
have any rights under the U.S. Constitution, and only a quarter of Americans (26%) can name all three branches of government.

With such research analysis, the New York State Education Department has initiated a State Civic Seal of Engagement for seniors to receive on their graduation diploma. The initiative supports and aligns with Guilfoile and Delander (2014), who supported the following practices:

- Provide instruction in government, history, law and democracy.
- Incorporate discussion of current local, national, and international issues and events into the classroom, particularly those issues and events that young people view as important to their lives.
- Design and implement programs that provide students with the opportunity to apply what they learn through performing community service that is linked to the formal curriculum and classroom instruction.
- Offer extracurricular activities that provide opportunities for young people to get involved in their schools or communities.
- Encourage student participation in school governance.
- Encourage students’ participation in simulations of democratic processes and procedures.

Civic Engagement VALUE Rubric

The Association of American Colleges and Universities, teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States, created a Civic Engagement VALUE Rubric. The team of experts created the rubric through a process that examined several existing campus rubrics related documents for each learning
outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty (Inquiry and Analysis VALUE Rubric, 2009). The rubric articulates fundamental criteria for each learning outcome with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubric is intended for institutional level use in evaluating and discussing student learning on civic engagement. The following criteria learning outcomes that are indicated on the rubric are as follows:

1. Diversity of Communities and Cultures
2. Analysis of Knowledge
3. Civic-Identity and Commitment
4. Civic Communication
5. Civic Action and Reflection
6. Civic Contexts/Structures

Prepare students to become active and productive members of society through curriculum and education program that promote civic education. Cultivating students and assisting them in becoming well-versed citizen will, in the long term, create responsible, accountable, and nation-abiding citizens that will help a country to continue to grow and prosper.

Program Implementation

Implementing a program in schools can be challenging. There are many factors that can assist a program or prevent it from being implemented in schools. Such factors include finance, district and building goals, teacher, administration, and community commitment to support the implementation of a program within the school district, and
resources allocated for the success of the program. When looking at implementing a program, Unni Vere Midthassel (2004) writes that schools “…might be faced with a dilemma where there is a difference between the needs and wants of the staff (some or all) and the needs of the organization as a whole” (Ertesvåg, Roland, Vaaland, Storksen, & Veland, 2010, p. 328-329). Therefore, implementing a civic education program may be supported or not supported depending upon the needs and wants of a school district. According to Torill Larsen (2005), who conducted a study of schools which were at least three years through implementing the Second Step One program, found that what characterized the schools most successful in implementing the program was strong focus on leadership combined with management strategies and a continued and systematic focus (Larsen, 2005). Both individual and organizational factors affect the longevity, viability, and duration of a program. The idea of implementation and the factors affecting an implementation may vary due to several variables. These variables, including participation commitment, finance to support implementation, resources, and leadership, can influence whether the implementation of a program is successful or unsuccessful. Effective approaches to managing implementation or a change calls for combining and balancing factors that might not go together, such as simultaneous simplicity-complexity, looseness-tightness, strong leadership-user participation, bottom-ups/top-down-ness, fidelity-adaptivity, and evaluation-non-evaluation (Fullan, 2016, p.68). If any one of these factors is working against implementation, the process will be less effective, and with more factors supporting implementation, the more change in practice will be achieved (Fullan, 2016, p.68).
Positives of Implementing Civic Education Program

Developmental psychologist Youniss (1997) drew on philosophy and political science to state:

- Civic identity is not just cognitive and effective (what individuals know and think), but also behavioral (what individuals do).
- Civic development is not individual, having to do with the human being’s growth and change. It is public and political, involving membership and participation.
- Political participation involves collaboration and conflict and is voluntary (in modern societies).

For this study the researcher dove into understanding the importance of civics education by analyzing a K–12 district leader’s perception about civics education programs that correlate with curricula, projects, assemblies, portfolios, guest speakers, resources, and partnerships with local organizations, such as museums and local executive, legislative, and judicial organizations. Using Youniss’ (1997) approach when conducting research and analyzing data, the researcher deciphered information with his civic theory approach and its implications, which are as follows:

- The course of civic development depends on the institutions that provide political opportunities for youth.
- Good civic education is experiential, and the valuable experiences are political (involving collaboration and conflict).
- The context around institutions matters, so, for instance, civic education should differ accordingly for poor and rich kids.
• Often, recruitment leads to experience, which develops beliefs and values. (This is importantly different from the common assumption that people hold values, which lead them to engage or not engage. For example, turnout statistics are usually interpreted as a manifestation of apathy or ignorance, rather than an outcome of weak recruitment.)

In addition, Vygotsky’s (1934) zone of proximal development, which provides “a conceptual basis for explaining the five basic tenets of cooperative learning: positive interdependence, face-to-face interaction, individual accountability, small-group and interpersonal skills, and group self-evaluation” (Doolittle, 1997, p. 84) provides a framework that supports the idea that the more active and engaged students are at a local, state, and national level, the more likely such students will be productive and active participants within the political, social, and economic aspects of their society.
Figure 4 shows Vygotsky’s (1934) zone of proximal development (ZPD) framework.

According to Doolittle (1997),

Vygotsky formulated a theory of cognitive development that is based on student’s ability to learn how to use socially relevant tools (such as money, pencils, and computers) and culturally based signs (such as language, writing, and number systems) through interactions with other students and adults who socialize the students into their culture…individuals immediate potential for cognitive growth is limited on the lower end by that which he or she can accomplish independently, and on the upper end by that which he or she can accomplish with the help of a more knowledgeable other such as a peer, tutor, or teacher. This region of immediate potential for cognitive development between the upper and lower limits is the zone of proximal development (p.84).
When looking at the *Zone of Proximal Development* image, by the Institute of Education Assessors, one can note how it shows the way to assist students’ current capabilities. In reference to this research and framework, using the ZPD, the social studies curriculum should consist of what students can do independently. This section covers the current content knowledge and skills being taught to students through civic education experiences, including in classes, resources used in the classroom, assemblies, guest speakers, projects, and portfolios, which will assist students in moving to the next phase of becoming active participants in their community at all levels, as seen in Figure 5.

![Diagram](image.png)


Students can achieve this with support from administrators, teachers, staff, and community members by incorporating civic education within their districts with guiding principles of constructivist learning environments. These learning environments include
those shown in Table 1. These principles are also reflective in the New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework and the IDM Blueprint.

Table 1
Guiding Principles of Constructivist Learning Environments, Dale Schunk, *Learning Theories an Educational Perspective*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guiding Principles of Constructivist Learning Environments</th>
<th>Pose problems of emerging relevance to students.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Structure learning around primary concepts.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seek and value students’ points of view.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Adapt curriculum to address students’ suppositions.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assess student learning in the context of teaching.</td>
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</table>

Comparing Dewey’s (2018) inquiry-based learning and democratic education to the New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework IDM, one can see how the two are similar and support the idea of implementing K–12 civic education. Figure 1 shows how Dewey’s inquiry model affects the learning process. The process promotes planning (identify an inquiry), retrieving (develop and gather resources to support the inquiry), processing (choose pertinent information and make connections and inferences), creating (create a product), sharing (communicate with the audience), and evaluating (evaluate the product/inquiry).
When comparing Dewey’s inquiry base learning to the C3 New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework (Inquiry Design Model), see below for the similarities.
Figure 2: College, Career, Civic Life (C3) Framework & IDM Model

The C3 inquiry design model prompts compelling questions, essential questions, supporting questions, and resources that reflect on primary and secondary sources. Students are encouraged to grapple with these resources and understand, analyze, and evaluate historical content and support their understanding by using historical evidence. This historical evidence will answer the supporting, essential, and compelling questions. Students are also encouraged to do an action piece (taking informed action) or an extension activity (summative performance task) to further their understanding. The C3 Framework is an extension of Dewey’s (2018) ideology of inquiry-based learning.

Combining Vygotsky (1978) with Dewey’s (2018) belief that schools should facilitate and enrich each child individually and his belief in universal schooling, Dewey argued that democracy would be achieved only as schooling was “popularized in
character as well as clientele, and hence in the reform of education, he saw the first and
foremost work of an intentionally progressive society” (Cremin, 1964, p. 126).

When looking at the New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework and civic
action through the lenses of Youniss’ (1997) civic theory, Vygotsky’s (1978) ZPD, and
Dewey’s (2018) inquiry-based learning and democratic education, one can see how they
are similar and support the idea of implementing K–12 civic education. Implementing a
civic education in a K–12 program not only aligns with the New York State K-12 Social
Studies Framework and the C3 Framework, but also support students’ abilities to
understand such ideologies. Figure 3 shows all ideologies coming together so that
students will become global citizens and support all levels of community: local, state, and
national government.
Figure 3: Shifting the Perception of Educational Leaders and Implementing K-12 Civic Education will support global and national citizens, Chart from Sheena R. Jacob (2018).

Negatives of Not Implementing Civic Education Program

Educators must prepare our students to become productive members of society and well-versed citizens. By doing so, they are creating responsible, accountable, and nation-abiding citizens who will help the country to grow and prosper. It is important to teach civic education through culturally responsive ways that support the whole child approach (ASCD). Implementing civic education promotes openness and acceptance to diversity. By not experiencing civic education, students may feel outcasted, a sense of not belonging, unassimilated to American values and morals, and as though they are a
minority. All these effects can lead to a rise in membership in gangs, terrorism, and extremism. Transformative citizenship education’s “purpose of knowledge is to improve society” (Code, 1991; Collins, 2000; Takaki, 1993), and that is why a transformative civic education is vital. Too many times, educators forget to diversify lesson plans and ways of thinking to promote a sense of openness. They must be welcoming and provide for all students to be part of a successful citizenship.

Research Studies

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2001):

There is no widely agreed upon curriculum for civic education in the United States. This is reflected by the fact that civic education in school takes place across a wide range of courses, such as social studies, civics, history, government, global studies, and geography. Furthermore, in several school districts across the country, there is no requirement that students take a civics or government course during their school years. Additionally, little is known about the school and classroom context in which civic education happens in the United States or the status of civic education as an explicit goal for schools (U.S. Department of Education. Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2001, p.25).

Though there is significant research supporting a relationship between school and classroom characteristics and mathematics and science achievement, there is not a significant amount supporting the relationship between school, classroom characteristics, and civic knowledge (National Center for Education Statistics, 2001, p. 25).

Everhart (2017) identified predictors of student perceptions of personal, civic responsibility (civic-mindedness) among undergraduate students at the University of Kansas (p. 3). Civic-mindedness is generally defined as “a person’s inclination or disposition to be knowledgeable of and involved in the community and to have a commitment to act upon a sense of responsibility as a member of that community”
Everhart’s study sought to determine how students’ interactions with identified components of the Kansas University environment related to student civic mindedness. Everhart used Astin’s (1991, 1993) input-environment outcome (I-E-O) model, which provided central theoretical support for Everhart study. This I-E-O model informs the structural process through which student outcomes are influenced by institutional interventions or environmental characteristics when controlling for individual student characteristics (inputs) such as demographics (Everhart, 2017, p. 7).

Student involvement theory and student engagement theory provide secondary theoretical framework support in helping to explain the nature of student interactions with the Kansas University institutional environment, which ultimately produced the desired outcomes. Astin (1984, 1999) defined student involvement as “the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience” (Astin, 1999, p. 518). This energy may be ardent toward co-curricular as well as well as extra-curricular activities and may include both academic (e.g., out-of-class study sessions) and non-academic pursuits (e.g., student clubs and organizations; Everhart, 2017, p. 7).

Student engagement theory includes the correspondence of the institution with the student’s involvement, and the strategically focused nature of the activity is directly related to the institution’s desired student outcomes (Everhart, 2017, p. 7). According to Everhart:

…both involvement and engagement theory are critical to the present study because they represent student interaction with institutional environments as measured by the independent variables (the “E” in I-E-O), and because they inform both sides of the student’s experience: student investment in the activity and institutional investment in the student (Everhart, 2017, p.7).
Everhart (2017) attempted to determine how students’ interactions with specific components of the Kansas University environment predicted their perceptions of personal, civic responsibility. The results suggest that there are

…specific environmental interactions that predict desired civic engagement outcomes for Kansas University students, including general participation in community service, frequency of civic engagement during college, participation in out-of-class discussion about social issues, and the existence of supportive faculty mentors (Everhart, 2017, p. 87).

Everhart indicated that prior research supported these findings, and Kansas University provided significant support and infrastructure to help these predictive outcomes. Everhart suggested that future research should “drill further into these predictors, particularly those predictors that prior research suggested would be related to the dependent variable, but for which the present study results were inconclusive” (p. 87). Kansas University provided an environment supportive of many predictors, but, in a funding climate that seeks new opportunities for budget savings, Everhart suggested that the institution must continue to allocate resources in a manner that supports its mission and recognizes the proven benefits of student civic engagement (Everhart, 2017, p. 87).

Comber (2005) examined whether civic coursework and content contribute to the acquisition of civic skills. The author spoke to broader issues of inequality in civic skill development and the distribution of civics coursework and recommended that

…all American high school students take at least one semester of civics and recommend schools and communities seek to prioritize teaching civic skills in schools, so as to equalize abilities of political participation (Comber, 2005, p. 2).

Further research is needed to thoroughly understand the relationship between the content of civic courses, the classroom climate of civic courses, and civic skill presence.
Comber’s study investigates the ability, not the willingness, of citizens to engage in political participation. Comber (2005) referred to salient theorists of civic education:

…The American founders felt education should provide a moral education and form character in future citizens (Pangle and Pangle 2000). In particular, President George Washington urged Congress to support a civic education that would consist of “teaching the people themselves to know and value their own rights; [and] to distinguish between oppression and the necessary exercise of lawful authority” (Fitzpatrick 1939 [1790] p. 493). John Dewey and Charles Merriam also espoused the necessity of education for developing characteristics of citizenship in a democracy and the responsibility of American schools to teach youth how to participate in a democracy (Niemi & Junn 1998). Benjamin Franklin maintained that good schools should include the value of promoting democracy (Hochschild & Scovronick, 2000).

Comber reiterated how civic education is vital within the secondary and postsecondary curriculum. Implementing such programs will allow students to become more active at the local, state, and national levels. The researcher presented other theorists throughout the dissertation to support the importance of implementing and emphasizing civic education, including:

- Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) documented the importance of resources in promoting political participation, including money, time, knowledge, skills, and self-confidence.

- Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) developed a resource-based theory in their civic voluntarism model. The civic voluntarism model maintains that political participation is a function of political engagement, recruitment through social networks, and resources. Resources include time, money, and civic skills.

Verba and Nie (1972) defined political participation as individual political actions that influence government actions. Verba et al. (1995) asserted that civic skills foster
individual political participation. The following information is some of the findings through this research (Comber, 2005, p. 120-121).

- Comber’s study considers civic skills scarce resources unequally distributed.
- Data indicated that minority students held lower levels of civic skills than more privileged students.
- Data also provide evidence that for some civic skills, such as political interpretation skills, racial/ethnic minorities and low-income students may only have opportunities to learn civic skills in school.
- Civic skills are not equally distributed among those of different race, ethnicity, household income, gender, and noncollege populations.
- Increased civic skill levels are present when contact with civic education is present.
- Students of civic education are more likely to expect to complete a 4-year college degree.
- Students who do not take civic education are more often African American, Latino, or immigrants.
- Students who do not take civic education are less likely to be in open classroom climates.

Throughout both studies, the emphasis on civic education and how implementing the content, civic skills, and student-centered activities that support civic participation at the local, state, and national level is addressed consistently. However, it is important to note that there must be a commitment from schools at the local, state, and national levels for this idea to work at the level that Everhart (2017), Comber (2005) and other researchers
would like to see. Variables such as socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, gender, and life experiences drive civic education and civic participation. As a result, the approach to research and discussions should revolve around equity and provide means to support this idea.

**Summary**

Schools can help students succeed in civic participation by enabling them to attain a sense of structural inclusion in their society and nation, of political efficacy, and of higher levels of political engagement and participation. Each school must have a district-wide goal that incorporates and invests in civic education. By promoting and encouraging civic education, such schools will have students who understand their role and responsibility in their community and nation.

Shapiro and Brown (2018) stated:

…low rates of Millennial voter participation and volunteerism indicate that schools have the opportunity to better prepare students to fulfill the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship. While this brief calls for increasing opportunities for U.S. government, civics, or service-learning education, these requirements are only as good as how they are taught. Service learning must go beyond an act of service to teach students to systemically address issues in their communities; civics exams must address critical thinking, in addition to comprehension of materials; and civics and government courses should prepare every student with the tools to become engaged and effective citizens (Shapiro & Brown, 2018, p.8).

The authors also suggested that working and partnering with local, state, and national programs such as:

…Generation Citizen’s action civics programming and Judicially Speaking’s guest lectures from civics experts—have allowed for small changes to make a big impact on how teachers educate the next generation of leaders. While some highlighted examples have successfully reformed civics, more states, districts, and schools should invest in comprehensive and action-oriented civics curricula to build students’
capacity to become engaged and knowledgeable citizens (Shapiro & Brown, 2018, p.8).

Students who are taught to be accountable for their actions and understand their role in a government are more inclined to actively vote and be a part of elections (Banks, 2015). These students will feel that their vote counts and their voices will be heard, which will reflect on the ideas of successful citizenship and transformative citizenship education (Banks, 2015).

Successful citizenship supports the idea of successful or effective citizenship socialization (Banks, 2015, p. 152), and transformative citizenship education validates the cultural identities of students; it helps them to attain the knowledge and skills required to function effectively in the civic culture of the nation as well as to challenge racial, social class, and gender inequality. Civic education promotes the following:

- Globalization
- Civic Responsibility
- Learning from the Past
- Assimilation
- Embracing Diversity
- Respect
- Open Communication
- Advocacy of Truth
Chapter 3

Methods and Procedure

Overview

This chapter presents the methodology and procedures used to explore a district social studies coordinator’s perception of civic education and implementation in a suburban school district. The goal of this study was to contribute to the limited research on how school district leaders perceive and implement civic education programs within their districts. Perceptions and implementation of civic education in a K-12 social studies curriculum were explored through qualitative methodology, including observations, interviews, and analysis of documents. The specific research questions that guided the study are as follows:

*Research Question #1:* What are the perceptions of the implementation of a civic education program, for the K-12 social studies curriculum, in a suburban school district?

*Research Question #2:* How is the civic education program in K-12 social studies implemented?

The methodology used was a qualitative multiple case study methodology, with the unit of analysis being individuals. A qualitative approach was appropriate for this study because qualitative research lends itself to examining various experiences, settings, and structures such as those in this case of a suburban school districts civic education programs in a K–12 social studies curriculum. According to Berg (2001):

…the notion of quality is essential to the nature of things. On the other hand, quantity is elementally an amount of something. Quality refers to the what, how, when, and where of a thing-its essence and ambience. Qualitative research thus
refers to the meanings… of things. In contrast, quantitative research refers to counts and measures of things (Berg, 2001, p.2-3).

According to Creswell (2003), a quantitative approach is appropriate when a researcher seeks to understand relationships between variables. When conducting to qualitative research, the term is used as

…an umbrella term to refer to several research strategies that share certain characteristics. The data collected have been termed soft, that is, rich in description of people, places, and conversations, and not easily handled by statistical procedures. Research questions are not framed by operationalizing variables; rather, they are formulated to investigate topics in all their complexity, in context. While people conducting qualitative research develop a focus as they collect data, they do not approach the research with specific questions to answer or hypotheses to test. They also are concerned with understanding behavior from the informant’s own frame of reference. External causes are of secondary importance. They tend to collect their data through sustained contact with people in settings where subjects normally spend their time-classrooms, cafeterias, teachers’ lounges, dormitories, street corners (Bogdan and Biklen 2007, p. 2).

A case study design is appropriate for this study because the goal of the research is to analyze the perceptions a K–12 social studies curriculum leader has on civic education by using an exploratory case study design accurately. According to Robert K. Yin (2018), “…choosing case study research compared with others when (1) your…research questions are “how” or “why” questions, (2) you have little or no control over behavior events and (3) your focus of study is a contemporary (as opposed to entirely historical) phenomenon-a case” (p.2). The purpose of this case study was to develop an understanding of teachers and coordinator perceptions of a civic education in a suburban school district and to analyze how the program was implemented in that school district, and as such, the study fulfills all the conditions that make a case study design the most appropriate choice. This case study can further be characterized as exploratory rather than explanatory. An exploratory case study is typically used as an
intuitive investigation that is made in the early stages of detailed research being conducted in a particular area, such as the area of interest in this study (Berg, 2001). Limited research is currently available on perceptions and implementation of civic education curriculum in school districts. Therefore, this study can be useful as an initial study that sets the foundation for future research.

The data collection mechanism was primarily through interviews with supporting data collected through document analysis and observations. The researcher interviewed a K-12 social studies coordinator and two teachers whom the K-12 social studies coordinator oversees, observed two Civics courses at the high school level and two social studies classes at the elementary level that aligned to the New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework. Both teachers, secondary education teacher, Teacher #1 (the pseudonym given to the participant) and the elementary teacher, Teacher #2 (the pseudonym given to the participant), that were interviewed and observed worked under the K-12 social studies coordinator who promoted civic education using the New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework. In addition, all three participants provided documents for the researcher to analyze; these documents supported the civic education curriculum that was led by the K-12 social studies coordinator and implemented within the leader’s district. The researcher identified emerging themes using a multiple case study methodology.

The interview questions found in Appendix C are designed to discover participant perceptions around the civic education program of interest and are founded upon the main areas identified in the New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework, which can be found in Standard 5, titled, Civics, Citizenship, and Government. The New York State
K-12 Social Studies Framework supports and requires schools to promote civic education through curriculum by grade level (kindergarten through twelfth grades). Overall, amongst all grade levels, the interview instrument is aligned with the same civic ideals and practices that exist in the framework used by New York State K-12 schools (New York State Education Department, n.d.):

1. Basic freedoms and rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democratic republic
2. Role of the citizen in the community and nation and as a member of the global community
3. Civic participation and engagement
4. Respect for diversity
5. Civic ideals and practices in countries other than our democratic republic
6. Struggle for rights, access to citizenship rights and universal human rights

Using the *Inquiry and Analysis VALUE Rubric* (2009), the researcher observed two curriculum classes at the secondary and elementary level. The specific civic education program that the researcher chose to observe from the several options that the K-12 social studies coordinator provided, the teacher discussion during the interview process, and document analysis was used for triangulation. As Robert E. Stake (2010) explains, “...qualitative researchers triangulate their evidence...to get meaning straight, to be more confident that the evidence is good, they develop various habits called ‘triangulation’...triangulation is to member check ...it is a form of confirmation and validation...” (p.123).
**Researcher Positionality**

The study is a case study research as a methodology. According to Creswell and Poth, “a type of design in qualitative research that may be an object of study as well as a product of the inquiry” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 96). A case study is defined as a qualitative approach

…in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, documents, and reports) (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p.96-97).

Qualitative researchers interview and observe participants to gain a deeper understanding of the participants in a way that cannot be captured by quantitative measurements such as surveys or other instruments. The case study methodology is best used to understand participants’ feelings, perceptions, and understanding of the topic. Consistent with Creswell and Poth (2018), the ultimate purpose of qualitative methodology is to understand how individuals make sense of their surroundings. In this study, the researcher dove deeper into a suburban school district by relying on the principles of qualitative research and naturalistic inquiry.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985):

…naturalistic inquiry is always carried out, logically enough in a natural setting, since context is so heavily implicated in meaning. Such a contextual inquiry demands a human instrument, one fully adaptive to the indeterminate situation that will be encountered. The human instrument builds upon his or her tactic knowledge as much as if not more than upon propositional knowledge and uses methods that are appropriate to humanly implemented inquiry: interviews, observations, document analysis, unobtrusive clues, and the like. Once in the field, the inquiry takes the form of successive iterations of four elements: purposive sampling, inductive analysis of the data obtained from the sample, development of grounded theory based on the inductive analysis, and projection of next steps in a constantly emergent design (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.187-188).
By relying on qualitative analysis, the researcher is the human instrument, or the primary instrument, for data collection and analysis. The data that is collected is deciphered through the human instrument, which is the researcher, rather than through questionnaires, surveys, scales, etc. For the study, the researcher explored individuals, curriculum, classes, and student-centered activities in their natural settings. The researcher received a better understanding of human behavior and experiences. They seek to grasp the process by which people construct meaning and to describe what those meanings are. They use empirical observation because it is with concrete incidents of human behavior that investigators can think more clearly and deeply about the human condition (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 43).

Qualitative research study involves fieldwork. In this study, the fieldwork consisted of interviews and observations. The researcher physically went to the school district to observe and record behavior in its natural setting. The researcher interviewed a K–12 social studies curriculum coordinator and two teachers, under the K-12 social studies coordinator’s supervision in Pacific School District, to understand more fully the perceptions of implementing civic education curriculum within a K–12 suburban school district. The researcher collected data through interviewing, observing secondary and elementary classes, and analyzing documents that were syllabus for the 12th grade Civic courses, students’ work that promoted civic action that was observed in the 12th grade Civics courses, and an overview of 5th grade students’ activities and lessons. Interviewing a K–12 social studies curriculum leader, as well as teachers, and observing the implementation of civic education classes and lessons, as well as analyzing documents
support the argument that civic education allows students to understand, engage, and participate in civic activities.

**Procedures: Naturalistic Inquiry**

_Naturalistic inquiry_ often refers to qualitative research methodology. Naturalistic observation occurs when researchers study people, events, and phenomena where these naturally occur without altering or controlling the situation (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), qualitative researchers do not see themselves as collecting facts of human behavior, but rather “understand human behavior as too complex to do that and see the search for cause and prediction as undermine their ability to grasp the basic interpretive nature of human behavior and the human experience” (p. 43). As a result, qualitative research maintains advantages by providing more accurate understanding of the participants, curriculum, events, and programs that, in turn, provide a clear and concise understanding for this research.

Therefore, using an exploratory case study qualitative research approach provided for the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the perceptions regarding civic education curriculum. The study also aimed to develop a richer and more practical picture of the participants’ reality and, thereby, provide the researcher with a deeper understanding of the environment in which the participants operate.

**The Human Being as the Researcher: Researcher Bias**

Naturalistic inquiry requires a human instrument. Only the human being can adapt to unpredictable situations encountered in the field and have the ability to bring understanding of the knowledge that every researcher brings to the study. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) stated that “qualitative researchers go to the particular setting under study
because they are concerned with context” (p. 4). In the effort of qualitative research and to reduce the objections of positivists, the qualitative observer should reflect on Reinharz’s (1991) work. Reinharz insisted that, “without the processing function of the human observer, only subject like interpretations can be made of human events” (p. 242). This perspective helped ensure the research was as bias-free as possible while keeping in mind Bogdan and Biklen’s (2007) statement that “qualitative studies are not impressionistic essays made after a quick visit to a setting or after a conversation with a few subjects. The researcher spends a considerable amount of time in the empirical world laboriously reviewing and collecting piles of data” (p. 37). Such collection of data includes observation fieldnotes, interview transcripts, and the use of Inquiry and Analysis VALUE Rubric (2009).

Hence, the researcher was aware of the possibility of bias in the investigation of this study because of the role that this researcher employs. The researcher is currently a K–12 district social studies coordinator and is acutely aware of the possibility of bias in the investigation of this study due to the fact that the researcher has actively brought attention to and promoted civic education using various professional organizations’ platforms and by teaching how to implement a K–12 social studies Civic Education within a school district. The researcher is currently involved in professional organizations and plays active roles in organizations: Board Member of the Long Island Council for the Social Studies (LICSS), Co-Chair of the Cultural Education Committee of the New York State Council for the Social Studies (NYSCSS), and Advisory Council Member of the Rho Kappa National Social Studies Honor Society, National Council for Social Studies (NCSS). In addition, the researcher has been actively involved as a
stakeholder with the New York State Education Department on the Framework of Culturally Responsiveness Sustaining Education in New York State. The involvement and roles that the researcher maintains can be problematic because the researcher must take on the role as a researcher and not a practitioner. However, the researcher, being closely involved with the study, allows the researcher to have an advantage: prior knowledge on implementing civic education by using the New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework, the College, Career and Civic Life Framework, and the opportunity for students to graduate with the Civic Literacy Seal in the future. The researcher was comfortable and not intimidated by the data that was collected. The researcher possessed prior knowledge of a K-12 social studies district leader’s role, which was be helpful in navigating the internal dynamics of a school district and implementation of civic education curriculum. Therefore, the researcher did not shy away from the Investigator Effect, as described by Sara Delamont (2012). The purpose of this study lends itself to understanding the influence of the Investigator Effect on the participants. In this case, eliminating the Investigator Effect was impossible. To minimize this effect the researcher practiced constant self-analysis and journaling.

The researcher possessed prior knowledge that was helpful in navigating the curriculum, courses, and documents that districts provided. Also, the researcher was aware of the concept of the “I” and the personalizing of the research. The researcher was continually limiting and managing the personalization of the research so it would not influence the participants’ ideas and answers. In all, interviews with participants were clear and transparent allowing any exploration of the research questions to emerge
naturally. Therefore, validity, creditability, and trustworthiness of the study were enhanced using the above techniques.

**Trustworthiness of the study**

The researcher investigated detailed information on the district coordinator, teachers, civic curriculum, and resources, which were provided through the study. Therefore, establishing trust is vital for this study. Naturalistic inquiry refers to qualitative research to highlight the process of investigation through which a researcher studies people, events, and phenomena. A past criticism of naturalistic inquiries is that there are varied definitions of how validity, reliability, and objectivity might be implemented (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 289–331). To mitigate the limitations that might arise from these concerns, the researcher used the following techniques to increase credibility, dependability, and validity of the research.

**A prolonged period of engagement.** The researcher needed three months to become oriented in the research setting, to build rapport, and to become adept at detecting and accounting for distortions in the data. The main purpose for this prolonged period of engagement was to build trust and rapport, as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985):

…it is a process to be engaged in daily; to demonstrate to the respondents that their confidences will not be used against them; that pledges of anonymity will be honored; that hidden agenda, whether those of the investigator or of other local figures to whom the investigator may be beholden, are not being served; that the interests of the respondents will have input into, and actually influence, the inquiry process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 303).

The extended engagement in each school district allowed the researcher to minimize the attention given to the researcher in the naturalistic environment and allowed the
researcher to understand and recognize distortions. Ample time in the field further assisted in reducing the influence of unintended consequences, identifying important events related to the research, and conducting persistent observations. In addition, time was necessary to triangulate using different sources and methods in the data-collection process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 305-307).

During the three-month period of engagement, the researcher established a time, place, and commitment from the teacher and the coordinator. The preparation and planning during this allotted time allowed the researcher to observe civic education classes, as well as to interview one secondary social studies teacher, one elementary teacher, and one social studies K–12 district coordinator. Also, the researcher had the opportunity to conduct follow-up interviews. At the start of the study, the K-12 social studies coordinator and one secondary social studies teacher committed to participate in this study. As the researcher entered the district and interviewed the K-12 social studies coordinator, the researcher asked about the elementary civic education program. The K-12 social studies coordinator connected the researcher with the elementary teacher to interview and provided the researcher with the opportunity to observe the elementary teacher’s class and review documents used in the elementary civic education course.

**Thick description.** Geertz (1973) borrowed the term “thick description” from philosopher Gilbert Ryle to describe the task of ethnography (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 30). Thick description, as defined by Delamont (2002), “aims to make the familiar strange and the exotic familiar, via the analytical categories or themes” (p. 170). This allows researchers to transfer the findings to another setting by having the maximum information possible. According to Bogdan and Biklen, “the goals are to share the
meanings that the cultural participants take for granted and then to depict the new understanding for the reader and for the outsiders” (p. 31). Therefore, sights noted during observations and immediately after served to assist in creating thick description so no mistake of what was observed occurs.

In addition, thoughtful and purposive selection of participants can help foster the collection of rich and thick data. In this study, the participants were chosen due to the credibility they have shown in the field of New York Social Studies. For instance, the K-12 social studies coordinator participating in this study is an active member of the Long Island Council for Social Studies (LICSS), the New York State Council for Social Studies (NYSCSS), the New York State Social Studies Supervisory Association (NYS4A), and sits on the New York State Council for Social Studies, Cultural Education Committee. The K-12 social studies coordinator and the secondary education teacher were selected because they gave the researcher specific insight into the research regarding the perception of civic education and the implementation of a civic education program in their school district. The elementary teacher who participated in this study was selected through referral from the coordinator. As such, the participants had the experience and knowledge necessary to provide detailed responses, from which rich and thick descriptions could be derived.

**Ensure dependability.** Regarding a study’s ability to make dependability claims, Lincoln and Guba (1985) identified a process similar to a fiscal audit. The auditor examines the process by which the accounts are kept "to satisfy stakeholders that they are not the victims of what is sometimes called 'creative accounting' (p. 317). For this study, the researcher consistently reviewed the study for accuracy to prevent error, bias, and
subjectivity as much as possible. The researcher examined data for accuracy, so there will not be any influence by the researcher or participants or any misunderstandings that can influence the data. Dependability was also heightened by examining and cross-checking data for accuracy and corroboration to confirm that what was reported was accurate by researcher and participants; this process was consistent with the proper methods for a qualitative researcher, and constant cross checking and corroboration to make significant dependability claim (Berg, 2009) will be regularly done in the forefront of the research.

**Ensure confirmability.** The constant reflection and reiteration process throughout the examination process confirms that the inquiry is supported by relevant data, findings, interpretations, and recommendations. It establishes the confirmability of the research. For this study, the researcher reviewed the data and the results with the participants for their validity and clarity, when necessary. The practice of triangulating the data and keeping a reflective journal also improved the confirmability of the research. In addition, member checks were completed once the study was finished by sharing all of the findings with the participants involved and allowing them to analyze the findings critically and comment on them. The three participants, K-12 social studies coordinator, Teacher #1, and Teacher #2, offer affirmation that the summaries reflected their views, feelings, and experiences that support credibility. Allowing participants to review and comment on their views, feelings, and experiences, decreased the incidence of incorrect data and the incorrect interpretation of data. Data provided in this research addressed research questions and evidence of participants’ voices are authentic, original, and reliable.
Procedure: Entry

For conducting this study, entry emails and phone calls were made to grant permission for the researcher to enter the district and then observe and interview the teachers and district social studies coordinator (see Appendix E for Permission for Entry). Once the researcher received confirmation of approval via email, the researcher entered the district and interviewed a social studies coordinator, a secondary social studies teacher, and an elementary teacher, observed two civic education classes that were taught by the secondary social studies teacher and two elementary social studies classes taught by a 5th grade teacher, and then analyzed documents that the K-12 social studies coordinator, secondary social studies teacher, and elementary teacher provided which supported the civic education classes that the researcher observed.

Consistent with entry procedures outlined in Bogdan and Biklen (2007) regarding gaining access, the researcher contacted via email and phone the K–12 social studies director to conduct this study. As Bogdan and Biklen stated, “no two schools’ systems are organized the same. Most have specific procedures to follow” (p. 84). In Pacific School District, permission and access were granted by the K–12 social studies coordinator and from the Central Administration, which includes the superintendent, the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, and the Office of Human Resources and Administrative Services.

This meeting was held between the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction and the Office of Human Resources and Administrative Services at Pacific School District to discuss the purpose and nature of the study, to request access to the teaching staff, and to examine any documents pertaining to the study. Central
administrators placed one condition for entry. The condition was that no students were to be recorded. The researcher agreed to this condition.

By securing permission from the assistant superintendent and the Office of Human Resources and Administrative Services at Pacific School District, the researcher’s task to attract participants and minimize the influence of formal and informal gatekeepers was made easier. In a bureaucratic setting, members may not all agree and may pose informal threats to the research by prohibiting or being fearful of participation. Specific permission prevented such discord from occurring.

Prior to my arrival, school building security offices and secretaries were made aware of my scheduled visit. The researcher was allocated specific times to observe classrooms and to hold discussions with participants. Class coverage for the teacher was arranged during the instructional day to allow the researcher the opportunity to hold interviews in the K–12 social studies coordinator’s office. Therefore, the researcher was able to observe the activity of the natural setting where the district leader works on day-to-day basis.

**Participants.** The participants included a social studies leader, a K–12 district coordinator, who serves as the curriculum specialist of a Pacific School District (the pseudonym for the district where the study was conducted), a suburban school district in New York State, and two teachers who work under the K–12 district social studies coordinator’s leadership. The researcher engaged in observation of a civic education and in document analysis that supported the observed civic education classes. The K-12 social studies coordinator and teacher were selected purposefully, and the additional
participant volunteered through referral from the coordinator. Participation was voluntary, and no compensation or reward was provided participation in this research.

The social studies coordinator and the teacher selected parallels with the criteria outlined by Sargeant (2012) which held that:

Participant selection in qualitative research is purposeful; participants are selected who can best inform the research questions and enhance understanding of the phenomenon under study…the number of participants depends upon the number required to inform fully all-important elements of the phenomenon being studied. That is, the sample size is sufficient when additional interviews or focus groups do not result in identification of new concepts, an endpoint called data saturation (p. 1).

Screening selection and criteria of the K–12 social studies coordinator were as follows: a professional who is well respected in the field of social studies discipline and as a K–12 district administrator, is an active in participant in professional organizations such as the Long Island Council for Social Studies (LICSS), the New York State Council for Social Studies (NYSCSS) and the National Council for Social Studies (NCSS), has professional years of experience in the field, and is at the forefront of changes and revisions that come from the New York State Department of Education, specifically in the content area of social studies. The researcher chose to interview this K-12 social studies coordinator, knowing that the above criteria was met, and that civic education program is important in the leader’s school district. The researcher followed the institutional review board (IRB) procedures and informed consent prior to making any contact with the participants. Informed consent forms were requested from all participants, however the school district prohibited any form of audio or video recording of the students. The study proposal was submitted to the IRB at the university, and a copy of IRB approval was given to the school district.
Orientation of Participants

The participants in this study had little familiarity with the design and process of this case study and had limited understanding of what a case study was. Participants had the right to understand what was expected, the purpose of the study, and the process through which the study was conducted. Therefore, a meeting between the researcher and the participants took place prior to the start of observations and interviews. The researcher explained that each participant would be interviewed three times in order for the researcher to address the research questions of the study, to observe civic education classes, and to analyze documents that support the civic education classes the researcher observed. In order to preempt any concerns over anonymity, the researcher explained that the participants would only be referred to as the K-12 social studies coordinator, and Teacher #1, and Teacher #2. The researcher also discussed that the data collected would be held and treated with confidence to ensure that no harm of any kind should come to the participants. In addition, they were informed that they would receive no reward for participating in this study. By explaining the process of this research, the study began as visualized below in the plan summary. During this time, the researcher and the participants created an opportunity to learn and to possibly make future recommendations for future school districts and district leaders.

Plan Summary and Overview

To best understand the summary chart (Table 2), a written summary is also provided. Three formal interviews with each participant, including a K-12 social studies coordinator and two teachers, occurred. This amounted to nine interviews. Consistent with Seidman (1991), three interviews per teacher participant were multiplied by two
participants, for a total of six interviews. As the saturation point in the interviews was reached, no further interviews were conducted once the study ended. The researcher conducted observations and document analysis on a civic education program that was implemented in Pacific School District in order to gain insight on and triangulate the data. The overall flow of the interview and observation schedule for this research design is presented in Table 2.
Table 2

*Flow of Interview & Observation Schedule*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Triangulation Method</th>
<th>K-12 Social Studies Coordinator COMPLETED</th>
<th>Teacher #1 COMPLETED</th>
<th>Teacher #2 COMPLETED</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Observation/Orientation</td>
<td>December 2019</td>
<td>December 2019</td>
<td>December 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview #1</td>
<td>December 2019</td>
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<td>December 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish Background,</td>
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<td>Perception of civic</td>
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<td>education program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Observation #1</td>
<td>December 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>12th Grade Civics Course #1-Introduction &amp; Activity</td>
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<td>Observation #2</td>
<td>December 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>12th Grade Civics Course #1-Students Civic Projects Presentations</td>
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<td>Observation #3</td>
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<td>December 2019</td>
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<td>5th Grade Elementary Social Studies Lesson- U.S. Government</td>
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<td>Observation #4</td>
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<td>December 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>5th Grade Elementary Social Studies Lesson- Business Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview #2</td>
<td>December 2019</td>
<td>December 2019</td>
<td>December 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on specific details of the participants experience on perception, implementation of civic education program.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview #3</td>
<td>January 2020</td>
<td>January 2020</td>
<td>January 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document Review #1</td>
<td>12th Grade Civics Course Syllabus and Curriculum</td>
<td>December 2019-January 2020</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document Review #2</td>
<td>12th Grade Civics Course-Student Projects, Poster, &amp; Pamphlets Midterm/Final Student Portfolio</td>
<td>December 2019-January 2020</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document Review #3</td>
<td>5th Grade Lesson on U.S. Government</td>
<td>December 2019-January 2020</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Observations

The researcher discussed the goals and objectives of the research and the interviews with the K–12 district social studies coordinator and social studies teachers. Through the interview process, the researcher selected civic education classes that the researcher observed, and, from there, the researcher requested academic or informational materials to support the observed civic education classes. When taking a closer look at the New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework, the Inquiry Design Model that the New York State Department of Education supports encourages teachers to be facilitators, and their lessons should focus on student-centered activities and learning. The New York K–12 Social Studies Framework supports the historical thinking skills called Social Studies Practices, which represents the social science and historical thinking skills that students should develop throughout their K–12 education in order to be prepared for civic participation, college, and careers. According to the New York K–12 Social Studies Framework, one of the six Social Studies Practices include the practiced titled “Civic Participation” (New York State Education Department, n.d.). Also, knowledge of civic participation includes an additional section where the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework the IDM and has integrated a section titled, “Taking Informed Action.” The researcher used the Social Studies Framework and Inquiry Design Model to inquire about the various civic education programs in which the K-12 social studies coordinator implements and participates.

While observations can serve as a basis for researcher understanding, it is possible that the researcher’s understanding is not complete or entirely accurate. Therefore, it is natural to supplement observations by engaging in follow-up interviews with the K-12
social studies coordinator, Teacher #1, and Teacher #2. After observing the civic education classes, the researcher discussed the activities, supplementary resources, and the structure on how the civic education classes were being used. The interview questions and tables were used as a reference point to lead interviews and follow up discussions once the observation was completed. During the observation, the researcher strove to be as unobtrusive as possible so that non-participants remained unaware that observations were taking place.

**Questions.** During the time that was allocated for observations, the researcher took field notes detailing what the participants said and did, as well as where they sat during discussions and other activities. The researcher followed the three-interview structure: (1) establish background, perception, put experience into context, (2) focus on specific details of the participants experience, and (3) reflect the meaning of experience (confirm) (Seidman, 1991). Field notes were used to ensure accurate data collection. The researcher took field notes during observations, discussions, activities, and interviews. Notes included, as Merriam (1998, p. 106) suggested, the following:

- Verbal descriptions of setting, the people, the activities
- Direct quotations or at least the substance of what people said
- Observer’s comments-put in the margins or in the running narrative and identified by underlining, bracketing, and so on

**Interviews.** Once these follow-up interview questions for the teachers were answered, the researcher had a one-on-one interview with the K–12 social studies coordinator. As Seidmen (1991) explained, “Interviewing is most consistent with people’s ability to make meaning through language” (p. 7). The researcher interviewed both teachers and the K-
12 social studies coordinator using Seidman’s (1991) three-interview structure. This process allowed the researcher to deeply explore and expand upon the research questions with the participants in order to gain greater understanding of their experiences within the content they inhabit. The purpose of using this three-interview structure is because it incorporates features that strengthen the validity of the study by allowing the participants to put their thoughts, words, and comments into their context.

The following interview questions were used during the interview with the K-12 social studies coordinator:

1. State your name, school district, and position you are today.
2. What has been your role in implementing civic education program?
3. What has been the impact of implementation of civic education on the district community?

The following questions were used to assist with the interview:

4. What larger ramifications, if any, exist as a result of this implementation?
5. How frequently do you, as the K-12 social studies leader, engage with students in community service projects, activities, and organizations focused on civic engagement?
6. As the K-12 social studies leader, what are your perceptions of students’ civic responsibility in their districts?
7. Please explain why you agree or disagree with the following statements:
   - Civic education should primarily aim to cultivate within students knowledge, skills, and attitude/value pertaining to civic participation.
• Civic education should be implemented in a K-12 social studies curriculum as a service-learning project.

• Civic education denotes a formal school subject aiming to help students acquire citizenship within the education system.

• Civic education supports global citizenship which refers to a moral disposition that guides individuals’ understanding of themselves as members of communities, both on local and global levels, and their responsibility to these communities.

Table 3

9-12 Student Participation, Civic Engagement Students Participate in Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Program students participate in… (Yes/No-Explain)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food Drive for a nonprofit organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registering to Vote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering their services to local, state, federal nonprofit organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Senate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth &amp; Government Programs (i.e., Trial/Debate, Model Congress, Model U.N., etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Based Learning that supports K-12 students in understanding civic education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-Run Blood Drive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support the Military/Veterans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy Program where students initiate and generate the program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraise/Support a Nonprofit Organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Berg (2009) explained, interviews provide researchers with the opportunity to affirm and understand the participants’ thought process and experiences by using verbal shorthand and tactic recognition. Any spontaneous discussion initiated by the participants will be explored to its natural conclusion through this method. Applying Berg’s (2009) explanation, spontaneous discussions result in a more vivid and enriched account.
To record the data as accurately as possible, the researcher recorded the interview on an iPhone app, called Rev (Voice Recorder), and the interview was transcribed through the same software.

When striving to obtain quality data through interviews, it is important to try out questions (Merriam, 1998). The intent was to construct questions that used familiar language, that allowed opportunities for the interviewees to reflect, and that assisted with the interviewees’ descriptions of their experiences in order to aid both the interviewee and the researcher to uncovering meaning. For summative purposes, the schedule of interviews in visual form is listed in Table 4.

Table 4

Schedule of Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview</th>
<th>K-12 Social Studies Coordinator COMPLETED</th>
<th>Teacher #1 COMPLETED</th>
<th>Teacher #2 COMPLETED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview #1 Establish background, perception, and implementation of civic education program.</td>
<td>December 2019</td>
<td>December 2019</td>
<td>December 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview #2 Focus on specific details of the participants’ experience, perception, and implementation of the civic education program.</td>
<td>December 2019</td>
<td>December 2019</td>
<td>December 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview #3 Reflect on the meaning of experience, perception, and</td>
<td>January 2020</td>
<td>January 2020</td>
<td>January 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Document Analysis.** Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained:

Documents and records are singularly useful sources of information, although they have often been ignored, particularly in basic research and in evaluation. But there are many reasons that they should be more consistently tapped. They are, first of all, almost always available, on a low-cost (mostly investigator time) or free basis. Second, they are stable source of information, both in the sense that they may accurately reflect situations that occurred at some time in the past and that they can be analyzed and reanalyzed without undergoing changes in the interim. Third they are rich source of information, contextually relevant and grounded in the contexts they represent. Their richness includes the fact that they appear in the natural language of that setting. Fourth, they are often legally unassailable, representing especially in the case of records, formal statements that satisfy some accountability requirements. Finally, they are, unlike human respondents, non-reactive (p. 276–277).

For the purpose of this study, the Civics course syllabus, students’ projects that supported civic action, a 5th grade lesson that teaches the structure of government, and the 5th grade business community program at the elementary level were obtained, as these documents were a source of rich information for pursuing questions when directly interviewing or observing.

In order to analyze the documents, the researcher used the same *Inquiry and Analysis VALUE Rubric* (2009) that has been used throughout the study. The VALUE rubric was

…developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States through a process that examined many existing campus rubrics and related document for each learning outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty. The rubric articulates fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment (*Inquiry and Analysis VALUE Rubric*, 2009, p.1).
Using this rubric assisted the researcher in confirming that the collected data was accurate, as Lincoln & Guba suggested in *Naturalistic Inquiry*. The rubric articulates fundamental criteria for each learning outcome with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubric is intended for institutional level use in evaluating and discussing student learning on civic engagement. The following criteria learning outcomes indicated on the rubric are as follows: Diversity of Communities and Cultures, Analysis of Knowledge, Civic-Identity and Commitment, Civic Communication, Civic Action and Reflection and Civic Contexts/Structures. Taking additional notes as the observation and or document analysis begins allowed the researcher to have a rubric that is consistent within the study and that could assess a range of civic education programs and documents that the K-12 social studies coordinator and teacher might provide throughout the study. It is important to note that the *Inquiry and Analysis VALUE Rubric* (2009) is parallel to the New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework.

**Observation Analysis.** During the time that was allocated for observations, the researcher took field notes, which detailed what the participants said, did, and where they sat during discussions and other activities. The researcher used the *Inquiry and Analysis VALUE Rubric* (2009) that focuses on Civic Engagement to assist with observation notes and analysis. Early observations were less structured, and later observations became more focused as a better sense of place was acquired and as information grew (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Field notes assisted in the acclimation process and assured for the participants that data collection would be accurate. The researcher took field notes
during observations, discussions, activities, and interviews. Notes included, as Merriam (1998, p. 106) suggests, the following:

- Verbal descriptions of setting, the people, the activities
- Direct quotations or at least the substance of what people said
- Observer’s comments, which were put in the margins or in the running narrative and identified by underlining, etc.

For summative purposes, the schedule of observations in visual form is listed in Table 5.

Table 5

Schedule of Observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Triangulation Method</th>
<th>K-12 Social Studies Coordinator COMPLETED</th>
<th>Teacher #1 COMPLETED</th>
<th>Teacher #2 COMPLETED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observation #1</td>
<td></td>
<td>December 2019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th Grade Civics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course #1-Introduction &amp; Activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation #2</td>
<td></td>
<td>December 2019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th Grade Civics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course #1-Students Civic Projects Presentations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation #3</td>
<td></td>
<td>December 2019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Grade Elementary Social Studies Lesson-U.S. Government</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation #4</td>
<td></td>
<td>December 2019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Grade Elementary Social Studies Lesson-Business Community</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Analysis and Interpretations

Analysis and interpretation in the field. Bogdan and Biklen (2003) defined *data analysis* as the “process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials you accumulate to enable you to come up with findings” (p. 147). The researcher organized the data to the research questions that explored part of this study, such as: What was the intent of the study? Are the original questions still relevant? Did the observations, interviews, and collection of documents yield data related to the stated problem?

The constant review of data during this study, with the research questions in mind, lent itself to reassessing the research, so the data would be focused and free from researcher bias and influence of the “I.” When data are collected from any source, they are used to inform and direct the next session to produce the best information possible.

The process used to sort data required the researcher to first arrange all the data collected from field notes, transcripts, document analysis, and other sources, and to then determine the findings of the research. The field notes account for what the researcher observed, heard, experienced, and discussed through the data collection sessions. The researcher notes consistently reassessed what was being discussed and analyzed to determine if patterns emerged from the content being taught, from events taking place in the district to promote civic participation—supporting the need to continue to implement a civic education program—and from the perception of a K–12 social studies coordinator on implementing a civic education program.

Data analysis. The notes related to interviews and observations collected in the field, together with the documents and records available, was used like that of ethnography
studies (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The description was rich in dimension and character. Analysis ideally occurs concurrently with data collection in an iterative cycle. This allows the researcher to document the emergence of new themes and to identify perspectives that may otherwise be overlooked (Sargeant, 2012, p.1).

A coding mechanism, like that of Strauss and Corbin (1990), was used to categorize and sort the data into useful sections and was used to assist with deciphering the researcher’s interactions and observations. Strauss and Corbin (1990) discuss how the researcher starts with using structured questions, and, as the researcher collects data, he or she writes conceptual description, (description of situations), using a coding technique, which is a micro-analysis of data word by word (p. 96). According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), there are three types of coding: open (identifying, naming, categorizing, describing phenomena), axial (the process of relating codes to each other), and selective (choosing a core category and relating other categories to it) (1990, p. 96-99). For this study, the researcher applied open coding, (1) labeling the phenomena as named concepts and categorizing concepts that seem to relate each other under categories or subcategories whenever relevant, (2) developing categories and subcategories by identifying possible properties and dimensions and (3) grounding concepts, categories and subcategories to interviews. For instance, the theme of civic engagement manifested in words such as “duty,” “social conscious,” and “democracy” in the transcripts and documents, and the theme of civic identity and commitment manifested in words such as “commitment,” “responsibility,” and “work with others.”

Open coding is a flexible methodology, the researcher handles the data and as a result the data is dependent on the needs of the researcher. The research interacted with
the data line by line analysis (word for word/phrase by phrase) by sentence or paragraph analysis or by an entire document analyst (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 72-73).

As stated in Bogdan and Biklen (2003), common coding categories include a setting/context code, definition of the situation code, perspectives held by participants, participants’ ways of thinking about the people and objects, process codes, activity codes, event codes, strategy codes, relationship/social structural codes, narrative codes, and methods codes (p. 174–180). The use of Strauss and Corbin (1990) coding, classifying, and viewing data through the lens of research questions, is essential because it allows for continuous refinement and inquiry to generate an outcome rooted in a secure foundation.

After the researcher completed data collection, the researcher undertook analysis by becoming familiar with the data through reading, interpreting, and reflecting on developing a coding scheme based on the data. The researcher provided a detailed description of the setting, participants, and activities during the observations and interviews. The researcher listed themes that emerged from the review of the data, such as civic participation, civic engagement, students’ voices, service learning, community service, participation in government, senior experience, and taking informed action. The researcher used this coding to organize the observations, interviews, and documents to search for emergent themes.

The purpose of the coding and data collection was to establish connections, if any, from what the researcher observed, discussed, and found in reviewing documents. In addition, the researcher determined whether there was a connection between the framework and interpretive connections previously discussed in the literature.
CHAPTER 4

Results

Context

This chapter presents the findings on the study, which explored the perceptions of implementation of a civic education curriculum in a suburban school district. In this chapter, the research questions are summarized first, then overarching themes are illustrated, and, finally, findings for each research question are presented. This case study explored the experiences of one school district’s civic education program by interviewing a K-12 social studies coordinator who is the curriculum specialist overseeing kindergarten through twelfth (K-12) grades social studies in a New York State suburban school district. Additionally, the researcher interviewed two teachers whom the curriculum coordinator oversees. The researcher observed four social studies classes that implemented civics under the leadership of the social studies curriculum coordinator, and the researcher analyzed documents that comprised the syllabus for the 12th grade Civic courses, students’ work that promoted civic action that was observed in the 12th grade Civics courses, and an overview of 5th grade students’ activities and lessons that were observed at the elementary. Emerging themes were identified. The specific research questions that guided the study are as follows:

Research Question #1: What are the perceptions of the implementation of a civic education program, for the K-12 social studies curriculum, in a suburban school district?

Research Question #2: How is the civic education program in K-12 social studies implemented?
Interest in this topic originated from a pilot study conducted in mid-2019 concerning the implementation of civic education. The results of this study indicated that a suburban school district in New York implemented student activities at a K-12 school level to promote civic participation by using the New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework to support the implementation of such activities. From this pilot study the result influenced the researcher to conduct further inquiry. During the process the researcher noticed how few research studies were available on the implementation of civic education programs in a K-12 school district and the researcher used this pilot study as a foundation to conduct a qualitative study with one school district. Conducting four observations and nine interviews with three participants, as well as reviewing documentation from the participant district added richness to the results. The findings contained in this chapter reflect these qualitative results.

The emergent themes from this exploratory case study serve to shed light on the perceptions of K-12 civic education implementation within the social studies curriculum, and the process by which civic education is implemented in a suburban school district. The researcher used the Civic Engagement VALUE Rubric that was created by the Association of American Colleges and Universities; an organization of faculty experts who represent colleges and universities from across the United States. The team of experts created the rubric through a process that examined several existing campus rubrics related documents for each learning outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty (Inquiry and Analysis VALUE Rubric, 2009). The rubric articulated fundamental criteria for each learning outcome with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubric was
intended for institutional level use in evaluating and discussing student learning on civic engagement. The following criteria learning outcomes indicated on the rubric are as follows.

1. Diversity of Communities and Cultures
2. Analysis of Knowledge
3. Civic-Identity and Commitment
4. Civic Communication
5. Civic Action and Reflection
6. Civic Contexts/Structures

The themes that emerged from the study are listed below along with the definition of the theme:

Table 6

*Emerging Themes and Findings*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Civic Engagement             | Civic engagement is important for students to understand and practice. Students should participate in school and community affairs that influence them. | Participants Interviews  
Table 8  
Comments by K-12 Social Studies Coordinator and Teacher Participants about Civic Education Cultivation |
| Civic Identity and Commitment| Civic education is important, however participants feel Pacific School District can commit and participate in more civic education activities than what is currently being done. Limitations include a lack of support by community members and the fact that the | Participants Interviews  
K-12 Social Studies Coordinator Analysis Section  
Table 9  
Comments by Teacher Participants about Civic |
New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework guides civic education.

**Civic Knowledge**
Each teacher participant understands civics at the grade level that he or she teaches. Participants align their lessons, activities, and instruction with the New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework. The K-12 social studies coordinator expresses concern over the fact that teachers are not mandated to teach civics; it’s optional depending on grade level and, at times, some teachers are not comfortable with the content. As a result they do not teach it.

**Civic Contexts/Structure**
The K-12 social studies coordinator and Teacher #2 believe that civics should focus students on their own community and country first, while, Teacher #1 agrees but also believes that civics lends its to global levels of involvement.

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Civic engagement, civic identity and commitment, civic knowledge, and civic contexts/structures were themes that emerged from participants who acknowledged the importance of teaching and implementing civic education. However, limitations and barriers were presented due to a lack of support from educational leaders and from community members, specifically Pacific School District parents, for programs that encourage civics. Had there been in place a Pacific School District Board of Education policy that identified civics education as a district-wide goal and that entailed
involvement from the school district and the community, then the K-12 social studies coordinator would have felt more invested in it and mandated to support civics within a K-12 level. Due to the lack of such a policy, the K-12 social studies coordinator acknowledges that civics education is optional, not mandated, which leads to the reliance on the New York State K-12 social studies curriculum as guidance to promote and implement civics within class instruction.

The next section of this chapter introduces the district and the participants in this study, and explores their perceptions on implementation of civic education.

**Pacific School District**

There are 2,812 K-12 public school students enrolled in the Pacific School District. 49% (1,378 students) of the population is female, and 51% (1,434 students) is male. The varying ethnicities of students enrolled in the district are as follows:

- 61.1%, 1,718 students are White
- 3%, 84 students are Multiracial
- 5.4%, 151 students are Black or African American
- 25.9%, 728 students are Hispanic or Latino
- 4.5%, 127 students are Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander

The district is comprised of one high school for grades 9-12, one middle school for grades 6-8, and three elementary schools for grades K-5. The K-12 social studies coordinator supports, leads, and is viewed as the social studies curriculum specialist in the Pacific School District. The K-12 social studies coordinator had twelve years of teaching experience before becoming a full-time administrator nine years ago. The K-12 social studies coordinator has been employed by Pacific School District for four years.
Teacher participant #1 has been teaching secondary social studies in Pacific School District for sixteen years. Teacher participant #1 is actively involved with social studies professional organizations, such as Long Island Council for Social Studies and New York State Council for Social Studies. Teacher participant #2 has been an educator for twenty-eight years, twenty-two of them in Pacific School District. Over those twenty-two years, nineteen were spent teaching 3rd grade, and three were spent teaching 5th grade.

Consistent with Seidman (1991), three interviews per participant were multiplied by three participants yielding nine interviews in total. Two observations on each teacher, Teacher#1 and Teacher #2, yielded four observations in total. As the saturation point in the interviews was reached, no further interviews were conducted after the study ended.

The issues and themes that emerged from the qualitative inquiry conducted by the researcher are expressed by research questions in the order in which they are listed within the methodology section of this research. However, they are again listed here reference:

*Research Question #1*: What are the perceptions of the implementation of a civic education program, for the K-12 social studies curriculum, in a suburban school district?

*Research Question #2*: How is the civic education program in K-12 social studies implemented?

**RQ1: What are the perceptions of the implementation of a civic education program, for the K-12 social studies curriculum, in a suburban school district?**

The researchers asked the following question: “What are your perceptions of the students’ civic responsibility in your district?” This line of inquiry was followed by
asking, “Agree or disagree and explain why you agree or disagree with the following statements.”

Table 7

*Interview Civic Education Statements*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement #1: Civic education should primarily aim to cultivate within students the knowledge, skills, and attitude/value pertaining to civic participation.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statement #2: Civic education should be implemented in a K-12 social studies curriculum as a service-learning project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement #3: Civic education denotes a formal school subject aiming to help students acquire citizenship within the education system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement #4: Civic education supports global citizenship which refers to a moral disposition that guides individuals’ understandings of themselves as members of communities—both on local and global levels—and their responsibilities to these communities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When participants were asked, “What are your perceptions of the students’ civic responsibility in your district?” all three participants stated that it is important for students to have an understanding and to participate in their schools and community levels. The emerging theme that was drawn from this question was *civic engagement*, to teach students civics and help students get involved with decision-making that will impact their lives.

A common support emerged regarding the primary aim for civic education is to cultivate within students the knowledge, skills, and attitude/value pertaining to civic participation, as indicated in Statement #1. As was explored in Chapter 2, the importance of civic education implementation is to foster within students with skills and knowledge pertaining to civic participation amongst all grade levels. The New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework encourages New York State K-12 schools to support and
promote civic ideals and practices that focus on the following (New York State Education Department, n.d.):

1. Civic participation and engagement
2. Civic ideals and practices in countries other than those with a democratic republic

In Table 8, seen below, a number of comments are listed to illustrate the findings in relation to Statement #1. This chart serves to highlight and paraphrase the quotations used within this research question.
When considering Statement #2, which asked participants to reflect on whether or not Civic education should be implemented in a K-12 social studies curriculum as a service-learning project, answers varied. Overall, service-learning projects are a work in progress with limitations at Pacific School District. The K-12 social studies coordinator stated that there should be “…a mix, not just service-learning projects…” The K-12 social studies coordinator explained that on certain grade levels, such as 12th grade, courses are designed to support civic participation. However, for elementary grade levels “social studies takes the back seat amongst curriculums; the emphasis is on ELA and Math. So, we use the New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework to support civics.” The K-12 social studies coordinator explained that at the Pacific School District is currently more focused on the curriculum rather than on engaging students in service-learning projects. The K-12 social studies coordinator stated,
“You could, in each grade level, say we need a project, but I'm sure, as you know, in the elementary it's very difficult to do all that… When you start getting into third grade, fourth grade, fifth grade, where it's like, ‘What's our government? What does our government look like?’ And, I think, that's where you start running into, what do we really want to do? Do we want to learn about the constitution, or do we want to do a project? Right now, in this district, it's let's learn about the constitution. We're going to do something like ‘This is what the constitution says.’ That's not necessarily a bad thing, but just, in general, civics in the elementary, there's not one curriculum every grade level follows. So, if we're both third grade teachers, I could teach the constitution, and you'd be like, ‘Nah, I'm not going to teach that.’”

Referring to Chapter 2, Program Implementation, the idea of implementation and the factors affecting an implementation may fluctuate due to several variables. These variables, which include participation commitment, finance to support implementation, resources, and leadership all can influence whether the implementation of a program is successful or unsuccessful (Fullan, 2016, p.68). Teacher #2 and Teacher #3 explained that the service-learning project component is an area where the district needs improvement. In Table 9, seen below, several comments are listed to illustrate the findings relating to Statement #2 from the teacher participants. This chart serves to highlight and paraphrase the quotations used within this research question.

Table 9

Comments by Teacher Participants About Civic Education Service-Learning Projects

| Teacher #1 | “…It's sad because I feel like you could do so much more on a district wide basis without the exceptional focus on the standardized testing, because, if you're telling me this was a service learning project, but that the kids aren't being assessed on it, the natural inclination of a teacher is going to be to put it back. It's going to follow what I'm doing for the Regents. Like, I even said it, I'm not doing this until after the AP test….” |
| Teacher #2 | “…we do activities like honor our Veterans Day, understanding the importance of the American Flag with Flag Day, and really try to engage students to interact with outside community members and resources, but it is limited because they are so young and the time allotted to teach social studies.” |
The emerging theme that was drawn from this question was **civic identity and commitment**, which is to implement a civic education program with fidelity. All three participants acknowledged limitations to fully commit to civics due to other curriculum obligations, standardized assessments, school administration, and community barriers.

In response to Statement #3, which posed the belief that civic education denotes a formal school subject aiming to help students acquire citizenship within the education system, the K-12 social studies coordinator explained that, at the secondary level, the focus for civic education depends upon the course, the grade level, and the teacher. More emphasis on civic engagement are presented in the 12th grade Civics courses and in district wide events that the K-12 social studies coordinator implemented, such as Veterans Day, Flag Day, Wall of Heroes, and the Pacific Town Recycling Center Program. The K-12 social studies coordinator explained that each grade levels focused on the content that needed to be taught and was indicated in the New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework. Activities that were implemented focused on the course curriculum. However, teachers at the elementary level were not comfortable with creating civics as a formal school subject. The K-12 social studies coordinator stated,

“…see the problem in the elementary, they’re not comfortable with it. And when I try to even observe them as an unannounced observation, even telling them I’m coming in, they are very nervous about ‘Am I doing this right? Am I telling them the right information?’ And I’m like, ‘Dude, unless you're telling them something crazy, you'll be fine.’ …it is always, because we talked about it before, when you look at a district, what do you look at? Do you go, are they doing citizenship in third grade? Or do you go, what’d they get on the math regents in algebra? The elementary needs help; I have been trying to do more and more with them, and now I am balancing my time to go to all the schools…”

In Table 10, seen below, several comments from the teacher participant are listed to illustrate the findings regarding Statement #3. Both teachers indicated the importance of
civics as a formal subject and its positive impact on students. This chart serves to highlight and paraphrase the quotations used within this research question.

Table 10

Comments by Teacher Participants About Civic Education Formal Subject

| Teacher #1 | “…absolutely, civic education denotes a formal subject aiming for citizenship; it’s probably the most functional thing they need when they graduate for life. How to communicate with other people, how to have differences, we talked about, like, how many of you guys had an argument at your dinner table about politics at Thanksgiving. Let's talk about civility. There's a difference in saying, "I don't agree with your opinion," versus, "I think you're stupid.” …” |
| Teacher #2 | “…in the third grade level, we talked about cultures, social, political and economic aspects, and we compare each culture to our own, and, in 5th grade, we take a look at our communities and understand the role of community members, like the business community field trip.” |

The emerging theme that was drawn from this question was **civic knowledge**. The K-12 social studies coordinator expressed concerns about enlisting commitment from teachers in terms of implementing civics within their instruction since it is an option and is not an element of the mandated teaching curriculum. Teacher #1 stated that civic knowledge is in the forefront of her curriculum because she teaches the Civics course, while for Teacher #2 civic knowledge is limited to what is in the New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework based on grade level.

Statement #4 address civic education’ support of global citizenship, which refers to a moral disposition that guides individuals’ understanding of themselves as members of communities, both on local and global levels, and their responsibilities to these communities. In Table 11, seen below, several comments from the participants are listed
to illustrate the findings regarding Statement #4. Both the K-12 social studies coordinator and Teacher #2 believed that civic education should support the local level, what’s occurring in the U.S., New York, and at Pacific Town. To support at a global level will be overreaching. On the other hand, teacher #1 discussed how it is important that civic education supports global citizenship. The Table below serves to highlight the feedback utilized within this research question.

Table 11

Comments by Participants About Civic Education Global Citizenship

| K-12 Social Studies Coordinator | “…I disagree. I'd say more of a local thing then. I would just say that kids are worried about themselves, and it is few and far between where they're talking about worldly issues like the environment and pollution. The majority of your students are just worried about themselves like every high school kid is. So, when you ask them, they don't know a lot… your AP gov class, you could talk to them, and they'll know some worldly issues. But, if you saw that second Civics class, you're not going to get a lot of kids that are going, "Hey man, what the heck is going on in Syria right now with all those refugees and Turkey killing everybody?" You're not going to get it. A lot of them are like, "Where's Syria and where's Turkey?" To me, I think if you're going to talk about civic ed at the K through 12 levels, it should be the United States. Otherwise, it's huge.” |
| Teacher #1                      | “…I think to a certain extent, yes. Because I think just being aware, I think of that word, civility, and the way to, you don't have to agree with everything other people agree with. You don't have to have the same values as somebody else, but it's okay to understand that people have their own set of values, and that's okay. I think sometimes kids particularly have a very fixed mindset if this is what I believe in. This is the right thing to believe in. This is what my parents tell me the right thing to believe in. And that sometimes they can be inflexible and seeing that somebody may come from a different socioeconomic status, a different family setup, they had different... Maybe they are an immigrant themselves, and so, I think just getting that piece in is very important…” |
Teacher #2

“…more at local level. We teach about cultures and understanding, but they are really focusing on different roles than their local community members play, not at a global level...”

The emerging theme that was drawn from this question, **civic contexts/structures**, a commitment to work within local, state, and national levels, is demonstrated by the K-12 social studies coordinator and Teacher #2. Teacher #1, to a certain extent, expresses a commitment to collaboratively work internationally as well as on the local, state, and national levels.

The researcher continued to ask if students participated in any civic programs that already existed in the district. The K-12 social studies coordinator and both teacher participants indicated, as seen in Table 12: **Comments Participants About Civic Education Program Participation**, which civic education programs occurred or did not occur in Pacific School District and at what grade level.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>K-12 Social Studies Coordinator</th>
<th>Teacher #1 Confirmed</th>
<th>Teacher #2 Confirmed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food Drive for Nonprofit Organization</strong></td>
<td>Yes. K-12 participation</td>
<td>Yes. K-12 participation</td>
<td>Yes. K-12 participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Registering to Vote</strong></td>
<td>Yes, in high school.</td>
<td>Yes, in high school.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Volunteering Their Services to Local, State, Federal Nonprofit Organizations</strong></td>
<td>Yes. K-12 It was optional, not mandated, for all teachers and their classes to participate in activities such as writing letters to community members and participating in K-12 civic programs such as Flag Day, Veterans Day, etc.</td>
<td>Yes. Students wrote letters to local legislators, veterans, Wall of Heroes, and community members.</td>
<td>Yes. Students wrote letters to veterans, Wall of Heroes, and community members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Senate</strong></td>
<td>Yes, Student Government.</td>
<td>Yes, students have homeroom, and Student Government is organized through the building administration.</td>
<td>Yes, Student Government is run by teachers through the building administration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youth &amp; Government Programs (i.e., Trial/Debate, Model Court Program)</strong></td>
<td>Yes, Pacific Court Program</td>
<td>We had a mock trial, but it’s not</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Congress, Model U.N., etc.) at the high school. running because it lost interest. AP Human Geography has a United Nations Club.

Student-Run Blood Drive Yes, at the high school. Yes, at the high school. N/A

Support the Military/Veterans Yes, with K-12 participation. Yes, with K-12 participation. Yes, with K-12 participation.

Advocacy Program where students initiate and generate the program Not through social studies. Students go to building administrators. Not through social studies. Students go to building administrators. Not through social studies. Students go to building administrators.


Participants’ responses indicated that, although programs were promoted by the social studies departments at a K-12 levels, other programs were promoted through building administration, and not all teachers and buildings were mandated to participate in any of the previously mentioned programs.

To conclude, all three participants shared similar perceptions regarding implementing a civic education program for the K-12 social studies curriculum in a suburban school district. They identified the importance of implementing a civic education program based on the following themes:
• **Civic Engagement:** Teach civics to help students get involved with decision-making that impacts their lives.

• **Civic Identity and Commitment:** Implement a civic education program with fidelity.

• **Civic Knowledge:** Have students understand facts, theories, etc. from one’s own academic study/field/discipline to civic engagement and to one’s own participation in civic life, politics, and government.

• **Civic Contexts/Structures:** Have students demonstrate the ability and commitment to collaboratively work across and within community contexts and structures to achieve a civic aim.

All three participants expressed that there is an extent to which they can implement civic education program, and that is through the New York State Social Studies curriculum, classroom academic projects that support civics, and grade level field trips that promotes civic participation. All three participants expressed that there were ways they could further implement the content but were limited due to resources, administration and community support, and commitment to successfully implement programs that support civics.

**RQ2: How is the civic education program in K-12 social studies implemented?**

The researcher asked all participants the following questions to assist with investigating how civic education is implemented in K-12 social studies.

  Question#1: What has been your role in implementing the civic education program?
Question #2: What has been the impact of this implementation of civic education on the district community?

Question #3: What larger ramifications, if any, exist from this implementation?

For Question #1: What has been your role in implementing civic education program? The participants provided the following answers:

Table 13 Comments by Participants About Civic Education Implementation and Role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K-12 Social Studies Coordinator</td>
<td>“…I am the person who implements it all. I bring in programs, and during the school year…I will make sure we run it and assist with all teachers…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher #1</td>
<td>“…I was the original, when we proposed to create a formal Civics or PIG class, I was a person that basically adapted the state curriculum to what we would do in our building. It was always written into the state curriculum. The chairperson before the K-12 social studies coordinator basically offered PPA (Public Policy Administration) courses, public policy… the idea was that you would embed civics and government in the courses. So, like, psychology should have a piece of that; contemporary issue should have a piece of that. But, truthfully, over the years that became one little unit in a course; it got very marginalized or totally ignored.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher #2</td>
<td>“…at the elementary level, we really teach to the curriculum and follow along with the Social Studies Framework, and here and there, with help from K-12 social studies coordinator, we hold programs that promote student participation or give back to community or school.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For Question #2: What has been the impact of this implementation of civic education on the district community?

Table 14 Comments by Participants About Civic Education Implementation and Impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K-12 Social Studies Coordinator</td>
<td>“I see it as part of the curriculum because I think that's the only way you're going to get it done. I think if you try to make it a different thing, people: &quot;Who's going to do it? How are we doing it? When are we doing it?&quot; So, by embedding it, like with Teacher #1 when she was talking about how they're going to write a letter to their legislator, that's how you can embed it, and then, hopefully do it. Or even the voting because we do the County Board of Elections twice a year, in the fall and in the…”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
spring. In the spring last year, they got 40 or 50 kids to sign up to vote, to register.”

Teacher #1

“I think there's definitely an impact so far. I think something that we've done that's really good is having the County Board of Elections come in and go through the voting process with the kids. And we bring in the machines, and the kids get to practice, and we register kids to vote during school. And then a lot of them, after election day or at the board, when we do the school budget vote, they'll be like, "Oh, I voted today, and it was this kind. They're becoming a little bit more aware. Or, the fact that we talked about how you can initiate change. That left turning signal is once a week a kid is complaining about the left turning signal, "And I was late for first period." [Students believed that the left turn signal onto campus was delaying their arrival at school in the mornings.] And they're starting to realize that they do have that ability to address concerns that they may have. And some concerns you may have are ridiculous."

Teacher #2

“…having students interact and do activities instead of listening and learning is beneficial. Students are excited to go on the field trip to show how different members in society have different roles. They are going to understand how economics works in our community.”

For Question #3: What larger ramifications, if any, exist from this implementation?

Table 15 Comments by Participants About Civic Education Implementation and Ramifications

| K-12 Social Studies Coordinator | “… They learn that there can be a means to the end. The other ramification is the district has to be behind it, and, when they're not, it goes away. And then people are like, “Why aren't you doing anything?” A lot of the time it winds up being more of a political thing, and it's not even political in terms of the central office. It's Republican/Democrat. Like why are you only bringing in Democrats? And then you have to go through the whole explanation of how I asked the Republican party, and they didn't come in. Then they found out that all these kids signed up, so now they're angry. So, it always becomes this political thing, instead of like, “I'm helping your kids to see different points of view.” |
| Teacher #1 | “Yes and no. I think for some people (teachers), it's hard to go outside your comfort zone, and we we’re talking about the control issue, right? That if I were to send kids to present at Pacific Town Hall, you have to have a tremendous amount of faith that your name is attached to it. How is it going to go, and do we then do practice ones where I have to get kids out of classes and send them down to the community room and practice the presentation they're going to give and those types of things? We
talked about implementing a leadership course. For me, I would take the Civics course and tie it to the kids in the leadership course and alleviate some of the participation on one teacher.”

| Teacher #2 | “At the elementary level, there are teachers not comfortable with the social studies content. 5th grade in our district is departmentalized. That means I teach all 5th graders social studies in my building. I love it. However, the emphasis is on ELA and math due to standardized testing, so having all grade levels really dive into civic education or civic participation activities takes time. Sometimes, more time is given to ELA and math, and social studies takes a back seat.” |

As indicated by the participants, implementing civic education into K-12 social studies had its limitations. Activities that promoted civic engagement among students were supported by school activities or by using the New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework. It was, therefore, necessary to conduct observations of the participants to lend credibility to their statements. To conduct effective and meaningful observations of the participant teachers, an instrument was necessary. The instrument used in this study was the Civic Engagement VALUE Rubric, which was created by the Association of American Colleges and Universities, a professional organization comprised of faculty experts who represent colleges and universities across the United States. The team of experts created the rubric through a process that examined several existing campus rubrics related documents for each learning outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty (Inquiry and Analysis VALUE Rubric, 2009). The rubric articulates fundamental criteria for each learning outcome with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubric is intended for institutional level use in evaluating and discussing student learning on civic
The Civic Engagement VALUE Rubric provides the observer with questions and scales to measure implementation of civic content that is aligned to the New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework. New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework supports and requires schools to promote civic education through curriculum by grade level (Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade). Overall, amongst all grade levels, the framework encourages New York State K-12 schools to support and promote civic ideals and practices that focuses on the following (New York State Education Department, n.d.):

1. Basic freedoms and rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democratic republic
2. Role of the citizen in the community and nation and as a member of the global community
3. Civic participation and engagement
4. Respect for diversity
5. Civic ideals and practices in countries other than our democratic republic
6. Struggle for rights, access to citizenship rights and universal human rights
In total the researcher observed four social studies classes that supported civics, two at the secondary level and two at the elementary level, in Pacific School District.

Teacher #1 conducted two of the classes that were observed at the high school level. The course observed was titled Civics. It became evident, through the interview, that Teacher #1 created the course.

“I was the original, when we proposed to create a formal Civics or PIG class, I was a person that basically adapted the state curriculum to what we would do in our building. It was always written into the state curriculum. The chairperson before the K-12 social studies coordinator basically offered PPA (Public Policy Administration) courses, public policy… the idea was that you would embed civics and government in the courses. So, like, psychology should have a piece of that; contemporary issue should have a piece of that. But, truthfully, over the years that became one little unit in a course; it got very marginalized or totally ignored. To encourage kids to take social studies, especially with digital citizenship and all of the more modern issues coming up and how kids tend to be much more aware with social media politics, we wanted something that basically taught civility. I always say this is a class of civility.”

When observing the Civics courses that Teacher #1 created, the researcher observed two lessons titled *Civic Engagement-School and Town Issues*. Table 16, below, outlines the assignment that students were presented with during the first observation.

Table 16

*Civics Lesson, Civic Engagement-School and Town Issues Observation Notes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Each group will be assigned a school/town issue. For it you will need to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Identify a specific position or proposal to deliver to the BOE/Town Council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Identify the positives and negatives of the proposal using data (You need to have valid credible sources.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Create an advertising proposal on how to best communicate your proposal (poster, commercial, PPT, etc.). For it, describe what the proposal looks like, what propaganda strategy you would use, and HOW you would persuade the voters to go your way!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Issues**

**School Issues**

1. Open the campus to all grades.
2. Address student parking lot issues.
3. Require seniors to stay on campus for all 9 periods next year.

**Town Issues**
1. Left turning signal on Union into school lot
2. Parking meters along main street and at railroad station.
3. Address road conditions/potholes.

Directions: Put yourselves in groups of up to 4 people, and an issue will be assigned to each group. Create a proposal that addresses your assigned issue, and be sure to identify the positives/negatives of that proposal. Figure out how to sell your plan to voters. You will save this for your final exam where you will write to legislators. That means you will be doing the legwork for county legislation issues.

During the second observation of the Civics class, students were asked to present their school/town issues. Documents that reiterated the guidelines of this assignment and explained the purpose and objectives of this assignment were given to the researcher.

Table 17, below, depicts an excerpt of the documents that were reviewed by the researcher.

**Table 17**

*Civics Lesson, Civic Engagement-School and Town Issues Document Review*

Affecting a Community
Examine the issues below –
- alcoholism
- high-school dropouts
- quality of public education
- solid waste management
- child abuse
- homelessness
- racism
- spousal abuse
- crime/juvenile delinquency
- rape or date rape teen
- drug abuse
- divorce and impact on kids maintaining
- water quality
- school violence
- teen pregnancy
- downtown revitalization – parking meters in town
- mental health problems
- services for the elderly
| teen smoking | environmental issues | poverty | sexually transmitted diseases | teen suicide |

The issues listed above all affect American communities. Choose the issue about which you feel most strongly. Conduct research to find out the following information:

1. What problem/issue is it?
2. Are there any statistics that demonstrate the severity of the problem?
3. What are the causes of the problem?
4. What are the consequences that affect families?
5. Are there any possible solutions?
6. How much should government be involved?
7. What is our community currently doing about the problem?

Then, complete one of the following activities:

1. Write a position paper (You state how you feel about the problem.) in the school newspaper.
2. Write a persuasive letter to the editor in our local newspaper.
3. Develop an informative brochure about the issue.
4. Write a letter to a local elected official who has influence in addressing this issue.

Using the Civic Engagement VALUE Rubric, Teacher #1 received a level of Capstone for the following criteria:

1. Diversity of Communities and Cultures- Demonstrate evidence of adjustment in one’s attitude and beliefs due to working within and learning from diverse communities and cultures. Evidence- Students presented brochures and persuasive letters to local legislation and to school district administration about issues that pertain to the town and district.

2. Analysis of Knowledge- Connect and extend knowledge from one’s own academic study to civic engagement and to one’s own participation in civic life, politics, and government. Evidence- Student utilized content taught in class to explain action plan.
3. Civic-Identity and Commitment- Provide evidence of experience in civic engagement activities and describe what they learned about themselves. Evidence-Students self-reflected within groups and discussed the difficulties of creating action plans and barriers that they experienced to get to local officials and school administration to acknowledge and address their concerns.

4. Civic Communication- Tailor communication strategies to effectively express, listen, and adapt to others in order to establish relationships that will further civic action. Evidence- Students will present proposals at town meetings and board of education meetings.

5. Civic Action and Reflection- Demonstrate independent experience and show initiative in team leadership of complex or multiple civic engagement activities. Evidence- Students worked collaboratively. When decisions were not initially agreed upon, groups discussed and deliberated their positions. Students then voted on decisions.

6. Civic Contexts/Structures -Demonstrate the ability and the commitment to collaboratively work across and within community contexts and structures to achieve a civic goal. Evidence- Students took pride in developing their action plans before they were submitted to the Civics teacher as a final exam. The activity took time, and students will continue to build off each other’s action plans.

Two observations, taught by Teacher #2, were conducted at the elementary school. Teacher #2 taught 5th grade social studies. In the New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework, 5th grade social studies curriculum focuses on the Western Hemisphere.
During the first observation Teacher #2 was teaching about the three branches of the U.S. government and focused on the following standard that is provided by the New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework (New York State Education Department, n.d.):

5.6 GOVERNMENT: The political systems of the Western Hemisphere vary in structure and organization across time and place.
5.6a Government structures, functions, and founding documents vary from place to place in the countries of the Western Hemisphere.

Students will examine the basic structure of the United States federal government, including the president, Congress, and the courts.
Students will examine the foundational documents of the United States government for evidence of the country’s beliefs, values, and principles.

During the second observation, Teacher #2 was preparing students for the upcoming economics field trip. Content for that lesson was provided by the following New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework (New York State Education Department, n.d.):

5.7 ECONOMICS: The peoples of the Western Hemisphere have developed various ways to meet their needs and wants. Many of the countries of the Western Hemisphere trade with each other, as well as with other countries around the world.

In both observations, lessons aligned with the New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework, 5th grade Civic Participation Skills which are (New York State Education Department, n.d.):

- Identify different types of political systems and ideologies used at various times and in various locations in the Western Hemisphere, and identify the roles of individuals and key groups in those political and social systems.
- Identify rights and responsibilities of citizens within societies in the Western Hemisphere.
- Develop an understanding of the interdependence of individuals and groups in communities in the Western Hemisphere

Using the Civic Engagement VALUE Rubric, Teacher #2 received a level of Milestone for the following criteria:

1. Diversity of Communities and Cultures- The lesson has awareness that one’s attitudes and beliefs are different from those of other cultures and communities and exhibits little curiosity about what can be learned from diversity of communities and cultures. Evidence- Students discussed and explained the three branches of government, and, in the second classroom observation, students explained the roles of community members in a business community. Students were assigned different roles before the simulation field trip.

2. Analysis of Knowledge- Begin to connect knowledge from one’s own academic study to civic engagement and to one’s own participation in civil life, politics, and government. Evidence- For the U.S. government lesson, students learned about the three branches of government and applied their knowledge to understanding checks and balances. During the second classroom observation, students were assigned different roles that a business community might have. For example, if students were assigned to the medical center, they had to pick related roles to act out during the field trip. Such roles included admitting office/manager, bookkeeper, registered nurse, or physician. As students role played their jobs, they had to refer to prior knowledge regarding how communities collaborate with one another and
problem solve as a team. They had to demonstrate an understanding of economics, which reiterated their knowledge of needs and wants (New York State Education Department, n.d.).

3. Civic-Identity and Commitment- Evidence suggests involvement in civic engagement activities is generated from expectations or course requirements rather than from a sense of civic-identity. Evidence- Students identified the branches of government and why the government created checks and balances. Teacher #2 continued with business community field trip, which was an ongoing lesson and opportunity for students to perform their jobs/ responsibilities effectively.

4. Civic Communication- Communicate in a civic context and demonstrate the ability to do more than one of the following: Express, listen, and/or adapt ideas and messages based on others’ perspectives. Evidence- Students engaged in conversation and discussed their own understanding of the content being taught to them.

5. Civic Action and Reflection- Participate in civically focused actions and begin to reflect or describe how these actions may benefit individual or communities. Evidence- For the government lesson, students orally explained the differences of the branches of government. For the business community lesson, students role-played their responsibilities for each other to confirm their knowledge of the roles that were assigned.

6. Civic Contexts/Structures - Demonstrate experience identifying intentional ways to participate in civic contexts and structures- Evidence- Students
performed what was asked of them based on the lesson and activity that 
Teacher #2 engaged in with the students.

What emerged consistently from interviews and reviews of documents was the extent to which implementation of civic education is dependent upon the New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework. The K-12 social studies coordinator indicated that civics is implemented through the Social Studies Framework. Both teachers used the Social Studies Framework as a guide for civics in their classrooms. The K-12 social studies coordinator recognized that more work needs to be done. However, the community influence on district and building decisions is a factor and, at times, is seen as a barrier that prevents true civic participation from occurring in the district.

The K-12 social studies coordinator stated:

“… I was the first K-12 social studies coordinator, so they never even had a social studies person…I had a vision, and I think they're very nervous about what am I looking for. The teachers would say, ‘I've never had this curriculum. We've never had to teach it. Nobody really knows.’ My first goal with them was to implement the social studies curriculum and civics, and, overall, they were not against it. It's just, ‘I just don't have time for summer curriculum writing,’ they would say. I'll look to the summer and say, ‘Let's all meet, and we'll write our curriculum,’ but no commitments except for the few people who always volunteer. They would love for me to tell them, ‘Here's the curriculum. Here's what you're teaching. Here are the documents. We're done.’ My priority with them is to create a curriculum for each level with them.”

Being in his fourth year at Pacific School District, curriculum writing for all social studies courses and grade levels is the K-12 social studies coordinator’s priority.

However, if teachers are not committed or if central administration does not provide financial support, then civics education will not be reflective of the social studies curriculum. The K-12 social studies coordinator stated that civics is embedded in the
New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework and to implement the framework he would need full cooperation on the civic engagement and participation pieces.

To conclude, the New York State Social Studies Framework guides the way civic education in K-12 social studies is implemented by all three participants. Each participant refers to the New York State Social Studies framework as a confirmation to support the implementation of civics curriculum and activities as seen in observations of the classes, document analysis, and member checks. Additional programs that support civics may be promoted through the different schools in the district but not under the K-12 social studies coordinator. When member checking the accuracy of information that was reported in the data, the K-12 social studies coordinator confirmed that the lack of support and initiative by building leadership, central leadership, and community hinders the extent and depth of student participation and involvement.

**Summary of Findings**

The overall summary of findings on perception and implementation of civic education in a suburban school district shows that Pacific School District supports civic education through the New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework. All participants within this study confirm that civic education is important for students, however the implementation of additional civic education beyond the K-12 Social Studies Framework is limited at Pacific School District.

When comparing the teacher participants’ observations and the document analysis, it is evident that the difference in rating based off the Civic VALUE Rubric is ultimately guided by teacher interest. Teacher #1 is a 12th grade educator, who taught Civics, a course that focused on and is titled Participation in Government in the New
York State K-12 Social Studies Framework, and received Capstone rating (*Inquiry and Analysis VALUE Rubric*, 2009). On the other hand, Teacher #2 is a 5th grade educator who taught social studies that focused on and is titled The Western Hemisphere in the New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework. The 5th grade curriculum is not completely dedicated to civics. Therefore, Teacher #2 received Milestone (*Inquiry and Analysis VALUE Rubric*, 2009) due to the lack of civics content in which students are asked to deeply engage.

The K-12 social studies coordinator has not mandated all teachers to implement civic lessons, activities, or programs that encourage students to participate with their school, community, or state affairs. Therefore, implementation of such activities has been guided by teacher interest. The K-12 social studies coordinator recognized that the gap in commitment from the district and building administration and from teachers resulted in the decreased level and fidelity of civic education implementation. Impact of leadership was important, and the K-12 social studies coordinator had to foster support and encourage teachers to go above and beyond in terms of curriculum implementation.

In Chapter 5 the researcher will explore and unpack the meaning behind the statements made by interviewees. Perception and implementation of civic education was viewed more of a state curriculum, and participants would like to do more. However, implementation barriers and support hindered the evolution of civic curriculum and civic activities.
CHAPTER 5
Discussion

Introduction
The purpose of Chapter 5 is to present findings and recommendations on a topic to the leadership, practitioner, and scholarship communities for consideration, replication, and possible future implementation. This chapter also discusses other opportunities for future research based on the result of the study. This chapter includes the following subtopics: Implications of Findings, Relationship to Prior Research, Limitations of the Study, and Recommendations for Future Practice and Recommendations for Future Research.

Through qualitative research, the study explored the perceptions of implementation of civic education curriculum in a suburban school district. The research explored the experiences of one school district’s civic education program by interviewing a K-12 social studies coordinator who is the curriculum leader and specialist that oversees kindergarten through twelfth grade social studies in a New York State suburban school district. The researcher also interviewed two teachers whom the curriculum coordinator oversees. The researcher observed four civic education classes that the social studies curriculum coordinator supervised and helped to implement. The researcher analyzed the following documents: syllabus for the 12th grade Civic courses, students’ work that promoted civic action that was observed in the 12th grade Civics courses, and an overview of 5th grade activities and lessons. Emerging themes were identified using a multiple case study methodology. The specific research questions were as follows:
Research Question #1: What are the perceptions of the implementation of a civic education program, for the K-12 social studies curriculum, in a suburban school district?

Research Question #2: How is the civic education program in K-12 social studies implemented?

In Chapter 4, narratives from the participants that addressed the research questions and data collection included a combination of interviews, observations, and school district documentation.

Implications of Findings and Relationship to Prior Research

Data that was collected and reviewed led to the emergence of several themes: civic engagement which incorporates student activities within allotted instruction time and outside of school time that promotes students’ active participation and collaboration with local and school officials on issues concerning students and community, civic identity and commitment which involves implementing a program where all stakeholders (building and central administrators, teachers, community members) are all committed and supportive, civic knowledge which involves the ability to understand what civics means and to implement the curriculum within the time allotted for the subject social studies to be taught, and civic contexts/structures which involves having students demonstrate the ability and commitment to collaboratively work across and within community contexts and structures to achieve a civic goal. The following table defines the emerging themes based on the Civic Engagement VALUE Rubric that was used in this study.
Table 18

*Emerging Themes and Definitions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Definition of Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civic Engagement</td>
<td>This involves participation and “…working to make a difference in the civic life of communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make the difference…promoting the quality of life in a community throughout both political and non-political processes” (Ehrlich, 2000, vi).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Identity and Commitment</td>
<td>This involves an individual seeing her or himself as an active participant in society with a strong commitment and responsibility to work with others towards public purposes (<em>Inquiry and Analysis VALUE Rubric</em>, 2009).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Knowledge</td>
<td>This includes knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from one’s own academic study/field/discipline to civic engagement and to one’s own participation in civic life, politics, and government (<em>Inquiry and Analysis VALUE Rubric</em>, 2009).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Contexts/Structure</td>
<td>This includes organizations, movements, campaigns, a place or locus where people and/or living creatures inhabit, which may be defined by a locality (school, national park, non-profit organization, town, state, nation) or defined by shared identity (i.e., African-Americans, North Carolinians, Americans, the Republican or Democratic Party, refugees, etc.). In addition, contexts for civic engagement may be defined by a variety of approaches intended to benefit a person, group, or community, including community service or volunteer work, academic work (<em>Inquiry and Analysis VALUE Rubric</em>, 2009).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These themes emerged from participants as a result of a lack of support from educational leadership and from community members, specifically Pacific School District parents. Had there been a Pacific School District Board of Education policy that entailed support from the school district and community and made civics an education goal that the district strived to implement, then the K-12 social studies coordinator would have felt more invested and would have mandated civics support across the K-12 levels. However, that was not the case. Therefore, the K-12 social studies coordinator expressed that civics instruction is optional which leads him to rely on the use of the New York State K-12 Social Studies curriculum as guidance to promote and implement civics within teachers’ regular class instruction.

As stated in Chapter 2, Program Implementation, effective approaches to managing curriculum implementation or change calls for combining and balancing factors that might not go together, such as simultaneous simplicity-complexity, looseness-tightness, strong leadership-user participation, bottom-ups/top-down-ness, fidelity-adaptivity, and evaluation-non-evaluation (Fullan, 2016, p.68). If any one of these factors is working against implementation, the process will be less effective. Conversely, when more factors support implementation, the more change in practice will be achieved (Fullan, 2016, p.68). In this case study, factors such as strong leadership-user participation and bottom-ups/top-down-ness were not consistent and, as a result, was noted throughout the study. All three participants in the study expressed support for James Youniss’ civic theory approach, which encourages civic development by providing experiential political opportunities for youth. Furthermore, all three participants expressed their willingness and desire to do more with civics, and they have demonstrated civics activities within
their class instruction. However, they are limited in knowing if other teachers are following along due to the curriculum being optional and due to other teachers not being well versed in civic education.

The study indicated that the K-12 social studies coordinator’s perception of civic education is that it is a valuable and necessary curriculum component that the New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework promotes and one in which all districts should actively engage. However, in order for such a program to be successful and meaningful, it is essential to have support from central administration, community members, and the local Board of Education in addition to making a civic education program a district wide goal. Furthermore, through discussions with the three participants, the researcher discovered the importance of incorporating civic engagement activities in the classroom. It was noted that if educators do not see the value of such implementation, then the desired outcomes of civic education would not be attained.

In addition, it was evident that, at the elementary level, teaching social studies content rather than engaging the students in civic participation was a priority because of the lack of time allocated for teaching social studies. As a result, the K-12 social studies coordinator, with the support of the elementary principals, provided professional development for teachers and building administrators through building level meetings and administrators’ cabinet meetings. This ensured that elementary social studies incorporated lessons on taking informed action and that these lessons were supported with field trips. It was noted in this study that the courses, activities, and organizations offered at the secondary level made the program more attainable than at the elementary level. The K-12 social studies coordinator also mentioned that the district, being small,
does not contain many actively involved teachers, administrators, and community members. This lack of community commitment, in conjunction with competing programs from other disciplines and the time needed to effectively develop a K-12 civic education program that encourages students to be actively engaged with local, state, and national levels, presents tremendous hurdles. However, there are opportunities available for students to gain experience with active engagement, such as supporting nonprofit organizations, food drives, and community events through building programs (K-12 social studies coordinator, personal communication, December 2019).

Combining Lev Vygotsky’s thought that schools should facilitate and enrich each child individually with John Dewey’s stance on universal schooling, democracy would be achieved only as schooling was “…popularized in character as well as clientele, and hence in the reform of education, he saw the first and foremost work of an intentionally progressive society” (1964, p.126). When looking at the New York Social Studies Framework and Civic Action through the lenses of James Youniss’ Civic Theory (1997), Lev Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (1978), and John Dewey’s Inquiry-Based Learning and Democratic Education (2018) it is clear how all three ideologies are similar and support the idea of implementing K-12 civic education. Implementing a Civic Education in a K-12 program not only aligns with the New York Social Studies Framework and the C3 Framework, but it will support the ideologies of Youniss, Vygotsky, and Dewey as well as the ASCD Whole Child Approach.

The emphasis on providing civic education and opportunities that reflect civic engagement in K-12 schools utilized James Youniss’s (1997) theory of social interaction, Lev Vygotsky’s (1978) zone proximal development, and John Dewey’s (2018) hands on
learning approach. Jointly, these theories encourage students to become involved in community action and to develop stronger feelings of responsibility toward the common good, thereby increasing their desire to become citizens who assist engage on local, state, and national levels and who sustain positive productivity. The ideas laid out in the study offer clarification on why it is vital that schools implement civic engagement and education. Furthermore, it encourages researchers to continue to identify concrete evidence that supports the need for civic education in K-12 schools.

**Relationship to Prior Research**

As discussed in Chapter 2, past researchers such as C. Everhart (2017) suggested that the institution must continue to allocate resources in a manner that supports its mission and recognizes the proven benefits of student civic engagement (Everhart, 2017, p. 87). Another researcher, M. Comber (2005), reiterated how civic education is vital within the secondary and postsecondary curriculum. Implementing such programs will allow students to become more active at the local, state, and national levels. Comber (2005) highlighted other theorists to further support the importance of implementing and emphasizing civic education, including the following:

- Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) documented the importance of resources in promoting political participation, including money, time, knowledge, skills, and self-confidence.
- Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) developed a resource-based theory in their civic voluntarism model. The civic voluntarism model maintains that political participation is a function of political engagement, recruitment through social networks, and resources. Resources include time, money, and civic skills.
This study supports past research that support, and appropriate resources must be allocation to those that are implementing civic education. Civic education is not only taught within instruction but are activities and collaboration with local, state, and national stakeholders.

**Limitations of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to explore the implementation of the civic education curriculum within a school district. This study will add to literature on civic curriculum implementation and possibly inform educators who are implementing civic curriculum in similar contexts about potential best practices. Merriam (1998) affirms that “…research focused on discovery, insight and understanding from the perspective of those being studied offers the greatest promise of making significant contributions to the knowledge base and practice of education” (p.1). The K-12 social studies coordinator could be best examined through a qualitative research design. However, with any type of study, there are limiting factors.

Several limitations should be considered before findings can be generalized to this study. Participants were few. If this study were to be conducted again it is strongly suggested that additional school districts participate, possibly including quantitative research focused on surveying K-12 social studies coordinators/directors.

**Recommendations for Future Practice**

The December 2019 edition of Education Week featured an article titled *A Call to Arms for Civic Education*, which stated,

“…a new report is the latest to sound the alarm about the consequences of American students’ poor civics knowledge, and faulting not only the thin diet served up in
schools but also the lack of federal, state, and philanthropic investments in civics, compared to other topics…today's young people are disengaged from the civic process, voting in record low rates in 2014. And with Americans expressing deep distrust in the federal government and in their fellow citizens, the pillars of the country's democracy are being undermined, it warns. ‘When distrust for major institutions combines with distrust for other citizens, the result is declining support for democracy itself,’ says the call to arms, which was written by two scholars at a special center at the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life at Tufts University” (Sawchuk, 2019).

Under President Barack Obama’s education agenda, the Department of Education envisioned a national commitment to preparing all students for citizenship as informed, engaged, and responsible members of our society (Civic Learning and Engagement in Democracy, 2012). The document titled “Advancing Civic Learning and Engagement in Democracy: A Road Map and Call to Action” serves to reinvigorate civic learning and engagement for students, families, communities, and leaders in education, business, labor, philanthropy, and government (Civic Learning and Engagement in Democracy, 2012). Advancing research on how schools are implementing civic education into their schools, and understanding the pros and cons of such implementation, will assist future civics education programs. It is evident that the allocation of appropriate and sufficient resources, in addition to district and community support, is essential to ensure that civic education is successfully implemented in K-12 schools.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

The data revealed in this study can be used as a source for future research. Future research can add to these findings by exploring how can districts implement a K-12 civic
education curriculum for all students in their districts and then analyze short- and long-term effects of implementing such a program at the local, state, and national levels.

As previously indicated, the researcher is a K-12 social studies coordinator. Therefore, the potential ability that the researcher could have over identified with the participants exists. However, she was conscious of her bias and understanding of the topic and fully immersed herself in this district where the study took place. She understood the flexibility and limitations of how districts run their academic and student activities. This study’s primary purpose was to examine a social studies coordinator’s perception of civics education in a suburban school district as well as the nature of implementing such a program through the lens of the following research questions:

Research Question #1: What are the perceptions of the implementation of a civic education program, for the K-12 social studies curriculum, in a suburban school district?

Research Question #2: How is the civic education program in K-12 social studies implemented?

Conclusion

Only 22.7% of eligible New York State voters participated in the November 2019 elections. 53% of Americans think undocumented immigrants should have no rights under the U.S. Constitution. 26% of Americans can correctly name the three branches of government, and New York State is ranked 47th in the nation in voter turnout (Radez, 2020). In the 2019 General Election, all five boroughs had assembly districts where 10% of registered voters or fewer came to vote for Public Advocate. Public Advocate is first in line to succeed the mayor. This office is a direct link between citizens and city
government, and it is the watchdog for New Yorkers (Radez, 2020). It was noted that every borough saw districts with 90-100% of eligible voters chose not vote, and a significant number of New Yorkers did not register to vote (Radez, 2020). Students who are taught to be accountable for their actions and to understand their role in government are more inclined to actively vote and be part of elections. Students will feel that their votes count, and their voices will be heard, which will reflect the idea of successful citizenship and transformative citizenship education that James A. Banks mentions in “Failed Citizenship, Civic Engagement and Education.”

Successful citizenship supports the idea of effective citizenship socialization (Banks, 2015, p.152). Transformative citizenship education recognizes and validates the cultural identities of students while helping them to attain the knowledge and skills required to function effectively in the civic culture of the nation while challenging racial, social class and gender inequality. Civics education promotes the following:

- Globalization
- Civic Responsibility
- Learning from the Past
- Assimilation
- Embracing Diversity
- Respect
- Open Communication
- Advocacy of Truth
Promoting civic education empowers students to develop their ability to make informed decisions, to support their interconnectedness amongst national and global levels, and to enhance their belief in the power of their own voices and actions.
REFERENCES


http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412957397.n157


NYSUT. (2019). Your vote is your voice. Retrieved from https://www.nysut.org/resources/special-resources-sites/social-justice/your-vote-is-your-voice


Appendix A: IRB Approval

Federal Wide Assurance: FWA00009066 Dec 2, 2019 2:27 PM EST

Sheena Jacob
Ed Admin & Instruct Leadership

Re: Expedited Review - Initial - IRB-FY2020-214 PERCEPTIONS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF CIVIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN A SUBURBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

Dear Sheena Jacob:

The St John's University Institutional Review Board has rendered the decision below for PERCEPTIONS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF CIVIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN A SUBURBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT. The approval is effective from December 2, 2019 through November 30, 2020

Decision: Approved

PLEASE NOTE: If you have collected any data prior to this approval date, the data needs to be discarded.

Selected Category: 7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Sincerely,

Raymond DiGiuseppe, PhD, ABPP
Chair, Institutional Review Board
Professor of Psychology

Marie Nitopi, Ed.D.
IRB Coordinator
Appendix B: NIH Certificate of Completion

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that Sheena Jacob successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants."

Date of Completion: 09/09/2018

Certification Number: 2918491
Appendix C: Interview Discussion and Topics

Questions linked to New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework

Introduction:

1. State your name, school district, and position you are today.

2. What has been your role in implementing civic education program?

3. What has been the impact on the district community of this implementation of civic education?

Questions used to assist with the interview will be the following:

4. What larger ramifications, if any, exist from this implementation?

5. How frequently do you, (K-12 Social Studies Coordinator) engage their students in community service projects, activities and organizations focused on civic engagement?

6. What are your (K-12 Social Studies Coordinator) perceptions of their students’ civic responsibility in their districts?

7. Do you Agree or Disagree, please explain why you agree or disagree with the following statement:

   - Civic education should primarily aim to cultivate students with the knowledge, skills and attitude/value pertaining to civic participation.
   - Civic education should be implemented in a K-12 Social Studies Curriculum as a service-learning project.
   - Civic education denotes a formal school subject aiming to help students acquire citizenship within the education system.
- Civic education supports Global citizenship which refers to a moral disposition which guides individuals understanding of themselves as members of communities—both on local and global levels—and their responsibility to these communities

Students participate in the following program. Please say Yes or No and please explain your answer:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Program students participate in… (Yes/No-Explain)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food Drive for a nonprofit organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registering to Vote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering their services to local, state, federal nonprofit organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Senate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth &amp; Government Programs (i.e., Trial/Debate, Model Congress, Model U.N., etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Based Learning that supports K-12 students in understanding civic education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-Run Blood Drive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support the Military/Veterans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy Program where students initiate and generate the program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraise/Support a Nonprofit Organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix D – Observation/Document Analysis

#### Civic Engagement VALUE Rubric

**Definition**
Civic engagement is "working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes." (Excerpt from Civic Responsibility and Higher Education, edited by Thomas Ehrlich, published by Jossey-Bass, 2000, Preface, page 6). In addition, civic engagement encompasses actions wherein individuals participate in activities of potential and public concern that are both individually life-enhancing and socially beneficial to the community.

Evaluations are encouraged to assign a grade in any work sample or selection of work that does not meet benchmark (self or) best performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capstone 4</th>
<th>Milestone 3</th>
<th>Benchmark 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diversity of Communities and Cultures</strong></td>
<td>Demonstrates evidence of adjustment in own attitudes and beliefs because of working within and learning from diversity of communities and cultures. Promotes other’s engagement with diversity.</td>
<td>Reflects on how own attitudes and beliefs are different from those of other cultures and communities. Exhibits curiosity about what can be learned from diversity of communities and cultures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Analysis of Knowledge</strong></td>
<td>Connects and extends knowledge (facts, theories, etc) from one’s own academic field; discipline to civic engagement and to one’s own participation in civic life, politics, and government.</td>
<td>Demonstrates knowledge (facts, theories, etc) from one’s own academic field; discipline that is relevant to civic engagement and to one’s own participation in civic life, politics, and government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Civic Identity and Commitment</strong></td>
<td>Provides evidence of experiences in civic engagement activities and describes what self has learned about self and others in relation to a reinforced and clarified sense of civic identity and continued commitment to public action.</td>
<td>Promotes civic identity and continued commitment to public action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Civic Communication</strong></td>
<td>Taps communication strategies to effectively express, listen, and adapt to others to establish relationships to further civic action.</td>
<td>Effectively communicates in civic context, showing ability to do more than one of the following: express, listen and adapt ideas and messages based on others’ perspectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Civic Action and Reflection</strong></td>
<td>Demonstrates independent experience and shows initiative in new leadership of complex or multiple civic engagement activities, accompanied by reflective insights or analysis about the aims and accomplishments of one’s actions.</td>
<td>Demonstrates independent experience and new leadership of civic action, with reflective insights or analysis about the aims and accomplishments of one’s actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Civic Contexts/Structures</strong></td>
<td>Demonstrates ability and commitment to collaboratively work with and other community contexts and structures in achieving civic aims.</td>
<td>Demonstrates ability and commitment to work collaboratively with community contexts and structures in achieving civic aims.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Appendix E: Permission for Entry

Greetings,

I am currently working on my Ed.D. through Saint John’s University and I am ready to start collecting my data through interviewing and analyzing your K-12 Social Studies program, specifically on civic education.

The goal of this study is to emphasize the importance of incorporating civics education within a school district. Implementing civic education within the K-12 curriculum will assist students with understanding their roles and responsibilities in a community and a nation. The overarching topic of this study is, “Perceptions of Implementation of Civic Education Curriculum In A Suburban School District.”

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to provide resources, curriculum, allow the researcher to observe classes or programs that connect with civic education, and have a one to one interview with possible follow up visits for clarity with yourself and a teacher that you supervise in your department. Although you will receive no direct benefits, this research may help districts implement civics education within their schools that will assist students with understanding their roles and responsibilities in a community and a nation.

Confidentiality of research records will be strictly maintained by using codes to refer to schools (School A, School Leader B, etc.), such that specific schools and/or districts are distinguishable from each other, but not identifiable as any school or district. Participant’s IP addresses, email addresses and other personally identifiable information will not be recorded when the interviews are completed. Participants will not be asked to provide their name or the school or district in which they work.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty. While completing this process, you have the right to skip or not answer any questions that you prefer not to answer.

If you would like to participate in this study, please respond to this email. If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know. My mentor for this study, is Dr. Rosalba Del Vecchio, Professor and Director of Non-Public School Leaders at St. John’s University.
Sincerely,

Sheena R. Jacob

Doctoral Student | St. John's University | School of Education

Coordinator for Social Studies (K-12) | Glen Cove City School District
Appendix F: Consent Form

Research Consent Form

You have been invited to take part in a research study to learn more about “Perceptions of Implementation of Civic Education Curriculum in A Suburban School District.” This study will be conducted by Sheena R. Jacob, a student in the Administrative and Instructional Leadership program in the School of Education at St. John’s University as part of her doctoral dissertation. The researcher’s faculty sponsor is Dr. Rosalba Del Vecchio, Professor and Director of Non-Public School Leaders at St. John’s University.

The goal of this study is to explore the implementation of the civic education curriculum within a school district. The overarching topic of this study is, “Perceptions of Implementation of Civic Education Curriculum in a Suburban School District.” This study will add to literature on civic curriculum implementation and possibly inform educators implementing civic curriculum in similar contexts about potential best practices.

If you agree to participate in this qualitative study, you will be asked to do the following:

1. Provide resources, curriculum that supports civic education curriculum that has been implemented in your school district.
2. Allow the researcher to observe classes or programs that connect with the civic education curriculum.
3. Participate in a one to one interview with possible follow up visits for clarity with yourself and a teacher that you supervise in your department.

Interviews will be recorded for the researcher to analyze and interpret qualitative data that is provided through the interview. Although you will receive no direct benefits, this research may help districts implement civics education within their schools that will assist students with understanding their roles and responsibilities in a community and a nation.

Confidentiality of research records will be strictly maintained by using codes to refer to schools (School A, School Leader B, etc.), such that specific schools and/or districts are distinguishable from each other, but not identifiable as any school or district. Participant’s IP addresses, email addresses and other personally identifiable information
will not be recorded when the interviews are completed. Participants will not be asked to provide their name or the school or district in which they work.

Your interviews will be audio-taped. You may review these tapes and request that all or any portion of the tapes be destroyed. Participation in this study will involve approximately one hour of your time. There are no known risks associated with your participation in this research beyond those of everyday life. Although you will receive no direct benefits, this research may help districts implement civics education within their schools that will assist students with understanding their roles and responsibilities in a community and a nation.

Confidentiality of your research records will be strictly maintained by keeping consent forms separate from data used to make sure that the subject’s name and identity will not become known or linked with any information provided. Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty. For interviews, you have the right to skip or not answer any questions you prefer not to answer.

If there is anything about the study or your participation that is unclear or that you do not understand, if you have questions or wish to report a research-related problem, you may contact Sheena R. Jacob at sheena.jacob17@my.stjohns.edu or the faculty sponsor, Dr. Rosalba Del Vecchio at 718-990-5277, delveccr@stjohns.edu, St. John's University-School of Education, Sullivan Hall, 511, 8000 Utopia Parkway, Queens, NY 11439. For questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University’s Institutional Review Board, St. John’s University, Dr. Raymond DiGiuseppe, Chair digiuser@stjohns.edu 718-990-1955 or Marie Nitopi, IRB Coordinator, nitopim@stjohns.edu 718-990-1440.

You have received a copy of this consent document to keep.

Agreement to Participate

Participant’s Signature Date
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sheena Rachel Jacob</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date Graduated</td>
<td>June, 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baccalaureate Degree</td>
<td>Bachelor of Science in Education, Temple University, Philadelphia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Major: Secondary Education Social Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date Graduated</td>
<td>January, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Degrees and Certificates</td>
<td>Master of Arts, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, Major: Secondary Education Social Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date Graduated</td>
<td>May, 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Degrees and Certificates</td>
<td>Master of Science in Education, The College of Saint Rose, Albany, Major: Educational Leadership and Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date Graduated</td>
<td>December, 2009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>