6-27-2002

Instituting issue-based civics in the 11th grade classroom

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INSTITUTING ISSUE-BASED CIVICS

IN THE

11TH GRADE CLASSROOM

by
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A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Science Degree
in
The Graduate School
of
Rowan University
June 27, 2002

Approved by

Professor

Date Approved 6/27/02

ABSTRACT

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2002
Dr. Donna W. Jorgensen and Dr. D. Mark Meyers
Master of Science in Teaching Degree

There were several goals of this study. The first goal of this study was to identify if issue-based civics would produce any difference in a students attitude for and appreciation in civics. The second goal was to identify if issue-based civics would produce any difference in a student's comprehension levels in civics. The last of these goals was to identify if the school a student attended had any impact on their attitude toward and appreciation of civics and comprehension levels in civics. The study was conducted on a sample of 70 11th grade students enrolled in American History II college prep classes available during a spring 2002 student teaching placement. The study was conducted at two different area high schools in southern New Jersey. An attitudinal survey was used to assess the participants' attitude toward and appreciation of civics before and after treatment. The surveys were administered to both a traditional lecture-based group and an issue-based group. Results of the survey revealed that the participants of the issue-based group did not have a greater attitude toward and appreciation of civics as the researchers predicted. The results did not show a level of statistical significance ($p<.05$) but did approach a level of statistical significance with a score of .086. A test was also administered to both groups before and after treatment.

Results from the tests showed similar comprehension levels before and after the treatment and again the lecture-based group did slightly better or the test. Also, the results from the tests revealed that there was no statistically significant difference between the two approaches to instruction. To identify if any impact was made between the schools the participants attended and their appreciation and attitude toward and comprehension of civics, the researchers ran a two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). This revealed that there was no significant effect between the school and the appreciation for and attitude and comprehension of civics.

MINI-ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study was to affect student's attitudes for and appreciation and comprehension levels of civics through issue-based approach to teaching civic education. Independent t tests showed that the mean scores of the survey and the test were about the same prior to and after treatment. A two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed there was no statistically significant difference ($p<.05$) between the school a student attended, and their attitudes toward and appreciation and comprehension of civics.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would first and foremost like to thank our advisors. First, we want to thank Dr. Donna Jorgensen for all her unbelievable support and for her voice of reason throughout the writing of this thesis. Your teaching and generosity did not go unnoticed and we thank you for all your help. Second, we would like to thank Dr. Mark Meyers for steering us in the right direction from the start. You provided the very foundation for this thesis and we could not have completed this without your experience and expertise behind us. We want to thank our families and loved ones who offered and provided us with so much support throughout a sometimes-trying year. Finally, we would like to thank God for allowing us the capacity to think these thoughts and create this thesis, which is truly a symbol of our hard work.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

The identity of Americans is defined by acceptance and allegiance to shared political values, principles, and beliefs in democracy. These values, principles and beliefs Americans share have provided the foundation for the stability of our government. However, democracy is just an idea. It comes to life only when we participate. The dispositions that form democratic philosophies are not inherited. Both Generation X (born 1965-1978) and Generation Y (born after 1978) have experienced few defining historic episodes (with the exception of the World Trade Center attack on September 11, 2001. The course of Generation X and Generation Y's upbringing was a time in American of relative peace, prosperity, and a lessened need for immediate political actions. This atmosphere has led to the declining political engagement of young Americans (Soule, 2001). The waning participation of the young in American democracy has become one of the many major concerns for civic educators. Researchers have been debating the cause of and remedy for the growing ignorance and apathy. They are in agreement that the components of competent citizenship are simply not taught in America's schools. Findings point to the need to improve the content and the way educators teach civic education. Alexis de Tocqueville describes democracy as not a "machine that would go of itself" but something that must be passed down from one generation to the next, introducing to each the knowledge, skills and commitment to sustain democracy (Center for Civic Education, 1995). However, the civic education that exists today focuses too much on concepts and definitions within government and not on the practical application of these concepts. Often, teachers present isolated facts apart

from any context that might give those facts meaning. Teachers fall short in connecting content to contemporary issues of interest to their students (Cotton, 1999). This type of curriculum contradicts de Tocqueville's warning. It gives far too little attention to the natural give and take processes of our system. An alternative method that would change the existing passive civic education teaching model is issue-based civics. Issue-based civic education focuses on the humanistic, realistic and imperfect nature of our government. It provides students with hands on activities exemplifying how the democratic process works in courthouses and town halls. This method allows the students to actively understand their role and duty as Americans.

The need for effective civic education is crucial because of the power Americans possess. The time is not to call on all students and teachers to become integral parts of America. Reinvigorating and reenergizing civic education can do this. It is imperative that all citizens receive the kind of civic education that enables them to fulfill their everyday responsibilities of citizenship and to judiciously exercise their powers.

It is important that all Americans have a sense of their government and its history. All citizens should know how and why America came into being and how the Constitution has permitted citizens to successfully govern themselves for over two centuries. However, understanding the government is more than just basic recognition of the structure of democracy. It means knowing that government (no matter what kind) is the most dominant device for social control (Branson, 2001). It entails an appreciation of its impact on our lives. Government has the power to advance justice or injustice, enact laws, declare wars and protect or violate human rights. Therefore, citizens must possess

the knowledge, skill and determination to monitor our nation and influence its actions in order for those actions to promote democracy.

Since the birth of our nation, America's public schools have recognized the importance of civic education. American's founding fathers, Jefferson, Madison and Adams, all believed that a constitutional democracy could not sustain without the participation of all (white, educated, landowning males) Americans. A democratic society depends on its citizens and their understanding of civic virtues for its continued existence. For this reason, it was believed that the civic mission of schools was to nurture these responsibilities into civic participation (Center for Civic Education, 1995).

The constitution of almost every state asserts education for citizenship as a major objective (Hoge, 1988). Civic education is an established part of the curriculum of social studies as a content discipline. However, there is sufficient evidence that civic education in America's schools is failing. There is not enough sustained and systematic attention placed on it. More than half of America's youth lacks the knowledge, attitudes and skills that civic educators believe they should possess in order for them to become responsible citizens. Consider these disturbing trends: about one-half of the eligible electorate does not participate in presidential elections and the turnout for local elections is less than 20%. Most notable, the lowest registration and turnout rates are found among the 18-24 year old group (Hall, 1998). Civic education in schools is supposed to develop the inclinations to and skills necessary for political participation. Effective civic education is the primary means of teaching and learning the democratic values our forefathers deemed necessary to instill in all Americans. Therefore, the knowledge attained through civic

education is dependent upon the substance, design and manner of presentation of each teacher. Attention needs to be given to the manner in which civics content is offered.

One way to instill and promote democratic values in Americans is through the education of the youth of America. Realizing the importance of civic education, the researchers began to ponder what they knew about or government and how they felt about it when they were in high school. This led them to wonder what do students currently enrolled high school really know about civics. Are they informed and do they even care to learn more about civics? The researchers casually started asking teenagers these questions. The answers they received were not exactly accurate nor did the adolescents seem to appreciate talking about civics. Teenagers appear to be ignorant and lacking knowledge of America's democratic values, principles and components. This information led the researchers to formalize their questions and to develop several hypotheses that could be tested using a quasi-experimental study during the student teaching experience of the two researchers in two distinctly different high schools.

The researchers wanted to know what the attitudes of high school juniors would be towards civic education. The also wanted to know whether there would be any difference in the level of comprehension of students who were taught using different teaching methodology in civic education. Finally, the researchers wanted to know whether there would be any difference between the two schools. This led the researchers to create the following research hypotheses:

H_0: There will be no significant difference in attitudes towards and appreciation of civics in 11^{th} grade college preparatory American History II students who receive

issue-based civic education versus those who receive lecture-based civic education.

H_1: There will be a significant difference in attitudes towards and appreciation of civics in 11th grade college preparatory American History II students who receive issue-based civic education versus those who receive lecture-based civic education.

H_0: There will be no significant difference in higher level of comprehension of civics in 11th grade college preparatory American History II students who receive issue-based civic education versus those who receive lecture-based civic education.

H_2: There will be a significant difference in higher level of comprehension of civics in 11th grade college preparatory American History II students who receive issue-based civic education versus those who receive lecture-based civic education.

H_0: There will be no significant difference between the two schools in the study with regard to attitudes towards and appreciation of civics in 11th grade college preparatory American History II students.

H_3: There will be a significant difference between the two schools in the study with regard to attitudes towards and appreciation of civics in 11th grade college preparatory American History II students.

H_0: There will be no significant difference between the two schools in the study with regard to level of comprehension of civics in 11th grade college preparatory American History II students.

H_4: There will be a significant difference between the two schools in the study with regard to level of comprehension of civics in 11th grade college preparatory American History II students.

This quasi-experimental study was carried out in two distinct sites and was designed to foster the mission by exposing 11th grade college preparatory American History II students to civic education. This will provide students with functional knowledge and promote a lifelong habit of political participation. The study was a collaborative effort by two student teachers seeking to understand and learn the answers to their questions.

Operational Definitions

The following key terms will be used throughout this paper and it will be important for the reader to understand them in the context of the study.

Appreciation: recognition of the aesthetic values that students cultivate through enjoyment and interest in a particular subject.

Attitude: way of acting or behaving that shows what one is thinking.

College preparatory: track in New Jersey public schools which encompasses students with intelligence levels and inclinations to attend college.

HELP test: instrument modified by the researchers to test the sample's knowledge of history, economics, law and politics in civic education.

Higher level comprehension: the utmost capacity or power of the mind to fully understand civics.

Issue-based civic education: civic education that focuses on active participation in civics instruction through examining social issues and contemporary problems in America's democratic society.

Lecture-based civic education: formal instruction of civics, providing students with a lecture and textbook understanding of their own civic life in America.

Chapter 2 - Review of Related Literature

Many educators think that democratic citizens should have an understanding of the political system in which they participate. It is also believed that the greater the depth of information held by citizens, the more democratic that society becomes (Soule, 2001). Americans need the knowledge, ability, and the motivation to supervise government and to influence its actions so that those actions are in line with democratic values and follow democratic processes (Branson, 2001). Unfortunately, the information compiled in Soule's paper shows that young adults knowledge and the understanding of the democratic process is lacking. For instance, the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress found that 75% of high school seniors were not proficient in civics and 25% could not identify two ways the Constitution prevents any President from becoming a dictator. Even more perplexing, are the attitudes in young adults she found pertaining towards government and politics in general. Soule reports that only 26% of incoming freshman consider it very important to keep up to date with political affairs. The figure is down 24% from 1970 (Soule, 2001). This lack of sufficient knowledge base will lead to a surely lead to a lack of both participation and leadership in America's civic affairs. How can civic education counteract this reality?

The goal of civic education is competent and responsible participation with our constitutional democracy. This participation requires a solid foundation of knowledge and understanding, participatory skills, development of character and the commitment to both the fundamental values and principles of American democracy (Center for Civic Education, 1995). These civic values should be the core elements of study from

elementary school through high school. These sentiments are also reflected in the National Standards for Civics and Government, which were prepared by scholars, teachers, and public leaders in 1994 (Butts, 1995).

There is research that suggests that American schools have neglected civic education. This disregard stems in part from the false assumption that the knowledge needed by citizens to participate in their civic community comes as a by-product of the study of other subjects or an outcome in and of itself (Center for Civic Education, 1995). However, critics of civic education argue that the content civic educators teach create the current state of citizenship. In other words educators today need to regain their focus on how and what to teach students about civic education. So, it appears that American schools are failing in how they teach civics. Frequent textbook instruction oriented towards the acquisition of unproblematic knowledge and the passive acceptance of social institutions has failed America's young students. This, coupled with the "selection of content that is narrow in scope and lacks depth of treatment, makes students both uninvolved and absent of the necessary skills for participation in a democratic society"(Cotton, 1995). These findings support the need for a new model of civic education. One model outlined in the research is issue-based civic education (Shaver, 1992). This model is needed for two reasons: first to increase the level of student interest and appreciation in civic education and second to increase student comprehension of civic education.

In looking at whether an issue-based approach would have a positive affect on student attitude and comprehension one must consider whether the content is appropriate for the learner. For instance, many supporters of issue-based civic education believe the

content is appropriate because it allows the teaching of the social sciences to an audience who might not be ready for such ideals in a traditional model (Shaver, 1992). Shaver believes that the fundamental components of civic education are not fully understood by most students in the traditional lecture-based approach (Shaver, 1992). The way to combat this inefficiency is to provide students with real-life examples of civic problems in their own communities and by trying to draw connections between the two. Therefore, one advantage of an issue-based approach is the availability of teaching complex concepts to an audience who might not have fully grasped the material in a traditional lecture-based approach. Another advantage to issue-based civics is that it promises a high level of integrated learning and student involvement in the learning process (Vontz & Nixon, 2000). In looking at this description of issue-based civic education the key words are integration and involvement. These are the two things every many or woman must have in order to become a leader in their civic community. So in fact doing creates doers.

Vontz and Nixon (2000) believe the issue-based model directly ties the learner to problems that presently exist in their communities in a way that is relevant and intriguing to their minds. This statement clearly creates a picture of a student becoming engaged in a class activity not merely for learning's sake but because the problem is indeed very real and either directly or indirectly affects students and the community in which they live. The first thing any teacher must do before introducing a topic of study is to "hook" students with a promise that today's lesson affects each of them in such a profound way that they would be harmed if they failed to comprehend the material. Issue-based civics provides that "hook" clearly and simply.

The second way that issue-based civics can increase a student's level of interest and comprehension is by relating an increasingly diverse and pluralistic composition that is the United States to each student (Vontz & Nixon, 2000). As Shaver (1992) suggests because this approach to civic education rests on the subjective views of students, they undoubtedly expose students to views that differ from their own. And just as important, today's youth live in a very diverse world and this approach helps teach students about diversity and hopefully tolerance (Massialas, 1989). Last, and most important, issue-based education teaches the invaluable democratic process of decision-making. As Engle (1968) states that the mark of a good citizen is the quality of decisions he reaches on pubic and private matters of social concern and this can be done best through reflection, speculation and a thought provoking process of reaching conclusions. This argument can be the most powerful of the three in creating an increase in a student's level of interest of civic education because it seems to imply that issue-based civics teaches people to make decisions and as stated earlier the mark of the good citizen is the quality of decisions he reaches. So it can follow that an approach to civics that can teach someone to make sound decisions on matters of social concern can create a difference in how students view civics.

However, not all of the researchers' findings have led to beliefs that issue-based civics can increase a learner's interest level. One such argument that deserves some notice is the idea that an issue-based approach focuses too much on the negative aspect of society and not enough on the positives in society (Oliver, 1968). A class, which is centered on the study of society's ills, could create a deeper apathy towards civics and

could create a problem greater than the one the researchers initially attempted to solve (Oliver, 1968).

Another argument against issue-based civic education comes from Hirsch (1996) who believes that dropping content from the curriculum altogether will hurt disadvantaged children because they sometimes lack the background of basic knowledge and skills needed in today's society. In this argument Hirsch believes the sacrificing of content that would be taught in a traditional lecture-based approach is too much to give up and that it unfairly discriminates against the under-privileged students of the world. Whether Hirsch is correct or incorrect is not yet known, but before concentrating on the affects effects that issue-based civics have on underprivileged student interest levels the researchers attempted find literature, which supported their second hypothesis.

Although the idea of teaching civics with an issue-based approach is fairly recent, there is some literature that states this approach creates a higher level of comprehension than the traditional lecture-based approach. Most of the research that can be found centers on a study called Project Citizen (Tolo, 1998). Project Citizen gives 10 to 15 year-olds the opportunity to participate in government and society while practicing critical thinking, dialogue and debate, negotiation, tolerance, and decision-making (Tolo, 1998). The first step of the project is usually considered the most difficult (Tolo, 1998). This step requires the students to select a problem to attempt to solve. Many students find it difficult to narrow down so many potential problems to a select few. But once the class is confident it has enough information to work on any problem the students vote to see which one they will study (Tolo, 1998). After dividing the class into research teams and then cooperative teams, each team focuses on the stages of inquiry and engagement in the

public policy making process. The first stage is the explanation of the problem, and the evaluation of alternative policies to deal with the problem. Next, the students will work to develop a public policy that the class will support and develop an action plan to get the government to accept the class policy (Center for Civic Education, 1998). These steps of the project are important and valuable because instead of injecting problems into the classroom merely for the sake of controversy, the program encourages students to examine important questions of policy that are relevant to them and their communities (Vontz & Nixon, 2000). This allows students to think through issues, which helps raise their level of comprehension in terms of civic education.

In 1997 a research team led by Professor Kenneth Tolo at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs conducted a comprehensive eight-month study of Project Citizen as it is practiced in the United States (Vontz & Nixon, 2000). One of the key findings is what the report concluded about the comprehension levels of the students who participated in Project Citizen. In his study, Tolo found that students and teachers believed Project Citizen helps students develop a greater understanding of public policy (Tolo, 1998). Also students and teachers believe Project Citizen helps citizens understand how their government works and develops student commitment to active citizenship (Tolo, 1998). The researchers and many educators such as Tolo believe that an understanding of public policy and an increased understanding of how the government works are vital to the overall skills needed to engage oneself fully in civic matters (Tolo, 1998).

Tolo also noted three other skills learned by the students in Project Citizen. First he noticed that the project helps students learn about specific community problems

(Tolo,1998). This helps create a real sense of community among the participants. Project Citizen also teaches students important communication skills and research skills (Tolo, 1998). These skills are extremely necessary to the advancement of civics in a learner's life and help to create a knowledgeable and competent citizen. However, it must be mentioned that the mere belief that these students have gained various skills and comprehension is not the same as actually attaining these skills (Vontz & Nixon, 2000). To make the claim that each student gained a higher sense of comprehension would require a much more in-depth study.

It is also important to note that Project Citizen is currently being used in 15 different countries around the world with similar results (Center for Civic Education, 1999). For instance the program is highly successful in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. First implemented in 1996, it has been a major civic educational initiative of the Federation (Vontz & Nixon, 2000). Three years after its initial debut, the Federation held its third annual We the people...Project Citizen National Showcase. The showcase included 5,600 students presenting their portfolios to more than 550 educators, students, government officials, and media representatives (Center for Civic Education, 1999). The success of Project Citizen in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is a sign of support for the usefulness of an issue-based approach to civic-education.

Issue-based civic education widens the scope and treatment of civics in the classroom. In doing so, it develops the necessary higher order thinking skills associated with active involvement in civics. Lessons that analyze pubic issues, contemporary topics and controversial subjects in the classroom promote democratic attitudes and values. Also, it allows for the open and free exchange of ideas between the teacher and the taught

(Hoge, 1988). This format encourages students to examine important questions of policy that are relevant to them and their community. Issue-based civic education ensures that these students will become active not only in the classroom but also in society (Vontz & Nixon, 1999). Additionally, it helps students think through important issues while remaining respectful of differences of opinion and other points of view. Given the nature of our diverse society, this is a character trait American leaders must possess.

In conclusion, much of the research obtained has pointed out that civic education is a vital component of the education of every American. Warnings that the citizen gap or as Hubert Humphrey states the "dead air space between the people and their government is the greatest threat to our government (Branson, 1994). An improved model of civic education can help fill this gap. In order to test whether an issue-based model of civic education would be an improvement in the classroom the researchers sought to perform a study. Both researchers were assigned to high school placements for Clinical Internship student teaching in the spring semester of 2002. Since each was teach 11^{th} grade American History II students who would be soon of voting age and able to participate in the political process of the United States, the researchers selected four intact groups for this study.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

The existing research reveals that Americans are not prepared for responsible citizenship through their school social studies classes. With this in mind, the researchers decided to carry out a study that would allow them to test their presumption that students who are taught using an issue-based format of civic education would learn more about our government as well have a more optimistic attitudes towards civics. During the spring semester of 2002, both researchers were assigned to high school placements for Clinical Internship student teaching. Both assignments involved teaching 11th grade American History II students who would soon be of voting age and able to participate in the political process of the United States. For this reason the researchers chose to utilize them in their study. The researchers selected four intact groups from their placement. This was a population of convenience for the researchers. The study was performed in two different high schools in different southern New Jersey school districts.

Schools

The schools where the study was conducted will be identified throughout this paper as high school A and high school B. High school A was the placement of teacher 1, a female Master of Science in Teaching candidate. High school B was the placement of student teacher 2, a male Master of Science in Teaching candidate. Both high schools educate students in grades 9-12. High school B has an enrollment of approximately 500 more students than high school A. The schools were both predominately white, but each had a minority population represented as well. The researchers wanted a culturally

diverse sample, so they chose two 11th grade American History II college preparatory classrooms from each school that were the most culturally diverse and balanced according to gender.

Design

After reviewing and examining all characteristics of the location for the study and the participants, the researchers then focused on how they were going to conduct the experiment. After determining which classrooms would participate in the study, the researchers had to design the general set-up of their experiment. The design used in this study was the non-equivalent control group design. This was used because the researchers assigned treatment to intact similar groups. Each high school contained one treatment group and one control group. Both teacher 1 and teacher 2 randomly assigned the control group to one of their morning classes and the treatment group to one of their afternoon classes. The control group received the lecture-based lessons on civics while the treatment group was taught in an issue-based fashion. The experiment took place over a six-week period. Prior to the initiation of the treatment, both groups were tested to find out their level of comprehension and attitudes towards civics. At the end of the study, the same test and survey will be re-administered. The researchers used homogeneous groups and determined that no pre-existing differences occurred between the control group and experimental group by performing independent sample *t* test. This ensured the experiment's external validity. Along with high external validity, the researchers sought to maintain internal validity. When lessons were created, certain limitations or threats to this validity were noted. Potential problems included the length of time between the

pre-test/pre-attitudinal survey and post-test/post- attitudinal survey, as well as the differential selection of participants. Even though these problems were difficult to diminish, the researchers did their best to guarantee that all groups were equal in ability before the treatment was initiated.

Participants

The participants for this study were chosen based on the classes the researchers were assigned to for their Clinical Internship. The researchers selected a sample of four classrooms consisting of 70 students in total (N=70). High School A contained 34 students (n=34) were used in this experiment. In high school A, one class containing 17 students received lecture-based instruction. Another classroom also, containing 17 students received issue-based instruction. High school B utilized 36 students (n=36) in this study. The researchers chose one class from high school B which contained 18 students to receive lecture-based instruction. Another class containing 18 was assigned to receive issue-based instruction. Each classroom used in this study was already homogeneously group by the high school. The classrooms chosen by the researchers were designated to be on the college preparation track.

Instruments

The first action of the researchers was to develop a way to effectively measure and assess the samples' attitudes and appreciation of civics. The survey was created based on the Likert scale model (see Appendix A). This scale asks students to respond to a series of statements and questions concerning their current feelings and interest in a

subject, in this case, the subject was civics. Participants were asked ten questions and had to choose one of five responses. Response choices varied for each question. Responses indicated whether the student felt the statement was not important, important very important, hat it, it's okay, love it, disagree, neutral, agree, very low, average, very high. Each response was assigned a point value ranging one to five. A high score of 30 or above on the survey indicated to the researchers a positive disposition towards civics. Since numbers were used to represent the response choices, analysis for internal consistency was determined by using Cronbach's Alpha.

In addition to developing the attitudinal survey, the researchers also wanted to examine the level of comprehension of civics of both groups. The same test was be used at the beginning of the experiment and then again at the completion of the lessons. The researchers developed a multiple-choice test to measure knowledge of history, economics, law and politics in civic education (HELP Test). These four elements were chosen because the researchers felt that they encompassed all the major components of civics and the study of each would lead a student to a high level of cognitive understanding and practical application of civics. The HELP test (see Appendix A) was planned to have high content validity due to its accurate measure of what the student was both taught and what the student learned. The HELP Test has construct validity because every question was selected from a published textbook of Civics used in many high schools today. After determining the four major components of civics the researchers wanted to concentrate on, all questions on the HELP Test were aligned with these four areas of concentration. The researchers then sought the chapter test booklet of the civics instructional package they were using. Five questions were selected from several chapters

and test forms for each of the four areas that were to be covered by the instructors (see Table 1). There are 20 questions in total on the test. The researchers presume that their format used in designing the test will not damage the presumed high level of internal consistency because all questions on the HELP Test came from an accredited textbook company. Answering fifteen or more questions correct was accepted as being a high score by the researchers.

Table 1

Origin of the HELP Test Questions

Item Number	Chapter	Test Form	Question Number
1	10	A	2
2	10	A	7
3	10	A	13
4	10	A	11
5	2	A	15
6	5	A	15
7	7	A	12
8	22	A	7
9	8	B	6
10	8	B	9
11	8	A	11
12	3	B	10
13	11	A	9
14	11	A	11

15	22	A	15
16	22	A	11
17	21	B	8
18	21	B	6
19	12	B	5
20	12	B	16

Davis, J. (2000). *Civics participating in government.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Procedure

After identifying and developing the necessary instruments to be used in this experiment, the researchers began the process of planning both lecture-based and issue-based lessons. The experiment consisted of four lessons, taught on consecutive Fridays. These lessons focused on the three branches of government as well as state and local governments. The control group was instructed using formalized textbook and lecture-based lessons on civics. The researchers relied on the instructional materials and aids from the textbook *Civics Participating in Government*. These lessons were aimed at teaching concepts involved in democratic citizenship and participation. The researchers chose this aim for each lecture-based instruction because concepts are considered essential to the understanding of the principles and values of citizenship in America. Lessons were designed for mastery of fundamental concepts and facts involved in civic education. Students were treated as passive learners throughout each class period by being asked only to absorb and retain facts about civics. They received information provided and controlled by the teacher who was to be viewed as a master in the subject of

civics. The teacher emphasized content and regulated all classroom actions by deciding what and how much the students needed to know without any input from them. The teacher viewed his/her responsibility as ensuring that all students in the control group understood all definitions and concepts but allotting time to expand this knowledge into ideas and actions.

In contrast to the control group, the researchers exposed the treatment group to the alternative active teaching style of issue-based civic education. The content of these lessons was intended to be the same as the control group. However, the methods used in transmitting the knowledge were different. The researchers sought to take advantage of the benefits and aspects of an issue-centered education without sacrificing maximum student comprehension of the content within civic education. In issue-based education, students learn to practice skills and utilize the tools necessary for a positive democratic life. Civics was not treated by the researchers as a subject matter, that is isolated from life after secondary schooling is completed. Learning experiences were carefully selected by the researchers to prepare, spark and facilitate the sample's lifelong participation in civics. The teacher in these lessons served as a guide for the students who were challenged through activities, which involved problem solving and alternative thought processes. He/she only supervised students in locating, analyzing, interpreting and applying civic concepts and definitions. Unlike the lecture format in which the students were strictly taught what to think and know, this style stressed the development and explanation of individual and group thoughts on given information and actions within civic education.

After successfully determining how each style would be presented to the sample, the researchers felt it necessary to have some idea of the goals that were being aimed at. Educational objectives were developed. This is an essential step in planning instruction for both the control and treatment group. These objectives will be used as guidelines for selecting materials, specifying content, and organizing and developing procedures. All objectives came from the four components of study the researchers wanted to focus on. They included the Judicial branch, Legislative branch, and Executive branch and state/local governments. Lessons for both groups contained the same objectives in order to maintain consistency in instruction. In total the researchers listed seven educational objectives for four areas (see Table 2).

Table 2

Lesson Objectives

Area of Study	Educational Objectives
Judicial	The student will be able to map the steps in which a case reaches the Supreme Court.
	The student will be able to recognize the power of the Supreme Court decisions.
	The student will be to identify the process justices use in making their decisions.
Legislative	The student will be able to describe the role of Congress in the lawmaking process.
	The student will be able to summarize the steps involved in making a bill into a law.

Executive	The student will be able to define the authority, role and qualifications of the President and the Executive office.
State/Local government	The student will be able to explain the role, powers and organization of state and local governments.

Learning experiences were then developed for the control group and the treatment group. Each experience is geared towards one of the two teaching approaches and deemed effective for reaching each specific objective (see Table 3).

Table 3

Learning Experiences for Lecture-based and Issued-based groups

Group	Area of Study	Learning Experiences
Lecture-based	Judicial	Students will complete a flow map on the steps in which a case reaches the Supreme Court and take notes on the Judicial branch of government.
Lecture-based	Legislative	Students will complete a blank chart that depicts how a bill becomes a law. Students will read and answer questions on a current bill in Congress.
Lecture-based	Executive	Students will complete a guided reading activity defining the qualifications to be president, powers of the president and role of the president.
Lecture-based	State/Local	Students will be placed in four groups. Each group will receive a section of a chapter on state and local

		government. They are to answer questions at the end of each section.
Issue-based	Judicial	Students will analyze five controversial Supreme Court cases o the freedom of speech. Students will debate and argue in an open forum how they should be decided
Issue-based	Legislative	Students will be placed in groups and create an original bill either banning something concerning driving or allowing something that is currently prohibited. Students will present their proposed bills and vote for or against them.
Issue-based	Executive	Students will watch excerpts from an episode of the West Wing. Students will create a classified ad/help wanted ad for president. They are to include the skills, qualifications and duties required.
Issue-based	State/Local	Students will bring in articles from the newspaper on issues that affect state and local government. Students will create potential remedies for these issues

After identifying learning experiences, the researchers wrote formal lesson plans for each individual lesson (see Appendix B). This was an essential step in the planning

process because two teachers taught each lesson. A formal lesson plan assured that participants in both high schools would receive the same type of instruction and content.

During the last week of March, the researchers began their experiment. They administered the pre-HELP test and the pre-attitudinal survey. The data from these instruments was scored and noted, as it would be used later to assess the success of the treatment. From that date on, both researchers taught lessons on consecutive Fridays. During the first week of May, the study was assessed with the re-administration of both the HELP test and the attitudinal survey. Questions reexamined were the same on both. The structure and degree of content difficulty remained the same. Data from the initial HELP test and attitudinal survey were compared with scores taken from the second set of tests.

It was decided by the researchers to first conduct two independent sample *t* tests to measure whether there was a difference in attitude and/or difference in level of comprehension based on how the group was instructed. The researchers also conducted two, two by two analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests on the data to determine whether a significant statistical difference occurred among the two groups in high school A in knowledge and attitude and appreciation versus those taught in high school B.

Chapter 4- Analysis

One of the numerous concerns of civic educators is the declining political engagement of young Americans. Researchers have attempted to pinpoint the cause of and solution for this growing ignorance and apathy. Findings point to the need to improve the content and the way educators teach civic education. One new model mentioned in the research is an issue-based approach to civic education. The researchers attempted to perform a study testing whether an issue-based approach would create any difference in both how students feel and what they know about civics.

The researchers selected four intact classrooms for this study, two that were taught using an issue-based approach and two that were instructed using the lecture-based approach. Both groups were given a test and survey before and after instruction to see if the model used in instruction had any effect on the participants' attitudes towards civics and their level of comprehension of civics. Furthermore, the researchers wanted to see if the school attended had any effect on the students' results on the both instruments. This chapter statistically analyzes the results of the study.

Prior to instruction, the researchers administered a survey on each participant's attitude towards civics and a test measuring the students' knowledge on the four major components of civics. Since the attitudinal survey used numbers to represent response choices, analysis for internal consistency was determined by using Cronbach's Alpha. Cronbach's Alpha was used to estimate internal consistency reliability by determining how well all items on a test relate to all other test items and the total test (Gay and Airasian, 2000). If the correlation is high, then there is evidence that the items are

measuring the same underlying construct. This noted in the reliability coefficient. If the coefficient is .80 or higher, then it is considered acceptable. Thus the test is taken into account as being reliable and consistent. After performing Cronbach's Alpha on the attitudinal survey, a reliability coefficient of .8308 resulted (see Table 4). In this instance, the researchers can be assured that their attitudinal survey was reliable and all questions measured similar things.

Table 4

Cronbach's Alpha Results

N of Cases	N of Items	Alpha
70.0	10	.8308

The HELP test was compiled from a reliable civics textbook. For this reason, the researchers presume that all questions were reliable. After concluding that the survey and test were reliable, the researchers administered the instruments to each participant in the sample to determine if there was any pre-existing difference between the lecture-based group and issue-based group. In other words, the researchers wanted to verify if the groups were fairly equal in their attitudes and appreciation of civics and their knowledge of civics. To do this, the researchers performed an Independent samples *t* test on the results of the lecture-based and issue-based pre-attitudinal and pre-HELP test scores (see Table 5 for pre-attitudinal data). In looking at the attitudinal survey, the Mean, or average score was 30.11 out of a possible 50 for the lecture-based group (n=35). The issue-based group (n=35) had a mean of 29.02. This indicates to the researchers that the appreciation

and attitudes towards civics of both groups was approximately the same prior to instruction.

Table 5

Independent Samples t Test for the Pre-Attitudinal Survey

Independent Variable	N	Mean	STD	*t*	*df*	*p*
Lecture-Based	35	30.1143	5.2791	.766	68	.440
Issue-based	35	29.0286	6.3731	.766	68	.440

Note: p>.05 is not significant

The results of the pre-HELP test also allow the researchers to conclude that both groups' Means prior to instruction were also relatively equal in their level of comprehension of civics (see Table 6). The Mean of the lecture-based group was 12.14, while the Mean of the issue-based group was 12.08. Both groups maintained almost the same level of comprehension of civics prior to instruction. Overall, both Independent Samples *t* tests demonstrate that there were not any pre-existing differences between the two groups that would affect the outcome of the study. After determining that the researchers had homogeneous groups in terms of attitude towards civics and levels of comprehension of civics, the treatment was initiated. Once the study was concluded, the post-attitudinal survey and post-HELP test were administered.

Table 6

Independent Samples t Test for the Pre-HELP Test

Independent Variable	N	Mean	STD	*t*	*df*	*p*
Lecture-based	35	12.1429	2.2899	.95	68	.924
Issue-based	35	12.0857	2.7157	.95	68	.924

Note: p>.o5 is not significant

To analyze the data of the lecture-based group compared to the issue-based group, the researchers performed two Independent samples *t* tests. Analysis of data to show the difference of the attitudes and appreciation of civics between the two groups revealed a Mean of 32.2 for the lecture-based group (n=35) and a Mean of 29.5 for the students who received issue-based instruction (see Table 7). Contrary to the researchers' belief that the issue-based group would yield higher Mean scores, it was the lecture-based group that actually had the higher scores on the attitudinal survey. This may have been because most classes are taught with a lecture-based format. For this reason, the issue-based approach is unfamiliar to most students. Since there was no significant statistical difference between the two groups, the researchers must reject H_1 and accept the null hypothesis. However, though it was not statistically significant, it is important to note that it was approaching the level of significance.

Table 7

Independent Sample t Test for the Post-Attitudinal Survey

Independent Variable	N	Mean	STD	*t*	*df*	*p*
Lecture-based	35	32.2000	6.1778	1.744	68	.086
Issue-based	35	29.5714	6.4319	1.744	68	.086

Note: p>.05 is not significant

Analysis of data on the post-HELP test given after treatment was completed revealed that the lecture-based group (n=35) had a slightly higher Mean score than the issue-based group (see Table 8). The Mean of the lecture-based group was 11.9 and the Mean of the issue-based group was 11.2. However there is not a statistically significant difference between the two groups level of comprehension as a result of different methods of teaching, so the researchers must reject H_2 and accept the null hypothesis. Interestingly, among the pre-HELP and post-HELP scores there was only a slight difference in Means that could not be directly attributed to type of instruction.

Table 8

Independent Sample t Test for the Post-HELP Test

Independent Variable	N	Mean	STD	*t*	*df*	*p*
Lecture-based	35	11.9429	2.6673	.909	68	.366
Issue-based	35	11.2571	3.5756	.909	68	.366

Note: p>.05 is not significant

In order to determine if there was a significant difference between the participants' attitudes towards civics and the two schools they went to, the researchers did a 2x2 ANOVA (see Table 9). School, main effect A, was not a statistically significant factor nor was main effect B, instruction. Furthermore, there was not a statistically significant difference in the interaction between main effect A and main effect B. Thus, in looking at school as a possible main effect in the difference in attitudes and appreciation towards civics, the researchers found that there was no statistical significant difference in attitudes towards and appreciation of civics. This concludes that there was not a statistical difference between and interaction of where the students were taught and how they responded on the attitudinal survey. This shows that regardless of what school the students attended it did not have an affect their attitudes of civics. This leads the researchers to reject H_3 and accept the null hypothesis.

Table 9

Univariate Analysis of Variance of Post-Attitudinal Survey

Between Subjects

Source	*df*	F	MS	*p*
School	1	1.790	68.984	.186
Instruction	1	1.685	64.959	.199
School * Instruction	1	.612	23.600	.437
Error	66	-	38.544	
Total	70	-	-	
Corrected Total	69	-	-	

a. R Squared = .100 (adjusted R Squared = .059)

In order to determine whether there was any interaction between the students' comprehension of civics and the schools that they attended, the researchers performed another 2x2 ANOVA (see Table 10). In looking at school as a factor in different comprehension levels of civics, the test discovered that main effect A, school and main effect B, instruction was statistically significant. Therefore, the ANOVA revealed that there was no interaction between school and instruction. This means that where a student attended school did not make a statistical difference in their comprehension levels of civics. For this reason, the researchers have to reject H_4 and accept the null hypothesis.

Table 10

Univariate Analysis of Variance of the Post-HELP Test

Between Subjects

Source	*df*	F	MS	*p*
School	1	.298	2.928	.587
Instruction	1	1.570	15.438	.215
School * Instruction	1	1.035	10.182	.313
Error	66	-	9.834	-
Total	70	-	-	-
Corrected Total	69	-	-	-

a. R Squared = .052 (Adjusted R Squared = .009)

Through the use of the Independent samples *t* test and the ANOVA, the researchers have determined that none of their hypotheses were proven to be statistically significant. There are numerous reasons as to why the study resulted in this statistical conclusion, which need to be explored. However, even though all research hypotheses were rejected,

the researchers believe that there is reason to believe that the results do hold some value in determining the method by which civics is taught and should be taught.

Chapter 5 - Discussion

The researchers set two main objectives before beginning their study. The first was to find out whether or not an issue-based approach would impact a student's interest level or comprehension of civics. The second objective was to find out whether or not the particular school a student attended affected their interest level or comprehension of civics. The entire study revolved around these two objectives. As stated earlier, the researchers found literature that supported their beliefs that civic involvement and responsibility in America was in fact in a state of apathy and decline. The literature also supported their claim that this was primarily due to the way that American schools teach civics and that today's educators needed a new focus in teaching civic education. This new focus in teaching civic education was called an issue-based model. With this model in mind, the researchers designed a study that would measure the effects that both the traditional lecture-based approach had and the issue-based approach had on interest and comprehension levels of civics. The results of both the test and the survey would tell each researcher how each group felt about civics and what they knew about civics before and after treatment. The results of each instrument would be vital in the researchers' acceptance or rejection of each hypothesis.

What the researchers found was that an issue-based approach to civic education made no statistically significant difference in either the students' interest levels or their comprehension levels of civics. As disappointing as it was to the researchers to have to reject their first two hypotheses, the data did prove important in other areas. First, although issue-based civics did not raise the groups' overall comprehension level in

civics, it was on par with how each group felt prior to instruction. This tells the researchers that although the desired outcome was not obtained, the study was done correctly and efficiently. The median scores on the pre-HELP and the post-HELP were separated by only .7 on each test and this shows that each group remained relatively consistent. Again, although the research did not prove to be statistically significant, it led the researchers to believe that the study was well-designed and implemented. Second, the researchers believed that the nearly identical separation of median scores between the two groups shows that the study was probably not long enough to show any significant difference. The median scores of the pre-HELP and the post-HELP were so similar that not enough treatment occurred between them to produce any statistically significant data. This will be addressed later in suggestions for future studies.

When analyzing the results for the pre-attitudinal survey and the post-attitudinal survey, the researchers hold similar views. Although the two groups' median scores were separated by a slightly greater margin after the treatment, they still showed a fairly consistent pattern with the first set of surveys given prior to treatment. This also tells the researchers several things about their study. First, not enough treatment occurred between the two surveys to create a statistically significant difference. It was probably too short of a study to change how students feel about civics. By the time most students are becoming accustomed to the material and the pattern of teaching, the study was ended. A longer study may give students a long enough period to become comfortable with the material and style of teaching so that they may change their viewpoints on civics. Second and maybe most important, the researchers believe that the higher survey scores on both the survey prior to treatment and after treatment is directly linked to the style of teaching

the students are most accustomed to. It is important to note that each researcher was a student teacher throughout this study and they were taking over for a teacher who had taught these same students for approximately six months before each student teacher would begin. The researchers believe that a certain level of comfort and trust exists between a student and a teacher that cannot be duplicated over a four to five week span. Students feel comfortable with a teacher's style and know what to expect from lesson to lesson and test to test. The researchers want to point out that they both were taking over classes that were primarily lecture-based and this proved difficult to overcome throughout the study. The researchers were required to build rapport with each student while making each student feel comfortable with the issue-based approach to teaching civics. This proved to be more difficult than expected and the Mean scores of comprehension will attest to this. However, given a lengthier study or doing this study through a teacher who has had students for a reasonable length of time might produce statistically significant results. In conclusion, the researchers feel the higher interest levels of the lecture-based group over the issue-based groups has more to do with comfort and familiarity with their primary teacher than it does with the failure of an issue-based approach to create results.

The researchers also looked at the interest and comprehension levels of each student using the issue-based approach and applied each school to see if what school a student attended produced any results. However, the researchers found no statistically significant difference between where a student attended school and their interest or comprehension levels in civics. Before designing and instituting this study the researchers looked at both the settings of each school and its overall student population. As was noted

in Chapter 3, the schools were different in terms of diversity and the researchers assumed that this would make a difference when they looked at interest and comprehension levels of the two schools. In other words, the researchers believe and still do believe that where a student attends school will make a difference in how they feel and how well they comprehend content in a given subject area. This belief did not produce the desired results for two reasons. First, the sample size was much too small. It is extremely difficult to duplicate the feelings of an entire student body while collecting data from only 35 students. Second, the study was not long enough to provide enough treatment to show how the school a student attends affects their interest and comprehension level of civics.

The lack of statistically significant data does not mean that the results were not important in other areas or that they would not be statistically significant given a few changes in the study. The researchers were extremely intrigued by the study's finding on the significance that instruction made on a student's interest of civics. Again, although the results were not statistically significant they did approach a level of significance. The intriguing part of this is that it was the post-attitudinal survey results of the lecture-based groups that approached a level of significance. The researchers attest this to an overall comfort level most students have with a lecture-based approach. The lecture-based group had a higher level of interest in civics than the issue-based group because they were used to this style of teaching and it required less activity and participation on their part. One thing the researchers did notice throughout the study was that most students disliked becoming a part of what they were learning and instead would rather take a backseat and listen to a lecture-based class. Because issue-based civics both encourages and requires students to become involved and because most students do not like becoming involved

the post-attitudinal survey median scores were higher than the pre-attitudinal survey scores.

Limitations

Throughout the study the researchers noticed some limitations that reduced the effectiveness of the treatment. First, as mentioned earlier the researchers were student teachers and this compromised the rapport with the students making it a little more difficult teach each particular lesson. Also, the fact that the researchers were student teachers made their styles inevitably "new" and produced a sense of hesitation by the students to engage themselves in each lesson. What might be even more important to point out is that this study took place over a four-week span and that this consisted of approximately a third of the total teaching time the student teachers had with their students. This made producing statistically significant results extremely difficult.

Another limitation of this study had to do with the time the study was conducted. The study was conducted from early April to early May. This is important because some of the students were seniors and April and May do not show up on their academic calendars. For the rest of the students, many of these lessons were time to unwind and relax as the year dwindled away. This undoubtedly figured into the results from both the post-HELP and the post-attitudinal survey. Another time factor is that the study was conducted seven months later than the September 11th tragedy. As the researchers noted in the introduction, there might never be a better time to become active in ones community than now and no greater thing to do than to accept a civic responsibility. However, time is sometimes quick to heal wounds and the wounds of the young heal the

quickest. Many of the researchers' students did not feel the call of civic responsibility in April or May and they did in September and October. Therefore the interest level in civics and the topics that were discussed throughout the study were lower than they might have been seven months earlier.

The researchers were able to narrow down all the limitations of this study to several which they believe to be the most important in running a study such as this one. First, the issue of individual teaching style cannot be overlooked. The researchers had two very different and distinct styles and this definitely had an effect on the study. Although this limitation cannot be corrected, it must be taken into account when looking at the overall results of the study. Second, the sample size of this study was a severe limitation. As noted earlier, the sample for this study was only 70 compared to schools with a total population of about 4,000 students combined. A larger study would be needed if any substantial conclusions are to be drawn. Third, the lack of sufficient assessments for each particular lesson and the entire study compromised the effectiveness of the study. Most students knew that they would not be held responsible for each lesson's content and this created a lack of effort on their part. This directly affects both their interest and comprehension levels in civics. The researchers believe these limitations must be taken into account before conducting a study such as this.

Suggestions for further research

The researchers would first suggest to anyone thinking of conducting a study such as this to review the above limitations. Although some limitations cannot be addressed, many of them can and will need to be if potential researchers wish to produce statistically

significant results. There were too many limitations in the researchers' study to produce statistically significant results but with some changes it can provide some real valuable insight into the effects of issue-based civics. Another suggestion the researchers would like to make is that they believe contrary to what Hirsch (1996) states that content will not be sacrificed in an issue-based approach to civic education. In fact the results from the study show that the post-HELP scores from both groups are extremely close and that Hirsch claim may not be valid. Also a larger and lengthier study might provide enough scope to see if in fact this lack of content does discriminate against under-privileged students. Hirsch (1996) believes it will and larger study will probably incorporate a large enough sample to test this claim.

Finally, the researchers would like to encourage others to expand on the study and widen its scope in terms of length and sample size. The researchers believe that this study was well worth the time and work it took and believe in the importance of incorporating issue-based civics in the classroom. The researchers believe that an issue-based approach to civic education can go a long way in reaching both the national and state standards for civic education. An issue-based approach to teaching civics can in fact create a connection between students and their communities. It can fill the gap between the people and the government.

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APPENDIX A

Attitudinal Survey

HELP Test

American History II (CP) Research Project

Answer the following questions honestly. . .

1. How important is it for every citizen to learn about civics/government?

1	2	3	4	5
Not important		important		very important

2. How much do you enjoy learning about civics/government?

1	2	3	4	5
hate it		it's okay		love it

3. Do you think that all schools should teach civics/ government to their students?

1	2	3	4	5
disagree		neutral		agree

4. How would you rate your knowledge of civics/government?

1	2	3	4	5
very low		average		very high

5. Do you think that you've been adequately prepared to participate in civic/government?

1	2	3	4	5
Disagree		neutral		agree

6. I would like to learn civics strictly through a structured textbook lecture model.

1	2	3	4	5
disagree		neutral		agree

7. I would like to learn civics according to an issue-based structure, which utilizes real life contemporary problems.

1	2	3	4	5
disagree		neutral		agree

8. Do you believe that an issue-based lesson would be more likely to increase your knowledge on civics?

1	2	3	4	5
disagree		neutral		agree

9. Do you believe that a structured textbook/lecture approach would increase your knowledge of civics/government?

1	2	3	4	5
disagree		neutral		agree

10. How would you rate your overall knowledge of civics/government compared to your peers?

1	2	3	4	5
very low		adequate		very high

Research Project (CP)
Directions: Answer the multiple choice questions as best you can. Fill in the correct letter.

____ 1. A court can interpret a law
- A. only in a specific case
- B. whenever Congress asks it to
- C. whenever the President asks it to
- D. whenever it wants to establish a precedent

____ 2. Supreme Court decisions require a
- A. unanimous vote
- B. simple majority vote
- C. two-thirds vote
- D. three-fourths vote

____ 3. Who has the final say about what the Constitution means?
- A. Congress
- B. the President
- C. Supreme Court
- D. all three government branches

____ 4. Supreme Court Justices should not be influenced by
- A. Decisions of previous courts
- B. The Constitution
- C. What the President wants
- D. What Congress had in mind when making the law

____ 5. An advantage of a democracy is that people
- A. always agree about the country's values
- B. can usually solve controversial issues easily
- C. do not have to obey laws
- D. have the right to make decisions about what the government will do

____ 6. Separation of Powers means that
- A. state and federal governments have different powers
- B. power is divided among the three branches of government
- C. each branch can limit the powers of the other branch
- D. The Judicial branch decides the powers of the other branches.

____ 7. The amendments to the Constitution are evidence that the Constitution
- A. gives the people too much power
- B. is flexible
- C. is finally perfect
- D. Changes only in wartime.

____ 8. In most states voters must be all of the following EXCEPT
- A. at least 18 years old
- B. employed
- C. a resident of the state in which they vote
- D. registered

____ 9. Which of the following is true about Congress?
A. It is the judicial branch of the government.
B. Its main job is to enforce laws.
C. It can appoint ambassadors.
D. It is made up of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

____ 10. The number of state's representatives
A. Does not change.
B. Is determined by the majority party.
C. Can never be more than 50.
D. Can change after a census.

____ 11. Senators
A. Represent an entire state.
B. Serve the same length term as Representatives.
C. Must have been born in the United States.
D. Do not have to worry about what people in their states think.

_____ 12. Leaders in the House and Senate are chosen by
A. The majority party.
B. Both the democratic and Republican parties.
C. A conference committee
D. The President

_____ 13. A common argument for strong state governments is that, compared to the federal government, they are
A. Less corrupt.
B. Better able to serve their citizens' needs.
C. Better able to solve problems involving many states.
D. More likely to provide equal opportunities.

____ 14. A bill is
A. A plan of action designed to achieve a certain goal
B. A proposed law
C. A constitutional amendment
D. A formal agreement with other countries

____ 15. After a bill is introduced in either the House or Senate it is
A. Read and debated on the floor
B. Voted on by the House and the Senate
C. Sent to the President
D. Sent to a committee for study and review

____ 16. To be President a person must
A. Be at least 35 years old
B. Be a natural born citizen
C. Live in the United States for 14 years
D. All of the above

____ 17. A role of the President is to
A. Set goals and develop policies for the nation
B. Be responsible for making laws
C. Represent only voters
D. Head the legislative branch of government

____ 18. Most state tax revenue comes from
A. Income and sales tax
B. Excise and property tax
C. Sales and excise tax
D. Property and income tax

____ 19. Local governments are created by
A. The state government.
B. A board of supervisors.
C. The Federal Constitution.
D. The voters.

____ 20. Local, state and federal governments agree
A. About who will pay for services.
B. About who will decided what kinds of services to provide.
C. That no one level of government can meet all citizens' needs.
D. About how to spend grant money.

APPENDIX B

Lesson Plans

Teacher: Carissa Larkin and Nick DiBlasi
Class: American History II **Period:** 1,3
Grade Level: 11
Lesson Topic:Judicial Branch **Lecture-based**

A. Planning the Lesson

Rationale – Research Project Lesson #1 – Supreme Court

Lesson Objectives –

- The student will be able to map the steps in which a case reaches the Supreme Court.
- The student will be able to recognize the power of the Supreme Court decisions.
- The student will be able to determine the processes justices use in making their decisions by successfully completing a flow map.

Materials and Equipment –

- Blank flow map
- Steps in which cases can reach the Supreme Court

B. Instruction

Do Now: Read the following quote . . .

"The Constitution is what the judges say it is."

What does it mean?

Setting the Stage – The teacher and students will discuss this quote. She will ask the students their interpretation of the quotation. She will stop the discussion once students begin to realize that the Supreme Court in responsible for interpreting the Constitution and deciding what laws is constitutional and unconstitutional.

Transition: How does a case make it all the way to the Supreme Court? Once a case reaches the Supreme Court what process do the judges use in making a decision? These questions will be examined and ultimately explained in today's lesson.

Activity 1 – The following will be discussed while the students and teacher completes a flow chart.

Introduction – What Do Courts Do?

- Courts of law resolve legal conflicts. All courts perform the same basic function: to apply the law to an actual situation. Courts in our legal system resolve two kinds of legal conflicts. Criminal cases and

civil cases. The federal courts hear both kinds of cases and they both can find their way up to the Supreme Court.

- Interpreting the law – A court has to decide what the law in question means. A court must also have to decide if the law is allowed by the Constitution. This process of interpretation is a very important job. A court decision in a case has very broad effects. This is because a decision can establish a precedent, a guideline for how all-similar cases should be decided in the future. A precedent makes the meaning of a law and the Constitution clearer.

Discussion questions:

1. Why are courts important parts of our government?
2. How do their decisions affect citizens?

- State and Federal Courts – the legal system is made up of two separate court systems – those of the states and that of the federal government. Most legal cases begin in a lower level court. Each state has courts at different levels of government and courts for different purposes. Since most of the laws that govern our everyday actions are state laws most legal disputes are decided in state courts.
- Court of Appeals – appeal – to ask a higher court to review a decision and determine if justice was done. This court does not hold trials nor does it determine facts of cases. Its purpose is to review the legal issues involved to determine if the law was applied fairly and if due process of the law was followed. The court can decide to affirm a lower courts decision or it may reverse the decision. If that happens, the appeals court orders another trial
- Federal Courts - hear two kinds of cases; cases involving laws and issues beyond the authority of individual states and cases appealed from state supreme courts. In this role the Supreme Court sees that all 50 states interpret the Constitution in the same way that way all Americans are protected.
- Supreme Court - is the highest court in the federal court system. The major purpose of this court is to serve as the final court of appeals for both state and federal court systems. Only the Supreme Court has the final say about what the Constitution means. It establishes the broadest and longest lasting kind of precedent in our legal system.
- Judicial Review – one of the most important powers of the court. The power to overturn any law, which the court decides, is in conflict with the Constitution. Final Say.
- Justices – they must have the highest moral standards and have thorough knowledge of the law, constitution and history. The president chooses the justices from among the most respected judges, lawyers and legal scholars. The senate must approve the appointment.
- Work of the Supreme Court – each year the court chooses which cases to hear. The cases which they hear usually are those that raise the

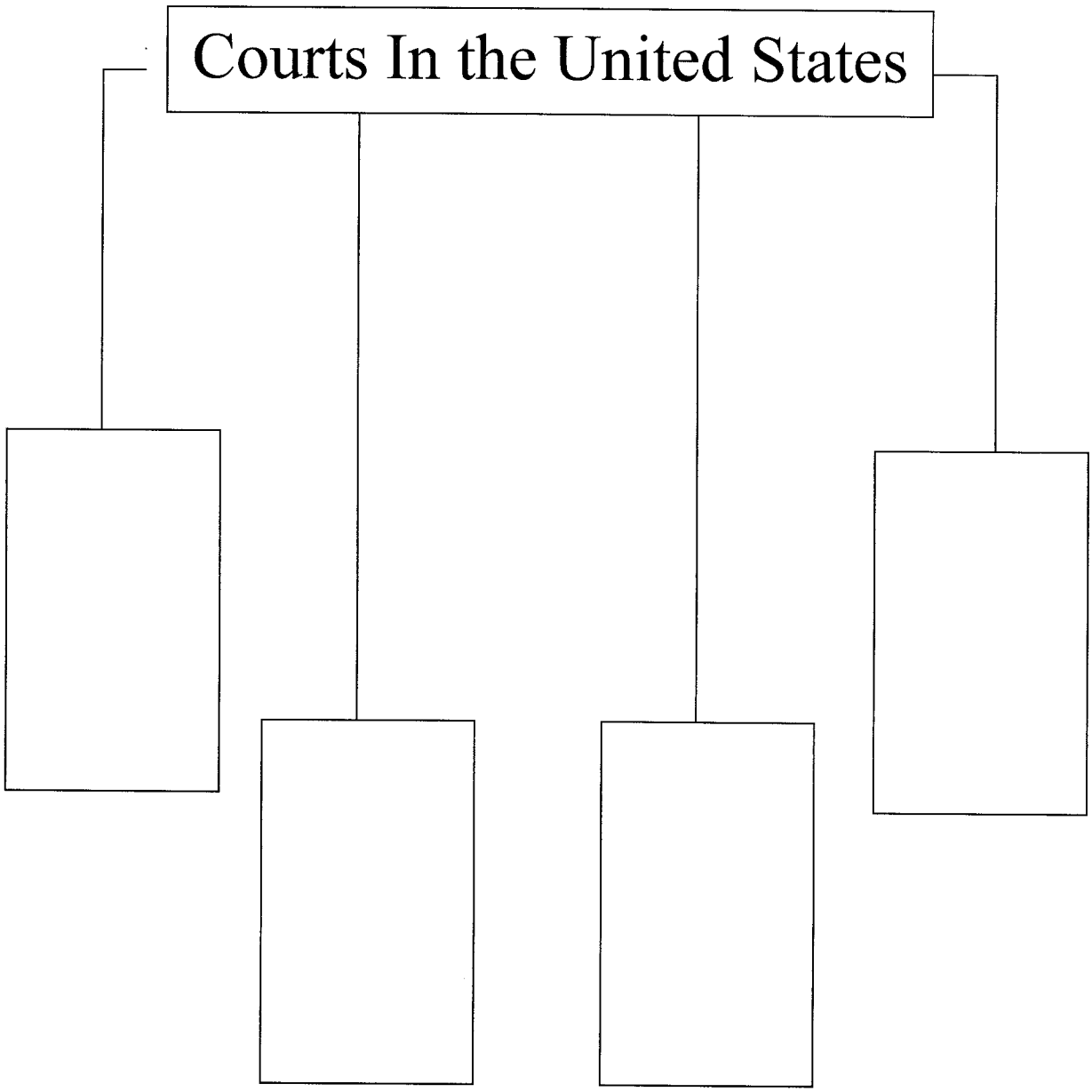
most important constitutional issues. When a case is put on the court calendar each side submits briefs. The justices study the briefs. The attorneys for each side present oral arguments. There are time limits placed on these arguments. The justices then ask questions to the attorneys to clarify information. After hearing oral arguments the court meets in conference to discuss that case and votes on it. The Chief justice leads the discussion. Then each justice has a chance to comment. A simple majority decides the case.

- Writing Opinions – decisions are accompanied by a written statement explaining the reasons for the decision. It shows exactly how the law is to be applied.
- Influences – a justice is most concerned with the law and how it has been applied up to that point. They must carefully review laws, related precedents and try to determine the intentions of lawmakers at the time they made a particular law. Hard to be impartial.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why must judges be chosen very carefully?
2. How can a case involving specific individuals have wide-ranging effects?

Closure – Ask students to summarize one way a case reaches the Supreme Court? Can you think of any recent Supreme Court decisions?


Courts In the United States

Teacher: Carissa Larkin and Nick DiBlasi
Class: American History II **Period:** 1,3
Grade Level: 11
Lesson Topic:Judicial Branch **Issue-based**

A. Planning the Lesson

Rationale – Research Project Lesson #1 – Supreme Court

Lesson Objectives –

- The student will be able to map the steps in which a case reaches the Supreme Court.
- The student will be able to recognize the power of the Supreme Court decisions.
- The student will be able to determine the processes justices use in making their decisions.

Materials and Equipment –

- List of Supreme Court Cases

B. Instruction

Do Now: Read the following quote . . .

"The Constitution is what the judges say it is."

What does it mean? The teacher and students will discuss this quote

Setting the Stage – This lesson is to show students the role of the Supreme Court in respect to interpreting the law.

Transition: How does a case make it all the way to the Supreme Court? Once a case reaches the Supreme Court what process do the judges use in making a decision? These questions will be examined and ultimately explained in today's lesson.

Activity 1 – The students will receive a list of five controversial Supreme Court decisions, which are laws. The wide range of cases presented will help students reach the each given objective.

- Each case will be introduced by name. The teacher will write the name of the case on the board, including the year to help the students understand what was happening in the world and in the United States that may have influenced the court to rule as they did. The students will not be told the outcome of each case. The students are to argue and analyze each potential decision. Ultimately, the class will vote after each argument is exhausted.

- While students are presenting their arguments the teacher will add in the following information. . .

What Do Courts Do?

- Courts of law resolve legal conflicts. All courts perform the same basic function: to apply the law to an actual situation. Courts in our legal system resolve two kinds of legal conflicts. Criminal cases and civil cases. The federal courts hear both kinds of cases and both types of cases can find their way up to the Supreme Court.
- Interpreting the law – A court has to decide what the law in question means. A court must also decide if the law is allowed by the Constitution. This process of interpretation is a very important job. A court decision in a case has very broad effects. This is because a decision can establish a precedent, a guideline for how all similar cases should be decided in the future. A precedent makes the meaning of a law and the Constitution clearer.

Discussion questions:

3. Why are courts important parts of our government?
4. How do their decisions affect citizens?

- State and Federal Courts – the legal system is made up of two separate court systems – those of the states and that of the federal government. Most legal cases begin in a lower level court. Each state has courts at different levels of government and courts for different purposes. Since most of the laws that govern our everyday actions are state laws most legal disputes are decided in state courts.
- Court of Appeals – appeal – to ask a higher court to review a decision and determine if justice was done. This court does not hold trials nor does it determine facts of cases. Its purpose is to review the legal issues involved to determine if the law was applied fairly and if due process of the law was followed. The court can decide to affirm a lower courts decision or it may reverse the decision. If that happens, the appeals court orders another trial
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- Judicial Review – one of the most important powers of the court. The power to overturn any law, which the court decides, is in conflict with the Constitution. Final Say.

- Justices – they must have the highest moral standards and have thorough knowledge of the law, constitution and history. The president chooses the justices from among the most respected judges, lawyers and legal scholars. The senate must approve the appointment.
- Work of the Supreme Court – each year the court chooses which cases to hear. The cases which they hear usually are those that raise the most important constitutional issues. When a case is put on the court calendar each side submits briefs. The justices study the briefs. The attorneys for each side present oral arguments. There are time limits placed on these arguments. The justices then ask questions to the attorneys to clarify information. After hearing oral arguments the court meets in conference to discuss that case and votes on it. The Chief justice leads the discussion. Then each justice has a chance to comment. A simple majority decides the case.
- Writing Opinions – decisions are accompanied by a written statement explaining the reasons for the decision. It shows exactly how the law is to be applied.
- Influences – a justice is most concerned with the law and how it has been applied up to that point. They must carefully review laws, related precedents and try to determine the intentions of lawmakers at the time they made a particular law. Hard to be impartial.

Discussion Questions:

3. Why must judges be chosen very carefully?
4. How can a case involving specific individuals have wide-ranging effects?

Closure – Discuss which arguments were the strongest and why? Do you agree with all the decisions discussed today? Why or why not?
Ask students to summarize one way a case reaches the Supreme Court?

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

Amendment I, Bill of Rights

1. Smith v. Goguen (1975) – Goguen wore a small cloth version of the American flag on the bottom of his pants. He was convicted in Massachusetts of treating the flag disrespectfully.

What did the Supreme Court say?

2. Halter v. Nebraska (1970) – Halter brewed home beer in accordance with state law. He placed an American flag on the beer bottle. He was convicted for disrespecting the flag.

What did the Supreme Court say?

3. Cohen v. California (1971) – Defendant was arrested for disturbing the peace. He wore a jacket that said "F#!# the Draft"

What did the Supreme Court say?

4. United States v. O'Brien (1968) – O'Brien and three others burned draft cards on the steps of a courthouse. He was arrested.

What did the Supreme Court say?

5. Tinker v. Des Moines School District (1969) – Two students wore arm bands to school to protest the Vietnam War. They refused to remove them when asked to do so. The students were expelled.

What did the Supreme Court say?

Teacher: Carissa Larkin and Nick DiBlasi	
Class: American History II	**Period:** 1,3
Grade Level: 11 CP	
Lesson Topic: Legislative Branch	**Issue-based**

A. Planning the Lesson

Rationale – How a bill becomes a law.

Lesson Objectives –

- The student will be able to describe the role of Congress in the lawmaking process.
- The student will be able to summarize the steps involved in making a bill into a law by devising his or her own law in groups.

Materials and Equipment –

- Law handout
- Chart handout
- Task handout
- Transparency of process

B. Instruction

Do Now: Pick up a handout and read the laws. How were these laws actually passed?

Setting the Stage – The purpose of Congress is to make laws. While it is simple to state its purpose in one brief sentence, it is another matter to be able to explain how the process works. For example between, 1991-1993 more than 10,000 bills were introduced but only 590 became laws. Let's examine why it's so hard to make a bill into a law.

Activity 1 – Create a bill

- Students will be placed into small groups of four. Each group will be given a task sheet, which asks them to create a bill either banning something concerning driving or allowing something currently, banned.
- After each group has completed the assignment, they will present their bills to the class. Students will vote on whose is passed and whose is not.
- While discussing each bill the following will be alluded to . .
- Where do bills come from? Citizens, interest groups or the executive branch. Only a senator or a representative can introduce bills into congress. Once introduced it is marked. House –HR and Senate S. The are assigned numbers in the order that they are introduced.
- Sent to committee hearings – each committee deals with a certain area. In the House there are 19 and Senate there are 17. Each committee deals with a different area, example banking or education. They control the fate of bills.

They study the bill, hold hearings, and propose changes. They will either recommend if all of Congress should hear the proposed bill or not. If not recommended the bill DIES. Committees are made up of both Republicans and Democrats. The majority party at the time makes up most of the committee. The majority of the members come from the majority party.

- If bill is recommended it goes to the floor – while in floor action the bill is read aloud. It is debated on. If approved it is sent to the other house.
- Other house – follows same process. Committee – floor action. If the bill is approved as is it is sent to the president. If amendments are made it gets sent back to the other house and follows the same process.
- When bill is approved it goes to the president he/she can either sign it and it becomes law or he can veto it.

Closure – The teacher will discuss the following questions: Why is it important to know this? Why is it so difficult for a bill to become a law?

American History CP

Your task: Create a bill either banning something concerning driving or allowing something that is currently prohibited. Answer the following questions.

1. State your potential law.

2. Explain how your bill could become a law.

3. How will your bill make driving better?

4. State the strong points of the potential law.

5. State the deficiencies of the potential law.

6. Who would probably want this bill to be passed?

7. Who would oppose it?

8. Do you think our process for making a bill is good or bad? Why?

Teacher: Carissa Larkin and Nick DiBlasi	
Class: American History II	**Period:** 1,3
Grade Level: 11 CP	
Lesson Topic: Legislative Branch	**Lecture-based**

A. Planning the Lesson

Rationale – How a bill becomes a law.

Lesson Objectives –

- The student will be able to describe the role of Congress in the lawmaking process.
- The student will be able to summarize the steps involved in making a bill into a law.

Materials and Equipment –

- Blank chart handout
- Bill handout
- Transparency of process

B. Instruction

Do Now: Complete the chart on how a bill becomes a law.
Students will receive a blank chart that depicts how a bill becomes law. There is a word bank to guide the student's thoughts. They are to try to complete it based on any prior knowledge they have concerning this issue.

Setting the Stage – The purpose of Congress is to make laws. While it is simple to state its purpose in one brief sentence, it is another matter to be able to explain how the process works. For example between, 1991-1993 more than 10,000 bills were introduced but only 590 became laws. Let's examine why it's so hard to make a bill into a law.

Activity 1 –

The teacher will place a transparency on the projector. It shows the process of how a bill becomes a law. She will describe each step in detail.

- Where do bills come from? Citizens, interest groups or the executive branch. Only a senator or a representative can introduce bills into congress. Once introduced it is marked. House –HR and Senate S. The are assigned numbers in the order that they are introduced.
- Sent to committee hearings – each committee deals with a certain area. In the House there are 19 and Senate there are 17. Each committee deals with a different area, example banking or education. They control the fate of bills. They study the bill, hold hearings, and propose changes. They will either recommend if

all of Congress should hear the proposed bill or not. If not recommended the bill DIES. Committees are made up of both Republicans and Democrats. The majority party at the time makes up most of the committee.

- If bill is recommended it goes to the floor – while in floor action the bill is read aloud. It is debated on. If approved it is sent to the other house.
- Other house – follows same process. Committee – floor action. If the bill is approved as is it is sent to the president. If amendments are made it gets sent back to the other house and follows the same process.
- When bill is approved it goes to the president he/she can either sign it and it becomes law or he can veto it.

Activity 2 – Analyze a bill
Students will be placed into small groups of four. Each group will be given a current bill that is actively being proposed in Congress right now.
They are to read the bill and answer questions concerning it.
After each group has completed the assignment the teacher will discuss their answers.

Closure – The teacher will discuss the following questions: Why is it important to know this? Why is it so difficult for a bill to become a law?

American History CP

1. What is the bill proposing?

2. Where did this bill originate?

3. Briefly explain how this bill could become a law.

4. State the strong points of the potential law.

5. State the deficiencies of the potential law.

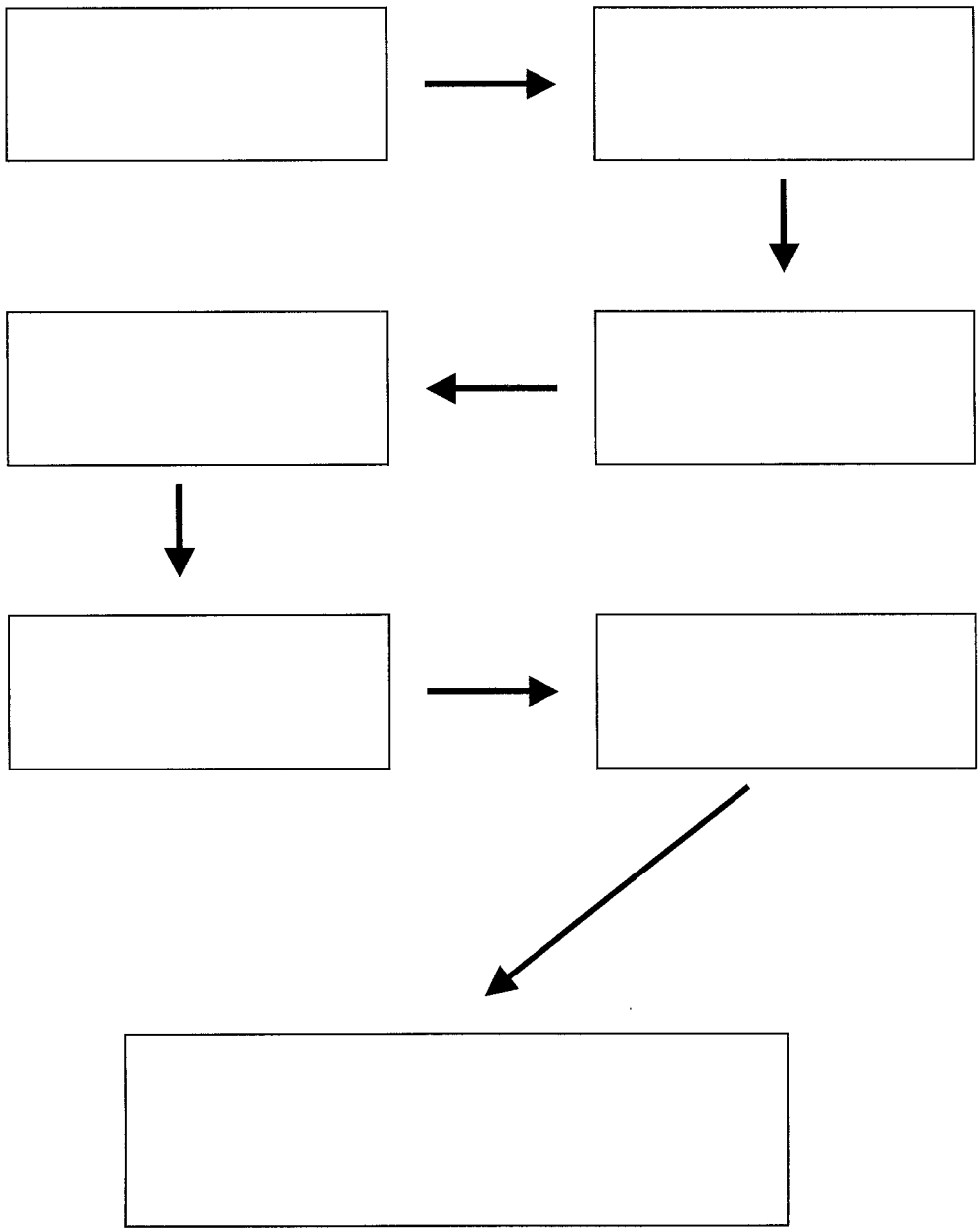
6. Who would probably want this bill to be passed?

7. Who would oppose it?

8. Do you think our process for making a bill is good or bad? Why?

Complete chart utilizing the word bank.

- floor action	-committee hearings
- sent to other house	- floor action
-bill goes to president	- bill is introduced
- committee hearings	



Teacher: Carissa Larkin and Nick DiBlasi
Class: American History II **Period:** 1,3
Grade Level: 11
Lesson Topic: Executive Branch **Issue-based**

A. Planning the Lesson

Rationale – The Executive Branch of our government

Lesson Objectives –

- The student will be ale to define the authority, role and qualifications of the President and the Executive office by creating a classified advertisement and watching a clip of a video.

Materials and Equipment –

- Video – West Wing
- Post-test and survey

B. Instruction

Do Now: Examine the following quote . . .
Being a president is like riding a tiger. A man has to keep on riding or be swallowed.

Harry Truman

How does he view his job as president of the United States?

Setting the Stage –

Who is the leader of the United States? The President, is the obvious answer. He is our highest elected official, represents all Americans. Just about everyone knows who the President of the United States is. But how many of you have a clear picture of what the president does and what his responsibilities are?

Activity 1 –

The teacher will briefly discuss the following. . .

- The president is the head of the Executive Branch- responsible for carrying out the laws or executing them. His most important duties are to set goals for the nation and to develop policies for reaching these goals.
  Even though advisors surround the president, he alone is responsible for making the final decisions about many important issues.
  Term of office – can only be president for two terms
  Qualifications – 35 years old, natural born citizen or live in the US for at least 14 years.
  Commander in chief – leader of the armed forces
  Chief diplomat – representative of the US in relations with other nations.
  Foreign policy- plans for guiding our nation's relationships with other Countries. How to support or oppose actions of other nations.

Domestic policy – plans for dealing with the nations problems
Budget – policies cost money. How are we going to pay for it?
Appoints Supreme Court justices but the Senate have to confirm them.

Activity 2 – Create a classified advertisement

- The students' in-groups will create a classified advertisement for president.
- They are to include the skills, qualifications and duties required. It should be designed as though it is a real advertisement. Sample classified ads will be placed on a transparency for the students see.
- Each group will present their advertisement to the class.

Transition: To fulfill all these duties the President needs a lot of help.

- White House Staff – inner circle of advisors and assistants. Give advice. This staff includes a chief of staff, key advisors, legal experts, speechwriters, press secretaries, office workers and researchers.

This is what we are going to look at today. What is the White House really like? What happens on a daily basis? What do those people do all day?

Activity 3 – West Wing

The teacher will explain to the students what they are going to watch. This portion of the West Wing deals with actual people who once worked in the White House. It explains through interviews what these people did and how they viewed their job.

Closure – Would you ever want to be President or work in the White House?

Teacher: Carissa Larkin and Nick DiBlasi	
Class: American History II	**Period:** 1,3
Grade Level: 11	
Lesson Topic: Executive Branch	**Lecture-based**

A. Planning the Lesson

Rationale – The Executive Branch of our government

Lesson Objectives –

- The student will be ale to define the authority, role and qualifications of the President and the Executive office by completing guided notes and watching a clip of a video.

Materials and Equipment –

- Guided notes handout
- Video – West Wing

B. Instruction

Do Now: Examine the following quote . . .
Being a president is like riding a tiger. A man has to keep on riding or be swallowed.

Harry Truman

How does he view his job as president of the United States?

Setting the Stage –
Who is the leader of the United States? The President, is the obvious answer. He is our highest elected official, represents all Americans. Just about everyone knows who the President of the United States is. But how many of you have a clear picture of what the president does and what his responsibilities are?

Activity 1 – guided notes
The teacher will teach the following in detail . . .
As she is explaining the information the students are to be filling out their guided note handout.

- The president is the head of the Executive Branch- responsible for carrying out the laws or executing them. His most important duties are to set goals for the nation and to develop policies for reaching these goals.
  Even though advisors surround the president, he alone is responsible for making the final decisions about many important issues.
  Term of office – can only be president for two terms

Qualifications – 35 years old, natural born citizen or live in the US for at least 14 years.

Commander in chief – leader of the armed forces
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Foreign policy- plans for guiding our nation's relationships with other Countries. How to support or oppose actions of other nations.
Domestic policy – plans for dealing with the nations problems
Budget – policies cost money. How are we going to pay for it?
Appoints Supreme Court justices but the Senate have to confirm them.

Transition: To fulfill all these duties the President needs a lot of help.

- White House Staff – inner circle of advisors and assistants. Give advice. This staff includes a chief of staff, key advisors, legal experts, speechwriters, press secretaries, office workers and researchers.

This is what we are going to look at today. What is the White House really like? What happens on a daily basis? What do those people do all day?

Activity 2 – West Wing

- The teacher will explain to the students what they are going to watch. Portions of this episode of the West Wing interview people who were once in the White House. They describe their job and the atmosphere they worked in. It is very informative.

Closure – The teacher will stop the video with about five minutes remaining in class. She will summarize everything the students should have learned today.

American History II Guided Notes

The Executive Office

I. The Role of the President

a. The President is the head of the _____ _____, which is responsible for executing, or carrying out, the _____ .

b. The Presidents most important duty is to set _____ for the nation and develop _____ .

II. Office of the President

a. The President is elected for a term of _____ years. To be President, a person must be at least _____ years old a _____ _____ citizen.

b. The President is the _____ _____ _____ of the armed forces. This means when the nation is at war _____ the most important decisions regarding our Army and Navy.

c. The President is also our _____ diplomat, the most important _____ of the United States with other _____.

III. White House Staff

a. At the center of the administration is the White House staff. It includes the President's _____ _____ of trusted _____ and assistants. All members are _____ by the President.

b. The staff includes a chief of _____ , press _____ , legal experts, _____ and other key advisors

Teacher: Carissa Larkin and Nick DiBlasi
Class: American History II **Period:** 1,3
Grade Level: 11
Lesson Topic:State and Local Government **Issue-based**

A. Planning the Lesson

Rationale –State and Local governments

Lesson Objectives –

- The student will be able to explain the role, powers and organization of state and local governments by bringing in and discussing newspaper articles.

Materials and Equipment –

- Transparency – relationship between state and national government
- Student newspaper articles

B. Instruction

Do Now: Answer the following question . . .
Should states have more power than the federal government? Why or why not?

Setting the Stage – the teacher and the students will discuss this question. Possible answers will probably included the following; states differ greatly, state governments can serve their people better that the national government. They can fit laws and programs to their particular needs. Dividing power can make each level of government do its job. The national government can then focus its attention on its major responsibilities. The teacher will display a transparency, which depicts the relationship between national government and state government.

Transition: How are state and governments set up? What do they do? What can't they do? Under federalism, states carry out much of the work of meeting the needs of citizens. State governments are organized into executive, legislative and judicial branches with powers similar to those of the federal government. Each branch acts as a check on the other two branches of the state government. In addition citizens can have a great deal of influence on state lawmaking.

Activity 1 – Current Events

- Each student was asked to bring in a newspaper clipping concerning issues that affect state and local government. Each student will be allotted time to present a summary of their article.

- The whole class will create potential remedies for these issues. In doing so the following will be discussed in detail. .
  - State legislatures – job has grown more complex with the rapid growth of the United States. Many are full-time lawmakers. In most states, legislators must be United States citizens and live in the state and district they represent. All states except Nebraska have a bicameral legislature. Divide legislative terms in sessions. To finance state governments, the money comes from different kinds of taxes.
  - State Executive Branch – led by a governor and a group of executive officials. These officials help run the many agencies that enforce the laws and carry out the state's programs. Early state constitutions greatly limited the power of the governor. Over the years, many constitutions have changed in order to give the governor more power to take on the growing responsibilities of state government.
  - Types of Local Government –Local governments are created by the states and have only those powers that state governments give them. The powers that state governments give to local governments help meet the needs of thousands of communities throughout our nation. Teachers, librarians, bus drivers, police officers all work for local government. Your daily life runs on the services of local government, such as garbage collection, road repair and water supply. Local government is the level closest to you.
  - Local Government Services and Revenue – We ask local governments to help us in many ways. They provide utilities or services needed to the public. They build parks, schools and roads. They plan for growth. Every time officials decide to handle a problem a certain way, they are making policy. Policy decisions often depend on money. Because no government has all the money it needs, officials must decide which services to offer.

Closure – After learning all of the above, could any of the problems in your articles been avoided? How?

Teacher: Carissa Larkin and Nick DiBlasi
Class: American History II **Period:** 1,3
Grade Level: 11
Lesson Topic:State and Local Government **Lecture-based**

A. Planning the Lesson

Rationale –State and Local governments

Lesson Objectives –

- The student will be able to explain the role, powers and organization of state and local governments by reading chapter sections and answering questions

Materials and Equipment –

- Transparency – relationship between state and national government
- Chapter Sections

B. Instruction

Do Now: Answer the following question . . .
Should states have more power than the federal government? Why or why not?

Setting the Stage – the teacher and the students will discuss this question. Possible answers will probably included the following; states differ greatly, state governments can serve their people better that the national government. They can fit laws and programs to their particular needs. Dividing power can make each level of government do its job. The national government can then focus its attention on its major responsibilities. The teacher will display a transparency, which depicts the relationship between national government and state government.

Transition: How are state and governments set up? What do they do? What can't they do? Under federalism, states carry out much of the work of meeting the needs of citizens. State governments are organized into executive, legislative and judicial branches with powers similar to those of the federal government. Each branch acts as a check on the other two branches of the state government. In addition citizens can have a great deal of influence on state lawmaking.

Activity 1 – Group work

- The students will be placed in-groups. There will be four groups in total. Each group will receive a section of the chapter on state and local governments.
  - Section 1- State Legislatures

    - Section 2 – State Executive Branch
    - Section 3- Types of Local Government
    - Section 4 – Local Government Services and Revenue
- Each group will read their section and answer the questions at the end of the section. The teacher will discuss their answers. The following information is included in each section . . .
- State legislatures – job has grown more complex with the rapid growth of the United States. Many are full-time lawmakers. In most states, legislators must be United States citizens and live in the state and district they represent. All states except Nebraska have a bicameral legislature. Divide legislative terms in sessions. To finance state governments, the money comes from different kinds of taxes.
- State Executive Branch – led by a governor and a group of executive officials. These officials help run the many agencies that enforce the laws and carry out the state's programs. Early state constitutions greatly limited the power of the governor. Over the years, many constitutions have changed in order to give the governor more power to take on the growing responsibilities of state government.
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- Local Government Services and Revenue – We ask local governments to help us in many ways. They provide utilities or services needed to the public. They build parks, schools and roads. They plan for growth. Every time officials decide to handle a problem a certain way, they are making policy. Policy decisions often depend on money. Because no government has all the money it needs, officials must decide which services to offer.

Closure – What issues concern state and local governments today?