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Representing "Underrepresented Students," Including Immigrant Students, in an Urban Advanced Placement U.S. Government Class: A Teacher's Inquiry on Challenges and Opportunities in Students' Academic Discourse

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Abstract

Since the passage of Public Law 107-110, the "No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (2002)," public schools have been encouraged to increase the number of students participating in Advanced Placement courses, particularly "underrepresented" or "low-income and other disadvantaged students." This policy was seen as a means of increasing academic rigor and college preparation (Section 1702, 2002) for a broader spectrum of students than those who traditionally had access to these courses. More recently, the U.S. Department of Education's focus on "achievement" and closing the "achievement gaps" has included civic learning (Duncan, 2012). Simultaneously, changing U.S. demographics have increased the number of English Language Learners in schools, many with "multidimensional citizenship," (Parker, Ninomiya & Cogan, 2011). In order for "underrepresented" students to have access to college preparatory courses, these students need contact with and ownership of disciplinary and academic language and content (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2010; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008; Walqui, & Lier, 2010). Students also benefit from a citizenship education that nurtures a blended cultural, national and global identity and allegiances (Banks, 2004, 2007).

This teacher practitioner inquiry examines the opportunities and challenges of preparing "underrepresented students," including immigrant students, for the Advanced Placement U.S. Government exam at an urban, neighborhood high school in an academically stratified school district. The intervention proposed in this study was to support students' disciplinary language and civic competency in an Advanced Placement United States Government course by incorporating civic deliberations and blog posts. Instructional and language strategies were scaffolded to build on the students' prior knowledge, points of view, and to build background knowledge. Interwoven are my observations and questions as a teacher practitioner reflecting on my preparation and response to the challenges and opportunities of working with students to prepare them for a high stakes exam and college / career and life. By using ethnographic methods, I analyzed students' responses in semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. Then, I analyzed my strategies to prepare for civic deliberations; as well, I studied students' participation in the deliberations and their subsequent blog postings. Lastly, I reflected on the changes I made to make the civic deliberations more accessible for students while encouraging students to include disciplinary evidence with their prior knowledge, identities and points of view.

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Comments

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REPRESENTING “UNDERREPRESENTED STUDENTS,” INCLUDING
IMMIGRANT STUDENTS, IN AN URBAN ADVANCED PLACEMENT U.S.
GOVERNMENT CLASS: A TEACHER’S INQUIRY ON CHALLENGES AND
OPPORTUNITIES IN STUDENTS’ ACADEMIC DISCOURSE

Donna Lynn Sharer

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Dedication

To my sons - my teachers of unconditional love -
Dessler Charles, Aaron Gregory and Luke Brady

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The process of writing this dissertation reminded me of the myriad of planned and unplanned events that occur in a public school classroom. Listening to and transcribing deliberations and interviews, re-reading student blog posts, sorting through lesson plans and dissecting my Journal notes, were daily reminders that teaching and learning are interwoven. Teacher and student are synonymic. Therefore, first I will acknowledge my students for their subtle to forthright methods of instruction. I thank them for their willingness to engage with complex issues, varied texts, academic strategies, occasionally contrary peers and an “old head,” exacting teacher. They reaffirmed inquiry is a communal effort; despite meticulous lesson planning, insights and wisdom cannot be programmed or narrowly measured. To the 17 students who persevered during the 2012-2013 academic year, you have my gratitude and appreciation.

This dissertation would not have been completed without the assistance and encouragement of my dissertation chair, Dr. Frances O’Connell Rust. As a part time student in a program designed for full time students, my academic career extended over seven years. During that time, many professors left. After my advisor accepted another position, Frances willingly accepted my request to chair my dissertation committee and guided me through the process. Frances contributed untold hours providing direction and feedback and sharing resources. She was consistently supportive and encouraging. Her ready smile told me “do not give up!” Another member of my dissertation committee, Dr. Kathleen Hall, also encouraged me to continue and found good in whatever work I shared. Her sincere smile and hugs told me I, a public school, working class student, was a capable thinker in an Ivy League institution. The last member of my committee,

Dr. Christine Woysner of Temple University, graciously agreed to join my committee to add social studies expertise and a broader lens. Although not on my dissertation committee, Dr. Cheryl Micheau introduced me to sheltered based instruction for English Language Learners, expanded my understanding of language learning, and provided encouragement and a willing ear regarding my research. She is a teacher's teacher and champion of immigrant students.

Although I did not have a writing group, I participated in a Research Apprenticeship Courses (RAC) that enabled me to share my writing with other graduate students. Dr. Janine Remillard and numerous students provided honest feedback and raised challenging issues. While not as intense as a writing group, this experience introduced me to a mirage of student research and made me more conversant. One graduate student, Vivian Lim, generously provided suggestions for navigating the School District's IRB process and shared her IRB proposal. Julie McWilliams, a fellow graduate student, conducted four interviews with my students throughout the school year. Julie took my questions and drew honest, insightful comments out of the students. She literally came through "rain, sleet, and snow" to conduct the interviews gratis. I am thankful for small and large acts of kindness and "no strings attached" generosity.

Most importantly, I want to acknowledge and thank my sons. As a full time teacher and single parent of three sons, taking on graduate study may appear foolish. Nevertheless, my sons literally and figuratively matured through the process. They grew up with a mother who attempted to balance child-rearing, full time teaching, running a home, community volunteering and studying in graduate school. While my balancing act was not always fair or level, my sons did not complain. My sons also were my

professors; their urban public school and 21st century teenage experiences have challenged my thinking about the institution of school, formal learning and what matters – especially to preteens and teens.

Even though my sons and I do not live near any extended family members, my siblings and mother provided encouragement and childcare help. My mother, Sandy and stepfather, Jim, who passed away in 2010, cared for my sons on extended weekends and a few weeks each summer. My sister, Beth, and her family, also helped with childcare. My brothers, Greg and Jeff, provided encouragement just by asking how I was doing. Auston Adams, a reliable and generous “sitter,” not “babysitter,” also cared for my sons so I could attend classes and seminars and whom my sons consider a big brother. All single parents need a sitter as reliable and trustworthy as Auston. Lastly, although my father passed away in 1995, I know he would have encouraged me to take the opportunity to continue my studies and to think about, question and challenge inequity and injustice. He lived his life by “doing unto others” but not seeking any recognition.

Again, I return to my students and my sons. They ground me, humble me and consistently remind me to embrace the messiness of life and learning. Hopefully, in this dissertation I have done justice to their humor, observations, questions, expertise, sanity and love.

ABSTRACT

REPRESENTING “UNDERREPRESENTED STUDENTS,” INCLUDING IMMIGRANT STUDENTS, IN AN URBAN ADVANCED PLACEMENT U.S. GOVERNMENT CLASS: A TEACHER’S INQUIRY ON CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN STUDENTS’ ACADEMIC DISCOURSE

Donna Lynn Sharer

Frances O. Rust

Since the passage of Public Law 107-110, the “No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (2002),” public schools have been encouraged to increase the number of students participating in Advanced Placement courses, particularly “underrepresented” or “low-income and other disadvantaged students.” This policy was seen as a means of increasing academic rigor and college preparation (Section 1702, 2002) for a broader spectrum of students than those who traditionally had access to these courses. More recently, the U.S. Department of Education’s focus on “achievement” and closing the “achievement gaps” has included civic learning (Duncan, 2012). Simultaneously, changing U.S. demographics have increased the number of English Language Learners in schools, many with “multidimensional citizenship,” (Parker, Ninomiya & Cogan, 2011).

In order for “underrepresented” students to have access to college preparatory courses, these students need contact with and ownership of disciplinary and academic language and content (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2010; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008; Walqui, & Lier, 2010). Students also benefit from a citizenship education that nurtures a blended cultural, national and global identity and allegiances (Banks, 2004, 2007).

This teacher practitioner inquiry examines the opportunities and challenges of preparing “underrepresented students,” including immigrant students, for the Advanced Placement U.S. Government exam at an urban, neighborhood high school in an academically stratified school district. The intervention proposed in this study was to support students’ disciplinary language and civic competency in an Advanced Placement United States Government course by incorporating civic deliberations and blog posts. Instructional and language strategies were scaffolded to build on the students’ prior knowledge, points of view, and to build background knowledge. Interwoven are my observations and questions as a teacher practitioner reflecting on my preparation and response to the challenges and opportunities of working with students to prepare them for a high stakes exam and college / career and life. By using ethnographic methods, I analyzed students’ responses in semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. Then, I analyzed my strategies to prepare for civic deliberations; as well, I studied students’ participation in the deliberations and their subsequent blog postings. Lastly, I reflected on the changes I made to make the civic deliberations more accessible for students while encouraging students to include disciplinary evidence with their prior knowledge, identities and points of view.

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

“This year you will memorize the 50 states and 50 capitals for social studies,” began my fifth grade teacher. “Now, I want you to come to the front of the class and point to where you were born.”

It was the 1970s. My classmates in our small, rural New York State public school were primarily born in the region but there were students born in New York City and adjoining states. From April to June and during September and October, sometimes there were “migrant students” who were from Texas and Florida. As I sat in my wooden desk waiting my turn, I realized I was “odd.” After my name was called, I went to the front of the class and looked at the map of the United States but I could not point to where I was born.

I shyly look at my teacher and said, “I was born in Nicaragua; it’s not on the map.” I do not remember my teacher’s reaction other than another student asking if Nicaragua was in Africa. I said “no” and pointed at the wall below the map - “it’s in Central America.” I returned to my seat. Nothing more was said. Then, I copied the names of the 50 United States on line paper.

My school experiences were probably not unique. At the time, the social studies curriculum where I lived, New York State, primarily focused on the United States. In elementary and middle school, we studied New York State and United States history and geography. In ninth grade we studied Africa and Asia; in tenth grade we studied Europe. In eleventh grade, we again studied United States history and geography. Senior year was civics and social science electives. While the current New York State’s social studies curricula includes Latin America in elementary school with “Global Studies” in

ninth and tenth grade, students generally learn more about the history of the United States. This is also true in the state where I teach. Even more “U.S. centric” is the study of civics or government. The state’s civics standards focus on the United States political ideals, structures, and history; a few standards include the United States’ relations with other nation-states or international organizations.

The state’s standards are not far removed from The National Standards for Civics and Government ninth to twelfth grade standards; the standards assume the centrality of the nation-state (Center for Civic Education). The United States is united by “shared values and principles” and its foreign policy is based on “American national interests, values and principles” (Center for Civil Education). Both are similar to the College Entrance Examination Board’s Advanced Placement United States Government course (2010) which since its introduction in 1987, has been dominated by the mechanics, structures and process of the United States government within six areas of study:

1. Constitutional Underpinnings of the United States Government (5 – 15%)
2. Political Beliefs and Behaviors (10 – 20%)
3. Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media (10 – 20%)
4. Institutions of national government: Congress, presidency, bureaucracy, federal courts (35 – 45%)
5. Public policy (5 – 15%)
6. Civil rights and civil liberties (5 – 15%)

Even though the demographics of United States public schools have changed since I went to school, the civics standards and the content emphasis in the Advanced Placement U.S. Government course appear to have remained the same.

While teaching Advanced Placement U.S. Government during the 2010-2011 through 2012-2013 academic years, I have grappled with how to balance a focus on the “knowing” that is required of students in order to prepare them for the Advanced

Placement U.S. Government exam with my understandings of participatory, student centered teaching and learning and civic competence. As a teacher, I struggled with content “detached from reality” and implicitly equating students with dry sponges versus individuals with agency and prior knowledge (Freire, 1970, 1993, pp. 71 -72). The AP U.S. Government course easily becomes one of socialization and transfer of knowledge in contrast to what Ochoa-Becker (2007) labels “counter-socialization” accentuating critical and autonomous thinking and discernment. Therefore, how do I build a curriculum based on students’ strengths, experiences, ingenuity and world views (Nieto, 1999)? Is it possible to create spaces in an Advanced Placement Government course that honors students as “knowledge producers,” encourages democratic participation and action and challenges inequality while at the same time preparing students for a breadth versus depth fact driven standardized test based on a narrow national narrative (Banks, 2007; Moll, 2005; Parker & Lo, 2014, April)? Certainly, it is possible but it is also complicated when most of the students’ prior knowledge, experiences and identities do not neatly fit into the national narrative portrayed in the Advanced Placement U.S. Government and Politics course.

Background/Study Rationale

Since the passage of Public Law 107-110, the “No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (2002),” public schools have been encouraged to increase the number of students participating in Advanced Placement courses, particularly “underrepresented” or “low-income and other disadvantaged students.” Federal, state and local funds have been used

to pay the exam fees for low-income students (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). In conjunction with the College Board, the federal policy of increasing student participation in Advanced Placement courses is portrayed as a strategy to increase academic rigor and college preparation (Section 1702, 2002) for a broader spectrum of students than those who traditionally had access to these courses. To a certain extent, the policy has been successful.

By 2013, the number of high school participants had doubled since 2003 and the number of low-income students quadrupled (College Entrance Examination Board, February 2014, p. 6). Nationally, the percentage of student scoring a three or higher increased 7.9%; nevertheless, a state-by-state analysis indicates the percentage increase ranges from as low as 1.6% in Mississippi to 13.2% in Connecticut (College Entrance Examination Board, February 2014, p. 12). Meanwhile, the number of students of color and low-income students who The College Board identified as having “potential” to take an AP course remain “underrepresented” and only one state has “closed the performance equity gap” for African American students (College Entrance Examination Board, February 2014, p. 27).

Simultaneously, The College Board has revised courses including biology, U.S. history, European history, and physics while adding two new courses in 2014, “Seminar,” and in 2015, “Research” (College Entrance Examination Board, September 2014). The “Seminar” and “Research” courses emphasize critical thinking and academic reading, writing and research to prepare students for Advanced Placement courses. Pressure to revise courses stemmed from complaints from teachers and the sharp increase in the number of students scoring the lowest score - “1” - on Advanced Placement exams

(Drew, C. 2011). For example, the Advanced Placement U.S. History exam has been revised for 2015 to improve its alignment with the Common Core Standards, historical thinking skills, and themes which emphasize depth versus breadth of content (College Entrance Examination Board, September 2014; College Entrance Examination Board; 2014b). A draft of proposed changes to the Advanced Placement U.S. Government and Politics course was released on November 17, 2014.¹ The draft includes three “improvements” including: (1) a list of founding documents and primary sources recommended for college courses, (2) five “big ideas” including constitutional democracy, civil liberties and civil rights, U.S. political beliefs, citizen participation and interaction among branches of government and (3) skills required for analysis and interpretation and communication of civic knowledge (College Entrance Examination Board; 2014a). While the proposed changes to the AP U.S. Government course may align with the Common Core Standards, emphasis on use of academic language and evidence and claim to align with college political science course requirements, the changes do not consider changing public school demographics, including more immigrant students and students with diverse learning needs (Crouch, Zakarya & Jiandani, 2012).

Should college preparatory courses, especially in humanities and social sciences, respond to demographic changes? In the 2014-2015 school year, for example, 50.3% of

¹ I defended my dissertation on November 11, 2014 or a week before the draft changes were released. For the 2013-2014 academic year, or the year following my dissertation research, The College Board published a booklet *Preparing Students to Think Critically in AP U.S. Government and Politics*. According to The College Board, “the purpose of this tutorial is to offer support in teaching political science skills...blending the science of research methodology and critical thinking with political content...” This is an optional resource on The College Board web site - http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/courses/teachers_corner/2259.html This indicates alignment with the Common Core Standards.

public school students are students of color (Maxwell, 2014, August 19). The demographic shift toward a multilingual school population seems to have been the natural outgrowth of immigration policies that began with the passage of the 1965 Nationalities and Immigration Act (P.L. 89-236); no longer were visas given based on the “National Origins Formula” that favored immigrants from Western Europe. After 1965, immigration opened to Asian, Latin American and African immigrants and, eventually under “family reunification policies,” their decedents. Between 1991 and 2000, the U.S. Census Bureau (2000b) showed a 67% increase of immigrants from Latin America and Asia and a 14.6% of those from the Caribbean and Africa. In some cases, these numbers have masked an overall decline in population as, for example, has happened in Pennsylvania, where the southeastern region of the state grew 3.4% from 2000-2010 because of Latino/a and Asian immigrants (Matza & Duckneskie, 2011). By 2043, the U.S. will be a “minority-majority” nation (Bernstein, 2012, December 12). National population projections for 2060 are approximately 46% European-American, 14% African/African American, 33% Latino/a, 8% Asian American and Pacific Islander and 1.5% American Indian” (Bernstein, 2012, December 12). The U.S. will be a nation where no group will be able to claim “majority” status.

From the mid 1980s to the present, immigration has simultaneously become more transnational versus “one-way” immigration (Hall 1992 and Suarez-Orozco 2001, as cited in Jo 2003). Twenty-first century immigrants must navigate between more than one national and/or ethnic identity and language (Hall 1992 as cited in Jo 2003). According to Parker, Ninomiya and Cogan (2011), their “multidimensional citizenship” implies that people may have multiple identities including national, ethnic, religious, gender, family,

class, and vocational. Teachers need to consider the implications of this trend toward “multidimensional citizenship” (Parker, 2002, pp. 154, 162). Citizenship curriculum should, according to James Banks (2004b as cited in Banks & Nguyen, 2008), “help students develop a delicate balance of cultural, national, and global identifications and allegiances” (p. 148) so as to increase students’ civics knowledge and engagement. Honoring students’ multi-dimensional and, if applicable, transnational, citizenship may assist students in discerning this delicate balance. Is it possible, especially in a high stakes national civics course like Advanced Placement U.S. Government and Politics, to acknowledge multidimensional, transnational citizenship perspectives and points of view?

As the classroom teacher, I worked with 17 Advanced Placement United States Government students at our midsized (N= 600), neighborhood urban high school during the 2012-2013 academic year to understand the opportunities and challenges of preparing “underrepresented students,” including immigrant students, for the Advanced Placement U.S. Government exam while encouraging the students to incorporate their prior knowledge with disciplinary evidence in civic deliberations and subsequent blog posts. The intervention proposed in this practitioner action research study was to honor students prior knowledge while supporting students’ access to and acquisition of academic English and disciplinary language and civic knowledge in an Advanced Placement United States Government course. By incorporating structured deliberation and blog posts with scaffolded literacy and instructional strategies, including reading, writing, speaking, listening and thinking, that built on the students’ prior knowledge, identities

and points of view, I hoped to prepare them for the high stakes test. More importantly, I hoped to work with them to prepare for college, citizenship and life.

Research Questions

The overall question:

What challenges and opportunities does the teacher researcher at a neighborhood high school experience when encouraging “underrepresented” students, including immigrant students, to include their prior knowledge, points of view, identities, and disciplinary evidence in an Advanced Placement United States Government and Politics class?

The sub-questions:

1) What instructional strategies encourage and engage “underrepresented students,” including immigrant students, to incorporate their prior knowledge, points of view, identities, and disciplinary evidence in an AP U.S. government course?

2) How do “underrepresented” students, including immigrant students, live and experience citizenship and acquire civic competence in an Advanced Placement United States Government class?

Definition of Terms

Advanced Placement (AP) is a college equivalent high school course that may provide college credit. At the end of the course, students may take an exam. Scores range from 1, “no recommendation,” to 5, “extremely well qualified.” Some colleges and universities may accept a score of 3 or above on a 5 point scale for college credit. Highly competitive universities either will not give credit for AP U.S. Government or require a “5.”

Civic Competence, according to the National Council for the Social Studies Standards, is “the knowledge, intellectual processes, and democratic dispositions required of students to be active and engaged participants in public life. ... and requires the abilities to use

knowledge about one's community, nation, and world; apply inquiry processes; and employ skills of data collection and analysis, collaboration, decision-making, and problem-solving" (National Council for the Social Studies, 2010, p. 9).

Citizenship is not limited to political or legal status acquired through birth or naturalization. Citizenship includes cultural, national, global (Banks, 2004a, 2007, 2004b) and transnational allegiances and awareness (Castles, 2004). Citizenship is realized in community versus as an individual label or status (Ochoa-Becker, 2007). Therefore, citizenship identifications may conflict or compliment each other; they may be fluid rather than fixed.

Deliberations, similar to discussions and debates, involve an exchange of ideas and sharing multiple perspectives but with the goal of "finding areas of agreement within the group" (Deliberating in a Democracy, 2004-2009). Unlike debates, deliberations aim for "common ground" and honor the soundness of others' opinions and evidence versus seeking defects or pitfalls in order to compete or win (Public Deliberation Handbook, 2010). According to Parker and Zumeta (1999), students are given agency when they participate in structured deliberations on public policy by considering a problem, collaboratively analyzing the problem, and collectively developing solutions.

Neighborhood high school in our School District is an open enrollment school. There are no admission requirements and students with an address in the "catchment," or designated geographic area, may attend the high school. In the school district, half of the

high schools have admission requirements and / or procedures and half do not. In 2011-2012, six District schools were closed. During the academic year of the study, 2012-2013, 24 additional schools were closed including six high schools. Three special admission high schools were opened. Therefore, in the 2013-2014 school year, there were more special admission high schools than neighborhood or “no admission / application required” high schools. There were also 36 charter schools with 9th – 12th grade. This is relevant to my study because School District neighborhood high schools are generally viewed as “schools of last resort” or “dropout factories” rather than viable options for college bound students (Herold, 2013).

Scaffolding learning is a process of planning, preparing and implementing lessons with supports, including organization, procedures, environmental, and materials, to enable learners to build on their individual and collective skills and knowledge (2012 *Amplifications of the English language development standards: Kindergarten - grade 12* (3rd ed.), 2013; Taba, 1962; Vygotsky, 1978; Walqui & van Lier, 2010; Wood, Bruner, Ross, 1976). The temporary supports enable students to participate in critical, abstract and deeper thinking, including disciplinary content, to construct knowledge rather than replicating other’s knowledge.

“Underrepresented” students refers to students who historically have been less likely to participate in Advanced Placement courses included low socioeconomic status (SES) students, English Language Learners (ELLs), first generation college students and African American and Latino/a students. A school’s SES is determined by the

percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch. All of the students in my class are considered low SES and half were ELLs. Of the 17 students, one had a father who had completed college as an older adult and one had a mother with an associate degree. The other students' parents had not attended college.

Possible Limitations

My research is not intended to prescribe a curricular model for an AP U.S. Government course nor “best practices.” The data is limited to one class of students and one teacher. The school setting, composition of the class, and teacher’s experiences and perspectives also influence the study. Nevertheless, I examined my instructional practices, including scaffolding and literacy / language strategies, in designing and implementing structured deliberations and subsequent blog postings. I have included a process and materials that may be replicated or revised and implemented with other students. It is a self-study that has enabled me to deliberately and carefully examine my practice and consider tensions, dilemmas and hints of success (Loughran, 2002).

Also, I recognize that practitioner research validity has been questioned, referred to as “navel gazing” and described by Huberman (1996) as “hubris.” Instead, I share Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s view that practitioner research or school based “teacher learning” is critical for educational improvement and equity (2009; pp. 1, 6, 9, 12). According to Anderson and Herr’s (1999), practitioner research may be aligned with five types of validity. In my study I consider Anderson and Herr’s (1999) “process

validity,” and “democratic validity.” “Process validity” “problematizes” the practice. “Democratic validity” notes who benefits from the study and whose voices are included. In this practitioner research study, I hope I have closely critiqued and improved my practice while honoring the voices of my students.

My Positioning within this Study

I began teaching in a large, urban School District in 1992. I was 31 years old and had varied employment, volunteer and organizing experiences in the same urban area. My formal education occurred in a K-12 rural public school system and a public college and university. When I began teaching, I had a Bachelors degree in History / Social Studies, K-12 and a Master of Arts in English / Creative Writing with a concentration in poetry. When I started teaching, I began another graduate degree, an Educational Masters in Psychology of Reading, and finished in two years adding K-12 Reading Specialist certification. Next, I took graduate classes to earn K-12 English as a Second Language Specialist certification and added 7-12 English certification. I also have National Board Certification in Adolescent/Youth Adult Social Studies / History (2002; renewed in 2011). More recently, thanks to a James Madison Fellowship, I completed a Masters of Arts in History.

While I have many years of formal education, my birth, family and religious background have significantly influenced my worldview and national narrative.

For example, my birth and religious background have led me to be ambiguous about national citizenship. I am from a religious tradition – Mennonite - that historically discouraged political participation, including voting, and followed a “two world” theology. A “two world” theology teaches we are “in the world” but “not of the world.” Therefore, one does not participate in “worldly” things. Also, I was born on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua to U.S. born parents who were working class, Christian missionaries. While I am not an immigrant to the U.S. and my ethnic background is “Pennsylvania Deutsch,” I always knew I had dual citizenship – Nicaraguan and U.S. – and an awareness of Nicaragua and Nicaraguans. After we moved to the United States, my place of birth, Nicaragua, was consistently present because my parents maintained friendships with Nicaraguans.

As I became politically active in college in the 1980s, missionary became synonymous with imperialism. During my 20s and 30s, I organized against what I saw as the detrimental cultural, social and political ramifications of United States imperialism. In the 1980s, I returned to Nicaragua. My Nicaraguan citizenship enabled me to travel in restricted regions during the “Contra War,” or U.S. funded counterrevolutionary war. Simultaneously, my U.S. passport let me leave Nicaragua; this gave me possibilities unavailable to my Nicaraguan friends. Nevertheless, I knew the significance of my family’s connection to Nicaragua via their missionary experience. This was difficult to reconcile.

My parents’ missionary journey may or may not have been typical. Three days after my mother’s 19th birthday, my parents married and within a month left for Central America. After spending nine months in a Spanish language school in Costa Rica, my

parents moved to the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua. The Atlantic Coast is unique; colonized by the British, it did not become part of Nicaragua until 1894. We lived on the southeast Atlantic Coast in Bluefields. At the time, Bluefields was a “Creole” town – people of African and European, although not usually Spanish, descent who speak “Creole” English - and indigenous people, Miskito, Rama and Garifuna. Everything from the climate, vegetation, preparation of rice and beans, to music and housing construction, as well as ethnicity and religion, separates the Pacific and Atlantic Coasts of Nicaragua.

Atlantic Coast people, Costeños, unlike people of the Pacific Coast, are predominantly Protestant; German Moravian missionaries began proselytizing in the 1840s and the British brought the Anglican Church. Willinsky (1998) describes “colonial education” as a stabilizing force of imperialism; it served the empire more than the people (p. 100-101). Although the 19th century Moravian missionaries were not tied to the British, they were part of the “imperial” project. They established schools and hospitals, translated the Christian scriptures of the Bible into Miskito and sought to be a “witness to the supreme love of the Lord” (*La Mision Evangelica Morava*, 1949, p. 8).² My parents, I assume, believed they were “sharing God’s love” as they entered a world distinct from their Pennsylvania Deutch upbringing but a community that shared their religious devotion and a similar theology.

While in Bluefields, Nicaragua, my father taught at the Colegio Moravo, the Moravian primary and secondary school. Initially, my father was one of two North American teachers in the secondary school. By year two, my father was the only North

² *La Mision Evangelica Morava* is an 8-page pamphlet which chronicles the history and centenary of the Moravian missions in Nicaragua – 1849 – 1949. The exact quote is “testimonio del amor supremo del Senor.”

American teacher. The other teachers were Nicaraguan and had attended the school. Both of my parents worked with the “Young People’s Fellowship” and lived in the “Mission House” with young people who were from rural areas and received a scholarship to study at the high school. After my parents left, at least three of the young people received scholarships to study in the United States. Two young women, Nancy and Carol, spent summers at our home in New York. One young man, Brady, visited our home when I was ten. A decade and a half later when I returned to Nicaragua, Brady’s family hosted me in their home.

As I grew up, my parents’ connections to Nicaragua broadened my worldview. Family friends included Cuban American immigrant families from Northern New Jersey. Together we celebrated Christmas Eve with roasted pork and garlicky yucca. In addition, one of my father’s jobs was working for a migrant workers program; we went to community activities and events. Also, in 1973, a Nicaraguan family, who had been our neighbors in Bluefields, was sponsored by a relative to come to the U.S. They lived in Brooklyn, NY, but would travel to our small “upstate” New York town on weekends and during the summer. I learned from their oldest daughter, my friend Debbie, how hard it was to adjust to school in the United States when you are twelve-years-old and do not “fit” into U.S. census ethnic categories. Again, my family’s friendships challenged a provincial, Western mindset.

While I know the education provided at the Bluefields’ school, Colegio Moravo, was Western, I eventually found evidence that my parents were dedicated and atypical. When I was a teen, I was told we did not stay in Nicaragua as planned because my father was ill. He had contracted hepatitis and found the hot climate difficult. I did not learn

until my father died in 1995 from cancer caused by the hepatitis that he was not invited back. Apparently, the directors of the school, two United States women who had lived in Nicaragua since the 1930s, brought their U.S. racial attitudes and practices to Nicaragua. Fortunately, my parents did not replicate the directors' views. When my father died, I found letters he had saved from Nicaraguan friends including Brady. In one letter, Brady wrote:

“Things that other missionaries never did, you both did, you visited the poor, they were welcome to your home, and in fact so much different things that I would need more than two sheets of paper to put them down. Do you realize how much remarks were passed after you were gone? All around you can hear, Well, the Sharers were nice. Others say They didn't seem to be American. Others said nothing good lasts long. ... May I ask you a question? Are you really Americans? If you are, you are an exception to Americans. And you put a brake to my thoughts, for now when I am asked, “Do you think the Americans would ever count us like one? I can only say I don't know, for there seem to be Americans that look at us as one” (Personal correspondence, November 29, 1964).

When I returned to Nicaragua in the 1980s, it was during a decade of war, scarcity and division in Nicaragua. The United States was funding and directing a “Contra” or counterrevolutionary war to overthrow the Nicaraguan government. The U.S. government was not treating Nicaraguans “as one” or equals. Nevertheless, my parents' friends reminisced about my parents and embraced me. The extended family of my former husband, an indigenous, Creole Nicaraguan, cared for me. At the same time, I carried the coveted United States passport but was repeatedly reminded that I was “Pinolera” or “Nica” - Nicaraguan. My bi-national identity was not a contradiction; it just was. These experiences - from my birth to adulthood - have influenced my conviction that schools should be a safe space that enables natural, cross-cultural

experiences where students emic and etic identifies are acknowledged and valued and where the ambiguities about cultural, national and global identity are understood as a positive process rather than a restrictive label.

Since 1992, I have been a classroom teacher in a large, U.S. East Coast urban school district. Twenty-eight percent of the city's residents live below the poverty level, 21% of families speak a language other than English at home and 12.5% of residents were born outside of the U.S. (Pew Charitable Trusts, 2013). The city was on the verge of bankruptcy in 1991 and continues to struggle with providing adequate services for the disproportionate number of impoverished residents. Simultaneously, funding for public schools has been inadequate for at least two decades (Denvir, 2014; Travers, 2003). Enrollment in the School District's public schools has plummeted as enrollment in charter schools is nearly 40% of publicly funded school students (Pew Charitable Trusts, 2013; Socolar, 2014). Akin to other large underfunded urban school districts, students – including my three sons - are learning in the midst of upheaval and uncertainty.

Over the years, I have primarily taught high school social studies but also reading, English, biology, algebra 1, and English as a Second Language. The school district, similar to other large urban districts, has experienced significant administrative, curricular, and structural changes. From 1992 - 2012, there were ten superintendents, including interim superintendents. In 2011 and 2013, thousands of employees were laid off (Herold, 2011, March; Mezzacappa, 2013.) As a single parent of three teenagers who attend public schools in the School District, my engagement with the schools is not just professional; it is also personal. The progress of my students is tied to the progress of my children, my neighbors and myself.

Statement of the Problem

Following the U.S. Civil War, public education expanded. By the late 19th century, immigration soared. Simultaneously, the 1893 Committee of Ten report called for a college preparatory, standardization of curricula in public schools. Then, in 1918, the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education (CRSE) changed course; high schools should offer “tracks” including academic, vocational, commercial and general (Mirel, 2006, Winter). In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for example, by the 1920s concerns about the increasing African American and immigrant population led to the creation of standardized tests in reading and mathematics to allegedly promote economically and socially dependable citizens (Alvarez, R., 2014, April). Over the next sixty years, panic about the state of public education in the United States culminated in the 1983 report “A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform.”

The “A Nation at Risk” report used the language of nuclear disarmament, popularized in the 1980s nuclear freeze movement, by charging the United States educational system with “unilateral, educational disarmament” (p. 5). The report recommended “strengthening” high school graduation requirements including requiring three years of “social studies” for high school graduation. The “social studies” recommendations reflected the bipolar world of the early 1980s. According to the document, students should have a breadth of understanding of classical and contemporary ideas while focusing on the differences between “free and repressive societies” and how “our” economic and political systems’ “work” and “function.” The report triggered the creation of subject specific “rigorous and measurable” standards that promoted “learning

the New Basics.” The report influenced the 1994 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) that required states to incorporate rigorous standards by national organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) and the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS). The most contested standards were those for United States history.

In the fall of 1991, the National Endowment for the Humanities under Lynne Cheney funded the development of United States history standards by the UCLA National Center for History in the Schools. A History Task force was convened. Lynne Cheney and Diane Ravitch, then Assistant Secretary of Education, were co-chairs; co-directors were Charlotte Crabtree, director of the National Center for History in the Schools (NCHS), and Gary Nash of the Cooperative Research Program at UCLA. The Task Force agreed to develop standards for U.S. and world history and to include therein facts, interpretation and analysis that “incorporate civic education, economic history, art history, literature and geography” (Nash, Crabtree, and Dunn, 1997, p. 156). A very deliberative, consensus building process was established. Besides the 28 member National Council, the co-directors, and the co-chairs, many other organizations, all representing varied sectors of the U.S., participated (Nash et al., 1997, p. 160). Contentious topics included multiculturalism versus Euro-centrism and Western Civilization versus World History. By May 1994, a draft was available and was quickly criticized by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and Chester Finn, former Secretary of Education in the Reagan Administration, for allegedly limiting the accomplishments of Western civilization (Nash et al., 1997, p. 185).

While changes were made to address some of the wishes of Finn and the AFT, a barrage of criticism began in November 1994 with an editorial in the *Wall Street Journal* written by Lynne Cheney. Cheney charged the authors with an “obsession” with multiculturalism, racism, political correctness and minimal focus on United States personalities and traditional history (Evans, 2004, p. 166). Talk show hosts and political pundits blasted the history standards (Evans, 2004; Nash et al., 1997). The United States Congress intervened in January 1995 when the Senate voted 99 to 1 to reject the history standards. Once again, the authors of the standards were tagged by the U.S. Senate as “anti-western” and “anti-American.” The lone dissenting senator refused to sign, claiming the repudiation of the Standards was inadequate (Cavanaugh, 2010; Rethinking Schools, 1995;).³ The Senate Resolution 66 included the stipulation that governmental funding should only go to “recipient(s) ...(who) have a decent respect for... United States’ history, ideas, and institutions, to the increase of freedom and prosperity around the world” (Pressler, January 20, 1995).⁴ In a similar House of Representatives denunciation, Newt Gingrich, the newly elected Speaker of the House, submitted an article, “History Standards are Bunk,” that quoted numerous liberal members of Congress reiterating the “anti-Western” and “anti-American” charges (Gingrich (GA), 1995). In a retrospective on the standards, Diane Ravitch (2005) labeled the standards a product of “cultural wars.”

According to Nash (1997), Cheney and other accusers “deliberately misrepresented” the standards and took sentences and phrases out of context to foment

³ The “dissenting” vote was by Senator Bennett Johnston (D-LA). (Gingrich, 1995).

⁴ The Senate resolution was submitted by Senator Pressler (R-SD) on behalf of both Democrats and Republicans including liberal Senators Feingold, Kennedy, Harkin, Moseley-Braun, Kerry, Simon, Boxer, Feinstein, Wellstone, and Murray.

charges of bias (pp. 202 – 205). Revised standards were republished in 1996. This “basic” edition added more material on the U.S. Constitution, the Cold War and “western expansion” (*Rebirth of History Standards*, 1996) but did not mention the conflict in the preface other than to label history the “most contentious field of the curriculum” (National Center for History in the Schools, 1996, p. ix). According to Evans (2004), the standards were sanitized to appease neoconservative critics.

Emphasis on the standards reappeared with Public Law 107-110, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. Interdisciplinary social studies is explicitly eliminated in favor of discrete teaching of history, geography, civics and economics (United States Department of Education, 2001, Sec. 2351).⁵ Civics education is defined as “civic competence and responsibility;” funding was made available to a few programs including a congressional simulation, “We the People,” and “Project Citizen” to address “specific problems ... (including) school violence and drug abuse” (United States Department of Education, 2001, Section 2342). NCLB also promoted a neoconservative version of history standards with the requirement to teach “traditional” U.S. history by focusing on “the principles of freedom and democracy, articulated in our founding documents” (Paige, 2003, as cited by Singer, 2005, p. 8). With the Act, Teaching American History grants were made available to for the teaching of “traditional” U.S. history until 2011-2012 (United States Department of Education, 2001, Section 2351).

⁵ NCLB states that the Teaching American History Grant (TAHG) Program is “for the development, implementation, and strengthening of programs to teach traditional American history as a separate academic subject (*not as a component of social studies*) within elementary school and secondary school curricula...” (Sec. 2351). From 2002 – 2010, nearly \$1 billion in grants was awarded. Funding was dramatically decreased in fiscal year 2011 so no new grants were awarded. There was no funding for fiscal year 2012 (U.S. Department of Education, Teaching American History; “FY 2012 TAH funding,” 2011)

Simultaneously, NCLB altered the quantity and quality of instruction. In elementary, middle and “underperforming” public schools, social studies instruction waned (Manzo, 2005). Instead, teachers focused on tested subjects - reading and math. In addition, NCLB detoured from the 1994 Bilingual Education Act’s emphasis on English acquisition and first language skills to English only proficiency diminishing the importance of students’ culture and language (Garcia, 2013; United States Department of Education, 2001, Section 3101). NCLB legislation conflicts with research on language acquisition; students must take standardized tests within one year of entering the United States rather than allowing students time to acquire academic and disciplinary English. The pressure for students to “achieve” has led to the most recent manifestation of standards, the Common Core.

In 2008, the National Governor’s Association released the precursor to the Common Core Standards, *Benchmarking for success: Ensuring U.S. students receive a world-class education*. The report described U.S. education as “falling behind” other nations; in order to increase U.S. competitiveness an “internationally benchmarked standards in mathematics and language arts” was needed (National Governors Association, 2008, pp. 6 – 7). This led to the creation of the “Common Core State Standards Initiative” for language arts and math (Thompson, 2013). Instead of creating separate standards for history and social sciences or social studies, there are English / Language Arts standards for History/Social Science. The proponents of the standards emphasize disciplinary, academic language, “close reading” of primary and secondary sources, comparing / contrasting points of view, analyzing qualitative and technical data and argumentative writing (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices &

Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). Acquisition of these skills is to ensure students are “college and career ready.” In response to the Common Core, the *College, Career and Civil Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards* was published by the National Council for the Social Studies in 2013. The *C3 Framework* adds the “content knowledge, skills and dispositions” the authors believe are lacking from the Common Core literacy skills set (p. viii). According to Lee and Swan (2013), the *C3 Framework* incorporates disciplinary literacies while adding standards for “civic life” including deliberation and action (p. xxiii).

Numerous concerns have been raised about the Common Core Standards such as funding by the Gates Foundation, alignment with high stakes standardized tests, the prescribed reading strategy and the role of testing corporations (Karp, 2013-2014; Newkirk, 2013). A March 2013 Issue Brief by the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) identified what teachers of English Language Learners (ELLs) must do to equip ELLs for the new standards. Teachers must build on students’ background knowledge, scaffold instruction, and explicitly teach academic language and differentiate instruction based on English level proficiency (p. 5). The Standards also do not include the sociolinguistic and communicative language needs of second language learners (“Raise your voice on behalf of English learners,” 2013). Concerns have also been expressed regarding preparing content area teachers to engage ELLs in academic language and discourse (Bunch, Kibler & Pimentel, 2012; Coleman, R., & Goldenberg, C., 2012, February).

Welcoming all students into academic discourse should require building on students’ prior knowledge and experiences (Short, Vogt, & Echevarria, 2011; Walqui &

van Lier, 2010). Instead, the No Child Left Behind Act (2002) funds a narrow understanding of the United States national narrative and civics and multiculturalism while the self-defined ethnic composition of the United States has evolved into a more ethnically diverse population (U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, 2011). According to the 2010 U.S. census, 12% of the U.S. population is “foreign born” and 20% are either first or second-generation U.S. residents (U.S. Census bureau, Population Division, 2011). In addition, documented immigrants are also more likely to travel between their homeland and the United States than previous generations. Those unable to travel physically are able to travel virtually and maintain transnational networks, kinships and literacies (Lam & Rosario-Ramos, 2009).

Simultaneously, social studies education, whose “primary purpose . . . is to help young people make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world” (1992 NCSS definition), has been pulled between proponents of teacher –centered, transmission of “traditional” United States knowledge and identity and student-centered, transformational knowledge. While there has been attention to multicultural curricula (Banks, 2007; Nieto, 1999), culturally responsive curricula and pedagogy (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995), minimal attention has been given to the influence of youth’s ethnic identity and its influence on their historical interpretations (Epstein, 2009; p. 15) and global education (Merryfield, 2001). The needs of transnational migrant students with their complex “identity formation” (Jo, 2003-2004), or “immigrant – responsive” multiculturalism (Oikonomidou, 2011) has received minimal attention.

NCLB also promotes Advanced Placement (AP) courses through the federal and state funding of test fees for low socioeconomic status (SES) students. Advanced Placement courses are often “gatekeepers” and noted by college recruiters but are criticized for breadth and scope of coverage (Parker, Mosborg, Bransford, Vye, Wilkerson & Abbott, 2011). Nevertheless, encouraged by NCLB guidelines, more students are taking AP courses in public schools. According to the “Advanced Placement Report to the Nation (2012), “ the number of U.S. public high school students who took at least one Advanced Placement exam increased from 17% to 30% in a decade; nevertheless, the majority of AP test takers are not “underrepresented” students (p. 16). For example, in 1985 only 1% of AP exam takers were African Americans; by 2005, 5.2% of students taking AP exams were African Americans (“There is both,” Winter 2005/2006).⁶ The “achievement gap” is evident in “qualifying grades” or a 3 on a scale of 1 to 5: 63.3% of European Americans students versus 27.8% of African American students receive a “qualifying grade” (“There is both,” Winter 2005/2006).⁷

In our School District, 1634 Advanced Placement tests were administered in 2004. In 2011, 7,129 AP tests were administered. Simultaneously, the District wide “qualifying grades,” a score of three, four or five, went from 51% to 21.4%.⁸ This grade decline follows the national trend; the percentage of students receiving a qualifying score

⁶ While African American participation in Advanced Placement has improved, it is not near the SAT numbers: 11% of students who take the SAT are African American while African Americans are 13% of K-12 students. The most common AP course for African American students is English literature or 7% of test takers. 5.7% of AP U.S. History test takers are African American and 5.6% of AP U.S. Government. Fewer African American students take AP science and math courses. (Calculus AB – 4.6%, Chemistry 4.4% and Mechanical Physics 2.2%) (“There is both,” Winter 2005/2006)

⁷ The “qualifying grade for African American students in AP U.S. History is 26.1% and 22% for AP U.S. Government. (“There is both,” Winter 2005-2006).

⁸ In 2011, 4.5% of our School District students who took an AP exam received a score of five, 6.9% received a score of four, and 9.9% received a score of three.

has decreased as the number of students taking the tests has increased (Lewin, 2010). Until the 2013-2014 school year, high schools in our School District were rated based on the percentage of students in an AP course but not on their success on the test.⁹ Starting in 2013-2014, the state's school rating system, School Performance Profile, recognizes the number of AP and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses offered and the percentage of students who receive a 3 or better on an AP exam.

With pressure on public schools to increase the number of students enrolled in AP courses, preparation of “underrepresented” students and the content and pedagogy needed to support these students requires further examination. AP U.S. History and AP U.S. Government curricula prioritize knowledge that may or may not conflict with the students’ worldviews. If social studies is “to help young people make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens in a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world” (National Curriculum Standard for SS, 2010), how might a U.S. civics course build on students’ prior knowledge and points of view including transnational and multi-dimensional students’ perspectives? If the “civic mission of social studies” requires “embracing pluralism” (National Curriculum Standards for SS, p. 9), how might “pluralism” honor “underrepresented” students perspectives and interpretations of U.S. history and government? If curriculum is to be “culturally responsive,” how do students maintain their transnational and multi-dimensional identity while succeeding academically in a standardized course (Ladson-

⁹ Beginning in 2013, our state changed how schools are evaluated. “Adequate Yearly Progress” or AYP was changed to “School Performance Profile” or SPP. (Chute, 2013) For high schools, SPP includes the number of “core” - life or physical science, English, mathematics, social sciences and history - AP courses offered and the number of students who score a “3” or higher.

Billings, 1995)? Teachers' assumptions about a student's acceptance of Western "democratic" ideals, interpretations of gender roles, and attitudes toward academic achievement may be more precarious for immigrant students (Kurtz-Costes & Pungello, 2000).

Immigrant students' experiences with social studies texts designed for English Language Learners (ELL) may also be problematic if they encourage comparing and contrasting U.S. and other cultures or include "show-and-tell of one's own culture," (Cruz, Nutta, O'Brien, Feyten, & Govoni, 2003, p. 32) rather than empowering immigrant youth to assert their perspectives, understandings and interpretations of U.S. history and civics. Experts in English language acquisition, such as Short (1994), overemphasize the "cultural" component of social studies, or adaptation to U.S. culture and historical holidays, rather than the academic study of history and government in secondary schools (Short, 1994). For example, Short, Vogt and Echevarria (2011) describe social studies as "less rigorous" because it is "telling of stories, the revisiting of familiar things like your neighborhood and community workers, (and) the sharing of information of cultures and traditions around the world" (p. 1). Nevertheless, in the same text, the authors recognize that social studies is difficult for English Language Learners because they lack necessary background knowledge (Short, Vogt, & Echevarria, 2011, p. 3). These contradictions are accentuated in high stakes test courses.

Purpose of the Dissertation

In February 2013, my oldest son received an email from a small Midwest U.S. college. The email encouraged him to take Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate and honors courses. According to the email, “the more you challenge yourself, the more prepared you will be for your college experience” (Goshen College, personal communication, February 28, 2013). The email equated taking advanced courses with admission, scholarships and grade point averages (GPA). In a dissertation study by Chodl (August 2012), participation in AP and IB courses improved chances for admission to selective universities. Nevertheless, selective universities have become more reluctant to grant college credit for Advanced Placement courses (Stevens, October 2013). Some exclusive private schools stopped offering Advanced Placement (AP) courses and a few wealthy public school dropped AP course (Berger, 2006; Hu, 2008, December 6; Zhao, 2002).¹⁰ Advanced Placement is considered too restrictive and test driven. At the same time, Advanced Placement offerings in our urban School District have expanded.

At the small, neighborhood urban high school (N = 600) where I teach, Advanced Placement offerings were quickly increased from four to nine between 2008 and 2010. In the summer of 2010, I participated in an Advanced Placement U.S. Government seminar to prepare to teach the new course. Unfortunately, the leader of the seminar had neither public school nor urban school experience. Sample syllabi were available on-line

¹⁰ Scarsdale, NY public school dropped AP courses in 2008 in favor of their “Advanced Topics” courses.

but there was little direction in how to prepare so-called “underrepresented” students for the AP exam. More importantly, there was no direction in how to engage students with limited background knowledge and interest in the focus of the course – the mechanics and structures of U.S. government.

During my first year of teaching the course in 2010-2011, the reality of working with students who had minimal interest in the content of the course, little background in the particular content of the course as well as limited experience with academic reading and writing, required me to re-envision the course. How might I change my perspective to build on what student bring to the class? How might I change the course to boost their interest? If the class is college preparatory, what should that entail? If the class is to increase civic competency, how is that realized? Is there space for students’ multi-dimensional identities? Is there space for civic action? By my third year of teaching the course, I had more questions than answers.

CHAPTER 2: Framing the Study

Conceptual / Theoretical Framework

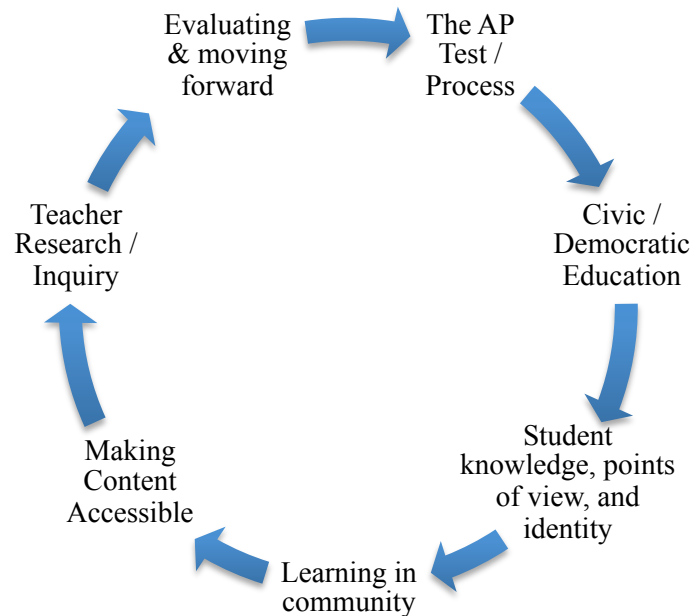


Figure 1: Conceptual / Theoretical Framework

In preparation for this study, I located myself, a teacher – researcher, in multiple and varied theoretical frameworks. I selected these literatures because they include my epistemology, methodology, content, context and strategies. The primary theories that influenced this study include:

(1) Advanced Placement (Hayes, 2010; Katz, 2006; Klopfenstein & Thomas, 2010; Parker, Mosborg, Bransford, Vye, Wilkerson, & Abbott, 2011; Pucci & Cramer, 2012; Pust, 2006; Rothschild, 1999; Schneider, 2009; Torres, 2010; Walker, 2007)

(2) Civic or democratic education (Banks, 2004, 2007; Castles, 2004; Hess, 2009; Ochoa-Becker, 2007; Parker, 1996, 2003; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004);

(3) Students' knowledge (Bradford, Derry, Berliner, Hammerness, & Beckett, 2005; Cohen, Steele, & Ross, 1999; Delpit, 1988; Dochy, 1994; Dwek, 2006, 2010; Freire, 1970, 1993; Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Nieto, 1999)

(4) Learning in community and scaffolding participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Taba, 1962; Vygotsky, 1978; Walqui & van Lier, 2010)

(5) Academic, disciplinary and second language acquisition and social studies (Chamot, 2009; Cruz & Thornton, 2009; Cummins, 1981, 2008; Haynes, 2007; Jiménez, García, & Pearson, 1996; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008; Short, 1994, 1998, 2005; Short, Vogt, & Echevarria, 2011; Walqui & van Lier, 2010; Zwiers, 2008)

(6) Teacher practitioner research (Allwright, Autumn, 2005; Anderson & Herr, 1999; Anderson, Herr, Nihlen, 2007; Campano, 2007, 2009; Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1999, 2001, 2009; Freeman, 1998; Herr & Anderson, 2005; Johnston, 2006)

In addition to the formal theoretical framework, I consider professional development experiences that influenced my practice as a teacher. These include participation in the local Writing Project summer institutes, a civic engagement program, *Student Voices*, and a *Street Law* summer seminar.

Before addressing the theoretical frameworks, I will review the historical context of United States social studies education and the College Board's Advanced Placement program. Locating research in an historical frame of reference provides grounding for contemporary research (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 185). My analysis of the evolution of social studies education in the United States informs my understanding of civic competence. My review of the Advanced Placement program includes research on teaching Advanced Placement U.S. Government and concerns regarding "underrepresented" students. As a teacher – researcher, situating the content I am teaching in its historical context diminishes the isolation of classroom instruction. It is a

reminder of the intellectual, political and social struggles of curricula development that my students and I embark on each day.

Historical context of teaching of social studies

Contemporary school based citizenship or social studies education in the United States has its origins in late 19th and early 20th century curricular committees. Civics was included in proposed course content beginning with the National Education Association and American Historical Association Committee of Ten (1893 – 1895; 1892 – 1894) through the Committee on History and Education for Citizenship (1918 – 1921) (Douglass, 1967; Evans, 2004; Jorgensen, 2010; Lybarger, 1983; Nash et al., 1997; Nelson, 1994; Rugg, 1926; Saxe, 1991; Whelan, 1991). In the midst of the committee reports, the American Political Science Association Committee of Seven, 1911 – 1916, shifted the focus in civics from structures and workings of government to “Community Civics” or students’ engagement in current issues for the betterment of the students’ communities. The 1913 Preliminary Statement and the 1915 Report on Community Civics sponsored by the National Education Association Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education (CRSE) supported this shift. CRSE also sponsored The Social Studies in Secondary Education report that emphasized the study of contemporary issues and students developing solutions for societal problems such as sanitation, housing, child labor, recreation and health. Lastly, the report included “Vocational Civics” or preparation for industrial work and trade. By 1921, the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) was created; according to its manifesto, *A National Council for the Social Studies* (1921), NCSS would promote citizenship and train “democratic citizens” (*The National Council to Promote Social Studies Report*, 1922, p. 130).

The committee reports and statements did not temper the debates on how curricula might promote “democratic citizens.” In the 1930s, an early proponent and creator of Social Studies curricular materials that included problem solving and controversial issues was Harold Rugg (Evans, 2007; Kliebard, 2002). By World War II, some school districts banned Rugg’s curricular materials (Nash et al., 1997; Zimmerman, 2002). During the early 1950s, social studies teachers were cautioned to focus on factual information, maintain neutrality and to not allow students to take action on controversial issues (Ballinger, 1963). By the end of the decade, the Cold War’s shift from blacklisting to the space race led to National Science Foundation funding of “New Social Studies” curricula. The “New Social Studies” emerged from the 1958 National Defense Education Act that called for “social efficiency” education to defend the United States by focusing on rigor and technical skills developed in top down, university created curricula (Kliebard, 2004, p. 267). According to Thornton (1994), the “New Social Studies” attempted to move from “entrenched citizenship transmission / recitation” to a more transformative approach but it failed to gain wide acceptance (p. 229).

Three projects are illustrative of the academic foci, pedagogical approaches and controversies surrounding the “New Social Studies.” First, *Man: A Course of Study* or MACOS, begun in 1962 by anthropologist Douglas Oliver and continued by Jerome Bruner and Peter Dow, introduced fifth graders to inquiry and issues through film, artifacts, material culture, games, stories, maps, and pictures (Bruner, 1960, 1977; Johnson, 2010). Eventually, MACOS was also labeled “anti-American” and criticized for its cultural relativism and humanism (Evans, 2011b; Kihss, 1975; Wolcott, 2007). Second, *The Harvard Studies Project* (1967) included case studies that incorporated

historical and social science knowledge to address current issues. By 1972 there were 30 pamphlets that reinforced U.S. values of civil liberties and private property, majority rule and the rights of minorities while incorporating multiple perspectives, historical and contemporary understandings and evaluating evidence (Evans, 2004; Haeussler Bohan & Feinberg, 2010; Parker, 1991). Despite the early praise, it was criticized for its lack of impact on teacher practice and promoting the illusion of an inquiry based curricula (Evans, 2004; Lybarger, 1991). A third project, the 1969 *High School Curriculum for Able Students* led by Edwin Fenton at Carnegie Mellon University, combined inquiry, primary sources, study skills and content knowledge (Cude, 2010; Evans, 2011a; Fenton, 1971; Good, Farley & Fenton, 1969). Similar to Harold Rugg, Fenton was targeted with charges of “anti-Americanism,” fostering strife and controversy (Evans, 2011). Eventually, the “New Social Studies” was also criticized for its inability to critically analyze race and racism, and Euro-centrism (Contreras, 2010; Sleeter, 1996). Curriculum themes of international conflict, war / peace, decision-making and the environment were included in some curricular publications but people of color were still marginalized or ignored. By the early 1980s, United States federal government funding of inquiry based curricula ended with the shift to academic standards and conformity.

While national organizations were developing academic standards, a series of publications and reports provided philosophical and curricular models for “standards driven” instruction. A publication that gained attention and support by advocates of standards was E. D. Hirsch's *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* (1987, 1988). Hirsch emphasized “common” content and promotion of “democracy.” A report, Bennett’s (1987) *James Madison High School: A Curriculum for American*

Students was similar to Hirsch's *Cultural Literacy*; both promoted “common” knowledge, skills and ideals. The next report, *The Bradley Commission on History in Schools* (1989), included more cultural and global diversity and critiques of U.S. ideals. Like *The Bradley Commission’s report, Charging a Course: Social Studies for the 21st Century* by the National Commission on Social Studies (1989) included “civic responsibility and participation,” and U.S. ideals but added community service.

The 1980s reports led to the 1990s state and national standards under *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* (Cavanaugh, 2010). The most contested national standards were the *National Standards for History*. The history standards, developed by broad based National Council and affiliated organizations, included civic education, literature and geography (Nash et al., 1997). Critics ranged from the American Federation of Teachers to the U.S. Congress. Within a decade, the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) reinforced the use of academic standards in the development of standardized tests and teaching “traditional American history” (No Child Left Behind Act, 2002b). NCLB also promoted the expansion of Advanced Placement courses and subsequent testing (No Child Left Behind Act, 2002a). Nearly 100 years of debating how to define, nurture and promote “democratic citizenship” shifted to debating and measuring “academic achievement.”

Literature Review

Advanced Placement

At the beginning of the Cold War, the Advanced Placement (AP) program was created on the premise that, according to David A. Dudley (1958), the Director of the 1957-1958 College Entrance Examination Board's Advanced Placement Program, "all students are not created equal" (p. 1). The idea of identifying high performing students and targeting them for special courses came on the heels of the Ford Foundation's "pre-induction scholarships" award beginning in 1951. These were designed to take "talented" high school students" out of high school before they were eligible for the draft and enroll them in prestigious universities (Rothschild, 1999, p. 79). Representatives from Andover, Exeter, Lawrenceville, Harvard, Princeton and Yale met in 1951 to align their high school and introductory college courses to decrease "wasted" repetition and increase rigor in school (Blackmer, Bragdon, McGeorge, Harbison, Seymour, & Taylor, 1952, p. 13 – 15). The need for an exclusive program for exceptional students was accepted as necessary to reach their maximal potential (Angermann, 1961, p. 50) and to provide academic programs grounded in students' aspirations and competencies (Dudley, 1958, p. 2). As Rothschild (1999) points out, a goal was to increase the number of "strong college graduates" entering graduate school so as to better position the United States to compete with its adversaries.

According to Charles R. Keller, chair of the Department of History at Williams College and Director of the College Board's Advanced Placement (AP) Program from

1955 – 1957, AP “affected curricular thinking, course planning, articulation of work done in school and college, communication between schools and colleges, particularly at the teachers level, and the intellectual tone in schools and colleges” but not in history or social studies (1958, p. 7 – 8). Keller (1958) lamented the lack of “rethinking” in either curriculum or pedagogy.

Starting in 1952, the Advanced Placement report, *General Education in School and College*, found that in social studies there was more agreement on goals versus how to obtain the goals (Blackmer et al., 1952, p. 66). The Advanced Placement committee recommended studying current issues and “the remote” or “non-Western thought and institutions” (p. 67) in college survey courses. To avoid students taking courses to boost their grade point average (GPA), the committee recommended that “narrative American history” be taught in secondary schools; the emphasis should be on “the continuity of our national development... political factors in that development... and (the) problem of interpreting (historical) evidence” (Blackmer et al., 1952, p. 70-72). Pedagogically, the committee recommended that students learn to take notes from books and lectures, to read maps, interpret and confront controversial issues, take exams based on reasoning and memorization and to have opportunities to explore topics of personal interest (Blackmer et al., 1952, p. 72 - 73). Memorization and reliance on one textbook were considered inappropriate; workbooks, weekly quizzes and test review questions were equated with the dangers of “the older slavery to the text” (Blackmer et al., p. 73).

To raise standards in both high school and college courses, the AP committee proposed the creation of exams approved by college professors to replace freshman college courses (Blackmer et al., 1952, p. 129). To begin the process, a test committee

consisting of two college professors and one high school teacher collaborated with Educational Testing Service to create exams for “superior” students (Blackmer et al., 1952, p. 132). The first exams were administered in 1954 to students from selected private schools. By 1957, 2000 students took 3,700 exams and 150 colleges participated (Marland, 1975). To the credit of the founders, by January 1960 there were AP courses in 24 public school districts (Ralston, 1961).

While AP helped align high schools and college survey courses, it did not deviate from its original design for the academically talented. However, even those students needed support. Teachers quickly realized the need to identify students in sixth grade and begin separation of students by perceived academic ability and prepare them for AP courses starting in seventh grade (Whipple, 1958, pp. 24 - 25). While teachers made adaptations and determined how to implement Advanced Placement requirements, the content and scoring of exams was an ongoing debate and limited funding for these additional activities. Nevertheless, as early as 1958, AP exams for “academically talented” high school students gained wider recognition in colleges as was clear in educational publications (Keller, 1958) and easier access for these students to prestigious universities (Schneider, 2009, pp. 818-819). There was concern that AP tracked students by ability, separating the “the brightest and most capable students,” but it also provided “prestige and privilege.” Schneider claims that the latter was not the original intent (p. 818). That said, despite growing concerns that tracking students by ability was leaving other students behind and unprepared for a college education (p. 819), by 1965 AP was well established and received positive national press (Rothschild, 1999, pp. 184-185).

Concern over lack of student diversity in Advanced Placement courses increased in the 1980s (Lacy, 2010). The program expanded into more urban, multi-ethnic and international schools and continued to add courses including U.S. and Comparative Government (1987), Micro and Macro Economics (1989) and Psychology (1992). In 1999, Advanced Placement was challenged in California. Two class action cases - Daniel et al. v. State of California and Castaneda et al. v. University of California Regents - were filed to challenge enrollment and admission policies related to Advanced Placement. In the court cases, parents and students utilized the federal courts to challenge the status quo and empower students (Solórzano and Ornelas, 2004, p. 23). The 2001 No Child Left Behind Act included federal funding for Advanced Placement exam fees – a step designed to increase the number of low-income students taking the exams (No Child Left Behind, 2002b, Part G). In 2002, the College Entrance Examination Board, the not-for-profit organization that administers Advanced Placement, issued an “equity policy statement” which called for ending policies that limited access to Advanced Placement course to students who were “traditionally underrepresented” for “ethnic, racial or socioeconomic” reasons. By 2003, the number of “underrepresented” students who took Advanced Placement exam increased by 16.2% (College Board, 2004).

Who has access to Advanced Placement (AP) courses may be important because most educators assume the courses are synonymous with college preparation and rigor; this presumption is rarely challenged (Pucci & Cramer, 2012). Nevertheless, rigorous courses influence college readiness and attendance (Perna, 2005; King, 1996). According to the College Board (2010), there is a correlation between four-year college graduation rates and earning college credits before entering college. College preparatory

content courses are particularly important to English Language Learners who are often isolated and tracked into substandard courses and not held to high academic standards (Callahan, 2005; American Federation of Teachers, 2006). Even if students do not score a three to five (out of five) on the Advanced Placement test, some researchers claim that students who take them are better prepared for college (Nugent & Karnes, 2002; Santoli, 2002). Nevertheless, there is a strong correlation between a passing score of 3 or higher and income; low-income students rarely gain college credit through Advanced Placement scores (Handwerk, Tognatta, Coley & Gitomer, 2008, p. 23).

Critics of Advanced Placement, like Katz (2006) and Schneider (2009), chastise the narrow focus on a standardized test rather than preparing students for the rigors of collegiate learning. Some studies support Katz (2006). From 2003 – 2009, the correlations between Advanced Placement participation and college preparation are mixed: nine studies found a positive correlation, nine a mixed correlation and four a negative correlation to college preparedness (McClanahan, 2010). According to Klopfenstein and Thomas (2010), there are no meticulous studies demonstrating causation between taking an AP course and college success. For AP to diminish the “achievement gap,” Klopfenstein and Thomas (2010) found that early preparation and supports for students are necessary (p. 184). Therefore, AP course experience is not a predictor of college success (Klopfenstein & Thomas, January 2009).

While the benefits of Advanced Placement for college preparation are debatable, teacher consideration of pedagogical approaches that enhance the skills needed for success in Advanced Placement courses and, ideally, college, provide insights about expanding learning. Joan Kernan Cone (1992), an English teacher, described her

responsibility to provide opportunities for all students to identify as learners in an open admission Advanced Placement English class. Cone's practice included modeling writing and discussion to enable students to collaborate and shift toward shared facilitation. In the second year of the class, Cone focused on small groups and pairs of students "talking and working out meaning together" (p. 716). Students also took ownership from Cone to reflect on and shape the "class dynamics," content / curriculum and test preparation (p. 717).

In 2006, Jennifer Pust described her experience in opening an Advanced Placement English Literature classes to English Language Learners (ELLs). Pust realized incorporating strategies for students performing below grade level in reading and writing supported the ELLs in the AP course. She used "think aloud," or modeling her thinking while reading, to scaffolding major assignments. She provided sentence starters for writing assignments and fishbowl discussions on literary works. In the fishbowl discussions, students received credit for comments on the content of the works but also for responding to peers and using academic language. Pust also posted teacher and student created charts on the classroom walls with academic vocabulary and class notes. Lastly, Pust expanded the literary canon to include an English literary work with Spanish vocabulary that reflected the culture of her ELLs. This move increased collaboration and confidence. Pust (2006) prepared her students for the AP test but, "more importantly, we prepared for the world after the test... to be successful in college and beyond."

Oberjurgue's (1999) and Walker's (2007) research focused on improving outcomes on the AP test. In a study on Advanced Placement U.S. Government, Oberjurgue (1999) described the course as "test-driven," requiring "test taking skills" and

analytical writing; the skills may be developed through “student-centered activities” such as oral and visual individual and small group presentations (pp. 265 – 266). A more comprehensive study by Walker (2007) on Advanced Placement U.S. History identified 12 teaching methods designed for low-income students to improve their pass rate on the Advanced Placement U.S. History exam. Walker compared methods recommend in research literature to support low-income students with the practices of two teachers. Both the teachers’ practice and literature included the importance of thesis based essay writing, group work, encouragement of student engagement, and utilization of practice tests. Although not found in the research literature, the teachers’ practice also included heavy reliance on the textbook, and out of class independent reading by the students. Two critical findings in the research literature, incorporating both students’ prior knowledge and their culture, were not evident in the teachers’ practice. Walker (2007) concluded that the research literature on low-income students conflicted with these teachers’ classroom practice because the research literature was not focused on students in rigorous or advanced classes. The two teachers in Walker’s study emphasized student independence while teaching reading and writing skills but did not see the relevance of infusing the students’ cultures. Similarly, Pucci and Cramer’s (2012) raise concerns with the disconnect between Advanced Placement history courses and a “culturally relevant and engaging curriculum;” such academic tracking, they suggest, can be harmful to the culture of a small school (pp. 166 – 167, 173).

In another study of six gifted English Language Learners in an Advanced Placement programs, Torres (2010) noted that the students’ language, Spanish, and culture were not integrated into Advanced Placement courses other than Advanced

Placement Spanish. A study of a College Board professional development program designed to increase teachers' cultural competence found that some teachers held low expectations for students of color; the teachers also lacked interest in professional development to meet the needs of diverse students although they expressed concern for their students (Hayes, 2010). Taken together, these studies suggest that many teachers may be reluctant to broaden the canon of Advanced Placement U.S. History by drawing on students' knowledge and cultural perspectives.

The breadth of knowledge students are expected to know for the exam also hamper Advanced Placement history and government courses; the course becomes a "vocabulary" list of topics rather than purposeful learning (Parker, & Lo, 2014, April). In a 2008-2009 mixed-method study of a project-based approach to teaching A.P. U.S. Government, researchers examined student engagement and scores (Parker, Mosborg, Bransford, Vye, Wilkerson, & Abbott, 2011). Students participated in five simulations including the roles of legislators in the U.S. Congress, Supreme Court justices, and government and community leaders developing public policy. At a high achieving, wealthy suburban school, students in the project based course outperformed students in a traditional course. In a lower achieving suburban school, students in the project based class performed as well as students in the traditional class. The authors concluded that it is possible, and more engaging for students, to join preparation for a "high-stakes, breadth-oriented test" with in-depth, project based, real world learning. The project was expanded in 2010 – 2011 to more ethnically, socio-economically and academically urban school districts ("Knowledge in action," 2013). At this phase, the researchers had to incorporate reading and writing supports and strategies for the students. Less

academically prepared students had not been exposed to the literacy and discourse prerequisites; students not only had to comprehend the text but also had to know how to use evidence, academic language and content specific language (Eng, 2012). Therefore, even with literacy supports, underprepared students did not gain the critical thinking and content knowledge from the project based approach necessary to participate and gain from the process (Eng, 2012).

While the number of students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses nearly double and the number of low income students nearly quadrupled from 2003 to 2013 (College Entrance Examination Board, February 2014), there are limits on equity. In 2011, the College Entrance Examination Board *7th Annual Report to the Nation* appeared to backtrack on full equity and access; “equitable access” should be a “guiding principle” for students “willing and academically prepared... to succeed in a rigorous, college level opportunity” (p. 8). Test results also vary by geography and ethnicity. For example, in 2013 nearly 30% of students in Maryland who took an AP exam scored a 3 or higher; in contrast, 15% of Pennsylvania exam takers and only 4.4% of Mississippi students scored a 3 or higher (College Entrance Examination Board, February 2014, p. 11). Another concern is the disparity between urban and suburban schools; 10% of students in urban schools versus 60% of students in suburban schools scored a 3 or higher (Stevens, October 2013). Lastly, African American students are the most underrepresented group of exam takers and students scoring a 3 or higher and only one state has closed the “performance equity gap” for African American students (College Entrance Examination Board, February 2014, p. 17, 30). According to Tai (Summer 2008), administering AP tests will not solve the “performance gap” because of the lack of a national commitment

to educational equality, including equitable funding, qualified teachers and comprehensive preparation of students in early grades. To equitably prepare “disadvantaged” students for college level courses in high school, Dougherty and Mellor (2010) recommend intervention in preschool and early elementary school (p. 225). They advocate a “seamless academic readiness ramp,” starting in preschool, to provide students with the skills and academic curricula to enable students to be prepared and successful.

Civics / Democratic Education

Since the laser focus on reading and math under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, concern over the loss of civic education has gained attention. In 2011, Arne Duncan, U.S. Secretary of Education claimed civic education was a “core subject... critical to sustaining an informed democracy and a globally competitive workforce” (p. 124). Prominent individuals, such as former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor, co-founded iCivics to promote civics education. Nevertheless, clarifying the aims or intentions of civic education often leads to tension and division.

According to Diana Hess (2009), civic education connotes perpetuating a static system versus democratic education that is vital, changing and disputed (p. 14). Whether the term “civic” or “democratic” education is used, debates on civics education are often polarizing. For example, is civic education intended to promote U.S. “exceptionalism” or assimilation into the dominant, Eurocentric culture? Is it intended to ensure hierarchical

and restrictive ethnic and class political and economic structures are perpetuated? Is it intended to perpetuate a narrow, simplistic national narrative or an expansive, complex national narrative? Or, is civic education transformational, multicultural and international? Is civic education a catalyst for social, political and economic change? Even the more neutral definition from the National Council for the Social Studies (2010) calling for “active and engaged participants in public life” (p. 9) may cause division and is open to interpretation.

Civics education, according to Ochoa-Becker (2007), is not limited to an individual’s relationship to the nation but includes “a matter of identities, relationships, privileges and responsibilities” (p. 32). From this perspective, citizenship is not an individual label or behavior; it is actualized in community. Since the founding of the United States, claiming legal citizenship has evolved through persistent, community based organizing by marginalized groups for recognition and basic civil liberties and civil rights. The struggle for a more inclusive experience of citizenship also led to shifts in civics education.

Until the 1960s, civics education was primarily “assimilationist.” For Banks (2007), students were to acquire values or ideals associated with the United States, such as democracy, equality, justice, liberty, and opportunity, to create a unified nation. Too often, the values were an illusion of unity. According to Hepburn (1993), education was the tool used to shape assimilation. Banks (2004) notes that the goal was for everyone to share a “mainstream,” or Eurocentric, culture. Banks writes that the 1960s ethnic group movements challenged assimilation and worked to make the United States acknowledge their political, cultural and economic claims. Organizing by ethnic groups led to forms of

multi-cultural education in the 1970s – 1980s that focused on tolerance, respect and acceptance of multiple cultures. In 1974, Kalectaca called on schools to teach academic language and culture while welcoming the students' home language and culture. By the 1990s, multiculturalism was supplanted by a pluralism that emphasized “affirmation, solidarity” and emancipation (Hill, 2007, p. 251 adapted from Chapman & Hobbies, 2005, p. 299).

Pluralism, according to Parker (1996; 2003), creates a citizenship “that embraces individual differences, multiple group identities, and a unifying, political community all at once” (p. 25). Parker (1996; 2003) supports pluralism but cautions against a pluralism that replaces extreme individualism with lockstep group identity because it may lead to denial of liberty and separation. Parker believes political unity can reside with social and cultural distinctions. These distinctions are clarified in genres of civics education: “traditional,” “progressive,” and “advanced.” “Traditional” proponents generally leave politics to people directly involved in government while they accept that citizens may vote or run for office. A traditionalist curriculum emphasizes civic knowledge or content, especially structures of government, information about public issues, and champions liberty and justice. “Progressives” also embrace knowledge but stress interpretation and citizen participation that goes beyond voting, for example, such as community action to affect public policy. A progressive curriculum must include the study of direct, democratic participation and possibly opportunities for action. Nevertheless, both traditional and progressive ideologies and methodologies assume that assimilation, rather than social and cultural distinctions, is a cornerstone of civics

education (Parker 1996; 2003). The third perspective, “advanced,” builds on the progressive by bridging democracy and diversity or pluralism.

Westheimer and Kahne (2004) also have a ternary model: citizens are either “personally responsible,” “participatory,” or “justice-oriented” (p. 240). “Personally responsible” citizens are charitable, follow the rules, and individually display good behavior and attitudes (p. 240). “Personally responsible” civics programs encourage character development and volunteering. “Participatory citizens” are charitable, knowledgeable about government, active in their community, including providing leadership, within fixed community and social structures (p. 240). “Participatory citizens” civics education includes learning how government and community groups work and assisting students in civic action. “Justice-oriented citizens” not only are charitable but also challenge injustice and unjust institutions and structures, have knowledge of social change movements, and encourage questioning, debate and action to change unjust organizations and systems (p. 240). “Justice-oriented” civics education focuses on understanding, questioning and analyzing economic, social and political institutions to promote just social change and collective action. A mixed methods study by Westheimer and Kahne (2004) shows curricular design to be grounded in the political positions and interests of the creators of the curriculum; if the goal of the writers of a curriculum is personal responsibility, participation or justice, then they will make this goal explicit because they have “significantly different implications for pedagogy, curriculum, evaluation and education policy” (p. 263).

James Banks (2008) calls for “interrogating” three forms of civics education: “assimilationist, liberal and universal” (p. 129). According to Banks (2008), civics

education should be “transformative” by encouraging students to acquire the academic skills and beliefs to confront inequity, and work for democratic and just communities. It should be grounded in the students’ cultures while, at the same time, exposing them to global points of view. Students in a “democratic multicultural society,” suggests Banks, need knowledge, opportunities to reflect on their values, discern options for action and to nurture awareness and respect for cultural differences to act equitably (Banks & Banks, with Clegg, 1999 cited in Banks, 2004, p. 4.) For this to occur, students’ identities should be a combination of their culture, national and international identities; students’ lives, beliefs, and ideas need to be respected and welcomed (Banks 2004; 2007). Banks, like Westheimer and Kahne, describes a “justice oriented” model; students are aware of injustice and inequality and need opportunities and guidance to act for a more humane world. One teacher role according to Banks (1996, as cited in Banks, 2004) is to work with students to learn about the multiple forms of knowledge, including students’ community and cultural knowledge, and attend to how values influence interpretations of knowledge. In addition, teachers should help students compare their knowledge with “mainstream academic knowledge,” including U.S. democratic values, to learn how to navigate between their community, and with other communities in the United States and the world (Banks, 2004; 2007).

Banks’ (2004) model for cultural, national and global identities has self or cultural identity at its core in that one must feel positive about one’s cultural group before one can accept others. In the sixth and final stage of Banks’ (2004) *Stages of Cultural Development Typology*, students acquire “the knowledge, skills and attitudes” to operate efficaciously within their ethnic community, other ethnic communities, their national

civic community and global civic communities. Schools, therefore, need to include U.S. democratic values (Banks, 2007, p. 9), while recognizing past and current injustice without concentrating on lists of de-contextualized oppressions that strip people of agency and community power. Civic education, according to Banks (2007), should not only include “workforce” preparation for students but also support students in caring about others while taking action to improve society. In order to take action, Banks (1999 as cited in Banks, 2007) proposed a curricular process for decision-making in which students acquire “interdisciplinary knowledge,” clarify their values, defend their decisions within the larger society’s democratic values, reflect on the consequences of their decisions and alternatives, then take action aligned with their values including acceptance of the ramifications (p. 145-149).

Banks’ (2004, 2007) multiple citizenships - cultural, national and global - are similar to in Castles’ (2004) transnational citizenship. Economic globalization, transportation options and new communication tools have created “transnational communities” in which, according to Castles, people may have “multiple identifies and divided loyalties” rather than loyalty to one country (p. 22). Castles placed transnational identity on a continuum. On one end of the continuum is national, public policy enforced assimilation. On the other end of the continuum is multiculturalism that acknowledges “cultural diversity” and “equal opportunity” in work and education (p. 24 – 27). While acknowledging a heterogeneous nation, multiculturalism assumes fixed borders and allegiance to one country (Castles, 2004). Transnationalism assumes multiple allegiances.

“Transnational communities” and citizens may be “from above” such as employees of multinational corporations and international institutions, or, “from below,” such as immigrants who maintain emotional, familiar, economic and political ties with their place of birth community while establishing new ties in another country (pp. 27 – 29). According to Castles, the nation-state has responded with three approaches to educating immigrants: exclusionary or segregated, assimilationist and multicultural. Castles suggests that a fourth model may be necessary – transnational (2004, p. 31). While “transnational communities from above” have had “international schools” that cater to the national and international elite and perpetuate their social, political and economic status and worldview, “transnational communities from below” have tried to establish alternatives to mainstream schools that they claim do not meet their children’s needs (pp. 42-43). “Ethnic schools,” according to Castles, usually include the immigrant students’ first language, home culture and faith; this may threaten the educational system but also “provide children with the mental and cultural capabilities needed to succeed in mainstream schooling “ (p. 43). The presence of “transnational communities from below” may alter the charge of education: “passing on cultural knowledge, helping to achieve social equality, fostering personal and social identity, developing self-esteem, and nation building” (p. 44). Nation building may no longer be realistic and social equality may be unobtainable as economic globalization exasperates economic inequality between North/South nations that, in turn, escalates forced migration. According to Castles (2004,) this may require alternative conceptions and formulations of citizenship and citizenship education.

Students' Knowledge

According to Dochy (1994), prior knowledge is “the whole of a person’s actual knowledge,” implicit and explicit, changing and based in one’s schemata (p. 4699). Students bring their varied experiences, points of view, skills and understandings to the classroom; it is up to the teacher to welcome and build on the students’ knowledge. In an Advanced Placement course, the curriculum is not prescribed but the College Board’s “goals” for the course determines the topics, content and skills necessary for the exam. The parameters for interpreting the knowledge, or topics and content, are not expansive. The knowledge needed to achieve a “passing” score may or may not reflect students’ prior knowledge, experiences and ideas. This is especially true for immigrant students in United States history and government courses.¹¹ If the knowledge is prescribed and the parameters are narrow, is there room for welcoming students’ thinking versus only evaluating what they know?

Validating students’ “lived experiences” or “funds of knowledge” is essential in creating critical pedagogy (Gonzalez, 2005, pp. 41 – 43). Students’ home knowledge and family experiences are a resource rather than a deficit. In a classroom, students use their home knowledge to produce knowledge rather than merely receive the knowledge of teachers or embedded curricular materials (Moll, 2005). Acknowledging students as creators of knowledge, versus receptors of others’ knowledge, recognizes the students’ full humanity (Freire, 1970, 1993). According to Freire (1970, 1993), to be fully human, we have to express our creativity, engage in inquiry and praxis, reflect and act. Praxis

¹¹ In the 2010 Advanced Placement U.S. Government and Politics Course Description, it assumes students will be familiar with the content, institutions and practices of U.S. government (p. 4).

(Freire, 1970, 1993) includes a shared process of asking questions, reflecting and then acting. The teacher and student learn through questions and dialogue; the dialogue informs the teacher's pedagogy (Freire, 1970, 1993). The process is both humanizing and liberating.

Assuming students are both intelligent and knowledgeable regardless of their heritage or circumstances is "radical" (Nieto, 1999, p. 109). For example, Nieto (1999) argues that teachers of bilingual and bicultural students who are more effective expect the best of each student and affirm students' intellect; they begin with and affirm students' cultures while broadening their perspectives and focus on students learning from each other. Teachers then are able to assist students in learning how to "do school" in order to succeed academically (Nieto, 1999). Learning how to "do school," includes students acquiring the "culture of power" – the dominant "linguistic forms, communicative strategies, and presentation of self... and ways of interacting" (Delpit, 1988, p. 25). Explicit or direct communication and instruction which emphasizes product as well as process is needed to teach the codes of power (Delpit, 1988). Delpit (1988) also states teachers need to acknowledge their expertise and power, analyze with students the codes of power, and recognize students' expertise and communities. Like Moll (2005) and Gonzalez (2005), Nieto (1999) and Delpit (1988) emphasize teachers honoring, affirming and learning from students' home culture. In this context, students' bilingualism and biculturalism are viewed as assets rather than as deficits.

Besides validating all students' home knowledge and ability to create knowledge, teachers need what Dweck (2010) terms a "growth mindset." Intelligence and ability are not fixed; they are developed through effort and support (Dweck, 2010). Teachers

provide support by holding high expectations for all students, guiding students, praising students for honest effort and learning with students (Dweck, 2006). While there may be differences in the ability to learn particular things such as painting or mathematics, intelligence may be learned which means it may be taught (Bradford, Derry, Berliner, Hammerness, & Beckett, 2005). Therefore, intelligence is malleable. Teachers also influence students' motivation and belief in their academic abilities with consistent high standards and the confidence that students will reach elevated standards (Cohen, Steele, & Ross, 1999).

Learning in community / Scaffolding participation

Providing the supports for students to move beyond recitation of factual information is necessary for civic learning and competence. Hilda Taba, an early proponent of constructivist pedagogy, cultural pluralism, heterogeneous grouping and what she termed "learning for democracy" or citizenship education (Bernard-Powers, 1999, pp. 192 - 193), advocated the blending of "emotional, intellectual and practical experiences" throughout a child's school career. Content, Taba claimed, should be based on the needs of the students. She insisted that curriculum and teaching be guided not by subject matter or depth versus breadth of coverage but by a focus on topics that improve comprehending present-day society (Slater Stern, 2010, p. 43).

Taba also assumed that all students could think abstractly or at a higher level when thinking is systematically and concretely taught (Taba, 1962; Fraenkel, 1992; Slater

Stern, 2010). Taba (1962) challenged the notion that specific factual knowledge was necessary before students can generate general and abstract thoughts. Students should collectively organized information and comprehend and apply knowledge versus memorize it (Fraenkel, 1992). Taba's spiraled curriculum development process (Taba, 1962; Slater Stern, 2010, p. 46 – 47) included thinking, knowing, and valuing and defined student academic and social outcomes.

Taba developed an eight-step curriculum planning process. The steps include: (1) diagnosing needs, (2) formulating specific, comprehensive objectives, (3) selecting content, (4) organizing content, (5) selecting organizing experiences, (6) organizing learning experiences, (7) evaluating and (8) checking for balance and sequence (Taba, 1962). Teacher planning includes questions to focus the learning and move students to deeper understandings. The content should be organized inductively – from “known to the unknown, from the immediate to the remote, from the concrete to the abstract, from the easy to the difficult” (Taba, 1962, p. 359). In organizing and planning learning experiences, Taba (1962) emphasized functional learning experiences with a “sequence that makes continuous and accumulative learning possible” (p. 364). First, the teacher should assess students' prior experiences and understandings and investigate ways to connect the experience to students' lives. Second, students, individually and in small groups, participate in active research or “intake” through reading, searching, pondering, analyzing and synthesizing information. Third, teachers create assignments for the whole class to help students develop generalizations “to put their ideas together and reformulate them in their own terms” (p. 367). Fourth, the students apply what they have learned by addressing broad questions and comprehensive concepts and making connections to

related situations. Students incorporate other's knowledge while personalizing knowledge. Lastly, teachers and students participate in ongoing evaluation with authentic assessments (Slater Stern, 2010). Taba's approach encouraged all students to participate in critical and deep thinking.

Similar to Taba, Vygotsky (1978, p. 57) believed higher order thinking was "interpsychological," or between people, and "intrapsychological" or inside the student. Key to enabling all students to participate in authentic and deep learning is scaffolding. Jerome Bruner coined "scaffolding" to explain how assistance supports a novice learner (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). Scaffolding within heterogeneous, collaborative groups moves students beyond replication to more abstract thinking. According to Vygotsky (1978), "using imitation, children are capable of doing much more in collective activity or under the guidance of adults" (p. 88); students learn through interaction and cooperation (p. 90). Vygotsky (1978) did not claim that everyone can learn everything; rather, he claimed that learning occurs when instruction is within the "zone of proximal development" or when a student is supported in moving from their independent learning level to a higher level with teacher support and in concert with more skilled peers (p. 86). Therefore, teachers must plan lessons that include skills and concepts students already known in conjunction with skills and concepts they are capable of learning collaboratively. Eventually, the student is able to understand or apply the skills and concepts independently.

Walqui and van Lier (2010) apply Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development" and scaffolding to English Language Learners in *Quality Teaching for English Learners (QTEL)*. Learners require stability with classroom and lesson plan routines to enable

them to take risks or experience “continuity and coherence” (Walqui & van Lier, 2010, p. 35). If learners feel safe, they are free to learn from mistakes. Teachers provide “high challenges” with “high support” for all learners while providing a language learning based on “meaningful contexts and activities” to enable students to learn academic language (Walqui & van Lier, 2010, pp. 90, 97). Similar to Vygotsky, learners work with peers of equal skills, fewer skills and stronger skills; skill levels are fluid as learners construct knowledge. Walqui and van Lier (2010) proposed “three moments in a lesson” including (1) activating background knowledge and introducing key vocabulary in context, (2) interacting with a text by chunking text, reconnecting the chunked text with the whole text, and making connections between the text and other ideas, and (3) continuing and stretching understanding - “amplifying not simplifying” - to other genres, problem solving and ideas beyond the text (pp. 152 - 186).

Lave and Wenger (1991) extend the understanding of Vygotsky’s “zone of proximal development” to “social transformation” (p. 49). Like Walqui and van Lier (2010, Taba (1962) and Vygotsky (1978), Lave and Wenger (1991) affirm learning is not an isolated, individual act; it occurs in alliances with others. Formal and informal collective learning, or what Lave and Wenger (1991) termed “communities of practice,” is how we improve our learning. Members of the “community of practice” evolve over time, and have a shared commitment, tools or resources, and information; new members eventually become experienced members who are fundamental to the community. Similarly, where classrooms are structures to be highly collaborative, teamwork is explicitly taught and reinforced, including the language and skills for discussion and

mutual discernment and reasoning, facilitates English Language Learners' identifying their communal learning and individual academic needs (Langer, 2001).

Academic, disciplinary and second language acquisition and social studies

Compared to other disciplines, history and the social science are considered more challenging for English Language Learners because of complex, abstract vocabulary, variety of verb tense forms, sentence structure with the subject in the second clause, and expository discourse (Chamot, 2009). Social Studies content is often dependent on literacy and higher order thinking skills; strong reading and writing skills are required for students to fully participate in class (Short, 1994, 1998). Short (2005) states social studies text often lacks the variety of oral and visual clues to enable students to tackle the intellectually strenuous material. Students are expected to read texts and discern implied cause and effect, detect bias in varied media and interpret and analyze historical documents to statistical data (Zwiers, 2008; Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). These tasks are more arduous when students are unfamiliar with the background knowledge of U.S. history, government and society assumed by the teacher or tests. In addition, their academic socialization may conflict with what is assumed in U.S. schools (Haynes, 2007; Short, 2005). Lastly, the background knowledge or cultural literacy of the student may conflict with the dominant narrative in a course or text (Cruz & Thornton, 2009; Jiménez, García, & Pearson, 1996; Szpara & Ahmad, 2007). This is an opportunity for the teacher to encourage students to bring their narrative into the course and interpretations of the

text. In order for students to share in the creation of multiple narratives, students need access to academic and disciplinary language.

To understand how students acquire academic and disciplinary language in a second language, many scholars refer to the work of Jim Cummins (1981, 1994) on Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) and Stephen Krashen (1982) on comprehensible inputs. According to Cummins (1981; 1994), most English Language Learners (ELLs) learn social communication skills within two years. Social communication with peers or adults is less cognitively demanding than academic literacy communication. According to Cummins (1981), it takes five to seven years for students to develop CALP. Students with academic language skills in their first language (L1) are able to transfer this knowledge to the second language (L2) (Collier, 1995). Research supports encouraging bilingualism, or the use of L1 literacy skills to learn academic English, by “adding English” versus replacing the student’s first language and building on students “conceptual knowledge” from their previous academic experiences (Cummins, 1994, pp. 39 - 40). Cummins (1994) states language and content instruction should occur simultaneously. Content instruction also benefits from Krashen’s (1982) emphasis on “comprehensible input,” similar to Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development. If teachers tailor language that is somewhat more difficult for the learner while providing supports and building on students’ prior knowledge, students are able to participate in more in-depth interactions in their second language. Teachers also need awareness of disciplinary based literacy skills and strategies, versus generic content reading strategies, to enable students to interpret

and engage in disciplinary specific learning (Shanahan, & Shanahan, 2008; Zwiers, 2008).

Three approaches or programs to assist teachers in developing appropriate instruction for English Language Learners are World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Descriptors, Quality Teaching for English Learners (QTEL) and the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model. The first program, WIDA “Can Do” descriptors, are social and academic language development standards for four language domains that scaffold steps for instruction and assessment across language proficiency levels (WIDA standards framework, 2014). The “Can Do” descriptors focus on students’ assets versus deficits. The WIDA descriptors are aligned with ELL assessments, ACCESS (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners), that provide teachers with a student’s proficiency level in social and instructional language and by content areas including social studies. WIDA’s “Classroom Frameworks” and “Can Do Descriptors” support receptive and productive language and content integration (Nordmeyer, 2007, pp. 2-3). Teachers focus on skills students “can do,” versus what is linguistically and developmentally inappropriate, at each language proficiency level in the four language domains and develop assignments and assessments aligned with the skills. Scaffolding that enable students to fully participate are sensory, graphic and interactive supports. Sensory supports include realia, images and illustrations, physical activities, videos and models. Graphic supports include charts, graphic organizers, timelines and tables. Interactive supports include working with partners, small / cooperative groups, use of first language (L1) to whole group instruction. The teacher must determine how to

combine the supports to “ensure the efficacy of any support.” (*2012 Amplifications of the English language development standards*, 2013, p. 11).

The second approach, Quality Teaching for English Learners (QTEL) is grounded in social linguist learning encapsulated into five principles (Walqui & van Lier, 2010). The first principle, “sustain academic rigor,” emphasizes “deep knowledge” or the integration of factual, disciplinary information to build understandings and engage in real world problem solving (Walqui & van Lier, 2010, pp. 86 – 87). The second principle, “hold high expectations,” combines challenging content, multiple points of engagement by students, intensive and extensive scaffolding or supports and cooperative learning (Walqui & van Lier, 2010, pp. 88 – 92). The third principle, “quality teacher and student interactions,” requires teachers to prepare lessons based on students’ constructing knowledge by participating in ongoing, academic based receptive and productive language (Walqui & van Lier, 2010, pp. 93 – 95). The fourth principle, “sustain a language focus,” is to ensure every lesson combines content and language learning. Lessons incorporate learning academic and disciplinary language with purposeful activities in context and planning a language focus needed to support fluent language production (Walqui & van Lier, 2010, pp. 96 – 99). Last, principle five, “develop quality curriculum,” is based on scaffolding instruction, spiraling learning, connecting content to students’ lives, and solving real world problems (Walqui & van Lier, 2010, pp. 99 – 100). Together, the principles provide guidelines for teachers to develop learning environments to support students’ cognitive, linguistic and discipline or content learning.

The third approach to assist teachers is the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model. The SIOP Model was created to help teachers “adapt and

modify mainstream, grade appropriate curriculum” for English Language Learners (Honigsfeld, & Cohan, 2008, Winter, pg. 25). SIOP consists of eight components to help students acquire academic knowledge while improving their English language proficiency (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008). The Model presumes students have prior experiences and knowledge that are building blocks for future learning versus a hindrance or inadequate. For example, two components that support academic language acquisition are explicit vocabulary instruction and scaffolding grounded in students’ prior knowledge. In *Making Content Comprehensible for Secondary English Learners*, the authors use Blachowicz and Fisher’s (2000) principles for vocabulary instruction including learning words in context with “meaningful tasks,” and many specific strategies to enhance student ownership of academic vocabulary learning (Ruddell, 2007 as cited by Echevarria, et al. p. 65 – 68). Teachers may incorporate scaffolding, for example, that draws analogies between students’ experiences and a concept, by the teacher “re-contextualizes” the concept (Sharpe, 2006). O’Hara, Pritchard and Zwiers (2012) add teachers need to analyze “the texts, tasks and tests” to determine receptive and productive language demands and objectives to blend the learning of content and language. The other six SIOP components, including building background and grouping to support interaction, provide a framework for lesson planning and delivery that encourages students to take ownership over academic language and content.¹²

¹² Krashen (2013) has challenged SIOP’s claims of validity and use of two conflicting views of language acquisition – his Comprehension Hypothesis versus a Skills-Building Hypothesis. Skills-Building includes explicit and repeated vocabulary instruction. A Comprehension Hypothesis argues productive language emerges from receptive language acquisition. Intermediate second language learners acquire language by learning disciplinary content and reading versus focusing on grammar and vocabulary.

Honoring students' home and/or community language and the wealth of experiences and ideas students bring to the classroom are central to the three approaches. As students learn academic language and disciplinary content, the teacher must build on the student's prior knowledge while being cognizant of both language and content objectives and demands (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008; Walqui & van Lier, 2010). Rather than reduce or minimize challenging language and content, teachers must deepen and augment instruction by providing appropriate scaffolding to enable students to produce and receive academic language and content (Walqui & van Lier, 2010; WIDA standards framework, 2014; Zwiers, 2008).

Teacher Practitioner Research

Teacher practitioner research is, according to Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009), “non-linear” border crossing; the teacher/researcher concurrently moves between both roles. The teacher/researcher, according to Campano (2007), works hand in hand with students in a cyclical process of inquiry that is essential and “humbling” (Campano, 2009, p. 338). Similarly, Freeman (1998) compares teacher research to “juggling” doubts and certainties since “change is part of the research process” (pp. 86, 90). The teacher takes an “inquiry stance” on his/her teaching because she/he assumes “teacher learning” is longitudinal and is based on prior knowledge that is connected to new knowledge (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2001, pp. 45 – 46).

According to Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2001), an inquiry stance is grounded in theories on practice and requires “generating local knowledge” while challenging ways of knowing (1999). The theories do not “develop ‘generative law’ about educational practice” (Richardson, 1994, as cited in Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 19), but instead breed questions and pose problems. The questions should come from collaboration: a synergetic process to improve practice, create social change and discover understandings about practice (Herr & Anderson, 2005). A “critical spirit” and awareness of positionality are essential to avoid replicating the status quo and unquestioned bias (Herr & Anderson, 2005, pp. 24, 34 – 35). For Campano (2009), practitioner research also requires teachers to recognize students’ personhood to establish a fair and level relationship between teacher and student.

Classroom teacher practitioner research reveals possibilities and is integral to the academic and social mission of social studies education. Nevertheless, while practitioner research is utilized in literacy research, action research and self-study are, according to Johnston (2006), infrequently used in social studies research. Johnston (2006) notes even though practitioner research addresses issues central to social studies education such as democratization, social change and justice, most practitioner research is about methods courses or fieldwork and is done by social studies teacher educators versus K-12 classroom teachers. It is important for classroom teachers to participate in practitioner research because social justice issues such as representation of the “other,” which can lead to stereotypes of the “exotic” or deficit labels being placed on students, can be “unmasked” as a practitioner examines his/her “prejudices and biases” and learns from her/his students (Johnston, 2006, pp. 73 – 75). Practitioner research supports teachers in

discernment and reflection, and personal and professional understandings to help students become contemplative and engaged citizens (Johnston, 2006, p. 78). For Allwright (Autumn, 2005), practitioner research is not about “problem solving” or adjusting techniques. Rather, it must involve both teachers and learners as “understanders” with plural “understandings” not merely about academic improvements but larger life issues (Allwright, Autumn 2005, p. 361).

Despite the growing acceptance of teacher created knowledge, there are critics. Practitioner action research provides the teacher with more agency; it enables the teacher to produce or to research rather than to “just consume” (Robinson & Lai, 2006, p. 4). According to Richardson (1994), action research is to improve practice that impacts the classroom; it is secondary to “formal research” (Anderson, Herr, & Nihlen, 2007, p. 38). This “formal/practical knowledge dualism” has been challenged by Cochran-Smith and Lytle and by Clandinin and Connelly (Anderson, Herr, & Nihlen, 2007, pp. 38 – 39). In practitioner action research, questions emerge from “discrepancies between what is intended and what occurs” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1991, p. 14). Underlying the questions about the validity of practitioner action research are interpretations of knowledge, knowing, and who has the ability to “know.” According to Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1991), research planted and inserted in practice enables the teacher and students to jointly build knowledge by dramatically challenging and changing who possesses knowledge and what is knowledge.

Reflection on theoretical frameworks and practitioner professional experiences

The multiple theoretical frameworks I have included, Advanced Placement, civic or democratic education, student knowledge, learning in community and scaffolding participation, second language acquisition, and teacher practitioner research, are a few of the influences on the choices I make every day as a classroom teacher. As a veteran practicing teacher, I have participated in and experienced many opportunities for professional development and growth over the past two decades. I attempt to ground my decisions not only in theory but, simultaneously, on practice and knowing about my students I work with and who work with me.

Before I began teaching in September 1992, I had a variety of work and volunteer experiences that influence my understandings about learning. Community and political organizing work was the most influential. Following my undergraduate graduation in May 1983, I held a variety of jobs from making sandwiches and pizza to housecleaning and secretarial work. My primary devotion was to organizing work in my neighborhood, my new city and nationally. I was fortunate to meet and work with veteran community organizers who taught me “backward design” before I was introduced to the model for curricular development in the mid 2000s (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Through organizing work, I learned how to work collaboratively to envision and develop short and long term goals while detailing the various steps to achieve the goals. I also learned strategies for engaging people in issues they may or may not believe are relevant. These experiences not only influence how I plan a course but, fundamentally, my

understandings of the power of groups to bring about change and the need for collaboration.

Once I began teaching, I sought opportunities to work with colleagues who shared my beliefs. In the summer of 1994, I participated in a three-week Writing Project Summer Institute I with about 25 other School District teachers. At the time, I taught in a small, School District “remedial / disciplinary” school for students expelled from public schools. The size of the staff, two content teachers per subject for 6th – 12th grade, and our isolation from other schools led me to seek out alternative professional development experiences. The following summer, I participated in Summer Institute II. Summer Institute II introduced teacher inquiry and practitioner research. During the 1995-1996 school year, I conducted an inquiry project analyzing ways to engage reluctant students in academic work by incorporating strategies with intrinsic motivation. Although I transferred to a School District neighborhood high school in 1996-1997, understanding the merits of practitioner research and inquiry undergirds my teaching and learning. I continued teacher inquiry and reflection on practice when I completed National Board Certification in 2001-2002 and renewed in 2011.

Other professional development experiences also have influenced my theoretical framework. During the 2001-2002 school year, I volunteered to participate in a civics action project, *Student Voices*, offered to School District teachers through the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania (“National Civics Project,” 2004). In exchange for attending professional development and implementing the curriculum, we were given a classroom desktop computer and Internet connection. At the time, neither was available at the school. In the fall of 2001, we focused on national election

issues and in the spring of 2002, local election issues. Also, we were given \$500 for students to develop and carry out civic action projects in the spring. My students participated in the annual *Student Voices* civics fair providing opportunities to present their civic action project, meet students from other schools and earn cash prizes for our school. My involvement with *Student Voices* expanded each year, including creating curricula and serving on an advisory board, until the program lost funding in 2008.

Student Voices was my introduction to broadly defined civic competence. My students identified issues of concern and were engaged in civic action to address the issues. For example, the City Council primary elections were in the spring of 2002. My students did not know the role of City Council or the candidates. As a class, we surveyed the 15 candidates concerning their top three issues. With this information, we created a brochure to distribute throughout our city to inform voters about the role of City Council and the candidates top three issues. Then, the students created brochures in their 10 home languages. In teams, students distributed the brochures in their communities including churches, mosques, neighborhood stores, community centers and ethnic restaurants. In 2003, another class also created a multilingual project to improve city recreation centers. Both projects engaged students in original research, development and implementation of an action plan, and presentation to public officials.

This model of instruction, beginning with students' interests, building on students' prior knowledge, embedding content knowledge and academic skills in a project, and concluding with an action plan, is aligned with my understandings of civic learning (Freire, 1970, 1993; Banks, 2007). When I attended a week long professional development to teach Advanced Placement U.S. Government in August 2010, the

presentation of civics education was very different. The instructor emphasized content or what students needed to know from the structure of the U.S. federal government to Supreme Court cases. There was minimal mention of the writing portion of the exam. Breadth, memorization, and a high stakes test were equated with “rigor” (Parker, Lo, Yeo, Valencia, Nguyen, Abbott, Nolen, Bransford, & Vye, December 2013). We finished the week with sample syllabi but not prepared to engage my students in a course on civic competence grounded in their prior knowledge and interests nor academic writing and language. There was almost no attention to or recognition of the academic needs of “underrepresented” students.

To try to invigorate the AP course, I applied for and participated in a 2011 summer weeklong workshop on the Supreme Court sponsored by *Street Law*. This opportunity emphasized interactive strategies including deliberations. Diana Hess (2009) led a session on using deliberations. Dr. Hess also distributed a pre-publication copy of a study on using project based and/or interactive strategies in Advanced Placement U.S. Government courses (Parker, Mosborg, Bransford, Vye, Wilkerson, & Abbott, 2011). Both Dr. Hess’ presentation and the study were critical in how I altered and prepared to teach the content of the Advance Placement course.

These theoretical frameworks influenced this dissertation but classroom learning experiences and professional development also influenced my interpretation and application of the theories. I also cannot separate my experiences outside of the classroom from my understandings of civic competence, students’ sources of knowledge, and pedagogical supports. Lastly, my students’ interests, academic experiences and life stories also shaped the content and foci of the course.

CHAPTER 3: Methodology

Research Design

This dissertation examines my experiences teaching an Advanced Placement U.S. Government course with “underrepresented students,” including immigrant students, in an urban neighborhood high school. In our city, neighborhood high schools are considered “schools of last resort” (Mezzacappa, 2014, February 21) or labeled “dropout factories” (Herold, 2013, March 5). Therefore, students enrolled in our Advanced Placement classes may not be enrolled in the courses at more academically and socioeconomically diverse or selective high schools. Most of the students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses, especially immigrant students, find mathematics and science courses aligned with their career goals but few believe social studies courses are useful. For example, a student, Cheri, commented to a prompt on the November 2012 class questionnaire, “What skills will prepare you for college?” with “math and science.” Her response was typical. Therefore, at our school it is often difficult to recruit enough students for the AP social studies courses.¹³

Although my students may not believe social studies is as relevant as mathematics and science, social studies disciplines offer opportunities to prepare students for college and career, and more importantly, life. According to Eisner (2003/2004), curriculum should include opportunities for students to “critique ideas,” evaluate issues without clear

¹³ As the Advanced Coordinator, I organized the recruitment process for AP courses at our school. For the 2014-2015 school year, 13 students registered for AP US History and 11 for AP US Government. This required extensive outreach. In contrast, more than 30 students registered for AP Calculus. By the spring of 2015, 10 students remained in AP US History and 9 students in AP US Government.

solutions, foster “multiple literacies,” encourage collaboration and provide avenues for service. While I would like to include all of the components outlined by Eisner in my classes, it is more difficult to create the space in an Advanced Placement class especially with students who may not have the particular prior knowledge aligned with the required content for the course. Therefore, I sought a curricular strategy to both address the content of the course with opportunities for students to build on their prior knowledge, collaborate, critique ideas, exercise multiple literacies and language domains, and make connections to broader issues.

For the purpose of this study, I designed a series of deliberations (Hess, 2009; King, Newmann, & Carmichael, 2009; Ochoa-Becker, 2007; Parker, 2008; Rubin, 2012) based on the core content of the course; students were required to interpret and construct knowledge on contemporary issues. In each deliberation, students were encouraged to participate in academic discourse, including using discipline specific language and content. The deliberations focused on the institutions of the U.S. federal government – Executive, Legislative, and Judiciary – while including issues related to public policy, political beliefs and civil rights and civil liberties. I chose deliberations, versus debates, to encourage students to collaborate and seek areas of agreement rather than competition and disagreement. I also selected deliberations as a pedagogical tool because the process required students to incorporate literacy skills and language domains – critical reading, academic writing, speaking and formulating questions, and active listening - and critical thinking (Hess, 2008; Hess & Posselt, 2002; Parker, 2003; Walqui, & van Lier, 2010). For many of my students, exercising all language domains, especially in one activity, and supporting a position with multiple-perspective, academic evidence was a new

experience. Lastly, I included post deliberation blog posts to extend the in-class conversation and encourage students to demonstrate, in writing, their newly acquired academic language and content and to continue to collaborate on an issue.

According to Larson (2003) and Snyder (2008), electronic discussions on controversial issues allow more reserved, reluctant and / or unsure students to share their ideas. The electronic discussions do not take the place of in class discussion but may enhance the discussion. Teachers play a crucial role in framing and guiding the electronic discussion to encourage evidence based dialogue and critical thinking while respecting different points of view (Hostetler, 2012; Larson, 2005). Simultaneously, the teacher also has less control over the direction of the electronic discussion than in class (Larson, 2005). Hostetler (2012) advises teachers to use questions, summarization and reframing of questions to encourage personal and community understanding of issues. Larson (2005) also found English Language Learners participated more in the electronic discussion than in class because they had more time to understand their peer's comments and contemplate their response. Usually, electronic discussions encourage students to use disciplinary academic language and complex sentence structures and ideas compared to face-to-face discussions (Snyder, 2008).

Besides deliberations and subsequent blog posts, I included multiple data sources and methods for collecting data. Triangulation, or using varied and many data sources, is a backbone of practitioner research (Anderson, Herr, & Nihlen, 2011; Campbell, 2013; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1991). Maxwell (2005) reminds us the researcher is “the instrument in a qualitative study” as the eyes and ears collecting the data (p. 79). Therefore, my data included documents and artifacts such as my lesson plans,

assignments and student work, my journal, four quarterly student questionnaires, and four semi-structured interviews with small groups of students. The lesson plans and assignments were aligned with the both the content and skills required for Advanced Placement U.S. Government but also my understandings of civic competence, literacy learning and desire to create an engaging, meaningful and communal learning environment. I chose to keep a journal or field notes, and conduct student questionnaires and semi-structured interviews based on my understanding of qualitative research and practitioner action research.

A reflexive journal, according to Anderson, Herr, and Nihlen (2007), enables the teacher to maintain a record of data gathering with her/his reflections on the adjustments made as the class evolves (p. 153). The journal notes are similar to Marshall's and Rossman's (2011) description of field notes as "detailed, non-judgmental (as much as possible), concrete descriptions of what has been observed" (p. 139). The journal or field notes, including personal reflections, are integral and fundamental to teacher research (Anderson, Herr & Nihlen, 2007; Campbell, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). For these reasons, I kept a journal with reflections on the opportunities and challenges I faced including the class dynamics, curricular and pedagogical decisions, and daily happenings in the class. I wrote in the journal either during my lunch, after school or at night. Some days I scribbled a few notes on an index card during class to remember what was said or occurred. Then, I added the notes to my journal entry.

I also included semi-structured, audio-recorded small group interviews to provide another lens for students to share their understandings of and perspectives on the class (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Originally, I intended to conduct the interviews but the

School District did not give me permission since I was the teacher of record. In retrospect, my presence may have limited the students' comments (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). For this reason, a member of my dissertation committee suggested another graduate student to conduct the interviews. The graduate student had experience conducting interviews, was familiar with the school and knew a few of the students since she worked with a community based organization affiliated with the school. Consequently, she had a vested interest in the students and the school. She graciously volunteered to come to our school four times to conduct the interviews.

I chose semi-structured interviews to ensure an ethnographic quality to the interviews. The interviews were not purely open-ended; Anderson, Herr and Nihlen (2007) recommend developing questions to solicit the students' experiences and perspectives. The day before each interview, I asked a group of students to participate. Then, I gave the students a copy of the interview questions. The questions sought students' understandings about what they expected to learn and were learning in the class, what experiences they found meaningful and engaging, and questions on their prior experiences, background and beliefs vis-à-vis civic competence and participation. Students identified themselves when they responded to questions and made comments. I stored the audio recordings of the interviews but did not transcribe the interviews until the summer after the class ended.

There were four interviews, December, February, April and June, with five to seven students. The interviews were held during the class period in another classroom. This avoided students missing another class or having to volunteer to stay after school. While a small group of students participated in the each interview, I worked with the

remaining students in our classroom. According to Menter, Elliot, et al. (2011), the selection of students for group interviews should include students who know each other, be intentional and inclusive and include between five to eight students. While I intentionally selected students to reflect a cross section of the class based on gender, first language, and ethnicity, who participated was also influenced by student attendance and willingness to participate. Fifteen of the 17 students in the class participated in at least one semi-structured interview.

My next data source was four online student questionnaires in November, January, March and late May. The questionnaires were not to tabulate responses; they were to “hear students’ voices about their own learning” (Cobb, 1993 as cited in Anderson, Herr & Nihlen, 2007, pp. 182 - 183). I created open-ended questions to encourage students to share their identities, experiences, points of view, and new knowledge related to the course. Initially, I gave students the option of answering the questionnaire anonymously (Menter, Elliot, et al., 2011). All of the students chose to include their name. Also, I assigned the questionnaire and offered to provide computers before or after school for students to complete the questionnaire. Only two students completed the questionnaire by the initial deadline - November 21. Hence, I secured laptop computers for students to complete the questionnaire in class. For the subsequent questionnaires, I scheduled class time to increase the likelihood that students would complete them. In hindsight, lack of anonymity did not limit students’ responses; they were candid and honest. For example, students who were reluctant to speak in class and did not publicly question class activities wrote frankly in response to the questions. Jim wrote in November “honesty, I don’t think that this class suit me.” Jim’s opinion did not

change; in June he wrote “I don’t think the course would help me in college.” The questions evolved with the students’ concerns, the content of the course and the happenings in the class. I used student responses to the questionnaire to make adjustments to the course and to hear the students’ concerns.

Contextualizing the School District

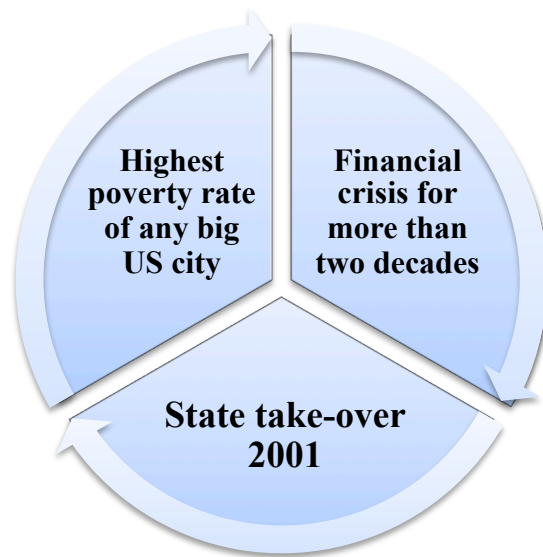


Figure 2: Attributes of the School District

The School District is located in a large, northeast U.S. city. As of 2013, the city has the highest poverty rate, 28.4 percent, of any big U.S. city (Lubrano, 2013, March 20). With the end of federal stimulus funding for education in 2011 and the election of a new state governor, the District faced a financial crisis. Nevertheless, financial crises are not new to the District. Since the 1990s, state and local funding have been inconsistent

and insufficient (Denvir, 2014; Travers, 2003). In February 1998, the Superintendent threatened to close schools because of insufficient state funding (Close, June 1, 1998; Denvir, 2014; Travers, 2003). In response, the Superintendent resigned in July 2000 and on December 21, 2001, the School District was taken over by the state and headed by a five member School Reform Commission (SRC) with two members appointed by the mayor and three members appointed by the governor (Steinberg, 2001, December 22; Travers, 2003). Since the announcement in 2001 through the fall of 2012, one CEO, two appointed superintendents and five interim superintendents have run the School District. Each CEO / Superintendent has announced his/her program to improve schools.

In 2004-2005, a core curriculum was introduced in high schools. While the focus was on English and mathematics because of standardized testing, social studies courses were also created. World History (9th grade), U.S. History (11th grade), and Social Science (civics and economics) (12th grade) were required courses. A required elective, African American History (10th grade), was added in 2005-2006. The courses, aligned with state standards, focused on coverage of factual information and history skills such as chronological thinking, continuity and change and historical interpretations. The state's civics standards focused on the structure and role of government. The District's Social Science course followed the state standards but *Student Voices*, a civics engagement program, and *The Stock Market Game* for economics, was included.¹⁴ Although the required courses did not change when we had a new leadership in 2008-2009, the

¹⁴ For six months in 2005, I was on "special assignment" in the School District's curriculum office to work on the social studies curriculum. In 2003-2004, a company, Kaplan, was hired to create the high school curricula. To revise the curricula, teachers were sought to work with the company's representatives to make revisions. Because of teacher input, project-based programs were included in social studies. Nevertheless, there was no District oversight; the programs were optional. *Student Voices* lost funding in 2008.

Superintendent changed the academic requirements and therefore experiences for students in so-called “low performing” schools.

During the high school academic career of the students in the Advanced Placement U.S. Government class, 2009-2013, the School District program included the rapid expansion of independent charter schools, the transfer of 17 District schools to charter management companies, and the designation of nearly 100 out of 240 schools as “empowerment schools.” Our school was an “empowerment school.” “Empowerment schools” or “underperforming schools,” received additional staffing for two years and were required to follow heavily scripted, direct instruction curricula. In 2009-2010, all incoming ninth graders were tested for placement in SRA/McGraw Hill’s Corrective Reading and Corrective Math. All teachers were required to create and follow a seven step, direct instruction lesson plan. Standardized test preparation was incorporated into all courses. Students were “pulled” out of classes, including social studies classes, to prepare for the standardized tests.

The upheaval in District leadership and the state take-over coincided with the No Child Left Behind legislation and Race to the Top federal funding. The federal legislation and funding encouraged school districts to create curricula aligned with standardized tests, to incorporate “data driven instruction” based on benchmark objective tests, and to turn schools over to charter management companies. Federal policies have had a direct impact on the School District’s neighborhood high schools; schools were labeled based on standardized test scores and graduation rates. This led to some schools being closed or turned over to charter operators.

By the 2012-2013 school year, there were 52 School District high schools and 35 charter high schools. Of the District schools, 23 high schools are comprehensive or neighborhood high schools with no admission requirements and 29 high schools have admission requirements. The admission requirements for and procedures to gain entry to the charter high schools vary by school. During the 2012-2013 academic year, the School Reform Commission proposed closing or relocating 44 District schools, impacting over 17,000 students (Herold, 2012, December 13). Eventually, 24 District schools were closed - 22 neighborhood schools - and three new high schools with admission requirements were opened.

For the 2013-2014 academic year, there were 36 charter high schools, three new special admission schools for a total of 32 District special admission schools and 21 neighborhood high schools.¹⁵ The dismantling of neighborhood high schools began under the tenure of a nationally known CEO in the mid 2000s. Over 20 new, special admission high schools were opened from 2002-2007 while charter school expansion grew exponentially. The demise of neighborhood high schools was intentional (Herold, 2013). English Language Learners and students with an Individualized Education Plan are disproportionately concentrated in neighborhood high schools (McCorry, 2014, March 20). Neighborhood high schools continue to be “underperforming” and threatened with closure and / or take-over by a charter management company.

¹⁵ Five of the remaining 21 neighborhood high schools are part of a consortium of schools in one neighborhood. Three new School District high schools with admission requirements were approved for the 2013-2014.

Contextualizing the School

Figure 3: A Chronology of Sandler High School

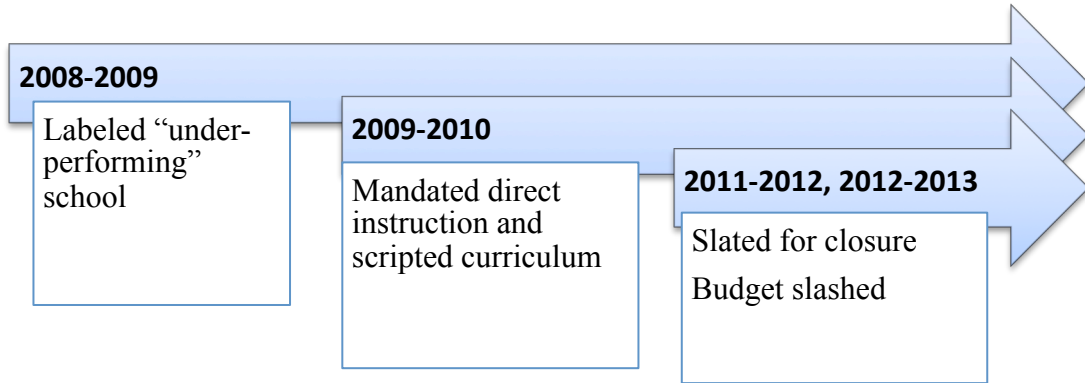
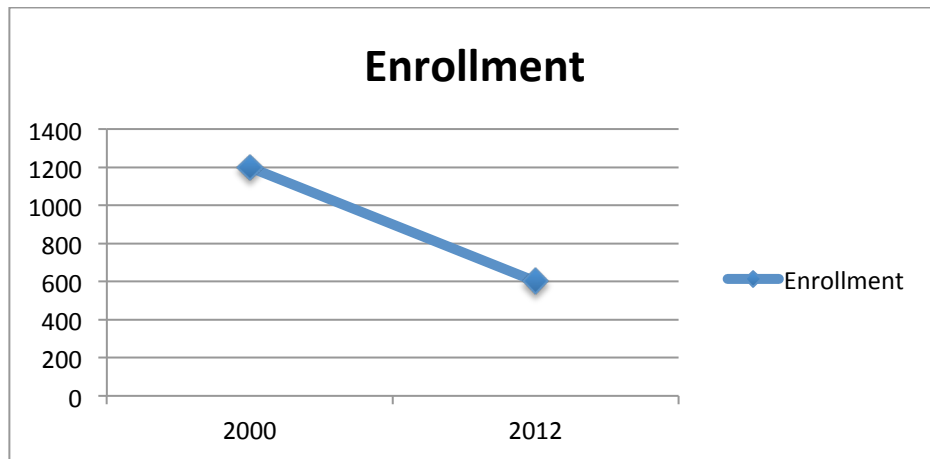


Figure 4: Sandler High School Student Enrollment



The school, Sandler High School (pseudonym), is a small neighborhood high (N=600) school with no admission requirements or process. Any student may attend who lives within the geographic "catchment." Students may also be transferred to the school from another school for disciplinary reasons. In 2000, the enrollment was 1200 (Herold,

2011, October 14); in September 2012 there were about 550 students on roll and 604 students by June 2013. The dramatic decrease in enrollment during the 2000s is attributed to the growth of special admission schools, charter schools and the loss of an internal special admission academy or program.¹⁶

In 2009-2010, Sandler High School was labeled an “empowerment school” or an “underperforming” school because of low-test scores and a low graduation rates. The label brought additional staffing for two years, 2009 – 2011, but also micromanagement by the School District administration. When funds were dramatically cut in 2011, staff and programs were eliminated. Despite being labeled “underperforming,” limited resources and a relatively small size, our school offered one section each of seven Advanced Placement courses in 2012-2013: U.S. History, U.S. Government, English Language, English Literature, Calculus, Studio Art and Chinese.¹⁷ AP Biology and Physics were added in 2013-2014. In 2012-2013, AP class size ranged from eight to 26 students. There were 17 students in AP U.S. Government. Because of the variety of courses, approximately 25% of the 130 seniors had enrolled in at least one Advanced Placement class during their high school career. Nevertheless, we were not meeting the academic goals set by the School District and State.

Because of our shrinking student body and “underperformance,” during the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 school years, Sandler High School was slated to close. Intensive

¹⁶ The loss of special admission academies or programs in some neighborhood high schools occurred during with the growth of small, special admission high schools between 2004 – 2008 and continued with the creation of new, special admission high schools in 2013-2014. This occurred at the same time as No Child Left Behind and ranking of schools under “Adequate Yearly Progress” based on standardized test scores. Sandler High School lost a “Law Academy” special admission program in 2005.

¹⁷ The school offered AP Physics and AP Chemistry in 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 but they were cut in 2012-2013 because the physics teacher retired and the chemistry teacher transferred to a special admission school. With new teachers, AP Physics returned and AP Biology was added in 2013-2014.

student, staff and community based organizing kept the school open. On October 13, 2012, my sons and I, along with at least 300 - 350 students, family members and staff members, attended a School District meeting about potentially closing our school. The turn out apparently shocked the School District leadership because the new Superintendent visited our school on October 15, 2012.

Following the October meeting, students were very vocal about the proposed school closing. Students insisted our school was “good” and therefore should remain open. Brenda reflected the sentiments of most students when she proclaimed during the Superintendent’s visit - “they can’t close our school” (Journal, October 15, 2012). At the time, I had no idea what would happen. By mid December 2012, we were no longer on the closure list. Fortunately, our school was given a reprieve. Instead, a neighboring career and technical high school was merged with another neighborhood high school for the 2013-2014 school year. Sandler High School was spared.

Sandler High School, built in 1912 - 1913 and opened in January 1914, is located in a “row house” neighborhood with stable home prices. The two block radius immediately surrounding the school is a European American neighborhood; few, if any, of the students attend the school. In contrast, the school’s “catchment” is one of the most economically and ethnically diverse in the city (Pew Charitable Trusts, 2013). Most students who live in “the catchment” choose special admission, charter and parochial schools rather than attend Sandler High School. In 2011, nearly 75% of students who live in the school’s “catchment” or geographic boundaries did not attend the school (Herold, 2011, October 14). Despite this reality, the school is ethnically diverse. In 2012-2013, 50% of the students were Asian American, 30% African American, 12%

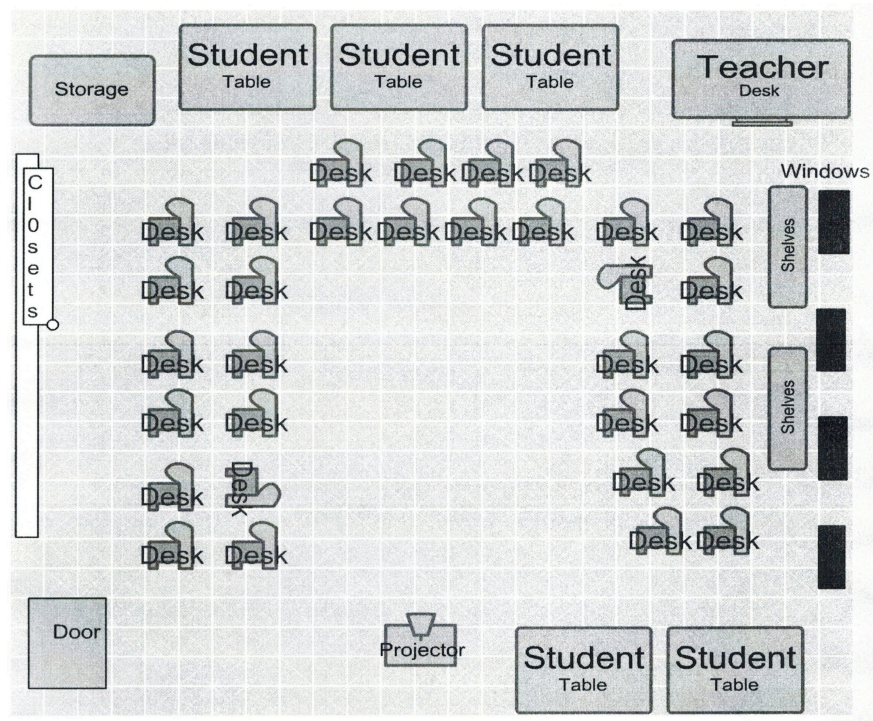
Latino/a and 8% European American. The school has over 20 language groups; nearly 40% of the students are English Language Learners including refugees from Nepal and Burma, and students from Cambodia, Eritrea, Pakistan, Tunisia, Cambodia, Vietnam, The People's Republic of China, Mexico, Colombia, Honduras, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, El Salvador, and Indonesia. All of our students are considered "economically disadvantaged;" all receive free lunch. Lastly, 18% of students have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Similar to most of the city's neighborhood high schools, students with an IEP and English Language Learners (ELLs), and students who receive free/reduced lunch are concentrated in neighborhood high schools.

Under the No Child Left Behind legislation, the school in 2012-2013 was in Corrective Action II, 7th year. Although we have made progress in students scoring "proficient /advanced" in reading and math on the state's standardized test, we did not make graduation requirements for ELLs in 2012-2013 and did not make academic performance goals. The class of 2013 standardized test scores dropped dramatically from the previous class' scores especially for African American students. SAT scores averages also do not indicate "college ready" except possibly in math – 426.02 in math, 341.59 in reading and 326.83 in writing. The results on the ACT Subject Tests were similar - 17.94 in math, 14.45 in reading, 12.47 in English and 15.47 in science. Nevertheless, the school offers some unique extracurricular programs for students through community partnerships.

Sandler High School has community partners who provide extra curricular opportunities for our students. Build On, a national community service organization, has two full time staff assigned to our school. Students are able to participate in ongoing

community service projects and selected students participate in bi-annual Treks, or twelve-day service and cultural exchange trips to countries such as Haiti, Nicaragua, Malawi and Nepal. For students who meet the admission requirements, there is also a Migrant Education program that runs after school tutoring, college application supports and summer employment opportunities. Another after school program, Out of School Time (OST), provides classes and clubs that are not available during the day including instrumental music lessons and ensembles, a dance club, a radio program, intramural sports and a science club. It also pays for “grade improvement” and “credit recovery,” programs to assist students who are failing classes and to boost graduation rates. Lastly, OST pays students a stipend for participating in their programs and employees students during the summer months. The community-based partnerships are an essential component of the school.

Contextualizing the Classroom



Front of the classroom

Figure 5: Classroom Layout

Since our school is 100 years old, the classrooms reflect a bygone era but include 21st century technology. Our classroom has pockmarked chalkboards, peeling paint, water stained drop ceilings, and warped hardwood flooring. Sliding closet doors line a wall. Water drips during rainstorms. The windows are frosted and have security bars. The room lacks adequate ventilation; it is very hot year round despite seven fans I purchased and, with the aid of extension cords, place around the room. The décor includes an assortment of students' desks, a wooden teacher desk and a variety of tables,

chairs and bookshelves I have collected over the years. I am able to arrange the students' desks so they face each other in two u-shaped semi circles. This arrangement encourages interaction between students. During class, I rotate between the semi-circles or meet with students in small groups.

Although many features of the room are still reflective of 1914, there is a Promethean Board and access to shared computer carts with 13 to 22 lap top computers. The lap top computers are anywhere from two to seven years old. I purchase any additional materials from markers to chart paper, posters to maps, and copy paper to printer cartridges. In 2011-2012, I purchased a photocopier / printer for my classroom and supplemental texts for the class. Besides copying, I use the printer to scan student written work to share with the class. I also purchased an online grade book and web hosting for a class website. Since I began teaching in 1992, I have spent thousands of dollars a year, and worked second jobs, to provide the necessary materials and resources in order to teach in our District.

Despite the classroom's physical limitations, students rarely complain except when a mouse or large insect visits our room. The students and I may be conditioned to the reality of our dilapidated, under-resourced school. For example, although the school has a library, we have not had a librarian for nearly a decade. There is no budget to purchase books or periodicals for the library. There is no access to electronic databases such as ProQuest or Electric Library. The library has six desktop computers but it is primarily a meeting room rather than a space for research. While a librarian and library may be considered the norm in most high schools, it is not the norm in our school or School District.

Contextualizing the Course

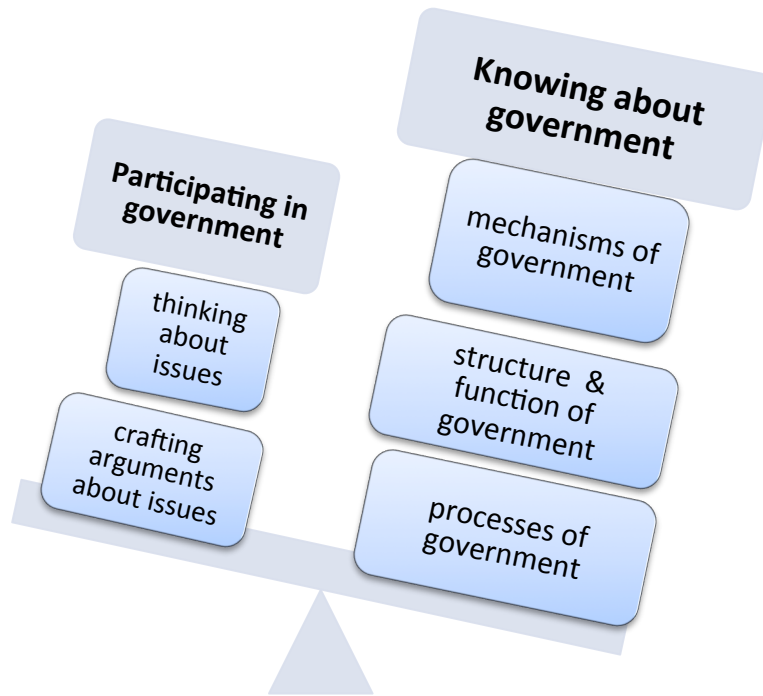


Figure 6: Foci of AP U.S. Government

Nearly 50% of the Advanced Placement U.S. Government and Politics exam is on the mechanics, structure, function and processes of the U.S. federal government. The exam emphasizes knowing information. For example, students have to describe and understand Federalism but they do not critique or question it. This conflicts with my understanding of “doing democracy” (Hess, 2009) and civics education (Banks, 2008; Castles, 2004; Parker, 1996, 2003).

Additionally, my experience of having taught AP U.S. Government during the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years influenced my inquiry. As the coordinator of Advanced Placement program at our school, I proctored all AP tests other than the test

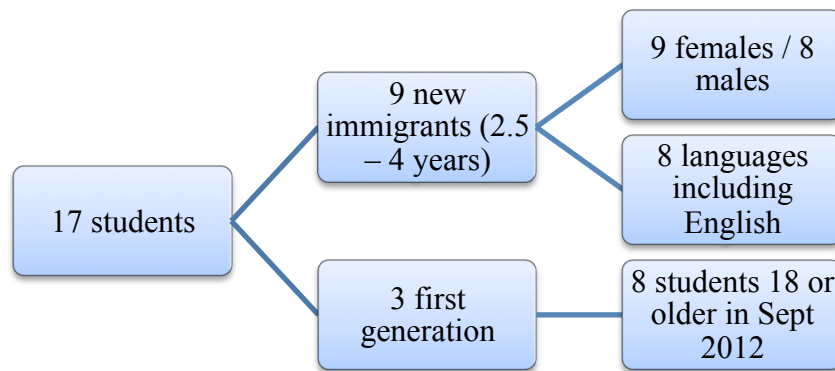
for the course I taught. During proctoring, some students complained they did not understand the exam. Some students refused to take the exam. They did not feel prepared. After both the 2011 and 2012 Advanced Placement U.S. Government exams, students told me they were familiar with the material on the test. The students appreciated feeling knowledgeable during the exam. This feedback reinforced my understanding that students want to be successful even if the AP exams appear insurmountable.

Another understanding I gained from teaching AP U.S. Government during the 2010-2011 school year was students more readily connected to the content of the course through issues and stories that resonated with their lives. This was helpful because I had tried to force connections for the immigrant students by asking comparative government questions. Students either did not know, for example, how power was divided in their home country or they felt the structure of government was inferior to the United States. I did not want to perpetuate negative assumptions or stereotypes. By focusing on the students' prior experiences, it might open some curricular spaces to transform the course from what Freire (1970, 1993) describes as "banking" knowledge to generating knowledge and critiquing power and authority.

Additionally, while most of my students were unfamiliar with the structure, mechanism and function of the U.S. government, they brought a wealth of prior knowledge about how the world does or does not "work," as well as experiences of justice and injustice (Freire, 1970, 1993; González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Nieto, 1999). They are able and desire to articulate the issues and concerns that are important to them. While the AP U.S. Government exam focuses on what students know or content versus thinking about and crafting an argument (Bernstein, 2013, February 9), thinking is

essential to civic competence. Therefore, I had to create ample opportunities for students to read, write, think, speak and share while also preparing them for an exam that assesses narrow civic content.

Introducing the students in Advanced Placement U.S. Government, 2012-2013



	African American	Asian American	Latino / a	European American	Multi-cultural
Senior Class	33%	53%	7%	6%	1%
AP Class	24%	57%	6%	6%	6%

Figure 7: Composition of the Class

Advanced Placement United States Government and Politics is a senior course that replaces the School District’s required Social Science course. There are no special admission requirements for social studies AP courses. Instead, teachers may recommend students and students may self-select the course. In June 2012, I distributed 29 copies of the summer assignment. Approximately 10% of the senior class was enrolled in the

course. The number of students enrolled in the course quickly changed by the beginning of the school year. In September, 12 students dropped out of the course: (1) seven students enrolled in a non School District, selective admission program at an off campus site, (2) four students dropped both Advanced Placement English Literature and Advanced Placement U.S. Government and (3) one student dropped out of school. By mid October 2012, 17 students remained in the course. Simultaneously, nine additional students who were enrolled in both AP English Literature and AP U.S. Government wanted to drop the AP English Literature class. The AP U.S. Government class would have had eight students. Instead, a new English Four, or senior English class, was opened to replace AP English Literature. Seventeen students remained in AP U.S. Government. The student who dropped out of school, an African American male, informed me that he was going to finish high school with a “cyber” charter school. I was not able to find out if he graduated.¹⁸

As I previously stated, there are no admission requirements for the course. Therefore, students who may be excluded because of standardized test scores are not excluded at our school. Of the 17 students who remained in the course, nine students scored proficient on the state standardized eleventh grade English/reading test; eight scored “basic.” Of the top 10% of seniors based on the grade point average (GPA), only two of the 13 students were enrolled in AP U.S. Government. Eight students, or 47%, were listed as “Limited English Proficiency” or English Language Learners (ELLs) (versus 34% of the senior class). Ethnically, the 2012-2013 AP U.S. Government class

¹⁸ The student who dropped out of school had been at student at Sandler High School his freshman year. He transferred to a Career and Technical Education school for his sophomore and junior year. He briefly returned to our school for his senior year.

demographics are similar to the school's senior class – 57 % Asian American (versus 53%), 24% African American (versus 33%), 6% Latino/a (versus 7%), and 6% European American (versus 6%), and 6% other/multicultural (versus 1%).¹⁹ Nine out of 17 students are immigrants; seven immigrated to the United States within the last three years. Students speak eight languages including English. There are nine females and eight males. There are no students with an IEP in the class. All of the students receive free lunch. Of the seven students who attended the selective off campus program rather than remain at our school, six scored “proficient” on the standardized tests. If the group had remained in the AP US Government class, demographically the class would have aligned with the senior class demographics. The group at the off campus program also included influential female senior class leaders.

Nevertheless, the students who remained in the Advanced Placement Government class included student leaders and students active in community partnerships. For example, two of the four senior class officers were members of the AP class. One student had participated in a Build On Trek, an international service learning trip, the previous summer and seven students consistently volunteered with Build On, an after school service learning program. Eight students had part time jobs and one student worked nearly full time.

At the beginning of the school year, most students stated they knew what they wanted to do post graduation. All but one student would be the first in his/her family to either attend college or complete a four-year degree. Twelve of the 17 students wanted to go to college, three students wanted to go to trade schools, one student had already

¹⁹ In comparison, in 2012-2013 AP Calculus class was 100% Asian American.

enlisted in the U.S. military and one student was undecided. Students who planned on going to college took advantage of an onsite program sponsored by a large state related university. The university program was intended to attract a more diverse student body to the university. The university provided a full time staff person to assist students with college applications and financial aid. Students were also guaranteed admission to a two-year program at one of the university's satellite campuses. If the student is successful in the two-year program, they complete their undergraduate degree at the main campus of the university. The support and assistance provided by the university's staff person was invaluable for many students. All students who applied were accepted by the university and received substantial financial aid although, for a variety of reasons, not all students chose to attend the university.

Whatever the students post secondary choices, the diversity of the students contributed to the distinct nature of the class. To introduce the individual students, I have included a chart with a list of students. Since I am hesitant to categorize or group the students based on standardized test scores, I have not included that information for each students. Instead, characteristics such as first language / multilingualism, previous social studies course(s), ethnicity and post-graduation goals became relevant throughout the school year. These characteristics provide insights relevant to the interactions between the students related to my research.

The following chart provides selective characteristics of the students. All names are pseudonyms. The pseudonyms do not necessarily reflect the ethnicity or culture of the students. They are generic, "Anglo" names. My dissertation advisor suggested this approach to select pseudonyms.

#	Pseudonym	First Language	Ethnicity/ country of origin	Social Studies course in 2011-2012	Post high school plans in June 2013
1	Sally	English	African American/ born in the US	US History	US military or trade school
2	Cheri	Khmer	Cambodian American / born in the US/ 1st generation	US History	4 year local state related university
3	Bill	Tagalog	Filipino - born in the Philippines – in the US seven years	AP US History	4 year local state related university
4	Brenda	Laotian (Thai)	Born in the US: Puerto Rican mother / Laotian father / raised by Laotian grandmother	African American History	2 year college at satellite location for 4 year state related university
5	Larry	Mandarin Fujian	Born in China / in US for 3 years	ESL Sheltered US History	4 year university / full scholarship
6	Rose	Mandarin	Born in China / in the US 4 years	AP US History	2 year college at satellite location for 4 year state related university
7	Chris	Mandarin	Born in China / in the US for 10 years	African American History	Trade school
8	Lois	Vietnamese	Born in Vietnam / in the US since December 2010	ESL Sheltered US History	4 year local religious affiliated university

9	Jim	Mandarin / Fujian	Born in China – in the US 3 years	ESL Sheltered US History	4 year local state related university
10	Bob	English	African American/ born in the US	AP US History	Work or college
11	Andy	Indonesian	Born in Indonesia / in the US 3 years	ESL Sheltered US History	Work or community college
12	Robert	English	African American/ born in the US	African American History	Work or Community College
13	Sue	Vietnamese	Born in Vietnam – in the US since August 2010	AP US History	4 year religious affiliated college; scholarship
14	Nancy	English	European American/ born in the US	AP US History	Trade school
15	John	English	Puerto Rican American/ born in the US; does not speak Spanish	US History	U.S. military
16	Sandy	English	African American/ born in the US	AP US History	Work and Community College
17	Gail	Burmese/ Chin	Born in Burma / refugee/ in the US 3 years	AP US History	4 year religious affiliated college; scholarship

Figure 8: List of Students and Relevant Data

Curricular Design

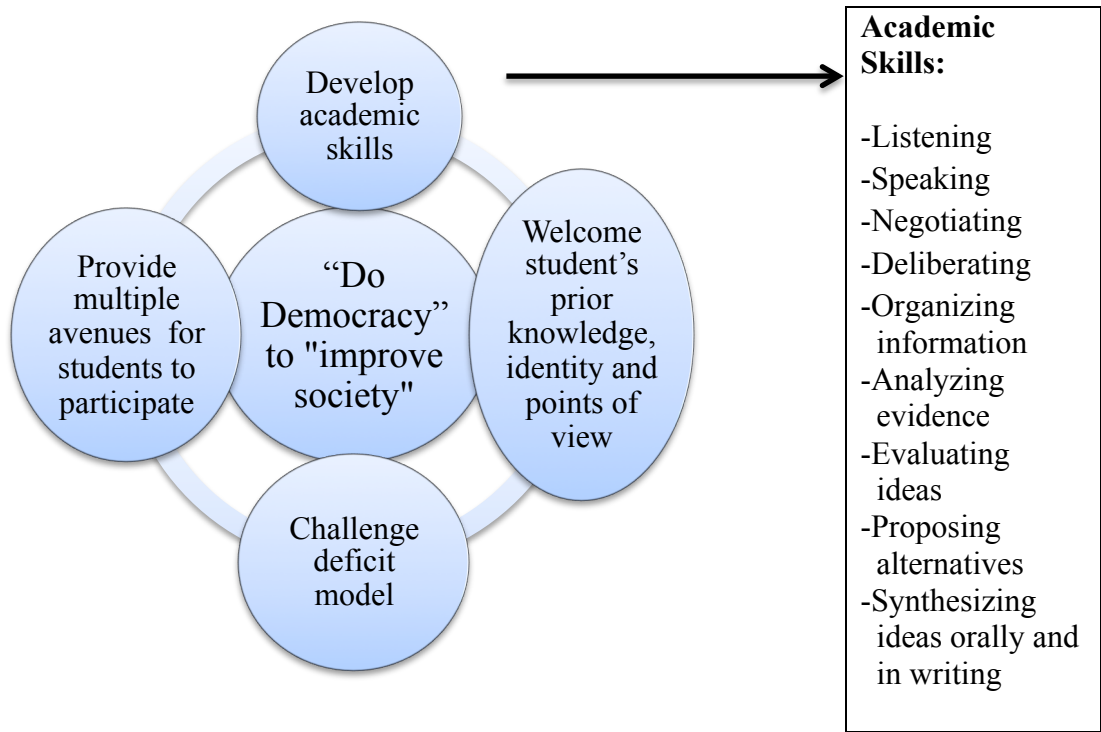


Figure 9: "Do Democracy" Curricular Design

Advanced Placement U.S. Government was not a priority for most of my students. Cheri reflected the attitude of most students in September - "everybody thinks this stuff is boring" (Journal, September 28, 2012). They had little to no interest in government. Other than Bill, no student stated they wanted to take the course. Fortunately, by the end of the year, more students shared Sue's and Larry's perspectives. Sue wrote on the final students questionnaire: "Thanks. You made a boring subject really interesting" (student questionnaire, June 5, 2013). Larry added, "Although

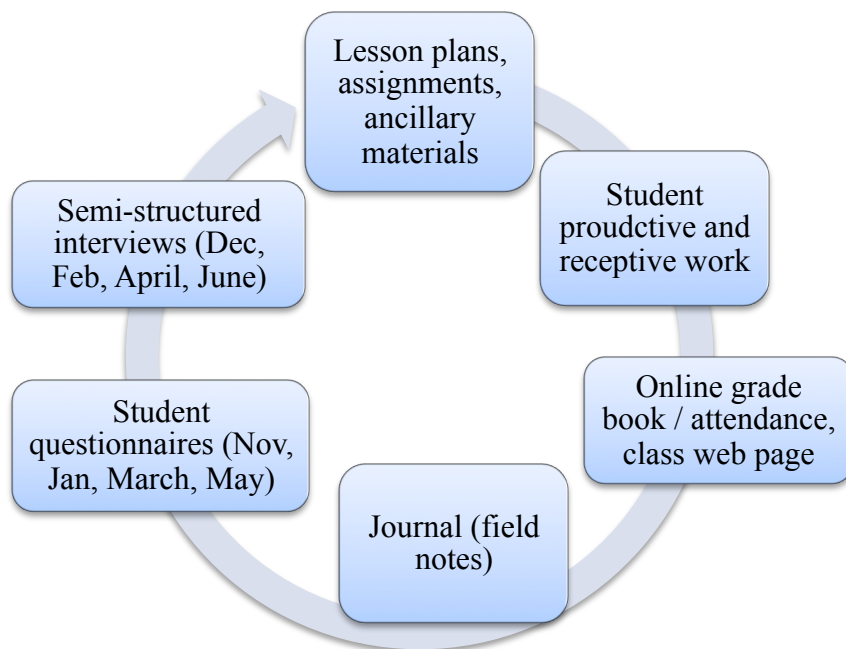
government is not interesting to me, it is indeed useful.” (student questionnaire, June 5, 2013). What influenced their attitudinal shift?

While the College Board does not have a required curriculum, since 2007-2008, it has required teachers of Advanced Placement classes to submit a syllabus for approval. My syllabus was approved but, just as I emphasized reflection and revision on writing assignment for my students, my syllabus underwent revisions throughout the year. In 2012-2013, just like the previous year, I revised the schedule, materials and approaches based on the students’ feedback and the class dynamics. I continued to struggle with ways to prepare my students for the AP test while creating a relevant, engaging class. I held onto my belief that all students would benefit from continuous integration and scaffolding of literacy skills and including components of sheltered language and content instruction such as building on student’s prior knowledge, learning language and vocabulary in context, and providing comprehensible inputs (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008; Krashen, 1982; Walqui, & van Lier, 2010). Balancing my understandings of what would benefit my students against the AP course requirements was disquieting.

AP U.S. Government defines civic content as primarily the mechanics, structures and process of government. Nearly half of the exam tests institutions of national government including the U.S. Congress, presidency, bureaucracy, and the federal courts. Throughout the year, I struggled with “teaching to the test” versus engaging students in literacy skills and democratic education as defined by Diana Hess (2009): “a form of civic education that purposely teaches young people how to *do* democracy” by fully participating in improving society (p. 15). This form of civic education challenges deficit thinking and modes of operating by designing a curriculum that encourages and enables

students to develop “democratic skills” (Valencia & Pearl, 2011, p. 283) such as listening, speaking, negotiating, deliberating, organizing information, and proposing alternatives. This is not a civic education that prioritizes memorization and regurgitation of assumed knowledge.

An Overview of Methods: Data Collection



Four Deliberations

- Audio recorded
- Aligned with core content (Legislative, Executive and Judicial Branches of government)

Three Blog Posts

- Extend deliberation
- Offer opportunities for all students to participate

Figure 10: Study Data Sources

The 2012-2013 academic year was the third year I taught Advanced Placement U.S. Government. I had two year's worth of unit and lesson plans, ancillary materials, and assessments. As with all courses, during the summer of 2012 I sorted through previous unit plans and created an initial calendar for the upcoming year. I searched for new resources and materials. I followed current issues including the upcoming presidential election. Simultaneously, I finalized my IRB proposal for my dissertation research; I was struck by the quantity of potential artifacts and data.

As I waited in September 2012 for the School District to approve, or not approve, my dissertation proposal, I considered how I would use the data and artifacts. My proposal included data from **my journal, semi-structured interviews, student assignments including blog posts, lesson plans, ancillary materials, student accessible online class attendance and grade book, audio taped class deliberations and online quarterly questionnaires**. On September 20, 2012, I emailed the School District to inquire about my dissertation status. I was told, via email, they were behind in notifications but, yes, it was accepted with one provision. I could not conduct the semi-structured interviews since I was the teacher of record. I would have to find someone else to conduct the interviews.

In early November, I received a hard copy, written notification of approval. I shared the news with my students and immediately distributed the consent forms. Eight of the 17 students were at least 18-years-old; they signed their forms. The remaining nine students gradually returned signed consent forms.

The official notification did not alter my plans for the year. We were in the midst of the 2012 presidential elections. As a class, we had built a sense of familiarity, if not

complete community, to take risks. The students had already demonstrated the deficit model, or the assumption that the students brought little prior knowledge or experiences relevant to civic competence, was false (Moll, 2005; Nieto, 1999; Valencia, 1997). We would continue to build on their literacy / language and cognitive skills. Two strategies became central to the course: **deliberation and subsequent blog posts**. While I had used deliberations before, I had not used the process consistently with one class nor in conjunction with subsequent blog posts. I believed the process of deliberations followed by blog posts would increase student engagement, build on their prior knowledge, and could be used to learn course content and connect to meaningful issues. In addition, according to Rubin (2012), discussion is an opportunity to open the classroom to differing mindsets, exchange beliefs and attitudes, and contemplate alternative viewpoints. While most of the students did not have background in the particular content, they had life experiences related to civic competence. I hoped the deliberation process, including blog posts, would provide multiple avenues for all students to participate and convince my students that they belonged at the academic table.

Despite my preparation of the academic table, it was difficult to connect students to both the required content and the academic expectations of an Advanced Placement course. I had to address the perception of some of the students like Nancy who announced on September 21, 2012, “Mr. B told us this isn’t really an AP class. We’ll be lucky to get a 2.” (Journal, September 21, 2012) Nancy was honest and her prediction about the AP test results proved correct. Based on my previous AP U.S. Government classes, if the goal of the course is scoring a “3” or higher on the exam, the goal is an

overwhelming weight that may divert the course from a focus on fostering civic competence to narrow test preparation.

Preparing my students for an AP course should have begun many years before September 2012. Our School District is academically stratified; there are many high school options other than a neighborhood high school. Our school is unique because of the number of immigrant students / English Language Learners (ELLs) who enter the school as teenagers. Therefore, while the College Board identifies “underrepresented” students by ethnicity and class, the particular circumstances at our school are much more complicated. I also had students who, in general, had little interest in the content and told me they did not want to be in a “boring” course. (Journal, September 20, 2012)

As I wrote, our school was identified for additional supports in 2009-2010 because of low standardized test scores and graduation rates. During the student’s ninth grade year, the School District mandated reading and math remediation, not academic enrichment. We were to prepare students for the state standardized tests, especially the “constructed response,” or writing in response to a reading and prompt, not critical or creative thinking. Complaints from teachers brought some changes in the student's sophomore year. Selected students were given “honors” English and math. The English “honors” class received a class set of *Springboard*, the “College Board Readiness System.” Nevertheless, it was not written into the curriculum. It was optional. In addition, only four of the 17 students were in “honors” English as sophomores. The English Language Learners and three students who transferred to our school during their junior year did not have an “honors” course experience. Senior year was too late to expect all students to embrace academic habits such as critical reading and thinking and

analytical writing and homework. The pattern of not turning in assignments, and incomplete or late submission of assignments began in the summer and continued throughout the year.

For instance, on September 28, I assigned an individual questionnaire on political beliefs. Students were to answer questions on events, people and experiences that had shaped their political beliefs. On October 1, I had planned for students to work in pairs to compare / contrast their list. Eight students had completed the assignment; I had to allow class time to complete the survey (Journal, October 1, 2012). Complaints about homework grew. In the November student questionnaire, Jim, Nancy, Gail, Ivy and Chris all complained about homework and writing assignments. As late as April and May, I struggled with students' unwillingness or inability to prioritize preparing assignments outside of class (Journal, April 10, 2013; Journal, May 20, 2013).

Likewise, throughout the year, I felt the time "crunch." Besides not enough students completing work outside of class, attendance was often inconsistent. During a marking period of 40 - 45 class periods, most students missed four to eight classes or 10% to 20%; three students usually missed from 12 to 19 days (online grade / attendance book). Unpredictable attendance impacted planning and pacing. For example, on April 29, eight students out of 17 were absent. I could not design a course that relied on consistent attendance and students completing many assignments out of class (Journal, April 29, 2012). Despite my cajoling and begging, each marking period was marked by students submitting assignments last minute, or not at all.

Therefore, the majority of the work related to the deliberations and blog posts had to be done in class. The process of the deliberations and materials I created evolved

based on pre-deliberation class activities, such as the Constitutional role-play, “Take a Stand” exercises, and student feedback. Although I chose the topics and created the initial questions (Hess, 2009; Ochoa-Becker, 2007), I also solicited suggestions, formally and informally, from students to improve the process and supports. I created a “packet” for the deliberations that included specific steps to prepare for the deliberation. I designed topic specific graphic organizers for students to collect and evaluate evidence. The questions for the deliberation were on another page; students were to list their knowledge and beliefs about the topic and add evidence from class readings / materials. The preparation for the deliberations was done in student selected small groups. Then, during the deliberation, students completed a chart - “Discussion / Fish Bowl” - and had to list at least two student’s comments they wanted to remember. Oral participation in deliberations was encouraged; I attempted to have students take turns representing their group. Nevertheless, individual students determined their degree of participation. Following each deliberation, students answered “post discussion” questions about what was discussed, what was not discussed, what they heard that influenced their position and remaining questions.

Following three of the four deliberations, students were to post a response to specific questions on a class blog. Then, they were to respond to two peers’ posts. I provided sentence stems for the response to peers as a scaffolding strategy. For the third and fourth deliberations, I responded to the blog posts by asking questions based on their post. Students were to respond to my questions. The blog posts were out of class assignments. I signed out laptop computers for students to use before school, during their lunch and after school. Like other assignments, as the year progressed, I gave students

some class time for blog posts to increase the number of students who participated. This did not guarantee student participation in blog posts.

Changing the “rules” for deadlines and turning homework into class work was disappointing. To keep students in the class, I had to be flexible. I was used to revising assignments and lesson plans throughout the year. I know when a lesson “gels” and when it does not. Also, I can sense when students are confused or lost. My relationship with most of the students was collegial; they expressed their opinions about what we did in class and made suggestions for improvement. At the same time, I needed to make the data collection manageable. I returned to my research questions and re-read my journal as a way to focus on the data needed for the research versus the volumes of student work created during the academic year.

An overview of Method: Data Analysis

I did not predetermine which students or voices to include in my data analysis. I began the process as a “blank slate;” I did not know what understandings would emerge. Each student brought their story and perceptions to the class; I did not want to exclude anyone. Student inclusion was ultimately based on attendance and willingness to participate. Fortunately, especially since there were only 17 students, all students participated in at some point during the year.

Throughout the year, I changed my lesson plans and the format for the deliberations “packet” - the tool students used to prepare for the deliberation - based on

student feedback and my observations. The “packet” or tool helped some students ground their participation with disciplinary content (Lo, Tierney & Nolen, 2014, April). My data analysis process is based on Charmaz (2006) grounded theory, Maxwell’s (2005) qualitative analysis, Menter, Elliot, Hulme, Lewin, and Lowden (2011) qualitative research and Anderson, Herr and Nihlen (2007) and Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1991, 2001, 2009) practitioner research. Charmaz (2006) states initial coding requires close reading of the data and openness to all possibilities; the codes emerge enabling us to analyze the data. After initial close readings, I began with what Maxwell (2005) labels “organization” or broad issues, such as challenges, opportunities, and prior knowledge. As suggested by Anderson, Herr and Nihlen (2007), I looked for patterns to “match, contrast and compare” (p. 215). For example, while I transcribed the **semi-structured interviews**, I added additional categories or “substantive” categories (Maxwell, 2005) including use of evidence and identity. I created charts based on the categories and recorded students’ comments from the semi-structured interviews and questionnaires chronologically. This allowed me to examine change over time and “hear” the students’ voices resonate within a category. At the same time, I was both teacher and researcher; we coexisted not in *their* class but in *our* class (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1991, 2001, 2009).

Although I was not in the habit of keeping a formal **journal**, I kept a journal during the previous school year and knew I had to allocate time at lunch, the end of the school day or in the evening to reflect on what occurred. I also carried **index cards to jot notes during the class**. After school, I transferred the index card notes to my journal. Journaling enabled me to reflect on and “interrogate my own teaching practices”

(Anderson, Herr, & Nihlen, 2007, p. 140), assumptions and revelations vis-à-vis my work with my students. I reflected on formal and informal conversations with students during class and after school. I ruminated on my endeavors to prepare students for post high school life and a high stakes standardized test that, in my opinion, did not assess students' growth. Subsequent to the course, I coded the journal by highlighting my tensions and recognition of opportunities and challenges during the year. I noted when I described students' civic competence and engagement. The coding process evolved over a year of reading, re-reading, and reflecting on my journal entries.

Students' understandings were demonstrated in four **audio-recorded deliberations**. Students shared their ideas and responded to peers via subsequent **blog posts**. Lastly, students' voice was recorded in a series of small group, **semi-structured interviews** conducted by a graduate school colleague who had worked with a few students through a community partnership. I had previously used **online student questionnaires** in 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 at the end of the course to solicit student feedback to improve the course. In 2012-2013, students completed questionnaires at the end of each marking period. The feedback influenced my lesson planning (Journal, November 23, 2012; January 7, 2013; March 31, 2013). Students also were assessed for completion of the **deliberation packets and blog posts**. The various data sources enabled me to consider how deliberations and blog posts, and the scaffold instructional strategies to prepare students, enabled students to use disciplinary evidence, their prior knowledge, identify and points of view to discuss current issues within the context of U.S. governmental institutions.

To analyze the **deliberations and blog posts**, I initially transcribed the deliberations. My experience with transcriptions is from an oral history course. Therefore, I transcribed the deliberations verbatim and did not correct grammatical, spelling or usage errors. Then, I color-coded / highlighted (a) my questions and comments to find patterns of my movements or efforts to frame, focus / re-focus or influence the discussion, and (b) students' use of (1) disciplinary content and/or language, (2) prior knowledge, (3) point of view and (4) identity as evidence. I also noted who did and did not participate. After highlighting, I created a chart to organize the information to look for nuances and patterns.

Regarding the **blog posts**, I "cut and pasted" the posts onto a Word document. Again, I did not make grammatical or usage corrections. I highlighted and wrote notes on the right hand side noting (a) use of disciplinary language and content, (b) prior knowledge, (c) point of view as evidence and (d) identity (Menter, Elliot, Hulme, Lewin, & Lowden, 2011). Lastly, I looked for evidence of whether the blog posts expanded on the class deliberations; in particular, I was interested in whether or not more reluctant oral deliberation participants were more engaged in the blog posts.

Ethical Considerations

As the teacher of record, I submitted grades for the students. Therefore, I was not permitted to conduct the semi-structured interviews but I prepared the questions. A graduate school colleague conducted the interviews. My colleague conducted four interviews that I transcribed in the summer of 2013. Students were no longer enrolled in the course. Nevertheless, students may have restricted their comments in the semi-structured interviews because I was the teacher of record. That said, based on the discussions during the semi-structured interviews, students appeared free to express themselves.

I also created four online questionnaires. Initially, I was going to have “blind” questionnaires” but when I asked the students, they preferred including their names. One reason was they wanted a grade, or credit, for completing the questionnaires. Although I gave class time for the questionnaires since half of the students did not have a computer at home, they still thought they should receive credit. The fact that I know who responded did not appear to discourage honesty. Students’ critical comments were similar to critical comments expressed in class.

Next, I had to ensure that students did not feel coerced into participating (Anderson, Herr & Nihlen, 2007). Consideration for my students’ confidentiality and comfort with challenging values or actions / policies associated with the United States, especially immigrants, required sensitivity and the creation of a safe classroom environment that encouraged open discourse. Initially, some students were very hesitant to participate because they lacked confidence in their oral English language skills. No

student was required to orally participate in the deliberations. Therefore, I did not grade their participation in the deliberations. They received credit for completing the deliberation “packet” and a grade for the blog posting. As the school year progressed, all students eventually participated orally. The pre-deliberation preparation enabled students to engage in their process and, if necessary, write their proposed responses before stating them in front of a group. For the blog posts, I encouraged a few students who were concerned about their writing to send me their writing assignment via email before they posted it online. Only one student consistently asked for this support. We were able to edit the postings for grammatical accuracy and spelling. Also, one student was an undocumented immigrant. This required additional steps to protect the student’s anonymity.

Lastly, I am European American with a working class background but years of formal education in public schools and universities. While I have a middle class income, my children and I have always lived in working class neighborhoods in our city. Akin to my students, my sons and I live with some of the same insecurities around street violence and uncertainty about the future of our schools and city. My sons attend our city’s under resourced public schools. Nevertheless, I need to be very cognizant of the power of my European American background, “white privilege,” formal education and my status as a U.S. citizen. My income, appearance, education and legal status along with role in the classroom, teacher, gives me immense power over my students. Being cognizant of my power and influence, while not sufficient to temper it, is essential for reflection on the opportunities and challenges I experienced during the 2012-2013 academic year.

Scholarly Context

Based on a Pro Quest search of dissertation topics related to Advanced Placement courses from 2006-2012, the dissertations are quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative critique topics include student participation, pass rates and the connection between civic courses and voter registration. The qualitative dissertations related to AP courses primarily focus on teacher attitudes toward open enrollment, “access and equity” as defined by the College Board, and teacher preparation for courses such as Advanced Placement U.S. History or English Language and Composition. I found one dissertation on Advanced Placement Government and Politics published in 2012, “Shouldn’t everyone know about their government: An exploration of curricular values in Advanced Placement U.S. Government Classes.” This practitioner research considered what students “found valuable in the class” (p. x). The location is a large suburban high school in a majority European American community. I am only aware of one longitudinal, mixed methods study of Advanced Placement U.S. Government (Parker, Mosborg, Bransford, Vye, Abbott, & Wilkerson, 2011). The study, begun in 2008, examined the impact of using simulations, or “Project Based Learning,” versus direct instruction / lecture to prepare students for the high stakes test. Also, practitioner research in social studies is still rare; the published research is primarily by professors of social studies methods course not classroom teachers (Johnston, 2006).

As a practitioner researcher, I do not intend to develop a pedagogical model for teaching AP U.S. Government and Politics to “underrepresented” students but I do offer strategies and tools to engage students in civics and public discourse. My research was grounded in my experience as both a practitioner and researcher with the goal of doing

“meaningful work in the world of ...the classroom “(Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 105.) I gained insights through studying my students’ work to see how they made meaning, produced knowledge, and interpreted understandings of citizenship – cultural, national, global and transnational – while preparing for a high stakes, standardized exam. I also considered students’ perspectives in constructing knowledge in a course that usually presumes a narrow interpretation of prescribed knowledge. Lastly, I utilize deliberations and blog posts to consider students’ use of their prior knowledge, point of view, identity, disciplinary language and content to form evidence-based arguments. Personally, I hope my students leave our classroom with more confidence in themselves as learners and teachers in the academy, responsive to opportunities for civic engagement and cognizant of their ability to influence political, economic and social change.

Chapter 4: Practice, Process and Progress

Introduction

This chapter is divided into three sections: Semester 1, Semester 2 and Advanced Placement Exam. Each section includes one or more “Reflection / Analysis” sections in lieu of a “conclusion” section. I use the term “reflection” with analysis because I am both reflecting on my **practice** as well as analyzing the **process** and outcomes or **progress**. A reflection implies looking or bending back; it is the return of light after it hits a surface. By reflecting, I hope to have carefully considered and interpreted what occurred. In addition, the reflections offer questions; an alternative to decisive explanation. The questions, in place of answers, often drove my decisions. I also include “analysis” because I attempt to loosen up or shake out what was crucial or emerged. I consider analysis a *process rather than a product*. Together, as a practitioner researcher, I reminded myself that my reflection and analysis are not to create a formula or blueprint for teaching AP U.S. Government to “underrepresented students.” Instead, our work was an opportunity to examine possibilities about both academic improvements and life issues as we created and interpreted knowledge and ways of knowing (Allwright, Autumn 2005; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1991, 1999, 2001, 2009).

Furthermore, an image that emerged, and later became metaphorical through the deliberation and blog post reflection and analysis process, was an invitation to a potluck and buffet “academic table.” Many of the students enjoy eating at local buffets. The buffets offer “all you can eat” and a wide variety of “ethnic” foods. I have eaten with

students at local buffets. We also have an annual “potluck” “multicultural fair” where students and staff bring “ethnic” dishes to share. The multicultural fair “potluck” is unpredictable yet anticipated; it is welcoming of the diverse experiences, points of view, and identities of my students. The buffet is more predictable but fluid; it is an array of instructional scaffolding, variety of resources, and my perspectives and experiences brought to the process. Neither requires the protocols nor special occasion for fine dining nor prepackaged, processed fast food. Instead, the potluck and the buffet materialize from the community. As the year progressed, I witnessed students become more comfortable and adept with the messiness and array of offerings they brought to the “academic table.”

“Semester I” is chronological and describes the content, and pedagogical strategies I incorporated to scaffold instruction and learning for the “academic table.” Using my journal, lesson plans, online grade / attendance book, student work, online student questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews, I retell the story of key learning experiences by focusing on how I scaffolded literacy skills, learning or instructional strategies and disciplinary content and language. I developed lessons driven not only by the Advanced Placement U.S. Government requirements but also by my understanding of my students, student feedback, civic competence and current issues. I do not include nor describe all activities and assignments from the first semester. Instead, I focus on how the instructional strategies and scaffolded learning prepared students for the deliberations and blog posts and AP U.S. Government exam. I considered what built on students’ prior knowledge, points of views and identity to construct knowledge (Freire, 1970, 1993; Gonzalez, 2005; King, Newmann, & Carmichael, 2009; Moll, 2005; Nieto, 1999). I

conclude the section with a reflection and analysis on my practice, and students' academic and social learning. The analysis considers the challenges I experienced as the teacher and the opportunities revealed as we coalesced as a group of learners.

In "Semester II," I focused on four in class deliberations and three blog posts. I include the instructional strategies and materials used to scaffold the process (Taba, 1962; Vygotsky, 1978; Walqui & van Lier, 2010). In addition, I analyzed audio taped transcripts of the deliberations, the students' blog posts and related assignments. Using the students' knowledge presented during the deliberation and written in the blog posts, I considered (a) teacher's moves and thinking and (b) students' moves and thinking. The teacher's moves I consider include how I (1) attempted to frame and / or focus or refocus the deliberations and blog posts, and (2) directed or guided the students. The students' moves and thinking include (1) use of disciplinary content and language as evidence, (2) use of prior knowledge and points of view as evidence, and (3) reflections on or inclusion of identity. Together, this analysis assisted in addressing my overall question on the challenges and opportunities and my sub-questions on instructional strategies and students' experiences with citizenship and civic competence. I conclude with a reflection or analysis of each deliberation including the process and outcomes. I include questions raised by the process and content and how my thinking and planning was challenged.

In the final section, "Advanced Placement Exam," I described and reflected on how I prepared students for the multiple-choice questions and the Free Response Questions (FRQs). I considered how I integrated test preparation throughout the academic year as well as end of the course test preparation. In this context, I analyzed how my students performed on exam-aligned assessments. Next, I compared my

students' results with national results on the exam. I consider why my students' yearlong credible academic work was not reflected in the AP exam results. Last, I discuss what occurred after the AP exam and my ongoing learning. Once again, I conclude with a reflection and analysis of both my practice and teacher and students' learning.

Semester I

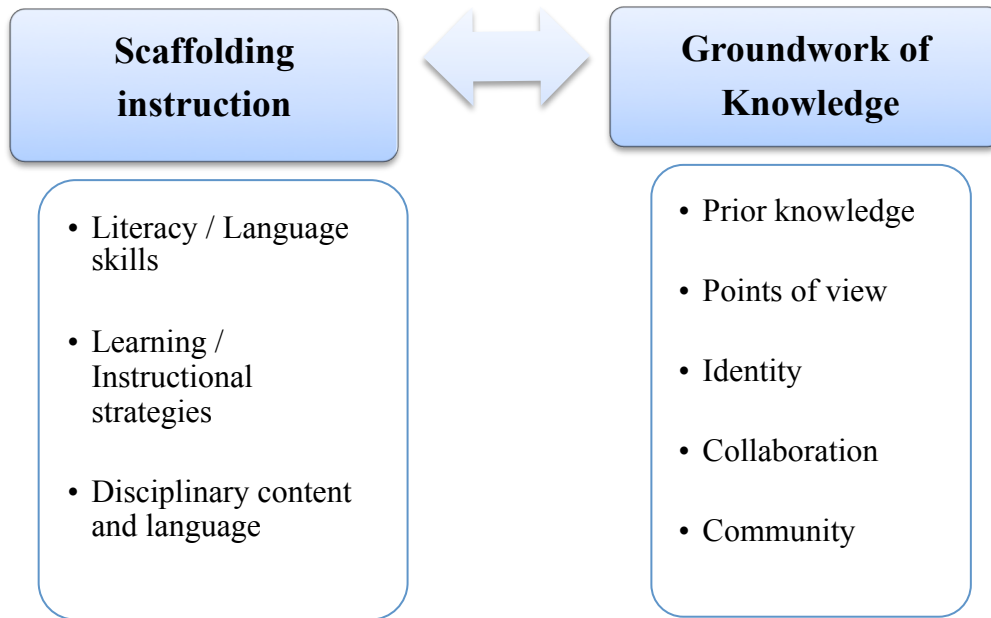


Figure 11: Foundations for Instruction and Learning

Background

The 2012-2013 school year was my third and last year teaching Advanced Placement U.S. Government.²⁰ Similar to previous years, the first marking period would provide an opportunity to create a classroom community, set the academic tone of the course, and build on students' prior knowledge while introducing disciplinary content and skills. Therefore, besides the disciplinary content of the course, I wanted to create a collegial and secure environment in the class in early September. According to Ellerbrock (2014), students will not freely participate or fully engage in class if they are

²⁰ The following academic year, 2013-2014, another teacher asked to teach AP U.S. Government. In 2013-2014, I taught AP U.S. History.

emotionally, psychologically or physically afraid. Since I began teaching, I learned that developing a sense of community with a group of students is essential for students to take academic risks. Although our school is relatively small (N=600), many students do not know each other. This was evident in the class. Only five of the 17 students had attended the school since ninth grade. Three students transferred to the school for their junior year. Senior year was also the first time some of the English Language Learners were not in content sheltered classes; they had limited experiences with “American” or U.S. born students.

The students in the AP Government class had a variety of social studies courses as juniors. Four students had been in a sheltered English as a Second Language (ESOL) U.S. history class. Most English Language Learners (ELLs) at Sandler High are in sheltered content or discipline classes until they are seniors; some remain in sheltered classes as seniors. Sheltered classes are exclusively ELLs. Besides the ELLs, seven students had been in AP U.S. History, three students were in African American History, and three students were in “regular” U.S. History.²¹ Therefore, the students did not have a consistent social studies experience in their junior year and did not necessarily know each other. I had to create opportunities to build a sense of community to support a level of comfort to enable students to take academic and social risks.

²¹ African American History is a required elective in our School District. Students must take three social studies courses and African American History to graduate.

Scaffolding Learning Semester 1

To scaffold learning during the first semester, building and nurturing a community of learners was the pivot for learning. The following diagram presents the relationship between the disciplinary content, literacy and academic skills and social components of semester one. In this section, I describe how each instructional component and / or strategy was included in the first semester and I conclude with a reflection on the growth of our classroom community and students' academic growth.

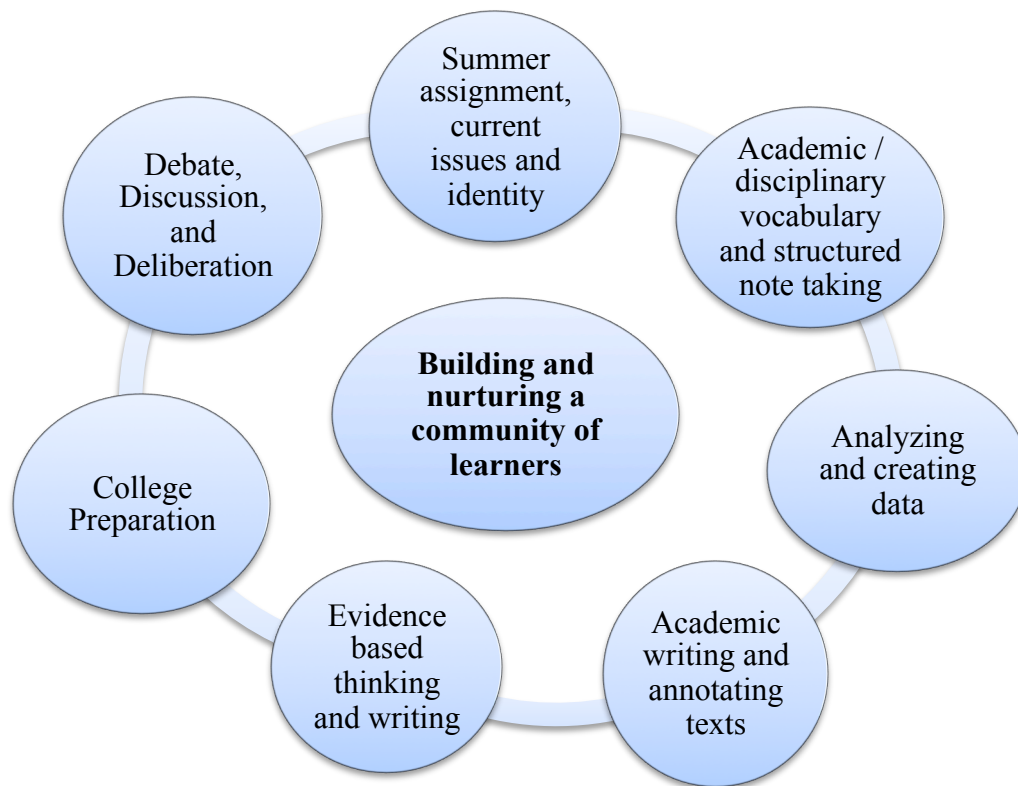


Figure 12: Building and Nurturing Community

Building community was at the core of developing the academic skills for the course. The first full day of school for students was September 10, 2012. To build community in the class, I began the school year with “get to know us” activities. We created a class “wordle” with (1) what you should know about me, (2) self selected adjectives to describe himself /herself, (3) in school activities he or she enjoys and (4) out of school activities he or she enjoys. In a “wordle,” the greater the number of times a word or phrase is used, the larger the print. Therefore, a “wordle” depicts commonalities while maintaining unique contributions.

We created the “wordles” in class as students contributed to each topic. That evening, I printed the “wordles” and the next morning posted them in the front of the room. We compared and contrasted the results on the third day of class. While the “wordles” revealed identity differences, the students also noted their commonalities (Journal, September 12, 2012). For example, in the first “wordle,” some students thought we should know their ethnic or social identities. Two Vietnamese students selected their ethnic identity as what we should know. In contrast, only one Chinese student out of four selected their ethnic identity. Most students shared either humorous identities, such as “I was a problem child,” to food preferences and behaviors. The second “wordle,” self-selected adjectives to describe themselves, also provided an opportunity to not only share attributes but also consider why they selected the attributes. For example, most students said they were “kind.” Other repeated terms were “easygoing,” “funny,” “diligent,” “responsible,” and “generous” versus “smart,” “intelligent” and “studious.” When we viewed the “wordle,” I asked students to comment on the similarities and differences. One attribute I noticed but students did not comment on was “smart” or “intelligent”

(Journal, September 12, 2012). Brenda noted how many students claimed to be “kind;” Nancy, in what quickly became her assumed role of class “comic,” added “that’ll change” (Journal, September 12, 2012).

The two other “wordles,” in and out-of-school activities, out of school “volunteering” was stated as often as “music,” “read,” “draw,” “chill,” and “sleep.” While not all students participated in volunteering or community service, 10 of the 17 students did throughout the school year. Students’ in-school activities, including the community partnership with Build On,²² provided an avenue for volunteering. While most of the in school activities may be expected, such as enjoying lunch and sports, a few students also wrote “helping others” and “learning.” While I wish I had done a post course set of “wordles,” I believe more students would have listed “learning” and “helping others” as positive school activities.

Figure 13: Building Community Wordles



²² Build On is a national service learning organization. Our school is fortunate to have two full time staff who organize service learning / community service for our students during the day and outside of school.

The next community building activity was a class timeline with 10 events from our lives. I modeled the activity by sharing ten events from my life. I asked students to focus on what they had in common and what made them unique. Students wrote their events on “sticky notes” and placed the events by year (e.g. 1990 - 2011). Then, each student was given one or two years to find what students had in common or what was unique for the year. While the students named areas of commonality such as “I was born,” “my sister was born,” or “moved to the U.S.,” and areas of difference such as “broke my arm” or “left the refugee camp,” this did not generate additional discussion. Unlike the “wordle” activity, students appeared to become quickly bored after developing their ten-event list (Journal, September 13, 2012). Rather than prolong the activity, I used the exercise to segue into an exercise based on one of the summer course assignments.

Summer Assignment, Current Issues, and Identity

Beginning in June 2011, the Advanced Placement teachers at Sandler High School had agreed to distribute summer assignments. Summer assignments were not part of the school culture. Nevertheless, we decided that Advanced Placement summer assignments might indicate the academic commitment required in Advanced Placement courses. Therefore, in June 2012, Advanced Placement students received hard copies of their assignments. For one assignment, I distributed “Who is an American?” a chapter from Howard Fineman’s *The Thirteen American Arguments: Enduring Debates that*

Define and Inspire our Country, and asked students to answer questions related to their identities. In addition, I placed the assignments on my class web site and spoke with each student. I also gave students my email address and cell phone number. Lastly, I included a model of each assignment on the class web site. In other words, I did each assignment to show students a sample assignment. During the summer, two students contacted me via cell phone and four students via email for assistance with the assignments. While I was glad that six students contacted me, only eight of the original 29 students did this section of the summer assignment. Therefore, we reviewed the assignment in class. This pattern of approximately half of the students doing assignments outside of class continued throughout the school year.

After completing the summer reading in class, we continued with the theme “Who is (North) American?” by reading statements by President Obama and presidential candidate Romney. This connected issues of identity and community with the upcoming presidential election and current issues. In small groups, students discussed and shared with the class what makes something or someone “American.” Immigrant students, Gail, Larry and Jim, revealed their difficulties in adapting to the United States and learning English (Journal, September 19, 2012). The question, “Who is a (North) American?” and who may become an (North) American reappeared throughout the school year. This question also segued into the fall of 2012 presidential elections.

To introduce the presidential elections, students took an online quiz that placed them on a political spectrum. Political beliefs are a required component of the AP US Government framework. The quizzes - “Are you more (or less liberal) than President Obama?” or “Are you more (or less) conservative than Mitt Romney?” - were sponsored

by *The Christian Science Monitor*. After students took the quiz, they posted to a class blog their results, any topics or terminology that was confusing, and whether or not they were surprised by the results; 13 students posted. This exercise provided another opportunity for students to share an aspect of their identity, including their political, social and economic beliefs, while giving me insights into their background knowledge on current issues and terminology. For example, Chris wrote (blog post, 9/18/2012), there were a lot of topics he did not understand including the Dream Act and Patriot Act; following the quiz he “googled” the topics. Brenda wrote she could answer questions about gay marriage and abortion but otherwise “don’t follow politics” (blog post, 9/19/2012). Bob was concerned if his support for “reducing the deficit by raising taxes on the wealthy and reducing military spending” made him “an extremist” (blog post, 9/19/2012). The posts demonstrated students’ willingness to publically grapple with abstract political labels and unfamiliar current issues. Students also become cognizant of their prior knowledge and ability to access information related to unfamiliar topics. Simultaneously, we learned about each other.

Academic / disciplinary vocabulary and note taking

Since it was a presidential election year, I aligned the content of the course with the fall 2012 U.S. elections. During the fall, I included elections, the Electoral College, political parties, interest groups, public opinion polls, voting rights, and the media. All of the topics are required for the AP U.S. Government exam. During the third week of class, I asked students to take an online quiz. I used the quiz to introduce political spectrum

and concepts including liberal, conservative, libertarian, populist, social mobility, and equity of opportunity versus equity of results. To introduce the terms, I utilized components of Marzano's (2004) strategy for **teaching academic and disciplinary vocabulary** and components of Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008) and Quality Teaching for English Learners (QTEL) (Walqui, & van Lier, 2010). According to SIOP, English Language Learners (ELLs) benefit from explicit academic vocabulary instruction. Therefore, I created a three-part vocabulary chart: (a) the term with its part of speech, (b) a description or definition of the term, (c) and either a symbol / picture related to the term and/or for English Language Learners, translation the term into the student's first language. I included translation in the student's first language (L1) because academic literacy in a second language is aided by academic literacy in the student's first language (Cummins, 1981, 1994; Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2010, pp. 11 – 13; Krashen, 1982). After modeling the process, students worked with partners to complete the chart and shared their symbol / picture or translated terms in small groups. For each unit of study or textbook chapter, I created and assigned Cornell Notes with academic and disciplinary vocabulary. (See Appendix 1)

To introduce the content, I created an adapted version of Cornell Notes (Pauk, 2000) for each chapter of the textbook, *American Government: Institutions and Policies, 12th edition* (Wilson & DiIulio, 2011). Cornell Notes are usually a blank, two-column note-taking organizer for students to take notes and later add questions and comments as a review strategy. Based on previous experiences with Cornell Notes and the difficulty the textbook posed for most students, I provided my students with very structured and

adapted Cornell Notes. As the year, progressed I decreased the amount of work I completed for the Cornell Notes and gradually transferred more of the responsibility to the students.

I adapted the Cornell Notes format by adding introductory questions to spur prior knowledge and encourage students to think about the “big ideas” of the unit (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Another adaptation was the inclusion of the three-part vocabulary chart. The next pages included headings, subheadings, questions and selected notes on each section of the text. Students had to complete the notes and add questions. The premise of Cornell Notes is students will reflect on the notes and use them to review for exams (Pauk, 2000). Ideally, I wanted students to use the Cornell Notes as a graphic organizer to become familiar with content before we covered the topics in class. (See Appendix 1) I encouraged students to do the Cornell Notes with a partner or in small groups. They had to turn in the Cornell Notes individually and list the names of their partner or group members on the assignment. Eleven out of 17 students completed chapter one Cornell Notes; on average, 12 students completed at least half of the Cornell Notes for each chapter during the first through third marking periods with most students collaborating with at least one other student. By the fourth marking period, less than seven students completed the Cornell Notes as we prepared for the Advanced Placement exam (online grade book).

Academic Writing and Annotating Texts

Using the context of the elections, I introduced the Free Response Question (FRQ), or written section, of the AP Government exam. According to the College Entrance Examination Board (2010), the FRQ requires students to “show analytical and organizational skills and to incorporate specific examples in their responses” regarding “principles of U.S. government and politics, and/or the analysis of political relationships that exist and events that occur in the United States” (p. 24). Students are expected to “interpret”, “analyze”, and “draw logical conclusions” (p. 24) by using evidence to answer a prompt. Students are not to give their opinion on a topic. To build on students’ prior knowledge while including a required component of the course, I selected two articles from an online textbook, *American Government* at USHistory.org. We started with the article, “What Factors Shape Political Attitudes?” (2008); the article lists factors that influence one’s beliefs - religion, place of birth, gender, family, and race / ethnicity. In small groups, I asked students to read about each factor and, using a graphic organizer, list how the factor did or did not influence their beliefs or point of view. To extend the small group discussion, I asked students to post their findings on our class blog and respond to two peers. This was another opportunity to build community as we learned more about each other. While students’ religious backgrounds and beliefs were diverse, the influence of family and place of birth influenced all students.

Before reading “American Political Culture (2008),” we followed the same process to introduce the disciplinary vocabulary: liberty, equality, democracy, individualism, rule of law, nationalism, and capitalism. After sharing student created symbols / pictures and/or translations of the vocabulary, I introduced a prompt to

introduce the AP U.S. Government FRQ. I modeled the prompt after an FRQ including assessment terms used in FRQ assessments:

In the U.S., the political culture is generally based on the concepts of liberty, equality, democracy, individualism, the rule of law, nationalism and capitalism. a) Select three of the attributes (liberty, equality, etc.) and *describe* how they are interpreted in the U.S. b) *List* three factors which influence an individual's political beliefs (gender, race/ethnicity, etc.). c) *Explain* how these factors may influence a person's political position.

Next, We reviewed annotating a text using a Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) process I introduced with the summer assignment (Vogt & Echevarria, 2008, p. 33).

- Check (✓) – concept or fact that is already known
- Question mark (?) – concept or fact that is confusing or not understood
- Exclamation mark (!) – something that is unusual or surprising
- Plus (+) – idea or concept that I want to remember or is new

Students then worked in self-selected small groups to read and annotate the texts, and used graphic organizers I created to brainstorm and organize their responses to the components of the prompt. Following the FRQ, I assigned a blog post to continue the dialogue and build on and recognize students' prior knowledge:

Compare / contrast your beliefs / values with the description of the U.S. with a focus on liberty, equality, democracy, individualism, rule of law, nationalism and capitalism. Pick **three** areas (e.g. liberty, equality, etc.) and write whether or not your definition is similar or different from what is in the reading. Think about your heritage and why your definitions may or may not be the same.

Fourteen of 17 students posted on the blog. Students' responses reflected their background and lived experiences. Observations of and involvement with dislocation to bias or discrimination framed the definitions. For example, Gail, a refugee, wrote liberty includes freedom from danger (blog post, 10/11/2012). Sally, a recent immigrant, and

Nancy, U.S. born, defined individualism as having one's own ideas and being responsible for one's actions (blog post, 10/11/2012). While most students focused on equality of opportunity, John and Bill wrote racism limits equality (blog posts, 10/12/2012). Also, five female students, Cheri, Rose, Lois, Sue and Gail, wrote how in their cultures there is no gender equality. Assumptions about male and female roles and gender divisions, "women's responsibilities are house chores and taking care of kids" (Lois, blog post, 10/12/2012), and options, "men have more opportunities than women in the real world" (Rose, blog post, 10/12/2012), reoccurred throughout the year. Fortunately, students were able to repeat the academic definition of the terms and, more importantly, their definitions were more nuanced. As the year progressed, students' awareness and willingness to consider how their lived experiences influenced their interpretations of the knowledge required for AP U.S. Government blossomed during class deliberations and in blog posts. Nevertheless, student generated "knowledge" is not assessed on an AP test.

Debate, Discussion, and Deliberation

According to the Carnegie Corporation of New York and CIRCLE 2003 report, *The Civic Mission of Schools*, the discussion of current and controversial issues and "simulations of democratic processes and procedures" (pp. 6 - 7) are 21st century competencies and necessary for civic equality. Hess (2009) notes political discussions are important in a democracy and that schools are a place to teach students how to participate in wide ranging ideological and political discussions. During the remainder of

the school year, deliberations and subsequent blog posts became central pedagogical strategies as I tried to balance preparing students for the AP U.S. Government exam, post high school college and/or career skills and, more importantly, active citizenship.

The fall 2012 presidential elections provided an opportunity to have students consider the difference between a debate, discussion and deliberation (lesson plans, October 22, 2012). I used the following definitions based on “Deliberating in a Democracy” (Marunich, 2005) to distinguish between debate, discussion and deliberation:

Debate is argumentative and aimed at *persuading* other people to agree with your argument. One side “wins.”

Discussion is “softer” than debate; you *share your point of view* and others share theirs. You learn more information about the subject. The goal is not necessarily to make a decision.

Deliberation is the focused exchange of ideas and the analysis of *multiple views* with the aim of making a decision and finding areas of agreement within a group. It is not just giving *your opinion* but also *listening* to other people’s opinions and trying to find some *common ground* on the topic you are deliberating.

We began with debates. Following the same model of reviewing key academic and disciplinary vocabulary, I distributed a chapter from *The IDEA Guide to the 2012 U.S. Presidential Debates* on the history of presidential debates. A class set of *The IDEA Guide* was available for free to teachers. Using the jigsaw cooperative learning strategy, students formed small groups and annotated one section of the chapter, wrote a summary on chart paper and presented it to the class. The jigsaw process enables a student to “master” one section of a text and teach and learn from their peers (Aarons & Patnoe, 1997). It also saves time; no one has to read the entire text. Following the in-class introduction to the presidential debates, I asked students to watch one presidential debate.

I created a graphic organizer to evaluate the debate and a series of blog post questions. Students considered whether or not debates helped inform the public, and /or affect the outcomes of an election. The blog posts revealed that students appreciated the history of debates in U.S. presidential elections but not all students were convinced of the merits of the presidential debates.

Twelve of the 17 students participate in the blog posts. Students noted benefits and limitations of debates. Brenda wrote debates can let voters know “the candidates ‘opinion of the topic at hand, (so) we can then decide on which candidate we believe is most suited to represent us” (blog post, 10/23/2012). Cheri and Rose responded that debates may impact elections because voters “may change their minds” about a candidate (blog posts, 10/24/2012). In contrast, Sandy wrote “the presidential debates are useful, however, I find them quite entertaining, how each candidate tries to expose the weaknesses of one another (blog post, 11/01/2012). Students also noted the limitations of debates. Larry noted there were only three presidential debates and “during the debates, one candidate usually uses lies and assaults another candidate” (blog post, 10/23/2012). Sue was concerned that debates were not fair; voters should not only rely on a debate to make decisions (blog post, 11/01/2012). The postings reflected students’ willingness to grapple with a component of presidential elections – public debates – while challenging, rather than accepting, the status quo.

The blog posts also enabled students to offer suggestions for improving presidential debates. Some students advocated for more inclusive debates. Bill raised his concern that presidential debates were limited to only the Republican and Democratic candidates and should be “more open” (blog post, 10/24/2012). Bill suggested allowing

the public to post questions via social media because this may encourage more people to “participate in the ballot” (blog post, 10/24/2012). Larry, Rose, and Cheri agreed with the idea of including third party candidates because, according to Cheri, “it is the right of freedom of speech” (blog post, 10/24/2012). Larry noted a third party candidate might include “more ideas to make the nation better” but the debate could be “chaotic” (blog post, 10/25/2012). Sue responded that too many candidates in a debate might “confuse” the voters and voters may be “afraid” to vote (blog post, 10/30/2012). The exchange, which included questions posted by me in response to students’ posts to encourage additional discussion, demonstrated students’ understanding of the role of debates but also their limitations. Students provided suggestions for improving citizen engagement, including social media and including more candidates, to make the process more democratic. Students demonstrated critical thinking with civic knowledge – they engaged in a democratic process with academic language.

Next, I considered how to prepare students for our first deliberation. To introduce deliberations, we viewed a video clip I found on YouTube, “Learning How to Deliberate” (Third Millennium Foundation). In the video, middle school age students from Costa Rica share thoughts about participating in deliberations. According to the video, deliberations encourage students to communicate, listen and collectively solve problems. After the video clip, I asked students if they agreed that learning skills to deliberate could promote problem solving. I waited for students to respond; after a long silence, Robert and Bob said the video was too long - 9 minutes - and Brenda inferred the video idealized the process (Journal, October 22, 2012). Despite the lack of enthusiasm, I introduced our

first deliberation topic - campaign funding - and told students we would use a similar process for further deliberations.

The following is the two day process we used to prepare for our first deliberation: explicit academic and disciplinary vocabulary instruction, video clip(s) to introduce the topic / issue, and reading, annotating, organizing and analyzing information from texts, data sources and political cartoons. I modeled the process and students participated in small groups. We began with disciplinary vocabulary related to political campaigns including *incumbent*, *incumbency*, *lobby*, *hard money*, *soft money*, *public opinion polls*, *Political Action Committee (PAC)*, and the *Electoral College*, and academic vocabulary including *bias*, *finance*, *disclosure*, *evidence*, and *relevancy*. Again, I divided the terms between students and we completed a class vocabulary chart. Next, I showed the video clip, *Explaining the Supreme Court on Campaign Finance* (Kuhnhenh, 2010). The video provided background information on campaign funding before we read and annotated, in small groups, a summary of the 2010 Supreme Court case *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*. Then, I distributed data, including charts, graphs and polls, on presidential campaign funding and spending. I modeled reading and summarizing the data from a chart and distributed the remaining charts and graphs to each small group to read and summarize. Next, we viewed two political cartoons presenting different opinions on the Supreme Court decision. Using three questions we had previously used to discuss political cartoons, I asked students to identify the key terms, objects or images and point of view in the cartoons. Last, in small groups students completed a graphic organizer citing evidence from the text, data sources and cartoons to determine if they

agreed or disagreed with the Supreme Court decision. I asked them to prepare a pro/con chart for homework.

The next day, before the deliberation, I asked who had completed the homework. Only two students, Gail and Lois, had the pro/con chart. Rather than give another day in class, I reviewed the definition of a deliberation and I presented guidelines and steps for the fishbowl / deliberation. A fishbowl is a form and format for structuring class discussion. A small group of students sit in the inner circle and participate in “valued talk” while other students are in an outer circle(s) and observe and listen until they join the inner circle (Michaels, O'Connor, Williams Hall & Resnick, 2010, p. 29). The teacher’s role, according to Michaels, et al. (2010), is to observe and guide the discussion at key points and focus or refocus the discussion. The initial guidelines I presented were detailed and possibly too complex but they provided structure (Journal, October 24, 2012). My goal was to guide the students through the process to prevent a “free for all” and / or a few students dominating the process.

Process for the deliberation: “Fishbowl”

On the Promethean Board, I presented the following structure and process to the students:

Inside the “Fishbowl:” (A) 1 member of each group enters the middle circle (4 chairs). Look at your evidence page. Each person in “the bowl” will present his or her strongest evidence. (B) After each student initially presents, anyone in the inner circle may ask clarifying questions (e.g. So, are you saying... Can you explain further what you meant by... I understand _____ but don’t understand _____.)

Outside the "Fishbowl" (A) Listen carefully to the positions of your classmates. What other ideas or concerns do you want to include? What evidence do you think is convincing? Why? What is missing?

Round 1: Four students present pro and con evidence.

Round 2: Students in the inner circle ask clarifying questions

Round 3: Students in the outside circle ask clarifying questions.

Round 4: Switch students in the inner circle. Present evidence.

Round 5: Anyone may ask clarifying questions.

Round 6: Switch students in the inner circle. Present evidence.

Round 7. Anyone may ask clarifying questions.

Round 8: Switch students in the inner circle. Present evidence. (5 students)

Round 9: Anyone may ask clarifying questions.

Round 10: "Take a stand" – You will stand with other students who share your position on the statement: "Citizens United v. FEC is necessary to uphold free speech rights. Campaign spending has limited impact on elections." You will strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, or disagree.

Round 11: In your respective "corners," select 3 pieces of evidence that you believe is the most convincing.

The focus question - *Should there be limits on spending in U.S. elections?* - was also on the Promethean board. I told students the question provided a parameter for the deliberation but they could raise other questions. While I planned on finishing the fishbowl deliberation in one day, I quickly realized we needed more time (Journal, October 25, 2012). While everyone took a turn in the inner circle, Bill and Bob dominated. There was more talking than listening (Journal, October 25, 2012). Time was always at a premium either because students did not do the homework and therefore were not prepared or I misjudged how long it would take to begin the process (Journal,

October 25, 2012). The day following the deliberation was “Senior Day,” Friday, October 26. Monday and Tuesday, October 29 and 30, were “Hurricane Sandy” storm days. Therefore, we did not return to school until November 1. The first deliberation lacked fluidity and coherence; nevertheless everyone spoke at least once and took a position in “Take a Stand” (Journal, October 26, 2012). The process was messy but we had completed our first deliberation!

Analyzing data from multiple sources and student created data

Throughout the year, students had to analyze and synthesize multiple types of texts, opinions and data. For some students, this was a new experience. At times, students complained about the amount of reading and wanted “the answer” (Journal, October 16, 2012). Nevertheless, once we started, they participated. The three weeks before the presidential election provided an opportunity to examine multiple texts as we further investigated the U.S. Constitution and voting. We reviewed the 15th, 19th and 26th Amendments and the 1965 Voting Rights Act. We reviewed graphed data on who votes and their characteristics such as age and affiliations (Journal, October 16, 2012). I asked students to consider why people chose to vote or not vote. All but two students believed it is acceptable not to vote. None thought voting should be required. Their concerns about voting included “I might vote for the wrong person” to “what if the person does something wrong and I voted for him?” (Journal, October 16, 2012) I told the students they taught me something new. In general, I did not assume responsibility for the actions of a politician just because I had voted for him or her. They felt enormous responsibility

even though they consistently stated their vote did not count (Journal, October 17, 2012). Was this an oxymoronic thinking or a reality they had experienced? Did the students assume they were powerless but responsible for something they believed they did not control? Did this mindset have implications for their performance in school - something they felt responsible for but was beyond their control?

As a follow up to the review of voting rights and students' attitudes toward voting, I assigned an interview in conjunction with the presidential elections. This was another opportunity to discuss types of evidence and using evidence to support a position. The interviews also changed some students' attitudes toward voting. The assignment was:

Discuss voting with a family member, friend or neighbor over 30. (1) Ask them if they vote and why or why not? If the person is not a U.S. citizen, ask him/her if they ever voted in their country of citizenship. If yes, what do they remember? If no, why not? (2) Do they think voting is a valid way to determine public opinion? Why or why not? (3) Write a summary paragraph about what you learned from the interview on voting. Did the interview encourage you to vote or get involved in an issue? Why or why not? (This is your opinion - there is no right or wrong answer. Nevertheless, reference the interview and how it shaped your opinion.)

Most students interviewed family members who either had negative experiences with voting or did not believe voting matters. Cheri interviewed her father (blog post, 11/7/2012). A native of Cambodia, he was never able to vote in his home country. Now that he is a U.S. citizen, he would like to vote but he does not have time. Sally also interviewed her father (blog post, 11/21/2012). He did not vote because it is not required; Sally does not know if she will vote unless the candidate has high standards. Andy interviewed his sister, a citizen of Indonesia (blog post, 11/18/2012). She does not think

people have much influence over government officials. Andy concluded it is “best to stay neutral” or not be involved in government.

In contrast, other students interviewed an adult who believes voting matters. Lois interviewed her mother, a citizen of Vietnam (blog post, 11/8/2012). Lois learned that her mother did not vote in Vietnam because her father, Lois’ grandfather, did not like the “communist government.” Now, Lois’ mother said she would vote if she gained U.S. citizenship because voters can help influence government “programs and plans.” If Lois becomes a citizen, she will vote because “it is in my interest.” Gail interviewed a teacher who voted in the U.S. presidential election. After the interview, Gail believes every vote counts; voting is to “make my voice heard” (blog post, 11/8/2012). After Nancy’s interview with her aunt, she concluded that she would only vote if she felt strongly about a candidate (blog post, 11/18/2012). Sandy, the only student who voted in the fall of 2012,²³ interviewed her uncle (blog post, 11/11/2012). The interview affirmed her opinion that voting is a way to have your “opinion heard.” Unfortunately, Sandy’s first voting experience was negative. She had to use a provisional ballot and was concerned her vote did not count (Journal, November 7, 2012). After Sandy shared her concern, Gail raised a concern about the Electoral College.

We had reviewed the Electoral College in the context of the election and learning election related vocabulary. I had a large Electoral College map from C-SPAN posted on a window shade and we had used an online Electoral College map that included voting patterns in urban areas across our state. We did a “pro/con” activity on the Electoral

²³ Two of the 17 students, Brenda and Sandy, were eligible to vote in the 2012 presidential election. While six other students were 18 years or older, they were not U.S. citizens. Sandy voted. Sally, who turned 18 two weeks after the election, expressed disappointment in not being able to vote for President Obama (Journal, November 7, 2012).

College. Did their understanding of the Electoral College influence their hesitancy about the potential power of voting in a presidential? Is this healthy skepticism?

Evidence based writing

The presidential election of 2012 permeated the content of the course in the fall of 2012. Following the initial deliberation, students again worked in self-selected small groups on an election related issue. Each team collected evidence to inform their position and create a policy brief. To select an issue, we used *The IDEA Guide to the 2012 U.S. Presidential Debates*. Once students created their groups, they selected an issue. The students selected marriage equality, education (No Child Left Behind Act), immigration (Dream Act), climate change, the economy (recession) and health care (abortion). Then, I introduced students to web sites including ProCon.org - Pros and Cons of Controversial Issues - Rock the Vote, and Project Vote Smart as well as varied news sources for additional information. Students were asked to answer the following questions:

- a) What are the issues related to your topic? Look up the history of the issue and the current debate.
- b) Where is there agreement / disagreement on the topic? (pro/con) What is controversial about the topic?
- c) What are the public policy choices or options? (rules, laws, actions, etc.)
- d) Based on your research, what is your group's recommendation? (e.g. What should individuals or groups do? What should the federal government do?) Why?

We devoted five days to research and writing in class. I reminded students they would have to work outside of class. Seven students did not have Internet access at home. Therefore, I arrived to school early and stayed after school each day and procured

a few laptop computers. Nevertheless, the same few students, Sue, Gail, and Lois, consistently sought additional help. Rose and Brenda sporadically sought help. Larry and Rose asked clarifying questions via email. During class, I monitored each group as they collected pro / con evidence, and wrote a policy brief advocating for a particular position. Then, small groups were to present their policy brief to the class.

Once again, my time frame was interrupted by events outside of class (Journal, 11/8/2012). The policy brief presentations finally occurred on November 13 following Veteran's Day holiday on November 12. The most detailed presentation was on immigration by Rose, Lois and Sue. While their position on the Dream Act was not consistent, they included some historical data on immigration policy. They did not come to agreement on whether or not all undocumented students should be allowed to stay in the U.S. Rose, Lois and Sue are all recent immigrants but came under family reunification. They emphasized "legal" immigration (Journal, 11/13/2012). Two other groups presented on abortion and the recession. Both presentations were incomplete. The remaining three presentations were on November 15 following a class trip to local sites related to the U.S. Constitution on November 14. Presentations lacked sufficient historical context to develop clear policy positions although students' positions on the issues were clear (Journal, 11/15/2012). I realized that I needed to continue to scaffold the reading and writing skills, highlight potential academic and disciplinary vocabulary to include and provide the historical context in order to prepare students to analyze data and evidence and prepare a presentation.

Lastly, my journal reflection focused on the need for additional class time. Lack of time was compounded by some students' inability or refusal to do work outside of

class or do assignments “last minute” (Journal, 11/16/2012). Procrastination was not unique to my students but at times it was pervasive. This was especially clear as I sat on November 20 at 5:30 pm in our classroom waiting for assignments from students. First marking period grades were due that evening by 11:59 pm. I received assignment from five students via email after 10:00 pm (Email correspondence, 11/20/2012).

Field Trip and Role-Play: Problematizing content with multiple perspectives

The next major preparation for the deliberations was a Constitutional Convention role-play. On November 14, 2012, we went on a class trip to local sites related to the founding U.S. documents. The trip was in conjunction with in an in-depth review of the Declaration of Independence and an introduction to components of the U.S. Constitution. In the December semi-structured interview, Brenda commented, “I have lived here all my life and I’ve never been inside these places” (Semi-structured interview, December 17, 2012). Rose also was influenced by the trip: “You always walk past _____. I never stop. For me, it was like wow, amazing. History is always around us” (Semi-structured interview, December 17, 2012). I hoped the trip would “hook” the students for tackling the complexity and implications of the U.S. founding documents.

After the class trip, to provide another perspective and gain a deeper understanding of the U.S. Constitution, students participated in a Constitutional Convention role-play from the Zinn Education Project (Bigelow). Students learned parliamentary procedure, read an excerpt from Federalist #10, and compared and contrasted positions of Federalist and anti-Federalists. The students also had to view the

U.S. Constitution through different narratives and perspectives. The students not only represented those invited to the Constitutional Convention - bankers, lawyers, merchants and plantation owners - but also farmers, workers, and enslaved African Americans.

The guiding questions during the role-play, “Who was included in the U.S. Constitutional debate? Who was excluded? Does it matter?” provided a focus while each group proposed compromises on five issues. The issues were (1) slavery including trade and representation, (2) congressional representation by state or population, (3) relief for debtors including farmers, (4) payment of soldiers from the War for Independence and (5) voting rights. Groups developed proposals based on their self-interests, such as bankers or farmers, and then attempted to gain support from other groups. Then, individuals voted on each compromise based on their assumed role.

The class Constitutional Role Play compromises were:

- 1) End the slave trade immediately (vote: 9-7)
- 2) Create a bicameral legislature based on population for both the Senate and House; everyone, included enslaved people, will count as a full person (vote: 10 - 6)
- 3) Debt forgiveness (a) Debtors will work for bankers at 1/2 wages until the debt is paid. A debtor may have someone else substitute as a worker. (b) No debtor will go to jail unless he refuses to work. The debtor can also lose 1/2 of his property (vote: 11 - 4)
- 4) Money owed to soldiers should be paid 10% on the dollar (vote: 8- 4)
- 5) Voting rights: males have to be 21 and property owners to vote
females have to be 18 and married to property owners to vote
enslaved African Americans may vote but their vote only counts as
1/2 a vote (vote: 9 – 5)

Lastly, students wrote their reactions to the role-play on blog posts. The blog posts questions were:

1. In your opinion, which social group won the class Constitutional role-play? Why? Give evidence from the class' decisions.
2. In your opinion, which social group or groups won the real Constitutional Convention in 1787? Give evidence from key constitutional decisions to support your position.

3. Describe the parliamentary process we used in class to "compromise." Was the process fair? Equitable? Why or why not? What did you like about the process? What did not you like about the process?

All students agreed the bankers and aristocracy benefited from the actual U.S. constitutional compromises. Only one student did not accept what other students consistently wrote about our class constitutional compromises: "the bankers won because they had the power" (blog post, December 7, 2012). Brenda added, "Bankers won because they had the ultimatums that applied to all groups" (blog post, December 9, 2012). The sole dissenter was Larry. Larry wrote, "I think the enslaved African Americans won the class constitutional role play. First, even though we did not get rid of slavery, we stopped slave trade. In addition, before the class's decision, even if slaves were free, we wouldn't own anything so that we would be thrown in jail because they cannot pay their debts. Now, our class decided that we would not be put into jail. Also, we get pay when we work. We also got some rights to vote."

A few students accepted the class' constitutional compromises but others expressed disappointment and loss. Nancy wrote, "I can't complain because even though I was a farmer it didn't really effect me because I had enough land to support my family and still have left-overs to sell" (blog post, December 7, 2012). Bill disagreed. Bill wrote, "It is not equitable to the slaves due to the lack of influence that they had during the meeting. They were not able to make any amendments of their own" (blog post, December 7, 2012). Sue also expressed her sense of loss as a worker. "Like I'm a worker and also a debtor. I lost my IOU that the government has to give to me long time ago; I lost my poverty or go to jail if I don't pay the debt. The wealthier get the most

benefit.” Another student, Jim, asked why the bankers won. “In the process I liked every groups gather together to against the bankers. I don't like the bankers made so many unfair decisions” (blog post, December, 7, 2012).

Most students believed the parliamentary procedure used in the role-play was fair. As Lois wrote, “It gave the same opportunity for everyone to make questions or vote. The amendments would be ratified according to the majority. I like when we did not agree with the amendment, we could reject and made another one which could satisfy most of the groups” (blog post, December 10, 2012). Sue “like when we discusses about the Constitution in class, it was fair when everybody was thinking base on their role and was not try to get all the benefit belong to them” (blog post, December 7, 2012). Again, Larry disagreed; he pointed out “the process is not equitable because different group possess unbalanced powers. Slaves had little influence” (blog post, December 9, 2012). Cheri also lamented the fact “the slaves didn't get to pass the amendments for freedom” (blog post, December 7, 2012).

Through the role-play, students articulated their belief in equity and fairness while recognizing the inequity and unfairness of the actual U.S. constitutional compromises. In the role-play, they attempted to provide more equity but also acknowledge the limitations. As Robert wrote, “the Constitution was made by the rich for the rich. We tried to make the process fair but it can't happen when there is so much unfairness back then” (blog post, December 17, 2012).

Following the role-play, I introduced another assignment to further problematize students' understanding of the U.S. Constitution. Students were to write an essay on whether or not the U.S. Constitution is a conservative document to benefit the founders or

a progressive document to benefit all the people. We had three sources or texts – the U.S. Constitution, an excerpt from Howard Zinn’s (1980) *A People’s History of the United States* and an excerpt from Thom Hartmann’s (2007) *Screwed: The Undeclared War against the Middle Class*, “The Myth of the Greedy Founders.”

Again, students divided into small groups and I “jigsawed” sections of the texts. Each group was responsible for presenting one section to the class. Students read the texts and used the SIOP annotation strategy we had used since September. Each group presented their section on chart paper. Then, as a class we outlined the author’s arguments. Next, using graphic organizers I created for the students’ essay, students began by writing a thesis statements and then outlining their essays. We devoted four class periods to the essay. I had reserved lap top computers for three days.

Unfortunately, like many assignments, only nine students out of 17 submitted an essay. Five of the students, Gail, Lois, Sue, Bill and Cheri, came after school for additional help. I spoke individually with each student who did not submit an essay. The responses ranged from lack of time to confusion (Journal, December 21, 2012). Of the nine students who wrote the essay, all included a thesis statement and supporting evidence from the role-play and the texts read in class. Five argued the U.S. Constitution was written for all people because, as Larry wrote in his essay, “the Founders sacrificed for the nation, and considered the needs of the poor.” In contrast, four students reflected Gail’s position that “ the U.S. Constitution was written to maintain the power of the few or the political elite because they wanted to establish a strong federal government, wanted to protect their economic interests, and wanted to exert their power unfairly over the lower classes.”

While there were flaws in the process and some students continued to not do work outside of class, problematizing the U.S. Constitution encouraged multiple perspectives, collaboration and listening to divergent points of view. Students reflected on their process to make the realities of the late 18th century more equitable but found it difficult. For most students, the framework of the U.S. Constitution sided with the established powers. While the role-play may have violated historians understanding of “presentism,” or interpreting the past by present day standards and values, students also appreciate the difficulty faced by the “Founders” in crafting a constitution. I hoped these understandings would continue when we interpreted the U.S. Constitution and evaluated evidence.

College preparation

Before the winter break, I invited Sandler High School Class of 2011 and 2012 graduates for a brunch and to talk about college with the students. Seven graduates came to class to give advice to the students. All of the graduates had been students in previous Advanced Placement U.S. Government classes. Their advice ranged from “take easy classes the first year” to “go the writing center” and “you have to study” (Journal, December 21, 2012). One college student advocated for extra curricular activities and talked about being fiscally responsible. They also shared memorable events including being surprised by the cost of textbooks, missing home and making friends.

When we returned from the winter break, I had students complete the second student questionnaire. Students commented on the graduates’ visit. Their remarks about

the visit ranged from being “hopeful” to providing clarity about “papers and tests” (Student questionnaire, January 2, 2013). Two students described the event as a “motivator;” “college is not just fun and games when it gets to taking education seriously” and “I need to think about time management now” (Student questionnaire, January 2, 2013). Although a few students wrote “it was alright” or “I knew everything,” the other students were appreciative. As Brenda wrote, “I like to listen about what happened with their freshman year. Also, their advice about preparing for our next steps in life” (Student questionnaire, January 2, 2013). Besides providing an opportunity to socialize, the event set a tone for the class. It did not transform students who were not doing homework nor completing assignments, but students referenced the visit throughout the winter. Their peers proved it is possible to attend a neighborhood high school and successfully transition to college.²⁴

Balancing academic skills, course content, and contemporary issues

Over the winter break, I outlined January through April and what we had to “cover” before the May Advanced Placement exam. The refrain, “I need to have more time,” appeared again in my journal entry (Journal, December 31, 2012). Were the reading strategies – annotating, jigsaw in teams, 5 w’s summarizing (who, what, where, when, why/how), Cornell Notes for homework, explicit vocabulary instruction - helping students understand the content? Did frequent use of Four Squares or “Take a Stand” get

²⁴ In December 2013 and May 2014, I invited graduates from 2011 - 2013 to meet and share with current juniors and seniors about college. Besides graduate from the Classes of 2011 and 2012, students from 2012-2013, Cheri, Bill, Brenda, Ivy, Nancy, Larry and Sue, returned to school and participated.

students to use evidence to support a position? Should I forget essay writing, something students certainly would need for college, and instead just assign blog posts and free response questions (FRQ) to prepare for the AP exam? Besides the academic skills, the overwhelming cloud hanging over the class was the required course content. Finding time to not only introduce the content but, more importantly, have ample time to grapple with the ideas, appeared to evaporate each month.

The month of January was interrupted with six days of our state’s standardized high school testing. Therefore, it was difficult to keep momentum (Journal, January 9, 14, 2013). The remainder of the semester focused on a central principle of U.S. government: Federalism. We examined the concept of Federalism including key Supreme Court decisions including Marbury v. Madison, McCulloch v. Maryland, Gibbons v. Ogden, Wabash and Pacific Railroad v. Illinois and U.S. v. Lopez.

To analyze Supreme Court cases, we used the following framework to summarize, understand and present a case:

<p><i>1. Name of the Case:</i> <i>2. Facts of the Case</i> (“The Story”) -Who was involved in the case? -What happened? -How did the lower Court decide on this case? (if applicable) <i>3. Issue(s)</i> -What was the legal issue(s) the Court had to decide?</p>	<p><i>4. Arguments for the Petitioner</i> -What were the arguments for the petitioner? -What precedents were cited? <i>5. Arguments for the Respondent</i> -What were the arguments for the respondent? - What precedents were cited?</p>	<p><i>6. Decision</i> -What was the decision of the Court? -What was their reasoning? -Were there any significant dissenting opinions? <i>7. Implications</i></p>
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After modeling how to summarize and present a case using *Marbury v. Madison*, students self-selected a small group. Each small group had to summarize one case, write the summary on chart paper and present the information. The topics included the Commerce Clause (Article 1, Section 3, Clause 3), judicial review, and enumerated powers. Students had definitions of the topics that we reviewed as a class.

After the presentations, I modeled finding similarities and differences between arguments presented in two cases. Then, with a partner, students completed the comparison / contrast process. Individually, students had a blog post assignment. In the blog posts, students were asked to:

Select two court cases related to Federalism. (1) For EACH case, briefly summarize the major issue related to Federalism (2 – 3 complete sentence) and write the Supreme Court’s decision (2 – 3 complete sentences) (5 points each; 10 points total), (2) compare/ contrast the Supreme Court ruling on TWO cases, (5 for comparison; 5 points for contrast; total 10 points) and (3) decide whether or not you agree or disagree with the Supreme Court’s ruling. Your agreement or disagreement should be based on your understanding of Federalism and the role of the Court (e.g. powers granted by the Constitution and judicial review). Make sure you are specific, clear and to the point. (10 points)

In my opinion, blog posts, besides providing a forum to continue a discussion, were opportunities to prepare for Free Response Questions (FRQs). Students had to respond to prompts, cite evidence, and analyze or synthesize information. Following individual posts, students were to respond to two peer’s posts and my subsequent questions based on their initial post. This encouraged students to dialogue with each other with limited teacher interference. After students posted, I asked either clarifying questions or posed questions to extend their analysis.

For the blog posts, students had summaries of each Supreme Court case from class presentations. They had a class-generated list of case similarities and difference. We had a large chart with division of power - federal, concurrent and state - that we had reviewed with a game. The blog post additionally required students to “Take a Stand” by agreeing or disagreeing with the Supreme Court’s ruling based on their understanding of Federalism.

Unlike previous assignments, all students posted on the blog at least one time; all but one student, Sally, responded to his or her peers. John, for example, started coming to my room during lunch to work. He always actively participated in class but had not done work outside of class. Lois and Sue came after school to use computers. Even Robert, who often told me he was bored in class, said the topics were “a little interesting” (Journal, January 17, 2012). The dialogue on the blog posts demonstrated that they understood the main ideas of the Supreme Court cases and how to analyze a Supreme Court decision vis-à-vis the U.S. Constitution. For example, Chris posted

“I agree with the court's decision in *Gibbons v. Ogden* because of the commerce clause of Article I, Section 8. This clause provides that Congress shall have the power to ‘regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.’ This clause would make the New York monopoly unconstitutional” (blog post, 1/17/2013).

Sandy also discussed the implications of a Supreme Court decision:

“I agree with the court's decision in *Gibbons v. Ogden* because this decision provided the federal government with the ability to regulate interstate commerce. However, the case added weight to the authority of the federal government over state's rights” (blog post, 1/17/2013).

Students also included disciplinary concepts and terms central to the arguments in the Supreme Court cases. In one section of Larry's post, he introduced the "necessary and proper clause" and considered the implications of enumerated versus implied powers:

"In *McCulloch v. Maryland*, even though the powers of government are limited, the government can use the "necessary and proper clause" to expand its ability of congress with no enumerated powers" (blog post, 1/17/2013).

Lois agreed with Larry by reiterating his interpretation of the "necessary and proper" clause and introducing the Supreme Court's argument of the supremacy of the people over the states:

"I agree with your position on the *McCulloch v. Maryland* case because the Constitution was the instrument of the people, not the states.... While the powers of government are limited, the "necessary and proper" clause was meant to enlarge the ability of Congress to carry out the no enumerated powers. Therefore, there is no way that the state have power to tax or destroy a Federal institution like (a) bank" (blog post, 1/17/2013).

Following Lois, I posted a response with a question for Larry in response to his original post. I wrote:

"The 'necessary and proper clause' is interpreted as giving the federal government powers that are not enumerated (written down) in the Constitution if they are "necessary" and proper or appropriate for the federal government. This enables the federal government to assume more power and take power from the states. Do you think there are situations where a state's policy should have power over federal authority? Should there be limits on the "necessary and proper clause?" (blog post, 1/18/2013).

Larry responded by demonstrating his understanding of a potential ramification of the "necessary and proper clause:"

"I think there should have some situations where a state's policy over federal authority and there should be limits on the "necessary and proper clause." Otherwise, the federal government will have absolute power" (blog post, 1/21/2013).

John expressed support for the Supreme Court regarding interstate commerce. John posted:

“In *Wabash, St. Louis & Pacific Railway Company v. Illinois* The Supreme Court took power from the states and gave it to the federal government. Don't “f” with the government.... The Supreme Court ruled that all states could not regulate their own taxes and they needed something to regulate it to keep trade running smoothly. It was unfair for Illinois to tax interstate goods more than intrastate goods” (blog post, 1/17/2013).

Three students agreed with John regarding the unfairness of the policy. I posted questions to John:

“Do you think the federal government should be the ultimate “decider?” Some people argue states should have more power. Some people don't like the federal government “imposing” rules on them. (As you wrote, don't “f” with the government.) What might have been alternatives in *Wabash... v. IL*? What are the affected states came up with their own plan?” (blog post, 1/18/2013).

John provided a thorough response reflecting his understanding of the origins of and need for federal oversight:

“The federal government should be the ultimate decider. Yes people do argue that the states should have power but throughout the court cases you see the government gaining more and more power because the states can't handle it. The *Wabash* case for example, Illinois was being greedy taxing goods transported throughout the state less for goods being imported. The states couldn't regulate their own taxes on traded goods so the government needed to step in and give them direction... Bottom line is if the states could be trusted to handle their issues then the government wouldn't need to step in and make all these rules” (blog post, 1/22/2013).

Students also expressed dissent with Supreme Court rulings. Sue disagreed with the decision in *United States v. Lopez*. Sue posted:

“I agreed with McCulloch vs. Maryland because I think that the bank was a federal institution so state cannot tax on the bank. I don't agreed with the decision of United State vs. Lopez because I think in that case it can use the "necessary and Proper Clause" since bring gun into school is a very serious issue’ (blog post, 1/15/2012).

Four students responded to Sue’s post by challenging her position on United States v.

Lopez. Brenda posted:

“I agree with the courts decision because the Lopez case didn't need the federal government to interfere with this case because it has nothing to do with ‘commerce’ or any sort of economic enterprise. Texas has its own laws dealing with guns so it doesn't apply to the federal government” (blog post, 1/17/2012).

Rose sided with Brenda while finding an area of agreement with Sue:

“I agree with the courts decision. First of all, a gun possession does not affect any interstate commerce especially the economic issue. However, I do agree with (Sue) that the court can charge Lopez because the "necessary and proper clause" gives the federal government more power” (blog post, 1/17/2012).

Nancy agreed with Brenda and Rose but also questioned why it was a federal case:

“I agree with the courts decision because Texas had its own rules with the guns so I didn't even see why the federal government got involved” (blog post, 1/18/2012).

Gail introduced a 1990 congressional act, the Gun Free School Zone Act, to challenge Sue’s position while also proposing an alternative means to acknowledge the potential danger of guns in schools:

“(Sue), I don't agree with you on the United State vs. Lopez because the GFSZ Act (Gun Free School Zone Act) is the act under the state law and it is supposed to be regulated by the School District. Even though bring gun into school is a very serious issue, it doesn't relate with the Interstate Commerce Clause that he was charged for. If he was charged for the bringing gun to school, it should be consider for the harming of public safety, and should be the federal issue” (blog post, 1/18/2012).

I then responded to Sue by posting two questions:

“(Sue), the Lopez case is complicated. Yes, guns in schools are a major problem. Why do you think the necessary and proper clause applies? How does bringing a gun to school impact interstate commerce?” (blog post, 1/18/2012).

Sue’s response included her prior knowledge and experience from her home country, Vietnam, while comparing the structure of government in Vietnam with the United States. Sue also recognizes, through the blog posts, she has a different understanding of the Supreme Court ruling in *United States v. Lopez*:

“In my own country, no one allow to trade or having gun, beside the policeman, and because of that, nobody die because of someone shoot them. It is a law in my country that no one can have the right to use gun. And first of all, my country is central government, so what ever the national government said the state need to do it, they have to do it, they cannot say they don't what to or it was unconstitutional and then don't do it. I was grew up in that environment so my political point of view was way much different than American political. I said " necessary and proper clause" because I think bring gun to school is need to be in the constitution. However, how I bring gun into school doesn't impact interstate commerce so it is impossible to be in the constitution” (blog post, 1/22/2012).

Later, Gail added to a question to her post:

“...there should be laws based on national guarantee for a degree of public safety. Because there should be limitation of gun across the nation that will also guarantee the usage of gun. Like the selling and owning of guns should be highly controlled by the federal government. And the owner of the gun should sign or make contract stating that to use it only for emergency purposes/ safety purposes. It should not be for the danger of the people. I think this is a very controversial issue to argue on” (blog post, 1/22/2012).

The series of blog posts demonstrate the students’ ability to understand the Supreme Court cases and Federalism while contemplating the impact of Supreme Court decisions. Supreme Court decisions have contemporary implications. Students bridged their prior knowledge with disciplinary language and content. Students wrestled with the complexity of aligning rights, laws and safety. Guns in our neighborhoods are not

hypothetical discussions. The students turned something potentially abstract, such as Federalism and the “necessary and proper” clause, into something very tangible by proposing solutions to balance safety with civil liberties.

The focus on Federalism continued in class when students participated in two “Take a Stand” activities. I incorporated “Take a Stand” as a precursor for deliberations (Vogt & Echevarria, 2008). “Take a Stand” required students to respond to a prompt and take a position based on evidence. “Take a Stand” also provided a means to look at different required topics while using case studies to encourage critical thinking. As a class, the first topic we discussed related to Federalism was interstate commerce and federal highway funding. The second topic, marriage equality, provided another opportunity to examine a controversial issue based on constitutional arguments, including the 14th Amendment’s equal protection clause, versus personal opinion.

First we viewed a video clip from Cable News Network (CNN) from December 12, 2012. In the five-minute video, Piers Morgan of CNN led a discussion about same sex marriage with U.S. Senators Lindsey Graham, John McCain and Joe Lieberman. The senators focused on whether or not the U.S. Constitution restricts marriage laws to states versus the federal government. The senators provided diverse perspectives. Then, we read the 14th amendment as a class and I asked them, with a partner, to consider the following questions:

“The 14th Amendment does not directly concern marriage. How, then, could it be interpreted as guaranteeing the right to marry? Limiting the right to marry?”

At the end of class, we did a “whip around” with each students quickly stating whether they believed the 14th Amendment guaranteed or limited the right to marry. All but two students believed it guaranteed the right to marry.

The next day, on paper, I distributed facts on marriage equality in the United States including a chronology of marriage rights, current marriage laws by state and data comparing marriage equality with divorce rates by state. Lastly, I included the Congressional Budget Office estimates on the cost of extending employment benefits to same-sex domestic partners of federal employees. The students divided into two groups - one to identify constitutional arguments in favor of state control over marriage laws and the other arguments in favor of federal control over marriage laws - and post their arguments on chart paper. Next, we used the “Take a Stand” strategy to respond to the prompt, “The issue of marriage equality should be decided at the federal level.” All but two students either agreed or disagreed. The most frequently cited constitutional argument was the 14th amendment’s equal protection clause. Students, while focusing on constitutional and Federalism arguments, also shared why they either supported or opposed marriage equality. Brenda focused on fairness while John and Nancy took a “live and let live” position. Rose said, “It is about individual rights.” One student, Gail, stated marriage equality conflicted with her religious beliefs. Overall, students were able to place the issue within the context of the 14th Amendment and Federalism (Journal, January 22, 2012).

Reflection on / Analysis of Semester I

During the first semester, I initially planned class exercises to build community. My goal was to learn aspects of each student's history and provide a sense of security and care (Ellerbrock, 2014; Noddings, 2005). Based on my teaching experiences, in order for students to take academic risks, to sit at the "academic table," a teacher has to work with students to diminish fear of each other and potential humiliation. With a class of students who had limited involvement with each other and layers of diverse experiences, "getting to know each other" required more than a few "ice breakers." In retrospect, the "ice breaker" activities began the community building process but were not sufficient. Finding areas of common interests was important but the groundwork of building community occurred in the shared in-class, and out-of-class, lived experiences.

During the fall of 2012, we followed the presidential elections and considered the implications of policy and current issues. Incorporating students' identities by asking, "Who is (North) American?" and the political spectrum quizzes introduced students to each other, and me, through multiple lens. The diversity of the class was more than ethnicity and first or home language. Their identities were far more complex and multifarious. Sharing beliefs and experiences provided me with a better understanding for planning background knowledge as we prepared for the presidential elections.

In addition, students created data through interviews on voting and analyzed issues they prioritized as significant to their lives. We visited local historical sites and entered the murkiness of the U.S. constitutional compromises. The local historical sites were celebratory of the founding of the U.S. but also gave them awareness of the importance of our city to a U.S. national narrative. The constitutional compromise role-

play forced students to grapple with developing a more just and equitable system in a society that was extremely economically and ethnically stratified and unjust. The trip and the role-play provided multiple perspectives and opportunities to learn about each other in different settings.

The question of who is included or excluded from participation and decision-making and how decisions should be interpreted became actualized in the role-play and deliberation. Unlike the actual Constitutional Convention of 1787, in the constitutional role-play, most late 18th century sectors of U.S. society were included. Students experienced how difficult and complicated it is to reach a compromise when the diverse interests and needs of everyone are considered. How do we create equity and justice when the structures and procedures are neither just nor equitable? By working in small groups, completing graphic organizers to clarify their positions and proposals, and then moving to the fishbowl structure for a deliberation, students were able to include their perspectives. Although a few students dominated the first fishbowl, in subsequent deliberations, I made adjustments to ensure more students spoke publically. Students also demonstrated their command of content and disciplinary language in blog posts.

The blog posts on Federalism demonstrate the students' ability to incorporate disciplinary content and language with their prior knowledge, points of view and identities into reasoned, academic arguments. The blog posts gave students the "think time" to plan and formulate a response. It was a more equitable format; students did not have to worry about pronunciation or quickly processing what they heard. Also, by requiring students to respond to peers, their interpretations and arguments were refined. Responses included disciplinary content language such as "enumerated powers, "inter-

state commerce” and “necessary and proper clause” and academic language such as “unconstitutional,” “monopoly” and “controversial.” Additionally, the students considered precedent set by historic U.S. Supreme Court rulings to interpret historical and contemporary issues. Simultaneously, students brought potentially esoteric debates “home;” issues of violence and inequity often circle their lives. They agreed to disagree on marriage equality. Rather than run from arduous issues, they struggled with the limitations of laws, such as federal gun laws, while raising practical, genuine concerns.

The academic and social growth I witnessed during the first semester was possible because the students, including reluctant and disinterested students, accepted academic challenges. While my frustration continued with students who either would not or were not able to do school work outside of class, during class, all students participated. Granted, this required carefully planning and supports. I had mapped out the semester but I also had to adjust my timetable, modify instructional strategies, and adjust layers of supports. Notwithstanding my attempt to “charge ahead,” the predictable and unpredictable school and student circumstances prevailed.

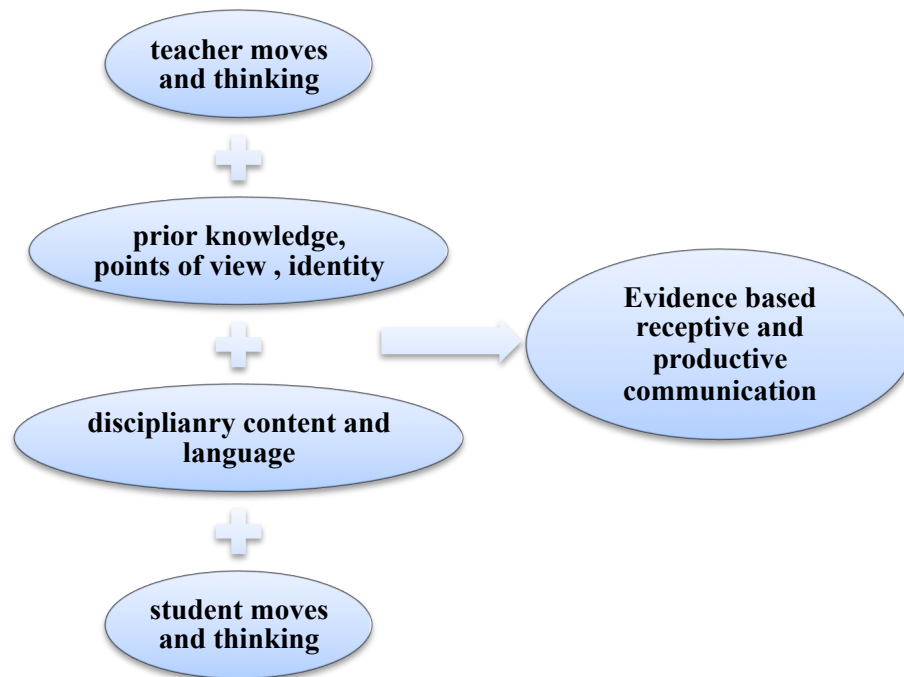
The scaffolding of instruction included “front loading” vocabulary. In retrospect, providing a list of terms, definitions and asking students to find synonyms, antonyms, draw a symbol or translate into their first language (L1), was not sufficient for students to internalize the disciplinary vocabulary. While it familiarized students with the vocabulary, the test was when it was used productively – in writing and speaking. For example, the first Free Response Question (FRQ) required students to consider beliefs or values associated with the U.S. such as liberty and individualism. Through writing, the definitions became more nuanced as students defined the terms based on their

experiences and points of view. In the blog posts on the presidential debates, disciplinary vocabulary was needed to discuss equity and fairness in the electoral process. When we moved to the first deliberation, the use of disciplinary vocabulary was limited to a few students. “Front loading” the vocabulary and having it visibly in front of students was not enough; they had to take ownership of the terms to comfortably use the language.

Students had more ownership of the terms when they created data for the interviews on voting. In this context, they had to apply the vocabulary to share their findings and conclusions about voting. Lastly, I had to continuously and consciously model the use of disciplinary language. Providing graphic and interactive supports, including sentence frames, sentence starters, charts and cooperative groups enabled students to demonstrate productive use of the disciplinary language.

During the first semester we also welcomed alumni and admired their college success and advice. Based on the student questionnaires, this event was a highlight of the semester. They spoke with friends, graduates of our neighborhood high school, who were succeeding at the college “academic table.” After reexamining my notes and student work, I was proud of the progress students made from September to February despite my frustrations with pacing, school interruptions and inconsistency in student out-of-school work habits. The depth of thinking, the cross talk in class and in the blog posts, demonstrated civic competence. They were incorporating prior knowledge and disciplinary content as evidence. Whether this was sufficient to prepare them for the AP exam was yet to be seen. What I had seen and witnessed was their willingness to move outside of comfort zones and add their perspectives at the “academic table.”

Semester II



Structures and Mechanisms of the U.S. Federal Government

Figure 14: Deliberations - Pedagogical and Content Process

If I view civic or democratic education through the lens of Banks (1993, 2004, 2007, 2008), AP U.S. Government is a course with a limited, if not a narrow, national narrative and conception of civic education. By rejecting a deficit model (Gonzalez, 2005; Moll, 2005; Nieto, 1999) for my “underrepresented students” and problematizing issues, I hoped the pedagogical and content choices I made turned the course more toward a “justice-oriented” stance (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). During the second semester, students displayed civic competence and, as defined by King, Newmann and Carmichael (2009), “authentic intellectual work,” by participating in a series of deliberations and subsequent blog postings to actively engage in research, dialogue and

decision making regarding complicated, and often controversial, issues (Hess, 2009; Rubin, 2012). According to Banks (2008), this form of civic education encourages students to work for justice and equity. They used their prior knowledge and acquired disciplinary content to collaboratively clarify their understandings and, in some cases, propose solutions. Their solutions were a composite of who they are - students with different life experiences and with “multidimensional” or “transnational” citizenship identities (Banks, 2004, 2007; Castles, 2004; Ninomiya & Cogan, 2011; Parker, 1996, 2003).

Using skills we learned during the first semester, I continued to scaffold the instructional process leading to the deliberations and blog posts. By providing a variety of supports, including modeling, disciplinary vocabulary instruction, annotating and summarizing multiple texts, academic writing and small group collaboration, to varying degrees students participated in receptive and productive evidentiary based argumentation (Pust, 2006; Taba, 1962; Vygotsky, 1978; Walqui & van Lier, 2010). Although not all students were comfortable expressing themselves orally, the blog posts offered an opportunity to state their position and receive a response from peers.

In this section, I intentionally showcase student voices in vignettes describing what occurred in class. In the vignettes, I note teacher and student moves. At the beginning of vignettes, I italicize a student’s phrase that either influenced or reflected on the discussion. I chose this approach because I want the reader to experience the students’ voices and interactions. The vignettes bring the reader into the classroom to experience the dynamic, delicate, and at times disconcerting and awkwardly juvenile yet maturing,

process that occurred during the deliberations. One student, John, who was active in the deliberations, confirmed the importance of hearing students' voices when he expressed:

“The speaking. That helped me learn the best because when you read it, it is like huh? But when you have to speak you have to summarize and you have to hear other people explain it. Group work. You don't have a choice. You do it. You go to sit in the center of the room and do it. Gets you speaking in front of everybody. That helped a lot. Ya. Learning. (semi-structured interview, February 1, 2013).

Following each deliberation, I reflect on and analyze what occurred. The reflection / analysis includes the deliberation, blog posts and other subsequent activities from my teacher/researcher perspective. With each deliberation, despite my frustrations, I am proud of their accomplishments and willingness to risk learning together. I share my challenges, frustrations, occasional heartaches along with opportunities and moments of exhilaration - fuel that resuscitates a teacher.

The Messiness of Grades

The second marking period ended similar to the first marking period. The emotional struggle of assigning grades felt like a tug of war between being honest with the students regarding their academic “achievement” or trying to keep everyone enrolled in the class (Journal, January 11, 2013). Seven students failed the first marking period. Six students failed the second marking period. Three students barely had a “D” average. Since five students earned an “F” two marking periods in a row, I offered them a “contract.” All five students - Sally, Chris, Bob, Robert and John - signed the contract. The students would receive a “D for the second marking period in exchange for agreeing to do the following during the 3rd marking period:

- Turn in ALL assignments ON TIME
- Revise any assignment needing improvement
- Complete test corrections
- Maintain a “C” or 70% average during the 3rd marking period
- Come for extra help before or after school as needed

I believed the requirements would not only help the students “pass” but also were good work habits and focused on learning through revision. Revising assignment and test corrections should improve students’ skills and content knowledge. Unfortunately, none of the students kept all components of the contract but all but one student turned in most subsequent assignments. They all stayed in the class.

Preparing for Deliberation One: Must Congress represent us to be representative?

Because of standardized testing during the month of January, my pacing for the course was disrupted. I had planned on beginning the first unit at the end of semester one with a deliberation on the U.S. Congress in mid January. Instead, we did not begin until the second semester. We began with the three branches of government; this included the U.S. Congress, Article II of the U.S. Constitution, incumbency and the demographics of the 113th Congress. First, to delineate the powers of the Congress, we read Article II of the U.S. Constitution. Again, students were in small groups and had one section to annotate and present. We focused on the role, qualifications and responsibilities of senators and representatives. Next, after I modeled reading a bar graph, “The Advantages of Incumbency,” students selected small groups to analyze and present additional charts and graphs on the impact of incumbency. This was not a new issues; it was included in the fall 2012 elections. Even so, we reviewed disciplinary terms associated with

incumbency - campaign financing, gerrymandering, franking privilege, constituent services, pork barrel spending - using the same vocabulary strategy. Then, students had to “Take a Stand” on incumbency. The prompt was “Should Congress enact term limits? Should congressional terms be limited to 12 years?” While students took a position, too few were interested in stating “why” they supported or opposed term limits. Fortunately for me, two students accepted the challenge. Bill argued against term limits stating “they need experience” (Journal, January 29, 2013). Brenda countered Bill with “they control too much. Twelve years is enough. They need to get another job” (Journal, 29, 2013). For the other students, the bell rang and they appeared relieved to escape my questions (Journal, January 29, 2013).

To further prepare for the deliberation on the U.S. Congress, the next day I began with the prompt “What is your image of a member of the U.S. Congress?” Students were to write adjectives and then share them with the class. I wrote their adjectives on the Promethean Board; the most common were “old,” “white” and “men.” I then showed the class images of the 113th U.S. Congress. While I did not ask for additional adjectives, Sue, Rose and John pointed out that there was more ethnic diversity than they realized. Next, I distributed charts with the 2010 U.S. ethnicity/race demographics and the demographics of the 113th U.S. Congress. I asked the students to compare the data with the demographics of the 113th U.S. Congress. Together, we looked at the charts and it was obvious that the 113th U.S. Congress, while more diverse than previous years, was still predominantly male and European American. I told students we would consider whether or not Congress should reflect the diversity of the U.S. They would work in groups to become experts on one characteristic, category or group and present their

findings to the class. Then, we would deliberate and the unit would conclude with proposals to improve Congress.

I had planned for two days for groups to read and present their data - January 30 and 31, 2013. I had gathered charts and graphs on characteristics of the new Congress: occupation, age, educational attainment, gender and ethnicity. Again, I modeled analyzing a chart on occupations of members of Congress versus the U.S. population. Then, students formed their small groups and each had a chart / graph to analyze and present. I asked if anyone was surprised. Sue responded about the number of women while Bob commented on the number of lawyers (Journal, January 30, 2013). Again, the bell rang and I reminded them we would continue tomorrow.

In addition, I prepared charts, graphs and articles with additional information on members of Congress. I divided the information into the following characteristics, categories or groups: women, wealth, age and religious affiliation, African Americans in Congress, Asian Americans in Congress and Latino/as in Congress. Each group would read, analyze and present to the class information on the characteristic, category or group. I included guiding questions and reviewed the annotation process. Again, this took more time than I planned so the deliberation was delayed to the following week.

Participating in Deliberation One: Must Congress represent us to be representative?

On February 5th, I began class with a 1.5-minute trailer for a video “Mr. Cao Goes to Washington.” Mr. Joseph Cao, a member of the 111th U.S. Congress, was the first Vietnamese American elected to the U.S. Congress. The video had premiered on

Public Broadcasting System (PBS) on February 3, 2013. Former Representative Cao was from Louisiana's Second Congressional District and represented a majority African American District. The questions for the deliberation were raised in the video trailer:

“When government reflects the demographic patterns of the society, it is said to exhibit "descriptive representation." Does the term descriptive representation apply to the U.S. Congress? Why or why not? If historical trends persist, do you think Congress will become more or less representative? Do you think it is necessary for Congress to "look" like America? In other words, must Congress *represent* us to be *representative*? Why or why not? Would you support measures similar to this one taken by the Indian national legislature – 1/3 of seats are for women? Why or why not?”

We also viewed a three-minute video clip, “Destination Casa Blanca: The Latino Voice in Politics.” The video, created in 2010 by the Hispanic Information and Telecommunications Network, included the fact that most newly elected Republican Latinos were from congressional districts with few Latinos with the exception of Florida. Following the video clips, I showed students a photo of the Congressional Representative for our school's Congressional District. In a congressional district where nearly 65% of the constituents are people of color, the representative is a nearly seventy-year-old European American man. Again, I asked students to consider must Congress *represent* us to be *representative*?

Students had five forms of scaffolding or supports: Cornell Notes homework, fishbowl process and structure, small groups, graphic organizer with notes and student created charts with their presentation notes displayed around the room. The Cornell Notes were homework from the textbook chapter on the U.S. Congress (See Appendix 2). The structure, a fishbowl process, was based on the previously undertaken by the class. The fishbowl process was on the Promethean Board; we reviewed the steps. I also re-

distributed a set of condensed guidelines based on *Choices Program: Guidelines for Deliberations*: speak your mind, listen carefully, help develop each other's ideas, stay open to changing your mind, don't personalize disagreements and don't be afraid of uncertainty. Despite my prodding, there were no comments or questions. Each group selected the first person that would represent the group in the fishbowl: Brenda, Sandy, Nancy and John took their seats in the inner circle. The other students were in the outer circle with their small group. Each student had a *graphic organizer with notes* from the previous small group presentations to use during the deliberation. The *charts* with notes from each group were also displayed around the room (See Appendix 3).

Deliberation One, Day One

To analyze the deliberation, I noted my teacher moves, actions or inaction to (1) frame and/or focus or re-focus the deliberation, and (2) direct or guide the students. Then, I noted student moves or thinking including (1) use of disciplinary content and language, (2) use of prior knowledge and point of view and (3) reflection on or inclusion of identity. The moves were not always clearly delineated; some students assumed a much more dominant role than others and, in retrospect, I may have missed opportunities to ensure everyone directly participated.

The deliberation, February 5 and 7, 2013, began when I framed the process by reminding students of the purpose of a deliberation:

“Remember, this not a debate. You're not trying to argue or win. You're sharing ideas. You're discussing the topic - whether or not Congress should reflect the general population by ethnicity, age, wealth, gender, and religion. You're sharing ideas and information on that so you can come up with a position based on

evidence. Our goal was to develop positions based on evidence and practice using disciplinary language related to the U.S. Congress and each group's area of expertise. Following the deliberation, you have an individual blog post assignment related to the deliberation and a team research project to develop a proposal to improve Congress. Who would like to go first?"

The deliberation on February 5th lasted for 18 minutes. In spite of my attempts to control or direct the structure and parameters of the deliberation, students problematized the issue by interjecting their prior knowledge and experiences with identity. Students infused their concerns that led to a less structured deliberation process but a richer discussion while I emphasized "citing the evidence" and covering the topics.

" I'm not being racist... I want it to be diverse. "

Initially, students followed my framing of the discussion but most did not reference evidence from their notes or their charts. One student, Sandy, included disciplinary content but the other students' evidence was based on their point of view and life experience. Nancy, who often reminded me she liked to make people laugh, began with a comment that was clarified by her peers. Students openly reflected on identity but expressed concern that voicing the need for ethnic diversity could be perceived as racist. Throughout the year, many students expressed that discussing, or even raising the reality of race or ethnicity, was somehow racist.

Sharer: Who would like to volunteer him or herself to go first?

Nancy: I'll go first. So, it should reflect the U.S. because the U.S. is awesome.

Sharer: What is your evidence? What is persuading you?

Nancy: The U.S. of A. is a growing, diverse nation and we accept all people and I believe all types of people should be in Congress. That's only fair. Your kind knows your kind best. (Laughter.)

Brenda: I agree with Nancy because the U.S. is diverse and because of that diversity we should have a more diverse Congress because our own ethnicity knows us best and what we've been through.

Nancy: Are you going? (Directed at other students in inner circle.)

Bill: I believe! (in a sarcastic tone and from the outer circle)

Sharer: Talk to each other not just me.

John: Yea, I agree. Because (pause) I was prepared to yell at someone and tell them they were wrong.

Brenda: He wants to argue.

John: I was arguing for it. Because it is good. Like Nancy, we accept a lot of different cultures. Yea, It won't be fair if it's all white people. But, yea, (laughter), everyone should be represented by their kind. Kind of racist but I think it would work out better for everyone.

Nancy: Exactly. No offense but why would you put an Asian in a majority Black community?

Sandy: From his (Vietnamese Congressperson from Louisiana, Representative Cao), point of view, he wanted to see things from his view. He couldn't represent Black people.

Nancy: Difference races have different ideas.

John: I'm not being racist.

Nancy: I'm just saying white people, you know, they've been around forever. You don't just want to see white people there. Black people have different ideas. And Asian people.

John: I just want it to be diverse.

Women leadership: From "Women are not naive" to "PMSing"

Again, I intervened, attempting to control the parameters or focus but not realizing my prompting would lead to sexist comments. My move to control the process backfired. We no longer were discussing whether or not Congress should reflect the general public but women in leadership. Initially, Sue and Sandy advocated for women in leadership based on point of view. Nancy shifted the tone; she appeared to use "punch lines" rather than evidence. The discussion included sexist notions of women.

Sharer: What about the other sectors we looked at - ethnicity and race but gender? class?

Sue: Women! Women, they have their own way of seeing things. Women are not naive. (from the outer circle)

Sandy: Yes! Women, they have their own way of seeing things.
Nancy: Coming from a girl (referring to Sandy), who thinks like a man. You can't argue this point.
Robert: Nancy, you think like a man too. (from the outer circle)
Nancy: That's why I'm not arguing the point.
Brenda: I think like a man too. (John begins intentionally cough.)
Sharer: What does that mean?
Nancy: Cause girls when they're PMSing they are going to blow things up. (laughter).

At this point, I interrupted Nancy. Students were yelling back and forth across the room. I asked a clarifying question attempting to re-focus the discussion on leadership and to question the sexist tone and content. My effort failed.

Sharer: Are you saying because females menstruate that disqualifies us from leadership?
Brenda: No, not that.
John: They can't control their emotions during that period, we'll have a nuclear holocaust will go on.
Nancy: Exactly. They have a pimple on their face and half of America is gone.

Voting and Identity: "All Black people voted for Obama."

Again, the room erupted as comments were yelled back and forth. I no longer had control. To reign in the class and re-focus the discussion, I returned to the prompt and redirected the group. I replaced the inner circle with four new students: Bob, Gail, Bill and Andy. Since everyone appeared to want to talk simultaneously, I suggested they go clockwise to allow everyone to speak. Instead, the students challenged my attempt to organize the process by moving from the discussion from the inner to outer circle. The students also returned the content to ethnicity and included voter participation. The tone was more thoughtful; the deliberation returned to citing evidence from disciplinary content and prior knowledge. My input was limited to encouraging participating. I also

mentioned other categories beside ethnicity but my comment was ignored. Whether or not a congressional representative needs to ethnically represent his or her constituents drove the discussion.

Sharer: Okay. Remember, one person talks at a time. I'll give you each a minute.

Bob: We're talking about females. Okay. (Laughter) No PMSing. (Laughter)

Sharer: Andy, do you want to say anything?

Andy: No, no.

Bob: I'll go. Asian American mostly vote democratic but small ethnic groups like Vietnamese, they vote for Republicans, the majority. So, I think it's beneficial for those groups to represent their own people. So everyone can get representation.

Gail: The Vietnamese guy (Representative Cao) represented African Americans. It is not really fair. They want the real African American people to represent them.

Bob: So you believe what?

Sharer: Please let everyone talk first. You don't only have to focus on ethnicity.

Bill: What, Bob, do you actually mean by that? I was thinking, not to be old fashioned, limit who can run for whatever region but majority population by ethnicity, religion, sexuality. Like he said, the area in Louisiana had 60% African American population but it depends on who the people vote for and who can represent them in Congress. It can be anyone of any race if they believe in them.

Brenda: Can I say something? (from the outer circle) If that is the case, people still feel more represented by their own ethnicity. A different race, I do believe in the back of their mind, oh, if so and so, then I'd feel more represented if he was from my ethnicity.

Bill: I'd like to agree with your argument.

Brenda: I was just saying to counter your argument.

Bill: I'd like to agree with you but also I'd like to say if they want to be represented by their people, they have to encourage them to run for office so they can vote for them.

John, who was no longer in the inner circle, interjected "All Black people voted for Obama." Sandy, Bob, Gail, Brenda, and Robert talked back and forth and affirmed Brenda's statement, "We can relate to minorities." Then, Bill again cited statistics to address the prompt and Sue responded by complicating representation and identity. New voices challenged the assumption that everyone votes based on ethnicity.

Bill: Basing it on population, the president should be white since 66% of the population is white. Still more white than anything else in this country.

Sue: Even though your race, the people around you, like Obama, he's African American but he lives in a white community and everything about him is white. (from the outer circle)

Bill: That's what I'm trying to say. Just because some people of your race don't have the same opinion as you.

Bob: Same with religion.

Cheri: It can be of any race. They can represent you. It doesn't matter about race. (from the outer circle.)

Bill: That's what I'm saying.

At this point, the process deteriorated and Bill, Bob, John, Brenda and Nancy yelled back and forth. I intervened by asking "What about the issue of wealth?" Again, my attempt to frame the prompt was rejected. Instead, Rose, who had not spoken, introduced evidence on voter participation and an analysis of a quota system for representation. Rose cited evidence her group had researched that directly responded to the prompt. The evidence was displayed on chart paper on the classroom wall. Rose stated:

"I want to talk about the participation. As you can see the chart right there, the Asian population is 5.1% but the percentage of the voters, the participation of voters is 2.5%. The participation makes the decision for the U.S. If the Congress is diverse than different regions and customs, they will have many different ideas. You can't stand on one. If you want to be like India, you can have a percentage. You can take two years for voting. It will make the U.S. develop slowly and affect economic problems. You should make the Congress more diverse. I don't say we don't let other people in Congress. We should make one side stronger than the other and make a point."

Rose, who infrequently spoke to the entire class, had changed the tone of the deliberation. After a very lively deliberation, there was a long pause. I interjected, "Rose introduced a lot of new ideas. Any response?" I waited but again, no response. I summarized Rose: "Her point is not just Asian American don't vote. The U.S. has low voter turnout in

general with the exception of some presidential elections. But voting or participating matters. Do you agree with Rose?"

Again, there was no response. Once more, I attempted to include another category: "Do you think people who have a lot of wealth can represent people with far less wealth?" Brenda said she did not understand; I responded, "The majority of people in Congress are much wealthier than the general U.S. population. Does it matter?" Bob added, "They are out of touch with the struggles people go through. They aren't able to understand. Problems and stuff." The bell rang. As students walked out of the room, I wondered if the deliberation process topics would stay with them or be lost in the clamor, hustle and commotion of the school hallways. My curiosity would have to wait (Journal, February 5, 2013).

Deliberation One, Day Two

"There's too much noise!"

We did not resume the deliberation until February 7 because February 6 was a professional development day; students were not at school. The second day provided twice the time, 37 minutes, to deliberate. After quickly setting up the room, I asked who had not been in the inner circle. Four students joined the inner circle: Sue, Jim, Larry and Rose. Jim and Larry had not spoken on February 5th. I reminded students we would start with students in the inner circle. On February 7th, the initial discussion

appeared disjointed; they were not talking with each other. There was more talking at each other. Sue raised the issue of gender. Jim called for ethnic diversity. Larry dismissed a need for religious and age diversity. Rose, like Sue, proposed quotas. Nevertheless, their points were targeted and raised the importance of diversity in representation.

Sue: Hey. I think there should be more women in Congress. Since $\frac{1}{2}$ of the world is woman. So, half of the Congress have woman.

Jim: Congress should be more diverse because different cultures, different people think different things. If only white people in Congress, can't see your own mistakes. Other people have different perspectives.

Sharer: Thank you.²⁵

Larry: It is not necessary for Congress to reflect religion or age because if a person is not in the same race, do a better job, he should be in Congress.

Rose: I think Congress should make a rule for how many by ethnicity. People from different ethnicities should be in Congress, set up a percentage like in college. They limit how many percentage of Asian and Black can be there.

Rose's claim about college admission based on quotas briefly shifted the conversation. The discussion moved out of the inner circle and between Sue, Rose and Brenda. Brenda, who was not in the inner circle, claimed colleges have quotas based on race. I added some colleges do consider race but not the U.S. Congress. Rose restated her position on quotas but added more categories: "They (Congress) should set some limits for age and different religions to make Congress more diverse." Sue responded with a provocative question: "What if like there is not enough people to fill the percent?" Rose provided a proposal as a viable solution: "It depends on participation. The percentage can be based on participation."

²⁵ During the deliberation, I thanked students for speaking. I use this strategy in class to recognize a student's participation without affirming, rejecting or questioning what they say. More often, I thanked the students during deliberations that either spoke infrequently in class or who, because of their discomfort with public speaking in English, were reluctant to speak. Jim rarely spoke in class.

At this point, the division between the inner and outer circle again dissolved. Jim, Larry and Rose said nothing. Bob took over the conversation and returned to the February 5th topic of women in leadership. Bob and Bill resumed sexist arguments while Brenda and Nancy challenged their assertions. I intervened and asked the group to refocus while trying to reframe the discussion by adding content. It was the first time a student, Bill, referred to his home country as a source of evidence. I also invited students outside of the circle to participate. Otherwise, I allowed the students to steer the conversation. A student, Gail, led the conversation back to the issue of representation.

Bob: This question is for Sue. You think there should be more women in Congress. Do you honestly think that women can make decisions? Be in a leadership position based on stats and reason?

Bill: I'd like to agree with Mr. _____ (Bob's surname) on this point.

Brenda: I'd like to disagree.

Bill: Emotional!

Brenda: We are more in tune with our emotions. What makes you think we can't run a country based on our emotions?

Nancy: We wouldn't be in debt right now if Hillary Clinton was in. Her husband

Bob: Obama's got this.

Brenda: Bill! Bill! Just because women are more emotional than men does not mean we can't run a country with our emotions.

Bill: I don't like men. I like women. Lets not focus on sexuality and focus on the arguments.

Sharer: Let's refocus. Bob and Bill are challenging whether or not women can be in leadership positions. Obviously, there is some precedent for women in leadership positions. In some countries women have been and are in the top leadership positions - president, prime minister. The U.S. is one country where that hasn't happened to date.

Bill: Well, I can actually vouch either way. Maybe in a scenario where it involves decisions or war, men will be less likely to halt and think about it. They'll just go in, run, and go out.

Nancy: Bush was about to blow up the Middle East after 9/11.

Bill: I can vouch for women in position that made economic progress. My country had one or two women presidents. So, I'm saying women can be good but women can be bad.

Sharer: Sally's hand is up. She hasn't spoken. Let her speak.

Sally: Women can rule a country.

Brenda: She has a point. I'm the same way so she has a point.

Sue: Quiet, Bill. You talk too much. There's too much noise!

Gail: Even if Congress doesn't mean she has to control everything. More representation from the women's side so she should be equal. Half the population is women.

After a flurry of comments about who was talking too much, Bill interjected with disciplinary content supporting ethnic and gender diversity. Also, like on February 5, Bill apologized for making what he assumed was a negative comment about white people.

“People are not being represented as should be. They are voting who is getting in there. The popular vote is getting in white people. Sorry, not to be offense. We are getting more women. Of course, not much women running. There is still majority of male victory.”

I responded to Bill, “It isn't offensive to bring up ethnicity or race. This is the U.S. Race and ethnicity are everywhere. I know I'm white. It's okay to say ‘white people’.” Bill laughed awkwardly while the other students were quiet. Instead of asking students to consider why they were uncomfortable mentioning “white people” in front of me, I reminded students what we had learned about diversity in the 113th Congress and the power of incumbency in elections. I then tried to frame the parameters by suggesting we look at another category: “Larry brought up age. How many of you would run for Congress at the age of 25?” Students went back and forth about who would or should run for office and vote. I attempted to reinforce the process of only speaking while in the inner circle and by suggesting students move into the inner circle. Seating shifted but my attempt to bring order to the deliberation quickly faded. I lost an opportunity to open the classroom space to a discussion about their discomfort with talking about “white people” in front of their “white teacher” – me. Maybe I was not prepared to lead the

conversation. I was caught off guard but should have foreseen the issue. As a “white teacher,” I should have invited the conversation in order to reassure the students our classroom was a safe space for essential conversations.

“Why should religion matter when you’re making laws?”

Once more, I focused the conversation on another category - religion. I reminded students the vast majority of Congress people are Christian while the U.S. population has more religious diversity. Initially, students used disciplinary content to consider if religion should have any influence.

Brenda: Why should religion matter? We’re talking about Congress. Law. Why getting religion into law?

Nancy: Would you elect someone, honestly, from that hell of a church? (I believe she was referring to Westboro Baptist Church.)

Bill: Religion doesn’t really matter.

Brenda: If its concerning the law, it shouldn’t matter.

At this point, an orderly dialogue unraveled; side conversations took over until Bob responded to Nancy’s comment that people side with their coreligionists. A rich, student driven conversation ensued. Identity took on a new dimension and, for the first time, a student referred to the U.S. Constitution and another student introduced possible origins of U.S. values.

Nancy: Religion does have somewhat of an influence. I know nobody in here would vote for an atheist.

Bob: No, that’s not true.

Brenda: Why should religion matter when you’re making laws?

Bob: Most of the stuff comes from the Bible. I'm not a Christian but like fundamental equality. From the Bible.

Sue: No. It's what you believe.

Bob: Justice is basically from the Bible. It's what we base our government on.

Bill: It's not only the Bible. Also the Founding Fathers wanted a secular country. Government and church are not the same. 1st Amendment. Right? Religion is being too intermingled with Congress. A government with too much religions will not create harmony. It will create chaos.

Bob: That hasn't happened though.

Nancy: That's because we have the majority Protestant and Christian. I can appreciate the law and religion thing. You wouldn't do something against your beliefs. You wouldn't be disgraceful to your people.

Bill: I wouldn't feel like a disgrace to my people. It isn't my people doing something against my beliefs. It is other people.

“Age. Definitely age.”

Next, I initially used a student's idea to reframe the deliberation. Instead, my framing move led to a teacher dominated deliberation. I responded to students' comment on whether or not a member of Congress could be arrested and this led to side conversations on religion and drug use. To reclaim the process, I reverted to “Take a Stand” and asked students to form groups.

“We digressed. If you think Congress should reflect the demographics of the U.S., go to the door side of the room. If you think it doesn't matter, over time Congress will be more reflective of the U.S., go to the window side of the room. If you are in the middle you still need a reason. Remember our example, in India $\frac{1}{3}$ of their Congress has to be women. Quickly. Just move your body to the window, door or middle.”

Almost all of the students stood in the middle of the room. Bob was the exception. I asked for their rationale and reminded them the school's Congressional District, the home District for most of the students, was represented by an older European American male. The next section was not as teacher directed but I continued to restate or clarify students' statements. It began with a dialogue between Bob and myself but the other students

quickly responded. My attempt to organize the process with “Take a Stand” turned into a “free for all” rather than an organized process.

Bob: I would propose that the leader of a group should represent that group of people.

Sharer: So, you would base representation on the population of a congressional district?

Bob: Right.

Sharer: Anything other than ethnicity?

Bob: Other than ethnicity? Age. Definitely age.

Sandy and Nancy now agreed with Bob regarding age. Both claimed, “older people don’t understand younger people.” This led to more back and forth conversations. In another attempt to provide order or focus, I turned to the vast majority of students who remained in the middle. “Is your argument, yes, Congress should reflect the U.S. but you have reservations? Why are you in the middle?” The conversation continued on age with one student, Bob, providing disciplinary content, but most comments disparaging older people. Was it ironic, coincidental or deliberate that students were comfortable mocking older people in front of me, a 51-year-old woman, but not comfortable mentioning “white people?”

Sally: I need more information. But, I think Congress should have to reflect us cause the majority are white men and some females and I don’t think that is equal. They don’t represent young people.

Nancy: Yea. They forget when they was young.

Brenda: Some of the things like there could be like a percentage of different ethnicities. But age is a different story.

Nancy: When you get older you kind of lose it.

Sue: We need to be young!

Nancy: Why can’t it be middle age? Like 30?

Bill: 30 is the minimum requirement for the Senate.

Brenda: But, it’s like 30 or 35. You’re middle age.

Robert: Once you turn 45 you’re an old bag.

“I don’t really know which side.” “It’s okay.” “...It will get better and better.”

Following back and forth comments on what defines middle age and more disparaging comments about “old people” like myself, Robert redirected the conversation by being forthright.

“Honestly, I just want to say, both sides don’t really affect me much so I’m in the middle. Honestly. To be honest, besides this class I’m not really into politics. It doesn’t really affect me. I don’t really know which side.”

I thanked Robert for his honesty. Cheri responded, “I don’t know but everything will work out. It’s okay. In time, it will work out.” Gail, who had not spoken recently, returned the deliberation to participation and prior knowledge from her home country.

“There should be women in the Congress but if they don’t run, you can’t vote for them. This is like good. It’s relations. It’s like with President Obama. I think, like, religious people don’t like gay marriage. So we don’t agree. It’s not good. But, it’s not a problem in the United States. Just like in my country, like, everybody has to be Buddhists, but the United States, the more controversial the problem is solved. I think it would be good if the majority religion is in the Congress so they can decide.”

I thanked Gail and said turned to Chris. I said, “Chris, you have the last word.” Chris, who had not spoken and generally did not participate in whole class discussions, added a new argument with an analogy. Based on his point of view, he rejected identity and diversity for practicality and affirmed Cheri’s comment; in time, things will work out.

Chris: For example, if you are going to build a house would you rather hire someone of your race that doesn’t do a good job or someone of another race who does a good job? That concept, you can apply it to politicians. People are more diverse in the U.S. and it will get better and better.

Sharer: Thank you, Chris.

Sue: Can I have the last word?

Chris’ analogy reflected his career goals; he hoped to be a contractor.

Nevertheless, Chris did not have the last word. Sue expressed being overwhelmed with

“so many ideas” and I summarized, “there are diverse ideas here (in class) just like the U.S. and the world.” Bob and Bill noted the class was often split by gender but Bob also emphasized ethnicity noting “its is like 60% - 67% Asian in this class.” Nancy, the only European American students, chimed in “it’s like 2% white.” Once again, conversations flowed back and forth with some students sitting in silence while others disagreed about class demographics. Again, there was no apology for disparaging comments about age and gender; even so Bill and John apologized for mentioning “white people.” Did I miss an opportunity to open the conversation to identity and ethnicity? As a “white person,” and especially as a “white teacher,” was I capable of facilitating the conversation? Sue did not give us much of an opportunity to examine race. Sue had the “last word.”

Sue: Who is incumbency?

Nancy: Something when you get elected.

Sharer: Incumbency is when you win an election and keep your position because of connections, money. Once someone gets elected, it is must easier to get reelected. Many people in Congress and City Council are there for decades.

Sue: Oh. Yea. Yea.

Then, the bell rang. Once more, students quickly left the room as I stood wondering if our deliberation had provided a safe space to discuss sensitive, and perhaps awkward, issues. Who was more uncomfortable or unprepared? The students? Me? (Journal, February 7, 2013).

Deliberation One blog posts

The next step in the process was the blog post. Since the deliberations did not conclude with a shared proposal or position, the blog posts offered an opportunity for students to continue the discussion and clarify their positions. The blog posts have a two-

step process: post responses to prompts and respond to two peers. Unlike some of the previous blog posts, I did not add a third component to respond to my questions in response to the students' posts. I chose to limit my comments to the teacher evaluation rather than join the posts. There were two deadlines for posting: February 8 and 11, 2013. For the first time, I included a student's self-evaluation rubric as well as a teacher evaluation rubric. I wanted to see if a self-evaluation would improve the quality of the posts (Journal, February 3, 2013). Each post should be "clear, complete, and convincing;" these were categories I had used in previous rubrics (See Appendix 4). Just like the Advanced Placement U.S. Government exam, students were not evaluated on grammar, usage and spelling. Although I did note on student's individual evaluations if an error was repeated, I did not delete points but intended it as feedback to make them more aware of the grammatical, spelling or usage error.

All but one student, Brenda, wrote a blog post. Three students, Andy, Sandy and Sally posted late. The assignment was:

Class deliberation - Should Congress "look" like the U.S.? Must Congress represent us to be representative of the U.S. public? Why or why not?

Due by Friday, February 8, 5 pm:

- 1) State your position on the above questions.
- 2) Give evidence from the class deliberation to support your position. You need at least 3 reasons (evidence) for your position.
- 3) What did you learn from the deliberation process about the topic and/or about developing evidence? (Be specific. List at least 3 things you learned.)

Due by Monday, February 11, 5 pm

- 4) Respond to two peers. Tell your peer either (a) how their contribution to the deliberation helped you formulate a position, (b) how their blog post helped you formulate a position OR (c) anything else they contributed to your small group or the deliberation.

I was interested in how the deliberation informed their position, how they used evidence to support their position as well as incorporation of academic and disciplinary language and concepts. Students referenced the deliberation, including statistical evidence, and peers' comments in all of the blog posts. Overall, students wrote Congress does not have to demographically reflect the United States but a diverse Congress is at least helpful, if not necessary, in order to be more aware of and represent the people's concerns. Sandy, for example, argued, "I think that Congress shouldn't not have to look like the U.S. But the members of Congress should be different gender and a different ethnicity" (blog post, 2/13/2013). The most frequently cited evidence, that Congress was becoming more diverse, was the increase in women and African American representation - the 113th Congress was 20% female and 17% African American - despite the power of incumbency. There was disagreement on whether or not a range of age groups is necessary. No students supported a quota system to determine representation.

Jim was the first to post. Jim defined the role of Congress and, like most students, would not require diversity in Congress but believes it is beneficial and necessary to include members with different points of view:

"Congress do not have to look like the U.S. Congress (because it) is a legislative where senators held to discuss/make policies and laws. What they said and done have to serve for the nation. In order to reach this goal, congress should become more diverse. Different gender and race should have voice in the Congress... Different people have different experience and are born in different culture. They have different perspectives that Caucasian does not have which gives Congress more choices while they making decisions" (blog post, 2/7/2013).

None of Jim's classmates responded to his post but his argument was similar to other students. Chris, for example, added to Jim's definition of government and reiterated what

he stated in class, “The only goal for the government is to make laws and policies to keep everyone happy. We do not need a certain amount of women or race for them to reach that goal. But having a more diverse Congress brings more to the table for discussion” (blog post, 2/11/2013).

Some students advocated for a meritocracy. Bob’s sentiments, “diversity isn’t really important as long as you have well qualified people” (blog post, 2/11/2013) resonated with other students’ posts such as Andy’s, “As long as they (are) qualify with all the requirements to become Congress and people voted them, it is really not a big deal when it comes to race, religion, and gender” (blog post, 2/7/2013). Larry concurred: “In my opinion, the Congress should “look” like the U.S. because the winners should base on their abilities other than the percentage of each race” (blog post, 2/8/2013). Larry continued with a need for Congress to “willingly” represent the public and a need for more religious and class diversity. Nancy also expressed the need for Congress to follow the public’s lead: “They (Congress) know what they're going into so they shouldn't get all into what they personally believe in, they should do what's best for the people” (blog post, 2/9/2013).

Other students argued that a leader can be supported by and represent people of different ethnicities or races. According to Cheri and Lois, if voters vote for candidates who represent their position on issues instead of race, religion or gender of the candidate, the member of Congress can represent them (blog post, 2/8/2013). Sue, for example, did not assume people of the same race necessarily share the same beliefs. Sue posted: “People with the same race may not have the same idea on how things should be done. I think a “clever” voter will vote for who they think will best represent them in the

congress, not just because that person share the same race with them” (blog post, 2/10/2013). John based his position that Congress does not have to “look like” the people they represent based on two pieces of evidence. He wrote,

“In the presidential election Obama received 77% of the Asian vote. Obama clearly represented most of the Asian population despite the fact that he is of a different race. Hispanics are growing in number in congress but are being elected by whites” (blog post, 2/11/2013).

Robert challenged the position that race and ethnicity do not influence one’s ideas. He wrote: “I do not agree with your statement that says that most people of the same race won’t have the same idea on how things should be done. I believe that most people of the same race will indeed have similar ideas on how things should be and possibly have a similar way of thinking. However I mean the majority not all. Very clear and strong post even though we disagree” (blog post, 2/12/2013).

Additionally, while not requiring Congress to be reflective of the U.S., students added clarifications and raised concerns such as potential conflict, discrimination and the power of incumbency. Rose wrote, “ Congress should "look" like the U.S., but not exactly like the U.S.” based on a quota (blog post, 2/13/2013). Rose countered Chris’ position that Congress’ role is to only make laws and policies. She posted:

“Even though the Congress is used to make laws and policies, gender and ethnicity do make influence to it. According to different ethnicity and different culture or religion, people have different thoughts and idea about how to rule/make laws, and we need people who can represent us---women or Asian, to release our voice” (blog post, 2/12/2013).

Rose argued without more diversity in age, gender, and ethnicity, the Congress could not be inclusive. She raised the same concern she raised in class about participation and concluded without more diversity, there could be “ethnic conflict.” Bill raised the

concern of potential discrimination if Congress was required to mimic the demographics of the United States. Bill posted,

“It is against the principle of a man's freedom to pursuit of happiness as well as taking a man's right to express his opinion. It can also be seen to be discrimination of race, gender, or sex by restricting certain congressional positions for individuals of a certain group” (blog post, 2/8/2013).

Nevertheless, Bill noted “It would be good for the Congress to be representative of the populace but it is the decision of the voters to choose who will represent them” (blog post, 2/8/2013). Bill acknowledges the composition of Congress is changing but lamented the lack of religious and racial diversity. Bill concluded: “There is also the incumbency advantage that I noticed that the seats are held by mostly the same people all the time. This last one may prove itself a problem in the future” (blog post, 2/8/2013).

Lois provided a hopeful description of the 113th Congress and belief in the voters by citing disciplinary content evidence:

“Another evidence is the members in Congress are not only white; there are 45 African Americans in Congress and 12 Asian Americans and 38 Latinos. The Congress will break religious barriers as well. The Senate will feature its first Buddhist, and the first Hindu will join the House. There will be 100 women in Congress including 20 women in the Senate. The new faces will make Congress more like the U.S. population. Congress represents the diversity that exists in communities all across the country. This has happened without laws that force people to vote for only people from their same race, gender or religion” (blog post, 2/8/2013).

Lois' statement reflects a belief in the electoral process and voters. Later, in response to a peer she wrote “If I get to vote, I will vote on the candidate's policy and not his race or wealth” (blog post, 2/10/2013). Chris also affirmed the electoral process: “Congress will gradually adapt to the environment by itself and not out of force” (blog post, 2/11/2013).

Another feature of the blog posts is how students took care to support and affirm each other. For the response to peers, students were asked to note how their peers helped them formulate their position or other contributions to the deliberation. For example, Chris wrote, “The point you made in the deliberation has helped me formulate my position” (blog post, 2/08/2013). Larry noted “Andy, your blog have helped me to decide that Congress must represent us...as long as have the ability” (blog post, 2/11/2013). Simultaneously, a few students took care to acknowledge each other’s position while also raising new questions or challenging an aspect of the post. Namely, Rose challenged Chris’ faith in Congress’ ability to “keep everyone happy” regardless of its ethnic and gender composition (blog post, 2/11/2013). Rose posted “gender and ethnicity do make influence... people have different thoughts and ideas about how to rule / make laws, and we need people who can represent us...” (blog post, 2/12/2013).

Although the blog posts were neither as dynamic nor lively as the deliberation, they provided a forum to continue the conversation and reflect on each other’s ideas along with disciplinary evidence. Students clarified their positions. Terms such as “participation,” “diverse,” “equal,” “perspectives,” “representation” and “representative” entered the dialogue. The posts were formal and academic. Once more, I considered if the blog format was preparing them for the AP U.S. Government exam. Was I finding a balance between “test prep” and “authentic intellectual work?” (King, Newmann, & Carmichael, 2009). Were the blog posts just another assignment or were they integral to the deliberation process? (Journal, 2/13/2013).

Creating proposals: Reforming Congress

During the following two weeks in February, students developed proposals for reforming Congress, viewed and reacted to President Obama's State of the Union address and, based on issues raised in the State of the Union address and fall 2012 elections, selected an issue to research for the writing of a congressional bill. Once again, students self selected group members to create proposals on reforming Congress. I selected the categories for reform:

- Congressional term limits
- Size of Congress
- Gerrymandering / Redistricting
- "Pork barrel spending" / earmarks
- Campaign Financing / Public financing of elections

I provided students with pro / con background information on each category. We reviewed disciplinary vocabulary including constituent(s), incumbency, gerrymandering, campaign funding, constituency service, franking services, and pork barrel and earmarks. Then, in their small groups, students completed a graphic organizer summarizing the arguments based on (a) evidence or data, (b) arguments (rationale) and (c) proposal (what should happen.) At the time, I believed focusing on the evidence and arguments from the background materials would enable them to develop a proposal (Journal, February 7, 2013). I also thought this format would prepare them for the Free Response Questions (FRQ) on the Advanced Placement exam.

Each team developed a proposal they wrote on chart paper and presented their proposal to the class (See Appendix #5). The following are the students' proposals:

Size of Congress

Congress needs to be bigger. We need more representatives to be helpful. This means they must stay in contact with their constituents. Congress should also be more local. They have to live in their state instead of Washington, D.C. Therefore, Congress should increase from 435 members to 600 members to better represent the people. They can communicate online.

Campaign Finances

Candidate will receive public funding and collect from \$5 to \$100 per donor. Public funding will increase so Congress doesn't depend on private donors.

Gerrymandering / Redistricting

A commission will be created composed of members of the two major parties and selected independents. To end gerrymandering, the independent redistricting commissioners will conduct several public hearings throughout the state to hear proposals.

Term limits

We propose that the Congress members should have limits so the incumbency rate isn't as high as now. For the Senate, two terms of 6 years each and for the House, two terms of four years each. They need to limit funding for travel and their employees to \$750,000 versus \$900,000 they get now. And, we will limit franking to six months before elections so they can't try to influence the voters with propaganda.

Pork barrel spending / Earmarks

Unnecessary spending should stop. Money should be used for humanitarian projects that benefit the people versus Congress' friends. There needs to be restrictions on the amount of money Congress has to spend. We need disclosure requirements on all Congress funded and sponsored projects.

After each proposal was presented, students asked clarifying questions and commented on the proposals for 20 minutes. I tape-recorded the process in order to focus on the process versus taking notes. Clarifying questions ranged from defining terms such as "humanitarian" and "for people's well being" to how often Congress members would need to be in Washington versus at home. The group clarified Congress would spend the

majority of time at home and community through “Wi-Fi - you know, online.” There were also concerns raised about equity of representation and partisanship - “they have partisan points of view and nobody agrees.” Students questioned how electronic communication could bring together Congress people who held extremely different positions on issues. Students were concerned that small states have more representation per capita than large states. They wanted to ensure representation was equitable.

Following the presentations and clarifying questions, I asked students how we should conclude the process. Bob suggested we vote on each proposal. Gail said all of the proposals were good; why not accept all of the proposals? I took a straw poll and most students agreed all of the proposals were good (Journal, 2/14, 2013). This left the activity “hanging;” I did not have a next step plan such as writing letters to members of Congress about the proposals or contacting local organizations who work on issues such as gerrymandering or campaign finances. That said, students incorporated the disciplinary vocabulary and understood current problems related to Congress. They were able to propose changes based on evidence. While some changes would require a congressional amendment, such as term limits, other proposals were possible including challenging gerrymandering. In retrospect, rather than use this as an opportunity for students to participate in civic action, I let my concern for pacing and coverage aligned with AP U.S. Government rule (Journal, February 15, 2013).

Creating a bill: The U.S. Congress

The last in-class activity on Congress was on “how a bill becomes a law.” We had reviewed the congressional bill making process at the beginning of the unit on Congress. We watched *Schoolhouse Rock’s* “How a bill becomes a law” and simulated the process through a short role-play to identify key steps in the process and the roles of the three branches of the federal government. This assignment was an occasion to apply what they had learned about Congress (See Appendix 5). Students would work in pairs, research an issue, search for previous legislation related to the issue and write a bill to present to the class. Four teams were members of the Senate and four teams were members of the House of Representatives. Since there were 17 students, one person had to work alone. Bill volunteered and chose to be a senator. Students self selected their partners.

Students adopted an issue from the fall 2012 presidential campaign or from the February 12 State of the Union address. The issues selected ranged from narrow to broad, domestic to international. They included taxation and the national debt, unmanned aerial vehicles or drones, torture and Guantanamo Bay, funding political campaign, college tuition, energy policy, gun policy, marriage equality, and cyber hacking. Students selected timely and personally important issues.

On February 22, a Friday, I introduced the assignment, explained the process, and had students select a partner and their issue. Students would have three class periods to work with their partner on the assignment and ask for my assistance. During the week of February 25, I also administered an objective test on the U.S. Congress and a Free

Response Question (FRQ). Originally, I planned for students to have students select two of their proposed bills, one for the Senate and one for the House of Representatives, to simulate the bill making process. We would replicate the process and they would vote on the bills.

To scaffold the process, I prepared a series of graphic organizers to systematically “walk” students through the research and writing process (See Appendix 5). After selecting their issue, students would use two sources, a book we had used in the fall, and a previously used web site, ProCon.org. Students would not need as much time for research; instead they could focus on the content of the bill. The graphic organizers included (1) a summary of the text’s chapter related to their issue, (2) “notes” of pro and con positions on the issue, (3) research on actual Congressional bills related to the topic with the Library of Congress THOMAS website, (4) a summary of four media sources on the topic with links to a variety of mainstream and alternative media sites listed on our class web site, (5) a chart to summarize the bill making process in either the Senate or House of Representatives, (6) a chart to identify two interest groups working on the issue with links to two websites on interest groups, and (7) a template for a bill.

Besides three class periods, I stayed after school three days and invited students to come for additional help. Two students, Sue and Cheri, came on Wednesday. Cheri was born in the United State to immigrant parents. Sue had only been in the United States for a few years. Neither had any previous class about U.S. government or the U.S. political process. Their topic was college tuition. Most of their questions were about college costs, possible sources of funds, and why college was so expensive. I did not have answers to satisfy all of their questions but we were able to find information in both the

book and website and organizations working to make college more accessible. After working together for one and a half hours, they were able to narrow their proposed bill to increasing federal grant funds and decreasing the interest rate on college loans (Journal, February 27, 2013).

The bills were due on Friday, March 1. I read the bills over the weekend and was disappointed. All of the bills needed to be revised. While all but one group used the template to write the bill, the content was sparse. For example, Sue and Cheri's initial bill did not include a title or summary of the current situation and need for their proposed law (See Appendix 6, see "Preamble"). They did not include "Section 4" on funding and enforcing the legislation. They also skipped "Section 5" or penalties for non-compliance. More importantly, they assumed the legislation would be funded and enacted by a special interest group rather than the government. After reading all of the proposed bills, my lesson plans for Monday, March 4 had to be changed (Journal, March 2, 2013). Therefore, over the weekend I had to not only revise my lesson plans but also try to determine what went wrong.

Initially, I wondered whether or not they needed to understand the congressional legislative process. Yes, they needed to understand the process for the Advanced Placement exam but was it essential for civic competence? At that point, I was not going to resolve the larger issue. I focused on the scaffolding process I had created and what was missing. Should I have started by explicitly reviewing disciplinary vocabulary from the template? Was the vocabulary in the sources too unfamiliar? Should I have narrowed the topics? Did they need additional in class time? Had I not explained the

difference between public interest groups and the Congress? I had to determine where, once again, things went wrong (Journal, March 2, 2013).

On March 4, rather than selecting two bills and simulating the congressional voting process, we worked on revising their bills. I projected the template on the Promethean Board and asked the students, with their partner, to look at my comments on their assignment. We went through each section, step by step, and I had them note what they had done successfully and what needed to be revised. Again, I offered to help anyone after school and asked them to submit their revised bills by Thursday, March 7. While the revised bills showed improvement, we never completed the process by simulating voting on a bill. Instead, I provided additional feedback on their revisions and, as always, allowed anyone to resubmit the assignment. Sue and Cheri revised their bill twice. They included background information on the cost of college, financial aid and student debt as justification for the legislation. They corrected the proposal on the role of the government versus interest groups and added an enactment time frame. All but two groups, Robert and Bob and John and Sally, revised their bills. On paper, six of the eight groups, and the one bill done individually by Bill, appeared to understand the components and the legislative process. Nevertheless, because of time restrictions, we did not discuss the proposed bills as a class. We did not have space to share their passion for the issue, why they had selected a particular solution, and what they learned about the role of legislation and interest groups in the lawmaking process. Instead, after I reviewed the remaining weeks in the marking period, I determined we had to move onto the next branch of the federal government, the executive branch (Journal March 4, 2013).

Reflections on / Analysis of Deliberation One

Deliberation one included a week of preparation, two days of deliberation, a blog post, a proposal to reform the U.S. Congress and a student created congressional bill. A goal was to seamlessly incorporate the AP U.S. Government requirements on the legislature into the deliberation process. In addition, the congressional bill offered the potential for civic action. Although the students chose an issue for the proposed congressional bill, the process dissolved under time constraints and insufficient scaffolding of skills and content background knowledge. I also chose to “move ahead” on the AP U.S. Government syllabus rather than create space for civic action.

On day one of the first deliberation, 12 or 17 students participated orally. I provided a framework for the fishbowl deliberation but, in general, it was, ignored. The students physically and verbally moved between the inner and outer circle and focused the conversation primarily on ethnicity or race and gender. Initially, most comments were based on point of view rather than disciplinary content. Point of view led to identity. An outsider may have viewed the deliberation at chaotic. Also, initial comments on women in leadership were offensive. There was laughter and yelling. In retrospect, the students addressed the prompt, included multiple sources of evidence - disciplinary content, point of view and identity - and concluded by raising critical issues including voter participation, identity politics and understandings of citizenship. For the students, citizenship and identity are intertwined; it is not a citizenship based solely on shared values but also on a multi-faceted identity and relationships (Banks, 2004, 2007; Castles, 2004; Ochoa-Becker, 2007; Parker, 2002; Parker, Ninomiya & Cogan, 2011). Day two would amplify disagreements while providing more space for clarification.

On day two of the first deliberation, two students were absent, Andy and John. Andy rarely spoke but John often participated and was generally animated. While all students other than Lois participate orally in the deliberation, five students dominated the deliberation. My attempt to provide a framework with a fishbowl was again ignored and I reverted to an alternative framework, “Take a Stand,” to try to force the students to declare a position based on evidence and provide some closure. While students physically took a position in the classroom, all but one student stated they were “in the middle;” additional clarity did not occur until the subsequent blog posts.

During the deliberation, most students’ comments were based on point of view and prior knowledge. I provided most of the disciplinary content. Identity did surface related to age; students assumed older people could not understand them. Yet again, disparaging comments were made regarding women and also “older people.” In contrast, when a student referred to “white people,” they apologized for interjecting race. Were students apologizing because other than Nancy, I, the teacher – the authority figure - was the other “white person” in the room? Before the deliberation, should I have assumed my “whiteness” would disturb the flow of the deliberation more than my age, gender or authority? Did my “white privilege” lead to my ignorance? Or, were they conditioned to apologize for injecting race in school? (Journal, February 8, 2013).

If I had conducted the semi-structured student interviews, or at least listened to the audio recording, I may have been better prepared. In the semi-structured interview on December 17, 2012, about six weeks before the deliberation, students initiated a discussion on ethnic perceptions and divisions in the school and community. This topic was not part of the pre-planned questions. Nevertheless, the discussion may have set the

stage for students' comments during the deliberation. In the semi-structured interview, Sandy, an African American, shared how she felt different from her African American peers because "kids don't think they can achieve. But our family is totally different. My Mom, you can do whatever you put your mind to." Cheri, a first generation Cambodian American, admitted, "I don't understand African Americans. The wild kids. Kind of difficult when you are the quiet one." Brenda, a first generation Laotian and Puerto Rican disagreed: "We are comfortable with each other even with the wild kids... If we bump each other in the hall, we say sorry. I think we're mature enough to know." Sandy, Cheri and Brenda's maturity was a consistent presence throughout the year.

The second day of the deliberation generated more questions than answers. Was our classroom a safer environment because, in general, the so-called "wild kids" were not enrolled in an AP class? Did the deliberation on congressional representation provide for a space to consider racial perceptions and prejudices, including "white people" and possibly "white privilege," or was I more focused on the process and disciplinary content to hear their concerns? Did the semi-structured interviews, conducted by a European-American graduate student in her twenties, provide a safer space? Was it the small group versus whole class setting? Was my agenda and structure, desiring a disciplinary based, evidentiary deliberation on Congressional representation, thwarting the kind of dialogue students desired on ethnicity and ethnic perceptions of "the other?" Is it possible to blend, balance, and bridge the academic skills and disciplinary content required in an Advanced Placement course with issues more pertinent or germane to the students?

Another area of contention was religion. The students are from varied religious backgrounds: Protestant, Catholic, Muslim, and Buddhist. Other students openly stated

they have no religious tradition. Despite their differences, they were able to honestly and openly disagree on the separation of religion and the state and what influenced U.S. values. Students' comments demonstrated civic competence. Together, they discussed religious and secular values and whether or not religion should play any role in the law. Bob, a Muslim, claimed U.S. values were grounded in the Bible, a particular religious tradition, rather than religion in general. Bill, a Roman Catholic, countered with a secular argument: the "Founding Fathers wanted a secular country." Brenda, a Buddhist, maintained her position that religion should not influence the law. Using point of view and disciplinary content, they moved beyond Congressional representation to an issue central to the formation of the United States. Their discourse was academic and supported with disciplinary evidence. The process provided space to agree and disagree while moving toward clarifying their positions.

The deliberation ended on a conciliatory note. Gail claimed in the United States controversial issues were solvable. Chris advocated for a meritocracy; identity should not determine representation. Rather, the "best person for the job" should be the deciding factor. Nevertheless, during the deliberation there was not unanimity and some issues, such as gender and race, were far from resolved. The relevance of age, especially the inability of older people to represent them, was one of the few areas of agreement. Dialogue provided a path for clarifying points of view and sharing understandings of citizenship; it was "a process" rather than the product. We could participate at the academic table without consensus or closure.

The subsequent blog posts continued the prompt – "Must Congress represent us be representative of the U.S. public?" With this blog post, I added a student self-

evaluation; I hoped it would encourage students to focus on more than the content of the post and think about how they presented their arguments. After receiving their self-evaluations, for most students it was just another “check off” list rather than a guide to improve their writing. My “teacher evaluation” also did not appear to have much influence on their writing. Rather, the blog posts were aligned with what occurred in the deliberation. The deliberation appeared to enable students to respond to the prompt while the blog post expanded their use of disciplinary content and evidence we had created or collected prior to the deliberation. Providing students with background information, working in small groups to interpret the background information, and sharing each small group’s information via chart paper with the class were necessary to prepare for the deliberation. The “packets,” or graphic organizers and notes used to prepare for the deliberation, the chart paper notes and the deliberation were used by students to create their blog posts. All of the scaffolding of skills and content was necessary to enable students to answer the prompt.

Simultaneously, after examining the blog posts, it struck me that the students primarily summarized proposals raised in the deliberation rather than raising new proposals. The prompt may have made their comments inevitable. Students cited evidence, used disciplinary language and, almost too neatly, advocated for meritocracy and a more gradual shift in congressional demographics. All students determined a quota system for Congress was either suspect or illegal but all supported diversity and inclusivity. They did not agree on whether or not people of the same ethnicity shared the same values. They agreed to disagree. Whatever their response, in the blog posts students consistently cited either demographic evidence or their peers’ or personal

arguments. The blog posts both echoed the deliberation but offered space to expand on or enter the dialogue.

The blog posts provided a forum for students reluctant to speak in class. Lois, for example, rarely spoke in a whole class setting. In October of 2012, Lois wanted to drop the class. She requested a “drop form” from the school counselor and asked me to sign it. I asked her to first come after school to meet with me. Lois came after school and we talked. She cried, shared her fears and why she was insecure in the class. Lois had been in the U.S. for two years. She grew up in Vietnam and knew nothing about U.S. government. At our school, she was previously in a sheltered history class and English as a Second Language English (ESOL) classes. She did not know many students. She preferred AP Calculus; she could ask her brother for help and she knew more students. I asked her to finish the first marking period. I would help her during lunch and after school. After using about six tissues, she agreed to stay for the first marking period (Journal, October 9, 2012). Fortunately, Lois stayed in the class through June 2013. While she never readily joined in a deliberation, she clearly responded to the prompts and added her voice in the blog posts.

The proposals for reforming the U.S. Congress and the writing of a Congressional bill included reviewing electoral vocabulary and current issues from the fall of 2012. In hindsight, I should have used the opportunity for a more actionable assignment. The proposals for improving Congress, while not all original such as changes in redistricting to campaign finance, reflected a desire for equity and responding to the will of the constituents. Students also saw opportunities for 21st century technology to improve Congress. One proposal to increase the size of Congress and have more congressional

members work in their home districts was original. Their solution to a “home based” Congress was to communicate via “Wi-Fi.” Interestingly, they recognized potential problems with electronic communication for people with desperate positions on issues. I did not ask if this was a reflection on the blog posting process or if it was solely based on their assumptions about members of Congress. I missed both an opportunity to clarify our process and for the students to extend the assignment by contacting an organization related to their proposal. I did not make reforming Congress actionable.

Instead, we moved to writing a congressional bill. The bill making process is included on the AP U.S. Government syllabus. To do more than review the steps, I had students create a bill and we would simulate the process. They selected a broad range of issues that had surfaced in class since the fall. Despite devoting considerable class time to the research and writing, the bills were incomplete. I re-taught the process and devoted more time to revising the congressional bills. While this improved the writing of the bills, once again we lost an opportunity to move from civic competence to civic action.

Deliberation one and the subsequent blog posts, the congressional proposal and the congressional bill included most of the suggested topics for AP U.S. Government on the legislative branch of government. I assumed students would learn the disciplinary vocabulary and content through “hands on” activities. While all of the activities provided spaces for students’ to join in productive and receptive academic tasks, they did not move toward civic action. In retrospect, civic action would have been a natural outgrowth of both the congressional proposal and congressional bill writing processes. I could have contacted local organizations related to their proposals and bills. I could have at least

sent the proposals and bills to our local congressional representatives. Not only would students have sat at the academic table but they also would help build it. Time and coverage, once again, drove my decisions rather than students' concerns and passions.

Preparing for Deliberation Two: Trimming the Executive Branch

The executive branch of the U.S. federal government, in particular the presidency, may be familiar to U.S. high school students. My students could name the current president of the United States as easily as they named celebrities but none knew the name of their congressperson. Still, they had little background on the complexity of the executive branch of government. We had followed the presidential election and current issues in the fall of 2012. I asked students to view the February 2013 State of the Union address and, with a graphic organizer, chart issues raised during the speech. We also viewed excerpts from the State of the Union address in class. Nevertheless, for Advanced Placement U.S. Government, they needed to understand the evolution of the powers and roles of the Executive Branch.

Like previous units, I assigned Cornell Notes and disciplinary vocabulary from the textbook chapter on the presidency. Familiarity with the vocabulary - cabinet, Electoral College, gridlock, impeachment, lame duck, legislative veto, line-item veto, pocket veto, and unified government - was necessary. On March 5, I began the class with posing the question "What is your image of the president of the United States?" I showed a video clip from YouTube, "44 Presidents of the United States," with an image

of each president. Then, we viewed the Bill Of Rights Institute video clip “Powers Herein Granted: The Presidency and Federal Power.” Together we listed some of the powers of the president. Next, to provide additional scaffolding, on the Promethean Board I posted a chart we had used comparing the powers of the three branches of government. This led to an activity “The Many Hats of the President.” We reviewed six roles of the president, from chief legislator to commander in chief and chief executive. With partners, students read scenarios and determined what presidential power was being executed. It was a “clean,” quick lesson that garnered little more than a list (Journal, March 5, 2013).

The next day, March 6, we began with an outline of Article II and Amendments #25 and #27 of the U.S. Constitution. We divided into four small groups; each group had one section to summarize and present. Because of time, I provided the outline to expedite the process. After each group presented, I introduced the President’s Cabinet. I showed a CNN web site with images and information on “Obama’s Second Term Cabinet.” I asked students to consider that the Executive Branch is much more than the president. We would be learning about the federal bureaucracy in order to consider the powers of the president and priorities in federal government spending.

Participating in Deliberation Two: Trimming the Executive Office

The federal bureaucracy, besides being complex, is responsible for most programs and services we associated with the U.S. federal government. The deliberation was an opportunity for students to propose improvements to one component of the federal bureaucracy - the President's Cabinet and the 15 Cabinet departments. Students self-selected their small groups and were given information on each Cabinet department. Together they would develop a proposal. I told the students some people complain the federal bureaucracy is too large and too expensive. Other people appreciate the services provided by the federal bureaucracy. They would propose ways to reduce or eliminate parts of the federal bureaucracy and consider the implications.

Directions: Review your materials on the various Cabinet Departments / positions and select five Departments for (a) reduction in funding (%) OR (b) termination or elimination. Using your information, explain how your cuts or termination of the Departments or positions will help or hinder the U.S.'s (1) domestic or international goals, (2) economy, (3) social services, or (4) political process. Who benefits? Who is hurt? Include your rationale and consider the impact of your proposals.

For the deliberation, 15 departments were included and three positions, the president's press secretary, the attorney general and the office of the vice president. The deliberation process included proposals that would require collaboration and compromise.

Thursday, March 7, was a shortened class period; I gave them time to prepare and I reminded them they had to be ready for Friday, March 8. The next day, Friday, as students entered the room, I replayed a short, educational rap video on the Executive Branch. I intended to quickly move into the deliberation on the Executive Branch

Cabinet. Two students were absent - Sandy and Nancy. I have known Sandy and Nancy since they were in ninth grade; they were in my “reading intervention” class. Ninth grade was the year they met and they became best friends. They were polar opposites. Sandy, a slim, reserved and serious African American teen, lived in a predominantly African American neighborhood about three miles from the school. Nancy, a heavy set, boisterous, and animated self-identified “Italian’ish” student,²⁶ lived in a predominantly European American neighborhood a half a mile from our school. Despite their differences, Sandy and Nancy were inseparable and loyal to each other. Nancy and Sandy had taken off from school to attend the funeral of Sandy’s stepfather.

After John commented on Sandy and Nancy’s absence, he announced, “this is so boring” and Sue responded, “I’m so hungry” (Journal, March 8, 2013). Then, Robert proposed a better use of our time would be watching videos of the “Harlem Shake,” a popular dance. As I stood in the middle of the classroom and wondered what I was trying to do (Journal, March 8, 2013). I attempted to settle the class and start. Very few students were prepared. Bill and Brenda argued about something that had happened earlier in the day. I stopped and told the class we would start on Monday. They had the rest of the period to prepare and ask me for help (Journal, March 8, 2013).

²⁶ Nancy identified as an “Italian’ish” - English, Irish, Swedish - on her father’s side - and Italian on her mother’s side. During the deliberation on the Congress, she also referred to herself as a “snowflake.”

Over the weekend, on March 9, I wrote in my journal:

“So, what to do on Monday? Do they have to learn about the bureaucracy? Yes, I am asking them to formulate a proposal based on complicated evidence. They have to understand the executive branch departments. They have to prioritize government functions. Is this making them ‘college ready?’ Should I bag the deliberations, the blog posts and try to drill for the test and hope for the best? Do I drill multiple-choice questions, vocabulary, and the FRQ (free response question) format? Or, do I continue to focus on the thinking, evaluating, reading, and writing? I’m sure they had no idea how much time I spend on trying to decide what to do.”

I decided to return to my original plan and hoped they were ready on Monday, March 11. On Monday, all of the students were present except Rose. After prodding, they sat with their partners and I reminded them of the process and focus. They would present their recommendations and listen for areas of agreement. There would be time for clarification and questions. The goal was class agreement on how to restructure the Executive Department’s Cabinet. Each group would have one representative in the inner circle and, as usual they could move in and out of the fishbowl.

“Now it’s official.”

Unlike the February deliberation on congressional representation, the process was more teacher directed. I began the class by directing students into their groups and restating the directions, which were posted on the Promethean Board. I called on students and directed the presentation of proposals. The students’ proposals were straightforward and based on disciplinary content and their point of view on governmental priorities. Identity and life experiences were absent.

Sharer: Ready? Ready? Each group will present their recommendations. We'll listen to see if there is some commonality. You each have the chart I typed up with your proposals. I'll jot down what you are recommending on chart paper and you can give your rationale or say why. I'll ask for an amendment for any group's proposal, you can ask for clarification on other group's proposals. We will end by taking votes on the final proposals.

Gail: Who wants to start?

Sharer: Okay. Bob has his hand up. You go, Bob.

John: Now it's official!

Bob: Shut up, John. Department of Defense. We're the Department of Defense. Cut it in half and combine it with Homeland Security. The economy is in dire need of stimulus. Defense is very large. There are systems that can merge.

Sharer: Any other recommendations to reduce or terminate other departments? Group 1? Secretary of State? Treasury? Commerce?

Brenda: We would like to combine Interior, Commerce, Agriculture altogether. They deal with the same issues, you know, wildlife, preserving.

Sharer: Thank you. Group 2? What are your recommendations? What are you proposing?

Other than reminding students to refrain from side conversations, the process was orderly; I called on students and asked clarifying questions. Students presented their proposals with their rationale. The rationales, based on disciplinary content, ranged from reductions in spending to unconstitutional to unrealistic. Group 1, represented by Bill, presented a proposal to combine departments to cut costs based on data distributed in class.

Bill: We will cut the Department of Education and Housing and Urban Development. Then, we will integrate the two departments with the Department of Health and Human Services. That will total up to \$8.8 billion - so we cut \$8 billion in spending. Cutting the Department of Homeland Security rather than the Department of Defense does what Homeland Security is responsible for so you can integrate the departments.

Sharer: You are proposing cutting Defense by 35%?

Bill: No. Not cutting Defense. Cutting the Department of Homeland Security by 65%.

Bob: There will be nothing left.

Sharer: Are you cutting defense at all?

Bill: No. Just getting rid of Homeland Security.

Sharer: You are giving 35% of what was allocated to Homeland Security to Defense?

Bill: Yea. Department of Homeland Security is basically gone.

“People can volunteer.”

Group 3, represented by Nancy, proposed relying on voluntary labor, a proposal grounded in point of view versus disciplinary evidence. While Nancy cited disciplinary content, she refused to clarify the ambiguity in their proposal. My attempt to direct the discussion by asking for clarification failed. John, despite my efforts to curb side comments, interrupted but also added levity.

Nancy: We want to cut up the Department of Veteran Affairs.

John: You are horrible.

Sharer: No side comments. Let the group finish.

Nancy: By 20%. The money can be used by Housing and Urban Development, which helps the veterans with homes. Cut the Department of Interior because the employees can volunteer. There were already 200,000 volunteers. People can volunteer. Department of Transportation, we are cutting down because they have \$70 billion and we want to cut down \$30 billion and focus on interstate. Yea, interstate.

Sharer: Interstate transportation or commerce? Which department?

John: Are you giving out free transpasses?²⁷

Nancy: Nope.

Sharer: Anything else? Are you going to clarify interstate transportation or commerce?

Nancy: Nope.

Robert presented the final group, Group 4. They followed the pattern of cutting funding but also relying on the private sector. Based on their students' points of view, their proposal was logical and cost effective. The proposal also indicated the students understood the general role of the Departments.

²⁷ Passengers who use the city's public transportation may purchase a transpass. Students who live more than 1.5 miles from school receive a free weekly transpass. A student trans pass may be used multiple times a day between 6:00 AM and 7:00 PM. A school transpass is highly desirable.

Robert: Department of Interior. Reduce it from \$16 billion to \$10 billion. 35%. Also billions in revenue from leases and recreation permits.

Sharer: So, you are saying Interior can be self-supporting. Other recommendations?

Robert: Housing and Urban Development reduced from \$40 to \$30 billion. Housing can go to contractors to do building.

Sharer: So you are leaving it to the private sector? No longer under the government?

Robert: Yea. And the press secretary needs to be cut. President Obama can talk.

Sharer: Anything else?

Robert: Department Of State. Reduce 20% and they clearly don't need that much money. Also, Attorney General and Defense. Combine so they can enforce and defend. A double whammy.

"I'm not amending ours. Forget it."

The next step required students to consider how they could collaborate and combine proposals. I asked for clarifying questions but instead, there were "punch lines" about picking up trash to blowing up historic sites. Again, I tried to refocus the class.

Sharer: Lets look at the charts with the proposals. Each group needs to see if you are willing to amend your proposal and combine it with another group. You will have to compromise. Anyone willing to amend or work with another group?

Nancy: I'm not amending ours. Forget it.

Gail: The education and health thing. Education, health is most important so we can add them together. (Most students were talking over each other.)

Sharer: Did you hear Gail's proposal?

Multiple students: No!

Before we could make any decisions, the bell rang. That evening, I typed a chart with their proposals and proposed amendments. The next day, we reviewed the chart. Brenda suggested we vote and no one agreed but no one disagreed. Brenda called for a vote and stood in front of the class' chart (Journal, March 12, 2013). The students agreed to combine the Department of Commerce and Agriculture since "they deal with similar stuff." They cut the Department of State by 20% and switched all funding related to

veterans to the Department of Veterans Affairs. Their final decision was to cut the position of vice president because “what does he do?” Nine other proposals failed.

Student evaluation of the process

Originally, I had planned to assign a subsequent blog post for deliberation two. When I reminded the students about the blog post assignment, there was a small uprising. I was charged with overwhelming them with assignment. I agreed. They had an AP U.S. Government assignment on interest groups that involved research and writing. They had assignments for other classes. I agreed to a less taxing assignment; I told them I would create an evaluation form to give me feedback to help prepare for our next deliberation. No one cheered but there were fewer complaints. This would also let us move forward. The AP U.S. Government test was in a few months (Journal, March 12, 2013).

Students, who appeared disengaged in the deliberation, wrote about what they learned on the evaluation form. Chris wrote the process helped him “understand the role of the departments by learning what they do and how they are important.” Lois, Sandy, Cheri and Brenda also commented on having a greater appreciation of the role of the Executive Cabinet Departments. Knowing the budgets helped Gail understand the role of the Departments. Andy wrote the process “helped me to understand because I did not know anything from reading.” Bill was the only student to express appreciation for the deliberation; “the process helped me to better understand the decision making process of the Executive Departments and reasons behind the decisions because we simulated a

deliberation process.” Two students complained, Sue and Bob, about the behavior of their peers. Bob stated watching a video would be more effective than interacting with his peers. Albeit, the evaluation form provided closure but limited insight into the process, the outcomes of the deliberation and their proposals for the federal bureaucracy. The blog posts may have provided space to further consider the implications of their dramatic to drastic proposals.

Reflection on / Analysis of Deliberation Two

As I reviewed my journal entries from deliberation one, I acknowledge the process was disheveled. My attempts to control the conversations with the fishbowl format were often ignored by the students. Nonetheless, the deliberation was dynamic, the conversations were fruitful, and most students were able to articulate an evidentiary position orally and in writing. For deliberation two, I decided to reinforce the process and structure (Journal, March 6, 2013). Adherence to the process enabled me to frame the students’ responses and refocus the class quickly.

On the surface, the deliberation was successful. They were told to reduce funding or terminate a department under the guise of improving the federal bureaucracy. I distributed information on each department’s budget; the groups used the data to determine their proposals. All of the proposals met the “reduce or terminate” requirement. Students included disciplinary content as evidence. The students’ proposals for rearranging the executive branch departments reflected students’ points of view with a general understanding of the role of each department. They prioritized which

departments they deemed necessary and which were too costly. Students proposed changes in funding and budgets but the implications of the cuts, whether in funding or personnel, were not necessarily grounded in evidence. Some proposals, such as eliminating the position of the vice president, would require a constitutional amendment. The position of presidential press secretary was considered a luxury. Suggesting hundreds-of-thousands of volunteers would replace paid staff at the Department of the Interior was not realistic. However, for me, the deliberation was a class exercise versus a learning experience. While the deliberation concluded with proposals and reviewed the Executive Branch Cabinet, the deliberation did not invoke either identity or passion nor efficacy or credibility (Journal, March 13, 2013).

In contrast to my perception of the deliberation, the students' reflections indicated the deliberation, even one teacher directed and distinct from their daily lives, contributed to student learning. Although there is limited evidence of deep understanding of the Executive Branch Cabinet, students were able to name each department, to consider responsibilities of each department, to recognize the relationships between departments and to make proposals they deemed valid. Should I have encouraged students to consider the impact of their proposed cuts? Who will the cuts impact? Who are the winners and losers? Does not civic competency include decision-making that takes into consideration how everyone is affected? Should I have reiterated the proposals had to be plausible? Did my directions – to reduce funding or terminate or eliminate a department or program – presume the outcomes? In retrospect, it was a lost opportunity to think more deeply and intently the departments rather than merely rely on static, numerical knowledge.

Without the subsequent blog posts, the dialogue did not continue. The logic of the short and long term implications of their proposals were not dissected. For example, Nancy's group recommended cutting the Department of Interior by replacing staff with 200,000 volunteers. Then, Robert's group recommended combining the Attorney General and the Department of Defense "so they can enforce and defend." Neither recommendation was realistic nor demonstrated awareness of the role of each department. Neither recommendation considered the short and long term interests of or impact on workers or other citizens. Without the subsequent blog posts, the challenges to the proposals ended with the deliberation. If I had listened to the semi-structured interviews before the summer of 2013, I may have made a different decision. Chris shared in February; "I think blog posts are useful because they give us time to think about it before submitting our answer" (semi-structured interview, February 1, 2013). Chris recognized the importance of the "think time" found by writing the blog post. By limiting the conclusion of the deliberation to an evaluation form shared only with me, the teacher, I stifled the kinship of the deliberation to blog post process. Students needed to continue to clarify and interrogate their proposals with each other. I realized the blog posts were not merely to prepare for the Free Response Questions (FRQ) nor a method for integrating technology; they were integral to the deliberative process (Journal, March 15, 2013).

Preparing for Deliberation Three: War Powers Act and “War on Terror”

The next examination of the Executive Branch focused on the U.S. president’s role as Commander and Chief of the military. We reviewed three key concepts - checks and balances, separation of powers and executive privilege - and the War Powers Act. We examined the War Powers Act in the context of the War on Terror. In the midst of the deliberation during the week of March 18, 2013, it was announced that a local military air base would become a command center for drones. This provided a local connection to a national and international issue.

Once again, to prepare for the deliberation, I prepared a series of instructional scaffolding activities to build on students’ prior knowledge and provide sufficient background knowledge. This included viewing brief video clips on executive privilege, the War Powers Act, and the U.S. use of drones. To provide two points of view, I distributed (1) “War Powers Belong to the President” by John Yoo (2012) and (2) “War Making Limits - Presidential Downsizing” by Larry Sabato (2007). Together, we highlighted the main arguments and students individually annotated the texts. Next, we read a summary of the 1973 Public Law 83-148, “Joint Resolution concerning the war powers of Congress and the President,” and again together highlighted the main ideas and students individually annotated the text. I also assigned a homework task to annotate a *Reuters* article, “Lawmakers raise concerns about Obama’ drone policies” from February 2013. Lastly, after complaints from Bob that I did not know how to lecture and should make them take notes, I took his advice. I distributed a graphic organizer for note taking and presented an interactive PowerPoint with general background information (Journal, March 12, 2013). During the PowerPoint, I asked students to consider two questions:

Does the modern U.S. presidency's military powers upset the constitutional balance of powers? Do the strategies in the "War on Terror" threaten democracy?

The PowerPoint included data on U.S. military spending, a summary of the Constitutional powers of Congress versus the president related to war, a history of declared and undeclared wars through images, and key provisions of the War Powers Act. The PowerPoint concluded with the 2001 Authorization of Military Force in response to the September 11, 2001 "terrorist attacks," and the Iraq Resolution of 2002.

The following information was also reviewed and put on chart paper to be available during the deliberation:

Under Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution, Congress has sole power "to declare war (and grant letters of marque and reprisal). Article II, Section 2 provides that "the president shall be Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy of the U.S." So... the President can wage war as "Commander in Chief" while Congress can declare war and fund it.

Sections 3, 4 and 5 of the War Powers Act puts restrictions on the president; he or she must consult with Congress and withdraw U.S. military troops within 60 to 90 days without congressional authorization.

Since World War II (1945), U.S. presidents have used his power as "Commander in Chief" to go to war without congressional authorization. For example:

- (a) Truman / Korea in 1950-1952
- (b) Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon in Vietnam/ 1950s - 1970s
- (c) Reagan in Grenada and Central American / 1980s
- (d) Clinton in Yugoslavia / 1999
- (e) Obama in Libya / 2011

Persian Gulf in 1991 (Bush 1) and Iraq in 2003 (Bush 2) were authorized by Congress.

Final preparation for the deliberation required background information on three strategies used in the U.S. "War on Terror." Students again divided into self-selected small groups. Each group's members read one section and "jigsawed" or shared the

information with other group members. Again, I asked students to use our annotation strategy to summarize the main ideas. The three strategies - “indefinite detention and military tribunals,” “extraordinary rendition and torture,” and “unmanned drone strikes” - were based on summaries of news articles from *The New York Times*, *Huffington Post*, *National Public Radio*, *Politico*, *ProPublica*, and *Open Society Foundations*.²⁸ The groups wrote their summaries on chart paper that we placed around the room. Individually, student had a “packet” with a chart to prepare for the deliberation and post deliberation reflection questions and evaluation (See Appendix 7). I hoped if each student determined their position on the War Powers Act and the “War on Terror” by listing evidence and their rationale, they would be better prepared for the deliberation. The charts would also assist students with their blog posts.

Participating in Deliberation Three: War Powers Act and “War on Terror”

The deliberation began on Wednesday, March 20, three days before spring break.

I posted a shortened fishbowl process and the questions on the Promethean Board:

- Is the War Powers Act Constitutional? (e.g. balance of power)
- Is the "War on Terror" unwarranted or warranted?
- Do any strategies used in the "War on Terror" violate the Constitution? Why or why not? Are the strategies necessary to protect U.S. citizens?
- Are the strategies immoral? Moral? Do they violate international law?

²⁸ The readings on the “War on Terror” strategies were compiled by a teacher, Javier Fernandez, who sponsored a website for AP U.S. Government. His website is no longer available from his former school district in Fulton County, GA. I was not able to find a new email address or web site to contact him or credit him.

Before we started the deliberation, I asked for suggestions to ensure everyone had an opportunity to participate. Larry suggested I limit each speaker to two minutes. I agreed and asked for a volunteer. Lois, who rarely spoke in class, quickly volunteered to keep time (Journal, March 20, 2013). We began the deliberation by reviewing the questions and the process. I gave them five minutes to meet in their small groups and consider the questions. I assumed this would enable us to focus on the questions and boost the use of evidence they had compiled in class. I reminded them to refer to the notes in their “packet.” After about five minutes, Bob, Bill, John and Gail joined the inner circle.

“Warranted. Unwarranted. Moral. Immoral.”

Sharer: Lets look at the questions. What is in the Constitution? Roles of the executive versus the legislature? Is the War on Terror unwarranted or warranted?

Gail: Unwarranted?

Sharer: Unwarranted means not right. Warranted means it right. You can justify it. Remember, “un” is a prefix. It means not.

Bob: Unwarranted.

Bill: But it is really warranted.

Next, random students began responding to the questions but there was no structure. I reminded students to allow those in the inner circle to speak; everyone in the outer circle could pose clarifying questions and tag a team member to replace him or her in the inner circle. I refocused the class and directed them, again, to rephrase the questions. Instead of only rephrasing, I inserted new information and another question.

Sharer: I want us to look at the strategies: detention and military tribunals, extraordinary rendition and torture, and unmanned drones. The questions are whether or not they are constitutional. Are these strategies necessary to protect U.S. citizens? Are the moral or immoral?

Gail: Immoral.

Sharer: Do they violate international law? I didn't add this information but you might consider this. In February, in the U.S. Congress, there was a debate on whether or not drones can be used on U.S. citizens. They have been used on U.S. citizens in Yemen. People that were U.S. citizens living in Yemen.

Sue: Where's Yemen? (from outside the circle)

John: Where? What?

Sharer: It is near Saudi Arabia. (I pointed to Yemen on a world wall map.)

Sharer: The issue for the U.S. Congress was should U.S. citizens experience what we do to people who are not citizens. The response from one person, I have his article, Bishop Tutu from South Africa

Class: Who? (Multiple voices)

Sharer: Bishop Tutu. He's South African. You may have heard of him. A long time human rights leader.

Bill: Desmond? That's his last name?

Sharer: No, first name. Bishop Tutu was very offended by the U.S. use of drones. He is a contemporary of Nelson Mandela although a little younger. He wrote an opinion piece published in the *New York Times*. He was very offended that if you are a U.S. citizen we won't drop drones on you but if you are not a U.S. citizen we can do whatever we want. This is something else to consider, does having U.S. citizenship mean you have protections that other people do not? Congress did not consider this.

My comments appeared to derail the process. At this point, two students, Bill and Brenda, were texting on their phones. John questioned why he had to take notes in class. Bob suggested the class was like a disco. I had to restate the process and the questions. Brenda, Gail, Sue and Bob were in the inner circle; each represented their small group.

Sharer: Okay. My bad. My bad.²⁹ Yea, I messed up.

Bob: Yea, you bad, Miss Sharer. You bad. (Laughter)

Sharer: Sorry. I got off track. Remember, when you are outside the circle, you are writing notes to prepare to be in the inner circle. You are not talking. Again, the first question is the War Powers Act constitutional.

Robert: Who knows?

Sharer: Outside the circle you don't talk. You're taking notes based on what students in the inner circle are saying.

Brenda: Peanut Gallery! Shove it! (Comments directed toward the outer circle)

Sue: Look. We have the same ideas. (Comments directed toward Brenda)

Sharer: We need to hear your ideas and see if everybody

²⁹ "My bad" is apologizing for a mistake.

Sue: We are pro. Prooooooooo.

Sharer: Tell us whether or not you think it is constitutional.

Sue: Yea. Yea.

“Hostility. Scrutiny.”

In the next exchange, the students supported each other by encouraging each other to speak. They also supported each other in the use of academic vocabulary to answer the question and demonstrate an understanding of a key disciplinary concept – “checks and balances.” My role was to refocus on the process, including the questions and structure, rather than the direct the discussion.

Brenda: Go ahead, Gail.

Gail: It benefits the power of Congress to balance power with the president.

Brenda: Congress appropriates vast sums of (pause) protection of (pause). I don’t know that word Ms. Sharer. The one with an “m” before abroad.

Gail: Hostilities.

Brenda: Yes, that one. Hostilities abroad in the shadow of the Cold War.

Bob: Constitutional that the War Powers Act is what it is now because it is about checks and balances. The executive branch

Sue: Gail said it. Bob just talk, talk, talk.

Sharer: He can say the same thing.

Bob: Checks and balances means up top is being checked by someone over them. President doesn’t have all power because of Congress and people vote for Congress.

Sue: So if you have (pause) greater scr... (attempted to pronounce the term)

Bob: scrutiny

Brenda: scrutiny

Sharer: Yes, greater scrutiny. Scrutiny means to look at something very carefully. Closely. Now is there anyone outside the circle who wants to replace someone in your group to add more evidence or a different position on whether or not the War Powers Act is constitutional?

“Democracy; like everybody should be equal”

The next inner circle group, Bill, John, Brenda and Gail, responded to the question without my intervention. John and Bill argued the War Powers Act is not necessary for “checks and balances” between the Executive and Legislative branches since Congress controls funding. Gail provided historical examples of why she believed “checks and balances” did not work; therefore, the War Powers Act is needed. The exchange also indicated their understanding of separation of powers.

John: I don’t think it is constitutional. He is the Commander in Chief. He shouldn’t have to be checked by someone - a group of people below him.
(Clapping by one person.)

Gail: This is democracy. Like everybody should be equal. There should not be someone who is higher than someone else.

Brenda: Have to have checks and balances.

Gail: Yea, so we have the War Powers Act.

Bill: Excuse me. Even without the War Powers Act, Congress has the power to eliminate a war by withhold funds from the war itself. So, it is not the president’s choice to fund the war. If the president wants to go to war, even without the War Powers Act, all Congress has to do it stop the money. (Gail tries to interrupt.) It is unconstitutional because you are limiting the power of the president as Commander and Chief, taking away his power telling him he can’t go to war. That is his power to command the military.

Gail: But the president did that in the Cold War and Iraq and it turned out pretty bad and economy turned out bad.

Brenda: The structure of the U.S. Congress

Bill: But that is Congress’s fault because they decided to fund it. They could have.

John: Just funded it a little bit. They always had the choice to say I’m not funding this anymore. Congress has the power to fund wars. All funds go through Congress. Basically, if they want to fund the war, they fund it. If they don’t, they don’t have to.

I thanked the group and affirmed the process. They had used evidence to support their position. They demonstrated their understanding of key disciplinary concepts regarding the U.S. federal branches of government. Then the process unraveled again

when Nancy, who was in the outer circle, claimed she was “I’m a pro con. Neutral.” Robert, John and Nancy disputed “neutrality.” I interjected we would continue tomorrow with whether or not the War on Terror was warranted or unwarranted. The bell rang.

On March 21, the questions were again posted on the Promethean Board. Three students were absent - Andy, Rose and Lois. Attendance hindered the process. Rose was absent four out of five days during the week. We lost our timekeeper from the previous day, Lois. In addition, my attempt to quickly move students into the inner and outer circle was derailed. Instead, Nancy, who was in the outer circle, began talking about Japan and World War II. She spoke in present tense. Bill, Brenda and John began yelling and questioning Nancy. I stood by the inner circle and waited for a pause to interject and refocus the class (Journal, March 21, 2013). I pointed to the questions and reminded students of the process. John, Chris, Brenda and Gail joined the inner circle.

“Unalienated, undocumented, unconstitutional ... We can change the Constitution.”

The deliberation on the “War on Terror” began with John arguing for justification of the U.S. bombing of other countries because of the attacks on the United States in 2001. This led to comments about torture and whether or not U.S. Constitutional rights, including the use of torture of detainees, should be limited to U.S. citizens. We had read about the imprisonment of men in Guantanamo Bay; this case provided the context for a discussion that shifted from point of view, informed by prior knowledge, to identity. The issue became personal. Only eight of the 17 students were born in the United States. Two students were naturalized U.S. citizens. Seven students were not U.S. citizens. One

student was undocumented. Whether or not U.S. Constitutional rights were determined by citizenship directly affected our class.

John: They (men at Guantanamo Bay) know what they are being detained for. It is based on American citizens. We didn't go to Australia and Russia and put in our Constitution. It is for citizens. Only. Our citizens. Someone is misinformed.

Sharer: Any response?

Chris: Yea.

Gail: Why?

Brenda: Evidence?

Gail: The Constitution doesn't say you can torture.

Chris: Yea. You shouldn't torture.

Sharer: How about John's point that the U.S. Constitution only applies to U.S. citizens?

Chris: Not outside the U.S. If they are U.S. citizens.... ummmm....

Sharer: Some of our classmates are not U.S. citizens. Does the U.S. Constitution apply to all of us?

Brenda: Yep.

John: To citizens and residents of the U.S. That is what I meant.

Bob: A tourist. So you can torture a tourist? (From the outer circle)

Brenda: Wait but then. Ms. Sharer. If technically does the constitution still affect the alien. Unalienated?

Sharer: Do you mean undocumented?

Brenda: Yea. Are they getting the same?

Sharer: No, because they do not have the same legal rights as people who are US citizens.

Brenda: Then technically

Nancy: You want to broaden it. (who is protected) (From the outer circle)

Sharer: Thanks, Nancy but lets try to keep comments to the inner circle. If you want to come into the inner circle, tap another student's shoulder and replace him or her.

At this point, two students who rarely spoke in class, wanted to join the inner circle - Jim and Sandy. Jim, a fairly recent immigrant and U.S. resident, and Sandy, a native born U.S. citizen, advocated for constitutional protections for everyone regardless of their status. Sandy cited disciplinary content evidence to challenge John's justification for torture. The students then considered whether or not the Constitution should be changed.

Jim: I am opposed. As Americans, they can't do it. (torture) Not just protect Americans.

Sandy: It is unconstitutional. The 4th amendment is right to be free of unreasonable searches.

John: It says reasonable searches. Does it say evidential searches? No, reasonable searches. We have reasons.

Sandy: 5th amendment says. No trial without a grand jury except war crime.

John: That is a war crime.

Sandy: No.

John: Yes. It is.

Sandy: But it (the Constitution) should be for everybody.

John: Well, then maybe we should change the Constitution and say everybody.

Sandy: We don't need to change the Constitution.

Gail: We can change the Constitution.

After Gail reminded the class the Constitution could be changed, the conversation again moved beyond the fishbowl. It deteriorated from changing the Constitution to insults about which students need to change. Again, I attempted to refocus the class and resume with the fishbowl structure and questions that were posted on the Promethean Board. John, Brenda, Sandy and Jim were in the inner circle. John immediately began with his point of view and a new source of information - social media - rather than disciplinary content from class. Nevertheless, John clearly understood the justifications used by the United States for using drones and the intended targets. John's comments appeared to be a result of my attempt to frame the discussion and redirect students to the deliberation questions.

"You don't hang out with a terrorist."

The tension caused by my control of the structure and content recurred throughout the deliberation. I attempted to control the structure by limiting speakers to the inner

circle of the fishbowl rather than a “give and take” around the room. I assumed exchanging seats in the inner circle would ensure most students would have an opportunity to speak rather than a few students dominating the deliberation. I also attempted to control the content by focusing on questions I created versus letting the discussion evolve without interruption. Did students need my “guidance” or was my “guidance” a hindrance to students’ acquisition of the ways of knowing and thinking skills required in a college preparatory class?

Sharer: Let look at the strategies from the “War on Terror.” Either the military tribunals - detention without being told why they are held. Indefinite detention. Extraordinary rendition and torture - getting people to give information and/or confess which under international law is considered torture. And the unmanned drones. Dropping bombs without a pilot in the plane. We’ll start with people in the inner circle and drone bombings.

John: What kind of remedial, I can’t say, this, remedial human being hangs out with a terrorist?

Sandy: They might not know they are a terrorist.

John: Look at his Facebook page. He just blew up a dog. You just know they are a terrorist.

Jim: They have to investigate.

John: They do. Thorough investigate.

Sandy: It might be a hate crime that they blew up the dog. Maybe they don’t like dogs.

John: Well. With a suicide vest on?

Sandy: You don’t know.

John: You don’t hang out with terrorists. I think if you hang out with terrorist you probably do deserve to be blown up. Not everyone deserve it but.

Sandy: What if they are a nice person?

John: You don’t hang out with a terrorist. That is how you get yourself accidentally killed. That’s like hanging out with someone who owes money and they are looking for them.

Brenda attempted to interject but John continued his line of reasoning: anyone killed by a drone bombing was at fault for associating with alleged terrorists. John made

analogies based on point of view; Brenda returned the discussion to special protections for U.S. citizens. Bob, a member of John's group, challenged him from the outer circle.

John: Like I was saying, its like hanging out with a drug dealer while the cops are looking for him, you're going to get blamed. If I owe money to someone who will chop my fingers off, will you hang out with me? Would you ride in a car with me knowing that person is looking for me?

Brenda: Can you say that about the U.S. citizens that were hit by drones? Can you say the same thing about them?

John: I'm talking about terrorists.

Brenda: Yea but then, what about these U.S. citizens?

John: I don't agree with that. That was governmental in a very. You guys know a word I want. I want to say.

Brenda: Fucked up way.

John: Yes. I have nothing to say about that. I have nothing to say. I just don't think you should hang out with terrorists. That's it.

Bob: Finish your point. (From the outer circle)

John: You can't hang out with a known suicide bomber. You know your life clock is going to end. Yea, I'm getting out of the circle. My blood pressure is going up. (Laughter)

"We need enough evidence."

Bob, without my directive, replaced John in the inner circle. Brenda clarified Bob's position on rights and torture.

Bob: Our group member, John is not in a right state of mind. Ignore what he said.

Sharer: You are adding your point of view; that doesn't mean you are negating what John said.

Bob: I'm pro. I don't think it right to take away rights. We don't have the right to torture people just because we think.

Brenda: You're con.

Bob: Yea, yea, I'm con. My bad. We don't have the right to hold people and torture people or violate their body.

Brenda: And I agree with that.

Bob: Even if Americans say it is for the cause of our country that is very vague. We don't have enough evidence. We need enough evidence to say that person is particularly involved to hold and question them.

Bob now moved the discussion to indefinite detention.

Brenda: It is like if they don't have enough evidence to hold you for murder.

Bob: Just like police can't come into your house without a warrant.

Brenda: Yea, they need evidence even with a warrant.

Bob: They need a warrant.

There was a lull. Bill replaced Jim in the inner circle. The students maintained the deliberation; they continued to build analogies between their world and the "War on Terror." I attempted to invite more students to speak.

Brenda: It is like if someone is accused of murder they can't hold them without evidence. They can detain them for 24 hours but they have to have evidence.

Same thing if a police wants to come in your house they need evidence.

Bill: But we aren't talking about local crimes. We are talking about national security and international security.

Brenda: It's the same thing.

Bill: We are talking about terrorism. We aren't talking about someone shooting some random bullet outside on the street. (Another student yelled "peace.") You see what they did on 911, they brought down two buildings. Killed thousands.

Brenda: Do you know how many conspiracy theories there are on 911?

Bill: Exactly. Then we should kill Bush. Shouldn't we?

Sandy: What?

John: We hold so many U.S. citizens without evidence. (From the outer circle)

Bill: There are a lot of US citizens detained without due process.

Sharer: Look at the strategies again. This is an ongoing deliberation on whether the detention strategies are appropriate whether a US citizens or not. Everybody has to get in the circle. Robert? Sue? Sally? We have to give everyone a chance to speak.

Instead of opening up the deliberation to new voices, Bob, Bill, John, and Brenda continued to dominate. Again, I attempted to guide the discussion and nudge their thinking. I restated the questions, emphasizing the three strategies used in the "War on Terror" we were discussing: indefinite detention, extraordinary rendition and torture, and use of drones. I added to their analogies. In response, John, from the outer circle, claimed the U.S. protected its citizens. Brenda brought up "drug dealers." The

deliberation then became a question / answer directed by me. Finally, by calling into question their reasoning, I realized I was stifling the process. I apologized for talking off topic and attempted to refocus the deliberation.

Sharer: You made an analogy with drug dealers. There are drug dealers on my block. Should my house be bombed?

John: We should have anti-tank rounds to target one person. If they give us invalid information, we can hold them longer.

Sharer: Should other people be put at risk? What if it is not drug dealing but another illegal activity like prostitution?

Bill: Don't bomb them.

Sharer: Well, you live near this group or people? Where does it stop?

Bob: At law abiding citizens.

Sharer: So, if anyone on your block is not law abiding, you are at risk?

Bill: I think all of America would be bombed if we are looking at law abiding citizens.

Brenda: Yea. I jaywalk.

Sharer: The prostitute is not doing me any harm.

Bob: Yes, she is, kind of.

Sharer: Not if she stays in her house. (pause) Sorry. Let's get back on topic. My bad. Yea, my bad. (pause) Be specific – U.S. constitution and international law. Be specific about the strategies.

At this point, a new group elected to enter the inner circle: Robert, Gail, Sally, and Bob. Robert said he was lost. Gail refocused the group on the constitutionality of the U.S. "War on Terror" strategies. Sally assumed John's arguments. I stood aside.

"There may be some people. Good people."

Sally: The strategies are necessary. What if someone attacks the US because we killed Bin Laden? We need the strategies for protection. We need to worry about what is going on here. Everybody is getting so worked up with something we can't control.

Gail: What if they say the US has a terrorist and they bomb us?

Bill: We are not getting the information.

Gail: If they claim we are terrorist and they bomb in the U.S., we will feel the same way. They might be living in Iraq but it doesn't mean they all are terrorist. There may be some people. Good people.

Sally: They are raising little kids to be terrorist. They walk around with guns. (Directed at Bill). Are you pro or con?

Bill: I'm in the middle.

The bell rang. I did not provide time for closure nor a "Take a Stand" opportunity. I left a rich discussion hang on Bill's final comment "I'm in the middle." We had not resolved a critical issue: do constitutional protections apply to everyone? The resolution would have to occur in the blog postings.

The next day, Friday, March 22, was the day before Spring Break. Six students told me they would be absent. I reminded them about the deliberation blog posts and the Spring Break extra credit assignment. I sent reminder emails and text messages. I pleaded with them to complete the required deliberation blog posts. I offered the extra credit because a number of students asked for it. Build On, the service learning non-profit affiliated with our school, was offering Spring Break community service. I distributed flyers and encouraged students to participate. Eight students participated in community service; five students served lunch at a shelter for homeless people, two participated in social activities at a veteran's center and two students helped clean up a neighborhood park. I met the students at the neighborhood park and helped paint park benches. For additional extra credit, students could share about their community service experience in an additional blog post. Students' comments on the community service included concerns about the role of government in job creation to the underlying causes and implications of poverty in the United States. Larry, Jim and Chris noted how much they learned from listening to the "old men" stories. They also commented that they met my oldest son who was also at the community service. Sandy and Nancy were at the

neighborhood park. The park is in Sandy's neighborhood. She wrote about her desire to improve her neighborhood and the importance of a clean park. The students who could have benefitted from extra credit did not participate in the community service.

Deliberation Three Blog Posts: War Powers Act and the "War on Terror"

The blog posts about the War Powers Act and "War on Terror" were due March 22, the Friday before Spring Break. Students were to respond to two peers during Spring Break, March 25 - 29, and answer my questions by April 2. I secured computers after school for students on March 21 and 22. I reminded students they could go to the public library to use a computer. Only seven of the 17 students participated in the blog post. John and Brenda, two very vocal students during the deliberation, did not post. Larry, Cheri and Jim, almost silent during the deliberation, did post. The following is the blog post assignment:

Post by March 22

- (1) Are the national security policies / strategies adopted by U.S. presidents in the "War on Terror" unwarranted violations of the Constitution, or are they necessary to protect U.S. citizens from external threats or both? Why or why not? Cite specific examples and arguments. (5 points for answering the question; 5 points for examples/arguments) (10 points)
- (2) Are some policies / strategies more problematic than others? (e.g. We looked at 3 strategies - which do you agree with and which do you not agree with) Cite specific examples and arguments for why you support or oppose a strategy. (5 points for answering the question; 5 points for examples/arguments) (10 points)
- (3) Does the War Power Act or the "War on Terror" threaten either balance of power (checks and balances) or democracy (citizen participation)? Why or why not? Site specific examples and / or arguments. (5 points for answering the question; 5 points for examples/ arguments) (10 points)

Respond to two (2) Peers by March 29

Choose from one of the following sentence starters for each peer:

(1) During the deliberation, you contributed to the process by.... This helped me form my position because...

(2) I agree with on your blog post because.... I disagree with..... on your blog post because...

(3) You raise an interesting point in your blog post, ... (the point), because.....

(4) I would like to know more about how you came to your position on Because...

Respond to my questions by April 5

The blog postings required students to answer the assigned questions and respond to two peers using the sentence stems as guidelines. In addition, students were to “respond to my questions.” My questions were probing; I wanted students to continue to “think through” their positions and reasoning. Whether or not the lack of students’ response to the blog post was because of Spring Break or my negligence in providing some closure during the deliberation is not evident in the blog posting done by seven students. The students who did post created an online dialogue in response to the prompts. Their posting included disciplinary content used during the deliberations and class readings. Unlike the class deliberation, the blog postings incorporated more disciplinary content as evidence while also including their point of view and issues of identity. Since the blog postings offer students more “think time” than the deliberation process, student may feel more confident. Blog postings also offer a space for quiet students or students uncomfortable speaking in public to voice their position.

The third question for the blog posting, “Does the War Power Act or the ‘War on Terror’ threatened either balance of power (checks and balances) or democracy (citizen participation)?” was the most problematic. Although we discussed the War Powers Act

in the class deliberation, the topic did not engage students as intensely as the “War on Terror.” While some students’ positions on the War Power Act were clearly for or against it based on “checks and balances,” others did not demonstrate they understood the controversy. Bill, for example, clearly opposed the War Powers Act because “it creates an imbalance in government giving Congress more power in warfare” (blog post, 3/21/2013). In contrast, Gail supported the War Powers Act because “it sets the frame and limit in order to fund or approve the war” (blog post, 3/22/2013). Jim contradicted himself by opposing the War Powers Act but calling for “a better balance of war powers between the president and congress” (blog post, 3/22/2013). Larry wrote the War Powers Act “threatened check of balance” but then cited examples indicating the president has too much power (blog post, 3/22/2013). Students may have not invested as much effort in the War Powers Act because they did not make personal connections; the War Powers Act was related to the structure of government. In contrast, while students considered the constitutionality of the “War on Terror,” students also raised issues of identity, personal rights and morality to the “War on Terror.”

Like the deliberation, in the blog posts students considered if the “War on Terror” strategies were constitutional and / or necessary to protect the United States and the constitutionality of the “War on Terror.” Three of the students initially wrote the U.S. strategies were warranted or necessary with some restrictions. Their arguments combined arguments from the class deliberation and class readings. Bill began the blog post thread by arguing, “Targeted killings... are less invasive and cause less collateral damage” (blog post, 3/21/2013). Bill acknowledged that targeted killings “face opposition because people are being executed without due process” but misunderstood

due process. According to Bill, “due process does not necessarily involved a trial by jury and only proof of guilt is enough” (blog post 3/21/2013). Larry’s justification borrowed language from the U.S. Constitution contending, “Like the clause ‘necessary and proper,’ the U.S. has to use these policies and strategies to protect the people who live in the U.S.” (blog post, 3/22/2013). Larry opposed indefinite detention and torture because “it is cruel and inhuman” but appropriate if the government uses the strategies to “find out the leader of the terrorist” and will “save the life of many soldiers” (blog post, 3/22/2013). Jim cited evidence about drones and introduced a question raised during the deliberation: should constitutional rights be limited to U.S. citizens? According to Jim, “drones don’t put American troops in harm’s way. America’s safety is the primary concern. Soldiers’ life are more precious to the Americans than non-American citizens” (blog post, 3/22/3013). From Jim’s vantage point, people in the U.S. have more concern for each other than for non-U.S. citizens. I asked him to clarify his position on the War Powers Act and he replied, “remember, constitution only works in America and benefits Americans” (blog post, 3/30/2013). Jim did not discuss the origins of his perception nor did I ask.

The students who opposed the strategies also reflected the class deliberation and class readings. For example, Nancy posted a concern for human rights and not attacking another country because the U.S. “thinks they’re a terrorist” and wrote the “arguments in class helped me develop my position” (blog post, 3/22/2013). In class, there was extensive discussion on how to determine if someone is a “terrorist.” Gail wrote the “War on Terror” violated the U.S. Constitution, particularly the 4th Amendment of “the right to (be) secure in his/her person” and the 5th Amendment, “no person shall be held to answer

without (a) grand jury nor there should not be torture” (blog post, 3/22/2013). Cheri cited *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld* “that declared the military tribunals are illegal” and the 4th and 5th Amendments (blog post, 3/22/2013). Sandy, as she did during the deliberation, focused on the 4th, 5th and 6th Amendments. She wrote, “everyone in and out of the United States should be treated equally” but acknowledge “the Write of Habeas Corpus shall not be suspended unless when in cases of rebellion or invasion. The public safety may require it” (blog post, 3/29/2013).

Using the sentence stems to respond to each other, an instructional scaffolding strategy, students either supported or questioned their peers. For this blog post, I also responded to each post by posing questions. As students read each other’s postings, they affirmed, questioned or rejected their peers’ positions. Sometimes they also acknowledged their peer’s posting changed their opinion. For example, Bill, in response to Nancy, wrote, “I did not previously consider...this country encourages human rights” and how this may affect strategies used in the “War on Terror” (blog post, 3/25/2013). Nancy and Sandy also responded to Gail and connected what was said during the deliberation to clarification of their position, particularly regarding protections in the U.S. Constitution (blog post, 3/22/2013; blog post 3/29/2013).

Six of the seven students responded to my questions. My questions were intended to either clarify what the student posted or to encourage critical thinking. For example, I asked Larry a question to clarify his position. Larry’s post on the War Powers Act included it “threatened checks and balances” and gave a president “carte blanche authority” (blog post, 3/22/2013). I responded to Larry, asking for clarification of his position, and provided information from class on the War Powers Act. I posted “I’m

not clear on your position on the War Powers Act. Should the president be able to go to war indefinitely - like the U.S. did in Vietnam - or should the president have to go to Congress after 60 - 90 days for approval or even to get congressional advice?" (blog post, 3/28/2013). Larry responded "It is definitely not appropriate giving the right to the President to be able to go to war indefinitely; it will cause economic crisis and social chaos" (blog post, 3/29/2013). My clarification question enabled Larry to clarify and distinguish his position by considering implications of a president's decision.

In another example, I asked Sandy a question to encourage deeper or more critical thinking. I wrote, "Sandy, you've included a lot of analysis on the 4th, 5th and 6th amendments related to the "War on Terror" strategies. How might you convince others that 'everyone should be treated equally?' Why is this value important?" (blog post, 3/30/2013). Sandy responded with a proposal for civic action: "I would start by getting people who feel the same way that I do to write letters to Congress and the president telling them how we feel and what we think they should do" (blog post, 3/30/2013). I also posed a critical thinking question for Gail. I wrote, "You provide specific examples for why you believe the 3 strategies we studied related to the "War on Terror" are not constitutional. Do you believe there is ever a situation where U.S. or international law should be violated?" (blog post, 3/28/2013). Gail reconsidered her position but also proposed an international solution. Gail wrote, "There might be a situation between the countries where international law should be violated if the people were tortured and other difficulties. But this situation should be solved by the United Nations or the world wide organization, not the U.S." (blog post, 4/1/2013). Gail's response moved the discourse

from a national to international frame of reference while also noting the murkiness of strict adherence to the law.

Reflection on / Analysis of Deliberation Three

The War Powers Act provided a review of a key concept of separation of powers - checks and balances – and executive power. Similar to the deliberation on the President’s Cabinet, students were able to respond to the prompts after clarification of terms and I stopped interfering with tangential information. Also, like the previous deliberation, the initial discussion on the War Powers Act lacked passion; overall, students’ responses were “cut and dry.” The emphasis on who was “pro” or “con” on the War Powers Act became a distraction. That said, students supported each other in using academic vocabulary and incorporating disciplinary content.

As the deliberation progressed, a final inner circle exchange between John, Gail, Brenda and Bill ignited more interest. They ended with constitutional arguments, explicit examples and critical questions. Does the War Powers Act limit the role of president as Commander and Chief? Is determining funding a sufficient “check and balance” for congressional influence during a war? In a democracy, is everyone equal? When Gail injected concern for equality and questioned unlimited executive power, the exchange became more animated. The group did not necessarily agree but they demonstrated their ability to use evidence – congressional powers – to support a position. Nevertheless, the topic did not engender the fervor of the “War on Terror.”

The deliberation on the “War on Terror” began and ended differently. Initially it was difficult to get students to focus on the legal and military strategies used by the U.S. A few students made general comments about terrorists. Once the discussion moved to definitions of citizenship, issues of identity and constitutional protections, the content was personalized. Whose constitutional rights should be protected? Nearly half of our class included students without U.S. citizenship including an undocumented student. If rights only applied to U.S. citizens, our students were not safe. Constitutional protections were not universal. Students who rarely spoke wanted to be included.

Topics that consumed the deliberation were the use of torture, evidence to support surveillance or incarceration and equal protection for all people, regardless of citizenship. Students were asked if the strategies, or tools, used in the “War on Terror” – detention and military tribunals, extraordinary rendition, torture and unmanned drones – are constitutional and moral. Students raised both constitutional and moral arguments. For example, John argued there are no victims; if a person puts himself or herself in a potentially dangerous situation, they must accept the consequences. Sally argued the strategies are necessary for “protection.” Conversely, Sandy and Bob argued the strategies are unconstitutional. Gail infused empathy and moral arguments; the strategies may lead to “good people” being harmed. Together, their voices illustrated a range of points of view framed by concern for others. Their personal experiences, from events in their neighborhoods to denial of equal treatment to years as a refugee and disciplinary content, were woven through their arguments. Unfortunately, because of time and my poor planning, the deliberation had no closure. It ended with Sally asking Bill if he was “pro” or “con” and Bill stating, “I’m in the middle.” There was no resolution on

constitutional protections and the “War on Terror.” Nevertheless, the students transformed a theoretical discussion of military strategies into something personal; there were relevant ramifications for our class.

Far fewer students participated in the blog posts following the deliberation. That said, those who did participate engaged in thoughtful dialogue on equity, constitutional protections and human rights. The blog posts offered an opportunity for more reticent students to utilize their notes (See Appendix 7), to cite disciplinary evidence and to extend the deliberation. Blog posts provided more time for reflection. For example, Jim, an immigrant student, addressed equity. Jim assumed U.S. citizens do not care about non-U.S. citizens. He dismissed whether or not the “War on Terror” includes unconstitutional acts because the U.S. Constitution only protects “Americans.” Jim provided another lens to examine race and ethnicity but also an issue critical in a civics class, definitions of citizenship and constitutional protections. If Jim’s perspective is reflective of other non-U.S. citizen immigrant students’ experiences, should not this influence the instruction of the U.S. Constitution in a civics class? It was a missed opportunity to further problematize definitions of citizenship, security and belonging.

In addition, students’ blog comments recognized everyone’s humanity; they agreed that national citizenship should not determine who is guaranteed civil rights and liberties. Students’ affirmed Castles’ (2004) description of “transnational” citizenship. Students’ loyalties are not limited to a legal definition of citizenship but grow out of experiences in a community (Ochoa-Becker, 2007). In our diverse community, with multiple national citizenships, the umbrella of constitutional rights should cover them all. Sandy, Jim, Larry and Gail did not only emphasize equality and equal treatment but

considered equity across national divisions. They problematized the concept of national citizenship with multilayered citizenship (Banks, 2004, 2007).

As the teacher, had I encouraged problematizing citizenship to the detriment of the students regarding preparation for the Advanced Placement test? For example, the Advanced Placement test would assess if students could explain the 4th amendment and checks and balances but not ask them to consider their implications on a controversial issue. The exam would not ask for proposals to remedying inequity and injustice. The exam would not include their multilayered citizenships or experiences. Instead of shifting from my schedule and allowing time for students to develop a proposal and action plan on the “War on Terror,” we marched toward the May 2013 Advanced Placement test. I limited the shape of the students’ academic table.

Preparing for Deliberation Four: The Affordable Care Act

Following Spring Break, we spent three days on the federal bureaucracy, and then began a study of the Judicial Branch of the U.S. government. In the midst of learning about the Judicial Branch, students prepared for a free *Street Law* legal simulation on April 26, 2013. Despite my concern over “coverage” to prepare for the test, I decided the simulation was a valuable opportunity. The *Street Law* legal simulation required two days of preparation and a one-day field trip for the simulation, April 26. The two days

of preparation involved two local lawyers coming to class to prepare students for the legal simulation topics. While the topics were not directly aligned with A.P. U.S. Government, legal contracts and car accident liability, the field day was an opportunity to meet other students and exercise our deliberation skills. I also saw it as a reward - a day out of school with a free hot buffet lunch, t-shirt and sack pack.

In between preparing for the legal simulation, we prepared for our fourth deliberation on the Judicial Branch and the Affordable Care Act. Similar to previous units, I provided multiple lens and scaffolds to assist students in accessing the content. We started with a homework assignment and class time devoted to disciplinary vocabulary. Disciplinary vocabulary included judicial review, majority and minority opinion, oral argument, trial and appellate court, brief, constitutional amendment, dissenting and concurring opinions, amicus curiae, plaintiff, defendant, judicial remedy, and writ of certiorari. Next, I “jigsawed” or divided Article III of the U.S. Constitution into sections and assigned each small group a section to summarize. We combined their summaries on chart paper and, with a chart on the three federal branches of government “checks and balances,” noted the powers of the Supreme Court. I gave two homework assignments: annotate and answer questions on Federalist Paper #78, Alexander Hamilton on Judicial Review and John Marshall’s 1823 “Response to Senator Richard M. John on Judicial Review.” All but four students completed the assignment.

The next day we viewed a 3-minute video clip on the powers of the Supreme Court and another short video clip on judicial review. I introduced interpretations of the U.S. Constitution with a chart comparing “judicial activism” and “judicial restraint.” I explained that “activism” is generally portrayed negatively while “restraint” is usually

viewed positively. I explained we would use different terminology: “originalist” and “living constitutionalist.” We viewed a short C-SPAN video clip with Supreme Court Justices Scalia and Breyer providing divergent positions on how to interpret the U.S. Constitution: “originalist” or “living constitutionalist.” I provided a note taking graphic organizer to use during the video clip. In class we completed arguments for “originalist” and “living constitutionalist,” including key vocabulary.

For homework, I asked students to complete annotating summaries of two Supreme Court cases - District of Columbia v. Heller, on restrictions on firearms ownership and the 2nd Amendment, and Roper v. Simmons, on the execution of minors and the 8th Amendment. Both landmark cases’ decisions have been criticized for judicial “activism” and “restraint.” The next day, April 10, no students had completed the summaries of the Court cases. I expressed my frustration to the students (Journal, April 10, 2013). Advanced Placement courses, just like college courses, require students to do work outside of class. It was April. Grades for the third marking period closed in one week. I thought they should know they have to find time to prepare for class.

Since no student had done the homework, my plans for April 10 were derailed. I had planned a “mini” deliberation on “originalist” versus “living constitutionalist.” Instead, we completed the homework assignment in class. With approximately ten minutes left, we began to discuss the two approaches. On the Promethean Board, I presented a spectrum of definitions for “originalist” and “living constitutionalist.”³⁰

“Originalist:”

a) Using the literal meaning of the words of the Constitution. The justices consider only the plain meaning of the words of the Constitution or what they believe they meant at the time the Constitution was written.

³⁰ The definitions are composites based on a series of Google searches for definitions.

b) Using the intentions of those who wrote the Constitution. This is similar to the first method but also calls upon judges to consider what their philosophy of the Framers of the Constitution was.

“Living Constitutionalist:”

c) Using basic principles and values in perspective of history. People who favor this method believe judges must consider the ideas about government that the Framers had but also must consider the realities of contemporary society.

d) Using contemporary social values in terms of today’s policy needs. This method argues that the justices should use contemporary social values in interpreting the Constitution to fit today’s policy needs.

The next day, April 11, I posted on the Promethean Board two sentence stems and two questions and a summary of the “originalist” and “living constitutionalist” criticisms:

- The Constitution should be interpreted using the Originalist approach because...
- The Constitution should be interpreted using the Living Constitutionalist approach because...
- Was the majority opinion in *District of Columbia v. Heller* correct?
- Was the majority opinion in *Roper v. Simmons* correct?

Originalists criticize the Living Constitutionalist approach because they believe it allows judges to substitute their personal values and desired outcomes for the will of the people. *Living Constitutionalists* criticize the Originalist approach because they believe we can’t tell what the Framers of the Constitution intended it to mean, or what the people of the time understood it to mean. They also believe that for the Constitution to endure, it must be adaptable to circumstances that the Framers could not imagine.

Instead of a deliberation, I asked students to participate in a “think, write, pair, and share.” We began with the two sentence stems. Students had to “think” about the sentence stem, “write” a response by completing the stem, “pair” with a partner, and “share” their sentences. Then, we repeated the process with the two questions.

By this point in the year, students were very familiar with the interactive strategies. When I directed them to “Take a Stand” - students had to either side with the “originalist” or the “living constitutionalist” – they quickly got up. To my surprise, all of the students stood with “living constitutionalist.” The students that spoke, John, Brenda

and Bob, emphasized a need for flexibility because values to technology have changed (Journal, April 12, 2013). No one else was interested in providing their rationale. It was another topic that generated limited interest or passion.

To complete the topic, I assigned a blog post - *Should a judge be a "Living Constitutionalist" or an "Originalist?" Why?* I had planned on giving them class time for the assignment but attendance, again, influenced our time frame. The next day, April 12, six students were absent. After reviewing registration for the Advanced Placement test and our April 24 trip, I distributed the borrowed lap top computers for the blog posts. I was able to individually meet with students. Eleven out of 17 students completed the post. All but two students maintained their position from "Take a Stand" - judges should be "living constitutionalist;" the exceptions were Rose and Lois. Rose argued, "I said the Living Constitutionalist, because the Constitution has to improve while the society is improving; I said the Originalist because of the respect of how the Founders would like the United States be in the future" (blog post, 4/16/2013). Despite my frustration with incomplete assignments, at least 11 students could articulate their position and provide disciplinary evidence (Journal, April 12, 2013). Understanding how judges interpret the U.S. Constitution was necessary for our next deliberation.

Similar to the third deliberations, we prepared for a week before beginning the deliberation. Preparation began with a short video clip on the Commerce Clause and an interactive PowerPoint presentation. During the PowerPoint presentation, we reviewed the history of the Commerce Clause and the "necessary and proper" clause in Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution and Amendment 10. Next, I told students there are

three key terms to remember related to the Commerce Clause: regulate, commerce, and among. There are many different judicial interpretations of what may be regulated, what is commerce and what is considered “among” the states. With materials from *Street Law* on the Commerce Clause, I divided 12 Supreme Court decisions related to the Commerce Clause between four small groups. Each small group was given a synopsis of the cases and would use a framework to summarize Court cases. We used the same framework throughout the year. Then, we would post the summaries of the Court cases around the classroom for students to utilize during the deliberation.

Following the presentation of the Supreme Court cases, I modeled a scenario from a lesson from *Street Law*, “Commerce Clause: Can Congress Make This Law? The lesson included a series of scenarios that required students to determine if the law was constitutional based on their interpretation of the Commerce Clause and the Supreme Court cases. There were five additional scenarios; students self-selected partners to review the scenario and determine if the law was constitutional. After students presented each scenario, we summarized four conditions Congress may regulate.

The next day, April 16, we began to focus on health care and the Affordable Care Act. I started with the questions “Should healthcare be a right?” Then, we viewed two video clips I found on YouTube, “How does health insurance work?” and “Health Reform Explained.” Next, initially as a class and then in small groups, we analyzed two political cartoons on the healthcare debate and data from a graph of U.S. healthcare expenditures, a graph on the health spending share of the gross domestic product (GDP), and two graphs comparing U.S. healthcare spending and per capita costs with other

industrialized countries. Last, I presented a chronology from 1912 to 2010 of key dates in the U.S. healthcare debate. With the chronology, I asked students to chart the healthcare concerns and demands and how the government responded. We ended with the 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Participating in Deliberation Four: The Affordable Care Act, Part 1

To provide background on the Affordable Care Act, we read summaries of precedent setting Supreme Court cases, and viewed four two-minutes to three-minute C-SPAN video clips “Supreme Court Health Care Argument Preview” from 2012. Next, we reviewed 12 arguments regarding the Act: six arguing it is unconstitutional and six arguing it is constitutional. I asked students to rank the arguments from strongest to weakest and share their rankings in small teams. Finally, on the day of the deliberation, I once again attempted to provide structure for the deliberation. I put the following information on the Promethean Board and reviewed it with the students.

We have looked at (1) how insurance works, (2) history of the U.S. health care debate, (3) components of the Health Care Act, (4) 3 related Court cases and (5) arguments for and against the constitutionality of the Act.

Topic: Deliberation on Health Care Act and the Commerce Clause

Key question: Is the Affordable Care Act constitutional or unconstitutional?

Is the individual mandate to purchase insurance constitutional?

Sub questions:

- a) Is the Commerce Clause related to health care? (5 min.)
- b) Should employers have to provide health insurance? (5 min.)
- c) Should individuals have to have health insurance? (5 min.)
- d) Is in the individual mandate constitutional? (10 min.)

Deliberation Four, Day One

The deliberation lasted two days - April 23 and April 25. April 24 was our Street Law simulation trip. Therefore, on April 23, we began by reviewing what we had learned to date and I reminded students they had suggested I limit the length of time for each speaker. Lois, again, was the timekeeper. I reminded students to use their “packets” and student created charts during the deliberation (See Appendix 8). We spent the first 15 minutes reviewing and clarifying what we had learned. Other than Gail answering Brenda’s question “what is a mandate?” with “you have to do it. No choice,” I did most of the talking. Now, more than 15 minutes into the class, we began the deliberation. I reminded students to use the information in the packet and the information on the charts that circled the room.

Although I thought I had the structure under control, Brenda raised a question - “do (college) students had to have insurance?” I explained a college would require them to have health insurance and both Sue and Bill expressed concern about the cost. Despite my concern over the structure, I realized students’ questions indicated their concern and interest in the topic (Journal, April 23, 2013).

“So I’ll disagree cause everyone agrees.”

Sharer: Okay, back to the Affordable Care Act. You will either pay for insurance or pay a fine to encourage you to get insurance. The premise is the system can’t work unless everyone has health insurance. It will be like anything else you don’t pay – ability to get student loans, income tax, everything. You will have to pay a fine or insurance – it is to encourage people to buy insurance.

Rose: There are very many different insurance companies in the U.S. You have to choose?

Sharer: The health exchange is supposed to show options.

Gail: What if your doctor won’t take your insurance?

Sharer: Then you have to find another doctor. I don't know all the details. Fortunately, I have health insurance through my employer. Employers will probably have to offer something. If you are low income, you may apply for Medicaid but each state will be different.

Again, I returned to the process and asked for volunteers for the inner circle.

Chris, Bill, Nancy, and Gail moved to the inner circle. Initially, Chris and Bill began with the first question and responded with disciplinary content evidence relating the Affordable Care Act to the Commerce Clause while answering Nancy's questions.

Chris: Healthcare makes up 18% of the U.S. So the concept of unpaid care is important to society and has a substantial impact on commerce.

Nancy: I agree with Chris.

Chris: Thank you.

Bill: I agree. Like he said it makes up a big chunk of the U.S. economy so it is connected to the Commerce Clause.

Nancy: So I'll disagree cause everyone agrees. It doesn't make sense to me. So are you saying it is okay or not okay?

Bill: We are saying under the Commerce Clause Congress can but not necessarily that it should.

At this point, I intervened. I restated the initial questions: "What is the commerce clause? Is the commerce clause related to the Health Care Act?" Gail replied "necessary and proper clause." Then, Nancy directed the discussion toward whether or not insurance in general is valid. Gail and Bill provided clarification based on their prior knowledge.

"That is not how the system works."

Nancy: Yea. I don't think they should be able to do that. We should be responsible for ourselves. Why should I have to pay for some junkie beat around. That's what I'm talking about.

Gail: If they have insurance, you don't. They have to pay.

Bill: Yes, as she was saying, if they don't have insurance you pay more for them.

Nancy: Why can't we pay for ourselves and call it a day? Why should I have to worry about the 50 million (people) who don't have insurance?

Bill: That is not how the system works. Those YOLO³¹ people are out there.

Lois rang the bell. I took it as an indication to move on to question two. Larry, Sandy, Sue and Bob volunteered for the inner circle. I clarified the question - "Should employers have to provide health insurance?" - by asking students to consider if the federal government can mandate something for employers. "Think about what the federal government already mandates of employers." Think about Federalism and the powers of the federal government.

Larry started by answering "yes," the federal government may mandate something for employers and health care is an appropriate mandate. My comments or students' comments from the outer circle prompted the rest of the discussion. The inner circle discussion was teacher directed; I felt like I had to "pull" them along (Journal, April 23, 2013).

"Safety...Get Sued...Salary...Taxes...Yes"

Sharer: What do employers have to do?

Larry: Health insurance for employees. Patient protection under the Affordable Care Act.

Sharer: Yes, right. Good. What else does an employer have to do?

Sandy: Safety.

Sharer: Yes, safety. OSHA. Occupational Safety and Health Administration. We learned about that agency when we studied the federal bureaucracy. If someone gets hurt, what happens?

Robert: Get sued. (From the outer circle)

Sharer: Yes, get sued. What else does an employer have to do?

Brenda: Salary. Minimum wage. (From the outer circle)

³¹ YOLO – "You only live once."

Sharer: Yes, minimum wage. The Fair Labor Standards Act. States also have minimum wage laws. What else do they have to do? When they pay you the minimum wage, what happens to your paycheck?

Class: taxes (many students called out)

Sharer: Can an employer pick and chose what taxes to take out? Is health care similar to wages and taxes? Employers also pay into taxes.

Sandy, Bob, Sue, and Larry: Yes

At this point, I asked questions and students responded with short answers versus evidence. It was not a deliberation. Bob interjected his point of view that employer provided health care will “discourage business.” While Bob’s point led to additional student comments, when I attempted to refocus the discussion on the prompts and citing disciplinary evidence, I dominated the discussion.

“Profit”

Bob: Disincentive to create business. That is what this country is about. If you have to pay for health care then you have a lot of companies that will die.

Sue: If a bunch of people pay for insurance, then like it will help pay for insurance. If a company pays, then it will be like

Larry: A company should pay. A company can get help.

Sharer: Do you mean a company can get a tax write off?

Bob: No tax write off.

Gail: If they have a few employees, they don’t have to pay. (From the outer circle)

Sharer: Right. It is based on the number of employees. Will this discourage hiring more employees? This is also a good time for questions #3 and #4: Should individuals have to have health insurance? Is an individual mandate constitutional? Can the government tell us we have to have health insurance?

Bill: Yes.

Sharer: Why? Look at the pro and con arguments. Remember what court case told the farmer you can’t grow as much as you want? How did this impact the farmer?

Bob: Profit.

Sharer: Yes. How? Why? By requiring health insurance, it lowers an employee's potential income. What do you think? Is the individual mandate constitutional?

Once again, I was directing the discussion by raising the questions and answering the questions. Students, in both the inner and outer circle, were giving their personal opinion but not referring to the disciplinary content or evidence. The response to my last question on the constitutionality of the individual mandate received single word or thought responses: six “no,” one “yes,” and one “I don’t know.” There was silence until Cheri, the lone “yes” vote, responded. Then, two students provided personal examples based on their prior knowledge to advocate for requiring health insurance and one student, Robert, stated it is wasteful but did not elaborate or provide evidence.

Cheri: I think healthcare is something you need. It is kind of like someone might not have the money to pay for health insurance. The Constitution should require it. We need health insurance.

Sharer: Thank you. Someone else?

Lois: We need health insurance. The cost of medical is high. If you need it, we need it. Like if you have an accident or something.

Robert: Nope. That is a waste of money.

Sandy: Some people can’t afford it. Like my grandma works in the (school) cafeteria. She doesn’t get paid enough. It depends on what they earn.

Sharer: Thank you. You would base payment on income?

The bell rang. The next day was our class trip for the *Street Law* simulation. We would have to resume the deliberation on Friday, April 25.

Deliberation Four, Day Two

My journal entries on April 23 and April 24 revealed both frustration and hope. I lamented the process on April 23rd: “Felt like I had to direct it. They just were not giving much evidence to back up their positions” (Journal, April 23, 2013). I was also adjusting my lesson plans. We needed additional time to review for the AP exam but we

also had not covered civil rights, civil liberties and the federal budget. It was the first year that I felt like we had not covered all topics for the AP test (Journal, April 24, 2013). Nevertheless, I was also looking forward to our participation in the *Street Law* legal simulation on April 24. Every student except Andy, who was ill, participated. I observed three simulations and was proud of my students' professionalism, attentiveness and reasoned comments. Unlike some of the other high school students, they listened conscientiously and some phrased their comments by restating the prompts. I was a proud teacher! (Journal, April 24, 2013).

The next day, April 25, I attempted to quickly move into the deliberation. After I turned on the tape recorder and announced we would begin after a quick review, Brenda announced "Ms. Sharer, we used more evidence yesterday." Rose agreed: "We had more information than them (other school's students)." Bill added, "Yea, we won!" I congratulated the students and told them, "Yes, you demonstrated your skills. Now, you can demonstrate your skills on the Affordable Care Act."

To review on April 25, I provided three sources of information. The first source was a very short video clip from C-SPAN on the Supreme Court's 2012 ruling that the Affordable Care Act was constitutional under Congress' power to levy taxes. The second source was a review of the pro and con arguments including the Supreme Court case, *Gonzales v. Raich*: Congress may regulate non-economic intrastate activity if the activity or behavior undermines a larger regulatory plan. Lastly, we read excerpts from a *New York Times* news article on the 2012 ruling before we began the deliberation.

Sharer: The Court ruled 5 – 4 – once again very close – it is constitutional – the individual mandate for health insurance. Health insurance is required either through an employer, Medicaid or Medicare, or bought individually or we pay a fine. The Court ruled Congress has the right to tax and the penalty for not paying is considered a tax.

Bill: What about poor people?

Sharer: Their income isn't high enough so they get it through Medicaid.

Larry: Congress says everyone?

Gail: Yes

At this point, Bill, Gail and Sue continued to ask clarifying questions about the impact of the ruling. I returned to the news article about the ruling to address some of their questions. I added that our state was not going to fully participate in the federal program and therefore fewer low-income people would qualify for Medicaid. We also watched two additional very short C-SPAN video clips on the decision. Then, I framed the discussion and encouraged students to take time to think and form their argument. Because there was little discussion based on evidence on April 23 and our time was limited, I decided to change the structure to require all students to participate in “Take a Stand” versus the fishbowl process (Journal, April 25, 2013). Each student would give his or her position and rationale. Again, I focused the discussion and restated the key issues.

Sharer: All right. So, I want you to take a minute to think, based on what you know, you will agree with the Court's ruling: Congress has a right to pass the law because it is a tax - or no, you disagree. Congress can't mandate everyone to buy health insurance. Think for a minute before we begin. You will take a position and give your reasons. Think about the Court cases, what you know about the necessary and proper clause, commerce clause. Those of you who agree with the Court ruling – yes, Congress has the power to tax; yes they can tax people who don't buy the insurance as a penalty, go to the window. Those of you who say no because you think it is part of the commerce clause or can't penalize people who don't buy health insurance go by the closets. Arguments of justices are health care is unique – you don't have to buy a car – at some point in your life you will have to use health care.

After students moved to either location, I reminded students they had to give a reason, use evidence, to support their position. Then, students in support of the Court ruling individually gave their position. All students agreed with the majority opinion of the Supreme Court's - health insurance is unique. All but Bill stated a position based on point of view; Bill also referred to a Supreme Court case, *Wickard v. Filburn*. I rephrased students' positions and thanked them for speaking. I do not know whether or not my comments clarified or confirmed the students' positions.

"You have to pay for what you have."

Bill: I agree with the law as far as the Commerce Clause. Congress can tax people if they don't buy health care like the case with the farmers. They couldn't grow extra for themselves. Same as people without health insurance. They are not contributing to paying medical bills like everyone else.

Sharer: Thank you. That was succinct and you cited evidence from *Wickard v. Filburn*.

Sue: I agree because at some point people will have to go to the hospital. You have to pay for what you have.

Sharer: So, it is because what you said earlier. 100% of people will use health care.

Sue: They need to pay for it.

Sharer: It is a common good product. Everyone has to pay their share. Thank you.

Lois: I agree. It is constitutional. Health insurance is (what) we need.

Sandy: You should pay some of your taxes for it.

Sharer: Your argument is if I'm paying someone else should pay. Thank you.

Next, the students opposed to the Supreme Court ruling stated their position. They argued that Congress did not have the power to force anyone to purchase a product or good. They also expressed concern about the cost. One student, Larry, used disciplinary evidence and considered the long-term implications. Again, I rephrased students' position and thanked them.

“Congress could use tax for anything.”

Gail: We should have insurance. We should pay. Congress should not say you have to buy it. They can't force us to buy it. If we have to use health care system, we can pay but not a tax. We buy it for ourselves. Nobody tells us to buy it so we buy it.

Sharer: For you, it is common sense to buy insurance. Thank you.

Brenda: You can't make someone buy something. You can't just tax them. What if they have no money? You can't say you have to pay this.

Sharer: You think it is impractical or unfair. Thank you.

Nancy: It is unfair. You can't tell someone you have to pay for it. It is more like a dictatorship.

Andy: Not everyone can buy it.

Jim: Same.

Bob: Yea.

Larry: If you are forced to buy health insurance, there will be no limit on the Commerce Clause. Congress could use tax for anything.

Sharer: So you are saying, it doesn't fall under the “necessary and proper clause?” You fear the ramifications. You fear what might else happen?

Larry: Yes.

The last group, Robert, Rose and Cheri, was in the middle of the class. I called on them and asked if they were either undecided or believed there were merits in both positions. While they were speaking, the bell rang. Rose insisted everyone wait. She demanded to give her position.

“Stop. I want to talk!”

Sharer: Why are you in the middle?

Robert: We do need health care but the government should go about it differently.

Cheri: I haven't decided yet.

(Bell rang)

Rose: Stop. I want to talk! We need health insurance. Yes. But I don't think we need to like pay more in taxes. You said if we don't get insurance, there will be a penalty. I don't agree with the penalty.

Despite the ringing bell, the students waited for Rose to speak. Rose's insistence of speaking was an indication that she valued the topic. She was invested in the process and in sharing her position. The fact the other students stayed after the bell rang and listened also indicated their interest and respect for each other (Journal, April 26, 2013). Rose's position was also nuanced; she critiqued one aspect of the Act while agreeing with the Court that health insurance is unique. I was elated (Journal, April 26, 2013).

Deliberation Four Blog Post: The Affordable Care Act

The subsequent blog post for the deliberation on the Affordable Care Act had three due dates. The students' initial post was due April 25, response to two peers was due April 27 and a response to my questions was due May 1. Three students posted by April 25. By May 4, 13 students completed at least one of the posts; four students, Lois, Andy, Gail and Sally, did not post. The initial post was to answer the following prompt:

(1) You are a Supreme Court justice. You have heard arguments in the case about the individual mandate provision of the *Affordable Care Act*. Now you must write a decision in this case. Your decision should include:

- A summary of the issue in this case. (up to 5 points)
- Your ruling on the constitutionality or unconstitutionality of the individual mandate. Cite at least one precedent or previous Court ruling to support your ruling. (up to 5 points)
- Provide at least three reasons for your decision. (up to 9 points; 3 points for each decision).

All but one student, Larry, wrote a two-sentence summary of the issue. The summaries included two or three points: health insurance will be mandatory, refusal to purchase health insurance will result in a penalty, and people can not afford health insurance. Only Larry included causation in his summary; the sharp increase in health

insurance costs has led to a need to reduce the costs. The costs of health insurance influenced the Affordable Care Act. Six students argued the Affordable Care Act is constitutional, six argued it is unconstitutional and one student, Cheri, was undecided. All students cited at least one previous U.S. Supreme Court ruling to support their position.

Students who argued for the constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act primarily relied on the Supreme Court rulings in *Gonzales v. Raich* and *Wickard v. Filburn* and their understanding of interstate commerce. With health care, according to Chris, “the costs of that unpaid care are shifted onto the rest of society and have a substantial effect on interstate commerce” (blog post, 5/2/2013). The fact Chris presented in the deliberation, health care is 18% of the U.S. economy, was repeated in seven blog posts as evidence for both opposing and supporting the Supreme Court ruling. Sandy cited *Gonzales v. Raich* and the Commerce Clause to argue for the constitutionality of the Act. She also wrote no one should “freeload” by shifting their health care costs to those who have health insurance. Larry, also citing *Gonzales v. Raich*, noted the Supreme Court ruled, “Congress could regulate interstate noneconomic activity,” and “the cost of the uninsured have a considerable effect on interstate commerce” (blog post, 4/28/2013). The concern for fairness and sharing the burden of health care costs requires, according to Bill, everyone to purchase health insurance. According to Bill, *Wickard v. Filburn* showed the necessity of people participating in economic activities to cooperate in order to prevent the system from failing (blog post, 5/2/2013). Rose was the only student to cite *Gibbons v. Ogden*, “the Constitution gives

the federal government the right to regulate interstate commerce;” health care is commerce because it “involves a financial interaction” (blog post, 4/27/2013).

Students who argued the Affordable Care Act is unconstitutional referenced *Wickard v. Filburn* and *U.S. v. Lopez*. They opposed the ruling in *Wickard v. Filburn*; Congress should not be able to limit an individual’s involvement in commerce. They agreed with the ruling in *U.S. v. Lopez*; there are limits to actions that impact interstate commerce. Students assumed a libertarian stance. Individual rights are preeminent; the common good is secondary. Most opponents of the Act emphasized individual freedom and the cost of health insurance as evidence. One student, Sue, argued health insurance, like a gun in a school zone (*U.S. v. Lopez*), is not interstate commerce “so the federal government should not control it.... (because) the Act looks like it limits our freedom” (blog post, 5/4/2013).

Jim and Nancy restated arguments Nancy raised during the deliberation by emphasizing individualism and personal freedom. Nancy indicated the United States epitomizes individual freedom; the Act is dictatorial for individuals and employers (blog post, 4/23, 2013; 5/3/2013). Both students interpreted the Supreme Court ruling in *Wickard v. Filburn* as unconstitutional and therefore the Affordable Care Act is unconstitutional (blog post, 4/23/2013). Sue concluded “We cannot do what we want to, our own health is our personal issue and we should have a choice on it” (blog post, 5/4/2013). Similarly, Brenda stated the Act is “unconstitutional because you can’t make any person buy something, even if it is for their own well being” (blog post, 5/3/2013). Nancy and Jim also expressed concerns about the cost; they did not explain why the cost

is unconstitutional. John expressed his point of view and predicted the Affordable Care Act will lead to more national debt and bankrupt employers (blog post, 5/3/2013).

In addition, students were required to respond to two peers and answer questions I posted about their initial post. The directions for the response was:

Respond to TWO peers (up to 10 points; 5 points each):

(1) Use evidence to support a statement and (2) use a sentence starter to formulate your response.

- Use a probing question to elicit more information. (" You write that Can you explain that further? I don't understand because...")
- Summarize the discussion; summarize points of agreements and disagreement between fellow students. ("Based on your post, it seems like you believe that . . . "(Although) I believe...")
- Acknowledge the statements of others. ("As _____ wrote, '', I agree because.... OR I disagree because... (give evidence/ reasons)...")
- Make a concession ("You're right, _____, and I'm wrong! Your point about _____ made me realize...." "You make an interesting point but...")
- A prompt of your choice as long as it acknowledges something another peer wrote and you add additional insights.

Most students consistently used the sentence starters to write their responses. The sentence starters provided scaffolding and structure that promoted an online dialogue. Students were reminded to ask a question, summarize, acknowledge and/ or make a concession. For example, in response to Nancy's statement opposing mandatory health insurance, Cheri wrote:

"Nancy, I agree with your statement that the individual mandate to purchase health care is unconstitutional as you use the case Wickard v. Filburn. I believe that in that case, the government shouldn't limit the farmer on the wheat grown. Just like the government shouldn't force people to get insurance when some people can't afford it" (blog post, 4/28/2014).

In a subsequent post, Sandy challenged Nancy's statement that an employer should not have to provide health insurance. Sandy posted:

"I disagree with you about the employer and the employee. I think that the employer should always provide health insurance, because some people may get hurt on the job. If the employer does not provide health care insurance the employee may sue" (blog post, 5/2/2013).

In a response to Sandy's initial post, Nancy and Brenda acknowledged Sandy's position, quoting from her post, and stating what they learned from Sandy's post.

Nancy: *"Sandy, although I believe the purchase of health insurance mandate is unconstitutional, when you said, " the health insurance markets is 18% of the economy" makes me see a better view of it. However, I don't believe this is constitutional but you do make a valid point for the argument. Sandy, you made a very interesting point when you said, "I think that it is necessary for uninsured people who can afford insurance to purchase it, and not freeload on the people who are insured. With the uninsured people not paying their bill this now shifts their costs to providers, the government, and insured Americans." I think You're right. It's not fair to shift on other people"* (blog post, 4/26/2013).

Brenda: *"Although I believe that mandated health insurance is unconstitutional, I do agree with your point that "failure to buy insurance shifts the costs of health care for the uninsured to healthcare providers, insurance companies, and everyone who does have health insurance." When studying the health care act I didn't think of this point, so you have given me a different view to look at"* (blog post, 5/3/2013).

In another thread, Jim originally argued the Supreme Court ruling was unconstitutional: "Government shouldn't force people to do something that they don't want to do" (blog post, 4/27/2013). Rose, who agreed with Jim that the Act was unconstitutional, challenged him to recognize that having health insurance is beneficial despite the use of a negative label, "mandate." Rose demonstrated she understood not only the academic term but also how it applied in this context. Rose, using the sentence stems crafted a paragraph acknowledging Jim's point of view while articulating why she disagreed. Rose posted:

“*As you wrote that ‘Government shouldn't force people to do something that they don't want to do.’ I agree, but we should also see the good side of this decision. I mean, having health insurance is better than don't have at all, even though the word ‘mandate’ doesn't sound good. I also understand the point that you made to argue that ‘some people will not be able to afford the insurance,’ and this is why some people want that the Congress makes the employers afford the cost for his or her employees”* (blog, 4/27/2013).

The tensest exchange occurred between friends and immigrant students, Larry and Jim. This was the first deliberation where Larry was more vocal. Jim rarely said a word. Instead, in the blog post Jim questioned Larry's use of *Gonzales v. Raich*. Jim's response was personal and Larry appeared to perceive it as an attack. Larry's original post argued *Gonzales v. Raich* allows Congress to regulate “intrastate, non-economic activity.” Therefore, the Affordable Care Act is constitutional. Larry chastised Jim for writing his opinion versus using evidence and an aligned Supreme Court case.

Larry: “The individual mandate is an essential part of the Affordable Care Act's plan to reduce healthcare costs. Almost All people will sick at some point. When people do not buy insurance, this law just regulates how and when people pay for the inevitable use of health care... Based in the Court ruling of *Gonzales v. Raich* where it said that Congress could regulate non economic activity if it was an essential part of a broader regulatory scheme designed to regulate economic activity” (blog post, 4/28/2013).

Jim: “*Gonzalez v. Raich* does not support your position good enough. The Health Care and your case are totally different things. I know you don't have health care. If you think the individual mandate to purchase insurance is constitutional, you should purchase health care now. Otherwise, how can you support your position?” (4/29/2013).

Larry: “Have you read ever read *Gonzalez v. Raich* carefully? Do you know what which side is this case support? This case clearly supports the argument that the Individual Mandate is Constitutional. I have my health insurance from the time when I came to United States until last week, and I am going to get health insurance this week. You just hear part of the conversation between me and Andy. In addition, no matter I have health insurance or not, it does not influence whether the Mandate Individual is Constitutional or Unconstitutional. *When you are doing this kind of question, you must use evidence to support your position rather than your opinions, and make sure to use right Supreme court case to support your position*” (italics mine) (blog post, 5/1/2013).

Recurring themes in both the deliberation and the blog posts were interpretations of individual freedoms, or civil liberties, and perceptions of the United States as a paradigm of freedom. In one blog post exchange, Larry challenged Jim's definition of freedom. Then, I posted and asked Jim to clarify his position. Instead, Jim altered his definition. Bob challenged the notion of freedom without limits. Chris responded by quoting from the Preamble of U.S. Constitution and affirmed Jim's initial position on freedom. Sue also affirmed concern for individual freedom.

Jim: "America is a country of freedom... Government shouldn't force people to do something that they don't want to do" (blog post, 4/27/2013).

Larry: "America is a free country, it does not mean you will have absolutely freedom" (blog post, 4/28/2013).

Sharer: "What does freedom mean to you?" (blog post, 4/28/2013).

Jim: "Freedom means we can do whatever we want as long as we didn't break the law" (blog post, 4/29/2013).

Bob: "*You stated* the U.S is a free country but in this context there is not absolute freedom because that would be anarchy, government has to regulate production of goods to maintain a balance market in the economy. Also health care needs reform to protect the assets of citizens that pay taxes for others" (blog post, 5/1/2013).

Chris: "...the preamble it says, 'we the people...blessing of liberty,' and by having this bill passed, I feel a loss of liberty" (blog post, 5/2/2013).

Sue: "This act look like it limits our freedom. We cannot do what we want to, our own health is our personal issue and we should have a choice on it" (blog post, 5/4/2013).

The blog post exchange provided a forum for four Asian immigrant students, one African American student, and myself, a European American teacher, to dialogue on a ideal central to U.S. – freedom. While they did not resolve whether or not the Affordable Care Act limited their freedom, they raised their concerns and challenged or affirmed each other's assumptions. They led and participated in a dynamic deliberation at the academic table.

Reflection on / Analysis of Deliberation Four

The fourth deliberation included two parts: how should the U.S. Constitution be interpreted and a timely case, the Affordable Care Act. Understanding judicial philosophy – originalist versus living constitutionalist – is an AP U.S. Government exam topic. In addition, students needed to understand judicial philosophy as part of our preparation for the final deliberation on the Affordable Care Act. For the first part, I had to be flexible and change from a deliberation to a think-write-pair-share strategy. I also utilized “Take a Stand” to help move the process forward and encourage students to move from discussion to decision making. My pre-planned teacher moves had to respond to students’ needs, an approaching AP exam and the ever-present “bell.” I also realized the philosophical position of judges did not engender much interest.

Once again, I provided extensive background information to prepare for our question: “Is the Affordable Care Act constitutional or unconstitutional? Is the individual mandate to purchase insurance constitutional?” When we began the deliberation, students’ questions on health care were genuine; having health care is not a given. That said, the deliberation was not merely on the merits of health insurance or health care. They had to determine whether or not requiring health insurance is constitutional. This required me to directly guide the process through questions. For example, I had to remind students of what we had learned about Federalism and federal agencies to generate any response. Rather than a deliberation between students it became a series of teacher generate questions and short responses by students. Most responses were based on personal experience rather than constitutional arguments. During day two of the deliberation, once again I returned to my fall back strategy, “Take a Stand.”

Using “Take a Stand” forced everyone to say something. Again, for most of the discussion I had to add clarification and infuse the disciplinary language and content. Nevertheless, students took a position and two, Larry and Bill, referenced a Supreme Court case and the Commerce Clause. The turning point in the “Take a Stand” occurred at the end. The bell rang but Rose demanded we stop and hear her argument. Her peers stayed and listened. Although the students did not exhibit a sufficient understanding of either judicial interpretation or constitutional arguments related to the Affordable Care Act, they demonstrated their commitment to each other and the process. They exercised civic competence and citizenship.

Following the deliberation, students’ blog posts built on the deliberation and “Take a Stand.” While students expressed concern about health care, they also cited previous Supreme Court decisions on the Commerce Clause as evidence. In the blog format, students appeared to use their “packets” with notes and had the time to formulate an argument. They also referenced a statistic from the deliberation regarding the U.S. economy and health care. Last, in their subsequent response to two peers, students consistently used the sentence starters; the tone of the responses was academic and deliberate.

Three student moves stand out during the fourth deliberation: the students use of Supreme Court Cases as evidence, the tense blog discussion between Larry and Jim and the students participation in the Street Law legal simulation. First, to support a position, students had to consider previous Supreme Court cases on the Commerce Clause, the Constitution’s “necessary and proper clause,” and determine if the Supreme Court ruled appropriately on justifying the requirement to have health insurance. While the

deliberation and “Take a Stand” strategies did not produce a depth of analysis based on disciplinary evidence, by the time students wrote the blog posts, they were able to make a shift in use of evidence. Students used their prior knowledge and experience with health care in conjunction with their understandings of U.S. laws to formulate a position. The additional step of responding to two peers forced students to further refine their thinking.

Second, when Larry used the blog format to challenge Jim’s reasoning on the Affordable Care Act, a dynamic discussion occurred. It moved beyond the Act to understandings of freedom and identity. It also showed Larry had acquired the message that academic arguments required disciplinary evidence; he chastised Jim for relying on personal opinion. The blog format allowed Bob, Sue, Chris and I to join the discussion. Freedom, an ideal or value synonymous with the founding of the U.S., was defined collectively through a deliberative process rather than in isolation or individually. Freedom became concrete in the context of interpreting the law and individual’s experiences; it was not an abstract concept.

Lastly, students used the skills they had learned in class, including increased confidence, to actively participate in the *Street Law* legal simulation. During the simulation, students worked in teams to formulate positions on scenarios with legal implications. For example, one scenario included teens, alcohol served at a student’s home, and a car accident. Students had to consider who was liable. Although the topic did not require the depth of constitutional analysis of our deliberations, all of our students participated individually and collectively. Although I do not know if this could have occurred in October, it did occur in April. They took what we had learned in the classroom to a public forum. They sat at the head of an expanded academic table.

The Advanced Placement exam

Ken Bernstein (2013, February 9), a recently retired Advanced Placement teacher and scorer or reader of the AP U.S. Government exam for the College Board, lamented the impact of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation on his “quite bright,” suburban students. NCLB contributed to his students entering high school with very limited background in social studies and higher level thinking needed for college preparatory writing. According to Bernstein (2013, February 9), the Advanced Placement U.S. Government exam’s Free Response Questions (FRQs) do not enhance students’ academic writing. For example, the FRQ focuses on content far more than argumentation and there is no assessment of the structure of the response (Bernstein, 2013, February 9). The exam focuses on breath of content versus depth of knowledge and analysis (Bernstein, 2013, February 9; Parker, et al., December 2013; Parker & Lo, April 2014). The “tug of war” between preparing students for a content loaded test versus civic competence and college level thinking and writing impinged on my planning and preparation.

Out of respect for my students, I felt obligated to prepare students for the Advanced Placement exam. The first and second year I taught the course, I asked students to complete a blind on-line questionnaire at the end of the school year. One series of questions was about exam preparation. Students consistently wrote they wanted to be prepared for the exam. Most of my former students felt prepared for the AP US Government exam. Nevertheless, their scores did not reflect their confidence. After proctoring many AP exams, I also learned the importance of preparing students for both the length and structure of an AP exam.

Starting in 2011-2012, my second year teaching the course, I became Advanced Placement Coordinator at our high school. The role is primarily administrative but I also proctored all AP classes' exams except my own class. The College Board requires precise protocols and procedures for proctoring exams. While we followed the protocols, I witnessed students who were unprepared and very frustrated during testing. Some students quickly gave up and put their heads down. Others were very distracted and had difficulty focusing. After the exam, there were comments about what they did not know versus what they knew. After my first year as a proctor, I resolved to provide a safe, affirming and serious testing environment for all students. My students would enter and leave the AP exam confident and secure in their abilities and intelligence. Regardless of their score on the exam, they should know they belong at the AP exam table.

To prepare students, we did five activities during the academic year aligned with the exam: (1) Cornell Notes with vocabulary on each chapter of the textbook, (2) test aligned multiple choice questions on chapter tests, (3) gradual increase in the number of multiple choice questions per timed test, (4) untimed and timed Free Response Questions (FRQ), and (5) end-of-course exam focused assignments and student presentations. In addition, the blog posts provided an additional writing experience requiring course content. Also, when planning the deliberations, I attempted to balance current and controversial issues with the course requirements of the knowledge and content of the structures and mechanism of government. For example, we closely examined the U.S. Constitution on the powers of the executive branch before the deliberation on the War Powers Act and the "War on Terror." While I frequently wrote in my journal I felt a lack

of time to maintain an appropriate pacing, by the time students took the exam on May 14, 2013, we had at least covered the required content.

AP U.S. Government Exam: Multiple Choice Questions

The AP U.S. Government exam includes 60 multiple-choice questions that must be answered in 45 minutes. According to *Government and Politics United States and Comparative: Course Description*, each questions includes five answer choices (College Entrance Examination Board, 2010b).³² In previous years, students told me they wanted more practice answering questions within a set time limit. Therefore, I gradually increased the number of questions on each multiple-choice test from 30 on the initial test to 60 on the final test. Each marking period, I created two multiple-choice tests. Students were given a study sheet that listed content to review for the test. The test questions were modeled after the AP U.S. Government exam. Although the College Board rarely releases multiple choice exam questions, the 1999 test was released and the textbook included sample multiple-choice questions. I also wrote questions based on class topics that were not in the textbook.

Since I began teaching the course, I encouraged students to do “test corrections” following our class multiple-choice tests. The “text correction” process should help students think through why the answer they chose was incorrect while also improving their grade point average. It would enhance their metacognition. On average, nine

³² Until 2011-2012, students lost credit for a wrong answer. In 2011-2012, the College Board switched to “right-only” scoring for Advanced Placement tests.

students completed test corrections for each test. The following is the test corrections policy:

Test Corrections	A.P. U.S. Government
<i>Test corrections are to be done alone – they are not a group effort.</i>	
Multiple Choice: If you selected an incorrect answer, (a) write why you selected the incorrect answer (at least two complete sentences) and (b) why the correct answer is accurate (at least 1 complete sentence) – up to 1.5 points	
You may receive up to 80% on the test.	

I included a due date and students had to sign the form stating they did the corrections alone. I required solo corrections because I did not want a student to merely copy another student's work. Also, ideally, if students used the strategies we reviewed in class for taking multiple-choice tests, they should develop cognitive tools to interpret multiple-choice questions. Based on the test results, this did not occur.

The following line graph shows the mean score on each class multiple-choice test without and with test corrections. The average for the six multiple-choice tests before test corrections is 49.6%; the average with test corrections is 59.7%. The change in percentage is distorted because, on average, only half of the students completed test corrections. The students who consistently did test corrections were Cheri, Bill, Larry, Rose, Jim, Chris, Gail, Lois and Sue. While they completed test corrections, the process did not lead to significant improvement in test scores without test corrections. The number of questions per test may have influenced the results; the first test had 30 questions and I added five questions per test. The final test had 60 questions. Like the AP US Government exam, students had 45 minutes for each test. Nevertheless, students

who completed the corrections improved their grade point average if not their ability to excel on the multiple-choice test.

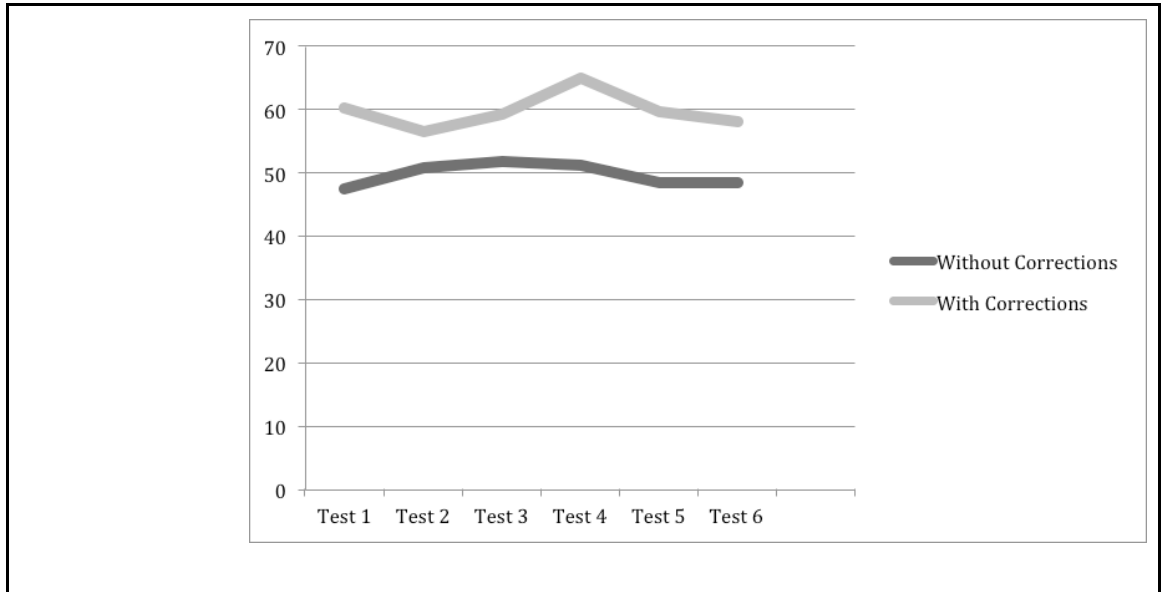


Figure 15: Course Multiple-Choice Tests Averages with and without Text Corrections

AP U.S. Government exam: Free Response Questions (FRQs)

The Free Response Questions on the AP U.S. Government exam consist of four required questions. Each question holds equal weight. According to the College Board (2010b), the questions require students to demonstrate their “knowledge” by analyzing, interpreting and organizing information with “specific examples.” The scoring guidelines are very straightforward; students earn five to six points per question by answering with a “correct description,” “correct explanation,” or “correct definition” (College Entrance Examination Board, 2013a). According to the scoring guidelines,

students must include particular terms and concepts in their answer. Students demonstrate what they know but not what they think.

The following is the first question from the 2013 AP U.S. Government exam Free Response Questions (College Entrance Examination Board, 2013b):

1. There are several different approaches to representation within a democratic political system.
 - (a) Define direct democracy.
 - (b) Define republican form of government.
 - (c) Describe one reason the framers of the United States Constitution chose a republican form of government over a direct democracy.
 - (d) Describe each of the models of congressional representation.
 - Trustee model (attitudinal view)
 - Delegate model (representational view)
 - (e) Explain why a member of Congress might sometimes act as a trustee (attitudinal view) rather than a delegate (representational view).

The prompt asks students to “define,” “describe” and “explain.” The prompt also is, in the words of Parker and Lo (2014, April), is a “vocabulary” list versus purposeful learning. Even the final bullet, the explanation, only requires how and why; there is no space for an academic argument on a particular form of representation. If a student diverts from the prompt, he or she will not receive any points.

Besides releasing the prompts, The College Board releases exemplars for each question. According to the College Board (2013b), the following answer received full credit.

- (a) Direct democracy is a form of government, such as that of Ancient Greece, in which the citizens vote directly on key issues and for their leaders. Rather than elect representatives, citizens represent themselves and meet together to discuss and vote on issues.
- (b) A republican form of government is one in which citizens elect leaders to represent them in the government and to cast votes on important issues to represent the interests of their constituents.
- (c) The framers chose a republican form of government over a direct democracy

because they feared putting important political matters directly in the hands of the people. They feared this would result in conflict and destruction of the original values of the Constitution, particularly because the new government was still fairly weak at the time.

(d) The trustee model of Congressional representation is one which the Congress person makes political decisions influenced by their own personal views and ideologies. The delegate model is one in which the Congress person votes and makes political decision based solely on who he or she believes their constituents would want.

(e) A member of Congress might act more as a trustee than a delegate if the issue at hand falls under his or her area of expertise. For example, a Congress person with a business background may base a vote concerning business regulation on his or her own prior knowledge and experience with the matter rather than on what their constituents support.

The exemplar complies with the directives in the prompt. The parameters of the prompt are narrow and subordinates higher-order thinking; there is no expectation of argumentation, comparison / contrast or consideration of the effects of a particular form of representation. Similarly, the three additional prompts on the 2013 AP U.S. Government exam only required students to “describe” and “explain” (See Appendix 10).

To prepare students for the Free Response Questions (FRQs), I introduced the format and structure of the questions in October. In the instructions, I included:

Remember, a FRQ is NOT an essay. You answer the components of the questions – nothing else. You are NOT asked for your opinion – you are asked to use evidence or examples. Pay attention to assessment terms: define, identify, describe, and explain.

- Write an introductory sentence by using key terms from the question. (In the U.S., the political culture....)
- Answer each question and include the letter to show what you are answering (a), (b), etc. Follow the question order as they appear on the test.
- During the AP test, you will NOT be given any background information. You need to rely on what you remember. You need to include examples / evidence from history, current events, Court cases, amendments to the Constitution, etc. whenever possible to support your answer.

For each marking periods one through three, I assigned one FRQ to complete outside of class and one timed FRQs in-class. I followed the College Board format; I included four questions in each FRQ and required students to “define,” “identify,” “describe” and / or “explain.” The prompts were based on what we had studied and, sometimes, included charts, graphs or political cartoons. I also encouraged all students to revise their written assignments. Just as I encouraged “test corrections” on multiple-choice tests, I encouraged and helped students revise written assignments.

Although we only did six FRQs, we did many additional formal writing assignments from essays to blog posts to writing a congressional bill. Unlike the FRQ, the other writing assignments required students to include what they thought versus only what they knew. Students had to support their position with evidence, compare and contrast proposals and consider the effects of policies. College type preparatory writing, unfortunately, did not prepare them for the FRQs. For example, in the *AP United States Government and Politics 2013 Scoring Guidelines* (2013b), a student response to question 1(e) received “0” points because the student “inaccurately used a partisan argument.” There is no indication if the partisan argument was supported with evidence. Therefore, since the deliberation and blog posts, and other class academic writing exercises, encouraged critical thinking and analysis, I may not have properly prepared students to carefully separate their point of view from the “facts” required for the FRQs.

Initially, of the six FRQs we did during the academic year, most students were willing to revise the out-of-class assignments. On the first out-of-class FRQ, 13 of 17 students completed the FRQ; 12 revised the assignment. The scores ranged from 17% to

67%.³³ With each subsequent FRQ, fewer students made revisions but the mean scores improved. The second FRQ mean score was 51% and the third FRQ mean score was 54.4%. Also, by the third out-of-class FRQ, all students submitted the assignment but only two students made revisions. The pattern was the same with the in-class FRQs; by the final FRQ only two students made revisions but the mean scores increased.

Therefore, I assumed students' familiarity with writing an FRQ improved.

Unfortunately, most students scored few points on the FRQs on the AP exam.

My decision to teach and assign a limited number of FRQs was influenced by my assumption that the blog posts would provide the writing practice to prepare for the AP U.S. Government exam. In retrospect, the deliberation and subsequent blog posts did not mirror the FRQ format. Rather than only focusing on the four academic tasks in an FRQ - "define," "identify," "describe" and "explain" - recalling of factual information and reporting content - I asked students to also conduct research, evaluate evidence, and propose solutions. The deliberation process and blog posts required students to take a position - to think - and support their position with evidence. The later is more aligned with the Common Core Standards than the AP U.S. Government FRQ (Bunch, Kibler & Pimentel, 2012). The process also is more aligned with what King, Newmann, and Carmichael (2009) label "authentic intellectual work." "Authentic intellectual work" requires students to create knowledge, versus recall information, based on prior knowledge, deep understanding of new knowledge, extensive dialogue, and real world and students valued associations (King, Newmann & Carmichael, 2009). If I had focused on students acquiring the knowledge from the course aligned textbook, would students

³³ Like the AP U.S. Government FRQ, I gave students points for each accurate answer. Then, I converted the points to a percentage. Students asked for a percentage grade.

have done better on the FRQs? I do not know. I do know the deliberation and blog posts process incorporated the productive and receptive literacy domains - speaking, writing, listening and reading – necessary for college and career more effectively than the Free Response Questions.

End of course test preparation

To further prepare for the AP exam, I created four assignments. The assignments were in addition to their homework Cornell Notes, a handout with Supreme Court cases and a vocabulary review handout. The first assignment was for Spring Break and due April 2. The assignment included an online practice test from *Shmoop*, a test preparation and learning guide web site, and a chart to analyze their results. Based on the results, I asked students to complete a chart with five strategies they believed would help them prepare for the test. The second assignment was a sample test from our exam practice book, *5 Steps to a 5 AP U.S. Government and Politics, 2011*. After completing the test, students were to complete “Analysis of Practice Test Results.” Nine students completed the analysis. The analysis included listing unfamiliar vocabulary, considering what helped them answer questions correctly, and a deeper analysis of 12 questions they had incorrect. Third, students worked with a partner to prepare a review of two course topics to present to the class. Lastly, students were assigned two Free Response Questions (FRQs) to complete individually (See Appendix 11).

The second assignment, the analysis of their practice test results, reiterated students’ unfamiliarity with vocabulary and difficulty with completing the multiple-

choice section in 45 minutes. I did not include the practice test results in students' grade point average. Instead they received credit for analyzing their results on the practice test assignment. Although only nine students did the assignment, their reflections provided insights preparing students for future exams. Four immigrant students who completed the reflection, Larry, Jim, Lois and Gail, wrote about their frustrations with a timed exam.³⁴ For example, Lois wrote "I did not understand some words and some questions were long so it took me awhile to read the questions." Jim conferred with Lois; "I was unable to answer questions correctly because I have no enough time and question words look unfamiliar to me." Again, Larry wrote "picking answer too fast; I can not pay attention to the questions." Other students also expressed bewilderment including Chris, "my mind was drawing blanks" and Cheri, "I mixed up and was confused of which was which for the many court cases and some things I don't remember." All students were overwhelmed by the academic vocabulary; John wrote, "I have no clue what some of these words mean." Despite the fact I had explicitly taught disciplinary vocabulary and assessment terminology and students had taken multiple-choice tests since October, the phrasing of the questions, vocabulary and content was a burden. The mean score for the practice test was 39.3%. The results were discouraging (Journal, April 23, 2014).

The third assignment had three components and was done in pairs. Each pair was assigned two chapters from the AP exam review book. Two components of the assignment, definitions of vocabulary terms for their chapters, and summary notes on the chapters, were to be posted on our class blog site. I provided a model for the summary;

³⁴ Our state's standardized tests are not timed. All students have unlimited time to complete the tests. For four years prior to 2013, I proctored "extended time" for English Language Learners (ELLs) on the standardized tests. Many students required twice as much time as their U.S. born counterparts.

the students had to list key ideas / definitions of key terms and constitutional and/or Supreme Court connections. The third component was a presentation of the topics in the chapters for the class. Students created a PowerPoint or Prezi to present the key concepts / themes, terms, and either (a) section(s) of the Constitution / Amendments or (b) Supreme Court Cases. I stayed after school five days to help students with the assignment. Only two pairs, Sue and Lois, and Brenda and Nancy, came after school for help (Journal, April 29, 2013). Nevertheless, unlike the other assignments, all students completed the third assignment. I allotted two class days for students to prepare and four days for presentations. While I was pleased students turned in the assignments, I had to cajole and beg to ensure all presentations were ready. Unfortunately, six of the eight presentations were incomplete and the summaries were mediocre (Journal, May 6, 2013).

The fourth assignment was a Free Response Question (FRQ). I gave them sample FRQs with answers from the College Board AP U.S. Government released items. Since I was proctoring other AP tests, they were to complete the FRQ with a substitute teacher on May 10. We would review their responses on May 13, the day before the exam. Twelve students completed the FRQ on May 10; four students, Bill, Larry, Rose and Brenda,³⁵ cut class and one student was absent. Like other assessments, the results were mixed. Chris and Gail answered all of the questions and understood the prompts. Six students answered at least three of the four questions and four students completed one or two questions. I scored the FRQs over the weekend and we reviewed their responses in

³⁵ The students cut class because they participated in the National Honor Society's annual blood drive. They did not ask permission nor arrange another time to complete the FRQ. One student, Gail, asked permission to miss class. She came after school to complete the FRQ. Therefore, students were participating in a civic action but it was also an indication that they were not focused on the exam.

class. They worked in small groups and assessed each other's FRQs with an exemplar. At that point, it was too late to "cram" for the exam (Journal, May 13, 2013).

In addition, I scheduled after school and two Saturday review sessions. I was only able to persuade students to show up for one afterschool review session - May 13. Chris, Larry, Sue, Cheri, Brenda, Sandy, Jim and Bill attended. Since we only had one and a half hours, I asked them to look through the topics from the previous week's presentations and vocabulary. We would prioritize what we would review. At this point, I assumed clarifying vocabulary and concepts would be beneficial. They came up with a list of topics and I asked students to select a topic they felt confident about to explain to the group. After some prodding, everyone but Jim and Chris agreed to present the topic. It was interesting to listen to the student's explanation of how they understood or remembered the Court cases and vocabulary (Journal, May 13, 2013). When we left, I thanked them for coming and told them "you'll be fine tomorrow. Get enough sleep." I did not tell that I was now concerned; I did not want the review session to discourage rather than encourage them (Journal, May 13, 2013).

Whether or not I provided appropriate or sufficient review would be tested the following day, May 14, 2013. I had tried different review strategies each year. Students' scores did not improve. This year, the review process was truncated because we had to rush to complete all of the required content. We had invested time in the deliberation rather than "covering" and drilling the course requirements. I would have to wait until July 2013 for the results.

AP U.S. Government 2013 test results

As the Advanced Placement Coordinator at my high school, I coordinate and proctor exams. I am not permitted to proctor my class' test. I asked a colleague to proctor the test. My colleague taught another AP course. With him, I reviewed the procedures and booklet for the test, including the time requirements. I assumed the testing environment would be conducive for a high stakes test.

The AP U.S. Government exam was on Tuesday, May 14, 2013. This was the last exam the students would take during their high school career. There were 16 students scheduled to take the exam; one student, Sally, had injured her foot in an accident. She stopped attending school in early May. By 7:50 AM, 15 students were eating the breakfast I had purchased – bagels and cream cheese, bananas, red grapes, orange juice, apple juice, and energy / granola bars. Bob was late. I called his home at 8:00 AM; his father assured me he would be at school in time to start the test at 8:30 AM.

In general, the first 30 minutes of the exam are to complete the pre-test information. Then, students have 2 hours and 35 minutes for the test including a 10-minute break. In comparison, the AP U.S. history test is 3 hours and 15 minutes. When I proctor, I carefully monitor the time and encourage students to continue and try their best. With each exam I have proctored since 2011-2012, there are students who quickly give up on the writing or open-ended section of the exam. While I did not think about who would or would not “give up,” I assumed students would take the allotted time since they only had 100 minutes for four open ended questions. To my surprise, my colleague dismissed the students 30 minutes early. When I inquired why he had dismissed the

students early, he said, “They flaked out” (Journal, May 14, 2013). I did not know how to respond. I will never know if the dismissal affected the test results.

The College Board restricts discussion of the AP exams. A teacher may never view nor discuss the multiple-choice section of the test with the students. The open-ended section is released 48 hours after the exam. Then, the teacher and students may review the open-ended section. I was very curious about their shortened exam period but waited 48 hours to discuss it with my students. I privately and individually asked three students why they left the exam early. They all told me they asked to stay but my colleague told them they were dismissed. Apparently, he assumed they did not need or desire additional time. The students also told me a few students stopped taking the exam – Bob, Robert and John. While I was not surprised the three students did not complete the exam since throughout the year they had done little work outside of class, I was still very disappointed. What if they had been encouraged to continue to try to answer the questions? Would it have made any difference? I will never know.

In July 2013, the College Board released the local AP exam results and in February 2014, the College Board released national results (College Entrance Examination Board, February 2014). Again, AP exams are scored from a “1” to “5” with a “5” the highest score. Nationally, on the May 2013 exams, 20.1% of high school seniors scored a “3” or higher on at least one AP exam. In our state, the average was 15.9%. Also in May 2013, nationally of the 216,944 students nationwide who took the AP US Government exam, 24.6% of students scored a “1” and 24.9% scored a “2” for a total of 49.5%. Nationwide, 325,108 students took the English Literature exam; 11.7% scored a “1” and 33.4% scored a “2” for a total of 45.1%. For Calculus AB, 223,444

took the test with 31.1% scoring a “1” and 11.2% scoring a “2” for a total of 42.3%. In contrast, of the 5,684 students nationwide who took the AP Chinese Language and Culture exam, 70.1% scored a “5.”

How did our school compare to the national results? Our school’s scores on the AP Chinese Language and Culture exam were slightly higher than the national average; conversely, our school’s scores on the English, math, and U.S. government exam were significantly lower. Why was AP Chinese aligned with the national scores but not the other courses? Students who take AP Chinese at our school are ethnically Chinese and are already fluent in Chinese, Mandarin, and some are also fluent in Cantonese or Fujian. The teacher only accepts students who are already fluent in Chinese and have lived in China at least through eighth grade. Eleven students received “5s,” one student a “4” and two students received “3s;” 78% of our students received a “5” on the AP Chinese exam.

In comparison, in AP U.S. Government, two students, Bill and Gail, received “2s;” the 14 other students received “1s.” In all but AP Chinese, the exam scores at our school were similar to AP U.S. Government. English Literature had three “2s” out of 11 student and U.S. history had two “2s” out of nine students.³⁶ Three students out of 19 received a “3” in calculus. Of the students in AP US Government, one student, Bill, received a “2” in AP U.S. Government and a “2” in English Literature. Gail received a “2” in AP U.S. Government and a “2” in calculus.³⁷ Bob received a “1” in AP U.S.

³⁶ Three of the 11 students who took AP English Literature had taken the same course with the same teacher during the 2011-2012 school year. Therefore, they took the AP English Literature exam twice. The principal allowed the students to take the same course twice arguing they may improve their test scores. As far as I am aware, this was the only time our students took the same AP course two years in a row.

³⁷ One student, Larry, took the AP Calculus AB exam in 2012. He scored a “4.” He was the only student in 2012 who did not score a “1” on the calculus exam at our school. In 2012, Jim, Rose and Larry, all fluent in Chinese, also took the AP Chinese exam and scored 4, 5, and 5 respectively.

Government but a “2” in English Literature. Otherwise, everyone received a “1” in their AP U.S. Government and other AP tests in 2013.

In the June 7 semi-structured interview, immigrant students shared their thoughts on the exam. Gail said she was prepared because “I felt like we covered all the stuff.” Larry and Sue found many questions confusing; Sue shared “I don’t understand what the question about... I can’t answer.” Larry stated, “If you know the answer, you just chose. It is hard to guess. Some very confusing. Time is quick.” Gail also reflected on the time and the language divide between the knowledge of immigrant and U.S. born students and the need for additional testing time:

“We are immigrants. We don’t know this. We need more time on the test. The real Americans understand.” Gail clarified, “I mean they know the English level and everything like some people... even when I watch a movie I don’t know what they are talking.”

Students also considered how the U.S. form of government differs from their home countries and why this presents problems in preparing for the exam. Larry included “We learned a lot. It is totally different from my country, China... The U.S. passes laws. The Constitution is different. The three branches. So much to learn is so different.” Gail responded:

“It is so different from Burma... Americans already know and been in democracy and people know rights. In Burma it is just happening now. People need to get use to it (having rights). I think it will take time to become like a real democracy. I need to understand more so it is good we learn more but it is so much for the test.”

Students, while struggling with the content of the exam, made connections to their prior knowledge and experiences. The immigrant students found value in learning about the

U.S. governmental system, especially social justice issues and constitutional rights, even if they felt overwhelmed by the exam.

While I was disappointed with the results on the AP U.S. Government exam, I was not surprised. The results were similar to 2011 and 2012. As I have written, I did not teach the course in 2013-2014. Another teacher wanted to teach the course so I taught AP U.S. History. Even so, the 2014 AP U.S. Government results were identical to 2013; two students scores a “2” and the 15 other students received a “1.” This was despite different demographics in the 2014 AP U.S. Government class. The alternative, special admission program that took students from the 2012 and 2013 classes no longer was available for our students. The 2014 class included the class valedictorian and salutatorian and a transfer student who previously scored a “3” on AP English Literature and a “4” on AP Psychology. The class also had fewer immigrant students. Lastly, the 2014 class benefited from a *Gear Up* grant.³⁸ The *Gear Up* grant included a full time staff person to work with the students to prepare for college since middle school. They had numerous college trips during high school, assistance with college applications, scholarships and grants and received tutorial support. To prepare for the AP U.S. Government exam, my colleague’s pedagogical approach was more textbook driven. There was frequent lecture / note taking on topics, occasional class discussion on assigned readings, and student written, versus teacher scaffolded, Cornell Notes on every textbook chapter. She also devoted six weeks of test preparation. There were no class trips. Nevertheless, the results were the same. Very few students scored higher than a “1” on the AP exam.

³⁸ *Gear Up* is a federal grant to support increasing the number of low-income students prepared for college.

Exercising civic competence post-AP exam

After the AP exam, students had an opportunity to exercise civic competence in support of equitable school funding. In general, students in “under-resourced” or “under-funded” schools have lower AP scores than students in more affluent school districts (Handwerk, Tognatta, Coley & Gitomer, 2008; Stevens, October 2013). Test scores also significantly vary based on geography and ethnicity (College Entrance Examination Board, February 2014). According to Tai (2008), despite the College Board’s and U.S. federal government’s emphasis on “access and equity” for “underrepresented students,” if students have not been prepared for advanced coursework, participation in an Advanced Placement class will not address the inequitable funding of public schools.

In our School District, underfunding is not a new phenomenon. In 1993, the state froze the school funding formula leading to two lawsuits filed in 1997-1998 to require the state to provide equitable funding (Travers, 2003). One lawsuit claimed the state school funding formula was discriminatory against “non-white” students. Instead of allowing the lawsuits to proceed, the mayor and the state legislature agreed to a “friendly” takeover of the School District in exchange for additional funding (Travers, 2003). The School District was taken over by the state on December 21, 2001. Since then, funding ebbed and flowed; beginning in 2010-2011, funding was dramatically cut causing annual “doomsday budgets” as charter school population rapidly grew while District schools were closed and enrollment decreased (Denvir, 2014, October 13). Lack of funding and basic resources is the norm in our public schools.

Students had an opportunity to address school funding three days after the AP U.S. Government exam. On May 17, 2013, the 59th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme

Court Brown v. Board decision, thousands of students walked out of school at noon to protest school budget cuts (Lattanzio, 2013, May 18). When I watched video clips posted on YouTube over the weekend post May 18, I saw at least a dozen of my students in their school grey, collared uniform shirt, walking to City Hall (Journal, May 19, 2013). Over half Sandler High School students walked out of school on May 17.

Six students remained in our AP U.S. Government class during the walkout: Larry, Jim, Chris, Sue, Rose and Cheri (Journal, May 17, 2013). I asked them if it was okay to audio record our conversation. They agreed. The group was very talkative about their personal lives and impressions of U.S. schools. They did not feel comfortable walking out of school but they supported students who did. Cheri began by sharing her concerns with rights of students. Rose confirmed, “first Amendment,” and preceded to review some of the rights we had discussed in class. Larry was also reflective about what was missing in our schools including more higher-level math and science courses: “equity must be the rule rather than the exceptional” (Journal, May 17, 2013). Even though my students did not demonstrate on the exam the College Board AP U.S. Government’s definition of “qualified” to “extremely well qualified,” they exhibited civic competence throughout the year, including three days following the exam. Both the students who walked-out and the students who remained understood and exercised constitutional rights.

Reflection on the AP Exam and Results

If a class is measured by the results of one exam, my students and I did not meet the standard. Although I introduced them to the format of the exam's questions, including multiple choice and Free Response Questions (FRQs), and simulated the exam format questions throughout the year, the students were not able to demonstrate what they learned in this format. The year long scaffolding of academic skills, including learning academic and disciplinary vocabulary, academic and evidence based writing, research, and a series of deliberations connecting course content with contemporary issues, did not appropriately prepare my students for the exam.

Rather than closely align the course with a College Board approved textbook, I chose to combine the course required content, such as the presidential election process and the three branches of the federal government, with contemporary and controversial issues (Hess, 2009; Rubin, 2012). Pedagogically, while I included test preparation by mimicking multiple-choice and Free Response Questions and textbook based note taking with Cornell Notes, the majority of our class time was devoted to scaffolding academic and disciplinary skills and small group research to prepare for varied instructional activities and assessments such as a role-play, presentations, academic writing and deliberations and blog posts. My re-introduction to deliberations occurred in June 2011 at a Street Law seminar; Diana Hess (2009) led us through a deliberation simulation. Dr. Hess also distributed a draft of the article, "Rethinking Advanced High School Coursework: Tackling the Depth/Breadth Tension in the AP U.S. Government and Politics Sources" (Parker, Mosborg, Bransford, Vye, Wilkerson & Abbott, 2011). I decided to emphasize what the authors' label project-based learning throughout the

course. Next, I came across Beth Rubin's *Making Citizens* (2012); Rubin's research suggests five steps to organize academic discussions including teaching the structure and providing authentic topics. By explicitly teaching the deliberation process, including collaboration and research, and repeating the process throughout the academic year, I believed my "underrepresented students" would be better prepared for the AP exam than through an a "banking model" of instruction (Freire, 1970, 1993). The AP exam results require me to question my pedagogical approach and evaluate why most of my students struggled with the AP exam.

Despite reviewing the content and format of the exam, additional factors may have influenced the outcome. Many students' academic state of mind, especially in the last few months of their senior year, did not include end of year exam preparation. Our school did not have formal final exams in non-AP classes. Also, during the academic year, about half of the students consistently did work outside of class. While homework was assigned in other classes, the expectation of out of schoolwork was not consistent across the school. In addition, life's events, at times, took precedence over schoolwork. Next, scores on in-class multiple-choice tests during the year averaged around 50%. I should not have expected a better result on the AP exam. Students who have not been prepared for advanced academic course work from a young age will not quickly acquire the language and skills in one year (Klopfenstein & Thomas, January 2009; Tai, 2008). Even the College Board (2011) markets AP courses for students who are "willing and academically prepared... to succeed in a rigorous, college level opportunity" (p. 8).

Also, while students brought a wealth of prior knowledge and experiences related to ethnicity, gender, citizenship, age, language, culture, discrimination and assorted life

experiences, they had not been exposed to most of the course content or vocabulary before the class. Their knowledge of the mechanisms and structures of U.S. government was infinitesimal. Sally's point was typical; she wrote, "before this class, I really didn't know about the government and how it works" (student questionnaire, May 23, 2013). Cheri and Chris also expressed confusion with the quantity of content and vocabulary (student questionnaire, May 23, 2013). Larry and Sue stated they had difficulty interpreting some questions; therefore, they were not able to answer the questions (semi-structured interview, June 7, 2013). Gail noted the immigrant students did not have sufficient academic vocabulary (semi-structured interview, June 7, 2013). In June, Rose told me, in retrospect, I should have required them to memorize vocabulary (Journal, June 5, 2013). At the time, I viewed their advice as a negative reflection on my exam preparation. In retrospect, vocabulary instruction devoid of context and purposeful tasks with content contradicts with research on disciplinary and academic language learning (Blachowicz & Fischer, 2000; Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2008; O'Hara, Prichard & Zwiers, 2012; Walqui & van Lier, 2010.) Nevertheless, both immigrant and U.S. born students struggled with the academic and disciplinary vocabulary, discourse and content.

Some immigrant students may have benefitted from testing accommodations. Unfortunately, The College Board does not allow for any accommodations for English Language Learners on AP exams such as a word-to-word dictionary or extended time. Only students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) may receive accommodations. While a word-to-word dictionary would not have guaranteed better test scores, it may have given some students minimal extra support needed to interpret questions. Based on my standardized testing experience, a word-to-word dictionary is of limited use without

extended testing time. If students were given additional time, especially for the multiple-choice questions, they may have been more successful. Sixty questions in 45 minutes allows for 3/4th of a minute per question. Even Andy, who rarely complained to me, noted there was not enough time (student questionnaire, May 23, 2013).

Additionally, the AP U.S. Government exam results may also reflect a weakness of the test. While AP courses and exams are often portrayed as the standard in college preparation (Nugent & Karnes, 2002; Santoli, 2002), others chastise the focus on a standardized test versus preparing students for purposeful, collegiate learning (Katz, 2006; Schneider, 2009). Parker and Lo (2014, April) describe the AP U.S. Government exam as a “vocabulary” list of topics and Bernstein (2013, February 9) wrote the exam lacks college preparatory writing. The exam also does not provide students with an opportunity to engage in civic or “democratic education” (Hess, 2009) that includes an opportunity to express divergent points of view or delve into the complexities of civic life. According to Banks (2004, 2007, 2008), civic education should be grounded in the students’ cultures and provide opportunities for reflection and discernment while welcoming their ideas and beliefs. Instead, the AP exam merely asks students to “define,” “describe” and “explain.” In contrast, the deliberations and blog posts required students to analyze and synthesize disciplinary content with their experiences and support a position. Students had to engaged in real world learning (King, Newmann, & Carmichael; 2009; Parker, & Lo, 2014, April), and tackle issues related to complexity of their civic and community life (Hess, 2009; Rubin, 2012). In contrast, the AP exam was limited to lower level thinking. The topics on the exam, while relevant to the functioning of the federal government – political representation, political parties, judicial nominations, and public policy

implementation - did not ask students to connect the topics to their civic lives nor ask for their analysis nor arguments regarding a topic. Therefore, the deliberation and blog posts may not have provided the type of preparation necessary for the AP U.S. Government exam. The AP exam did not serve the parameters of discourse that evolved in our class.

Post AP test

On May 15, there were 16 days before students would begin rehearsing for graduation on June 10. One day was the senior trip and a professional development day. We had three days of shortened classes, 30 minutes, because of state standardized testing for non-seniors.³⁹ Realistically, we had about ten class periods left to bring the course to a close. We would end with one more deliberation and blog post and a “Legacy” project. The “Legacy” projects required students to select an issue significant to them, find information on the issue in three newspaper articles, and present how they will advocate about the issue after they graduate. Presentations would occur on the last three days of class, June 5 - 7.

The last deliberation was an expansion on civil rights and civil liberties we studied before the exam. I wanted to close with a deliberation and blog post directly related to the students - students’ rights in public schools. I had planned on audio tapping the last deliberation but it did not occur as a whole class. Instead, students worked in small

³⁹ The state’s standardized tests overlapped with the second week of AP exams. In total, there were six days of state standardized testing but only three more days after the AP U.S. Government exam. This was the first year of two “rounds” of state standardized testing: January and May.

groups and concluded with a blog post. Inconsistent student attendance dictated what we were able to do in class. Nevertheless, we focused on the following questions:

- Should students in public schools be forced to say the pledge of allegiance?
- Does political speech interfere with the public schools' mission to educate students?
- Should a school prohibit the wearing of offensive slogans or symbols?
- Should schools be able to dictate a student's appearance?
- Should public schools ban students' speech that refers to sex or drugs?
- Should a school district discipline a student who gives a lewd speech at a high school assembly?
- Should a school's administration determine what is in a student created school publication?

Similar to previous deliberations, I provided extensive background information with multiple perspectives before beginning the deliberation. I showed students two images of students with t-shirts that had been in the local news. We viewed a video clip from May 2013 about a local school district that suspended a student for wearing a t-shirt. We read a news article from the fall of 2012 about a School District student who was in a confrontation with a teacher over the political message on her t-shirt. I knew introducing school attire would stir their interest.

School attire, in particular uniforms, is contentious for teenagers. Our school requires students to wear a grey collared shirt and a pair of black pants or a skirt. Uniform policy was contentious throughout the year. On November 8, 2012, for example, the principal made an announcement restating the school's uniform policy. There had been students assigned to "in-house suspension," or a school based suspension, for uniform violations. Many students complained that the uniform policy was not clear not enforced fairly, especially against immigrant students (Journal, November 8, 2014). At the end of the year, Jim referenced the uniform policy when he sated:

“Some kind of stuff discriminates against immigrant students. Don’t speak English very well. They (school staff) don’t give a very good explanation. They just yell. ‘Wrong pants!’ So, I go to detention. Weird” (semi-structured interview, June 7, 2013).

Lingering complaints about the inequity in the uniform policy continued throughout the year.

On the second day of our last deliberation, students worked in small groups. Each group was assigned one question and a reading to annotate and summarize on chart paper and include in the “packet” to prepare for the deliberation (See Appendix 9). The readings provided background on the issue and two related Supreme Court cases. The process was interrupted by poor attendance and senior activities. Nevertheless, we pushed forward. The following was on the Promethean Board but only a few students attended on May 28. They worked in small groups rather than as a whole class deliberation.

First Amendment: 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.

Should students have limited first amendment rights - especially speech and the press - when they enter a school?

- (1) Briefly present your Court case(s)
- (2) Tinker Standard: School officials may not silence student expression just because they dislike it. They must reasonably forecast, based on evidence and not on an "undifferentiated fear or apprehension of disturbance," that the student expression would lead to either (a) a substantial disruption of the school environment, or (b) an invasion of the rights of others.
- (3) Write a brief review of the cases. Discuss the prompts.
- (4) Draw conclusions. How is student speech limited in public schools? Should student speech be limited in public schools?

At the conclusion of the process, I wanted students to create a policy for student speech in public schools related to (a) what students wear (b) student publications (c) student speeches and (d) participating in the Pledge of Allegiance or other group activities. Their proposal would be based on (1) the First Amendment and (2) at least 4- 5 subsequent Supreme Court cases. I hoped students would align themselves with a proposal based on constitutional arguments. Instead, eight students were on a science class trip, four students were absent and one student was at “in-house suspension.” Therefore, I spoke with the four remaining students and talked about their blog posts (Journal, May 29, 2013).

The blog posts required students to answer two of the original questions, and reflect on their beliefs before and after the deliberation. Then, they were to use Supreme Court decisions and their experiences as evidence. Four students did not complete the “packet” for the deliberation and five students turned it in late. While all students completed the blog post, seven were late and incomplete. Even though we did not complete the deliberation process, students who completed the blog posts included reflections on how the process influenced their beliefs. All but two of the students who submitted complete blog posts combined personal experiences and point of view with disciplinary content based on the Supreme Court decisions. The following three excerpts demonstrate the students’ abilities to participate in intellectual work connected to their prior experiences while not merely personalizing the dilemma; they place the dilemma in a larger context and consider its implications of a Supreme Court decision for all students.

Bill: “*Before* the deliberation I believed that the school should prohibit the wearing of symbols and slogans that may be deemed offensive by other students or the staff. I say this because I believe offensive symbols and slogans can be taken too far and cause a breach in the safety of the wearer and those around him. I have seen this happen at school. There can be racial tension... *After* the deliberation I completely agree with the decision of the *Supreme Court in Melton v. Young* because it is the duty of a school to keep its students safe from harm. If there is a history of tension that may be reignited because of a certain symbol or slogan the school definitely should have the right to ban the use of it” (blog post, 5/28/2013).

Andy: “No, Schools should not dictate a student's appearance. I think that student's appearances are really a personal matter, especially hair, it is really purely about personal matter.... The *Karr v. Schmidt decision*: A public school student has a First Amendment right to wear long hair to school. They said the student does not have a constitutional right to wear his hairstyle however he sees fit. I am not agree with the decision. I have experienced this rules back when i used to go to school in Indonesia. Most of schools did not allow students to have inappropriate hair and if the teacher see you with long hair, they will get a scissor right away and cut it messy so then students have no choice to cut it short. So i feel like students should have more freedom about their appearance or hair style as long as it don't bother student's school work and study” (blog post, 5/28/2013).

Sue: “Should students in public school be force to say the pledge of allegiance? *Before* the class deliberation, I think there is nothing wrong saying the pledge in school, because that is what I used to do when I live in Vietnam. The pledge was a part of the teaching in Vietnamese’s school, the teaching of loving your country and be loyal to it. So I don’t see anything “wrong” with saying the pledge in school. The court case of *Minersville School District v. Gobitis (1940)* ruled that student don’t need to say the pledge of allegiance. Respect to the flag was forbidden by Biblical commands and according to the 1st amendment, freedom of speech and freedom of religious, they don’t need to say what they don’t want and it is also belong to their own religious believe. *After*, I agreed with the decision because people have different believe, so force them to say what they don’t believe in or maybe against theirs believe is wrong. It’s protect by “freedom of religion” (blog post, 5/29/2013).

Bill, Andy and Sue included both their personal experience, “I have seen this happen at school” (Bill), “I have experienced this rule(s)...in Indonesia” (Andy) and “that is what I used to do when I live(d) in Vietnam” (Sue); they combined their prior knowledge with an analysis of the Supreme Court rulings to support a

position. They also indicated the classroom process and/or their peers, influenced their positions.

Students also grappled with how the deliberation process shaped their perceptions of community safety versus individual rights. Two cases involving free speech, *Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier* and *Melton v. Young*, evoked support for the Court's decisions based on school safety and disruption of student learning. Both issues directly affected the students. Although our school was neither extremely tense nor chaotic, our students were not immune to ethnic tension and divisions. In the semi-structured interviews in December, February and April, students openly and specifically discussed ethnic divisions and perceptions of the "wild kids" to other ethnic groups to lunchroom segregation (semi-structured interview, December 17, 2012). Their daily school and community experiences, as well as racial attacks on immigrant students at a neighboring high school in December 2009,⁴⁰ may have influenced their conclusions.

Sandy: "Should a school's administration determine what is in a student created school publication? *Before* the class deliberation I said that a school administration should not determine what a student put in the schools publication. But as the class talk about this issue I changed my point of view because some things are not meant to be in a publication like gossip, sexual pictures and innuendos. In the *Hazelwood school district v. Kuhlmeier* the court ruled in favor of the school saying that public schools do not have to allow student speech of it is inconsistent with the school's educational mission. *After*, I agree with this ruling if the publication prevents people from getting their education then it should not be in the newspaper" (blog post, 5/29/2013).

⁴⁰ In December 2009, the students' freshman year of high school or shortly before some of the immigrant students arrived in Philadelphia, 30 Asian immigrant students were attacked inside and outside of a neighboring School District high school. After inaction by the School District administration, an eight-day student led boycott brought attention to the crisis. (Ly, 2012)

Chris: “*Before the deliberation*, I think a school does have the right to prohibit offensive slogans or symbols that would disrupt school activity and the learning environment. In *Melton v. Young*, (1972) so basically a high school student was suspended for wearing a confederate flag on his clothing. The school argued that its going to be a big disruption. The high school student appealed and lost. *I still agree with the decision* because it is the school duty to keep the teaching environment safe and not hostile. The school has the right to prohibit offensive slogans and symbols that would disrupt the learning environment. If the court had decided to rule in favor of the of the high school student, then all hell would break loose and there would be riots in the school” (blog post, 5/29/2013).

Lois: “*Before the deliberation*, I believed a school should prohibit the wearing of offensive slogans or symbols because it may cause conflict or misunderstanding, especially race. In *Melton v. Young*, the court decided a school(s) can prohibit the wearing of offensive slogan or symbols. The Principal had every right to anticipate that a tense, racial situation continues to exist at the school and a disorders might reoccur if student use of the Confederate symbol. *After the deliberation*, I agree with the decision because even though students have First Amendment to protect our speech, school also must restrict what students can say... School administrators need to prevent conflict may occur by prohibiting the wearing of offensive slogans or symbols. So we can learn” (blog post, 5/29/2013).

Sandy, Chris and Lois stated their positions were influenced by the class deliberation. They considered the Supreme Court’s decisions and concluded safety and learning may be more important than freedom of speech. Other students who responded to their posts affirmed their positions. For example, Brenda responded to Sandy’s post: “Students speech could have some restrictions in cases of profanity, lewd sayings” (blog post, 6/1/2013).

There were numerous responses to the post regarding *Melton v. Young* - the wearing of a Confederate flag emblem in school. Students’ arguments focused on interpretations of the First Amendment while asking provocative questions and emphasizing respect for others. Larry wrote, “even though the first Amendment protects them (slogans or symbols), we must add some restrictions on some area

like school” (blog post, 5/29/2013). Then, Rose added she agreed with the Court’s decision but wondered, “Why did the manufacturer make this kind of jacket (with a Confederate flag emblem) for sale?” (blog post, 5/30/2013). Sue surmised “he might make the jacket by himself and have an intension on racial which is not protected by the 1st Amendment. These are not political speech it hurting people feelings and threaten them” (blog post, 6/2/2013). Gail agreed. “The freedom of speech can lead the tension on race and also can violate other’s rights. In such cases, there should be a prohibition” (6/2/2013). Lois concluded:

“The First Amendment which gives us rights to express our opinion. Therefore, many companies can manufacture those kinds of jackets. However, I think schools still should prohibit the wearing of offensive slogans or symbols to prevent conflict may occur between races or religions” (blog post, 6/3/2013).

Therefore, the interpretation of the First Amendment was not unanimous but the concern for preventing ethnic conflict, respecting other’s feelings and upholding the community prevailed.

End of the year Reflection / Analysis

Although my structure for the final deliberation failed, the process of a deliberation with blog posts was meaningful for many students. In the final online student questionnaire, student feedback confirmed the worth of “authentic intellectual work” (King, Newmann & Carmichael, 2009) in a high stakes test course with

“underrepresented students.” Lois, who attempted to drop the course in October and rarely spoke in class but often came after school for help, wrote:

“Debating and critical thinking. I know more about the topic. I know that most college courses required important thinking to write essays and to participate in class. This class trained me to become a good college student” (student questionnaire, 5/29/2013).

Sandy, who is also reserved, wrote the deliberation were the most helpful because “I got to state my opinion on a topic and I got to hear my classmates’ opinions” (student questionnaire, 5/29/2013). For Bill, the deliberation process allowed the topic to “stick in my memory” and for Rose, the deliberations let her “absorb more different opinions from others.” Gail wrote “I never talked a lot about issues. When I talk and talk and discuss I learn a lot” (student questionnaire, 5/29/2013). Bob agreed the process “let everyone better understand the topic” (student questionnaire, 5/29/2013). Larry recognized the role of deliberations in enhancing his language abilities: “I learned public speaking. Don’t just say it. Presentation develops our speaking and critical thinking skills” (student questionnaire, 5/29/2013). Jim concluded, “I am able to speak more confidently ” (student questionnaire, 5/29/2013). Students, like John, who were comfortable talking in class, found value in the blog posts because “I had to make sure to have evidence and valid views in order to blog. I could also see others’ point of view” (student questionnaire, 5/29/2013). The entire process – preparing for the deliberations through the blog posts – nurtured students productive and receptive language skills, refined their critical thinking and increased their awareness of and interest in civic issues.

The deliberation to blog post process also fostered community. In April, Brenda articulated, “In groups, I learn different people’s views and I learn my views by listening

to their arguments. I can change my views or keep them the same” (semi-structured interview, April 19, 2013). Larry and Chris found small group work beneficial because, according to Larry small groups “develop students teamwork and find out more evidence and ideas... we help with each other’s shortages” and for Chris, “we help ourselves and ask you if we really need help, we ask you (teacher)” (student questionnaire, 5/29/2013). Cheri also wrote “I like working with a partner and team because I help combine our knowledge... It does help build a better friendship with students because everyone will get closer since they will have to talk to each other” (student questionnaire, 5/29/2013). For Andy, the class “helped me a lot. Not just academics” (student questionnaire, 5/29/2013). Nancy, a student who often injected levity and tried to get us off topic, confessed, “I liked talking, having fun and forever bussin on everyone. I don’t like to work, it’s a real problem, but the learning with friends makes it fun. More interesting” (student questionnaire, 5/29/2013).⁴¹ Even Jim, a reserved student who often complained about the class, wrote, “I’m glad I took AP US Government because I have learned so much things in this class and make new friends. This class more like a family to me” (students questionnaire, 5/29/2013). While the academic and disciplinary learning was the overt intended purpose of the deliberation to blog post process, for many students, the process cultivated friendships and enabled them to learn.

The students’ end of the year reflections demonstrated the power of purposeful students talk and collaboration. They participated in “democratic education” (Hess, 2009) by taking academic and social risks while recognizing they learned from each other (Ochoa-Becker, 2007; Vygotsky, 1978; Walqui & van Lier, 2010) Students, such as

⁴¹ “Bussin” is “busting” or harsh teasing or mocking others.

Larry, Jim, and Cheri, although reluctant to talk in class found a voice in blog posts and in their small groups. Although I attempted to structure and direct the deliberations and blog posts, many meaningful moments happened when the structure crumbled. As Chris wrote, they helped each other and only sought my help if it was “really needed.” Their final written thoughts on deliberations affirmed the importance of a civics education that is more than the structure and mechanics of government. Civics education should be an opportunity to practice and create participatory, problematized citizenship in the microcosm of our classroom to empower students to carry their skills, awareness, challenges and confidence into our communities (Banks, 2004, 2008; Hess, 2009; Ochoa-Becker, 2007; Parker & Lo, 2014, April.) Participatory, problematized civic learning is possible in a linguistically, culturally and ethnically diverse classroom when instructional practices and processes honor students’ prior knowledge and identities as the students and teacher forge friendships (Ochoa-Becker, 2007). Once again, at the end of the academic year, the students not only demonstrated their civic competence but the importance of having their varied experiences, insights and proposals at the academic table.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Introduction

In this final chapter, I draw conclusions and consider the implications of what I learned by teaching and learning with a group of so-called “underrepresented” students in an urban, neighborhood high school Advanced Placement U.S. Government class during the 2012-2013 academic year. First, I consider the evolution of my research questions and explore possible answers drawn from the data of my study with references to (a) my teaching academic and disciplinary language and content with “underrepresented” students in the context of a national, high stakes standardized exam, (b) my students’ learning about citizenship and civic competence in the context of a national, high stakes standardized exam, and (c) the opportunities and challenges I experienced as a teacher practitioner research in that context. Last, I focus on the implications for practice, future research and policy. I end with my final thoughts as I continue on my journey as a teacher practitioner researcher.

Returning to the Research Questions

My early introduction to teacher-practitioner research emphasizing teachers asking “what happens when I...” began in 1994 when I participated in a yearlong inquiry project on student intrinsic motivation for collaboration and learning. Since then, I have understood my teaching to be intimately informed by a type of inquiry that nurtured local knowledge based on posing questions, discovering understanding about practice and creating change (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Herr & Anderson, 2005). While the areas

of inquiry include classroom practice and course content, they also include larger life issues rooted in students' prior knowledge and identities (Allwright, August 2005; Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005; Nieto, 1999).

In this teacher-practitioner study, I have examined the opportunities and challenges I experienced in preparing my students for a high stakes Advanced Placement exam and civic competence. Though teaching in a school and district with wide academic stratification, I assumed my students brought a wealth of prior knowledge and strengths to provide a foundation for nurturing academic skills and acquisition of disciplinary knowledge.

The overall question

What challenges and opportunities does the teacher researcher at a neighborhood high school experience when encouraging “underrepresented” students, including immigrant students, to include their prior knowledge, points of view, identities, and disciplinary evidence in an Advanced Placement United States Government and Politics class?

The challenges facing me as I embarked on my study related to the district, my school, and the course. The School District has a long history of academic segregation and stratification in high schools that stigmatizes neighborhood high schools. In recent years, there had been considerable upheaval in the School District administration resulting in closing of schools, charterization of schools, excessing of teachers, and a move in the District leadership to a mindset of “remediation” for neighborhood high school students. The school in which I worked provided limited college preparatory experiences for students. I was often frustrated by attendance, missed deadlines and / or incomplete or never completed out-of-class assignments. Lastly, the “breadth versus depth” of the AP U.S.

Government exam and the narrow national narrative content limited opportunities for civic action and often drove the agenda of the course. The AP exam itself had a limited academic focus. My students had no to little formal education or much interest in U.S. government. I was not able to let their interests, identities and academic needs drive all decisions. I cut short opportunities for civic action. Instead, the bell and course requirements too often held sway over my decisions.

Fortunately, the school administration did not question my curriculum; I was allowed to incorporate any instructional strategies and content I deemed appropriate. Additional opportunities began with who my students were and are and the ways in which they responded to my efforts to nurture a community of learners amongst a desperate group of students. As students built trust and worked in small groups, I observed students collaborate and prepare for deliberations on contemporary and controversial issues. Students shared their prior knowledge and points of view. They affirmed each other. As the year progressed, students incorporated more disciplinary language and content, especially in blog posts aligned with the deliberations. The blog posts were essential to extend the conversations and to give time and space for students to internalize the disciplinary content and language and reflect on the issues that surfaced during the deliberation. By scaffolding instruction throughout the year and within the deliberation process, all students were able to participate.

When the deliberation topics connected to students' lives, the discussions were nuanced and honest. Welcoming their identities, points of view and prior knowledge with disciplinary evidence did not diminish the academic nature of the conversations; the welcoming provided a grounding to enable the conversations to occur. Students did not

need superficial, popular culture topics to be engaged. Critical, complex and controversial issues with local to international implications that connected to students' identities aroused their interest. Students were willing to participate in a risky, cognitively demanding academic process when their prior knowledge and identities were accepted and intelligence respected. At some point during the year, all students, either orally in deliberations or in writing in blog posts, exhibited the ability to be contenders and collaborators in academic, disciplinary discussions.

The sub-questions

1) What instructional strategies encourage and engage “underrepresented students,” including immigrant students, to incorporate their prior knowledge, points of view, identities, and disciplinary evidence in an AP U.S. government course?

2) How do “underrepresented” students, including immigrant students, live and experience citizenship and acquire civic competence in an Advanced Placement United States Government class?

Throughout the academic year, I incorporated instructional strategies grounded in second language acquisition theory (Chamot, 2009; Cummins, 1981, 2008; Short, Vogt & Echevarria, 2011; Walqui & van Lier, 2010) and civic or democratic education (Banks, 2007; Castles, 2004; Hess, 2009; Parker, 1996, 2003). In order for my students to benefit from the instructional strategies, I scaffolded the process to provide supports while relying on small group collaboration (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Taba, 1962; Vygotsky, 1978). I presumed students brought valuable prior knowledge and identities to the class; this provided a footing for further learning (Delpit, 1988; Dwek, 2006, 2010; Freire, 1970, 1993; Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005; Nieto, 1999). I examined two instructional strategies to connect disciplinary learning with students' prior knowledge -

deliberations and blog posts - to engaged students in bona fide academic study on disputed issues aligned with the structures or mechanism of U.S. government (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005; Hess, 2009; Hostetler, 2012; King, Newmann & Carmichael, 2009; Larson, 2009; Parker, Mosborg, Bransford, Vye, Wilkerson, & Abbott, 2011; Snyder, 2008). Together, my students and I accompanied each other on an academic journey to “the academic table” of Advanced Placement. While my students did not have the disciplinary content background in U.S. government and politics, as the data of this study suggests, they were able to gradually acquire both academic and disciplinary language through this intentional and repetitive scaffolding of skills and content.

As the year progressed, the degree of active engagement with the disciplinary language and content in the deliberations and blog posts varied based on the topic. The topics that enlisted the most impassioned responses were directly related to students’ lives. This finding is not surprising; authentic, unrestricted, real-world questions should be integral to democratic or civic learning (Hess, 2009; Rubin, 2012). For example, when we asked if the U.S. Congress should reflect the changing demographics of the U.S. public to be “representative,” students considered ethnicity or race, age, wealth and gender and were actively engaged. They connected their experiences and identities while referencing disciplinary evidence and using disciplinary language. This also occurred when we discussed tactics used by the U.S. government in the “War on Terror.” Identity, equity and citizenship moved to the forefront as students considered who might benefit from constitutional protections in a class where nearly half of the students were not U.S. citizens. With topics less endearing to students, such as the federal bureaucracy or the War Powers Act, students were still able to complete the

process and include academic language and disciplinary language and content.

Nonetheless, the responses were less nuanced and impassioned but the process supported growth in civic competence.

My understanding of civic competence grew from my identity, pre-teaching experiences, and teaching background with civic engagement projects. For my students, it seemed to grow through the classroom activities of our year together. At some point during the year, all of my students, either orally in deliberations or in writing in blog posts, exhibited the ability to participate in academic, disciplinary discussions. Perhaps more importantly, they also demonstrated what seemed to me to be a genuine understanding of civic competence and citizenship. We grew into a community of learners.

At the beginning, I sought to build community through both intentional “ice breaker” activities, such as learning names and inquiring as to likes and dislikes, and intentional academic activities, such as discussing political identities and beliefs. With these, my intent was to position the classroom as a space of acceptance: Students did not have to like each other or me, but we had to coalesce as a class in order to work together as civic competence must include “active and engaged participants in public life” who have gained the skills of “analysis, collaboration, decision making and problem-solving” (National Council for the Social Studies, 2010, p. 9).

Civic competence also requires safe spaces to discuss citizenship and identity, equity and constitutional protections. Issues of race / ethnicity, gender, and religion / beliefs, surfaced during the deliberations and blog posts but were illuminated in the

semi-structured interviews where race and national origin, in particular, were openly discussed.

Civic competence requires a willingness to turn abstract concepts like freedom and equality into concrete experiences. Laws are interpreted not only based on legal precedence but also personal experiences. For example, in the first semester deliberation on Federalism, individual rights to own firearms were questioned based on collective “good” and personal experience. Brenda shared “I got robbed at gun point last year... I’ll go out now but I’m iffy. Certain situations change your perspective on stuff” (Journal, January 17, 2013). Guns could not be discussed in the abstract. Later in the year, it was the deliberation on the “War on Terror,” that saw my students taking the stance that concern for all should lead to a more caring and equitable stance on “the other.” By extending constitutional protections to U.S. residents, and possibly anyone regardless of residence, students demonstrated a move toward justice and equity and care for others (Banks, 2004; Noddings, 2005).

As students’ formal civic competence expanded throughout the year, their definition of citizenship gained clarity. The use of disciplinary content and personal experiences seemed to help them clarify their understandings and propose solutions (Banks, 2008) that suggested their understanding of citizenship was moving toward being multi-dimensional and transnational (Banks, 2004, 2007; Castles, 2004, Ninomiya & Cogan, 2011; Parker, 1996, 2003). For many of the students, but particularly the immigrant students, citizenship is multilayered. Rather than a citizenship based on national origin or a set of values such as freedom and individualism, their writing in blog posts, the conversation of their deliberations in class and in semi-structured interviews, and their participation in

demonstrations outside of school suggest that individually and as a group they moved over the year to an understanding of citizenship as personal, ethnic, national and global (Banks, 2004, 2007) and unfettered by legal or national boundaries. Over the course of the year, it became clear to me (and I think to them) that the rich diversity of the students' heritages, life stories and interests expanded the course content and amplified their understandings of citizenship. By the end of the academic year, I watched my students turn their tassels on their mortarboards and celebrate the beginning of adulthood.

Opportunities and Challenges for a Teacher Practitioner Researcher

Figure 16: List of Students and Relevant Data Including Through the fall of 2014

#	Pseu-donym	First Language	Ethnicity/ country of origin	Social Studies course in 2011-2012	Post high school plans in June 2013	Through the fall of 2014
1	Sally	English	African American/ born in the US	US History	US military or trade school	Working; U.S. military in December 2014
2	Cheri	Khmer	Cambodian American / born in the US/ 1st generation	US History	4 year local state related university	Began 2 nd year of college / studying nursing
3	Bill	Tagalog	Filipino - born in the Philippines – in the US seven years	AP US History	4 year local state related university	Began 2 nd year of college / studying finance
4	Brenda	Laotian (Thai)	Born in the US: Puerto Rican mother / Laotian father / raised by Laotian grandmother	African American History	2 year college at satellite location for 4 year state related university	Began 2 nd year of college / studying biology
5	Larry	Mandarin Fujian	Born in China / in US for 3 years	ESL Sheltered US History	4 year university / full scholarship	Began 2 nd year of college / studying engineering

6	Rose	Mandarin	Born in China / in the US 4 years	AP US History	2 year college at satellite location for 4 year state related university	Began 2 nd year of college / studying biology
7	Chris	Mandarin	Born in China / in the US for 10 years	African American History	Trade school	Began 1st year of trade school studying plumbing
8	Lois	Vietnamese	Born in Vietnam / in the US since December 2010	ESL Sheltered US History	4 year local religious affiliated university	Began 2 nd year of college / studying biology / nursing
9	Jim	Mandarin / Fujian	Born in China – in the US 3 years	ESL Sheltered US History	4 year local state related university	Began first year of trade school for computer aided drafting
10	Bob	English	African American/ born in the US	AP US History	Work or college	Working; plans to begin college in 2015
11	Andy	Indonesian	Born in Indonesia / in the US 3 years	ESL Sheltered US History	Work or community college	Working/ part time at community college

1 2	Robert	English	African American/ born in the US	African American History	Work or Community College	Working
1 3	Sue	Vietnamese	Born in Vietnam – in the US since August 2010	AP US History	4 year religious affiliated college; scholarship	Began 2 nd year of college / studying business administration
1 4	Nancy	English	European American/ born in the US	AP US History	Trade school	Working; completed trade school in culinary arts
1 5	John	English	Puerto Rican American/ born in the US; does not speak Spanish	US History	U.S. military	U.S. Marines
1 6	Sandy	English	African American/ born in the US	AP US History	Work and Community College	Parenthood ; completed one year of college
1 7	Gail	Burmese/ Chin	Born in Burma / refugee/ in the US 3 years	AP US History	4 year religious affiliated college; scholarship	Working; Completed one semester of college

Is the glass half full or half empty? The idiomatic expression is a reminder that challenges and opportunities are not neatly divided nor described. I have included the chart, “List of Students and Relevant Data,” from Chapter 3: Methods, with the addition of a column – “Through the Fall of 2014.” The additional column includes where the 17 students were one-and-a-half years post graduation. All have taken on responsibilities of adulthood whether in college, the military, a trade school, work and / or family. The results of one, high stakes exam did not foretell their future. Happily, the teacher-researcher dissertation process granted me a space to reconsider the 2012-2013 academic year. The challenge, for example, of preparing students who expressed no interest in government or politics for a high stakes AP U.S. Government exam was daunting. Simultaneously, the opportunity to witness the growth of students’ academic and civic competence and collegiality while discussing controversial governmental policies was refreshing. Rather than defining the year by one standardized, high stakes exam, the year is redefined because I was given an opportunity to view the year through my lens as a teacher practitioner researcher.

My findings regarding engaging in teacher practitioner research for the most part related to the conduct of the course itself. The challenge of pacing and “coverage” and most students’ lack of interest in the required course content created a convoluted situation. For example, while half of the students regularly participated in community service, they did not see the connection to the structures and powers of government (Martin & Inskeep, 2014). As the year progressed, there was more recognition that governance and democratic participation matters but none had any interest in college majors related to the social sciences or history (student questionnaire, May 20 – 23,

2013). Students seemed to recognize that the skills we practiced were helpful but they did not necessarily feel the same way about the content. When asked what was most memorable about the class, students consistently wrote about trips, deliberations, and working in small groups (student questionnaire, May 20 – 23, 2013). The communal experiences mattered and seemed to increase awareness of one another’s opinions and perspectives. Sue, for example, wrote she was surprised to learn she and all of her friends did not share the same “political positions” but realized how “background” and experiences shape points of view (student questionnaire, May 22, 2013). Only one student wrote about content – “issues related to gun rights” (student questionnaire, May 20, 2013). No one mentioned the required course content, namely the function, structure and mechanism of the U.S. government. Even now, even after a full year with them, I do not know whether their stance toward engagement over content contributed to their limited commitment to preparing for the AP exam.

It was this uncertainty that led me to the commitment to do both test preparation and complete the required content in class and pushed me toward favoring “coverage” of required content to dictate the schedule at the expense of opportunities for civic action. For example, following the first deliberation on the legislative branch, “Must Congress represent us to be representative of the U.S. public?” concluded with proposals for improving the U.S. Congress and writing a bill on a current issue. I did not have students contact an organization working on their issue. I did not allow space for students to plan an event to educate peers about their issue. I did not even have students write a letter to our local congresspersons. When we deliberated on the War on Terror and Affordable Care Act, students raised critical concerns regarding both policies. What

opportunities were missed by not having students create an action plan about the U.S. use of drones and extrajudicial killings? How might students have increased awareness about health care and health insurance if we had planned a school wide event? What type of actions would students plan that were inconceivable to me? Instead, we moved on to the next topic. With an actionable component, if they could “live” civics, as they did with community service, rather than discuss civics, students may have been more interested in the structures and mechanisms of government. They may have concluded they needed to understand the system in order to challenge it. While participating in the deliberation and blog posts was a form of “living” civics, or experiencing a democratic process, and did increase students’ understandings of how U.S. government is organized and works, it was not sufficient. I did not allow the space for a “justice-oriented” citizenship education (Westheimer & Kahne (2004); opportunities for collective action were truncated to “coverage.”

The AP exam results were typical for our school and our neighborhood schools in our School District. Most of the students scored a “one,” or the lowest score, and two of the 16 students who took the AP U.S. Government exam scored a “two” out of a possible “five.” When I received the results in July 2013, I was very disappointed. The exam, in my opinion, did not measure students’ academic growth. The vocabulary and time restrictions overwhelmed many students, especially immigrants. The College Board does not allow for any accommodations for English Language Learners such as a word-to-word dictionary or extended time. I do not know if the accommodations would have changed the results. I do know one year is not enough time to prepare students for advanced academic course work (Klopfenstein & Thomas, January 2009; Tai, 2008).

For example, during the 2013-2014 academic year, another teacher taught AP U.S. Government. The teacher followed a more traditional approach based on strict adherence to a course aligned textbook, frequent note taking and lecture, and quizzes. Nevertheless, the exam results were the same.⁴²

The AP U.S. Government exam results may also reflect a weakness of the exam. Advanced Placement is marketed as the “gold standard” of college preparation (Nugent & Karnes, 2002; Santoli, 2002), nevertheless, others criticize the exam for requiring test preparation over holistic collegiate preparation (Bernstein, 2013, February 9; Katz, 2006; Schneider, 2009; Parker & Lo, 2014, April). The exam requires students to “define,” “describe,” and “explain.” In contrast, the deliberations required students to engaged in analysis and synthesis with historic documents, Supreme Court cases, and current data and commentary or analysis of contemporary issues related to civic life (Hess, 2009; King, Newmann & Carmichael, 2009; Rubin, 2012). The AP U.S. Government exam is based on a “banking concept” versus a “problem-posing” approach to learning (Freire, 1970, 1993). The deliberations and blog posts are “problem-posing” and “authentic intellectual work” (King, Newmann & Carmichael, 2009). Did I do a disservice to my students by providing what I consider a college preparatory experience versus a tight adherence to test preparation? Based on the subsequent year’s test results, I did not. Even with more test preparation, the results were the same. Regardless, when the School

⁴² Another teacher requested to teach AP U.S. Government in 2013-2014. I agreed and instead taught AP U.S. History. The results were the same: two students a “two” and 15 scores a “one.” Another difference was the composition of the class. The 2013-2014 class included the school’s valedictorian, salutatorian, and a transfer students who had previously scored a “3” and “4” on AP exams in English and Psychology. Nevertheless, the results were the same.

District and State record the results of the exam, the results define the class and the teacher. Based on the results, I failed.

In place of ending this section on “opportunities and challenges” with my failure, I will return to the end of the year statement by Lois, a recent immigrant student who yearned to drop the course in October 2012 but persisted until her graduation in June 2013. Lois wrote the class helped her think critically, write, and participate in a linguistically and ethnically diverse class. Lois determined these skills were necessary for college (student questionnaire, 5/29/2013). In the final semi-structured interview, Lois shared this advice: “Make more friends of people who don’t speak the same language to you to learn more English. Ask questions. Not just say it to learn public speaking. Say to tell what you think” (semi-structured interview, June 7, 2013).

Lois’ reflection and advice reminds me that neither the students nor I are “remedial” or “failures.” Lois both increased her language skills and civic knowledge; more importantly, she realized her ideas were valuable. She not only belonged in the class but at the college preparatory academic table. Preparing “underrepresented” students, who are “underrepresented” by no fault of their own, for a high stakes standardized exam is difficult and may be disappointing. Preparing students for college preparatory civic competence by learning disciplinary language and content in conjunction with welcoming their prior experiences, points of view, and identities is also difficult but personally and professionally rewarding. The students built a classroom community that was college preparatory. They proved they belong at the academic table.

Implications for Practice, Research, and Policy

Teacher practitioner research is a cyclical movement of inquiry (Campano, 2009); the longitudinal process connects prior knowledge with new knowledge to generate “local knowledge” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, 2001). Therefore, I do not attempt to create a “model” for teaching AP U.S. Government nor determine cause / effect. For example, I cannot claim the deliberation and blog posts process either hindered or aided students as we prepared for the AP exam. Rather, as my questions indicate, I was interested in the dynamic and diverse assets students brought to the class, how to engage them in academic, disciplinary content, how to support civic competence and how students understand citizenship. The next section contemplates what the research may indicate for practice, research and policy.

Practice

The teacher practitioner research revealed the importance of intentional and systematic scaffolded instruction (Taba, 1962; Vygotsky, 1978; Walqui & van Lier, 2010) to support student learning. I was able to document for myself that with sufficient supports and time, all students were able to participate in academic, disciplinary discussions and current issues. They were able to support a position with both personal and disciplinary evidence.

Like me, others will have to grapple with lack of time and the perceived need to maintain the pacing of an exam driven course. They will, I hope, see in some of the instructional activities that I employed—deliberations using scaffolds like role play and

fish bowl, as well as the opportunity to write in blog posts—all students can become part of an academic discussion. The blog posts were particularly important for my students as they offered the “think time” necessary for all students to demonstrate their ability to respond to the prompts with their experiences and points of view as well as disciplinary language and content. Deliberations should be accompanied with blog posts or other public, written forums for students to dialogue with each other and the teacher.

There is a caution here, however: I had hoped the deliberation and blog posts would prepare students for the AP exam by mimicking the objective questions and Free Response Questions (FRQ) throughout the year. My students, like over half of the students across the U.S. who took the AP U.S. Government exam, were not successful on the exam. Preparation for a standardized, high stakes national test cannot occur in one year. This is especially true when students are not familiar with the content, concepts and vocabulary. Although I thought the deliberation and blog posts would prepare students, I concluded they were not aligned with the exam. The deliberations and blog posts encouraged students to analyze, synthesize and evaluate evidence with their prior knowledge. The AP U.S. Government exam emphasizes memorization and defining, describing, and explaining. I have no solution for higher exam scores other than improving equity for all students at a young age (Dougherty & Mellor, 2010; Tail, Summer 2008). This obviously is much more complicated in a large, under-resourced, academically stratified urban school system.

Lastly, the AP exam provides no academic arena for students to consider their identities in connection to neither civic competence nor citizenship. Students sought safe spaces, such as the semi-structured interviews and eventually in deliberations, to discuss racial, ethnic, gender, and national identity. The discussions grew out of their lived experiences in the school, the neighborhood, and the city and, for some students, countries of origin. Our diverse school was not a welcoming and harmonious setting for all students. The immediate neighborhood surrounding the school was often perceived as hostile to students of color and especially immigrant students. Students of color and immigrant students expressed disbelief to disillusion with the possibility of equality under the law. Students sought spaces to problematize their experiences with and issues related to constitutional protections to racism, sexism, and classism. In a course grounded in civic competence, there should be safe spaces for not only controversial issues but also sensitive topics. It is particularly important for European American teachers in schools predominantly students of color to be willing to acknowledge “white privilege” and learn how to facilitate safe circumstances for students generated discussions (Glazier, 2003). This may require teachers to take time to know their students beyond their classroom lives. Even in a high stakes, standardized exam driven course, time and space for safe, honest and difficult discussions should be found and even prioritized if a goal is civic participation.

Research

The dissertation creating and writing process is often solitary. Although some doctoral students work with colleagues, the final product is the responsibility of the doctoral candidate. Since I did not have colleagues to work with through this process, it was often isolating. Yes, I showed my work to my advisor and she provided feedback. Yes, I participated in a Research Apprenticeship Course (RAC) and received feedback from fellow doctoral students. Nevertheless, as a teacher / researcher, I would have appreciated working with other teacher / researchers who shared my interest in both academic language acquisition, especially with “underrepresented” students, including immigrant students, and social studies education. Therefore, my proposal for research is for additional teacher practitioner research with “underrepresented students,” scaffolding of skills and content with English Language Learners (ELLs) and Academic Language Learners (ALLs) (Zwiers, 2008; Zwiers & Crawford, 2011) and civic or democratic education (Hess, 2009).

Preparing so-called “underrepresented” students for Advanced Placement exams, particularly in disciplines where the students have little background knowledge, is challenging. Rather than denying the challenge or blaming the students, opportunities for teacher / researchers to ground their explorations of promising instructional practices should occur in schools. This may include teachers working as researchers or in conjunction with university based researchers to design and carry out studies with goals beyond scoring a “5 out of 5” on an AP exam. The assumption that the exam measures worthwhile, college preparatory skills has been questioned (Bernstein, 2013, February 9;

Katz, 2006; Klopfenstein & Thomas, 2010; Schneider, 2009). Therefore, going beyond test prep is necessary.

The study begun in 2008 by Parker, et al. (2011) is an example of collegiate researchers working with classroom teachers to introduce more engaging and problem posing instructional strategies into an AP course. Ideally, a group of teacher / researchers who work with “underrepresented” students in urban, neighborhood high schools will have opportunities to lead inquiry based research on how to make AP courses more accessible for our students and college preparatory.

Additional qualitative and ethnographic research is also necessary on scaffolding skills and content especially with English Language Learners but for all academic language learners (Zwiers, 2008; Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). Following Rubin (2012), who described and outlined a five-step structure for “authentic discussions that promote civic learning,” (pp. 59 – 65) and Banks (2007), who proposed a curricular process for civic decision-making and action, I identified seven components of a scaffolded process to prepare students, including English Language Learners, for disciplinary deliberations and blog posts built around “building and nurturing a community of learners” (Figure 12). While I do not claim to be in the same company as Rubin and Banks, as a classroom teacher I provide another lens based on practice. If all students are going to have equitable access to disciplinary content and college preparation, additional classroom based research across multiple language, geographic and content domains should occur. The lived experience of students and teachers may produce potential approaches to instruction that will not surface in a more quantitative approach.

Next, U.S. changing demographics have created to “majority-minority” public schools (Krogstad & Fry, 2014, August 18). Courses with narrow national content, such as AP U.S. Government, may be less accessible to students of color, and in particular immigrant students, because the assumptions that underlie the “correct” answers are not within the parameters of their experiences. Research on how students engage with civic knowledge, including students of color and immigrant students, may need to be considered. Epstein’s (2009) research on students understanding of U.S. history concluded students of color experience alienation and anger when taught the “official” narrative. Ladson-Billings (2005) concludes schools offer a narrow understanding of citizenship, little recognition of diversity, and an emphasis on compliance versus engagement. If a civic course affirms, for example, immigrant students’ unique assets such as bilingualism and biculturalism, what should be included? If a civics course welcomes students’ identities, prior knowledge and family knowledge, what should be included? Research on transforming Advanced Placement social science and history courses from assimilationist, narrow civic and national knowledge to courses that honor students multi-dimensional citizenship (Banks, 2004, 2007) may lead to new forms of assessment that measure engagement, academic growth and creative and critical thinking.

Lastly, research on aligning the study of history and social sciences with students’ lives and worldviews may increase interest in the courses. None of the students in AP U.S. Government planned on studying history or social sciences in college. They did not connect to the content of the courses or these areas of study were not connected to future career opportunities. In contrast, math and science were perceived as relevant and viable. This may be a result of No Child Left Behind legislation prioritizing English / reading

and math over other subjects. More recently, it may be a consequence of federal government funding and support of STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics). It may also be the reality of market forces; there is more demand and financial benefits in STEM fields. Nevertheless, as the 2012-2013 academic year progressed, some students acknowledged that how and what we learned was applicable to their lives. Research on transforming Advanced Placement social science and history courses into courses relevant to students' lives and career choices may improve access and achievement, especially for English Language Learners who too often are excluded from college preparatory courses and often enter college unprepared (Callahan, Summer 2005; Kanno & Harklau, 2012).

Policy

No discussion of policy can ignore the phenomenon of the introduction of disciplinary standards in the 1990s to the 2000s Common Core Standards or the standardized testing movement expanded under Public Law Number 107-110, No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Not only are states required to administer annual assessments in reading and math but Advanced Placement courses and exams are supported and funded (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). No student, regardless of English language ability or who learns differently, is excluded from the standardized testing. Recently, the U.S. Department of Education added Race to the Top competition for additional funding; the program promotes standardized test driven reforms and evaluation of teachers (U.S. Governmental Accountability Office, June 2011). No public school classroom is immune to the shifts in federal education policies.

The most recent shift is the introduction of the Common Core Standards. The implementation of the Common Core Standards has been controversial but has moved forward to include standardized tests aligned with the standards (Smith, Appleman & Wilhelm, 2014). The Common Core Standards are directly linked to The College Board and therefore Advanced Placement. After chairing the Common Core Standards, David Coleman became the President and Chief Executive Officer of The College Board (David Coleman, 2013, October 31). We do not know the impact of the Common Core Standards on Advanced Placement but there may be cause for concern. While the Common Core Standards do not prescribe content they were developed for English / reading and mathematics. There are reading standards for history / social science and science. To supplement the Standards, The National Council for the Social Studies (2013) released a document, *The College, Career and Civic Life Framework (C3)*, to “elaborate on the ELA / Literacy Common Core Standards for social studies inquiry.” Criticism of the Common Core Standards has included the promotion of a narrow understanding of literacy, “close reading” or New Criticism, that ignores how to improve reading comprehension (Smith, Appelman & Wilhelm, 2014) and research on second language acquisition (Cummins, 1981, 2008; Krashen, 1982; Short, Vogt & Echevarria, 2011; Walqui & van Lier, 2010). “Close reading” also elevates the text over students’ connecting the text to their lives and the larger world. Whatever or not the Common Core Standards and its aligned standardized tests are changed, as teachers we need to advocate for our students and provide appropriate instruction and contexts for learning.

Another policy that grew out of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 was the expansion of Advanced Placement courses and exams in public schools and especially

urban schools. This expansion will probably continue. For example, in Pennsylvania in 2013, the Pennsylvania School Performance Profile began including participation in Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses in its School Performance Profile (SPP) (<http://paschoolperformance.org/>). In addition, the number of seniors per school who score a “3” on an Advanced Placement exam is included in the calculation for evaluating the school. Rather than increasing so-called rigor, the inclusion of Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate “passing” scores may narrow the curriculum. If teachers feel pressure to “teach to the test” at the expense of engaging students in critical and creative thinking, versus accumulating knowledge, they may not be fully prepared for college and career.

Simultaneously, as The College Board has begun to update its vast array of exams, there has been resistance to the 2014-2015 Advanced Placement U.S. History exam. Small changes to the AP U.S. History course led to resistance from conservative politicians (Healy, J., 2014, October 3). In a *National Review* article, “Backlash to New AP U.S. History,” critics of the changes have labeled the course “leftist” and “internationalist.” In reality, according to James R. Grossman (2014, September 1), the response has been exaggerated. The changes are minimal but emphasize historical thinking that is “more complex, unsettling, provocative and compelling” (Grossman, 2014, September 1). Nevertheless, this response to the change in AP U.S. History may impact the proposed changes to AP U.S. Government.

On November 17, 2104, The College Board emailed a draft for public review of the AP U.S. Government and Politics revised course. The course was created in 1987; this is the first revision in nearly 30 years. I received a copy one week after I completed

my oral defense on November 11, 2014. The draft states there are three “improvements.” First, there is additional priority given to the U.S. founding documents and primary sources. This appears aligned with the Common Core’s emphasis on “close reading” of informational text. That said, the 1987 course included founding documents but not a list. The new course includes a required list of nine documents and 20 Supreme Court cases. The documents include the U.S. Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, the U.S. Constitution, four Federalist Papers, one Anti-Federalist paper and Dr. Martin Luther King’s *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*. There is also a list of 20 Supreme Court cases includes the Commerce Clause to civil rights and civil liberties cases. Second, the authors claim the course will be more aligned with “concepts typically required by universities for college credit” (pg. 5). The course will have five “overarching ideas,” including constitutional democracy, civil liberties and rights, U.S. political beliefs, civic participation, including technology influenced communication, and interaction among the three branches of the federal government. Albeit, the five ideas are the same as the six areas of study in the 1987 course, the weight given to the mechanisms, structure and functions of government appears to have decreased. Third, there is an explicit emphasis on skills; students will be expected to apply the course content. The skills – development of arguments to support conclusions and “analyze, compare, interpret and communicate political information.” (p. 5) – are similar to the Common Core Standards. How students will be assessed is not included other than a possible synthesis essay. If the writing assessment is a synthesis essay, this is a major shift from the 1987 course.

What does not appear to be included in the proposed draft changes to the AP U.S. Government course is any recognition of the demographic changes in U.S. public schools. As The College Board asks for “public feedback to ensure the course materials present a balanced view that does not favor one political perspective over another,” there is no indication a broad array of views will be included nor a significant decrease in “breath versus depth” of learning. A civics or democratic education curriculum needs to incorporate students’ knowledge (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005) and teachers need to understand students’ identities (Galzler, 2003). In addition, the course should encompass the multidimensional and transnational identities of many, if not most, students (Banks, 2007; Castles, 2004; Ochoa-Becker, 2007, Parker, 1996, 2003) while providing a space for students to confront complicated, controversial issues (Hess, 2009; Rubin, 2012). Based on the resistance to the revised AP U.S. History course, I do not expect the intuitional College Board to provide a curriculum that I have defined as necessary for so-called “underrepresented” students. If civic and democratic education is to motivate students to gain civic competence and become civically engaged, students will need to see themselves in the curriculum.

Another national policy trend is to require students to pass a civics test to graduate from high school. Since civics is not required under No Child Left Behind legislation, it is not a requirement in most states. According to the creators of the *Civic Education Initiative* (2014), civics education has lost ground to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) education even though it is necessary for students to be engaged citizens who are aware of U.S. values. Therefore, the initiative’s initial proposal is for all states to require students to pass a 100-question test of general U.S. history and civics

facts. The test is similar to the 100 questions that may appear on a U.S. naturalization test. Although background knowledge about the structures of the U.S. Government may help students analyze a current issue, a 100-question test of basic knowledge may reinforce civics as recall of facts versus action. The memorization of disjointed factoids may be a quick fix for lack of civic knowledge but I do not believe it will encourage participation and engagement.

Final Thoughts

I began this dissertation with my fifth grade experience of my place of birth. My place of birth was not on our classroom's U.S. map. My place of birth was invisible. Today, many more students' places of birth are not on our classroom maps. If civics or democratic education is going to engage students and encourage any form of civic action, students must be on the tangible and figurative maps in our classrooms. If college preparatory education is going to be equitable and accessible for all students, including English Language Learners and other "underrepresented" students, it should build on students' identities, prior knowledge and strengths. Then, scaffolding skills and content will provide more students with the disciplinary language and content to actively engage in civic deliberations and other college preparatory instructional strategies.

By the late fall of 2014, seven of 17 students from the 2012-2013 AP U.S. Government class were students at local, four-year colleges. As I finish writing this dissertation, they are nearing the end of their second year as full time college students. In addition, one student completed trade school and two students started trade school. Two students were attending or planning to attend college part-time while working. Another

student who had completed her first year of college had a baby. Two students enlisted in the U.S. military and two students were working. The students who are not in college either had to quit after the first semester or first year or decided to follow a career path. For two students, quitting was for financial and family reasons. Hopefully, the experiences we shared in our 2012-2013 AP U.S. Government class provided them with academic and disciplinary skills to find satisfaction in life and engage in civic action.

In the fall of 2013, I received an email from Larry. Larry wrote:

September 30, 2013

“Hello Ms. Sharer,
How are you? How is _____ (school)? Do you still have the templates of how to respond peer's post online? I went back to (web site) and everything was down. The professors assign many writing and reading every day. I need the ideas to respond to peers online. I will visit _____ (school) around Christmas ;).
Take care, Larry”

Using the sentence stems in the blog posts apparently was college preparatory. Larry, although not interested in civics or government, consistently did most out-of-class assignments. His participation in class increased as he gained confidence in his public speaking ability. As of 2014-2015, Larry is enrolled in his second year of college at a local, private university. I saw him in January 2015 at a MLK Day of Service event. His college experience has been challenging but successful. He has been accepted into worthwhile, paid internships. His career goal of becoming an engineer will be realized and assisted by obtaining his U.S. citizenship in the summer of 2015.

I also received an email from Gail on January 31, 2015. Gail wrote:

January 31, 2015

“Hi, just want to say Thank-you, cause we just got our citizenship yesterday and without your help (best teaching in AP gov) I wouldn't have any idea about US gov and politics. Just want to say Thanks. Gail.”

Gail, while elated about passing her U.S. citizenship exam and becoming a citizen, has had to travel a different road than Larry. She completed one semester of college but was not able to return. She has since worked two jobs and appears happy. She is helping her family. She told me she would like to return to college but can not at the moment. She still wants to work in a medical field. Gail is also bright and talented. She actively participated in class and usually did out-of-class assignments. She received a “2,” not a “1” on the AP U.S. Government exam. Nevertheless, family circumstances and obligations influenced her ability to stay in college.

Measuring success or failure by one exam or whether one is a full time student or working full time is neither fair nor equitable. Regardless of where the students are two years post high school graduation, they all demonstrated their ability and willingness to join the “academic table.” I hope my account and analysis of the experiences of the 17 students and myself during the 2012-2013 academic year demonstrates my respect of their willingness to accept the challenge of an Advanced Placement course, my regard for their eagerness to confront and challenge inequity and injustice, and my hope that what we learned will help them gain access to and transform the variegated academic tables of life.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Cornell Notes Chapter 1, Introduction to U.S. Government


(Font size and spacing is adapted to fit in the appendix.)

Cornell Notes Due September, 21, 2012

Chapter 1: Study of American Gov't: What is Democracy? Name _____

Before you read the chapter, ask yourself:
What do I know about power?
What do I know about authority?
What do I know about democracy?

Key Vocabulary

Term	Definition	Synonym/ antonym; symbol; first language
Authority (noun) (authorities – plural)	The right to use power.	Synonym: command
Bureaucratic view (view = point of view or way of looking at something)	View that the government is dominated by appointed officials.	<div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>Symbol:</p>
Democracy (noun)	Rule by the many / people	
Direct (participatory) democracy (noun)	A government in which all or most citizens participate directly	
Elite (noun) (also an adjective = best)	Persons who possess a disproportionate share of some valued resource, like money or power	

Legitimacy (noun)	Political authority conferred by law or by a state or national constitutions	
Class view (noun)	View that the government is dominated by capitalists	
Pluralist view (noun)	Belief that competition among all affects the interests that shape public policy	
Power (noun)	Ability of one person to get another person to act in accordance	
Power elite view (noun)	View that the government is dominated by a few top leaders, most of whom are outside government.	
Representative democracy (noun)	A government in which leaders make decisions by winning a competitive struggle for the popular vote.	

Key questions / main ideas	Details
I. Who governs? To what ends? Politics exists because people differ about two great questions.	People disagree on who governs (e.g unions, big business, special interest, the people, etc.)
2. What is political Power? Power: the ability of one person to cause another person to act in accordance with the first person's intentions.	A. Authority: B. Legitimacy:
3. What is democracy? Describes at least two different political systems.	Direct or Participatory Democracy (Aristotelian "rule of the many") Representative Democracy, or Elitist Theory of Democracy

<p>4. Is representative democracy best?</p> <p>Framers (authors of Constitution) favored representative democracy</p> <p>Founders influenced by philosophers</p>	<p>Text uses the term <i>democracy</i> to refer to representative democracy.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Constitution does not contain word <i>democracy</i> but “republican form of government” (meaning representative democracy). 2. Representative democracy requires leadership competition if system is to work—requires meaningful choice for voters, free communication, and so on. <p>Because....</p> <p>Aristotle defined democracy as the rule by the many.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Democracy is subject to decay into oligarchy (rule by the rich) or tyranny (rule by a despot). 2. Prevention of these extreme outcomes is achieved by the creation of a fusion of elements from democracy and oligarchy. <p>John Locke, 17th-century English philosopher and writer, had a profound influence on the Framers</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. According to Locke, people exist in a state of nature where they focus on finding food and on self preservation. 2. People want government as a means of owning property (farms) which will lead to an increase in food supply. 3. Differs from Thomas Hobbes, a rival English philosopher, who favored an all powerful government. 4. According to Hobbes, people live in a state of “war against all.” Only a powerful government could prevent civil war. 5. Locke disagreed, believing that people can peacefully coexist if they own their own land (farms). 6. Locke argued that government should be based on the consent of the governed, managed through majority rule. 7. Additional protection would be based on separation of powers, with separate legislative and executive branches.
<p>5. How is political power distributed in the U.S.?</p>	<p>Majoritarian politics</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leaders constrained to follow wishes of the people very closely 2. Applies when issues are simple and clear <p>Elitism</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rule by identifiable group of persons who possess a disproportionate share of political power 2. Comes into play when circumstances do not permit majoritarian decision making 3. Descriptions of four political elites <p>a) Class view :</p>

	<p>b) Power Elite theory:</p> <p>c) Bureaucratic view:</p> <p>d) Pluralist view:</p>
<p>6. Is democracy driven by self-interest?</p>	<p>All elite theories of politics may lead to the cynical view that politics is simply a self-seeking enterprise in which everyone is out for political gain.</p> <p>Tocqueville's argument on self interest:</p> <p>Examples of people acting beyond self interest:</p>
<p>7. What explains political change?</p> <p>The character of government has changed because...</p>	<p>Historical perspective makes it difficult to accept any simple explanation</p> <p>1930s versus 1980s:</p> <p>Foreign policy isolationism / internationalism:</p>
<p>Summary: List 5 – 6 key ideas</p> <p>Democracy can be direct/participatory or representative/elitist. Most argue for representative democracy because it is "practical" – less time, experts, too many people, etc.</p>	
<p>Key vocabulary:</p> <p>Democracy: (1) regimes/governments of the "rule of the many" (2) leaders struggle for the people's vote</p> <p>Representative democracy: elect people to represent "the people"</p>	

Appendix 2: Cornell Notes Chapter 13, U.S. Congress

(Font size and spacing is adapted to fit in the appendix.)

U.S. Congress – Chapter 13

Name _____

1. The Congress is part of the legislative branch of government. What does the legislative branch do?
2. What is your image of a member of Congress? Describe a member of the U.S. Congress.

Terms

Term	Definition	symbol / synonym / antonym / first language
bicameral legislature (adjective and noun) (to legislate = verb)	A lawmaking body made up of two chambers or parts	Bi = two Legislature = Congress
Caucus	An association of Congress members created to advance a political ideology or a regional, ethnic, or economic interest	
closed rule	An order from the House Rules Committee that sets a time limit on debate; forbids amending a bill on the floor	
cloture rule	A rule used by the Senate to end or limit debate	
concurrent resolution	An expression of opinion without the force of law that requires the approval of both the House and the Senate, but not the president	
conference committee	A joint committee appointed to resolve differences in the Senate and House versions of the same bill	
conservative coalition	An alliance between Republicans and conservative Democrats	
discharge petition	A device by which any member of the House, after a committee has had a bill for thirty days, may petition to have it brought to the floor	
division vote	A congressional voting procedure in which members stand and are counted	

divided government	Government in which one party controls the White House and another party controls one or both houses of Congress	
double tracking	A procedure to keep the Senate going during a filibuster in which the disputed bill is shelved temporarily so that the Senate can get on with other business	
Earmark	“Hidden” congressional provision that directs the federal government to fund a specific project or that exempts specific persons or groups from paying specific federal taxes or fees	
Filibuster	An attempt to defeat a bill in the Senate by talking indefinitely, thus preventing the Senate from taking action on the bill	
franking privilege	The ability of Congress members to mail letters to their constituents free of charge by substituting their facsimile signature for postage	
joint committee	A committee on which both senators and representatives serve	
joint resolution	A formal expression of congressional opinion that must be approved by both houses of Congress and by the president; constitutional amendments need not be signed by the president	
majority leader	The legislative leader elected by party members holding a majority of seats in the House or the Senate	
marginal districts	Political districts in which candidates elected to the House of Representatives win in close elections, typically by less than 55 percent of the vote	
minority leader	The legislative leader elected by party members holding a minority of seats in the House or the Senate	
multiple referral	A congressional process whereby a bill may be referred to several committees	
open rule	An order from the House Rules Committee that permits a bill to be amended on the floor	
party polarization	A vote in which a majority of Democratic	

	legislators oppose a majority of Republican legislators	
pork-barrel legislation	Legislation that gives tangible benefits to constituents in several districts or states in the hope of winning their votes in return	
private bill	A legislative bill that deals with a specific, private, personal, or local matter	
public bill	A legislative bill that deals with a matter of general concern	
Quorum	The minimum number of members required to be in attendance for Congress to conduct official business	
quorum call	A roll call in either house of Congress to see whether the minimum number of representatives required to conduct business is present	
restrictive rule	An order from the House Rules Committee that permits certain kinds of amendments but not others to be made to a bill on the floor	
roll-call vote	A congressional procedure that consists of members answering “yea” or “nay” to their names.	
safe district	District in which incumbents win by margins of 55 percent or more	
select committee	Congressional committee appointed for a limited time and purpose.	
sequential referral	A congressional process by which a Speaker may send a bill to a second committee after the first is finished acting	
simple resolution	An expression of opinion, either in the House or Senate, to settle procedural matters in either body	
standing committee	Permanently established legislative committee that considers and is responsible for legislation within a certain subject area	
teller vote	A congressional voting procedure in which members pass between two tellers, the “yeas” first and the “nays” second	
unified government	Government in which the same party	

	controls the White House and both houses of Congress	
voice vote	A congressional voting procedure in which members shout “yea” in approval or “nay” in disapproval, permitting members to vote quickly or anonymously on bills	
Whip	A senator or representative who helps the party leader stay informed about what party members are thinking	

Cornell Notes for Chapter 13 on the U.S. Congress

Main Ideas	Details
I. Congress versus parliament	<p>1. Parliamentary candidates are selected by their parties.</p> <p>2. Congressional candidates run in a primary election, with little party control over their nomination.</p>
<p>II. Evolution of Congress</p> <p>A. Intent of the Framers</p> <p>B. Competing values shaped congressional action: centralized versus decentralization</p> <p>C. Evolution of the Senate</p>	<p>1. To oppose the concentration of power in a single institution</p> <p>2. To balance large and small states: bicameralism</p> <p>3. Expected Congress to be the dominant institution</p> <p>Centralization</p> <p>a) Allows Congress to act quickly and decisively</p> <p>b) Requires strong central leadership, restrictions on debate, little committee interference</p> <p>Decentralization</p> <p>c) Allows for the protection of individual members and their constituencies</p> <p>d) Requires weak leadership, rules allowing for delay, and much committee activity</p> <p>Escaped many of the tensions encountered by the House. Why? (4 reasons)</p>
III. Who is the Congress? (beliefs, gender, race)	<p>Gender:</p> <p>Race:</p> <p>Beliefs:</p>

<p>Incumbency</p> <p>Political Party:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Membership in Congress became a career: low turnover by 1950s 2. Elections of 1992 and 1994 brought many new members to the House. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Redistricting after 1990 census put incumbents in new districts they couldn't carry. b) Anti-incumbency attitude of voters <p>Why might voters support incumbents?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Republicans: 2. Democrats: 3. What happened in 1994? 4. What happened in 2006?
<p>IV. Do members represent their voters? (Does Congress represent constituents' opinions?)</p> <p>1. May be devoted to constituents or act in accordance with own beliefs</p> <p>C. A Polarized Congress</p> <p>1. Members divided by political ideology</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Representational view: 2. Organizational view: 3. Attitudinal view: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) A generation ago, the "liberal" faction included Republicans, and the "conservative" faction included Democrats. b) Since 1998, Congress has been polarized along ideological and partisan lines. c) Attitudinal explanation of how Congress votes has increased in importance. d) Organizational explanation is of decreasing importance.
<p>V. Organization of Congress: Parties and Caucuses</p>	<p>A. Party organization in the Senate</p> <p>President pro tempore:</p>

	<p>Majority / minority leaders:</p> <p>Party whips:</p> <p>Policy committee:</p> <p>Committee assignments:</p> <p>B. Party structure in House</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Speaker of the House 2. Majority leader and minority leader 3. Party whip 4. Committee assignments 5. Democratic and Republican congressional campaign committees <p>C. Strength of the party structure</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Loose measure of the strength of party structure is the ability of leaders to get members to vote together to determine party rules and organization. 2. Tested in 104th Congress, when Gingrich with party support for reforms and controversial committee assignments 3. Senate contrasts with the House: <p>D. Party unity</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Measure party polarization in voting by votes in which a majority of Democrats and Republicans oppose each other 2. Party voting and cohesion more evident in 1990s than from 1960s through 1980s 3. Today, splits often reflect deep ideological differences between parties or party leaders. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) In the past, splits were a product of party discipline. b) Focus was then on winning elections, dispensing patronage, keeping power. 4. If voters are usually in the center on political issues, why is there a deep division between the two parties? (4 reasons) <p>E. Caucuses</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Associations of members of Congress created to advocate a political ideology or a regional or economic interest
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	<p>2. Gained leadership role in the 1970s when congressional power became more decentralized</p> <p>3. Although Republicans were reportedly going to abolish caucuses when they assumed control of the House in 1995, there were 290 caucuses in 2006</p> <p>4.</p>
<p>VI. Organization of Congress – Committees</p> <p>A. Legislative committees</p> <p>B. Types of committees</p> <p>C. Committee practices – Majority party has majority of seats on the committees and names the chair</p> <p>1. Assignments</p> <p>2. Chairs</p> <p>4. Decentralizing reforms</p> <p>5. 1995 changes</p>	<p>1. Consider bills or legislative proposals</p> <p>2. Maintain oversight of executive agencies</p> <p>3. Conduct investigations</p> <p>Standing committees:</p> <p>Select committees:</p> <p>Joint committees:</p> <p>Conference committee:</p> <p>House members usually serve on 2 standing committees or 1 exclusive committee</p> <p>Senators serve on 2 “major” committees and 1 “minor” committee</p> <p>How are chairs of committees elected?</p> <p>What is the subcommittee “bill of rights” of the 1970s? voted to close them. Decentralizing reforms made the House more inefficient, and committee chairs consequently utilized controversial practices to gain control (for example, proxy votes).</p> <p>What changes were made by the House of Republicans in 1995?</p> <p>What changes were made by the Senate Republicans in 1995?</p>

<p>VII. Organization of Congress – staff and specialized offices</p> <p>A. Tasks of staff members</p> <p>B. Staff agencies</p>	<p>Constituency services:</p> <p>Legislative Functions:</p> <p>Work for Congress as a whole, providing specialized knowledge equivalent to the president's.</p> <p>4 Major staff agencies: (list 4)</p>
<p>VIII. How a bill becomes a law</p> <p>A. Bills travel through Congress at different speeds Bills to spend money or to tax or regulate businesses move slowly Bills with a clear, appealing idea move fast, especially if they do not require large expenditures. Complexity of legislative process helps a bill's opponents.</p> <p>Congress initiates most legislation</p> <p>C. Legislative Productivity (post 2001)</p>	<p>Introducing a bill: Must be introduced by member of Congress</p> <p>Public Bill:</p> <p>Private bill:</p> <p>Pending legislation document:</p> <p>Resolutions: Simple –</p> <p>Concurrent:</p> <p>Joint resolution –</p> <p>Why has Congressional legislative output declined?</p> <p>What are earmarks?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bill is referred to a committee for consideration by either Speaker or presiding officer of the Senate <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Chamber rules define each committee's jurisdiction, but sometimes the Speaker has to make a choice. b) Speaker's decisions can be appealed to the full House. 2. Revenue bills must originate in the House.

<p>D. Study by committees (steps for bills)</p>	<p>3. Most bills die in committee. 4. Multiple referrals permitted until 1995; new rule allows only sequential referrals. 5. After hearings and mark-up sessions, the committee reports a bill out to the full House or Senate a) If bill is not reported out, the House can use the “discharge petition.” b) If bill is not reported out, the Senate can pass a discharge motion (rarely used). c) These are routinely unsuccessful. 6. Bill must be placed on a calendar to come for a vote before either house. 7. House Rules Committee sets the rules for consideration. a) Closed rule: sets time limit on debate and restricts amendments b) Open rule: permits amendments from the floor c) Restrictive rule: permits only some amendments d) Use of closed and restrictive rules increased from the 1970s to the 1990s e) Rules can be bypassed in the House: move to suspend rules; discharge petition; Calendar Wednesday (rarely done) 8. In the Senate, the majority leader must negotiate the interests of individual senators.</p>
<p>E. Floor debate – the House</p>	<p>E. Floor debate—the House 1. Committee of the Whole: procedural device for expediting House consideration of bills; it cannot pass bills 2. Committee sponsor of bill organizes the discussion. 3. No riders (no germane amendments) allowed 4. House usually passes the sponsoring committee’s version of the bill.</p>
<p>F. Floor debate – the Senate</p>	<p>F. Floor debate—the Senate 1. No rule limiting germaneness of amendments, so riders are common. 2. Committee hearing process can be bypassed by a senator with a rider, or if bill already passed in House. 3. Debate can be limited only by a cloture vote a) Three-fifths of Senate must vote in favor of ending filibuster b) Both filibusters and successful cloture votes becoming more common. (1) Easier now to stage filibuster (2) Roll calls are replacing long speeches (3) Filibuster can be curtailed by double-tracking: disputed bill is shelved temporarily, so Senate can continue other business.</p>
<p>G. Methods of voting</p>	<p>4. Effectively, neither party controls the Senate unless it has at least sixty votes; otherwise, the Senate must act as a bipartisan majority.</p>
<p>Procedures in the House:</p>	<p>G. Methods of voting 1. To investigate voting behavior, one must know</p>

<p>Differences in Senate and House bills?</p> <p>Bill in final form:</p>	<p>how a legislator voted on key amendments as well as on the bill itself.</p> <p>2. Procedures for voting in the House:</p> <p>a) Voice vote</p> <p>b) Division (standing) vote</p> <p>c) Teller vote</p> <p>d) Roll-call vote, now electronic</p> <p>3. Senate voting is the same except no teller vote and no electronic counters.</p> <p>4. Differences in Senate and House versions of a bill</p> <p>a) If minor, last house to act merely sends bill to the other house, which accepts the changes</p> <p>b) If major, a conference committee is appointed</p> <p>(1) Decisions are approved by a majority of each delegation</p> <p>(2) Conference report often slightly favors the Senate version of the bill.</p> <p>(3) Conference reports back to each house.</p> <p>(4) Report can only be accepted or rejected, not amended.</p> <p>(5) Report accepted, usually, since the alternative is often to have no bill.</p> <p>5. Bill, in final form, goes to the president.</p> <p>a) President may sign it.</p> <p>b) If president vetoes it, it returns to house of origin.</p> <p>c) Both houses must support the bill, with a two-thirds vote, in order to override the president's veto.</p>
<p>IX. Reducing power and perks (Ethics and Congress)</p>	<p>What is franking? How can it be regulated?</p> <p>What is the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995?</p> <p>What does it mean to "trim pork"?</p>

1. Is it important for congressional members to reflect the demographic diversity of the American public? Why or why not?

--What are the advantages and disadvantages of having a form of "affirmative action" for Congress?

--Are people in the US more interested in having a representative or senator who looks like them or one who thinks like them? Can you have one without the other?

2. One of the ideas espoused by Republicans in their 1994 "Contract with America" was term limits for congressional members. Term limits already apply to the president, and a handful of states have imposed them on state lawmaker. Although results from these states have been mixed, the idea of term limits for congressional members remains popular with some voters. What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of term limits?

--Do you think the lack of turnover in Congress is of sufficient concern to warrant a term-limits amendment? Why or why not?

Appendix 3: Charts for Deliberation on Congressional Representation

Median Net Worth of Current Members

	All members	House	Senate	Republicans	Democrats
2011	\$966,001	\$856,009	\$252,508	\$907,104	\$960,508
% change from 2010	⊕ 5.0%	⊕ 13.1%	⊖ 4.2%	⊖ 5.3%	⊕ 12.7%

- Median net worth of typical American household is \$66,790
- All 535 members of Congress have a median estimated about \$966,000
- An estimated of the Congress members net worth of more than \$1 million in a recent year.

African Americans in Congress

- Some Data :
 - African Americans in Congress ^{since} 1960
 - After Civil Rights movement; increased dramatically.
 - Before it's only 1.1% AA in Congress
 - Civil Right movement
- African Americans in Congress :
 - House - 42
 - Senate - 2
 - Democratic - 43
 - Republican - 1
 - Democratic party is dominates, because they believed that this party represent them.
 - Georgia - the most AA members in Congress.
- Congressional Black Caucus ::
 - found in January 4, 1969
 - focused on the concerns of AA, its priority is also the human and civil rights of all underrepresented people.
 - AA in Congress increased from (4) during 86th Congress to (10) during 91st Congress.
 - commitment to both DOMESTIC & INTERNATIONAL ISSUES...

It's surprising, that CBC has establish of a holiday to honor slain civil right leader, Martin Luther King, Jr.

Asian Americans (cut off title to remove names)

In the Presidential Election, 77% of Asia Americans polled for Barack Obama for President and 21% voted Mitt Romney. Support for each candidate varied by ethnic group, with a High of 54 Percent of Vietnamese Americans voting for Romney, Compared to 3% of Bangladeshi Americans.

Asian-American percentage of the electorate 2.6

Asian-American share of the U.S. Population 5.1

Latino/as in Congress

House: 33 Hispanic; 25 Democrats
8 Republicans

Senate: 3 Hispanic; 1 Democrat
2 Republicans

- * Latinos are trying to become a majority
- * In percentages, Latinos increase while whites decrease.
- * The more Latino people in Congress means the more seats
- * Latinos filling up Congress & voting more

Question 1: What is unique about the Latino population?
In the projected graphs Latinos population percentage has a high increase whereas the whites decrease.

Question 2: How Are Latino/as impacting Congress?
By filling up the seats in Congress, Latinos are becoming more of a majority. But doing so Latinos are able to influence decisions.

Age
(cut off title to remove names)

Senate: - Oldest 89 - Youngest 39
 - Median age is the oldest.
 * A Senator must be at least 30 yrs.

the ages have increased slowly since 1945.

112th.	Frank R. Lautenberg	86.95	↑ 113th
111th.	Robert C. Byrd	91.12	
112th.	Mike Lee	39.58	↑
111th.	Mark Pryor	45.98	

House of Representative:
 - Oldest 89
 - Youngest 29
 * A representative must be at least 25 yrs old.

112th	Ralph M. Hall	87.67	↑
111th		85.67	↓
112th	Aron Shack	29.60	↑
111th		27.60	↓

Women in Congress

- Since 1789 only 2% of members of have been women.
- There are 20 women in the U.S. Senate 3 Republican 17 Democrat
- 1992 became the "Year of the Women"
- From the 1990 to 1992, there was a great increase in the number of female members of Congress.
- Women get bathroom in Congress! (2011)
- Women are majority Democratic. Democratic views are more beneficial towards women's goals and are aimed in supporting the family.

Religion

Senate: Protestant 52%
 Catholic 27.0

House: Protestant 57.0
 Catholic 31.4

Is religion a matter to politics?

Appendix 4: Evaluation of Blog Post

(Font size and spacing is adapted to fit in the appendix.)

Self - Evaluation of blog post Name _____

Class deliberation - *Should Congress "look" like the U.S.? Must Congress represent us to be representative of the U.S. public? Why or why not?*

- 1) State your position on the above question. (3)
- 2) Give evidence from the class deliberation to support your position. You need at least 3 reasons (evidence) for your position. (9 points - complete, clear and convincing)

Evidence	Complete: 1, 2, 3	Clear: 1, 2, 3	Convincing: 1, 2, 3
1			
2			
3			

- 3) What did you learn from the deliberation process about the topic and/or about developing evidence? (Be specific. List at least 3 things you learned.) (9 points -complete, clear, and convincing)

Learned...	Complete: 1, 2, 3	Clear: 1, 2, 3	Convincing: 1, 2, 3
1			
2			
3			

- 4) Respond to two peers. Tell your peer either (a) how their contribution to the deliberation helped you formulate a position, (b) how their blog post helped your formulate a position OR (c) anything else they contributed to your small group or the deliberation. (9 points - specific, supportive and direct)

Response to Peer	Specific: 1, 2, 3	Supportive: 1, 2, 3	Direct: 1, 2, 3
1			
2			

Teacher Evaluation of blog post Name _____

Class deliberation - *Should Congress "look" like the U.S.? Must Congress represent us to be representative of the U.S. public? Why or why not?*

- 1) State your position on the above question. (3)
- 2) Give evidence from the class deliberation to support your position. You need at least 3 reasons (evidence) for your position. (9 points - complete, clear and convincing)

Evidence	Complete: 1, 2, 3	Clear: 1, 2, 3	Convincing: 1, 2, 3
1			
2			
3			

- 3) What did you learn from the deliberation process about the topic and/or about developing evidence? (Be specific. List at least 3 things you learned.) (9 points -complete, clear, and convincing)

Learned...	Complete: 1, 2, 3	Clear: 1, 2, 3	Convincing: 1, 2, 3
1			
2			
3			

- 4) Respond to two peers. Tell your peer either (a) how their contribution to the deliberation helped you formulate a position, (b) how their blog post helped your formulate a position OR (c) anything else they contributed to your small group or the deliberation. (9 points - specific, supportive and direct)

Response to Peer	Specific: 1, 2, 3	Supportive: 1, 2, 3	Direct: 1, 2, 3
1			
2			

Appendix 5: Deliberations on Improving Congress – Proposals

BATMAN

Deliberation on improving Congress Team members



- Congressional term limits
- Size of Congress
- Gerrymandering / Redistricting
- "Pork" / earmarks
- Public financing of elections

ME !!

Evidence: (data)

- House added hundreds of millions of dollars to the pentagon's annual spending bill for items the military didn't request.
- House tripled funding for an updated version of a cold war tank the U.S. army says it doesn't need.
- elimination would have a relatively insignificant effect on the budget deficit.
- Become a symbol for many americans of wasteful government spending
- 2009 government spent about 20 billion on earmarks, shows government wasting money

Arguments: (rationale)

- Restrict earmarks.
- Government money should only be spent on necessary causes.

Proposal: (what should happen)

- Unnecessary spending should be stopped, money should be used for humanitarian projects
- Benefit people, not senate/state
- Restriction on laws granting congress the ability to take money from the treasury
- All disclosure requirements for projects recipients/sponsor in Congress.



Deliberation on improving Congress Team members

- Congressional term limits
- Size of Congress
- Gerrymandering / Redistricting
- "Pork" / earmarks
- Public financing of elections

Evidence: (data)

House of Representative

33,000 — 700,00 people = average population

- The principle of proportionally equitable representation has been abandoned.
- Larger House would produce much smaller constituencies
- Most Americans are not ideologues. They want government to work efficiently, represent them well, provide some collective services and solve problems

Arguments: (rationale)

- Congress should be bigger, more representative to the people.
- Increase the number of members
- Easier communication with each other

Proposal: (what should happen)

- It should be bigger
- Government to work efficiently, represent the people well, provide some collective services and solve problems
- More members means more agendas, legislation, and debates.
- Congress should be local, if they represent a state, they must be in that area to be payed and stay in contact with constituents.

Appendix 6: Research for a Congressional bill

(Font size and spacing is adjusted to fit in the appendix.)

Research for a Congressional bill Team _____

Research topic from the Issues 2012 text. Summarize the chapter.

Who:
What:
When:
Where:
Why / How:

Research topic at: Pro / Con - <http://www.procon.org/>

1. Narrow the focus for your issue.
2. Summarize the positions on your issue

Notes:	Notes:
--------	--------

Research previous bills on the issue at:

Library of Congress: <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/LegislativeData.php?&n=BillText>

Notes:

Four media sites (e.g. CNN / Fox, New York Times, Christian Science Monitor, Democracy Now, ABC/NBC/etc). to find additional information on the issue. For each article, (a) include the author, source, date , URL (b) and a summarize key information. (**Media links are on our class web site.)

Article 1:

--

Article 2:

--

Article 3:

--

Article 4:

--

Components of your bill:

If you are a House member, summarize the process:

House of Representatives: http://www.house.gov/content/learn/legislative_process/

If you are a Senate member, summarize the process:

U.S. Senate: http://www.senate.gov/legislative/common/briefing/Senate_legislative_process.htm

Process

--

Locate **2 interest groups** who have a stake in the outcome of your bill:

Interest Groups - <http://www.opensecrets.org/industries/index.php>

Project Vote Smart: <http://votesmart.org/interest-groups#.URtxwIpnY78>

Name of Group	Focus Area	Initially, I notice...

Write your bill:

Resources on the bill making process - <http://www.congresslink.org/Frantzich/index.htm>

http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/legislative/g_three_sections_with_teasers/legislative_home.htm

113th Congress

1st Session

House of Representatives / Senate Bill # _____

A Bill For An Act Entitled: *Title of bill*

or

An Amendment to the Constitution Entitled: *Title of amendment*

In the Senate / House

Write the date

Write: Your name of state name introduced the following resolution which was referred to the Committee on fill in this blank when you know the committee name.

Resolved by the Committee on fill in this blank when you know the committee name of the United States of America in the Senate (House) that the following article is proposed as federal law under the jurisdiction of the United States of America, enforceable by Executive action.

For a bill: "Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that:"

For an Amendment: "Be it amended by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that:"

Preamble: *Whereas..... (Current situation that leads to the need for the bill or amendment. This should reflect your research.)*

Section 1: *What is the act going to do?*

Section 2: *Who is going to be involved / impacted / affected by the act*

Section 3: *Where? All of U.S. or a certain area / place in the U.S.?*

Section 4: *How is the act going to be funded? Who is going to enforce / administer this act?*

Section 5: *Penalties (if any) for non-compliance (not following the rules) of the act*

Section 6: *Enactment Date: When will the law go into effect?*

Bill Writing Guide

Writing legislation is easier than you might think. If you are politically aware and follow current events you probably already have some good ideas for legislation. Below are some simple guidelines to follow for writing a bill.

Selecting an area of interest. The first step in writing your bill is to select a topic. You should write a bill on an area of national politics that you already know a little bit about. Like the real Congress, the Senate simulation will deal with a broad spectrum of issues: education, foreign affairs, health and human services, finance, the environment, military affairs, business and commerce.

Research. Once you have decided an area of interest, you should read newspaper and magazine articles on that subject so that you can get a good sense of the current issues being discussed.

Selecting a specific subject/problem. The next work is to pick one problem or issue from your general area of interest on which you want your legislation to focus. For example, if you are interested in the war on drugs you may wish to write legislation on drug testing. Or, if you are interested in foreign affairs, you could write legislation to restrict United States arms sales abroad.

Determining the Type of Legislation.

There are three types of legislation:

A **Bill**: establishes a new law

A **Congressional Resolution**: expresses the sentiment of Congress

A **Constitutional Amendment**: changes or adds to the US Constitution.

Drafting your bill. To begin drafting your bill, you must first concisely, in 5 to 15 words, state the purpose of your legislation. For example, legislation on drug testing might be "to provide for drug testing of all commercial vehicle operators." Legislation on arm sales might be "to restrict military arms sales to democratically unstable countries." This concise statement of purpose will be part of the title of your legislation.

The body of your legislation. The main portion of your legislation will be its provisions or sections. The first section should establish the main effect of the legislation. The first section of drug testing legislation could be: "All interstate commercial vehicle operators shall be subject to a random drug test at least once a year." Other sections of your legislation should establish any limitations or restrictions: "The results of a drug test are to be kept confidential by the employer." Also include any penalties that accompany your new law: "Employers not complying with this law shall be subject to a fine of up to \$10,000."

The body of the bill should be divided into sections and numbered. A bill is specific, use only concrete detail. There is no commentary in a bill.

Evaluation: Up to 83 points

Task	Requirements	Possible Points
Research topic/ issue (text and Pro/con site)	Summary (who, what, where, when, why, how) – 2 to 3 complete paragraphs (6 – 8 sentences per paragraph)	Complete, clear, concise and a summary (no plagiarism unless you cite the source) 3 points per who, what, where, when, why, how = 16 points plus 4 points for quality of paragraphs
Research previous bill	Find at least two bills related to the topic. Summary of previous bills (name of the bill, number of the bill, major components, and anything else necessary to understand the implications of the bill)	10 point (5 points per bill) – complete, clear and include implications
Research 4 media sites	4 articles / stories: For each article / story – (a) include the author, source, date , URL (b) summary of article (who, what, where, when, why / how) and (c) unique information on the issue	Complete, clear and has the 3 required components (a, b, and c) – up to 5 points per article or 15 points total
Your bill	Follow the template for writing a bill; content reflects research on the issue	9 sections – each section is accurate, complete, clear, and concise (to the point); up to 4 points per section (each area listed above) or 36 points total
Two interest groups who have an interest in your issue / bill	List two groups and why they are interested in your bill	Up to 6 points

Appendix 7: Deliberation Packet – War Powers Act / “War on Terror”

(Font size and spacing is adjusted to fit in the appendix.)

War Powers Act / “War on Terror: – Evaluation Name _____ (_____ / 20)

I prepared for the deliberation by... (in class and outside of class)	
I contributed to the deliberation by...	
Next time, to prepare I will...	
Next time, to contribute I will...	
The process helped OR did not help me understand the War Powers Act / “War on Terror” because...	
Ms. Sharer, next time you should...	

Deliberation – War Powers Act / “War on Terror”

While reading and taking notes, annotated the articles by:

- A check mark (✓) next to a concept/fact/idea that you already know
- A question mark (?) next to a concept/fact/idea that is confusing or you don’t understand
- An exclamation (!) mark next to something new, unusual or surprising
- A plus (+) next to an idea/ concept/fact that is new to you

Prepare for the deliberation:

Place your information on the charts: War Powers Act (key background information, pro and con) “War on Terror” / Strategies (U.S. Constitution, Indefinite Detention / Military Tribunals, Extraordinary Rendition and Torture, Unmanned Drones - pro and con for each strategy)

My position on the War Powers Act:	My position on the “War on Terror” strategies:
Evidence:	Evidence:
Because:	Because:

Post Deliberation:

1. What did I decide and why? Did I support or oppose or have a new idea during the deliberation?
2. What did someone else say or do that was particularly helpful? How did this influence my position?
3. What, if anything, could I do to address the issue(s)? (How can you try to influence policy?)

Rate yourself and the class on how well the rules for deliberation were followed:

(1 = not well, 2 = well, 3 = very well)

	Me	Class
Read the material carefully.		
Focused on the deliberation questions.		
Listened carefully to what others said.		
Understood and analyzed what others said.		
Spoke and encouraged others to speak.		
Referred to the reading / evidence to support ideas.		
Used relevant background knowledge and life experiences in a logical way.		
Remained engaged and respectful even when controversy arose.		

War Powers Act / "War on Terror" - Evaluation Name _____ (30/70)

<p>I prepared for the deliberation by... (in class and outside of class)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annotate the important issue on the packet. - Discuss with the classmate about the strong position on the issues.
<p>I contributed to the deliberation by...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Giving my evidence and my position - Argue over our different view and persuade them to see my point.
<p>Next time, to prepare I will...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Find more obvious (evidence) and make sure I understand all the context on both sides (pro and con)
<p>Next time, to contribute I will...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Give more facts that what I think. - Encourage others to use the facts-laws than what they want to say.
<p>The process helped OR did not help me understand the War Powers Act / "War on Terror" because...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It helped because the argument that we had is most likely the same between the Congress and President that one support and other against
<p>Ms. Sharer, next time you should...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All the pro one side and con the other side and focus more on the fact (it is allowed by constitution/laws) than what they think.

Deliberation – War Powers Act / “War on Terror”

While reading and taking notes, annotated the articles by:

- A check mark (✓) next to a concept/fact/idea that you already know
- A question mark (?) next to a concept/fact/idea that is confusing or you don't understand
- An exclamation (!) mark next to something new, unusual or surprising
- A plus (+) next to an idea/ concept/fact that is new to you

Prepare for the deliberation:

Place your information on the charts: War Powers Act (key background information, pro and con) “War on Terror” / Strategies (U.S. Constitution, Indefinite Detention / Military Tribunals, Extraordinary Rendition and Torture, Unmanned Drones - pro and con for each strategy)

<p>My position on the War Powers Act:</p> <p>- Pro.</p>	<p>My position on the “War on Terror” strategies:</p> <p>- Con</p>
<p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - bloody conflict in Korea, Vietnam, Iraq - the legislative branch should be given constitutional opportunities to reclaim its greatly diminished role - balance the power on war between the President and the Congress - Congress appropriated vast sums of the prosecution of hostilities abroad in shadowy era of the Cold War 	<p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Habeas Corpus - Article I Section 9 - Relevant Sections of the U.S. constitutions - 4th Amendment - Right to be free of unreasonable search - 5th Amendment - no trial without grand jury except war crimes
<p>Because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - President have 60-90 days to report to the Congress and get fund from them. - Senate approval on treaties and declare war. 	<p>Because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hamdan v. Rumsfeld (2006) - military tribunals illegal - Judge blocked gov't from enforcing this controversial statute over the objection of the Obama administration - unmanned drones - killed many civilians - extraordinary tortured - inhumane - against law

Post Deliberation:

1. What did I decide and why? Did I support or oppose or have a new idea during the deliberation?

I decide to support the War Power Act which will set limit on the President and against for the War on Terror that is not necessary and proper.

2. What did someone else say or do that was particularly helpful? How did this influence my position?

The view of Abdul on the War on Terror helped me that unmanne does are killed more innocent people than the terrorist.

3. What, if anything, could I do to address the issue(s)? (How can you try to influence policy?)

I wanted to influence the golden rule that we all humans shou understand and follow. We also should^{be} mindful of our actions and their result.

Rate yourself and the class on how well the rules for deliberation were followed:

(1 = not well, 2 = well, 3 = very well)

	Me	Class
Read the material carefully.	3	2
Focused on the deliberation questions.	2	1
Listened carefully to what others said.	2	1
Understood and analyzed what others said.	3	2
Spoke and encouraged others to speak.	3	1
Referred to the reading / evidence to support ideas.	3	2
Used relevant background knowledge and life experiences in a logical way.	3	3
Remained engaged and respectful even when controversy arose.	2	1

Appendix 8: Deliberation Packet – Health Care Act

Health Care Act - Evaluation Name _____ / 30) Due Tuesday, April 2, 2013	
I prepared for the discussion by... (in class and outside of class)	Discussing the any argument with my group members in class. Reading through the materials that hand out in the class.
I contributed to the discussion by...	Giving ideas to my group members.
Next time, to prepare I will...	Gathering more evidences to support my opinion.
Next time, to contribute I will...	Be in the circle to talk.
The process helped OR did not help me understand the judicial interpretations...	It helps me to look at both sides of the issue, and it gives a respective to think through the consequences.
Ms. Sharer, next time you should...	Do the same thing!

Prepare for the discussion:

My position on Health Care Reform Act: (Constitutionality)

For, but there should be organized.

Evidence:

- more health security
- help people with pre-existing problems
- improve the health situation (status) of the U.S

But

- save money.
- the gov't should deal with the medical companies.
- set clear rules about the Act.

Key vocabulary:

Precedents before _____ vs _____

Case and year	Basic facts	Precedent set	Which side does this precedent support?
Wickard vs. Filburn 1994	Congress limit on the amount that the farmers could grow and relate to the interstate commerce	the health care is across the states, so relate to the whole population - interstate commerce	the Congre Wickard
U.S. vs. Lopez 1995	Congress interference on the school zone on carrying gun.	economic activities that have a substantial effect on interstate commerce	the state Lopez
Gonzales vs. Raich 2005	Homogenous marijuana was charged under federal law that made drug possession a crime.	Federal drug law was allowed under the Commerce clause; it's effect on the interstate commerce.	Congress

Discussion / Fish Bowl

Inner Circle Questions	Students	What did I hear I want to remember...	Persuasive / Not persuasive
<p>Arguments for...</p> <p>The Health Care and Commerce Clause</p> <p>The employers pay for Health Care</p> <p>Individual mandate</p> <p>Constitutional</p>		<p>the health care market makes up 18% of the U.S. economy and is nationwide.</p> <p>It's necessary. The employers should be responsible.</p> <p>The health insurance help you efforce the cost on medicine</p>	<p>P</p> <p>NP</p> <p>NP</p>
<p>Arguments against...</p> <p>The Health Care and Commerce Clause</p> <p>The employers pay for Health Care</p> <p>Individual mandate</p> <p>Constitutional</p>		<p>this is a individual free choice.</p> <p>Not fair to the employers. Cost too much.</p> <p>personal choice, not about the gov't. Just wasting money. Some cannot efforce it.</p>	<p>P</p> <p>P</p> <p>NP</p>

Supreme Court Moot Hearing Outline

Petitioners and Respondents: follow these guidelines:

"Mr. Chief Justice, may it please the court"

Explain the basic facts of the case What happened?

Why? Health insurance becomes a big issue in the U.S.
When? People are arguing about either the employers responsible
Where? for the health insurance or the employees should respond
Who? for themselves. they also argue that the individual
 mandate should or should not be constitutional. The
 case also about the relationship between Commerce
 Clause and the Health insurance.

"This case is about Health Reform Act"

What does your side think the key issue in this case really is?

Should the Health Act be part of the Commerce Clause?

What is the Constitutional question in the case?

Should the Individual Mandate be constitutional?

"We ask that the court rule that _____" (constitutional or unconstitutional)

"Our position is supported by the following precedents"

In the case of _____ vs. _____, this court ruled that _____. This precedent is similar to/different

from our case because ...

In the case of _____ vs. _____, this court ruled that _____. This precedent is similar to/different

from our case because ...

"In conclusion, Your Honor, we ask that the court rules _____ because...
(explain why this is important, how the ruling will affect U.S. lives, people's rights, society in general, or the future.)

Post Discussion:

1. What did I heard that is important?

A lots of people were on the side of unconstitutional.
Every one agree with the idea which is ^{is} the government
has no right to force people to purchase.

2. What did I want to say that was not discussed?

^{do} How the parties choose in this case - is individual mandate
constitutional or un constitutional?
Is the federal government taking a good look at it?
How is they gov't going to do to save it?

3. Which arguments were the most persuasive? Why?

When _____ supported that the health care should be in the Commerce
clause and said: "the health care market makes up 18%
of the U.S. economy and is nationwide," is the most
persuasive for me, because it's directly straight to point.

4. What did someone else say or do that was particularly helpful? How did this influence my position?

I ~~stay~~ stick with my position from the beginning to
the end.

5. What did I decide and why? Did I support or oppose or have a new idea during the discussion?

At first, I was on the side of unconstitutional individual mandate and I believed that the gov't has not right to force people to pay. However, later on I ~~not~~ realize the importance of having health insur^{ance}.
So, I change my side to Constitutional, but I still don't agree with the

6. What questions do I still have about the issue?

If the health act affects the U.S. so much, why does the U.S. ~~still~~ still ~~cut~~ cut the budgets from health welfare instead of trying to solve it?

7. How does this issue affect you, your family and friends?

~~The issue affects me and my family.~~

People will go to hospital one day, even just for physical check, and the cost is expensive, so people need health insurance.

Rate yourself and the class: (1 = not well, 2 = well, 3 = very well)

	Me	Class
Read the material carefully.	1	3
Focused on the discussion questions.	3	3
Listened carefully to what others said.	3	3
Understood and analyzed what others said.	2	3
Spoke and encouraged others to speak.	1	3
Referred to the reading / evidence to support ideas.	2	3
Used relevant background knowledge and life experiences in a logical way.	2	3
Remained engaged and respectful even when controversy arose.	3	3

Appendix 9: Deliberation on Student Speech

Student / Speech - Evaluation Name _____ (____ / 40)
Due Tuesday, May 28, 2013

Prepare for the discussion:

Should student speech be limited in public schools? <i>No, Unconstitutional</i>
Brainstorm possible evidence: <i>• Restriction of speech is an infringement of an individual's first Amendment Rights.</i> <i>- Freedom of speech</i> <i>- Freedom of expression</i>
Key vocabulary:

Supreme Court Cases

Case and year	Basic facts	Precedent set	Which side does this precedent support?
Minersville School Dist v. Gobitis (1940)	<i>Gobitis children expelled for refusal of flag salute under religion.</i>	<i>Mandatory flag salute doesn't infringe freedom of speech</i>	<i>Restriction of speech</i> <i>broader</i> <i>Dej</i>
West VA State Bd of Ed v. Barnette (1943)	<i>Flag salute be part of program & activities of school teachers and pupils required to honor flag.</i>	<i>Broader expression of speech.</i>	<i>mandatory salute of flag was unconstitutional</i> <i>D.</i>

	School District feared disturbances		Defendant
Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School Dist (1968)	Students not allowed to wear disruptive attire that may cause disorder. Protest of Vietnam war by wearing black arm bands	Expansion of student speech rights.	Students cannot be suspended for violation of 1st
Chandler v. McMinnville School Dist (1992)	Teachers on strike for improved salary/wor. conditions. Teachers struck, involving student anger and students wear armbands for better "act"	Expansion of Student Speech rights	Non-violent means of protest are non-offensive and protected by law.
Melton v. Young (1972)	White student wore a jacket with Confederate flag and was asked to raise and suspended in fear of racial tension	Take away students speech rights.	The 1st Amendment supports the majority opinion.
Karr v. Schmidt (1972)	Chelsea Karr not allowed to enroll for Jefferson High School for refusal to cut hair.	long hair is symbolic speech	Defendant Karr
Bethel School District v. Fraser (1986)	School event, Joseph Frederick held up banner with "Boys nite 4 Jesus" suspended.	Speech promoting Drug use is prohibited, Disruptive Tinker v. Des Moines.	Plaintiff School District
Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier (1988)	Morser spoke at school assembly to nominate classmate. Speech filled with sexual references and innuendo. Suspension not necessary from school records.	Sexual speech considered inappropriate going against Tinkers.	Plaintiff
Morse v. Frederick (2007)	Frederick holds banner w/ reference to drug use	- Morse viewed as a celebration of drug use. - School educating of the dangers of drugs	Morse

Questions

Question	Based on my prior experiences / beliefs / knowledge:	Compelling evidence / arguments from the class readings:
Should students in public schools be forced to say the pledge of allegiance?	Students should not be forced to salute for religious reasons. forced speech injures first amendment rights.	No. West Virginia v. Barnette Justice: Citizens are the first Amendment.
Does political speech interfere with the public schools' mission to educate students?	Freedom of speech of the first amendment. Tinker v. Des Moines	Fearing: Not Offensive. Loon: Reminds people of bad times. Abdul: People should be able to express beliefs. Wear: Express political speech expression should be alright.
Should a school prohibit the wearing of offensive slogans or symbols?	Yes, slogans and symbols may cause civil unrest and harm to the wearer.	Pruid Unrest Meltzer v. Young.

<p>Should schools be able to dictate a student's appearance?</p>	<p>Yes, dress codes are a part of all institutions Professionalism is key in all educational</p>	<p>Timber V. Des Moines</p>
<p>Should public schools ban students speech that refers to sex or drugs?</p>	<p>Yes. The mission of schools is to provide good education and protect students from harmful acts Sex and drugs can be harmful to extent.</p>	<p>Morse V. Undercruk Part of the school's job is to educate about dangers of illegal drug use.</p>
<p>Should a school district discipline a student who gives a lewd speech at a high school assembly?</p>	<p>Yes, inappropriate language in a school event or assembly is against</p>	<p>Disruptive speech not under first Amendment and decision at Tinker. ↓</p>

Should a school's administration determine what is included in student created school publication?	Yes School publications created by students must be reviewed for appropriate and censorship.	Hazelwood v. Kuhlman freedom of the press.
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Discussion / Fish Bowl

Inner Circle Questions	Students	What did I hear I want to remember...	Persuasive / Not persuasive
Should students be paid to say pledge?	me	West Virginia State v. Barnette.	Persuasive
No title speech in papers not school's mission	.	Political speech should be expressed. Remind people of bad experiences. People should express.	Persuasive
Prohibit wearing offensive slogans?	.	Hard to find offensive	NP
Should schools ban student use of speech referring to sex and drugs?	.	It is the school's job to educate student. We have a right to do what we want	P NP. ✓

Post Discussion:

1. What did I hear that is important?

Student has a ~~strong~~ right to express their opinions
School has a duty to provide a good education.

2. What did I want to say that was not discussed?

I wanted to discuss further the extent
of speech actually protected under the first amendment
and the Tinker precedent.

3. Which arguments were the most persuasive? Why?

C. says it is the school's duty to educate. This is persuasive
in the part that the school has the duty to educate in a safe environment.

4. What did someone else say or do that was particularly helpful? How did this influence my position?

B. and A. made the point that
students should be able to express themselves as a
student. I believe I have the right to give my views.

5. What did I decide and why? Did I support or oppose or have a new idea during the discussion?

I support students rights to speech to an extent as long
as it is not harmful to the speaker or others.

6. What questions do I still have about the issue?

How Tinker v. Des Moines what is the extent of disruptive
speech and attire limited to?

7. How does this issue affect you, your family and friends?

Yes, student rights affect my life as a student and as
a member of my school community

Rate yourself and the class: (1 = not well, 2 = well, 3 = very well)

	Me	Class
Read the material carefully.	2	3
Focused on the discussion questions.	2	3
Listened carefully to what others said.	1	3
Understood and analyzed what others said.	1	2
Spoke and encouraged others to speak.	1	2
Referred to the reading / evidence to support ideas.	2	3
Used relevant background knowledge and life experiences in a logical way.	1	3
Remained engaged and respectful even when controversy arose.	1	3

Blog Post (27 x 2 = 54 points)

(1) Your post – Due May 28

Select TWO questions from the list:

- Should students in public schools be forced to say the pledge of allegiance?
- Does political speech interfere with the public schools' mission to educate students?
- Should a school prohibit the wearing of offensive slogans or symbols?
- Should schools be able to dictate a student's appearance?
- Should public schools ban students' speech that refers to sex or drugs?
- Should a school district discipline a student who gives a lewd speech at a high school assembly?
- Should a school's administration determine what is in a student created school publication?

(a) Write the question. (b) Write your beliefs BEFORE the class deliberation. What influenced your beliefs? (c) Write a short summary of the Supreme Court's decision (d) POST Deliberation - Do you agree with the decision? Why or why not? (3 points each / 12 points)

(2) Respond to TWO peers – Due May 30

Response options to peers (up to 10 points; 5 points each):

- Use evidence to support a statement. ("Most people in the U.S. believe that . . . For example, in an opinion poll conducted this year. . . .")

- Use a probing question to elicit more information. ("You write that . . . Can you explain that further? I don't understand because...")
- Summarize the discussion; summarize points of agreements and disagreement between fellow students. ("Based on your post, it seems like you believe that . . ." "I believe...")
- Acknowledge the statements of others. ("As _____ wrote, ' . . . ', I agree because . . . OR I disagree because . . . (give evidence/ reasons)...")
- Make a concession ("You're right, _____, and I'm wrong! Your point about _____ made me realize...")
- A prompt of your choice as long as it acknowledges something another peer wrote and you add additional insights.

(3) Respond to teacher's questions / comments (5 pts) – Due June 4

Appendix 10: The College Board Free Response Questions (FRQs) 2013

The College Board releases the Free Response Questions (FRQ) each year. The following are the four questions students were required to answer on the AP U.S. Government test in May 2013 (College Entrance Examination Board, 2013b).

1. There are several different approaches to representation within a democratic political system.
 - (a) Define direct democracy.
 - (b) Define republican form of government.
 - (c) Describe one reason the framers of the United States Constitution chose a republican form of government over a direct democracy.
 - (d) Describe each of the models of congressional representation.
 - Trustee model (attitudinal view)
 - Delegate model (representational view)
 - (e) Explain why a member of Congress might sometimes act as a trustee (attitudinal view) rather than a delegate (representational view).

2. Political parties play important roles in United States elections and government institutions. Over the past several decades, the influence of political parties in elections has declined while their strength in Congress has increased.
 - (a) Describe two important functions of political parties in United States elections.
 - (b) Describe one important role political parties play within Congress to promote the party's public policy agenda.
 - (c) Explain how each of the following factors has weakened the influence of political parties over the political process.
 - Direct primaries
 - Candidate-centered campaigns
 - (d) Explain how party polarization has strengthened party influence in Congress.

PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTMENTS TO THE FEDERAL JUDICIARY BY SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS, 2000–2011 (in percent)						
President	African American	Hispanic	Asian American	White	Women	Men
Barack Obama	22%	11%	8%	59%	46%	54%
George W. Bush	7%	9%	1%	82%	22%	78%

Source: Alliance for Justice, August 2011
Percentages do not add up to 100.

3. Presidents consider many factors when nominating candidates to the federal courts, and getting their nominees confirmed is often difficult.

(a) Using the chart above, describe ONE similarity between President Barack Obama's judicial appointments and those made by President George W. Bush.

(b) Using the chart above, describe TWO differences between President Barack Obama's judicial appointments and those made by President George W. Bush.

(c) Explain why a president's party affiliation accounts for differences in presidential appointments to the judiciary.

(d) Describe one way a president can increase the chances of having judicial nominations to federal courts confirmed.

4. The public policy process is complex. The formation, enactment, and implementation of public policy involve many government institutions.

(a) Explain the importance of each of the following in the formation of the policy agenda.

- Media
- Elections

(b) Describe the roles of each of the following in the enactment of public policy.

- Congressional committees
- Executive orders

(c) Explain the importance of each of the following in the implementation of public policy.

- Bureaucratic discretion
- Issue networks OR iron triangles

Appendix 11: AP U.S. Government Test Review Assignment

(Font size and spacing is adjusted to fit in the appendix.)

AP U.S. Government Test Review Assignment

This is one of 3 major assignments for the 4th marking period! All work will be outside of class – either after school or at home!

Due: Wednesday, May 1, 2013

Send your work to: h _____@gmail.com or, when listed, post on the class blog

(1) There will be 8 groups and 1 person solo. You will be randomly assigned 2 chapters to review and present to your classmates. (Solo will have one chapter). Chapters are based on your textbook and Fast Track to a 5.

May 2:

Group 1: Chapter 5: Public Opinion and Political Beliefs and Chapter 6: Political Participation

Group 2: Chapter 7: Elections and Campaigns and Chapter 8: Political Parties

May 3:

Group 3: Chapter 9: Interest Groups and Chapter 10: Mass Media

Group 4: Chapter 11: Congress and Chapter 12: Presidency

Group 5: Chapter 13: Bureaucracy and Chapter 14: Federal Courts

May 6:

Group 6: Chapter 15: Policy making in the federal system and Chapter 16: Economic Policy and the Budget

Group 7: Chapter 19: Civil Rights and Chapter 20: Civil Liberties

May 7:

Group 8: Chapter 3: Theories of Democratic Government and Chapter 4: American Politics Culture

Single: Chapter 18: Foreign and Military Policy

Components of Assignment

1) Define the vocabulary terms for your chapters and *post at the blog site* (before 8 AM on May 1, 2013).

You may use the vocabulary list I distributed for definitions or your homework assignments from the school year. **(up to 25 points PER CHAPTER if complete and accurate)**

2) Create summary notes, using the template below, to share with your classmates. *Post at the blog site* (before 8 AM on May 1, 2013). **(up to 25 points PER CHAPTER if complete and accurate)**

3) Presentation of chapter / topic – no more than 10 minutes and 5 minutes for questions

You will create a PowerPoint (Word or Google Docs) to present the key concepts/ themes, terms, and either (a) section(s) of the Constitution / Amendments or (b) Supreme Court Cases.

The power point (Word or Google Docs) must either be sent before 8 AM on Wednesday, May 1, to h-----@gmail.com or brought to class on a flash drive.

Evaluation of Presentation

Category	Below Basic – 1	Basic – 2	Proficient – 3	Advanced – 4
Key concepts / themes	Neither clear nor complete presentation	Incomplete presentation; most information is clear	Clear and complete presentation	Well thought out / developed, clear, complete, and concise Presentations

Terms	Neither clear nor complete list/definitions in presentation	Incomplete or clear list / definitions in presentation	Clear and complete list / definitions included in presentation	Clear and Complete list / definitions included in presentation; included helpful ways to remember terms / definitions
Video clip	Not appropriate or significant enough to include	Either not appropriate or not significant enough to include	Appropriate and significant enough to include	Appropriate and significant enough to include; added explanation of how and why included video clip
Constitution / Amendments / Supreme Court Cases	Neither complete and not clear inclusion	Either not clear or complete inclusion	Clear and complete inclusion	Clear and complete inclusion and explanation of why / how significant to topic / theme
Question/ Answer	Not able to answer most questions with clarity and accuracy	Able to answer most questions with clarity and accuracy	Able to answer all questions with clarity and accuracy	Able to answer all questions with clarity, accuracy and sufficiently; demonstrated expertise
Pacing / Time	Totally off time frame	More than 5 minutes off time frame	Slightly off time frame	Stayed within 10 minutes presentation and 5 minutes Q & A

_____ / 24 x 5 = _____ / 120

Summary Notes Template SAMPLE (based on chapter in Fast Track to a 5 review book)

Chapter: _____ **Federalism** _____ (pgs. 63 – 68)

Federalism: A division of power between the state and federal government; has led to conflict in the U.S.; separation of powers

Section Title	Summary of key ideas / definition of key terms	Constitutional / Court connections
Sharing Power	a) power is shared between local government (states) and the national government b) endures (stays) in the U.S. – commitment to local self-government and Congress is elected by local constituents (people who live in their districts)	10 th amendment: power not granted to the federal gov't are for the States or people “Full, faith and credit” given by states to each other

	<p>c) to get states to agree, the national gov't has regulations and grants (money) to provide pressure</p> <p>d) Negative: state gov't can block national issues and programs (e.g. segregation)</p> <p>Pro : keeps individual rights and local control can move ahead of national policy</p> <p>e) supports political participation – citizens get involved in local issues and politics</p> <p>f) how federalism works has changed over time with many conflicts</p>	<p>States have to give people, “privileges and immunities” of citizens from other states</p> <p>Ensures extradition (return accused person to state where crime was committed)</p>
Federalism’s Historical Trial		
Federalism and State Monies		
Mandates		

Resources:

- Fast Track to a 5: Preparing for the AP US Government and Politics Examination (review book)
- Cracking the AP US Government Exam (review book)
- Shmoop - <http://www.shmoop.com/ap-exams/>
- Hippo Campus (videos) -
- Cornell Notes / chapter reviews from textbook
- Court Case Review handout
- Vocabulary Review handout

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