MEETING THEM WHERE THEY ARE:
THE USE OF TWITTER IN YOUTH CIVIC EDUCATION

By

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ABSTRACT

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Many measures of youth civic engagement indicate that youth participation in civic life has long been in decline; however, some of these measures fail to take into account ways that youth interact and engage with civic life. This qualitative study explored the experiences of five high school social studies teachers who have used the social media platform Twitter with students in their teaching of civics. Data collected during in-depth interviews was analyzed using a two-step coding process: first, an open-coding phase of data analysis allowed for data to emerge without preconceived ideas influencing the data; and second, a theory-based coding phase of data analysis allowed for examination of how the collective perceptions and experiences of participants connected to a proposed model of constructivist teaching of civic education with Twitter. Findings showed that the participants were introduced to Twitter for educational purposes by an influential peer who provided support as teachers considered the affordances of Twitter for their teaching. The study's findings also showed that participants viewed citizenship as moving fluidly between online and offline spaces. Further, participants were concerned about their students' self-worth, and used Twitter as a means of amplifying student voice and foster student agency. These findings contributed to theoretical understanding of the use of social media in K-12 education as well as the use of social media in the teaching of civics. Further implications included suggestions for research on introducing social media for classroom use in both teacher education and professional development programs. Additional implications for

research on the other ways in which teachers could support both online and offline civic engagement, the impact of the use of Twitter on student worth, and the impact of student worth on youth civic engagement are discussed. Finally, implications for teachers' adoption and use of social media for education are presented.

For Kori Oliver Schimpf, who thinks I can do anything,
and for Emily Chapman Marotta, who enthusiastically cheers me along at every step of the way.

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If "gratitude is the echo of grace" (John Piper), then indeed much grace has surrounded this project, for gratitude has been ever-present. Doctoral studies are strange and mysterious, years of vocational training that masquerade as the development of genius. I have arrived at this point because of two things that have developed out of the depth of relationships in my life: the drive to always keep reaching for the next, just out of reach goal, and the belief that our human capacity may well be limitless. My work stands on the shoulders of these giants:

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My mother and I did not have the best relationship, but throughout my school years she always told me that if I did my best, the result would be good enough for her. That, along with her instructions on always giving hostess gifts and never lying, were constant childhood refrains. Perhaps in another child that would have resulted in a mediocre or lackadaisical student, but I think she was wise enough to know that was all the incentive I needed to reach for the stars. In

this way, it is to my mom that I owe, at least in part, my work ethic, my honesty, and my generosity.

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dissipate for a little while. For all of that love, and for allowing me to see the fruits of

developmental and educational psychology live and in living color, thank you.

Our ground game isn't working; we're gonna put the ball in the air. If we're gonna walk into
walls, I want us running into 'em, full speed.
Leo McGarry, *The West Wing*

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Introduction

The issue of youth civic engagement has been a concern for teachers, researchers, and active citizens for decades. Most measures of traditional civic engagement by youth had been in decline until the presidential election of 2008; both that election and the presidential election of 2016 showed not only an uptick in youth voting but also new and alternative avenues of civic engagement among young people (U.S. Census Bureau; Bennett, Freelon, Hussain, & Wells, 2012). The presidential election of 2008 prompted scholars to theorize new ways in which youth are engaging in civic life, many of which are linked to how young people use social media.

However, civic education largely remains grounded in and supportive of traditional types of civic engagement. Despite an increase in youth voting in the 2008 and 2016 presidential elections, traditional forms of civic engagement, such as writing letters to newspapers and elected officials or joining a political party, remain low among youth (U.S. Census Bureau; Bennett, Freelon, Hussain, & Wells, 2012). Civic education remains driven by these traditional forms of civic engagement, often relying on ineffective methods focused on skills that are infrequently used among youth (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001). Educational research has suggested that new models of civic education, which include participatory pedagogies and the use of current events, are more effective, but these methods are not often used in civic education classrooms (Torney-Purta et al., 2001; Torney-Purta, & Wilkenfeld, 2009). Social media features can facilitate new forms of civic engagement for young people that are currently underexplored and undertheorized. The use of social media in civic education allows learners to construct their own knowledge in social environments that are realistic, which addresses several of the areas where current civic education practices fall short of research-

supported pedagogies and ways in which youth prefer to engage in civic life (Torney-Purta et al., 2001).

The purpose of this study was to explore how teachers use social media to teach civic education and whether and how their teaching with Twitter supports traditional or new models of civic engagement. In order to understand these experiences, I interviewed teachers in order to learn how (if at all) teachers are using social media to educate their students in newer models of civic engagement. The results of this study showed how teachers were using social media to teach civics and their reasons for doing so, which have important implications for researchers and practitioners. A better understanding of methods of teaching civic education that reach youth today will inform current teachers' practices of teaching civic education in the digital age. In addition, this exploratory study contributes to the limited extant literature on teaching with social media in K-12 education. Finally, this study aids the conceptualization of the use of social media in education.

Background of the Problem

Definitions. In this section I provide brief definitions of key terms: *civic engagement*, *civic education*, *social studies,* and *social media* and then outline the problematic mismatch between young people's civic engagement styles and the ways in which civics has typically been taught in K-12 schools. First, definitions for civic engagement and civic education are varied in the fields of education, psychology, sociology, communications, and political science. The educational research literature on *civic engagement* does not define this as a term, choosing instead to give examples of it which include, but are not limited to: voting, political participation, identification with a political party, or community service (Sherrod, Torney-Purta, & Flanagan, 2010).

According to Merriam-Webster's online dictionary, *civic engagement is "*something that engages, to induce to participate or to deal with especially at length" that pertains to "a citizen, a city, citizenship, or community affairs." Similarly, the dictionary defines *civic education* as the preparation of youth for participation in civil society. *Social studies* is the broad term used sometimes to describe high school departments that teach any of the following: anthropology, archeology, civics, economics, geography, government, history, law, political science; psychology, religion, and sociology; civics may be taught either as a component of any of these courses or as its own subject area) (National Council for the Social Studies, 2018).

Turning to the social media in education literature, *social media* can be defined as "online applications that promote users, their interconnections and user-generated content" (Greenhow & Gleason, 2014, p. 393). Because I am most interested in civics teaching with Twitter, a type of social media which is both a *social network site* and a *microblogging service*, I define these terms here. *Social network sites* can be defined as *"*a *networked communication platform* in which participants 1) have *uniquely identifiable profiles* that consist of user-supplied content, content provided by other users, and/or system-level data; 2) can *publicly articulate connections* that can be viewed and traversed by others; and 3) can consume, produce, and/or interact with *streams of user-generated content* provided by their connections on the site (Ellison & boyd, 2013, p. 158). *Microblogging services* are "platforms for sending, receiving, and sharing short posts" (Gleason, 2013, p. 967).

Citizenship styles and civics education. The problem of low civic engagement among youth is neither new nor unexplored. Going back decades, research has shown that successive generations of Americans have been less likely to join groups, have showed lower rates of social trust, and have voted less than Americans in older generations (Putnam, 1995, 2000). In more

recent years, scholars from a variety of fields (communications, political science, education, psychology, and sociology) have researched youth civic engagement, and a more accurate picture of how, when, and why youth participate in civic life is neither as simple nor as bleak as is commonly thought.

While it might be true that youth are engaging in traditional civic behaviors less frequently than did previous generations, it may be because they are engaging in civic life in ways that are not typically measured on traditional assessments of civic engagement. For instance, Bennett and his colleagues argue there are two models of citizenship today: *Dutiful Citizenship (DC)* and *Actualizing Citizenship (AC)* which will be briefly explained here and in more detail in the sections that follow (Bennett, 2008; Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009; Bennett, Freelon, & Wells, 2010). *Dutiful Citizenship,* the traditional model, holds as its central principle that civic engagement is a matter of duty and obligation; information is given to consumers by legacy media and other organizational sources; expressing opinions is done in the form of voting and letters to the editor, and civic action is taking part in traditional and civic organizations such as political parties. In contrast, *Actualizing Citizenship* is the more contemporary model, which describes citizens whose views of participation in civic life are more personal, using online social networks where information and action tend to be integrated; knowledge is co-created and co-curated, expression occurs over a variety of platforms, and action can range from joining online groups that can be more fluid in their membership, to community organizing to protests, marches, and consumer boycotts (Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009; Bennett, Freelon, & Wells, 2010).

In theorizing about these different styles of citizenship, Bennett and his colleagues also thought about the implications of these different citizenship styles for the planning, teaching, and

learning of civic education (Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009). While Bennett, Wells, and Rank (2009) believe that the curriculum and instruction for civic education should not rely solely on either a DC nor an AC style of citizenship, they note that many civic education programs are rooted in the DC style. Though not all civic education programs draw from a DC style and not all students operate from an AC style, many civic education programs follow DC methods in emphasizing knowledge acquisition, expression of opinion, and taking action in traditional ways while many youth subscribe to an AC style of citizenship (Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009). This disconnect between the citizenship style from which many civic education programs draw and the citizenship style practiced by many students in civic education classrooms may illustrate why many of these civic education programs seem to fail (Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009).

A further nuance is that the traditional civic education focus on the role and functioning of government is not wrong but rather not presented in ways in which youth typically approach politics (Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009). It is important to know how our government functions and how citizens can engage with it, but for many youth the starting point in entering civic and political life is more personal; it can range from engaging with issues they care about to the co-construction of knowledge via social media to ways in which they can be more personally active (Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009). Bennett's theoretical understanding of the shifts in youth civic engagement has been supported by data from the IEA Civic Education study, which will be described in more detail later (Torney-Purta et al., 2001).

The question then becomes what civic education would look like if it were more attentive to the ways in which youth best learn about civics and the ways in which youth prefer to practice the civic knowledge and skills they learn (Torney-Purta et al., 2001). In considering this question, Bennett, Wells, & Rank (2009) mapped their citizenship styles onto Jenkins' (2006)

understanding of learning preferences of youth who are immersed in online environments. Jenkins (2006) argued that students who are active participants in online environments do not thrive in educational settings where they function only as consumers of knowledge given to them by an authority. Based on this idea, Bennett, Wells, and Rank (2009) theorized that young people who approached civic education from an AC civic learning preferences perspective would favor interactive, project-based, peer-to-peer information sharing, participatory media creation, and a more democratic environment which supports learner-created content and peer assessment. In contrast, young people who approached civic education from a DC civic learning preferences perspective would favor text-based knowledge transmission and passive media consumption, would be focused on one-to-one interactions, and that knowledge and skills acquisition would be assessed by external standards without input from or attention to learner-created content or peer assessment (Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009).

Although Bennett and his colleagues have applied their model to education, it is important to note that this model does not address all of the complexities of civic education (Bennett, 2008; Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009; Bennett, Freelon, & Wells, 2010). There are aspects of civic education, such as democratic values or knowledge of the Constitution, which do not receive attention in Bennett's model. Although Bennett's model, as applied to education, does not cover dimensions that are important to the teaching of civics, it is not possible for Bennett's model to account for this model to stand for everything that is important to civic education. In spite of these limitations, Bennett's model provides a way of examining the inclusion of the use of social media in civic education.

These distinctions between DC and AC civic learning preferences seem to be supported by educational research, insofar as there is a correlation between more open or more democratic

classrooms (e.g. classrooms in which the climate allows or encourages disagreement between students; where discussion, particularly of controversial topics, is encouraged; where student learning is more active through activities such as discussion, debate, and role-play) and students from those classrooms scoring higher on measures of civic learning and civic skills than students from more closed classrooms (e.g. classrooms in which the climate did not encourage or allow disagreement; where discussion of controversial topics was rare; where the primary methods of learning were through reading the textbook or note taking) (Torney-Purta 2002; Gibson and Levine 2003; Campbell 2005; McIntosh, Berman, & Youniss, 2007; Pasek, Feldman, Romer, & Jamieson, 2008).

Moreover, certain classroom characteristics seem to produce students with higher measures of civic skills and learning. For instance, classroom discussion supports higher scores on measures of civic learning (Gibson & Levin, 2003; McDevitt, Kiousis, Wu, Losch, & Ripley, 2003; Parker, 2003; Syvertsen, Flanagan, & Stout, 2007), and discussion of contested issues may increase students' interest in politics (Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 1996; Hess & Posselt, 2002; Niemi & Junn, 2005; Syvertsen et al., 2007). Additionally, research shows that it is important to offer civic education in contexts that are relevant to students' experiences, such as the discussion of current events, student participation in school governance, simulations of democratic processes, and service learning (Gould, Jamieson, Levine, McConnell, & Smith, 2011; Gibson & Levine, 2003; Niemi & Junn, 2005; Pasek et al., 2008).

Given the substantial pedagogical differences between DC and AC civic learning preferences, the propensity of many youth to hold an AC style of citizenship as seen in the results from phase II of the IEA Civic Education study (Torney-Purta et al., 2001), and the above evidence of the characteristics of classrooms which produce students with the highest measures

of civic skills and civic learning, it would seem beneficial and likely that some civic educators

are moving in a direction of more open classrooms with pedagogical approaches which support

both DC and AC style students. Historically, however, most civic education programs rely solely

on a DC style framework (Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009).

Noting the importance of attending to both AC and DC styles of citizenship in civics

education, it is the AC style of citizenship education that requires additional research. Further,

given the importance accorded to the use of social media by Bennett et al. (2009, 2010), it would

seem imperative to examine how, when, and why teachers are using various social media in their

civics classrooms with what impact on students. While there are a variety of ways in which

students who hold an AC style of citizenship can learn about and be active in civic life, many of

those ways involve the use of digital and social media (Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009). This also

takes into account a practical, and not only theoretical, way of approaching civics education.

Civic engagement via social media. While the types of media used to create and

distribute information, to engage in boycotts or #hashtag movements, or to connect with other

citizens is varied, the use of the microblogging platform, Twitter, is widely used but

understudied in the educational research literature (Gao, Luo, & Zhang, 2012). For instance,

people took to Twitter to connect to, participate in, or critique the demonstrations, protests, and

uprisings known as the Arab Spring, the Occupy Wall Street movement, the Black Lives Matter

movement, the #MeToo movement, and the #NeverAgain movement. In 2011 in Egypt, young

people used Twitter to protest and organize activists who brought down the regime of President

Hosni Mubarak (Pew, 2012). Also in 2011, young adults used Twitter to propel a suggestion in a

magazine into the Occupy Wall Street movement (Preston, 2011). Between July 2013 and

March 2016, both youth and young adults used 13.3 million Tweets to show solidarity with and

participate in the Black Lives Matter movement (Pew, 2016). Very recently, high school students who survived the school shooting in Parkland, Florida in February 2018 began the #NeverAgain movement, which prompted the March for Our Lives in cities across the United States (Shear, 2018). Clearly, Twitter is being actively used by young people as both a method and a tool of civic engagement.

There is a disconnect between the ways in which many high school students in the United States are being taught civics and methods of civic participation and the ways in which youth are actually participating in civic life. While some students benefit from the traditional ways of teaching civics, there are other students whose civic imaginations remain uninspired by these ways. If the hope of civic education is to produce well-informed and active citizens, adjustments must be made in civic education. One of these adjustments could be to purposefully incorporate the use of social media into civics learning, particularly as there is evidence that youth are already using this media for civic engagement purposes. Next, I review the theoretical and empirical research literature that informs this study.

Chapter Two:

Literature Review

Civic Engagement in Youth

In this section, I will explore the research on civic engagement among youth, civic education, and the use of social media in education. As previously mentioned, civic engagement is a concept that has interested scholars in a variety of disciplines, including education, psychology, sociology, communications, and political science. While each of these disciplines has much to offer to the study and understanding of youth civic engagement, I focus here primarily on research from the fields of education and communications; this is why further sections of the literature review will focus on civic education and social media use in education. I have chosen to bound my literature review in this way because the focus of my study will be on what teachers are doing in their classrooms with social media, rather than on the psychological, sociological, philosophical, or political reasons youth are or are not civically engaged.

Many, including scholars and teachers, have been and continue to be concerned by the apparent lack of interest among youth in traditional civic activities, such a voting (Putnam, 2000). For their part, youth, when asked "What is a good citizen?" most frequently respond with one quality, often obeying laws or voting (Sherrod, 2004). However, limiting an understanding of civic engagement to voting only leaves the possibility of misunderstanding the ways in which youth understand their civic roles in society and the ways in which they choose to exercise them.

Sherrod, Torney-Purta, and Flanagan (2010) cite the American Heritage Dictionary definition of citizenship: "the status of a citizen with its duties, rights, and privileges" and also reference the work of political theorist Michael Walzer, whose definition of a citizen is a person who is "a member of a political community, entitled to whatever prerogatives and encumbered

with whatever responsibilities are attached to membership" in that community (1989). Sherrod and Lauckhardt (2008a) found that membership which has both rights and responsibilities is the common characteristic across many understandings of civic engagement. These definitions have been useful for scholars in youth civic engagement because the components of membership, rights, and responsibilities allows the field to examine educational environments for the critical developmental features of civic engagement (Flanagan, 2004).

Membership means more than being a citizen of a nation-state; one can belong or be attached to a variety of institutions in addition to one's country. These memberships also have both rights and responsibilities, and so in that way members act as citizens in these institutions. These include memberships in one's family (Fuligni, Tseng, & Lam, 1999), religion (Sherrod & Spiewak, 2008), race or ethnic group (Hughes & Chen, 1997; Torney-Purta, Barber, & Wilkenfeld, 2007), or community or organization (Kirshner, 2009). Further, research shows that adolescents' understanding of citizenship is related to their memberships in these other institutions (Bogard & Sherrod, 2008).

Another aspect of defining civic engagement is the idea that one who engages in civic or political action saw his or her life and interests as connected to the lives and interests of others. Altruism, tolerance, and concern for others are components that are sometimes included in definitions of citizenship (Sherrod, Torney-Purta, & Flanagan, 2010). Research has shown that performing community service in adolescence is correlated with civic engagement later in life (Youniss, McLellan, & Yates, 1997; Youniss & Levine, 2009). Conversely, civic and political engagement can be understood as working for one's group's particular goals and competing with others for power (Sherrod, Torney-Purta, & Flanagan, 2010). Whether one's motivation for civic engagement comes from a need and a desire to gain power or a need and desire to work for the

common good, engaging in civic and political action means a person is intentionally aligning his or her interests with the interests of others.

These different elements which define civic engagement are clearly articulated by several researchers in an attempt to provide a comprehensive understanding of civic engagement for scholars. One model suggests that there are three components to civic engagement: *civic literacy*, or the knowledge of one's community and civil affairs; *civic skills*, or competencies available for achieving group goals; and *civic attachment*, or the feeling or belief that the individual matters to the group (Flanagan & Faison, 2001). Similarly, the model offered by Sherrod and Lauckhardt (2008b) has three components: civic activities or political involvement; tolerance and concern for others; and membership, attachment, or allegiance. These and other researchers (Torney-Purta, Schwille, & Amadeo, 1999) seem to agree that, given membership in a group, the requirements to be civically engaged are knowledge and action.

In recent years, researchers and others have been concerned about what they see as a declining participation in civic life from youth (Putnam, 1995, 2000). Those concerned about this declining participation cite decreases in youth consumption of traditional or legacy news sources as well as a decline in traditional forms of civic engagement, such as belonging to a political party, writing letters to elected representatives or newspapers, and voting, as potential contributing factors (Bennett, Freelon, Hussain, & Wells, 2012). While the data support that youth are engaging with legacy news sources and traditional forms of civic engagement less, Bennett and his colleagues argue that this is not a decline in civic engagement among youth but rather a reorganization of youth civic engagement given new media and technology affordances which have changed the way in which youth understand and use both knowledge and action

(Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009; Bennett, Freelon, & Wells, 2010; Bennett, Freelon, Hussain, & Wells, (2012).

Bennett argues that there are two types of citizenship, *dutiful citizenship* and *actualizing citizenship*. *Dutiful Citizenship (DC)* describes a way of being a citizen which is based on duty and obligation. From this DC orientation, one receives news from authorities through traditional or legacy media (television, newspapers, radio) and acts upon that news through traditional political institutions such the government and political parties and traditional avenues such as writing letters to the editor and voting. In contrast, *Actualizing Citizenship (AC)* describes a way of being a citizen which is based on personal agency. From an AC orientation, news is not received from an authoritative source but instead co-created and co-curated on a variety of online-based platforms. Knowledge and action are intertwined as individuals express their beliefs, join online groups, and organize others in a variety in a variety of online and offline actions that include online movements and consumer boycotts (Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009). New media such as social network sites, blogs, and video sharing services such as YouTube make it easier and faster to use knowledge found and produced through these new media for action that occurs over the same platforms (Bennett, Freelon, & Wells, 2010).

Recognition of these two styles of citizenship does not preference one over the other, nor is a person's citizenship style merely a function of age. Bennett and his colleagues write that neither style of citizenship is superior to the other and that age does not necessarily determine which style of citizenship an individual has, noting that older generations who engaged in the protests and marches of the 1960s and 1970s may follow more of an AC model of citizenship, whereas youth who are raised in more conventional families with ties to DC style institutions (legacy media, political parties) may follow more of a DC model of citizenship (Bennett, Wells,

& Rank, 2009). Because of both the complexity and the variance of these citizenship styles, as well as the fact that not all people fall neatly into one style or the other, it is important to account for and attend to both citizenship styles when designing and implementing civic education. This is where we turn our attention in the next section.

Elements of Citizenship	Dutiful Citizens (Bennett et al., 2010)	Actualizing Citizens (Bennett et al., 2010)	Flanagan & Faison (2001)	Sherrod & Lauckhardt (2008b)
Knowledge	Information is provided by authorities, such as institutions and legacy media sources	Co-created and co-curated across multiple outlets and online platforms	Civic literacy: knowledge of one's community and civil affairs; Civic attachment: feeling or belief that the individual matters to the group.	Membership, attachment, or allegiance
Action	Joins political parties; writes letters to the editors of newspapers; voting	Expressing beliefs, joining movements, boycotts, marches, protests, organizing others; can be online or offline	Civic skills: competencies available for achieving group goals	Tolerance and concern for others; Civic activities; political involvement

Table 1. Components of Civic Engagement in Youth.

Civic Education

Civic education in the United States has a long history, as evidenced by the speech given by Horace Mann in 1842 in which he notes that most citizens do not know what is required of them and many are corrupt (Mann, 1842). In this speech, Mann talks about the need for greater learning and teaching about civic matters, noting that all governments require intelligence and morality in their rulers, and so the United States, a country in which everyone is a ruler, all citizens must have intelligence and morals character (Mann, 1842). Mann also notes that citizens are not born with the requisite knowledge and morality to successfully participate in American democracy, but they are certainly capable of achieving it through education (Mann, 1842).

More recently, young people have become unsure about their participation in traditional forms of political institutions, aside from voting (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schultz, 2001). Nearly 80% of students from the IEA study reported that they had no intention of engaging in traditional political processes such as joining a political party or writing letters to the editor of newspapers (Torney-Purta, et al., 2001). However, 59% of those students responded that they would fundraise for a cause and 44% reported that they would march for one (Torney-Purta, et al., 2001). The knowledge and skills required for these changing ways of participating in civic life have in some ways grown and changed from the models that have existed for decades. Learning how a bill becomes a law and how the Articles of Confederation led to the Constitution are necessary topics to learn, but education which ends there does not equip students with either the breadth of knowledge nor the variety of skills required to function in a 21st century democracy.

In 2012, The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (Godsay, Henderson, Levine, Littenberg-Tobias, & CIRCLE, 2012) reviewed civic education requirements in each state (Godsay, et al., 2012). They found that all 50 U.S. states include standards for civics and government within their broader social studies standards (Godsay, et al., 2012). 40 states require students to take at least one course in government or civics, and 21 states require the existence of a state government or civics exam (CIRCLE notes that this is a decrease from 2001 when 34 states had such a requirement), but only 8 states require students to take that exam (Godsay, et al., 2012). Only 9 states required a social studies exam as a requirement for high school graduation, which may have included civics or government questions (Godsay, et al., 2012). Despite its historical importance and the fact that schools are largely relied upon to provide civics education, the requirements to learn and succeed in civics seem thin and uneven.

In spite of a lack of requirements, schools do provide civic education. The underlying question which drives the design of civic education is: what types of learning experiences are required to teach young people to be the type of citizens we want and need them to be? (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). The research which has sought to find answers to this question has come in the form of two large and sweeping studies of civic education broadly and more focused and yet disparate studies which do not share or which lack entirely theoretical frameworks (Wilkenfeld, Lauckhardt, & Torney-Purta, 2010). In between the two large studies, completed in 1968 and 1999, there was a significant dip in the amount of research done on civic education, followed by a surge among researchers from a variety of fields prompted by the notion that youth are considerably less civically engaged than previous generations (Wilkenfeld, Lauckhardt, & Torney-Purta, 2010). This pattern of research has caused the overall empirical picture of civic education to have significant gaps and inconsistencies (Wilkenfeld, Lauckhardt, & Torney-Purta, 2010).

The first significantly large study of high school civic education was completed by Langton and Jennings in 1968. Studying 1669 high school seniors from 97 different high schools from across the United States, Langton and Jennings (1968) found that high school seniors who had taken one (or more, though very few respondents had taken more than one) civics course were more likely to be interested in politics, to be knowledgeable about government and its functions, to show more interest in accessing political information on their own and discussing that information with others, to have tolerance for others, and were more likely to feel politically efficacious. However, the correlations between completion of civics courses in high school and any greater interest or aptitude for civic engagement were extremely weak for all measures (Langton & Jennings, 1968). After this finding, many scholars stepped away from researching

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civic engagement, until the mid to late 1990s, when the U.S. and other democratic nations became acutely concerned about the lack of civic engagement among youth (Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009).

It was at this time that the second, much larger study was conducted in two parts across 28 democratic countries (Torney-Purta, et al., 1999; Torney-Purta, et al., 2001). Between 1996 and 1999, the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) conducted two phases of intensive study on civic education, its first on that subject since 1971; the first phase was a series of case studies on civic education done in 24 countries and the second was a survey of 90,000 fourteen year olds in 28 countries (Torney-Purta, et al., 1999; Torney-Purta, et al., 2001). The United States participated in both phases of this study, whose results were analyzed and reported for several years following the study's completion.

The goals of the case study of the United States during Phase 1 of the IEA study were to ascertain what youth were learning about civic life and to determine what various stakeholders thought should be taught in civics education classrooms (Hahn, 1999). This case study examined civic education as it occurred in schools and in social studies classrooms in particular (Hahn, 1999). While participation in civic life can be learned outside of the classroom, in the United States there has been a focus on teaching civics, primarily in social studies classes, since the 1890s (Hahn, 1999). Further, research has shown that the general consensus in the United States is that it is the school's responsibility to prepare students to be active and informed democratic citizens (Elam, Rose, & Gallup, 1996). Data for the phase 1 case study was collected from six sources (surveys of each of the 50 states; content analysis of textbooks; information from institutions and groups who participate in civic education; focus group interviews of 14-15 year old students; focus group interviews of social studies teachers from grades 8 and 9; and

interviews with subject matter experts) to analyze what 14-15 year olds are expected to learn in four areas (democracy, political institutions, and rights and responsibilities of citizens; national identity; social diversity and cohesion; and the connection between political and economic systems) (Hahn, 1999).

The phase 1 case study for the United States found that most students by grade 9 (age 14-15 years) will have had instruction in at least one class related to democracy, political institutions, and rights and responsibilities of citizens, though few will have had a course specifically focused on civics by that time (Hahn, 1999). Data from the textbook analysis and from the teacher and student focus groups showed very little variety in the topics that were taught in different classrooms (Hahn, 1999). The differences between classrooms came in the variety of pedagogies that teachers used to teach very similar content, which ranged from lectures and reading the textbook in class to discussing current events to debates, simulations, and mock trials (Hahn, 1999). Even though there is clear evidence that students learn more effectively and develop an interest in civic and political life if they have the chance to debate contested topics in an open and encouraging classroom (Hahn, 1998; Niemi & Junn, 1998), few of the teachers or students in the focus groups of the first phase of the IEA study reported the use of these pedagogical approaches in their classrooms or school (Hahn, 1999).

Teachers in the study's focus groups also reported the obstacles they experienced in attempting to teach civics to their students. One issue that was raised as an obstacle was a lack of resources; another was that it was difficult to make civic education a priority. A number of teachers in the focus groups observed that it was challenging to teach civics to students who had poor reading skills or to those who did not speak much English. Other teachers reported that they felt that they were inadequately prepared to teach civics, while still others feared the

potential controversy of teaching about diversity. Finally, a number of teachers cited school policies or school climates which discouraged students from speaking out or having any power to be directly opposed to what they were trying to teach in civics (Hahn, 1999). The variety in these obstacles provides a sense of how many factors are involved in providing impactful and long-lasting civic education to youth.

At the school level, many teachers in focus groups talked about the effects of school climate on civic education, noting that it was more difficult to teach about democracy and participation in civic life when the school culture was primarily concerned about order and quiet behavior (Hahn, 1999). It is important to note that schools and classrooms which had less democratic environments also used fewer interactive instructional methods, and that these schools and classrooms were often in urban areas and served students from lower socioeconomic levels (Hahn, 1999). The result was that the civic education of students in higher socioeconomic groups was considerably different than the civic education of students in lower socioeconomic groups (Hahn, 1999).

Researchers used the qualitative data collected during Phase 1 of the IEA study to create a survey of student civic engagement as well as an exam which evaluated students' civic knowledge; the results from survey and the exam were the basis for Phase 2 of the IEA study (Torney-Purta et al., 2001). Across 28 countries, approximately 90,000 students ages 14-15 were tested and surveyed. Both the exam and the survey covered topics including: civic knowledge; ability to evaluate civic information; democratic strengths and weaknesses; how the students' understood their role as citizens; students' feelings about democratic institutions and individual rights; and student intentions about civic engagement in adulthood (Torney-Purta et al., 2001).

Overall, Phase 2 of the IEA study had twelve major findings. First, the study found that most of the students from a majority of the participating nations had an understanding of democratic values, but that understanding was usually superficial. Students from the U.S. scored significantly better than the international average on overall civic knowledge (Torney-Purta et al., 2001). A related finding was that there was no overall gender gap in civic knowledge (some individual countries displayed a small gender gap, with female students scoring lower on civic knowledge items). 80% of all participants reported that they intended to vote as adults (Torney-Purta et al., 2001). A fourth finding was that the study showed a positive correlation between civic knowledge and civic participation; those who showed greater civic knowledge were more likely to report that they would vote as adults (Torney-Purta et al., 2001). Another finding was that students are more likely to have greater civic knowledge if they attend schools which have a more open and democratic climate (Torney-Purta et al., 2001).

Outside of the school building, students are inclined to belong to groups or organizations which have a civic component provided that they are able to work with their peers and see evidence of the effectiveness of their work (Torney-Purta et al., 2001). Students reported a moderate level of trust in their government and governmental institutions such as the police and court systems, though this varied widely by country. Another finding was that the majority of students from the majority of countries get and trust their news from television; the only exception to this was that students in the United States reported that they trusted newspapers more than television (Torney-Purta et al., 2001). It is important to note that only three of the participating twenty-eight countries, Chile, Denmark, and England, asked their respondents about online sources of news (Amadeo, 2007). In each of these three countries, students who

reported getting their news from the Internet was significantly correlated with students' intention to vote as adults (Amadeo, 2007).

In terms of future civic participation, students reported that, other than voting, they were disinclined to participate in traditional forms of civic engagement. In particular, four out of every five students said that they do not intend to write letters, join political parties, or run for elected office themselves. However, students also reported that they are interested in participating in alternative forms of civic engagement, including collecting money for charities, marching in non-violent protests, or supporting environmental causes (Torney-Purta et al., 2001).

Phase 2 of the IEA study also highlighted some interesting beliefs held by the students who participated. One major finding was that the majority of students supported women's rights, though far more female students than male students felt this way (Torney-Purta et al., 2001). A smaller majority of students said that they supported the rights of immigrants, and again female students were more likely to report this than male students. However, roughly 10% of students in five countries (Australia, England, Finland, Sweden, and the United States) were described as "alienated" (Torney-Purta & Barber, 2011). These students, at age 14, did not trust government institutions and had very negative opinions of immigrants and ethnic groups (Torney-Purta & Barber, 2011). Students with these characteristics were identified more than a decade before the Brexit vote, the 2016 U.S. presidential election, and other recent elections in other countries in which similar sentiments played a role.

Teachers were also surveyed during phase 2 of the IEA study, and those surveyed reported that they believed that civic education was important and made a difference in students' civic development (Torney-Purta et al., 2001). Teachers said that they wanted to stress critical thinking with their students, but at the same time they reported that their classes usually

consisted of the transmission of facts to their students through lectures, textbooks, and worksheets (Torney-Purta et al., 2001). Teachers also reported that if they had better materials, more specific training, and more time with students, civic education could be improved (Torney-Purta et al., 2001).

Research continues to be done on subsets of the larger IEA study, and since the completion of both phases of the IEA study, researchers from a variety of fields have undertaken scholarship focused on the civic education of youth. In part because these fields are connected but not closely tied, and in part because of the trajectory of research in civic education, much of the scholarship on civic education lacks theoretical framing (Wilkenfeld, Lauckhardt, & Torney-Purta, 2010). However, given the studies that have been done since the second phase of the IEA study, there are some findings about civic education which taken together provide a broad picture of what civic education in the United States looks like and what elements it should have.

Niemi and Chapman (1999) found that students who were good students in other school subjects were generally inclined to be attentive to several markers of civic engagement, including attention paid to the news, a sense of political efficacy in communicating with the government, a developed understanding of the functioning of the government, and general tolerance of the views of others. These findings indicated that civic knowledge seemed to indicate that students who were academically successful in other subjects were more likely to succeed academically civic education courses, thus privileging students who do well in school to be the best prepared citizens (Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009).

Evidence of further disparity between students exists, as not only academically strong students but also those who come from higher socioeconomic environments are more likely to be successful in civic education courses (Torney-Purta & Barber, 2004; Niemi & Junn, 2005;

Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009). The U.S. sample of the IEA phase two study found that the scores on civic knowledge and skills measures of students from homes with lower socioeconomic status were significantly below international means (Torney-Purta & Barber, 2004). More recently, Niemi and Junn (2005), in examining how well schools have been able to develop civic skills, found that the effectiveness of schools in this area was inconsistent. They found that schools with the highest outcomes for civic skills development were those in high socioeconomic areas (Niemi & Junn, 2005).

Given the small variability of topics covered in civics classes, it would be important to know what those topics were. According to a survey conducted in 2006 by the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), 41% of high school students reported that their primary topic of study was "the Constitution or U.S. system of government and how it works." Other frequently mentioned topics were "wars and military battles," which was reported as a topic by 32% of students, and "great American heroes and the virtues of the American form of government," which was reported as a topic by 26% of students (Lopez, Levine, Both, Kiesa, Kirby, Marcelo, & Williams, 2006). The focus on these topics suggests a more DC style of learning, whereas only 11% of the students reported that civics classroom topics included discussion of contemporary problems or issues for the U.S. today (Lopez et al., 2006). Thus, in addition to best meeting the needs of students who are the most academically successful, the topics and style of approaching them seems to best fit a smaller number of students, leaving the majority as lesser prepared citizens.

Other research has examined the qualities of schools or classrooms which promote the development of civic knowledge, skills, and action (Kahne & Middaugh, 2008). Several of these studies have found that classroom climate and the general openness of a school is a critical factor

in the success of civic education (Torney-Purta, 2002; Gibson & Levine, 2003; Campbell, 2005; McIntosh et al., 2007; Pasek et al., 2008). Research on a subset of the second phase of the IEA study indicated that this was true for students in the United States (Torney-Purta & Wilkenfeld, 2009). Torney-Purta and Wilkenfeld (2009) examined a representative sample of 2,500 of the U.S. participants in the IEA study, looking at two measures which evaluated the classroom climates and pedagogies the students experienced. Classrooms were evaluated for how open (to what extent students were encouraged to express opinions and whether disagreeing opinions were respected) they were, and pedagogies were assessed as being traditional (based on lectures and textbooks) or not. Students were grouped into four categories: *both*, students who reported high levels of openness and traditional instruction; *neither,* students who reported low levels of openness and traditional instruction; *interactive*, students who only reported high levels of openness; and *lecture*, students who only reported high levels of traditional instruction (Torney-Purta & Wilkenfeld, 2009). Students who reported learning in open classrooms scored higher across all twelve measures used to assess civic knowledge, attitudes, responsibilities, and behaviors (Torney-Purta & Wilkenfeld, 2009). There were no measures on which students who only used traditional methods of learning scored higher than those who came from open classrooms, and those who neither had open classrooms nor traditional instruction represented approximately 25% of the sample (Torney-Purta & Wilkenfeld, 2009).

Related to this, Syvertsen et al. (2007) found that students learning in more traditional classrooms felt less confident about understanding and analyzing political information and experienced less political efficacy compared to students who learned in more open classrooms. An aspect of a more open school or classroom is the use of classroom discussion or current events or other issues (Gibson & Levine, 2003; McDevitt et al., 2003; Parker, 2003; Syvertsen et

al., 2007); discussion of contested topics has been shown to increase student interest in politics (Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 1996; Hess & Posselt, 2002; Niemi & Junn, 2005; Syvertsen et al., 2007). Some of these studies have also found that teaching civic knowledge and skills in contexts that are understandable to students and which speak to their own experiences is important (Gibson & Levine, 2003; Niemi & Junn, 2005; Pasek et al., 2008). These findings support the AC style of civic education supported by Bennett and his colleagues, rather than the DC style of civic education most often seen in civic education classrooms (Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009).

An emphasis on academic success as a precursor for civic involvement and the findings of what topics are taught in civic education classrooms are problematic for three reasons. First, academically successful students are not equally and evenly dispersed throughout schools, and both the IEA study (Hahn, 1999) and Niemi and Chapman's (1999) study showed that more academically successful students came from schools with high socioeconomic demographics. Secondly, academic success in civic education courses has not been shown to correlate to increased civic engagement or civic action; knowing information about how the government and political systems work does not necessarily mean that one will act upon that knowledge in civic life (Hart & Gullan, 2010). Finally, the content which is the focus of many civic education classes focuses on a DC style of citizenship (Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009).

Competencies emphasized	Successful Teaching Approaches	Challenges/Problems
Civic knowledge: knowledge needed to be an informed an active citizen, including but not limited to the function and workings of government; U.S. history; geography; economics (Gould, Jamieson, Levine, McConnell, & Smith, 2011).	Participatory pedagogies: student-created discussion agendas, student debates, interactive experiences (e.g. mock Continental Congress) (Niemi & Chapman, 1999; Torney-Purta et al., 1999; Torney-Purta et al., 2001; Gibson & Levine, 2003; Kahne & Middaugh, 2008).	Civics classrooms do not spend much time on contexts related to students' lives: 41% of high school students study the Constitution, study 32%, wars and military battles, and 26% study great American heroes while only 11% focus on issues or problems facing the country (Lopez et al., 2006).
Civic skills: all skills that are needed for citizen political activity, including but not limited to: critical thinking; ability to gather information and evaluate sources; ability to debate issues; ability to organize people; ability advocate for issues or people (Gould et al., 2011).	Giving specific and relatable contexts for civic education that are relevant to students' lives (Gibson & Levine, 2003; Niemi & Junn, 2005; Pasek et al., 2008) and discussing current events correlates to later student interest in politics (Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 1996; Hess & Posselt, 2002; Niemi & Junn, 2005; Syvertsen et al., 2007).	Transmission of knowledge pedagogies which prevent students from having discussion, asking questions, or providing input (Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009).
Civic action: various forms of civic participation, including but not limited to: voting; volunteering; attending local meetings; attending demonstrations (Gould et al., 2011).	Student involvement in the community, such a community service projects or helping with local elections, promotes later civic engagement (Niemi & Chapman, 1999; Torney-Purta et al., 1999; Torney-Purta et al., 2001; Gibson & Levine, 2003; Kahne & Middaugh, 2008)	Students have no intention of engaging in civic behavior as taught in schools (e.g. letters to the editor), but report wanting to engage in ways that are not taught in schools (Torney-Purta, et al., 2001; Syvertsen et al., 2007).

Table 2. Trends in Civic Education.

What components are then necessary to better promote the potential civic success of the majority of students? Research has presented some evidence here, too. The more successful civic education practices include students helping to create discussion agendas; student participation in deliberations; and a variety of experiences in community involvement (Niemi & Chapman, 1999; Torney-Purta et al., 1999; Torney-Purta et al., 2001; Gibson & Levine, 2003; Kahne & Middaugh, 2008). Bennett and his colleagues have arranged the various civic competencies into

five general categories: knowledge/information, communication/expression, organization/membership, action/participation, and orientations/attitudes (Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009). These authors then examined the pedagogies used in civic education classrooms to explore them, and compared and contrasted ways in which students with AC and DC styles of citizenship would best learn in each of the categories. This resulted in a framework for the ways in which both citizenship styles could approach each category, to bring about the end result of attending to both styles of citizenship in civics education classrooms (Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009).

For instance, civic knowledge is a necessary component of both AC and DC citizenship styles, but there is room for not only the transmission of knowledge from authoritative sources but also the evaluation of those sources and contemplation about what knowledge is most important (Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009). Thus, the DC citizen might want and need to know how the U.S. government functions, which is important to all citizens, but instead of that being a learning goal in and of itself, it would be possible to include the AC citizen experience by also investigating citizen-organized political processes, such as the use of social media for political purposes (Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009). Another example would be that in addition to teaching about ways to participate in traditional political campaigns, civics classrooms might also include teaching about ways to participate in issues-based campaigns, such as environmental issues or gun ownership. Further, it would be inclusive of both AC and DC citizenship styles to include teaching about a variety of methods that citizens could use to participate in civic life: voting, creating and sharing content on social media, connecting with traditional political organizations such as parties and campaigns, and boycotting consumer products. Pedagogies which support

both citizenship styles have a greater chance of producing more active citizens than DC style citizenship alone (Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009).

Taking these findings together, there is a picture of what civic education should look like in the United States. First, civic education in schools is important, in part because in the United States we expect civic education to occur in schools and in part because students who know the most about politics and government are those students who have taken courses in government or civics (Patrick & Hoge, 1991; Niemi & Junn, 1998). However, academic success has not proven to be an indicator of future civic engagement (Hart & Gullan, 2010). How students are taught and the way in which the school or classroom climate functions contributes to or detracts from a student's learning about democracy and civic action (Hahn, 1999). Further, schools' reliance on a DC style of citizenship and a DC style of teaching civics seems to limit the ability of schools to prepare all students to be capable, informed, and active citizens (Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009).

All of this supports the conclusions that civic knowledge without the ability to use or practice that knowledge does not lead to civic action, and the way in which schools are teaching civics does not match what students need in order to become active citizens (Hart & Gullan, 2010; Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009). Thus, if the primary objective of civic education is to prepare students to be active and informed citizens, there must be additional or other ways of teaching civic knowledge and skills. Bennett and his colleagues argue for the inclusion of AC style civic education into civics education classrooms, by using pedagogies which attend to both types of citizenship, as well as more open classroom environments in which students can debate contentious issues (Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009).

Given that much of Bennett and colleagues' understanding of *Actualizing Citizenship* characteristics is predicated upon the ways in which new media and digital technology have

changed the ways in which people access and interact with information and the ways in which they choose to act upon that information, and that some of the ways in which young people can and do participate in political processes and issues occur on and through social media, we must be attentive to what is known about the use of social media in education. Moreover, social media may have certain characteristics and affordances that seem particularly synergistic with the kinds of actualizing citizenship activities we want youth to develop, such as the ability to search for and evaluate sources of information, an awareness of contentious topics and current events and the ability to discuss them, and exposure to a variety of ways to participate in civic life. In this next section, I briefly review relevant prior research and theory on social media in education.

Social Media in Education

The widespread use of social media in a variety of contexts and for various purposes impacts the ways in which people understand and conceptualize teaching, learning, and educational research (Greenhow, Robelia, & Hughes, 2009). In their meta-analysis of 610 journal articles on social media, Van Osch & Coursaris (2015) found that the topic with the greatest number of articles was education and learning, which accounted for 13.9% of the articles they examined. Research into the roles social media plays in education has examined both the ways in which various social media are used in formal and informal learning as well as the possibilities that exist for the ways in which social media could reimagine the production, consumption, and use of knowledge and the ways in which learners and teachers work within and outside of the educational system (Greenhow, Sonnevend, & Agur, 2016). Scholars have examined the use of social media in education in a variety of contexts, including higher education (Selwyn, 2009); K-12 education (Greenhow & Askari, 2017); and informal learning settings (Gleason, 2013). Scholars have also researched the ways in which specific social

network sites are used for educational purposes, such as Facebook (Manca & Ranieri, 2013, 2016) and Twitter (Gao, Luo, & Zhang, 2012).

In spite of research that indicates that there are benefits to using social media for educational purposes, such as increased participation and critical thinking (Mason & Rennie, 2006; Ajjan & Hartshorne, 2008) and affordances for collaboration, interaction, and information sharing (Mazman & Usluel, 2010), a review of this research also yields articles which are critical of the use of social media in education. Research has shown that college students' grades decreased when their time spent on Facebook increased (Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010) and that using Facebook while doing schoolwork was negatively correlated to college GPA (Junco & Cotton, 2013). Similarly, students who used social media in extracurricular activities were found to be distracted (Andersson, Hatakka, Grönlund, & Wiklund, 2014). While it is appropriate and necessary to be critical in our evaluation of the use of social media in education, the ways in which these studies have evaluated social media use are the ways in which students (and others) use that social media for non-educational purposes. There is a difference between using social media for socializing while attempting to learn and using social media as a tool to facilitate learning. Undoubtedly the ways in which social media could be leveraged as a tool to facilitate learning have not been fully explored, but the research which examines social media as a tool for learning shows potential outcomes that are worth exploring further.

Twitter

Twitter is a *social network site* which has been described as a *microblogging service*. Both terms are accurate yet incomplete alone, illustrating the ways in which both online experiences and the ways in which we define, name, use, and interact with them have changed rapidly since the 1990s (Greenhow, Robelia, & Hughes, 2009). Twitter is among the many

digital tools and online platforms which have developed in the ethos of a more interactive

Internet with users who are both consumers and producers of content, which are short posts

called *tweets*.

Twitter has several characteristics of a social network site. Of the elements incorporated

into social network sites identified by Ellison and boyd (2013), Twitter has three: uniquely

identifiable profiles, publicly-articulated connections, and streams of user-generated content.

Each individual tweet is created by a specific Twitter user and each Twitter user is identified

uniquely by a *handle* styled @username (for instance, my Twitter handle is @chapmaab). Each

user has the option to add personal details to their profile (attached to their unique handle),

including a header photograph, a profile picture, and a brief description of themselves including

geographic location. These profiles also include data supplied by Twitter, such as how many

tweets each user has composed and the date that they joined the platform. Each of these aspects

of a user's profile is unique to that user and created and curated by him or her.

A second characteristic of Ellison and boyd's (2013) description of social network sites

that Twitter has is that the connections Twitter users make on the platform are public. In addition

to creating their own tweets, Twitter users can opt to follow other Twitter users. Twitter

designates the accounts a user follows as those a user is *following*. As Gruzd, Wellman, and

Takhteyev (2011) have explained, Twitter users are not required or necessarily expected to

follow a Twitter user who follows them. Thus, there is not usually a parallel between the number

of accounts a user is following and that user's number of *followers*, or Twitter users who follow

that user's account (Gruzd, Wellman, & Takhteyev, 2011). The number of accounts a user is

following and the number of followers of that user's account are listed in the user's profile.

Finally, a third of Ellison and boyd's (2013) descriptors of social network sites embodied by Twitter is that it has, as its central feature, a stream of user-created content. As previously noted, user-created content appears in short posts known as tweets. Each user's tweets, along with the tweets of the accounts that they follow, are displayed in a stream called a *feed*. This feed, populated with tweets composed or retweeted by the accounts the user follows, serves as the primary way in which users see and interact with tweets. A user's Twitter feed usually appears in reverse chronological order, although this order may be changed based on Twitter's software or advertisements.

Insomuch as Twitter is a social network site, Twitter is also a microblogging service in that it allows its users to create, interact with, and share short posts of up to 280 characters called *tweets* (Gleason, 2013). Although tweets only consist of 280 characters, they can contain a variety of other media and elements. Tweets can contain links to websites, online articles, or various media. Tweets can also specifically *mention* one or more other Twitter users by adding another user's Twitter handle to the tweet. *Mentioning* another user in a tweet serves to inform that user of their inclusion on the tweet and draws the attention of that user's followers to the tweet. Finally, many tweets employ one or more *hashtags*, a word or phrase which follows a # symbol and which serves to organize tweets by topic (boyd, Golder, & Lotan, 2010; Lewis, 2014). Someone using the hashtag #MSUepet hashtag in a tweet, which references the Educational Psychology and Educational Technology program at Michigan State University, would have that tweet categorized with other tweets which use that hashtag. Clicking on or searching for that hashtag would lead to a page of tweets which feature it. Although not their initial intention, in addition to grouping together tweets, hashtags can also serve a rhetorical purpose, functioning as labels or commentary on an individual tweet rather than seeking to

connect one tweet to a broader group of tweets (Bruns, Moon, Paul, & Münch, 2016;

Greenhalgh, Staudt Willet, Rosenberg, & Koehler, 2017).

In addition to posting their own tweets and following the tweets of others, Twitter users

can interact with the tweets of other Twitter users. There are four common ways in which this

can be done: *liking* another user's tweet (connoting approval, interest, or agreement); *replying* to

another user's tweet (similar to a mention seen above but in reply to a particular tweet);

retweeting a tweet (copying someone else's tweet to your own feed); *quoting* a tweet (linking to

a tweet with an additional post; the original tweet could be your own or another user's tweet).

I chose to use Twitter in this study for two reasons: the prevalence of its use and its

affordances for education. Twitter is a platform that is widely used by adolescents and young

adults. According to the Pew Research Center (2018a), 24% of Americans use Twitter. This

number increases dramatically when examining only young people: 40% of people ages 18-29

use Twitter; 45% of people ages 18-24 use the platform (Pew, 2018a). Further supporting the

idea that younger people use Twitter more often, the Pew Research Center also found that

Americans aged 18-24 are significantly more likely to use Twitter than are their counterparts

who are in their mid-to-late 20s (Pew, 2018b). Pew Research Center data for teens supports this

finding, also. Pew found that 33% of teens aged 13-17 use Twitter, but teens in the upper end of

that bracket, 15-17, are more likely to use Twitter; 43% of 17-year olds reported using Twitter

(Pew, 2015).

Secondly, using Twitter for this study is appropriate because of the affordances of Twitter

in education. Broadly speaking, educational research has examined the affordances of Twitter for

use in education, including how teachers and students use Twitter for educational purposes. A

literature review by Gao, Luo, and Zhang (2012) examined 21 research papers on the use of

Twitter in education. While 18 of the 21 of the studies they examined used higher education settings, many of their findings could be applicable to secondary education as well. For instance, Gao et al. (2012) found that the use of Twitter changes who the participants are in a learning setting. Specifically, the use of Twitter broadens the reach of the instructor, whether to students who are less inclined to participate verbally in class to people who are not physically present in the class (Gao et al., 2012). Further, Twitter can serve as a back-channel in educational settings, allowing learners in a lecture-format class to participate by live-tweeting, allowing learners to discuss, ask questions, and receive immediate responses from instructors (Gao et al., 2012).

Twitter also has the ability to connect learners in the classroom with a variety of people outside of it. Gao et al. (2012) found that classes which used Twitter were able to connect with Twitter users who were outside of their classroom and yet interested in what the students were studying. This brought lived experiences to learning and added to the authenticity of the learning experience, and student reported being excited by these interactions (Gao et al., 2012). Further, what students learn in the classroom is often practiced with people and in places outside of the classroom. Listening to and interacting with those people and becoming aware of those places can be an important part of taking what is learned inside the classroom and applying it to the real world.

Another affordance of Twitter is that it allows students' access to people who they may not have met or had access to without the platform. The example cited in Gao et al. (2012) is from a study in which students learning a language connected with native speakers of that language via Twitter, without which they would not have had a connection to native speakers (Borau, Ullrich, Feng, & Shen, 2009). Research has also shown that students who use Twitter are more likely to become involved in the wider community (Rinaldo, Tapp, & Laverie, 2011). It is

easy to imagine that students learning about civics could similarly find people on Twitter they would not otherwise interact with, including government representatives, student activists, leaders of social movements, and people who choose to express their civic views and encourage civic behavior on Twitter.

Yet another affordance of Twitter is the it can encourage learning to happen outside of and beyond class times. Using Twitter allows for reflection and learning to continue throughout the day, which may encourage further conversations with classmates and others, connections to real life applications of classroom learning, and integration of topics from a variety of disciplines (Gao et al., 2012). Research has shown that students who used Twitter as a part of their classes had discussions on class topics on Twitter outside of class; asked questions of and helped each other; and were more likely to ask questions and to engage more with their instructors (Holotescu & Grosseck, 2009; Dunlap & Lowenthal, 2009; Perifanou, 2009). Additionally, Elavsky, Mislan, and Elavsky (2011) found that a topic which was mentioned briefly in class became a topic of conversation amongst the students on Twitter for weeks following the class. This type of interaction beyond the classroom was seen even when instructors only use Twitter to post classroom assignments, materials, or notices (Lowe & Laffey, 2011).

Just as Twitter can expand the physical and temporal constraints of a high school classroom, it can also expand the pool of learners and instructors as well as the roles that they play. Tweeting about topics that are brought up in class promotes interaction between students, between students and the instructor, and between students, instructor, and other Twitter users (Gao et al., 2012). This expands not only the conversation but the topics which are covered. Additionally, while traditionally instructors are suppliers (or sometimes producers) of knowledge and students are consumers of knowledge, using Twitter allows those roles to become more

fluid. Students can consume information from a variety of sources; they can also co-produce and curate knowledge in ways that are not usually seen in traditional classrooms (Gao et al., 2012). Instructors and other Twitter users can also play any or all of these roles. Research has shown that when students are able to co-create and contribute information and materials, they were more likely to be active students (Dunlap & Lowenthal, 2009; Perifanou, 2009).

The use of Twitter in education also promotes connections between students and instructors; these connections occur both inside and outside the classroom (Domizi, 2013; Lin, Hoffman, & Borengasser, 2013; Junco, Heiberger, & Loken, 2011; Lomicka & Lord, 2012; Wright, 2010). Domizi (2013) found that students using Twitter were able to connect with each other in nontraditional ways. Junco, Heiberger, and Loken (2011) found that using Twitter helped their students to create connections with each other. Wright (2010) found that the use of Twitter developed community within classes that used it, and both Dunlap and Lowenthal (2009) and Lomicka and Lord (2013) had similar findings which they attributed to sustained connections that occurred over Twitter.

Yet another affordance of Twitter is that when it is used in educational settings, participation by students increases (Gao et al., 2012). Ebner, Lienhardt, Rohs, and Meyer (2010) found that when the use of Twitter was used regularly in the classroom, students were more engaged than they otherwise would have been. Other research shows that students who use Twitter for class had deeper interpersonal connections and were more engaged, while other research has shown that increased engagement and connections have improved the depth and quality of learning in those classrooms (Junco, Heiberger, & Loken, 2011; Kop, 2011; Kassens-Noor, 2012). Junco et al. (2011) further found that the use of Twitter in class allowed students who would not normally have participated to do so. As Bennett has theorized that many

adolescents have an *Actualizing Citizenship* approach to civic engagement and thus do not participate in traditional modes of civic engagement, this affordance of Twitter that it encourages participation from those who might not otherwise participate in class is significant.

Finally, there is some evidence to suggest that the use of Twitter in education deepens the level of thinking that students are able to give to topics and ideas over time. Students in a study conducted by Wright (2010) found that using Twitter allowed them to note, share, and process their thoughts in ways that helped them to think about new ideas. A study by Ebner and Maurer (2009) found that using Twitter allowed students to think about topics and ideas over a longer period of time, which allowed students to think more deeply about those topics. Some research has also suggested that the short character limit of Twitter posts (140 characters prior to November 2017, when that limit was increased to 280 characters) forced students to focus on main ideas (Wright, 2010). In Wright's (2010) study, students said that the character limit required them to think more deeply on the topics of their posts so that the posts would be clear given the character limit.

It is important to note that these studies which show evidence of deepening thinking through the use of Twitter exist in tension with other research, which has shown that in the oversimplification of ideas can lead to misunderstanding of information (Spiro, 1988; Spiro, Feltovich, Jacobson, & Coulson, 1992; Feltovich, Spiro, & Coulson, 2012). Cognitive Flexibility Theory posits that developing a deep understanding of material must be done through multiple learning experiences so that students can create robust mental conceptions of their learning and practice it with guidance from instructors (Spiro,1988; Spiro, Feltovich, Jacobson, & Coulson, 1992). Without this type of learning, students acquire incorrect knowledge, are unable to flexibly apply knowledge to new domains, and do not retain knowledge well (Feltovich, Spiro, &

Coulson, 2012). Research which has supported Cognitive Flexibility Theory contradicts studies which have shown deep thinking occurs through the use of Twitter; it is important to keep this tension in mind in exploring the affordances of Twitter for educational use.

As shown in this table, the research on education and social media suggests that social media may have certain features and affordances that make it particularly promising for supporting the essential components of civics education I identified earlier and in Table 2 as currently lacking but important for developing active civic engagement among today's young people.

Essential Components of Civic Education	Twitter Affordances
Schools generally and classes which teach civics should be open and democratic, allowing for greater student input (Hahn, 1999).	Using Twitter increases student participation and engagement, even from students who usually do not participate (Junco et al., 2011).
Classes which teach civics should include current events and hotly debated topics (Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 1996; Hess & Posselt, 2002; Niemi & Junn, 2005; Syvertsen et al., 2007).	Twitter connects students to people outside of the classroom and to those they may not have had the chance to interact with (Gao et al., 2012). These can include people and movements which are current and being debated in the public sphere.
Civics classes should use participatory pedagogies: student-created discussion agendas, student debates, interactive experiences (e.g. mock Continental Congress) (Niemi & Chapman, 1999; Torney-Purta et al., 1999; Torney-Purta et al., 2001; Gibson & Levine, 2003; Kahne & Middaugh, 2008).	Twitter is inherently participatory. Using Twitter in class expands the roles of participants in the learning community (Gao et al., 2012). Students who co-create and contribute information are more likely to be active students (Dunlap & Lowenthal, 2009; Perifanou, 2009). Using Twitter promotes continuing discussions of topics brought up in class outside of the classroom (Gao et al., 2012).
Giving specific and relatable contexts for civic education that are relevant to students' lives (Gibson & Levine, 2003; Niemi & Junn, 2005; Pasek et al., 2008).	Twitter connects students to people outside of the classroom and to those they may not have had the chance to interact with (Gao et al., 2012). These may include people and organizations with which students connect more authentically than traditional classrooms.
Schools and civics classrooms should prompt and include student involvement in the community, such a community service projects or helping with local elections (Niemi & Chapman, 1999; Torney-Purta et al., 1999; Torney-Purta et al., 2001; Gibson & Levine, 2003; Kahne & Middaugh, 2008)	Students who use Twitter are more likely to be involved in the wider community (Rinaldo, Trapp, & Laverie, 2011).
Civics classes should teach a variety of ways in which students can be civically involved (Torney-Purta et al., 2001).	Using Twitter connects students to civic participation beyond what may be taught in class (joining movements or boycotts, for instance). Also, the use of Twitter deepens students' thinking (Wright, 2010; Ebner & Mauer, 2009).
Civics classes should teach students how to search for and evaluate information from a variety of sources (Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009).	Twitter connects students to people outside of the classroom and to those they may not have had the chance to interact with (Gao et al., 2012). Using Twitter in class expands the roles of participants in the learning community, particularly shifting the role of students from receivers of knowledge to co-creators of knowledge (Gao et al., 2012).

Table 3. Essential Components of Civic Education and Twitter Affordances.

Summary

Civic engagement literature questions whether students should learn about civic engagement in school in the ways that they are actually participating in society; in other words, students should be learning and practicing civic roles in school settings in the ways in which they will use those skills out in the world as adults (Haste, 2010; Bennett, Freelon, Hussain, & Wells, 2012). Most current civic education programs in the United States do not do this, focusing instead on the foundations of American democracy and highlights of American leadership (Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009). Further, many young people today, who are engaged by co-created and co-curated knowledge and more personal connections to issues and activism in contrast to older generations who are engaged by legacy news sources and more institutional connections to issues and activism, do not see the way they interact with the world in civics education courses (Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009).

In order to be more inclusive of learners who approach citizenship from an *Actualizing Citizenship* style, Bennett and his colleagues argue that civics education should attend to and include knowledge and skills education that takes into account and speaks to both AC and DC citizenship styles. This must include the evaluation of news and media sources, discussions of contemporary issues, and the use of social media. Similarly, Greenhow, Robelia, and Hughes (2009) argue that the use of social media in education should have a stronger focus on the ways in which students are regularly and routinely using social media inside and outside of school.

Horace Mann (1842) argued that all students needed to be well schooled in how to be active and productive citizens, and that understanding of the role of civic education in schools has not changed since Mann's time. If Bennett's understanding of changing citizenship styles for some youth is accurate, and there is reason to believe it is, students who have significantly

different approaches to how they develop civic understanding and practice civic skills will have difficulty in or be alienated by traditional civic education. For all students, particularly those who are not academically successful in other subjects or who come from lower socioeconomic environments, as well as for older citizens who are hopeful of passing on the rights and responsibilities of self-government to future generations, then attention needs to be paid to the content, pedagogies, and expectations of civics education programs.

Conceptual Framework

Conceptualizing the use of Twitter in high school classrooms for the educational purposes of enriching civic education and increasing civic engagement is complex; social media use in education is undertheorized, and literature on the use of Twitter in civic education is non-existent. Taking a step back from that specific scenario, however, provides a better opportunity for theoretically grounding this research. The remainder of this section will examine several theories which conceptualize the use of social media for educational purposes. As none of these theories completely explains the use of social media in this proposed study, I will offer my own framework for this study at the end of this section.

TPACK: Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge

Examining the use of Twitter in civics education at the high school level draws upon understanding three aspects of education concurrently: technology, pedagogy, and subject matter content. This brings to mind the theory of teaching with technology known as TPACK: Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). TPACK provides a model which aims to incorporate the major elements of the knowledge needed by teachers to integrate technology in their teaching. These elements are content, the knowledge about a subject matter, its structure and frameworks, and its processes of inquiry; pedagogy, the knowledge of

the methods, practices, purposes, and processes of teaching; and technology, knowledge about standard and advanced technologies and possessing the requisite skills to use them (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). TPACK is the intersection of these three elements, in which a teacher understands what she wants to teach and how that content could best be represented or arranged for student learning, how she wants to teach that content and why she wants to teach it that way, and what technological tools she wants to use to teach the content and why and how those tools should be used.

In the particular case of this proposed study, the content is civics, the pedagogies are those which research has shown are most effective in teaching civics (e.g. debates, current events, simulations, etc.), and the technology is Twitter. The TPACK framework encourages scholars and practitioners to examine not only each of these elements of teaching but also the ways in which they fit together and influence each other, resulting in teaching which is not formulaic but rather which chooses elements that make sense together. What TPACK cannot do is to identity the best ways in which to teach civics or the ways in which technology more generally and Twitter more specifically can support the teaching of civics. For this, we must turn to other theories.

Constructivism

In broad terms, the theory of constructivism holds that the critical aspect of learning is that learners construct their own knowledge. While there are a number of different types of constructivism, two are worthy of mention here: social constructivism and cognitive constructivism. Cognitive constructivism explains the construction of knowledge as using information already held in one's mental schemas in conjunction with new information to help construct knowledge, somewhat akin to information processing theory (Spiro, Feltovich,

Jacobson, & Coulson, 1992; Hoadley, 2004). In some contrast to this, social constructivism, as initially conceived by Lev Vygotsky (1978), had cognitive, social, and structural components. Vygotsky (1978) believed that learning was and should be social and collaborative, but only insofar as working with and amongst others would help an individual learner to construct their own knowledge and internalize that cognitively. This was done in the zone of proximal development (ZPD), where a learner could cognitively stretch more in the company of slightly more capable peers and with appropriate supports commonly now referred to as scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky (1978) also believed that learning should be realistic, in part because he focused on the use of tools (including language) as another source of help for learners in constructing their own knowledge.

Problems with Constructivism

It is important to note prior to explaining the particular value of social constructivism to theorizing about the use of social media in education that some educational scholars do not support the use of constructivism as a theory to support teaching. A major criticism has been that some scholars understand cognition in ways that would make constructivism inefficient at best and ineffective at worst (Kirschner, Sweller, & Clark, 2006). From this perspective, learning occurs when new information is able to move from working memory into long term memory, so that it can be recalled and used when needed (Kirschner et al., 2006). The crux of this argument is that long term memory plays a greater role in numerous aspects of cognition, and so focusing on methods of instruction that best move new knowledge into long term memory sets learners up for the best chance to use that knowledge (Kirschner et al., 2006).

The criticism of Kirschner et al (2006) has been strongly countered by Hmelo-Silver, Duncan, and Chinn (2007), in large part because the well-grounded criticism of discovery

learning was broadly applied to all constructivist approaches in a manner which was easily and convincingly refuted. In spite of these criticisms, social constructivism continues to be used to theorize the use of social media in education. In two recent studies, Churcher, Downs, and Tewksbury (2014) examined the use of social media (Facebook and wikis) as a pedagogical practice through a social constructivist lens. Gleason (2013) examined the use of Twitter in the Occupy Wall Street movement, again through a social constructivist lens.

Each of these found elements of social constructivism that were particularly helpful in explaining why one would want to use social media as an educational tool. Three of these elements are aligned with pedagogies which research has shown to be successful in civics education and also with the affordances of Twitter. These elements are: 1) learners construct knowledge, 2) learning takes place in a social environment in which learners interact with peers, experts, and tools, and 3) learning should be realistic and be inclusive of multiple perspectives (Gleason, 2013; Spiro & Jehng, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978). The alignment between these elements of social constructivism, successful pedagogies used in civics education, and Twitter affordances can be seen in Table 4.

As can be seen in Table 4, these three elements which are essential to social constructivism align well with pedagogies that research has shown to be successful in the teaching of civics as well as some of the affordances of Twitter. The principle of constructivism that learners construct their own knowledge and that this happens in a social or communal environment which has peers, experts and tools are two principles which are intertwined in their alignment with civics pedagogies and Twitter affordances. These principles align with suggested strategies for civics instruction which recommend an open classroom climate with participatory pedagogies (debates, simulations), encourage community involvement, and allow students to

make their own evaluations of information (Hahn, 1999; Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 1996; Hess & Posselt, 2002; Niemi & Junn, 2005; Syvertsen et al., 2007; Niemi and Chapman 1999, Torney-Purta et al. 1999, Torney-Purta et al. 2001, Gibson and Levine 2003, Kahne & Middaugh, 2008; Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009). These align with Twitter affordances in that Twitter increases student participation; connects people to those outside the classroom, which expands the Zone of Proximal Development; allows students to co-create and construct knowledge, which in turn makes them more active students; and promotes community involvement because students who use Twitter are more likely to be involved in their communities (Junco et al., 2011; Gao et al., 2012; Dunlap & Lowenthal, 2009; Perifanou, 2009; Rinaldo, Trapp, & Laverie, 2011).

The third principle of constructivism which aligns with civic education pedagogies and Twitter affordances is the necessity of providing realistic learning experiences with multiple perspectives (Vygotsky, 1978; Spiro et al, 1992). This principle aligns with recommended pedagogies for civics education which suggest that civics classes should debate contested topics; that civics education should provide specific and relatable contexts that students find relevant; and that civics classes should teach students a variety of ways in which to become civically involved (Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 1996; Hess & Posselt, 2002; Niemi & Junn, 2005; Syvertsen et al. 2007; Gibson & Levine 2003; Niemi & Junn, 2005; Pasek et al. 2008; Torney-Purta et al., 2001). The principle of providing realistic learning experiences with multiple perspectives aligns with the affordances of Twitter in that in connecting to a wider group of people on Twitter than just their classmates, a student's interaction with multiple perspectives potentially increases; using Twitter has been an authentic way in which some people have become civically engaged through movements, boycotts, and marches; and using Twitter has been shown to deepen

students' thinking (Gao et al., 2012; Pew, 2012, 2016; Preston, 2011; Shear, 2018; Wright, 2010; Ebner & Mauer, 2009).

Elements of Social Constructivism	Successful Pedagogies used in Civic Education	Twitter Affordances	Dimension of Model
Learners construct their own knowledge through interaction with others (Vygotsky, 1978).	Civics classes should teach students through participatory pedagogies how to evaluate information from a variety of sources (Niemi & Chapman, 1999; Torney-Purta et al., 1999; Torney-Purta et al., 2001; Gibson & Levine, 2003; Kahne & Middaugh, 2008; Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009).	Individual Twitter users construct tweets. These users find other users, and in order to interact with other users' tweets must evaluate them.	**Learners construct knowledge.**
Learning occurs in a social environment with peers, experts, and tools (Vygotsky, 1978).	Schools and classes should be open and democratic. Also, schools that include student involvement in the community, such as community service or helping with local elections, have better civic education outcomes (Hahn 1999).	Twitter is a social environment in which users encounter peers, experts (in a variety of fields), and others. Additionally, Twitter is a tool (in Vygotsky's understanding of the term).	**Learning should be social.**
Learning environments should be realistic (Vygotsky, 1978; Spiro & Jehng, 1990).	Civics classes should use specific and relatable contexts that are relevant to students' lives. Civics classes should teach a variety of ways students can be civically involved (Gibson & Levine, 2003; Niemi & Junn, 2005; Pasek, Feldman, Romer, & Jamieson, 2008; Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 1996; Hess & Posselt, 2002; Syvertsen et al., 2007).	Twitter is realistic in that it can connect students, in real-time, to government agencies, government representatives, movements, issues, and a variety of news sources, including legacy news sources and crowd-sourced news.	**Learning should be realistic.**

Table 4. Alignment of constructivist theory, pedagogies for civic education, and Twitter affordances.

Constructivist Teaching with Twitter in Civics Education

Given this understanding of how social constructivism can support successful pedagogies in civics education classrooms including the use of Twitter, it is possible to construct a model of

constructivist teaching with Twitter in civics education classrooms which supports both *Dutiful Citizenship* and *Actualizing Citizenship* approaches to civic engagement. This model has three components. First, **learners construct knowledge.** From this perspective, learners construct their own understandings through the interaction of prior knowledge, new information, and ideas of others. This means that students who are learning about civics need exposure to social environments in which they can interact with others so as to make sense of what they are learning for themselves. Twitter is a social environment which requires such mental construction by providing opportunities for people to construct their own posts, or tweets, as well as opportunities to build on (modified tweets) or pass along (retweets) the posts of others. Secondly, **learning should be social.** This is a corollary of the first dimension of the model, as a social environment requires that people interact with each other, in order to hear information, think about varying perspectives and sources, and make meaning for oneself; Twitter provides such a social environment. Finally, **learning should be realistic.** Theoretical evidence and practical research indicate that students learn civics most effectively when presented with real-world information and situations; Twitter allows users to connect with current events in real time.

Statement of Research Problem

This study is the intersection of two interests: how teachers are teaching with social media and how teachers are teaching civic education. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the experiences and perceptions of high school teachers who had used or were using the social media platform Twitter, in their teaching of civic education. The study also sought to evaluate whether the teachers' use of Twitter in their civics teaching would align with the proposed model of constructivist civic education using Twitter and within that, with actualizing and/or dutiful citizenship styles.

Research Questions

To that end, the following research questions framed this research:

1. What are the experiences of teachers who are teaching civics with Twitter?

    a. What was the initial prompt that caused teachers to think about wanting to use Twitter in their classrooms?

    b. After the initial prompt to use Twitter, what was the teacher's process of choosing to use Twitter in civic education?

    c. What are the teachers' objectives for students' civics learning (as a result of this lesson, students will be able to….?)

    d. Given what teachers experience when teaching civics with Twitter, what models do these experiences align with? To what extent are these experiences aligned or not aligned with the model of constructivist civics education with Twitter?

Chapter Three:

Research Design and Methods

This third chapter details the methodology I used to answer my research questions. I begin with an overview of my chosen methodology, move on to an explanation of my sample, including why I chose to use this sample and how I found participants for the study. Following a discussion of the sample, I describe my positionality and role in the research, especially how I am approaching this study, the role I played in interacting with subjects, and any threats to validity posed by these. Next, I present a thorough description of my research plan, followed by descriptions of the research contexts, data sources, and data analysis. The final section focuses on the implications of this study.

Research Design

This study used a combination of two qualitative approaches to research: phenomenology and qualitative case study. The reason that two methodologies were employed was to allow me to honor the rich data obtained through participant interviews. Phenomenology was chosen as a methodology because of its focus on examining a phenomenon of interest for meaning and experience from the point of view of several individuals (Creswell, 2013). This approach allowed me to process the meaning of using Twitter in the teaching of civics, while qualitative case study allowed me to also evaluate and present their pedagogical choices and their reflections on those choices within individual cases and across the teacher-cases. It is important to note from the outset that there is a tension in using two methodologies within one study.

A phenomenological approach was chosen for this study because the research questions were designed to explore and to better understand the lived experience of teachers who had used Twitter in their teaching of civic education. According to Giorgi and Giorgi (2008), the main

intent of phenomenological research is to uncover the meaning of the experiences of a phenomenon. Creswell (2013) adds that phenomenological research describes or interprets these experiences across several individuals. Phenomenology aims to determine the essential meaning of these lived experiences through the examination of the *lifeworld* of the person or persons being studied (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2008). Giorgi and Giorgi (2008) explained that the *lifeworld* is the study of a phenomenon of interest as it occurs naturally, rather than in a laboratory setting. Because of its goals and focus on the lifeworld, phenomenology cannot be reduced to predetermined variables, using instead thick descriptions of lived experiences (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2008). The goals of phenomenological research also require interviews with people who have had the requisite experiences; thus, participants must be intentionally chosen for the study because they have the experiences under study and can describe those experiences thoroughly (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2008).

A qualitative case study approach was also used in order to explore a question in depth in order to provide a detailed understanding of the issue across several cases (Creswell, 2013). This study used a qualitative case study method in order to include the data collected during the interviews which pertained to teachers' practice of teaching, in addition to developing an understanding of their lifeworld. (Creswell, 2013; Giorgi & Giorgi, 2008). This approach required describing each case in detail and focusing on a single phenomenon of interest, in this case, high school teachers' use of Twitter in civic education (Creswell, 2013).

In order to answer the parts of my research questions which focused on the teachers' use of Twitter in class, I generated a thick description of what high school civics teachers who use Twitter in their classrooms actually do. Qualitative case studies require in-depth study of a particular issue or phenomenon, in contrast to other methodologies, like ethnography, which also

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require thick descriptions but which focus on the behavior of a culture-sharing group (Creswell, 2013). A thick description was necessary in order to better understand if and how the use of Twitter in civics classrooms aligns with constructivist teaching with social media and with Bennett's (2009) framework for understanding approaches to citizenship. The broader approach of a qualitative case study was most appropriate to explore teachers' pedagogical choices.

Sample Justification and Access

A purposeful sampling technique was used to recruit participants for this study in order to recruit participants who had the experience at the center of this study, namely social studies teachers who had used Twitter in civic education. Purposive sampling "involves searching for cases or individuals who meet a certain criterion "in order to provide a pool of individuals who are able to provide insight into the phenomenon of interest (Palys, 2008, p. 697; Shaw, 1999). Using purposive sampling ensures that all participants have experience with the phenomenon of interest (Creswell, 2013). The population of interest for this study was high school teachers who had used the social media platform Twitter with their students for the purpose of teaching civic education, and thus participants were recruited based on the following criteria:

1. Participants were required to be high school social studies teachers who are teaching civics. For this study, teachers must be situated in a high school (grades 9-12 or 10-12) social studies department and teaching at least one class with an identifiable civics component (i.e. civics is part of state, district, or departmental frameworks; is on the teachers' syllabus).

2. Participants must have been teaching for a minimum of three years. The rationale for this criterion was that teachers with at least three years of experience are more able to focus on pedagogy and improving their practice compared to newer

teachers who also need to work on classroom management, new curriculum, and refining content.

3. Participants were required to be regular Twitter users themselves, defined as using Twitter (tweeting, retweeting, liking other tweets) at least once per week and having at least one year of experience with the platform.

4. Participants were to be teachers who have already used Twitter as a tool for teaching civics.

5. Participants had been teaching in a school where the majority of the student population fell into either a low or a high socioeconomic status. This was based on literature identifying differences in civic education among different SES areas (Hahn, 1999; Torney-Purta & Barber, 2004; Niemi & Junn, 2005; Bennett et al., 2009; Gould et al., 2011).

Since the objective of this study was to examine the rich experiences of teachers who have used Twitter in civic education, the number of participants was based on the interviews themselves, ensuring that the teachers who were interviewed provided a diversity of experiences and a variety of perceptions. Initially a sixth criterion was included, which was that teachers were required to be teaching in Massachusetts in order to participate in the study. This criterion was meant both to bound the study and narrow the participant pool. However, there was difficulty in finding teachers who met the other five criteria and also lived in Massachusetts, and as a result the study was opened up to teachers who were living in other states.

Teachers were recruited to participate in this study in a variety of ways. First, requests were made to professors of teacher education who also study social media to see if any of their former students might fit the criteria. Similarly, I reached out to the professors at the Emerson

Civics Education Lab to see if they had any contacts who might fit the criteria. Thirdly, I sent individual emails to friends, college classmates, and former colleagues who are teachers or school administrators, asking if anyone in their school systems would match the criteria. Fourth, I contacted two civics education organizations, Generation Citizen and iCivics, and asked them if they knew of any teachers who fit the criteria and also to post messages on their forums, feeds, or pages inviting teachers to participate in the study. Relatedly, I reached out to Ed Tech Teacher, an organization which provides professional development for teachers, for potential participants. I contacted the chairpersons of both the Social Studies special interest group (SIG) of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) and of the Tech Community within the National Council for the Social Studies, asking them to share the request for participants with their members.

I also tweeted my request for participants, including a link to my website which offered more information about the study, using the hashtags #SocialMediaEd, #CivicEd, and #MSUepet. These requests were retweeted by colleagues. Finally, I reached out to individual teachers via email and Twitter who, based on prior presentations at conferences or their participation in the professional development communities on Twitter identified by the hashtags #sschat and #hsgovchat, seemed to meet the study criteria. The intention behind these various modes of searching for potential participants was to cast as wide a net as possible in order to find teachers who fit the sample criteria. When individual teachers responded to my requests for participation, we discussed whether they met the criteria for the study, and only those who met the criteria were interviewed. Through these methods, I was connected to a variety of potential participants. Overall, personal messages were the most effective in finding participants, whether from a person I directly contacted or who was contacted by someone I had reached out to.

Researcher's Role and Positionality

My own civic education began when I was quite young. My parents took my sister and I into the voting booth with them starting when we were quite young. When I was in elementary and middle school, my mother was on our town's board of education. I watched her run her campaigns and then participate in the life of our schools, having briefing books delivered every Friday, teachers calling our home during negotiations, talking at the dinner table about what education should be. I remember my own civic education including reading at least one newspaper daily from middle school through college; writing a letter to the governor of New Jersey in middle school and letters to the local paper when I was in high school; and an eagerness and excitement to register to vote as soon as I turned 18. The first election I voted in was the contentious presidential election of 2000; the election I refer to often when talking or teaching about civics is the bond referendum in my hometown in which 115 people voted, total. I was one of them. I really do believe that my vote matters.

All of this description is to say that I have a deeply and long-held belief that civic engagement is important and that preparing for that engagement should begin early in life. During my undergraduate teacher education program, a professor told me that teachers need as many tools in their toolbox as possible because no tool works for every student. This resonated deeply with me, and so as a teacher I have tried to include as many ways to get students interested in what I was teaching as I could. Even though I did not teach a course on civic education, I tried to weave elements of civic education into my classes. My world history classes learned to identify every country in the world on a map, so that when the news brought up situations in those countries, or the U.S. was in conflict with one, my students would at least know where those countries were. My U.S. history classes got to see photocopies of an absentee

ballot I had made in college, knowing I would want to talk about what a ballot looked like and that there were races beyond the presidential election to consider. However, as much as I think I did a decent job preparing students to be actively involved in civic life, I never had them actually engage in civic life as part of my classes.

In relation to my research questions, however, I am no longer an active member of the group I sought to study. While I was a social studies teacher, and while my license to teach history is still active, my current employment is not in social studies education (I am a lay ecclesial minister). Thus, I am not now, nor was I ever, a member of a social studies class or even a group of high school teachers who use Twitter in their classrooms (I was not even on Twitter until after I left teaching). I have found that I personally have moved from writing letters to writing posts on social media (I still vote and am a member of a political party), and in that that way I am active on the platform I wish to study. I do tweet, with some regularity, about politics broadly and about civic engagement particularly. Given all of this, I would say that my position is strongly to encourage people generally and young people specifically to be informed and active citizens, which is certainly a lens that I see this study through.

Threats to validity. Maxwell (2013) identifies two types of validity threats in qualitative research that could have affected this study: researcher bias and reactivity. *Researcher bias* refers to the ways in which data collection or analysis can be distorted by the researcher's values or preconceptions, while reactivity refers to the influence of the researcher on the research setting or participants (Maxwell, 2013). My bias as a researcher as it pertained to this study came from the value I assigned to both civic education and civic engagement. I also thought that social media can be an effective pedagogical tool. Further, Bennett (2009) would argue that not all people who hold an *Actualizing Citizenship* approach think voting is important, so that was an

area where I needed to be aware of my own values as I interviewed participants. These preconceptions provided the basis for my interest in this research, but they also could have influenced how I conducted my interviews or how I interpreted what the teachers shared with me in ways that could have bent the data to fit my preconceptions. These preconceptions could have influenced my data collection and analysis. Each of these points may have been an issue not only of researchers' bias but also of *reactivity*, as my beliefs may have influenced not only the way in which I see and understand the data but also in how I constructed my interview questions. The strategies I used in order to test the validity of my data collection and analysis, and mitigate researcher bias and reactivity, are described in the data analysis and rigor section below.

Data Sources

Interviews. For this study, the primary data source was semi-structured interviews with participating teachers. *Semi-structured interviews* utilize a set of predetermined questions, but the order of the questions is less important than establishing a connection with the person being interviewed (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Semi-structured interviews also allow the researcher to follow areas of interest, rather than following a script, and also allow respondents to introduce topics into the interview not thought of by the researcher (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Prior to conducting any interviews, I developed a number of prompts designed to explore teachers' experiences with Twitter in teaching civics (see Appendix A for interview prompts). The emphasis in each interview, however, was on understanding the experiences of each teacher, and thus the interviews unfolded in conversational manner. This conversational manner was developed at the beginning of each interview, which began with a grand-tour question. A *grand tour question* is a broad yet central question which allows the participants to openly describe their thoughts and experiences of a phenomenon or experience (Spradley, 1979; Creswell &

Poth, 2017). For this study, my grand tour question asked about participants' experiences in using Twitter for civic education. Subsequent interview questions flowed in response to each participant's comments, rather than as a list of questions to be answered in order. I used the interview questions are outlined in Appendix A as a guide; if there were questions at the end of the interview which remained unanswered, I asked those at the end of the conversation. In this way, the prompts served as a reminder near the end of each interview to ask questions about topics of interest to this study that had not naturally occurred in our conversation, to ensure that I collected data necessary to answer my research questions. There were times in each interview where our conversation detoured away from any of the prompts; these detours provided rich information in some cases, while in others they served to build rapport with the respondent.

Interviews were conducted at a time convenient to the participant and were all conducted via videoconference. In order to honor participants' time and to limit the burden placed upon them by a lengthy interview, I had let the participants know prior to their agreement to participate in the study and again just prior to the start of the interview about the maximum length of the interview (one hour). Though I was, to the best of my ability, aware of the time throughout the interviews in order to not exceed this allotted time, in two cases the interview ran longer than one hour. In each of those cases, the teachers seemed engaged in the interview, wanted to continue the conversation, and did not express any concerns about the length of time of the interview. Interviews were recorded with permission using a feature of the teleconference platform, and the interviews were transcribed by a transcription service and checked for accuracy by me.

Data Collection

Each of the five teachers who were interviewed for this study had been directly asked about participating in it, either by myself or by one of the people I had contacted to ask for help. Screening of potential participants as to whether they met the inclusion criteria began prior to asking them to be interviewed, either by asking my contacts for names of people who fit the criteria or by assessing this myself via potential participant Twitter biographies. Once a teacher agreed to be interviewed, messages were then exchanged, either via email or over Twitter. These messages, between the potential participant and me, provided the opportunity for me to further assess if the potential participant met the inclusion criteria and for me to explain the study, provide and explain the consent form (which was also reiterated verbally at the time of each interview), and, if they met the inclusion criteria and were willing to be interviewed, to set up a date and time for the interview which was convenient for the participant. In 3 cases, people who had agreed to be interviewed decided not to participate in the study. They indicated this by no longer responding to my tweets or emails, and so their reasons for withdrawing from the study are unknown.

Data Analysis and Rigor

Data analysis of the interviews followed a two-step process using, first, open coding, and second, theory-based coding. *Open coding* is when data is separated into categories (codes) based only on what is seen in and understood from the data, rather than a priori codes that were established prior to the reading of data or theory-based coding (Creswell, 2013). *Theory-based coding* examines data and assigns codes to data based on a comparison to a particular theory (Glaser, 2012). Given the lack of research regarding the use of Twitter in civic education, it was important to begin data analysis with open-coding to explore themes that emerged from teacher

interviews; this was also important from a phenomenological perspective, which tries to understand the nature and meanings of a particular phenomenon, because phenomenology requires openness to our everyday lives and experiences (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Phenomenology also assumes that preconceptions can only be tested through dialogue. My process of analysis was informed by this perspective because I returned to the raw data frequently, both in video and transcript form, to understand the meanings of the phenomenon of teaching civics with Twitter. It is also critical, given the proposed model of constructivist teaching with Twitter in civics education, that the data be coded using theory-based coding to examine how the collective perceptions and experiences of the participants in this study connect with existing theory and knowledge.

Theory-based coding.

This phase of data analysis used the constructivist model for the use of Twitter in civics education detailed above as a guide for a five-part process of theory-based coding (Glaser, 2012). This process was used to put my phenomenology findings in dialogue with prior literature to determine how my findings fit into the literature base. Codes were identified from the model prior to this stage of data analysis, which began with a re-reading of the data while thinking of possible connections to the model. A second step of this coding process was to identify the categories which aligned with the proposed model. For instance, two of the codes that emerged from the data were "life story," which identified parts of the interview during which one of the teachers spoke about their personal or professional history, and "prompt," which was used when a teacher explained how he or she started to use Twitter. During the third step, verbatim interview data was sorted into the categories identified in step two of the theory-based coding phase. The fourth step was to review the categories which were established from the model to

identify which of these categories do or do not help to explain the experiences of the participants. Finally, the fifth step of this coding process was to revise the initial constructivist teaching with Twitter for civics education model, retaining the aspects of the model which were affirmed by theory-based coding and removing those which were not affirmed.

The phenomenological data analysis was an iterative process, moving between the different parts in order to rigorously analyze the data. The first part of data analysis was to read through each of the transcripts thoroughly in order to gain a holistic sense of the data (Smith & Osborn, 2008). For this study, each transcript was read slowly by the researcher, in order to become familiar with the words of each participant. Upon the second or third reading, copies of each transcript were notated and significant statements were highlighted that seemed to bring together an understanding of the meaning of the experience for each participant (Creswell, 2013). Re-reading of the transcripts, as well as re-watching of the interviews, occurred throughout the data analysis process. A second aspect of the data analysis was to draft a description of the participant's experience of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Writing and revising descriptions of each participant's experience clarified my understanding of each participant's experience, and was a key aspect of the data analysis. The aim here was not to describe the events discussed by each participant, but to analyze the meanings behind those events in order to arrive at the overall meaning of the experience of using Twitter in civic education for these teacher-participants. Throughout the process of writing about the meanings of each participant's experiences, the participants' experiences were examined collectively and analyzed for common themes (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Finally, the meanings gleaned from each transcript were compared with the research on effective civic education to evaluate how the lived experience of each teacher compared with the literature base (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Part of

this process was to compare each of the transcripts, along with my analysis of them, in order to evaluate the data for any common experiences among the participants (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Common experiences and meanings were then synthesized, and the findings across participants are presented as emergent themes of the data (Smith & Osborn, 2008).

The following is an example of this process as it was employed in this study. Each teacher's interview transcript data was read at least twice before notes were made. Upon the third reading, I highlighted transcript lines that included information about topics that pertained to my research questions, such as the teacher's personal history; the context of the school and area in which they were teaching; how they came to use Twitter; and how they used Twitter with their students. Following this initial highlighting, I wrote up my initial findings in separate documents for each teacher. Through the process of peer review, (explained below), returning to the data, and re-writing to clarify my understanding about each case, themes began to emerge, the first of which was: "The Relevance of Twitter." I wrote up the way that each teacher attended to this theme at the end of the draft of their case, initially keeping the aspects of the theme separated by teacher. Each teacher's case was then compared to prior literature. Following comparisons to prior literature, each teacher's case was examined for alignment with the dimensions of the proposed model through the process of theory-based coding. For instance, each teacher's transcript was highlighted for areas where they spoke about students learning with each other, as a connection to the dimension of the model "learning is social." After each teacher's case had been revised at least twice, I began combining the writing from the cross-case themes to examine how teachers' experiences of those themes compared to each other. Following this cross-case analysis, peer review was on-going throughout data analysis; checking for counterexamples

occurred in the re-reading of transcript data as well as in each stage of the iterative writing process (each teacher case; connections to literature; alignment with model; cross-case analysis).

Credibility and Trustworthiness

Throughout the process of data analysis, three measures were used to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the data analysis. First, I presented my analysis of the data to two experts in qualitative inquiry, who were familiar with the research project, for peer review (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Peer review is the process through which someone who is familiar with the phenomenon under study or the research project examines the data analysis and challenges the researcher's assumptions, usually over time (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It is often used as a check on the researcher's bias (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

After I had written a draft of my analysis for a participant, the peer reviewers read the analysis and provided written feedback to me. After each draft for each case, I met with both of the peer reviewers to discuss the data analysis; through the questions posed by the peer reviewers, I clarified my thinking about each case (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Following each discussion with the peer reviewers, I returned to the data and re-read the transcripts (or in some cases re-watched the interviews) in order to develop a deep understanding of each teacher. Following my review of the data, I would return to the write-up of the analysis and edit it based on the conversations with the peer reviewers and my re-reading of the data. The edited version of the analysis was then returned to the peer reviewers, and we again discussed the revisions. This process was iterative, as each part of the process informed my thinking and understanding of each participant's case, and I returned to the data or the peer reviewers often throughout the period of data analysis (Berkowitz, 1997; Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009). This

iterative process was repeated with each participant' s case, and it served to ensure that the data analysis was robust but also that the analysis did not exceed what the data showed to be true. Pseudonyms were used for each teacher throughout the data analysis phase, as well as in the writing of this thesis, to shield the identity of the teachers who participated in the study from the peer reviewer and other readers.

The second measure was that I pushed myself throughout the data analysis phase of the study to find in the data examples which contradicted or did not support the themes she saw emerging from the data. This use of counterexamples, or disconfirming evidence, is a process through which researchers identify codes from within the data and then reexamine the data for evidence that contradicts or fails to support the previously identified themes (Creswell & Miller, 2000). This process of finding counterexamples also attends to the complex nature of qualitative research, and serves to provide a check on a researcher's reactivity (Creswell & Miller, 2000). The process of looking for counterexamples in this study was cyclical. Throughout the process of data analysis, I identified themes that seemed to emerge from the data. My next step was to re-read the data to identify any data that contradicted the emergent theme or when there was no data within one of the teacher-cases to support the theme for that teacher. For instance, one of the themes that emerged early on in the process was that four out of the five teachers were introduced by an influential peer to Twitter as an educational, rather than personal tool. Although this finding was clear in the experiences of four of the teachers, it was notably absent in Sam's case. This process was repeated for each theme that emerged to counteract my reactivity.

Chapter Four:

Results

The purpose of this dissertation study is to explore how teachers use social media to teach civic education and whether and how their teaching with Twitter supports traditional or new models of civic engagement. The results of this study are presented through an in-depth analysis of each participant's individual experiences as understood through their interview data. In the following chapter, each participant's case is presented individually, allowing the reader to understand each participant's experiences robustly. In each of these cases, I provide information about the participant and his or her background and context; how each teacher is teaching civics with Twitter; how the teacher thinks about teaching civics and teaching with Twitter; and how each participant's experiences align with the proposed model of constructivist teaching of civics with Twitter. Common themes that emerged from multiple participants' interviews will be discussed in the subsequent chapter (Chapter 5).

Overview: Abigail Bailey

As will become the pattern for subsequent participants, I will begin my analysis of this first participant, Abigail (a.k.a Abbey) Bailey, with her experiences of teaching civics with Twitter. For Abbey, these experiences center around student civic engagement, introducing students to the world outside of their isolated community, and increasing the value students assign to their experiences and opinions. The following two sections will discuss some of Abbey's experiences teaching civics with Twitter, and how those experiences align with the proposed model of constructivist teaching with Twitter for civic education. My focus on these three areas is intended to provide rich descriptions of how Abbey understands herself as a teacher, how she situates herself in the world of education, and how both of those experiences

impact her teaching of civic education with technology. Abbey's understanding and practice of teaching was shaped by her remote location, her hopes for her students, and her fervent belief that her students have voices worthy of attention from elected officials. Abbey's experiences in the rural Midwest and her role as an advocate for her students influence how she teaches and supports student learning.

Context. Abigail Bailey was a white, female, married mother who was also a high school social studies teacher from a rural area in Michigan. Abbey has been teaching for 19 years and referred to herself as "almost the whole social studies department" at her school of 195 students in grades 9-12; the English teacher in the school also teaches one social studies course. The school had 13 teachers, a principal, and a technology administrator, and served a town with a population of 880, 843 of whom were white (2010 U.S. Census). Abbey described the area as a rural farming community where many people live throughout their lives. She also noted that access to the internet is inconsistently available due to the remoteness of the area (the Internet went out during our interview for about 30 minutes). Abbey taught 10th grade world history, 11th grade civics, and three electives for grades 9-12: current events, world cultures, and women's history.

Abbey was a Madison Fellow, which offered a generous stipend to one person in every state each year to train to become exemplary secondary school teachers of the Constitution (James Madison Memorial Fellowship Foundation, 2019). Abbey loved the writings and speeches of the founding fathers (and Lincoln). She felt better educated than most civics teachers in this area because of the Madison Fellowship, and that made her feel like she had a responsibility to teach students about civics in ways that would make them see their own civic engagement as a necessity. She also delighted in these documents and the connections and

activities that can be made with and through them. This became important when she described one of the Twitter activities she did with her students in connection to American history primary source documents, as she notes that she was unsure "if a lot of civics teachers are really well-read in founding documents."

Overall, Abbey appreciated and enjoyed her rural community and small school, and she prided herself on being a well-read and civically engaged teacher. She saw herself as someone who was well prepared both to teach civics and to use Twitter to do so, and she grounded that both in her advanced training and through experience. Abbey was excited about the possibilities that technology can offer to students who live in a remote area.

Identity as a teacher. Abbey's primary motivation for teaching, and for the ways in which she teaches, was hope. She fiercely believed in her students, their abilities and in their futures. Because of this, she taught aspirationally: she approached the content and made her pedagogical and technological choices based on what her students *could* be able to know and do beyond their time in school. Abbey saw teaching history as a way of introducing students to possibilities for life beyond what they might be imagining for themselves. Part of her vision for teaching was tied to the remote and rural location of the school, which, in some ways, created a barrier between the people from her town and the rest of the world.

When her principal asked her to design two new elective courses for students, Abbey chose to develop courses on current events and women's history, so that students would know what was going on in the world and also feel represented in it. She described wanting to offer a women's history course in this way:

Women's history has always been something I'm really passionate about, and I thought, "This would be great because we have a lot of girls in our community that need to

understand that there's more out there than getting married and having babies," and you know, never really doing anything for herself.

Abbey loved her students, her town, and teaching, but all of that was undercut by the remoteness of where they live. She wanted her kids to thrive, which included being made aware of possibilities that extended beyond whatever role or life her students may feel has been predetermined for them. Abbey also felt the people in her town are underrepresented, ignored or discounted by those who represented them in government because of their geographic isolation. One of Abbey's goals in teaching was to show her students they have every right to be heard, and that they were equally part of this democracy that she loves so much. Part of the meaning of teaching for Abbey was in convincing her students that they matter, that their futures were not already set for them, and that they had the right and power to have and share their own opinions.

Prompt to use Twitter. Abbey loved Twitter because it provided her with a way to negate the geographic isolation of her students so that their voices could be heard. She described herself as a "Twitter nerd" who began to use Twitter personally and with her classes following her training to become a teacher trainer through her state's technology readiness initiative in 2013. Abbey's school was a pilot school for this initiative, which aimed to teach and encourage teachers to integrate technology and social media into their classrooms. She credited the person who trained her over a period of months through this initiative with "seeing how effective [Twitter] can be" in the classroom. Abbey's excitement in using Twitter was matched by the enthusiasm and creativity of the teacher who trained her in integrating technology and social media in the classroom, which in turn prompted Abbey to begin to use Twitter in her classroom shortly after she had joined the platform herself.

The following section will examine Abbey's *lifeworld* and how it informs her teaching practice and professional experiences (Husserl, 1970). Subsequent sections will explore her reasons for choosing to use Twitter and her objectives for her students' civic learning, followed by a discussion of whether and to what extent these experiences, objectives, and Twitter for civic education align with my proposed model of constructivist teaching with Twitter in civic education.

Process of choosing Twitter. Abbey experienced three tensions in teaching with Twitter. One was her own perceptions about how excited her students would be about using Twitter in class. Another challenge was having to navigate personal and school boundaries so that students could use Twitter comfortably. Finally, Abbey's experiences with using technology with students have shown that they are far less proficient with technology than other teachers in her school assume; this has also been a source of significant tension for Abbey.

In spite of her own excitement, not all of Abbey's students were initially enthusiastic about using Twitter in class. Abbey described thinking initially that the kids were going to be excited about using Twitter in class, and she was surprised to find that this was not the case:

> I thought they were going to think, "Oh, this is really cool, our teacher is trying to use social media. This will be awesome. We'll jump right in," and it really hasn't been. I think they feel a bit like I'm trying to overstep my boundaries. And so, their, you know, their personal area rather than their school area.

Abbey genuinely thought that her students would enjoy and be excited about using Twitter in class, assuming that they were Twitter users, that they were comfortable using the platform, and that they understood it well enough to feel at ease jumping right in.

Abbey's surprise at students' lack of enthusiasm over using Twitter in class may have a deeper meaning than it may first appear. Abbey perceived her students' lack of interest in using Twitter for school purposes to their desire for their teacher not to encroach on what they view as their personal space. Those students who were already using Twitter for personal use viewed their use of the platform as part of their personal domain, and they did not want to also use it in their school domain as well. However, Abbey's hopes for their civic engagement and her confidence in Twitter as an effective tool to increase civic engagement led her to continue to use Twitter with her students.

Abbey was also concerned about her students' technological proficiency. When she began using Twitter in her classes, Abbey found that about half of her students already had Twitter accounts and were Twitter users, which provided that "they already had a background [and] they understood it." What Abbey meant by this was that some of her students used Twitter to follow people and accounts that matched their interests, so they understood how to set up a profile and the basics of using Twitter (tweeting, retweeting, following accounts). However, she found that although she thought her students would demonstrate great facility with technologies and social media more generally, when asked, and without instruction, to use something new, her students were challenged:

> They're really good at the things that they're really good at. Like they're really good at Snapchat for example, but you go kind of further out into the world of technology beyond that and they're just, they're completely puzzled. So, you do have to walk them through. I think you do have to give them some background so that they know what they're doing.

Abbey had seen cases in which students lack not only technological proficiency, even when they are assumed to have it, and she had also seen instances where students' lack of

proficiency created the potential for them to be exploited. As an example, Abbey shared the story of a particular student who was an active Twitter user even before he became a student in her civics class. This student had two Twitter accounts, one for personal use and one because he wanted to be a fashion designer and was trying to gain publicity in that field. The student came up to Abbey to show her a direct message he had been sent offering him a number of followers in exchange for following something else. She described the rest of the story:

> It was a phishing scam basically is what it was. And I told him, I said, "You know, this is probably a good life lesson." I said, "I would recommend to you absolutely, positively, don't do what they're telling you to do." I said, "It might sound really good. You're going to get all of these followers, you might generate some revenue, but I wouldn't do it." I said, "I'd be really afraid of what would happen to your account." I said, "What would happen to your things that you share in your account?" So, you know, that kind of opened my eyes a little bit.

Abbey told this story to demonstrate how she (and others) sometimes perceive that if students used technology, they must know all the ins and out of that technology, likely better than adults do. Abbey said that this story was representative, to her, that this was not at all the case. Abbey said her perception from most teachers was that they think students are highly proficient with and easily adapt to new technologies, as evidenced when she said:

> I go to, you know, go to technology conferences and different things where I'm like, "Oh, your students are so much more tech savvy than you are and you just throw something at them and it'll stick." And then I go back to my class and I throw something at them and they're like, "We don't get it." and I thought, "You know, I don't think they're as tech savvy as we think they are."

Though Abbey attributed this disconnect to a fundamental lack of technological education likely resulting from the assumption that students know how to use technology without instruction, she also saw a connection between technology instruction and her students' civic engagement. For Abbey, civic engagement was greatly facilitated by Twitter, and Twitter use was facilitated by technological instruction. Being taken advantage of by someone online was a corollary to not having one's voice heard politically, because in both cases a lack of awareness leads to a lack of agency. For Abbey, a lack of technological proficiency included a lack of awareness about how people operate online. This lack of awareness put students in positions where they do not have the skills to make informed choices. Similarly, being well-informed about civic and political issues allowed people to be more civically effective, as they knew the issues and can respond to them. In this way, for Abbey, technological proficiency, particularly on Twitter, was intricately tied to civic engagement and participation.

As a result, Abbey's solution to the students' problem of using personal social media for school purposes was to transparently invite students to maintain those boundaries by creating a Twitter account just for school, allowing them to keep their personal Twitter accounts private while still participating fully in the Twitter experiences and assignments of the class:

> I said, "If you guys don't want to follow me with your personal [account], you want to make another Twitter [account]?" I said, "Make another Twitter account and have it be like, you know, @JimmySCivics, and that'll be the name of your, you know, your handle".

In doing this, Abbey was asking students to learn both how to use this technology well and how to increase and become more effective in their civic engagement, while at the same time respecting students' boundaries between their personal and school lives.

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The separation of personal and school lives has not been the only area in which Abbey has found that using Twitter in her classroom has been more complex than she had initially anticipated. In addition to the students who came into the class as Twitter users and still required instruction, Abbey found that there were also students who were not Twitter users prior to her class. Abbey noted that "it wasn't too hard to get the rest of them to kind of buy in and say, 'Okay, yeah. You know, we'll, we'll get a Twitter account, we'll sign up and start following people and doing this and that." These students needed additional instruction, such as the student Abbey described as her "farm boy" who had no social media accounts and only opened a Twitter account for her class. Abbey spoke of an exchange they had immediately after he had left her class:

> He said "Mrs. Bailey, I'm never logging into that thing again. I don't get it. I hate it. I
> don't like it." I'm like, "Hey, you know what? You used it for the purpose that you had to
> and I appreciate it," I said. "But keep an open mind."

Abbey spoke about this student warmly, and used him as an example not only of the students she encounters who are not already Twitter users, but more significantly as an example of a student who, in a variety of ways, was less likely to spend time interacting with the world beyond his town or his farm.

She wanted him to "keep an open mind" about Twitter because for her it represented a way in which he and other students could connect with the outside world with few barriers. In the exchange of ideas and the awareness of the multiplicity of voices and opinions that could occur on Twitter, Abbey felt her students from an isolated rural area can learn and grow and be aware of what was going on beyond their township borders. Beyond that, Twitter provided a way for these isolated students to potentially have more civic participation by being aware of what

was going on at all levels of government and by being able to communicate with their elected representatives. Abbey's invitation to "keep an open mind" really meant: you are a valuable member of your community, and you should be informed and use your voice to contribute to society. Her "farm boy" was representative of all of her students, and the hopes and aspirations she had for each of them.

Teacher objectives for student civic education with Twitter. Abbey felt overall that Twitter was "really effective" and "a really good learning tool" for the teaching of civics because it helped her students to meet the objectives that she had for them. These objectives were: 1) that her students would learn how to find out about current events and stay informed; 2) that her students would see themselves and their opinions as valuable, both in the eyes of their local community and in the eyes of governmental officials; 3) that students would see the relevance of the founding documents of American history (e.g. the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, etc.) as connected to the political leaders and events in the contemporary United States; and 4) that her students would see themselves as members of a community which reaches beyond their remote town and beyond the time in which they are living. Abbey also noted that she was aware that her students used other social media platforms, namely Snapchat and Instagram, more frequently than they used Twitter. However, Abbey chose to use Twitter because its features so closely aligned with the objectives she had for her students. Abbey felt that her use of Twitter with her students helps her students to meet all of these objectives.

In service of these objectives, Abbey primarily used Twitter for several, regular in-class activities and because she wants to teach her students both about civic engagement and media literacy and safety using Twitter. In describing particular uses of Twitter, Abbey said that sometimes she would:

throw something up on the whiteboard, a tweet from this or that person. Then we'll talk

about it for a few minutes, and it might not necessarily have anything to do with what

we're going to be talking about that day, but it's just maybe like a current event.

This may seem like a spontaneous choice, but for Abbey, using Twitter to find current events in

this way was well-planned, intentional, and meaningful. For her, current events were critically

important: not only did she teach an entire elective on them, but throughout our conversation she

referred to Twitter being a way in which students could get information about what was

happening in the world in ways that made it apparent that not all students were typically

engaging with current news or events. In contrast to reading a news story or watching a news

report, Abbey said that viewing a tweet in class could capture attention because of who had

posted the tweet, or that it could spark discussion because of the content. Additionally, Abbey's

decisions to throw tweets up on the whiteboard to open a class were not casual or last-minute

decisions; rather, this part of her lesson plan was the springboard for later activities and

discussions, a way to hook her students' into paying attention to the topic for the day. It was a

way for Abbey to introduce current events and to demonstrate to students how to find them on

Twitter, a way to make connections between U.S. history and the U.S. present, and a way to tell

students that connecting with the world on a regular basis was important.

Abbey also asked her students to make these connections in several other ways. She

asked her students to post to Twitter using a school hashtag so that other students and members

of the community could see what their opinions. Abbey also asked her students to follow news

stories and current events through other hashtags. She mentioned that she asked students to

compare Donald Trump's tweets with previous presidents' communications, such as Franklin

Delano Roosevelt's Fireside Chats and Lincoln's speeches. She also asked students to think

about how previous presidents would have handled Twitter, such as asking students if they thought Lincoln, known to be long-winded, would have been able to constrain his messages to 280 characters or would he have needed to use threads. Each of these activities was intended to increase awareness of current events, connections to U.S. history, and student civic engagement, and perhaps most importantly to Abbey, to show her students that they have important voices that can be used to contribute to U.S. society.

Finally, Abbey talked about how she connects current political themes with political themes present in earlier American history by having her students compare tweets of current or recent politicians with letters or speeches from earlier American political leaders such as Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, James Madison, or Abraham Lincoln. She spoke in detail about having her students look up particular tweets so that they could discuss them in class, and she particularly mentioned the tweets of Donald Trump as "a wealth of information and joy. Um, I don't think 'joy' is the right word." Abbey found both pleasure and educational value in connecting the tweets of contemporary political leaders with writings and speeches from past leaders, as when Abbey said her:

> favorite thing to do is to find a tweet and then go back to a founding document or like a piece of writing by one of the founders [of the United States] that, you know, that it's something that I feel like it has a comparison. And then putting it back on the kids and saying, "Hey, how does this tweet from President Obama equate to this letter from George Washington?"

Abbey felt that comparing the tweets of current political leaders and writings or speeches from past political leaders was not only fun but also a way to provide "good historical relevance" and to "have kids see how the issues that we're facing, you know, presidents from the 1700s, 1800s,

are not the same but as least similar to issues that are still being faced by presidents today."

Implicit in these connections was the importance of not only the history of the United States, but also of how that history is continuing to happen and develop, and that the people who are making decisions today can and should be measured against our past leaders.

This connection related to one of the primary objectives Abbey has for her students in using Twitter: for them to learn to communicate with government officials. She had two reasons for this goal. The first was that that if her students want to reach government officials, they needed to use social media platforms those officials use, as she indicated in this quote:

It just sort of seems that maybe that [using Twitter] is the way, if you want to communicate at this point, that's maybe the next best thing to an actual face-to-face, which you aren't necessarily going to get, or you're not going to get the platform that you have that Twitter gives you that you can message this person [government official].

Secondly, reaching out to political leaders through Twitter "put[s] it out there in a public forum" which creates greater accountability for political leaders, even by "people who might be electing them in the future." By using Twitter, students could not only reach out to government officials, but they could ask questions which they expect to be answered, as in Abbey's hypothetical example here:

"Hey, why did you vote this way on this bill? Please explain yourself because this is not good for our county, our people, our district" That it [Twitter] does sort of force them [politicians] to defend themselves a little bit more, that they have to really think like, "How are people going to respond to this and are they going to respond good or poorly," in that sort of a public forum where other people can be like, "Oh, wow, that's you know,

who is this person calling them out," and then look it up and be like, "Whoa, that's a high

school kid!"

Both Abbey's purpose in showing her students how to interact with government officials and her

invitation that they should interact with elected leaders were well served by using Twitter. Abbey

worked diligently to provide her students with knowledge and tools through which they can be

civically engaged so that they feel that they have the right and the responsibility to do so. Abbey

believed her students have a duty as members of U.S. society to be civically engaged, and she as

a civics teacher had a duty to prepare them to do that.

All of these uses for Twitter point to Abbey's desire to have her students see themselves

as members of a country with a long history which is still evolving and of which they were an

important part. From the local community through to the federal government, there was no

aspect of civic life to which Abbey's students (or anyone) should not be attuned, and they had

the right and responsibility to share their thoughts, whether with their local community via a

school hashtag or more widely by directly tweeting to elected officials. This was another way in

which Abbey uses Twitter to connect students to history and the present while communicating

her hope that they can and should be active citizens.

Alignment with proposed model. Earlier in this thesis, I proposed a constructivist model

for teaching civics with Twitter (see Chapter 2). This model was based on the principles of social

constructivism, research-established best practices in civic education, and the affordances of

Twitter which supported both constructivist learning and civic education. Moreover, this model

encompassed both styles of citizenship touted in the literature today, attending to both

Actualizing and *Dutiful Citizenship* styles (Bennett, 2008; Bennet, Wells, & Rank, 2009;

Bennett, Freelon, & Wells, 2010; Bennett, Freelon, Hussain, & Wells, 2012). Based on these

elements, the model proposed three essential dimensions for constructivist teaching with twitter for civic education: 1) learners construct knowledge; 2) learning should be social; and 3) learning should be realistic. This section of each participant's case will examine the extent to which his or her teaching aligns with this proposed model or not.

The first dimension of the model, as discussed in Chapter 2 (see table 4), is that learners construct knowledge. This dimension is rooted in the constructivist principle that learners construct knowledge through interaction with others (Vygotsky, 1978); in the civic education research which suggests that learning through participatory strategies where students make decisions about what they are doing (such as simulations) leads to greater civic involvement (Niemi and Chapman 1999, Torney-Purta et al., 1999; Torney-Purta et al., 2001; Gibson and Levine, 2003; Kahne & Middaugh, 2008); and in the basic purpose and features of Twitter which have individual users construct tweets in order to interact with others. Abbey's use of tweets as prompts for discussions, and her instruction to students to tweet and interact with government officials, supported this dimension; her students' tweets to elected officials were participatory, interactive, and helped them to construct knowledge. She noted that some of her students not only wanted to interact with government officials but were comfortable sharing their thoughts on governmental issues with their elected officials. These students felt that they had a right to be taken seriously in doing so: "They're [her students are] like, 'This is cool, I feel like I have a relationship with this elected official now that if I were to tweet at them about an upcoming piece of legislation that they might actually listen to my opinion because I have conversed with them." This reaction from students clearly delighted Abbey, who saw it as a fulfillment of the work she was trying to do with her students.

The second dimension of the proposed model of constructivist teaching of civics with Twitter is that learning should be social. As mentioned in Chapter 2, this dimension is based on the constructivist principle that learning occurs in a social environment with peers, experts, and tools (Vygotsky, 1978); on the civic education research which has shown open and democratic classroom climates and community involvement to support later civic engagement (Hahn, 1999; Niemi and Chapman 1999, Torney-Purta et al. 1999, Torney-Purta et al. 2001, Gibson and Levine 2003, Kahne & Middaugh, 2008); and on the features and purpose of Twitter as a tool which creates a social environment to foster interaction between a variety of users, including peers and experts. One of the ways in which Abbey used Twitter was to expose her students to a variety of different opinions. This extended to the way in which she runs her classroom, which was to promote an open classroom climate by encouraging student questions and welcoming minority opinions. Another one of Abbey's purposes in using Twitter with her students was to connect them with government officials. Abbey found that it was relatively easy to connect with federal and state officials through Twitter, but it was difficult to connect with county or town officials through this platform because not all of her area's local and county politicians and government officials were on Twitter.

The third dimension of the proposed model, that learning should be realistic, was founded on constructivist principles that learning environments should be realistic (Vygotsky, 1978; Spiro & Jehng, 1990); on the civic education research which occurs in specific contexts relatable to students' lives and which teach a variety of ways in which to be civically engaged (Gibson and Levine, 2003; Niemi and Junn, 2005; Pasek et al., 2008; Torney-Purta, et al., 2001; Syvertsen et al., 2007) and on the basic features and purposes of Twitter, which functions in real-time and with real people. The way in which Abbey used Twitter to connect her students with current

events and elected officials meant that she was using it for realistic and meaningful purposes. For instance, she commented that the real-time nature of Twitter made it more likely for Twitter users to impact political outcomes, given the fast-paced nature of how the legislative process can work. Abbey spoke about how she teaches about the possibility of her students' making a difference in the legislative process:

> There's not even time to send them a letter a lot of times, 'cause you hear about it, it's like committee, boom, it's on the floor, boom, it's done. I said, "So with Twitter, at least you can get them." I said, "Because they've all got their phones laying on their desks in the chamber." I said, "It's not like school where we tell you, 'You can't have your phone out.' So they've all got their phones out." I said, "If you turn on C-SPAN, they're all in their, you know, doing this," and I said, "They might be reading your tweet, you don't know what they're looking at." I said, "If it pops up at just the right time, it might make them reconsider."

For Abbey, using Twitter for civic engagement was not only participatory, but also led to involvement in one's community.

Overall, Abbey's teaching of civics with Twitter aligned well with the proposed model. Abbey's use of Twitter encouraged her students to construct knowledge. Abbey noted that using Twitter has provided her students with access to their elected representatives and other government officials, which aided in that knowledge construction while also promoting learning in a social environment. In particular, Abbey believed that tweeting with government officials could provide even future voters with the tools to impact government in timely and meaningful ways, making learning realistic. Abbey's use of Twitter for civic education aligned with the proposed model for constructivist teaching with civic education because Abbey's students

interacted on Twitter with peers and experts that connected them with people outside of their rural area in real time, relatable ways that encourage community involvement.

Overall reflections. Based on this prior research, Abbey's hopes for her students' civic education and engagement were well-founded. For her, the point of civics and civics education was not just to be informed, not just to be educated, not just to participate, but to be impactful. Abbey wanted her students to feel like being an active citizen matters, not just in an abstract way, but in concrete ways where their opinion or the way in which they understand and view a policy issue or hotly debated topic was valuable and worth adding to the conversation. For these purposes, Abbey found that using Twitter in her civics classes had been very effective and a positive learning experience, and one that she found valuable because of what it allows her students to do. In addition to learning about historical and current events as well as interacting with government officials, Abbey saw using Twitter in her classroom as a way of teaching students to be good citizens and to help them learn how to be thoughtful and cautious as they use social media. Above all, Abbey perceived that using Twitter has helped at least some of her students to become more active citizens, and that makes it a worthwhile tool to use in her eyes.

Overview: Josh Young

As with the last participant, Abbey, I will again begin with the experiences of my next participant; in the case of Josh Young, these experiences speak to Josh's guilt, idealism, and his feelings and actions which result from his reactions to the racial tensions in his community and school district. Next, I will turn to a discussion of Josh's experiences teaching civics with Twitter, and how those experiences align with the proposed model of constructivist teaching with Twitter for civic education. My attention to these three areas provides a picture of what is essential to Josh about his experience of teaching civic education with technology, which of

necessity are connected to how he saw himself, his community, and his role as a teacher. Josh's understanding and practice of teaching is significantly influenced by the racial demographics and de facto segregation of his community. Who Josh was, where Josh lived and worked, and what Josh did converged in ways that illuminate how Josh perceives his role as a teacher and influences the ways in which he teaches and interacts with students. This is important to study because Josh's lifeworld informed and shaped his professional experiences and teacher practices.

Context. Josh Young was a white, male, married father and had been a social studies teacher in a large high school in Waterloo, one of the larger cities in Iowa, since midway through the 2011-2012 school year. The district where Josh taught served nearly 11,000 students. The district had two high schools, and the high school where Josh taught serves about 1700 students. Both of the high schools in Josh's district began offering the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program in 2014; the IB Diploma Program placed rigorous demands on both teachers and students and focuses on in-depth learning through inquiry approaches across disciplines. The social studies department, of which Josh is a member, had 11 teachers; Josh taught world history, advanced U.S. history, and I.B. History. Josh described his classes as being "pretty diverse for Iowa," which he described as being predominantly white; he had "a lot of African American students" and "a huge influx of ELL students" from South America, Myanmar (Burma), and Malaysia. Josh was also the leader of the school's gay-straight alliance (GSA), where he has tried to connect his students to members of other GSAs across Iowa.

Of the two high schools in his district, the one in which Josh taught was predominantly white, while the other was predominantly African American. Josh's wife, Samantha, taught social studies in the other high school in the district, and Josh and Samantha taught some of the same classes. Josh's lifeworld was shaped by these cultural and family contexts. For instance,

Josh said that he and Samantha often discussed how they were going to plan their lessons together at home. Josh also compared himself, his work, and his school to Samantha's experiences frequently, and he perceived her work as his benchmark for inclusivity. These parallel yet very different lived experiences of teaching for Josh and Samantha have resulted in Josh feeling like he was supportive of his white and immigrant students while maintaining a sense of guilt over the de facto segregation of the two high schools in the district. Josh's teaching was one of his attempts to atone for this guilt. Throughout our conversation, Josh frequently brought up ways in which he incorporates African American and civil rights history into his curriculum, but unlike his descriptions of other topics or activities, which were offered as examples of ways one could teach with Twitter, his references to his inclusion of African American history were offered as a contrast to how others in his district teach history. Josh offered these as evidence of his attempts to change the racial dynamics at play in his classroom, school, and community.

Identity as a teacher. Josh's identity as a teacher was centered on being a champion for his students, which was built upon his fundamental idealism of what teachers and education could do for students when all students had what they need to thrive. One of Josh's examples of this thriving was the experience of the ELL students in his school, which had a "full-fledged ELL program." By this, Josh meant that the ELL students in his school were supported in class through an ELL counselor who accompanied the students in classes and an interpreter for each student who would benefit from having one. Josh had the support that he needed in order to be an effective teacher to all of his students, who in turn had the support that they needed in order to participate fully in class and in the school environment.

Another of Josh's examples of the district living up to its idealistic goals was the IB program. Josh described his experience of teaching IB as a "kind of inquiry approach" that he has been using throughout his teaching. He credited the IB program as having "increased my teaching ability across the board." In particular, Josh said that one of the most difficult aspects of the history curricula at his school was the breadth that it attempted to cover, and the IB program and its focus on depth of certain aspects of history allowed his students to really focus on learning history skills as well as content. Because of this, he appreciated the IB program and felt that the IB program better prepared students for adulthood. Josh saw these two school programs, ELL and IB, as examples of highly effective ways in which the school can support students.

Josh also saw ways in which the school district can be more supportive and inclusive of students. Josh was well aware of the racial dynamics that are at play in his community, and he worked to break down the barriers that exist because of the community's racial history. In the early 1900s, Waterloo was considered a "sundown town," a term meaning that African Americans were prevented from living within the city limits and had to leave town before sunset or risk physical harm (Bray, 2015). African Americans were only allowed back into the city as strikebreakers in 1910, and those who came were cordoned off to an area of 20 square blocks and required to live in that separate section of the city from white residents (Bray, 2015). Though that requirement no longer exists, the geographic divide between the neighborhoods of white and African American families largely remains. Strikes, protests, and riots have peppered the community's history, and the integration of the school system was met with protests and riots in the 1970s. Due in part to the residential segregation and in part to district policies which did not change school zones to be more racially diverse, the school district in Waterloo remains largely racially segregated. Josh was well acquainted with this history; though I researched to confirm

his descriptions, he knew the history and painted an accurate picture of the lived reality of Waterloo residents.

The following sections will examine Josh's lifeworld and how it informs his teaching practice and professional experiences; his reasons for choosing to use Twitter and his objectives for his students' civic learning; and the extent to which these experiences, objectives, and Twitter for civic education align with my proposed model of constructivist teaching with Twitter in civic education.

Experiences with Twitter in civic education. Josh's sense of idealism was developed during his teacher education program in college, where he became interested in using social media because it had many features he thought would support the type of teacher he wanted to be. Josh initially thought of using social media in the classroom as "this grandiose idea" which has "kind of worked for some things" that Josh wanted to do with his students, such as sharing his students' work with members of the community; in other cases, he found Twitter to be inefficient or ineffective for his purposes. Josh thought that social media would be interesting and engaging for students to use, and because of that interest, they would be more receptive to interacting with him and with each other in that space. Initially, Josh thought that he could use social media both during and outside of class, as a way of starting discussions with and between students regarding current events; to post articles to be read or Quizlets to be completed; to remind students of upcoming assignments; to share articles or news stories with students; and to connect with other students both in his high school and in the other high school in his district. He thought that social media, and Twitter in particular, could support all of these actions, because it allows users to share articles and documents and to discuss them in real time without physical boundaries.

Prompt to use Twitter. As he began his teaching career, however, Josh found that the biggest advantage of using social media was to build and maintain connections with students. Josh was inspired to use Twitter in particular for this purpose by a colleague in the English department of his high school, a frequent Twitter user who had a great deal of success in building relationships with students using Twitter. Josh's use of Twitter contrasted with Abbey's uses of it. Where Abbey found value in Twitter because of its content and access to governmental officials, Josh hoped using Twitter could bridge the racial divide between students in different high schools in his district. This hope remains unrealized, as Josh has neither heard from students nor seen on Twitter the ways in which they are connecting with their peers from the other district high school. Twitter seems to be another place where Josh's idealism was paramount: Twitter could provide a means of breaking barriers and connecting students from the different high schools, and this possibility was what fueled Josh.

Race came up frequently throughout our conversation: Josh responded to many open-ended questions with answers which pivoted to race. The racial dynamics of the community and the schools in his district seem to play a significant role in the way Josh thought about teaching. Josh mentioned that the district was trying to redraw the school district boundaries so that four middle schools in the district, which currently are racially segregated based on the current district boundaries, would become more diverse. However, this had yet to happen. Because Josh knew his community's history and because his wife worked at the other, predominantly African American high school in the district, he was well aware of the differences in experience between the white and African American students in the district.

Beyond knowing the history and racial dynamics in his city, Josh's experience of what it meant to be a teacher had been impacted by the segregation that occurred within his district. Josh

said that when his wife, Samantha, and he discussed their classes and lesson plans, he wanted to use Samantha's lessons incorporating African American history in his own teaching. Josh believed that Samantha has more authority to create lessons that explored African American history and connected it to their students' experiences because of her experience teaching in a school whose population is predominantly African American (Samantha herself was white). Josh spoke at length about teaching about African American history, particularly his attempts to connect events that happened in Waterloo with the Civil Rights Movement (such as the visit of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to Waterloo). Josh felt that his students were isolated from the African American students in the same courses at Samantha's high school: beyond attending different schools or even living in different sections of the city, they had different educational experiences and were isolated from African American history at-large. Josh seemed to feel some guilt over this fact, not because of any particular actions on his part, but because he was a part of both a race (white) and a system that has broadly excluded African American history from having a robust presence in school social studies curricula and because of the racial history in his own city.

  Process of choosing Twitter. Josh remained hopeful that his students' use of Twitter will be one way in which they begin to break down some of the barriers between African-American and white students. However, the inclusion of African American history into the Anglo-centric curriculum had not fostered connections between students across the two high schools in the district. Josh's only experience of using Twitter for the purpose of discussing African American history had been to examine relationships between the #BlackLivesMatter movement with the race riots of 1968 by looking at tweets from that hashtag. In the future, Josh wants to bring his

students to visit Samantha's students who are taking the same course, hoping that if the students meet in person, they will continue and grow that connection via Twitter.

Another way in which Josh hoped that Twitter can promote connections between people is his use of his own Twitter account to showcase student accomplishments. Josh used Twitter to post pictures of student work, saying that his students enjoy seeing their activities posted on Twitter, which prompts them to talk about what they have been doing in class. He also used Twitter to show his support for student accomplishments outside of the classroom, such as school sporting events, which helped him to build relationships with students. Additionally, Josh thought that showing interest and investment in students in out-of-school activities and by expressing that interest publicly on Twitter could have a significant impact on student-teacher relationships as well as the climate of the classroom or school:

> even if it's like going to a volleyball game or a football game and just being like "hey, blah blah blah, you won! Yay!" just little things like that I feel can even build that relationship and improve that culture [of the classroom or school] and if [students] feel comfortable with it, eventually moving it [Twitter] into the classroom.

Josh did this because it provided a way for students to be recognized for what they had done in ways that the students themselves could see and understand and which was also shared by their parents, the district, and others in the community. Josh thought that this recognition built up the community, and made students feel more included and valued. If his students felt supported and valued during extracurricular activities, Josh reasoned that they might feel the same about in-class activities. Thus, part of his rationale for using Twitter was to build up student work and accomplishments within the broader community. Josh explained this support in this way:

Especially with high school students, it's not like parents are, you know, excited to get to put [student work] on their fridge. Then our district, it does use social media as well. So they'll tweet it to everybody that follows the district.

Josh said that his students, their parents, and members of the community were primarily the ones who interacted with these tweets of student accomplishments. In this way, Josh was using Twitter to showcase what students were doing in an effort to build a culture of support and encouragement around those students, a concept which was found to be a recurring theme among the studies reviewed by Gao, Luo, and Zhang (2012).

Another area in which Twitter had been the right tool for Josh and his students was in his work as the advisor for his school's gay-straight alliance (GSA). The GSA at Josh's school had between 20-30 student members, and Josh was assigned to be their advisor. Because he was assigned, he did not know "there was an umbrella [GSA] organization for the state. So we actually stumbled upon that" using Twitter. One of the group's goals was to try to connect and communicate with other GSA's throughout Iowa, and they used Twitter for this purpose. Josh and his students in the GSA tweeted to other GSA's to find out what they were doing and to check in with them. This included a project in which several of the GSA's made and exchanged videos over Twitter with each other, allowing an even more personal connection between the different groups. Josh said that because of these connections from using Twitter, the GSA was able to grow and to do more than it otherwise would have been. He framed this by saying that Twitter made it possible for the GSA to be "able to make [this] a lot larger thing and then from there we've been able to go to different conferences because we've been able to make that contact."

Again, Josh's focus was on creating a supportive community that fostered student growth for students who were marginalized. Further, Twitter enabled the GSA at Josh's school to connect with other GSAs genuinely in ways that it would have been unlikely able to do without it. Additionally, from Josh's broad perspective on civic engagement, participation in an organization like a gay-straight alliance was a way of being civically involved. Through their involvement in the GSA, the students were trying to change and improve society, whether on the local, school level or throughout the state of Iowa and beyond.

Because of this focus on fostering connections through shared information, rather than pictures or videos, Josh preferred to use Twitter. Josh also spoke about choosing to use Twitter over Instagram and Snapchat, both more frequently used by his students than Twitter. He also mentioned that his department had discussed using different social media platforms in order to assess which platform best met their needs:

> We actually had like a department debating on this, we debated whether or not Snapchat could ever be used as a benefit for education, and we could not think of very much, because you can do updates and what have you, but eventually it does spiral out of control to what it is now, especially since it disappears. They don't have that tangible thing that they can hold onto, [that] you use for later assessments or anything like that.

The department's decision not to use Snapchat echoed Josh's own thought process, and he used because the affordances of that social media platform aligned well with his objectives for his students.

Josh's understanding of civic engagement was comprehensive, from political action to community service to individual choices. He explained his view of civic engagement in this way:

It doesn't have to be like the grandiose thing where you go out and change the world kind of mentality. It can be something simple too, you know, going to a food bank or anything like that, contacting your officials, starting up a recycling program at your school, all those little things.

This understanding of civic involvement was woven throughout the ways in which Josh taught, interacted with students, and used Twitter, but it largely avoided the racial justice issues which seemed to drive Josh. Again, Josh's understanding of civic involvement provided insight into Josh's guilt: his focus on changing the racial dynamics of his community were a justice issue *for him*, which he, and others who were similarly complicit, must work to change. This is not to say that Josh neglected teaching about civic participation; on the contrary, it was a critical part of his classes. In contrast to how he saw his own civic orientation, Josh wanted to meet students where they were and focused on relationship-building for the benefit of the community. This occurred across several domains, whether through his support of organizations like the GSA that provided support to marginalized students, promoting student accomplishments for community awareness, or maintaining or improving connections between English language speakers and English Language Learners and between students of different races.

Another one of Josh's objectives for using Twitter was teaching students *digital citizenship*, a concept which has two operative definitions in the literature. The first, from Ribble, Bailey, and Ross (2004) conceptualizes digital citizenship as "the norms of behavior with regard to technology use" (p. 7). Josh believed that students need to be taught how to use and participate meaningfully and respectfully on social media. Josh explained that Twitter is "an extension of the classroom" and the rules he had in place for class Twitter use were parallel to the types of rules he had set for in-class participation (e.g. respect for others; polite and courteous

interactions; sharing content that is not crude, violent, or disrespectful). A failure by the students to respect class rules on Twitter resulted in Josh blocking them (a "block" in this context is a Twitter feature which allows a user to restrict specific accounts from seeing their tweets, following them, or contacting them on Twitter.) (Twitter Help Center). Josh equated blocking students who did not follow the class Twitter rules with students who broke an in-class rule of not swearing in class. As an example of this, he told a story of a group of boys who tried to push the limits of Josh's rules:

> I had these group of boys are jokesters and they were always trying to kind of push my buttons kind of student. And after like a month of actually getting to know me, they're like, "All right, we're going to try this [not following class rules on Twitter]." They started putting, posting a bunch of vines, like inappropriate classroom fight vine. After the first one I'm like, "You do it again? I'm going to block you." And they did it again, so I blocked them. And then the next day they're like, "Why, why would you do that? We were joking." I'm like, "I told you the rule."

Josh blocked students on Twitter to indicate to them that they have acted inappropriately and that the consequence of misbehavior was that they no longer had access to Josh on Twitter. Josh used this example to show how important he felt it was to teach students boundaries and appropriate behavior on Twitter, and for the most part he said that he had not had any issues with students who were acting inappropriately. For Josh, teaching his students how to appropriately behave online was an aspect of civic education.

However, teaching appropriate social media etiquette was not the only way in which Josh conceptualizes digital citizenship. Mossberger, Tolbert, and McNeal (2004) conceive of digital citizenship more broadly, defining it as "is the ability to participate in

society online" (p. 1). Josh's view of citizenship encompassed a wide range of civic

actions, and he had rules for Twitter because he saw Twitter as one space in which

students can participate in civic actions. In this way, Josh's understanding of digital

citizenship was more aligned with the Mossberger, Tolbert, and McNeal (2004)

definition of digital citizenship than the definition from Ribble, Bailey, and Ross (2004).

Josh understood digital citizenship as participating in online society, which meant being

an active member of the community in online spaces. For Josh, digital citizenship was a

parallel to offline citizenship, each existing as spaces where people can practice their

rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

      Teacher objectives for student civic education with Twitter. Josh's idealistic

view of his role as a teacher and of how education can shape students' lives lead him to

have two concrete and practical goals for his students: 1) that his students would be

active citizens; and 2) that they would practice responsible citizenship. The common

thread that ran through each of these goals was that each required connection and

relationship with others. Josh used Twitter in a number of ways in his classes which were

in line with this focus on relationships and student outcomes as well as the research

which identified the best practices in civic education. For instance, Josh used Twitter to

highlight current events (Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 1996; Hess & Posselt, 2002; Niemi &

Junn, 2005; Syvertsen et al., 2007); to make connections between courses or periods in

history; to learn primary and secondary source evaluation; and to showcase student work

to their parents and the greater community (Niemi & Chapman, 1999; Torney-Purta et al.,

1999; Torney-Purta et al., 2001; Gibson & Levine, 2003; Kahne & Middaugh, 2008).

Josh found that students "seem to enjoy [using Twitter in class]" and so he tried to

incorporate Twitter into his lessons whenever possible, whether by sharing student work on Twitter during class time, having students use Twitter to look for current events, or asking students to use Twitter to connect what they are studying in class with news stories or events they find on Twitter. These uses served his purposes in teaching civics because they helped Josh to teach his students that they are members of a larger community and that they had a right and responsibility to be active in that community.

Josh valued using social media in these instances because it allowed him to reach students in real time, as issues are happening, even when they are not at school. This is similar to Abbey's purposes of using Twitter, although her objectives were to reach people in real-time, while Josh focused on students being attentive to unfolding news stories in real-time. Josh described how he did this:

> While the coverage is happening, I could post like different videos from CNN, stuff like that, or just using the shooting from last night, post it on social media just saying, "Hey, we're going to be talking about this tomorrow."

Using Twitter in this way allowed him to call students' attention to what is happening in the world *as it is happening*, so that they could observe what was going on and then begin to process it in class with him. Josh's goal with this activity was to connect current events with other aspects of history, or to use the current event as a way to open up a conversation about a history topic. As an example of this, Josh explained that when the riots in Ferguson, Missouri happened in 2014, he tweeted to his class during the "overnight coverage" of what was happening. Josh described what happened the next day in class in response to his tweet:

> Right after Ferguson happened, I had an advanced US [class], so we talked about it and with our city we do have racial tensions, because we have a lot of African Americans that

live on the east side and then we're on the west side. And we talked about it. I showed

them some videos and some of the coverage and then I had a kid whose dad was on the

police force and he felt very strongly about it. And then I had somebody on the other side

and they ended up having a very civil but emotional conversation. And they were ninth

graders. So it was really impressive about the dialogue that they were having.

Following the riots in Ferguson, Josh asked students to follow the #BlackLivesMatter movement

on Twitter, which he then connected to the civil rights movement in the U.S. Similarly, Josh has

followed recent issues and court cases pertaining to Roe vs. Wade and connected them with the

women's suffrage movement.

In each of these cases, Josh chose to use Twitter rather than any other platform because

Twitter offered the features that he wanted to use with his class, such as the ability to quickly

access and share news stories. Josh's primary objectives were to be able to share articles and

streams with his students (rather than focusing on pictures or videos on Instagram); and he

wanted his posts and any discussion that happened online to remain visible (rather than

disappearing on Snapchat). Twitter provided these features in ways that other platforms did not.

Josh's use of Twitter was meant to encourage networked connections: where students

from within a class, across town, or across the state could develop and maintain relationships.

This proved to be effective in Josh's work with the GSA as well as in his tweeting out student

accomplishments to connect them with the wider community, and Josh hoped these networked

connections would happen among students from the district's two high schools. Some of the

ways in which Josh's experiences and teaching practices align with the proposed model of

constructivist teaching of civics with Twitter will be explored in the next section.

Alignment with proposed model. As mentioned in the case of Abbey above, this section of each case is to evaluate to what extent the way in which Josh teaches aligns with the proposed constructivist model for teaching civics with Twitter (see Chapter 2). As a brief reminder, the three dimensions of the model are: 1) learners construct knowledge; 2) learning should be social; and 3) learning should be realistic. Each dimension is treated separately below.

For Josh, Twitter was a tool that helped learners construct knowledge, the first dimension of the model, although it was not the only such tool nor was it the primary place where the learning was constructed. Rather, Josh used Twitter as a piece of learning construction: students could find information there, shared information and interact with others with both freedom and limitations, and connected to community there (whether their peers or the larger community). Josh would argue that he asks students to use Twitter to construct knowledge, though he did this to a lesser degree than Abbey.

Josh attended to the second dimension of the model, that learning should be social, when he communicated to students about the value and necessity of hearing all voices, even those with whom they may disagree. Josh saw his role as that of preparing students to listen and relate to people to whom they have not listened or related before. He was attentive to helping students to form their own opinions, which in this context functioned to allow students the freedom to think differently from the long-held beliefs of their community. Josh reported that he was careful to avoid taking political stances as a teacher, but his inclusion of African American history, his hope of connecting students across schools, and his work with the GSA clearly pointed to his values. Rather than remaining neutral, as he claimed, Josh was trying to provide space for respectful connections between students as a way of building them all up.

Josh used Twitter in several ways that attended to the third dimension of the proposed model: that learning should be realistic. First, he wanted students to be informed of current events in real time, so that they were able to follow along with unfolding events. Secondly, he wanted students to connect with history and others who share parts of their own story (such as his students in the GSA), which he did by sharing stories about historical events. Finally, Josh included a variety of ways in which students can be civically involved in his teaching (both on and offline).

Josh's intentions of using Twitter for civic education aligned well with the proposed model, but the lived reality of his students' use of Twitter in and for class did not match his intentions. Josh's intention was to provide students with tools and access in which to construct meaning for themselves. The primary way in which Josh's class used Twitter as a way to construct meaning was by finding and sharing news stories or tweets about current events, primarily through Josh's own posts. This was a start at constructing meaning, as Josh's students came to understand current events through this process. Josh's teaching around the Civil Rights movement, which included teaching about historical events and figures, discussion about the racial dynamics of Waterloo, and interactions with the #BlackLivesMatter Twitter stream, was the best example of how he fostered an environment in which students could truly construct meaning. This is how Josh wanted to teach; his intentions aligned well with the proposed first dimension of the model, although his execution has fallen short of his intentions, and thus overall Josh's teaching only somewhat aligned with the proposed model.

Similarly, Josh's intentions for learning being social aligned well with the second dimension of the proposed model. For Josh, learning also did not happen in a vacuum: it was a social enterprise. Josh saw interacting with others as a critical aspect of learning, whether

through his work with the gay-straight alliance, in emphasizing African American history in his curriculum, in educating students on evaluating sources, or in tweeting out students' accomplishments to the community. Not only was this learning focused on the social dimension of the model, it also was grounded in what is real and true for Josh's students by interacting with people who share some of their experiences. Josh's intention of making learning has been successful moderately successful. Josh was consistent in sharing student work on Twitter, as well as in reaching out to parents and other community members with student achievements. His GSA students have also been quite successful in reaching out to other GSAs in Iowa in ways that have formed meaningful connections. However, Josh's hope of bridging the segregation between the white and black students in his district has not yet become a reality. In spite of this unrealized hope, Josh's intentions and actions attending to the social aspect of learning aligned moderately well with the proposed model.

Josh's teaching aligned best with the third dimension of the model, that learning should be realistic. Josh was intentional about providing his students with contexts that were relatable to them, a key component of successful civic education (Gibson & Levine, 2003; Niemi & Junn, 2005; Pasek et al., 2008). This was true in the case of using current events to explore historical events; in Josh's teaching of the Civil Rights Movement in conjunction with discussions about the racial tensions in the city and the #BlackLivesMatter movement; and with his work with the GSA by connecting them with other GSAs not only for support but for ideas for the group. Although Josh could have been more consistent in his use of Twitter to introduce realistic and relatable contexts to his students, his intentions and current use of Twitter for the purposes of realistic teaching about civics aligned well with the proposed model.

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Overall reflections. By his own admission, Josh used Twitter less often with his students than he expected to or would have liked; however, the ways in which he used Twitter were largely supported by research and also aligned moderately well with the proposed model of constructivist teaching of civic education with Twitter. Josh's use of Twitter was directly tied to furthering his connections with students and the community. Josh believed that if students felt that they were included in and valued by the community, regardless of race or sexual orientation or any other factor, they would be civically engaged. To further this goal, Josh used Twitter as a way of making connections between communities of students and of connecting students to current events and relating those events back to their town. These uses, as well as his use of Twitter and other technologies to increase student-teacher connections, was in service of convincing students that they are valued. Josh believed that if he broke down the barriers that kept students from feeling fully part of the community, as well as teaching them the skills to be informed by current events, that they would eagerly participate in civic life on their own terms.

Overview: Sam McGarry

As with the last two participants, Abbey and Josh, I will again begin with the experiences of my next participant, Sam McGarry. Sam's experiences were grounded in his and his students' privilege, and Sam's understanding of civic participation and what role Twitter can play in it tied back to this privilege. Following a description of Sam's background and context, I will turn to a discussion of some of Sam's experiences teaching with Twitter. I will conclude my discussion of Sam by examining how those experiences align with the proposed model of constructivist teaching with Twitter for civic education. My purpose in focusing on these three areas serves to show the meaning that Sam made about his experience and practice of teaching civic education, which were strongly linked to his sense of his role as a teacher within a community of privilege.

Context. Sam was a white, male, married, father and teacher who had been teaching for 24 years, the last 16 of which he had spent at a small public high school in a Westchester county suburb of New York City. The community where Sam taught had about 8,000 residents, the vast majority of whom were white. The community was best described as upper class and high socioeconomic status; in fact, some students from neighboring towns paid Sam's district to attend school there. While most of the towns in Westchester County, New York could be described in these ways, the community in which Sam teaches was home to considerable wealth even by Westchester County standards. There were three schools in the district in which Sam teaches: one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school. Sam's high school had 569 students, for whom there are high expectations: 100 percent of last year's (2018) class graduated and 99% of them went on to attend college. In May 2018, 228 students (40% of students in the high school) took a total of 503 Advanced Placement exams across 26 subjects; 94% of the exam scores were above a 3 (AP exams are scored out of a possible 5 points).

Sam lived about forty-five minutes away from the community in which he taught; he cannot afford to live where he teaches. Comparisons between Sam and some of the other study participants showed interesting contrasts. Unlike Abbey and Josh, who lived in the communities in which they taught, and as a result, felt connected to the experiences of their students, Sam's orientation to teaching connected to his perceptions of his students' privilege. Sam thought that his students were largely unaware of the advantages they had, and therefore he saw his role as teaching them how to use some of that privilege for good. It is important to note that Sam did not ask his students to reflect on their own privilege or to think about how to change the systems at play that contribute to that privilege. Rather, Sam was rooted in his own privilege, which, like his students, he did not fully see. Thus, he had no need for his students to abandon or question their

wealth. However, Sam's perception was that he was teaching his students to be active and responsible citizens by teaching them how to use of that privilege responsibly.

Sam taught both social studies and special education, which at his school meant that he taught some "mainstream" social studies classes and some special education social studies classes. Sam was situated within both the social studies and special education departments; there were 7 other teachers in each of those departments. Across different academic levels, Sam has taught world history and global history to freshmen, U.S. history to sophomores and juniors, and a class called *Participation in Government and Economics*, which was a senior social studies elective course. He used Twitter with his eleventh and twelfth grade students because one of his objectives in teaching with social media was to teach students how to use it effectively and appropriately, and Sam felt that only his upperclassmen were capable of using social media in this way because he thought that his younger students lacked maturity.

Identity as a teacher. Overall, Sam deeply enjoyed being a teacher, in part, because he was confident in his abilities and because he felt like he could teach students practical skills that would help them to become active citizens in adulthood. His primary motivation for teaching was this sense of vocation: his skills as a teacher met what his community needed, and because he was a capable teacher doing good work, he felt contented and even joyful that he was able to shape and prepare students well for adulthood, part of which was teaching his students how to be active and responsible citizens. For Sam, this joy stemmed not from hope or aspiration of what could be; rather, it came from the confidence he has in his ability to prepare his students for life. In this sense, Sam remained optimistic that his students could make a difference in the world, even though the nature of that difference might be unclear. Where this connected with their privilege was in how both Sam and his students saw active civic engagement: there were no

barriers to student civic participation except in their not knowing how to participate. Unlike Abbey's students, who lived in a remote and rural area which brought a sense of isolation, or Josh's students, who lived in a context of considerable racial tension, both of which created barriers to civic participation for some students, Sam's students, at least in his view, lacked only logistical knowledge of how to participate or an awareness of their own civic agency. Sam believed that what they needed, and what he enjoyed providing for them, was the practice of learning how to use their privilege for the good of society.

Thus, Sam's overarching goal as a teacher was to prepare his students to live as adults in society, and his thinking about what he teaches and the methods and technology he uses to support learning all reflected back to this fundamental goal. Sam was thorough and thoughtful in his teaching, and his understanding of adolescent development impacted what he did in his classroom. Though he did not mention the TPACK framework for teaching with technology (described in Chapter 2), throughout our conversation the ways in which Sam described his thought processes regarding his teaching mirrored the concurrent focus on technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge that defines the TPACK framework (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). Sam explicitly made connections between these three aspects of his teaching, bearing in mind his overarching goal of preparing them for adulthood while also taking the developmental needs of his students into account. For instance, one of Sam's primary objectives for his students was for them to learn how to contact government officials. He taught this content knowledge by having students reach out to these officials, a pedagogical choice he made so that his students practiced a skill needed in adulthood. Sam chose to have students reach out to officials through Twitter because it was convenient for both students and officials and provided a way for his students to connect with officials in a way that was likely to continue to be used after the

students left his class. Sam thought that if he taught his students a way of reaching out to government officials that was easy to understand and execute, they might develop a practice of communicating with government leaders that carried into adulthood. His constant reflection about his teaching practices contributed to Sam's confidence in his ability to teach students well: his choices about teaching were based on students' needs and capabilities as well as his goals for them.

The following sections will examine Sam's lifeworld. These will include how Sam's lifeworld informed his teaching practice and professional experiences, as well as his reasons for choosing to use Twitter with his students. Attention will also be given to his objectives for his students' civic learning; and to what extent these experiences, objectives, and Twitter for civic education align with my proposed model of constructivist teaching with Twitter in civic education.

Experiences with Twitter in civic education. The high school in which Sam taught provided each student with a laptop computer, a decision with which he disagreed. He was not trying to limit technology in school mindlessly: he described himself as "pretty technologically advanced" and "not anti-technology." Rather, Sam "spoke out against giving every kid with a laptop" because research says that "synapses fire off differently when a kid is writing notes as opposed to typing them." Additionally, Sam saw every student having a school-provided laptop as doing a disservice "for the younger kids that are still sort of intellectually immature," explaining that, for younger high school students, having constant access to a computer presented "a very hard temptation" to avoid classwork in favor of preferred online activities, and that younger brains are developmentally unable to resist this temptation. As an example of this, Sam said that his underclassmen "would rather be adjusting [their] fantasy football league" than

using the technology for classwork. He attributed this to development: younger students "can't avoid the impulse" to give in to their temptations, and so the constant access to computers became as much an obstacle as an asset to what Sam wanted his students to learn. Again, this points to Sam's understanding of his students' privilege: students in this community could live without working, and so part of Sam's role as a teacher was to push and teach them to not just give in to what they want to do but to encourage them to work hard for the intrinsic value of that work (rather than other motivating factors such as needing to be accepted to a good college in order to get a good job).

However, Sam found that when technology was used for particular purposes because of what it can do for and with students, he also found it to be a valuable tool for use in the classroom. While he initially "thought it introduced a new stimulus that the kids didn't necessarily need," when his school began providing each student with his or her own laptop computer, Sam said that now has seen "that there is a place, there is a value to [using technology in class]." This value was dependent upon why the technology is being used: for instance, Sam was willing to use Microsoft OneNote (which provided online editions to the textbooks Sam's school uses) in place of "heavy, clunky textbooks" when students preferred it. (Interestingly, our conversation reminded Sam that he needed to provide a physical textbook to a student who had requested one.) The ways in which Sam uses Twitter in class were also designed for specific purposes, as he used it to teach students how to contact governmental officials and to be well informed of current events.

Sam thought deeply about his pedagogical and technological choices for teaching, and he made choices about what, how, and with what tools he taught based on how those pieces of teaching fit together best for student learning. In this way, Sam had fairly clear objectives for his

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students and connected his methods and use of technology to those objectives. Sam also thought about educational psychology in making those choices and about the developmental periods his students are in and how their development could support or impede the use of particular methods or technologies. Sam explained further how he thought about this and how it affects his teaching:

So when you give these kids with brains that are not fully formed, you know, computers, it makes it harder. So in a lot of ways, it is harder for me to teach with those machines in their faces, but, you know, if you do a pros and cons, I think the pros outweigh the cons. It does make [teaching] a little easier for me.

While Sam's reasons for teaching with technology were sincere, his approach to technology was not just about what was effective or appropriate for his students. Rather, it connected back to the contrasts between his privilege and that of his students: unless Sam's students had a reason to do what Sam was asking of them, they chose to do what they wanted to do because that was an option available to them in the multiple domains throughout their lives.

It was with all of this context that Sam spoke about using Twitter with his classes. Sam's priority for his students was his need to prepare them to be adult members of society; for him, teaching students in ways that encouraged them to flourish in the world as adults was part of the essence of Sam's role as a teacher. Abbey would likely argue the same about her own role and hopes for her students, but in her case, there were additional gaps between where her students were and getting them to where she wanted them to be than there were for Sam. For instance, both Sam and Abbey were passionate about using Twitter in the teaching of civics because it represented how they believed students should be engaged with the wider world, and that they should advocate on their own behalf. Abbey approached the dynamic of rural students interacting with government leaders from a position of valuing her students and their experiences. However,

she did not expect responses from government leaders because they could afford *not* to respond: attending to students from a rural area was unlikely to raise their political capital. In contrast, politicians in Sam's area needed to respond to their constituents, regardless of age, because it would be difficult to be re-elected without their support. His expectation that elected officials would respond to his students on Twitter was also due to the sense of entitlement that comes from living in an area where expecting a response from an elected official was normative and not unusual. Sam also expected responses because the nature of Twitter allowed politicians to respond quickly and easily to students' posts.

Process of choosing Twitter. Sam's initial and primary purpose for using Twitter with his students was to teach them about reaching out to government officials. He describes his intentions this way:

I don't think at this point, if I were to ask a basic kid in the hallway right now, "How would you get in contact with a congressman?" I don't think they would know how. But

if I showed them [the elected official's] Twitter account, I think it makes it a lot easier.

Sam said that he could show his students that they have a "direct link" to government officials through Twitter that is "not snail mail, and it's almost automatic...it gets done almost right away."

However, when he began to use Twitter with his students, Sam noticed that even the students who had their own Twitter accounts did not know how to use the platform well. Like Abbey, Sam was surprised that his students "were just very superficially aware" of how to use Twitter and what it could do. He found that in needing to teach about the basics of using the platform more than he had initially thought he would, Sam was able to show his students "some of the cool features and the different people they can connect to." Through his teaching of how to

use Twitter, Sam asked his students to follow news agencies (e.g. CNN, BBC, etc.) in order to follow the news and also to bring information into the class. Sam used the news that showed up in his students' Twitter feeds informally, calling their attention to breaking news and history-making events. In this way, his students' lack of knowledge about Twitter worked to Sam's advantage, as he was able to teach them more about how and why to use the platform as well as demonstrate the types of accounts that he wanted them to follow.

One of the most important aspects of using Twitter for Sam was the ability to reach out to people or organizations, to make an opinion or experience known, and to expect a response from that person or organization. An interesting example of this, which Sam described, happened when one of his 10th grade students was eating a Hot Pocket snack in class and burned himself on it. Sam's response to the student was "tweet to Hot Pocket [the company] that you burned yourself." Sam believed that the student would "get some kind of response" from Hot Pocket, and so the student tweeted to Hot Pocket during class. While Sam said that he fully expected Hot Pocket to respond via Twitter and to apologize to the student, the student "was not expecting that response." In the end, both Sam and the student were wrong: Hot Pocket "asked [the student] to DM [direct message] them his email and he got...they sent him two boxes of Hot Pockets." For Sam, the meaning of this story far exceeded the novelty of it: what may seem like an unusual, silly, or inappropriate use of class time enlivened Sam, because it allowed him to teach a student concrete skills the student could use to solve his own problems while simultaneously showing that student to behave like an adult and respect an adult response in return.

Sam was excited about this story, telling it as a prime example of teaching his students to advocate for themselves; though the story, experience, and advocacy are quite different, Sam's excitement paralleled Abbey's over her own teaching of Twitter for advocacy purposes. The

sense that this story was an exemplar case of civic engagement, one in which Sam and the student felt that this was an appropriate use of time, energy, and resources, spoke to Sam's understanding of advocacy through a lens of entitlement. This sense of entitlement was completely lost on Sam, and presumably on the student, but it also spoke to the fact that when you live in a world of such great privilege, the angle from which you see the world is always skewed in your favor, and it cannot be skewed in another way. Moreover, you cannot see the skew: to you, the angle is straight and fair and level for everyone.

Another example of the meaning and value Sam assigned to using Twitter for civic purposes as preparation for adult civic participation was that he did not include Twitter as an activity with his freshman classes. While one aspect of this choice is that 9th grade history at Sam's school was ancient civilizations and the students are not able to "go on Twitter and contact an emperor of ancient China," Sam also described teaching freshmen about civics as "different" and "harder." Some of this difficulty may well have been the challenge of developing connections between ancient civilizations, contemporary history, and current events, but for Sam some of the difficulty lay with the age and developmental level of the freshmen. Sam used Twitter, and other social media platforms, with younger students in more passive ways, such as when his classes watched a live feed put out to social media by the Smithsonian's curator. Sam's students were able to see historical artifacts, but they were not asked to interact with the curator in any way.

Sam's understanding of civic engagement, and of using Twitter, was bound up in his goals to prepare students for adulthood, and he did not see freshmen as nearly ready for any of that yet. In contrast, he saw twelfth graders as having "one foot in adulthood," and so they were "more civic minded, more so than any of the other grades." In contrast, Sam saw younger

students as more easily distracted by technology, believing that they lack impulse control and would be tempted to use any technology used in class for their own purposes rather than the focus of the class. This spoke of a more didactic and less exploratory way of learning in general: Sam understood teaching and learning in certain ways, and student learning was dependent upon students doing what Sam thought would foster their learning. Sam was thoughtful about how he chose to teach, the developmental levels of his students, and what activities and tools best helped students reach his objectives for them. However, Sam was doubtful that students could co-create their own learning with less structured activities or independent exploration, because he thought that the activities that they would have chosen would not benefit their learning.

Learning how to harness that civic mindedness in order to use it for good purposes was one of the reasons that Sam chose to use Twitter with his classes: he was able to show them how to connect with elected officials, organizations, companies, and other accounts in ways that are appropriate and responsible. Sam's students learned how to be civically involved because he asked them to be civically involved, by tweeting to the President, to other government officials, and to others who have the power to have a significant impact on the community. In using Twitter in this fashion and by requiring students to tweet to particular people, Sam was showing his students how to use this tool to connect with people in power and also showing both the students and leaders that student voices should be heard and valued.

This belief in preparing students to be civically-minded adults was at the heart of Sam's understanding of what it meant to be a teacher. Sam wanted his students to believe that they would be effective in order to increase the likelihood that they would try to be civically involved throughout their adulthood. He wanted them to understand the ways in which they can be

effective members of their community, and the next section will discuss in greater detail what he did in class that can support his students in being civically-minded adults.

Teacher objectives for student civic education with Twitter. Sam only used Twitter in his classes with juniors and seniors. There were two reasons for this: one was that the content areas of those classes (US History and Participation in Government and Economics) were easier to connect to the content and users on Twitter, unlike other classes like Ancient Civilizations. The second reason was that Sam used Twitter to teach students to be civically engaged by requiring them to use Twitter for civic purposes, and he felt that only upperclassmen were ready and able to handle that responsibility of both civic engagement and of using technology during class appropriately. Sam started using Twitter with his 12th grade *Participation in Government and Economics* class because the curriculum for that class "is very project-based [with] a lot of independent learning." He also decided to try to use Twitter with this class because they have "one foot out the door and one foot in college," making the students in this class ideal candidates for Sam's purposes for using Twitter.

Sam found that, in choosing to use Twitter in class, not all of his students were familiar with the platform. Initially when he started to use Twitter in class, he was surprised at how little some of his students knew about Twitter, describing them as "superficially aware of it." He explained in greater detail here:

When I first started using [Twitter], [it] was [surprising], their lack of knowledge about it. I mean, they obviously heard about [Twitter], but not many had used it and I think 'cause they didn't have a need to use it. It was all Facebook and Instagram.

Sam needed to teach his students how to use Twitter, specifically what the platform could do, how to find accounts to follow, and how to contact people via Twitter. Sam said that Twitter use

among his students was more common recently, and that his students would use the platform to follow celebrities, follow the district's Twitter account for information pertaining to school closures, and in order to follow major news stories as they unfold.

Sam also said that as part of his overall desire to prepare students to be adults in the world, he wanted his students to see Twitter as a source of news and political action, rather than as a way to follow celebrities or trends. This was also one of the reasons that Sam chose to use Twitter, as he perceived of Instagram as a platform which was only used for keeping up with gossip. Sam said that using Twitter in class "opened up a new realm of Twitter, as opposed to seeing what the Kardashians are up to. Hopefully they realize that they can use if for positive things," such as connecting with elected officials or sharing their opinions with the wider community. In order to accomplish all of this, Sam's students were required to use the class Twitter account in various ways, such as tweeting at particular people or organizations. This was in stark contrast to the great degree of freedom that Matt (discussed in the teacher-case below) offered to his students, who were free to explore and creatively express what they know through any means or media they chose. Again, this contrast between Matt and Sam spoke to Sam's perception that his students, if given that freedom, would have chosen activities that Sam saw as being unsupportive of student learning.

In preparation for his students' imminent entrance into the world as adults, Sam tried to teach them ways to be active citizens. To that purpose, one of the ways Sam used Twitter with his students was to encourage "them to use Twitter to contact government, you know, senators, even local officials." As a way of teaching his students how to use Twitter and how to reach out to people appropriately, Sam created a class Twitter account to which each student had access. Sam asked his students to use Twitter through the class account "because I didn't want them

going rogue." Using Twitter in this fashion allowed Sam to always be able to monitor what the students were doing on Twitter, and Sam thought that using a class Twitter handle made it more likely that people would respond to the class's tweets. Sam described how he uses Twitter in class in this way:

> There's so many outspoken individuals in the political arena, in the government arena, that I love to have the kids pose questions to them. There's so many, you know, political conduits that have their opinions. I'd love to have, you know, their opinions. You know, I'd even have the kids pose rhetorical questions to government officials or to, you know, to scientists or, you know, something like that.

Sam's purposes in using Twitter were entirely about the ways in which students can connect via the platform to leaders and organizations and in that way share their opinions.

Whether it was because of the class Twitter handle or something else, Sam's classes have received responses to their tweets. Sam has used Twitter with his students to connect with elected officials and others who are related to what they are covering in class. For instance, Sam said that after his class watched a documentary by former Secretary of Labor Robert Reich, the class "tweeted to him, and [Reich] tweeted us back." Encouraged by having received a response, one of Sam's students tweeted to Reich and asked him to watch the movie with them in class, to which Reich again replied with regrets that he was unable to do so because he was travelling. Another instance in which Sam's students connected with someone over Twitter was when they reached out to and received responses from Harry Reid, former Senator from Nevada and Senate Majority Leader. Similarly, Sam's class reached out to President Obama several times, and though he did not respond personally, the class "got responses from two of his speech writers."

Sam reported that the class felt these experiences were "pretty cool," and yet Sam thought it was the very essence of how Twitter should work. According to Sam, Twitter provided a way to reach out to others that is "easy" and "not a huge time commitment," which greatly reduced the barriers to his students' initiating contact and also to people responding. Additionally, Sam believed that elected officials need to and are likely to respond when his class tweets to them: "a congressman is gonna respond to a high school kid." For Sam, this ease and potential effectiveness were some of the reasons why teaching students to use Twitter for civic purposes is worthwhile.

Alignment with proposed model. As with Abbey and Josh, this section of each participant's case will examine whether their teaching aligns with the three dimensions of the proposed model of constructivist teaching with Twitter as described in Chapter 2: 1) learners construct knowledge; 2) learning should be social; and 3) learning should be realistic. Sam's teaching poorly aligned with the first dimension, that learners construct knowledge. In contrast to the other teachers in this study, Sam did not believe that his students could construct learning through interactive or exploratory activities; he did not believe that these types of activities would not contribute to what he wanted his students to learn. Further, Sam did not trust his students to learn outside of his parameters, thinking that students who had the freedom to make choices about their learning would inevitably make choices that did not support their learning. His students' use of Twitter was limited to one class account and to interactions through Twitter which were dictated by Sam. Sam also did not emphasize building on students' prior civic knowledge for the construction of new civic knowledge. For all of these reasons, Sam's use of Twitter for civic education did not align at all with the first dimension of the proposed model.

Sam's requirement that students used the class Twitter account to tweet meant that they were working together in a social environment and used the same tool, which somewhat aligned to the second dimension of the model that learning should be social. Although Twitter is social by nature, Sam's students were limited in their ability to work with others on the platform because they were restricted to using only the class Twitter account. As a result, all of Sam's students were interacting with the same accounts, rather than expanding the pool of people with whom they interacted through Twitter by each student having his or her own account. Sam's classroom also seemed to be *open*, one of the characteristics that is beneficial to civic education. In the way that it is used within civic education literature, *open classrooms* are places where students feel safe expressing minority opinions; can ask questions freely without fear of ridicule; and participate in designing and maintaining classroom climate (Hahn, 1999). Although Sam carefully structured his teaching, his classroom was a place where students could challenge assumptions and hold unpopular opinions and where they were free to ask questions. In this way, Sam promotes an open classroom climate. Because of this openness, and because of their interactions on Twitter, Sam's teaching was fairly social, and thus moderately aligned with the second dimension of the proposed model.

Sam's teaching was also moderately aligned with the third dimension of the proposed model, that learning should be realistic. Sam's prompting his students to use Twitter to keep up with current events or his requirement that his students tweet at elected officials was a realistic practice of how adults can follow news and interact with the same government officials. In fact, Sam has found that students continue to use Twitter to interact with officials and to follow the news after they leave his class, which point to his success in providing students with realistic experiences and a tool they felt prepared to continue to use into adulthood. Sam's teaching to

prepare students for adulthood was realistic, which aligns moderately well with the proposed model.

Overall, Sam's teaching of civics with Twitter did not align well with the proposed model. Sam's use of Twitter did not allow his students to construct knowledge with each other and others on the platform. Although this learning occurs in social spaces, including both Twitter and Sam's open classroom, Sam's students are limited in their social interactions on Twitter. Finally, Sam believed his teaching was realistic because he asked students to interact with political and other leaders in real time, and they continued to use Twitter to reach out to these leaders long after they left Sam's class. Along this third dimension, Sam's use of Twitter for civic education aligns with the proposed model for constructivist teaching with civic education. However, the misalignment of Sam's teaching along the first two dimensions of the proposed model limit Sam's overall alignment with the model.

Overall reflections. Sam's focus on preparing students to be active citizens lead him to use Twitter for civic education, and both his reasons for using it and civic education literature showed Twitter to be an effective and appropriate tool for this purpose. Sam used Twitter because it provided an easy and effective way in which he showed students how to access current events and elected officials and also provided him with an opportunity for him to teach them about how to use that access responsibly. He has found that Twitter worked for these purposes and beyond, as elected officials or members of their staffs responded back to students via Twitter. Finally, research on both civic education and the integration of technology into teaching supported the ways in which Sam used Twitter for civic education, and Sam's experience of students using it after they leave his class or graduate and move on to college was his evidence of the effectiveness of his teaching and of Twitter for civic engagement.

Overview: Matt Lyman

As with the previous three participants, Abbey, Josh, and Sam, I will again begin with the experiences of my next participant; for Matt Lyman, these experiences centered around student engagement, the value of work, and inclusion. The following two sections will discuss some of Matt's experiences teaching civics with Twitter, and how those experiences align with the proposed model of constructivist teaching with Twitter for civic education. My focus on these three areas is intended to provide rich descriptions of how Matt understood his identity as a teacher, how he situated himself in the world of education, and how both of those factors impacted his teaching of civic education with technology. Matt's understanding and practice of teaching was shaped by his history of working to shape or change the culture of a school. Matt's experiences as a change agent and his openness to a variety of pedagogies influence how he teaches and supports student learning.

Context. Matt Lyman was a white, male, married father from Chicago, Illinois who recently left teaching to work for an educational consulting company. Matt began his teaching career at a Catholic junior high school in Chicago, a job he landed "two and a half weeks before school started" because "there weren't a lot of positions in 1995." While he loved the environment at the school, after three years he decided for financial reasons to take a position at a new high school that was just opening up. Working at a new high school gave Matt the opportunity to help create the culture of the school, which he described in this way:

> Because I opened the school you had to create the values. You had to create the culture. Everything could be rethought. And I got used to being in that environment of invent it, do it, and then it works. You know, I look back now like what a unique experience that was. Who gets to teach at a brand spanking new high school?

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Matt moved schools again after eight years, when another new high school opened up about five miles away. He described how he came to work for another new high school in this way:

> So then eight years in I was convinced I was gonna die at that school and be there forever, and then they opened up a new high school about five miles away. And, I was there for a day of training and somebody pulled me in the hallway and said, "Hey, why don't you come and work for us at this school? All of that creating has to happen. You can start doing it again." And I was like, "Oh, that's just too awesome."

Matt only remained at this second new high school for one year because one of his former teachers, now the principal of the high school Matt had attended, offered him a job. Matt again thought that he had found the school where he would remain for the duration of his career, but after 7 years he left his alma mater to move with the principal who had hired him to another district as the chair of the social studies department. He remained in that position for four years, retiring at the end of the 2017-2018 school year to begin working for an educational consulting company. Throughout his career, Matt taught all grades from 9 to 12, and mainly taught elective classes.

Identity as a teacher. Matt saw his identity as a teacher as someone who was a change agent. From shaping the values that defined the culture of the schools in which he worked to his time as department chair at the end of his career where his main function was to "redo this, fix this, change the whole system," Matt defined himself as a person who had an effect on an entire school. Throughout his career, Matt tried to change and improve the schools in which he has worked in novel ways, "the more daring and cutting edge, the better." Overall, Matt saw himself as a unique teacher who made a considerable difference in education by being counter-cultural.

Prompt to use Twitter. Given this way of being in the world, it was unsurprising that Matt experimented with using different technologies in the classroom. He started exploring Twitter after a friend of his had started using it in his classroom. Initially, Matt liked Twitter for personal use because he started to develop a strong professional learning network with social studies teachers throughout the country. This example illustrated how Matt understands teaching: constructivist at his core, he saw collaboration as making work better, and he wanted to provide students with as many ways to interact with other students as possible so that all students feel engaged in the process of learning. Matt's personal use of Twitter and other technologies was reflective of his desire to be collaborative. He familiarized himself with as many different ways of interacting with and presenting material as possible so that his students could have as many options to connect with other students as possible.

An important part of student engagement for Matt was the inclusion of a multiplicity of voices in his classroom. Matt valued this because it taught students to respect all people and to engage in discussion and debate with those with whom they disagree. Through many different strategies and technologies, Matt intentionally included the voices of parents, extended family members, subject-matter experts, students in other schools, and anyone who reached out to the class via online methods to have students engage with people who held conflicting opinions. This also encouraged parents and others to support what Matt was doing in the classroom and allowed students to work with varied opinions and hot topics because parents and other community members knew that many sides were being represented in the classroom. Matt described his reasons for doing this as:

I wanted it to open up the playing field. I believe it's easier when you're totally

transparent. Let everyone know what you're doing. When that troublesome parent who's

upset about politics gets mad because you're this or that or skewed one way or the other,

you're gonna want the community to be able to say, "No, that's not true." Right?

The following sections will examine this approach, and Matt's lifeworld more broadly, and how

it informs his teaching practice and professional experiences; his reasons for choosing to use

Twitter and his objectives for his students' civic learning; and whether these experiences,

objectives, and Twitter for civic education align with my proposed model of constructivist

teaching with Twitter in civic education.

    Experiences with Twitter in civic education. One of the principles of Matt's teaching

was his desire that students feel that their work had value. He wanted his students to feel that

they were not just doing work just to keep them busy, but rather that what they were doing in

class mattered beyond the scope of class. Matt felt that the type of work that students often were

asked to do in schools communicated that their work lacked value; as Matt put it, "what's the

point of all this work if you get a worksheet and you throw it in the garbage when you walk out?

Right? What's the life expectancy of your work?" Showing students' work to others was one way

to demonstrate to his students how valuable their work was. Like Josh, Matt's expectation was

that all students would share their work, at least with their classmates but often with parents,

extended family, and the wider community. He believed that treating student work as meaningful

and important would lead to students taking it seriously. He explained this by saying:

> If you're doing your work for an audience that's fake, like if you're giving a fake speech
>
> about something, the kids are gonna treat it fake. There's no validity in it. But when you
>
> tell them that the world will see this work that you're going to do, they achieve a different
>
> standard. Even if you just let your class see it.

Matt wanted his students to know that what they did was important and valuable, both because he believed that to be true and because he wanted them to produce work that matches those expectations. To support this, student work was tweeted to lawmakers and industry leaders; parents and other community members are asked to weigh in on student debates; and students share their work online via websites and YouTube for comment from others around the world.

Process of choosing Twitter. As a teacher, Matt was always willing to learn and use new tools or techniques in support of student learning. Matt never relied on or even preferred one particular tool or technology; rather, he allowed his students to have considerable freedom to make choices in the technology that they used. For example, Matt was particularly excited when he talked about a project in which his students collaborated to demonstrate their learning about U.S. laws; one group wrote and performed a song about LGBT+ rights; another wrote a poem about the Patriot Act. Using any of them, including Twitter, was optional, one of many choices through which students could connect to others and share their work.

Matt said that "75% - 80%" of his students were Twitter users, a greater percentage than other participants in this study observed. Matt thought his students would be more "comfortable" if they were given the choice of using Twitter rather than requiring it of them, in contrast to Abbey, Josh, and the literature on the use of Twitter in classrooms, which suggests that it is more effective when students are required to use the platform (Junco, Elavsky, & Heiberger, 2013; Gao et al., 2012; Junco, Heiberger, & Loken, 2011). However, Matt found ways to use Twitter without requiring all students to have their own Twitter accounts. He explained this:

> I never felt the need to require it because I had the majority of kids doing it, and the ones
>
> who wouldn't, we could always put them together with a partner to share things on social

media. You know, it was an opportunity for them to extend their voice and I didn't feel

the need to require it in any way.

In teaching with Twitter this way, Matt felt that he was reaching students where they were: those

who already had Twitter accounts could learn how to use them for civic purposes, and those who

did not could still learn how to use Twitter and what the platform could enable them to do (such

as easily reaching out to governmental officials) without feeling like they were being required to

use the platform beyond class.

Matt realized that without offering students the freedom and creativity to construct and

express their learning in ways of their choosing, he was limiting what students could do. Matt

compared the transactional methods of some teachers to the predictable outcomes of a machine:

"sometimes we like Coke machine transactions in education. We want to go and drop our dollar

in and get a clearly-defined and expected outcome." In contrast, Matt found he liked the

experience of allowing students freedom to explore and use technologies in ways that he did not

anticipate or design. He explained students' use of Twitter in education by continuing the

analogy of the Coke machine:

It'd be like if you put money into a Coke machine, then you randomly hit numbers and

letters and you didn't know what you were gonna get out but so long as the outcome of

the product that they produce meets the learning objective that you have as an in-

between, like the endpoint, the product that they create is gonna be who knows what they

come up with. But have you evaluated source documents? Did you learn how to write a

thesis statement? Did you present a clear and well formulated argument based upon facts

that you've collected in the process? Then my work is done.

Matt found that this freedom benefited student learning, seeing that the freedom to push the buttons in the combination that had the most meaning and value to students produced work that not only meets his objectives but was also of excellent quality.

Finally, an important piece of learning that influences Matt's decisions as a teacher was his belief that learning should relate to life. Matt's openness to exploring new technologies, his use of social media to follow current events as they are unfolding, his inclusion of parents and others' voices into class discussions, and the freedom he allowed students in assignments all stemmed from his belief that there is value in connecting learning to life. He explained this here:

> I truly believe with all of my heart that very little of the work that we do in school has anything to do with actual life. And that's my fundamental problem. So as far as the way that work connected them or changed them in my classes is that I gave them a chance to pursue their passion through my media. I stopped trying to say, "How should I have them prove this to me?" And I just said, "What would qualify as evidence of learning?" And gave them the option to say show me evidence that you learned. Right? Expression of your learning. And then I don't care what it is. So make a video. Write a song. Produce the song. Do spoken word poetry. I had a person say that they wanted to do interpretive dance. It never actually happened. I was really disappointed 'cause I really wanted to see what the hell an interpretive dance of history looked like. But why not say yes? I was so busy saying no. Why not say yes to something different that they're gonna be excited about?

While Matt's students had considerable freedom to choose how to demonstrate their learning, Matt was clear about their need to incorporate evidence of their learning of history topics and content in their work. Matt admitted that grading the creative aspects of student work was

somewhat subjective, mentioning in particular that he did not know how he would have judged the interpretive dance. At the same time, he knew how to assess for content knowledge and skills development, and he thought that over time students were better able to show their understanding through creative projects than through papers or tests. When Matt began to frame his understanding of education from the perspective of asking students to demonstrate that they had learned, it allowed him to be open to the wide range of ways in which students could do that.

Matt also found that student choice in assignments increased student engagement. Matt saw evidence of this engagement when his students often chose to spend more time working on projects for his class than for other classes:

> What ended up happening was they were spending more time on my classes than in other classes to the point where I'd have parents say, "Can you please tell them to stop? They're so into this." Or other teachers are like, "Yeah, I had kids say that my project wasn't done 'cause I was working on Mr. Lyman's project." And I was like, "If you feel bad about that, I do not." Right? In a world where you have choices, having a class where they want to choose you in a way that I'm not making them. Everyone always had a simplistic paper option. You could do a Venn diagram. It would take you 10 minutes. Or you could do a 12-minute video on Adam Smith versus Karl Marx. I'm not saying no to that.

Matt found that students who were more engaged with the process of creating projects were also willing and often excited to share them, often online. By sharing their work online, Matt's students could get feedback as well as validation that their work was valuable and worthy of their time and the time of others around the world who had watched or listened to it, similar to Josh's tweets about student work but targeting a much larger audience. He understood the connections between student engagement and external validation of student work in this way:

If you give them options and show them the possibility that's out there, the first time you

have a kid who gets a thousand views of their video, that class goes nuts. And all they

want to do is make something that people want to see and consume.

When students were given choices about how they demonstrated their learning, their engagement

with that work increased; sharing their work online further increased that engagement because it

validated their work as meaningful beyond their classroom.

Matt attributed his improvement as a teacher to this shift towards giving students greater

freedom to construct and demonstrate their learning. Matt's teaching changed because when he

"knew my kids better," he "spent more time helping them rather than telling them everything."

Through this creative process, he observed that students were more proactive in their learning

because they found that in doing their projects they needed to learn skills or information in order

to do them well. As Matt said, "they [students] realize, 'I want to do this, and I need to know

things.' And just that simple idea - suddenly they need to know something to do -- it changed

everything." Matt's shift to providing students with time and space to construct their learning in

ways that were meaningful and relatable to them changed his students' approach to learning; it

also changed Matt's approach to teaching. Some examples of how Matt's students used this

freedom to show and share their learning in creative and meaningful ways will be shared in the

next section.

Teacher objectives for student civic education with Twitter. Matt's main objective for

his students was to increase student engagement in learning. Matt sought to do this through his

assignments and by asking students to share their work with the community. The considerable

freedom Matt's students had in choosing how to meet his objectives allowed them to construct

their learning in ways that made sense to them. An example Matt offered in support of this was

when a student who had always struggled in Matt's class asked if he could write a song instead of writing a paper about the Industrial Revolution. The student made the argument that "the chorus of a song is like the thesis statement of a paper," and the result was "the first A [the student] ever got in a history class." For Matt, this was a moment when "I know he learned everything;" allowing the student freedom of expression helped him to construct his learning in a way that made sense to him and which provided him with a way of demonstrating his learning effectively. Matt shared examples of student work with me and was able to describe elements of songs, videos, and poems that he evaluated in addition to the historical content.

Sharing these creative projects online had a greater reach than any paper likely would have, expanding the group with whom Matt's students are constructing their knowledge. For instance, the student who wrote and sang the Industrial Revolution song posted it in various places online, where it now has thousands of hits. Although Matt always offered students the option to write a paper, he encouraged them to show their learning in other ways. He argued that people outside of the class were more likely to want to interact with his students' work if they showed what they have learned in ways that people were going to want to read, watch, or hear. He explained this in this way:

> My best example with the kids is like you always have the option to write a paper. Some of you will choose it 'cause it's where you're comfortable. I said, "But Tweet it out. When was the last time you read a four-page essay on Twitter? When was the last time you watched a four-minute video?" Like you'll watch a four-minute video. You're not reading a four-page essay. Nobody posts their essays to Facebook, Twitter, or any other social medias because no one wants to read your essay.

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This did not mean that a student's essay would not be of a quality that someone would want to read; rather, it was an acknowledgement that work would have a greater impact if students put their work into a format that people would spend time engaging with (Matt also suggested that I submit my dissertation as a video, so he still believes this to be true.) Further, Matt taught and assessed civics content while offering these types of assessments. He believed that a video or other creative project could be just as, if not more, effective at meeting the goals of civic education than an essay. Matt thought that these creative projects were more relatable to students' experiences (Gibson & Levine, 2003; Niemi & Junn, 2005; Pasek et al., 2008); more participatory and student-created (Niemi & Chapman, 1999; Torney-Purta et al., 1999; Torney-Purta et al., 2001; Gibson & Levine, 2003; Kahne & Middaugh, 2008); have greater involvement with the community (Niemi & Chapman, 1999; Torney-Purta et al., 1999; Torney-Purta et al., 2001; Gibson & Levine, 2003; Kahne & Middaugh, 2008); and demonstrate a variety of ways to be civically involved (Torney-Purta et al., 2001).

Another way in which Matt asked students to participate in their community was through conversations with other students across the country. Matt shared one example in which he and another teacher he had met via Twitter asked their students to assess the culpability of different members of German society in the Holocaust. All students were required to add their thoughts to a website, where each class debated their responses. The lesson ended with a debate over Skype. Matt described that experience here:

> Then we Skyped with his class, and our kids debated who they thought was the most responsible. Our kids were coming in during their free periods. They sat through my class during lunch. I taught eight periods that day because they were communicating and chatting and debating.

Students were then asked to respond to various prompts to continue their thinking, and then they peer-edited these responses across classes. Finally, the students responded to comments that students and teachers from other schools had left on their website, which Matt described as "an incredibly powerful experience."

Matt had other uses for Twitter in class, such as using it "to reach out to experts [and] to send messages to politicians." In particular, Matt asked students to "tweet work that they did that involved a certain lawmaker and have the lawmaker try and contact them back" as a way of teaching them how to interact with elected officials and as a way of showing students that their work had worth. Similarly, Matt mentioned an instance in which a student shared her work on the development of chemotherapy drugs for children via Twitter and tweeted to the pharmaceutical industry for a response to her work. Matt described this experience here:

> We had a person who tweeted out her video about medical [issues]. She was criticizing the cancer industry for not producing chemotherapy drugs for children because the adult drugs that they're giving kids are devastating their bones, wiping out their teeth, and destroying their hair. And she was like, "And the only reason they don't is 'cause it's not cost-effective 'cause not enough kids get cancer." And so we just tweeted that out and she got replies back from the [pharmaceutical] industry.

These examples illustrated the ways in which Matt used Twitter to engage students and to communicate to them and to the wider community that their work had value and in ways that include a variety of voices so that students can construct their own learning.

Another way in which Matt sought to engage students and increase community involvement was by including other stakeholders in the process of learning. For instance, Matt asked for the active participation of parents and other important adults in the community and in

students' lives (such as extended family members), texting and tweeting with them to ask for their opinions. In some cases, students were required to "text five adults who are not in this school" at the beginning of class to ask for their thoughts on the topics of the day. Students usually included parents as some of their five adults, and "all of a sudden, parents felt involved" in class. The responses were displayed (with permission) on a secure website to use as prompts for an in-class discussion. Matt also shared the website with parents, and he says that including parents and their varied opinions in this way created "an open and free space for conversation" which allowed Matt and his students to comfortably discuss anything from any perspective.

In including others' points of view in his classroom, Matt was also demonstrating for students how to engage in debates while showing respect and cordiality towards those who hold opinions different than their own. He shared his thinking about this:

I believe in civil discourse and I think that we've lost so much of that. Like we can't talk to each other kindly when we totally disagree. So this was my way of showing this is how it's gonna happen. These are your parents. Just ask them to be respectful of your classmates, and they did. It was kinda nice.

Matt used this activity to teach students how to have meaningful and polite exchanges on social media, showing that civil discourse is a requirement of civic conversation, regardless of the space in which that conversation occurs. This connects to the work of Abbey and Josh, who were also intent on teaching students how to present themselves as citizens in online spaces, though for Abbey, Josh, and Matt, civic behaviors in online spaces were not fundamentally different or separated from those behaviors in offline spaces.

This convergence of on and offline spaces was evident in Matt's first experience of using Twitter with his students. During the Arab Spring in 2011, Matt and his class used Twitter to

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follow #ArabSpring to watch the events of Tahrir Square in Egypt as they unfolded. Matt described the experience as being "transported to that place" because while the protests were happening, Matt was able to "to have certain students find people in Tahrir Square who were English-speaking protesters and ask them why they were there." Matt's students were able to reach out to people who were experiencing the events in Egypt as they were happening, and were able to understand from the perspective of people who were participating what it was like and why they were protesting.

Even though this was Matt's first time using Twitter with his class, he was attentive to the fact that "a lot of stuff that was coming out of there was pretty edgy" and so he had warned his students that at times he "might have to turn off the screen" where he was projecting the tweets. Matt also examined what different individuals were tweeting ahead of time, and so he was able to focus in class on showing tweets that were more appropriate and "filter out the ones that were more violent." Matt reached out to some people in advance to ask if his students could interact with them on Twitter, taking an additional step to ensure that his students were interacting with people on Twitter who could provide insights without inflicting emotional harm. Matt used this experience of tweeting with people in Tahrir Square to show students that history is

> messy and doesn't make sense, and I wanted to be there listening to it before the news was broadcast so that we could watch the news afterwards and say "Well, what's different from our experience and what you've heard on the news?"

In this way, Matt's students were able to connect with people who were experiencing current events, learn how to compare primary and secondary sources, and learn how to interact with people on social media in civil ways.

Matt has used Twitter similarly during other significant events in recent history, such as the protests of the Russian invasion of Crimea. Matt and his students followed along on Twitter as Ukrainians were protesting and the Russian military was responding by attacking the protesters with sniper fire. One aspect of this event that was different from following the protests and violence in Tahrir Square was the abundance of posts that were being tweeted in English. Matt explained that this was because the posts were meant for an American audience:

> They were putting it out in English specifically 'cause they wanted us to hear it. And one of the accounts we were following actually turned out to be like a fake account that was giving a Russian perspective of what was going on. So once we were able to unpack that, in hindsight everything made sense. But we were processing it and talking to people, and in a way, we were there because you could see the pictures and what's going on.

This allowed Matt and his students to not only interact with people who were living through this significant event, but also to have conversations around fake news, biased sources, and the ways in which people use social media for both communication and propaganda.

Each of these objectives -- student engagement, involving parents and other adults, and following current events in real time -- related to Matt's understanding of citizenship. Matt's teaching focused on preparing students to be informed, engaged, and civil members of society. An important aspect of Matt's understanding of citizenship was that the incorporation of the phrase "digital citizenship" into the lexicon has been a disservice to the overall way in which people understand citizenship. As he said,

> We make a mistake by declaring digital citizenship when really we're just talking about citizenship. So much of citizenship is digital. Stop making the distinction. Call it

citizenship. And realize that we can't look at traditional citizenship versus online

citizenship.

Matt's saw no distinction between online and offline citizenship, and this framed his teaching

because he wanted his students to see ways of participating in society both online and offline. As

Matt said to his students,

> You have a voice. Where do you want people to hear that voice, and what medium must
>
> you create in in order to have that message heard? And if it's just a paper you're limiting
>
> who's gonna hear that. So where are the people at and where can you meet them with the
>
> story that you want to tell?

As an example, he described a "quiet kid" who chose to make a video (one of the assignment

options) about Adam Smith and Karl Marx; she posted the video on YouTube, where it had, at

the time of our interview, over 300,000 hits. Matt related this back to his overall purposes of

engaging activities that promote value in student work in this comment:

> And she's just this quiet kid. So it was kinda cool to give her an audience outside of her
>
> class that she felt comfortable with. All I really wanted was products that meant
>
> something to the kids that have a life cycle beyond like them to me to recycle bin. That
>
> just seemed so pointless.

This anecdote showed everything that was critical to Matt as a teacher: providing students with

options so that they could choose ways to engage with material and present in ways that were

comfortable and meaningful to them and which can be viewed, valued, and responded to by

others. It also highlighted what Matt views as the critical aspects of education for him: student

interest and engagement in work so that what they produced was of a quality and in a format

which would be seen, heard, and discussed with others, all of which demonstrated the value of

student work, to both the student and his or her community. The above examples show how Matt used others' civic action to increase student engagement; Matt also wanted his students to increase their own civic engagement, as we will see in the next section.

Alignment with proposed model. As was true for Abbey, Josh, and Sam, this section of Matt's case will examine whether his teaching aligns with the proposed model (see Chapter 2). Matt's teaching was well aligned with the first dimension of the model, that learners construct knowledge. For Matt, student engagement, listening to a plurality of voices, and sharing student work in order to facilitate discussion were all ways in which students can engage civically. Matt taught his students how to interact with each other, their parents, other students, and government officials, and he made good use of discussion and debate. Additionally, much of Matt's teaching depended upon students' decisions about how they constructed and demonstrated their learning. These actions attended to this first dimension of the model well.

Matt incorporated the community into his students' experience as much as possible, thus attending to the second dimension of the proposed model, that learning should be social. Whether by texting parents and including their thoughts in discussions; interacting with other students across the country online and via Skype; or sharing student work with the intention that it be commented on, revised, and put back to the community as a contribution, Matt consistently included as many people and perspectives as possible in his classroom. Matt's attention to including different voices in his classroom was meant to encourage broad participation by students and other members of the community in the tasks of creating, sharing, revising, and benefiting from the work that students do in class. As a result, Matt's teaching is also well-aligned with the second dimension of the proposed model.

The third dimension of the proposed model, that learning should be realistic, Because Matt's students were able to choose the media in which they work with course material, the content which was new was scaffolded onto processes or media which are known to them. Learning and showing evidence of learning occurs through a variety of media, and the choice of media was largely left to the student, making it relatable. Additionally, students interacted with current events in class and connected those events to learning about how to follow the news and how to engage in civil discourse. Students were not always given unfiltered access; in the cases of the Arab Spring and the Annexation of Crimea, Matt limited the Twitter accounts to which students had access. Although he did this to protect them from excessive violence and to ensure that there were people who would Tweet with his students in English, Matt's filtering of Twitter limited the reality of the Arab Spring and Annexation of Crimea for his students. For the most part, though, Matt taught in ways that were realistic for his students, which aligns well with the third dimension of the model.

Overall, Matt's teaching of civics with Twitter aligned well with the proposed model, and is perhaps the best aligned of the teachers who participated in this study. Matt's students constructed knowledge through a wide variety of participatory strategies and learned through social interactions with their peers, parents and other family members, and a variety of others through online spaces. Finally, a hallmark of Matt's teaching was to use lessons and assess learning through projects which were realistic and relatable to students. Even though there were some ways in which Matt limited his students' access to Twitter accounts, for the most part, Matt's teaching aligns well with the proposed model.

Overall reflections. Matt was a veteran teacher who spent his long career as a change agent. In helping to open two high schools, Matt spent considerable time developing the culture

and values of those schools. The combination of this work and his extensive professional

learning network have provided Matt with much space in which to explore his appreciation for

new or avant garde methods and technologies, all in the service of connecting students to

learning through methods and projects which are relevant and interesting to them. Matt thought

deeply about how his methods in the class supported students to co-create their learning through

meaningful projects in media that they enjoy. For these purposes, Matt found that Twitter was

one of the tools that his students used for both learning and sharing their work in with the wider

community; for Matt, students sharing their work with a broad audience conveyed to the students

that their work had value well beyond the classroom. Matt provided a great amount of freedom

to his students in making choices about their work, which empowered them to invest in their own

learning. Above all, Matt wanted his students to feel that who they are and what they do was

worthy of attention, and he saw his students' civic engagement in the same way. Matt's students

were not learning and preparing to be people who contribute to the world; rather, they are people

who are already contributing to the world, and Matt's role was to help them to recognize that and

find ways in which they can do it effectively and well.

Overview: Toby Gardner

As will be made clear upon reading the next case, my next participant, Toby Gardner,

stands out from the other participants in a few ways. As with the cases already presented, I will

begin with an overview of Toby's lifeworld, followed by a discussion of his experiences of

teaching. This will be followed by descriptions of what he did in class, though these will be

narrow in scope because Toby's responses to my open-ended questions all returned to the two

ways in which he uses Twitter in class. I will end with a section which makes connections

between Toby's teaching and the proposed model of teaching civics with Twitter. Throughout

these sections, one of the ways Toby stood out is that the way he spoke about his teaching, his students, and himself were focused only on his Twitter practices with his students. In reviewing our conversation, it was peculiar to me that Toby would have even wanted to have been interviewed for a study on the use of Twitter in civic education: his use of Twitter was very focused on two particular uses that he has for the social media platform. What became clear in reading over the transcript of our conversation and upon further reflection was that Toby focused our conversation on the topics in which I had expressed interest. Though he clearly has considerable experience in teaching, Toby wanted to center our conversation on the main points of interest I had expressed to him. At times, and by comparison to Abbey, Josh, Sam, or Matt, Toby seemed to share less of his own story and background outside of teaching, but that seems like an intentional choice to put his teaching and his students' learning at the center of our conversation. The following sections will hopefully illuminate these differences further.

Context. Toby Gardner was a male, married, father who taught middle and high school social studies in Iowa. He has been teaching for 25 years, and near the middle of his career was named Iowa's Teacher of the Year (the specific year of the award will not be disclosed to protect the anonymity of the participant). The community in which Toby taught had slightly fewer than 2,000 residents; 43 out of the 51 high school seniors in the class of 2018 graduated from high school in 2018. Toby was one of two social studies teachers in the district, and he taught 8th grade social studies, an elective which was open to students in grades 9-12 called The Big History Project, and electives for juniors and seniors in American Government, psychology, sociology, and economics. Toby was also the faculty advisor for the student government of his high school, and the assistant boys' basketball coach.

Toby was focused throughout our conversation on his use of Twitter and his involvement in The Big History Project. In spite of this considerable involvement in his school and the accomplishments which led him to be named Iowa's Teacher of the Year, Toby did not share a great deal about himself. When I congratulated him for his 25 years of teaching, he shrugged it off and pivoted to what his students have been doing over that time. Further, he did not mention the Teacher of the Year award himself; I would not have known about it had I not done some basic internet research on the school in order to have a more complete picture of where Toby taught. Toby's demeanor and focus on his students communicated a humility that was focused on teaching and learning. The topic of my project and the reason for our conversation was his teaching of civics and use of Twitter, and so that is where he focused his attention. Throughout our conversation, Toby expressed excitement about aspects of teaching which seemed important to him: The Big History Project; teaching source evaluation; and preparing students to be active in society. However, given the breadth of topics that Toby covered, the extracurricular activities he led, and the fact that he was a teacher in a small school speaks to his involvement in and commitment to his community.

Identity as a teacher. Of the courses that Toby taught, our conversation centered on The Big History Project class. Toby described this as a year-long course which integrated science and social studies that covers "13.8 billion years of history." Developed by a teacher in Australia, the Big History Project was a course with course and lesson plans available for free online (Big History Project, 2019). The course explored the development of Earth and its people across 10 units, from The Big Bang to Agriculture and Civilization to a unit that looked ahead to The Future. Given the significant breadth of the course, Toby said that "a lot of schools are using it to replace their traditional world history class," and it was clear that he felt that The Big History

Project provided a better way to teach world history than other curricula or programs he had used. Toby was able to describe The Big History Project in considerable depth: what the course covered, who created it, how it was funded, and how it was often taught. Though some schools teach the course with both a social studies and a science teacher, Toby was the only teacher for the course at his high school. In explaining that he was the only teacher, Toby also described the class as "cool," which leads me to believe that he enjoyed the class so much that he appreciated being the only teacher.

Prompt to use Twitter. Like other participants in this study, Toby's initial choice to use Twitter with his classes was sparked by his being introduced to the social media platform at an opportune time. Nine years ago, Toby was in his Master's program at the same time as his school was transitioning to providing all students with individual laptop computers. At the same time, in The Big History Project class, Toby was teaching about "claim testers," four methods by which students in the course were taught to critically evaluate assertions (Big History Project, 2019). These "claim testers" -- intuition, empirical evidence, logic, and authority, -- are used throughout each unit of the course to teach students critical thinking skills (Big History Project, 2019). Toby, in conjunction with the discussions he was having in his Master's program and knowing that his students would soon all have the ability to access the internet in class, wondered about whether Twitter could be a space in which his students could "claim test" contemporary assertions. He explained some of his thought process in this way:

> Hopefully a student will see a tweet and they will have to think about, does it sound like it actually is true? Could it happen? You know, who's telling me this information? Is there any evidence to back it up? So not believing everything that they see on Twitter as being true.

Toby wanted to use Twitter as a way of asking his students to apply the skills that they were learning in their Big History Project class about evaluating the veracity of information to current events and modern-day issues.

This snapshot provided some insight into how Toby saw himself as a teacher. Even in his reticence to speak about himself, his story of how and why he came to use Twitter shed light on what was important to Toby as a teacher. His ability to connect his school's adoption of technology for every student with some of the overarching themes of The Big History Project class show a thoughtfulness and attention to student learning. Toby clearly valued The Big History Project because of its approach to teaching, and his choice to use Twitter showed that he was trying to connect what he valued for student learning with both contemporary issues and with the direction in which his school was moving technologically. Toby's lifeworld, how it informed his teaching practice and professional experiences; his objectives for his students' civic learning; and whether these experiences, objectives, and Twitter for civic education aligned with my proposed model of constructivist teaching with Twitter in civic education will be explored in greater detail in the following sections.

Experiences with Twitter in civic education. What came through clearly in my interview with Toby was the sense of pride he felt about his using Twitter with his students. Toby was the first person who responded to my requests to be interviewed for this study and was quick to make time for the interview itself. His enthusiasm made it seem as though Toby was really happy with the ways in which he used Twitter in his classes. Initially, this surprised me, as it seemed as though Toby's rationale and use of Twitter were narrow and underdeveloped. Toby spoke little about himself, and because he did not share much of his own thinking, at first it was difficult to interpret why he was enthusiastic about Twitter. This gave me the initial impression

that Toby was using Twitter as a novelty, without much thought. Further, he seemed rather proud to be using Twitter, and that it was his pride that had prompted him to agree to be interviewed.

However, upon a closer reading of the transcript and further reflection on our conversation, this proved to be untrue; Toby's use of Twitter for civic education was focused and aligned with the values and skills he wants to instill in his students through The Big History Project course. For Toby, the point of using Twitter was to provide a space where students could practice some of the skills that they were learning in The Big History Project course in ways which were more contemporary than some of their units of study and which might prove useful to them throughout life. As a result, Toby was really happy with his use of Twitter: it helped his students to meet the objectives that he had for them.

Process of choosing Twitter. It is unsurprising, then, that Toby spent almost all of our conversation framing his responses around his use of Twitter with his students. Toby initially thought that the school's transition to providing all students with laptop computers would facilitate his students' use of Twitter for class purposes. However, Toby said that initially the district blocked certain websites on these school-provided computers, and as a result, using Twitter was not "quite working out the way I wanted it to." At the point at which it became clear that the school computers would not allow students to access Twitter, Toby had already committed to using the platform with his students, and so in order to get around this, he asked students to use their smartphones to access Twitter. Toby talked about his process of bypassing the school's computers to access Twitter in this way:

> The school policy was that our server would block that particular website [Twitter] on
> our schools' one-to-one computers. So as far as me using it all the time, isn't quite
> working out the way that I would like it to. But students that have their own cell phones

with them, since basically everybody does and they can get onto Twitter using their data

plan, and we use it that way.

It may seem from this quote that Toby had little concern for the rules, but in other parts of our

conversation it became clear that he followed the spirit, if not the letter, of this rule. Toby spoke

about the boundaries that he had set up between himself and his students on Twitter, such as not

following his students' accounts. Although this meant that he did not see how they interact with

each other, or whether they respond to his prompts, Toby believed that maintaining this

boundary was important for his students' safety and privacy. Additionally, Toby thought of his

students' use of Twitter as he thought about the Twitter use of his own high-school age children:

he wanted them to have the experience of using the platform because of what they can learn and

experience through it, but he did not want them to be unsafe.

Toby used Twitter in two different ways. One of these was that he uses posts from

Twitter as discussion starters in class; the posts were intended to get students to think about the

sources of information. These prompts were meant for in-class discussion, to show students how

to think about and question information from multiple perspectives. In this way, Twitter

provided content which could be evaluated in class by Toby and his students using the same

methods that they used to evaluate information during The Big History Project course (intuition,

authority, logical, and empirical evidence; Big History Project, 2019). Although Toby did not

provide a specific Twitter example of this, he mentioned that The Big History Project requires

students to evaluate the theories put forth by various scientists in different historical periods.

The other way in which Toby used Twitter with his students was that he posted questions

on Twitter and expected students to respond to those questions by replying to the post on the

platform. Although Toby expected his students to respond to these questions on Twitter, and he

adamantly believed that they did respond to his questions there, the only way that he monitored if or how students responded to his posts was by overhearing them speak about it in class. The way in which he spoke about this activity made it seem as though this were a bonus or supplemental activity, rather than work that was required.

Toby did not use the questions he posted on Twitter in class in any other way. Further, as students were not required to have Twitter accounts for Toby's class, Twitter participation was only available to those who already had accounts. Toby thought, based on conversations with his students, that most of them were active Twitter users, but as he did not follow them, he was not actually sure of how many were using Twitter. In this way, this secondary use of Twitter allowed Toby's students to have an additional way in which to use Twitter related to what they are studying and which provided a way in which they could interact with their peers and course content outside of class. At the same time, however, Toby made no attempt to assess any learning that took place on Twitter, although he was confident that they were responding appropriately on Twitter based on the conversations he overheard.

While initially, and particularly in comparison to the other participants in this study, Toby's use of Twitter with his students seems tangential or tightly tied to a particular set of skills from one particular course, he did not speak about Twitter casually or without interest or care. Additionally, Toby was clear that he wanted his students to use the platform for specific reasons related to civic engagement. In particular, Toby was concerned about "fake news," which he saw as not only a real problem but the very type of problem that the skills developed during The Big History Project are intended to address. However, in order to address the problem of "fake news," Toby needed to prompt his students to pay attention to any news at all. During our conversation, he talked about how he recently found that his students were not paying attention

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to current events. Toby's response to this was to increase his use of current events, particularly related to politics, in class primarily through Twitter; he believed that his students were more likely to be attentive to news if it was easily accessible and conveniently available on their phones, as he described here:

> Well, I found out recently, talking about the midterm elections, that a lot of our high school kids don't like to watch the news [on television]. So if it's just right there on their phone, it's a lot easier for them to see a tweet and know what's going on, than finding time to turn on the news.

For Toby, Twitter provided a way in which students can access news, which is the first step in his mind to combating the problem of "fake news." Toby believed that this increased awareness of current events, combined with his teaching of the ways in which to evaluate the assertions made by various people, would help his students to engage with the news and to be able to differentiate between fact and opinion. More than anything we discussed, Toby saw being informed and having the ability to assess the veracity of information as critically important to civic engagement.

Toby used Twitter in class in ways that were focused on source evaluation, specifically in ways that were tied to the skills that his students hone during their time in The Big History Project course. Toby saw how he was using Twitter as aligned and supportive of the objectives he had for his students. He wanted to use Twitter because he thought it had value for showing students contemporary examples of various types of claims. His students, in turn, could use the skills they had developed in his class to evaluate these claims and to participate in the conversation happening around them. In this way, Twitter met Toby's expectations; we will see in the next section how it helps him to meet his objectives.

Teacher objectives for student civic education with Twitter. Toby's objectives for using Twitter with his students for civic education were clear: it aligned well with the objectives he had for his students. When Toby began using Twitter in class and with his students about nine years ago, it began as a way of sparking discussion at the beginning of class. Over time, Toby saw Twitter as a space where his students could extend the skills they were learning in The Big History Project course and apply them to current events. To this end, Toby used Twitter primarily in three ways: as a source of discussion starters; as a medium through which students can access current events; and as a medium for information which can be used to critique the accuracy of news and information. Toby primarily used Twitter as an additional and contemporary space in which to teach students the skills of evaluation as outlined by his Big History Project class, while he used tweets as discussion prompts to introduce current events and spark discussions in class.

Initially, Toby used Twitter as a source of discussion prompts; this continues to be one of his primary methods of using Twitter with his students. Toby found posts on Twitter that he thought would spark discussion and then his students discuss them orally in class, and this seemed to function well. Additionally, Toby set up a class Twitter account, from which he posted questions for students to answer with a post on Twitter. Toby said that the students who had Twitter accounts were responsive to this method of replying to questions, but those who did not have accounts were not asked to open one, and so they were left out of this activity entirely. There was no in-class element to this activity and there was also no alternative activity offered for students who were not on Twitter; this was an activity which clearly excluded other students. However, throughout our conversation, Toby gave considerably more time and attention to the other ways in which he used Twitter in class, making it seem as though his Twitter posts for

student discussions on the platform were intended to be additional or bonus ways in which students could interact with each other and the course's content, rather than seminal projects or required coursework.

Toby used Twitter in the Big History Project class, primarily as a place where students can have access to a great deal of information which they can then analyze in class for veracity and bias. Throughout each unit of The Big History Project, students were taught to evaluate claims and identify bias in the assertions that people make. Students were taught critical thinking skills across four categories of analysis for these evaluations: whether the person offering information had the authority to make the claims s/he made; whether the student's intuition indicated to what degree the information presented was accurate; whether there was any empirical evidence supporting a person's claims; and whether the claims being made were logical. These skills were repeatedly taught and practiced throughout the units of The Big History Project course. Toby described the questions that frame his teaching of fact checking as learning to identify whether a claim could be true, the source of the information, if the source has any reason to misrepresent the truth, and if there is any reason beyond the one source to believe the claim.

Toby had another purpose in asking his students to use Twitter to practice their source evaluation skills: he wanted his students to be able to identify "fake news." Toby found that his students were lacking in awareness about current events and wanted to use Twitter to provide students with a way in which they could access news quickly and remotely. Toby hoped that the convenience of using Twitter to access news would increase his students' access and consumption of news overall.

Toby's objectives for his students were not solely for learning source evaluation or increasing news consumption; rather, Toby saw both of these activities as directly related to civic engagement. Toby saw being informed of current events as a crucial aspect of being an active member of society, and the emphasis he places on students' awareness of current events and the development of source evaluation skills were offered in support of his students becoming informed and active citizens. One of the reasons that Toby chose to use Twitter with his students is so that they could see and practice the skills that they are learning in his class in a way and in a space which they could continue to use long after they have left his class. Being an active citizen was important to Toby, which for him means being well-informed; this was why he focused so much attention on current events and source evaluation.

Although Toby felt that Twitter met his needs, there were ways in which some of his choices regarding his students' Twitter use for class did not align with the research on effective Twitter use in classrooms. For instance, Toby said that after he had posted a question to Twitter, he did not monitor the way students respond to it, and he has never interacted with students or their posts on Twitter out of a fear of legal issues developing from him interacting with students online. Choosing to use Twitter in this fashion was contrary to some of the ways in which Twitter has been shown to increase learning or engagement by having students interact with instructors on the platform, such as requiring students to use it and instructors participating on the platform with students (Junco, Elavsky, & Heiberger, 2013; Junco, Heiberger, & Loken, 2011). Toby is concerned that participating on Twitter with his students might have legal ramifications for him; this was a valid concern to consider. However, there are also ways in which the potential issues can be mediated (e.g. ensure all communications are public and can therefore be seen by anyone; get parental permission beforehand).

Alignment with proposed model. Toby's use of tweets as prompts for discussions are evidence of the first dimension of the model, that learners construct knowledge (see Chapter 2). Toby's students used tweets as a tool to spark their collaborative thinking about civics topics and issues. It was Toby's intention that his students developed a deeper understanding of current events by talking and debating in response to the initial discussion prompt. In particular, Toby wanted his students to work through their discussions to as to know how to use their prior knowledge and the current information in order to hone their abilities to evaluate sources. This combination of tweets, student prior knowledge, and student interaction allowed students to work with their peers to construct knowledge, meaning, and understanding, which aligned moderately well with the first dimension of the proposed model.

Toby's teaching did not reliably align with the second dimension of the proposed model, that learning should be social. Toby's use of tweets to jumpstart discussions was partially supportive of this dimension of the model; although the social interactions occurred offline in their classroom, Toby's students' construction of knowledge through class discussion occurred in a social space. Additionally, it is possible that Toby's students were responding to the questions he posed to them on Twitter, though the extent to which the students were doing this, and the extent to which that constituted social learning, was unknown. Overall, however, Toby's teaching did not represent a truly social experience of learning, and thus did not align with the proposed model.

Toby was concerned with the third dimension of the proposed model, that learning should be realistic. Toby's intentions for using Twitter with his students centered around developing their interest in being attentive to current events and their ability to evaluate sources; both this goal and his use of current events, terms such as "fake news," and concern over being deceived

by news or governmental sources were all realistic and relatable to Toby's students. Additionally, Toby connected the topics and skills from The Big History Project with evaluating sources and claims from current events, connecting what students were learning in class with what was happening in the world around them. In this way, Toby's teaching aligned well with the third dimension of the proposed model.

Overall, Toby's teaching of civics with Twitter aligned to a moderate degree with the proposed model, although this alignment was centered around Toby's use of current events and source evaluation. For Toby, a critical aspect of civic development and education was being well informed, being able to judge for oneself the truthfulness of a claim, and being able to speak about current events, community issues, and political topics with knowledge and confidence. The process by which he guides students to be able to do this was somewhat constructive and realistic. While Toby's students interacted through in-class debate, and may have interacted on Twitter, it was difficult to assess the degree to which Toby's teaching was explicitly social in nature. Thus, Toby's teaching moderately aligned with the proposed model of constructivist teaching of civics with Twitter.

Overall reflections. Though his style of teaching with Twitter initially seemed rather laissez-faire, Toby's use of Twitter was thoughtful. Toby's use of Twitter was tightly focused on helping his students to pay attention to current events and to learn how to assess information so that they are aware of what is happening and can act appropriately based on real information. He saw this as important and tied to civic participation. Toby believed that it Twitter helpful, useful, and beneficial to his students. The value of Toby's inclusion in this study was not for the creative or varied ways in which he uses Twitter, or even in the connections made between his teaching and prior theory or research on civic engagement or education. The value of Toby's story is in

the great variability of successful teaching and learning, and as an example that teaching with technology can happen in small ways that are effective, useful, and meaningful. While each of these participants individually provided considerable insight into the experiences of high school teachers use of Twitter for civic education, four common themes emerged across multiple participants' experiences. These common themes are explored in the next section.

Chapter Five: Prompt & Process

Findings

Following the analysis of each teacher's case, the teacher-cases were collectively examined for common themes (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Although each of the participants in this study had a unique combination of background, context, and experiences, in listening to their stories, four common themes emerged related to my research questions across the five teachers: Prompt and Process of Using Twitter; The Relevance of Twitter; (Digital) Citizenship; and Student Worth. In the sections below, the first two of these common themes are discussed, which explore how teachers initially came to use Twitter as well as why they continue to use it over other social media platforms which are more frequently used by their students. Two additional themes are explored in the following chapter.

Abbey was introduced to Twitter by the person leading a training through a technology readiness initiative, in which Abbey's school took part. The training was related to integrating technology in the classroom generally, but one of the trainers "was a really heavy Twitter user" who showed the teachers attending the training how to use Twitter and how it could be used with students. Abbey said that the trainer showed those attending the training a variety of ways in which Twitter could be used in the classroom, and that training was when Abbey "got into using

Scaffolders: The Right Tool at the Right Time

In this study, I inquired: *what was the initial prompt that caused teachers to think about wanting to use Twitter in their classrooms? (RQ1a)*. Each of the teachers in this study were scaffolded into their use of Twitter, though this happened differently across the five cases. In four out of five cases, teachers were prompted to use Twitter in their classrooms because they had been introduced to Twitter by an influential peer, though there is variation in this

commonness that is representative of the complexity of coming to use Twitter for civic education. The influential peer appeared differently in each case: a technology trainer; a colleague; connections during graduate school; and in the case of Sam, his own interest. Most of the teachers approached Twitter in the context of how it could be used in the classroom (rather than as a personal social media tool), though again, here, their intentions and experiences varied.

A common experience for the teachers was that their introduction to Twitter occurred *after* the teachers had objectives for their students in mind. This enabled the teachers to connect the potential uses of Twitter for education generally with some of the specific objectives they had for their students. As a result, they constructed their own knowledge about how Twitter could be useful for civic education, often with the help of slightly more capable peers. [Twitter], just seeing how effective it can be." The trainer connected Twitter to three of Abbey's objectives for students: it provided access to people who hold a range of opinions; it connected users to what is going on in the country; and it provided users with access to political decision-makers in real-time. Abbey uses Twitter with her students because it helps her to achieve these objectives; she connects Twitter to the way she exercises her civic responsibilities, and so she ascribes to it considerable importance and value for civic education.

Josh was also introduced to Twitter through a personal connection, although in his case it was a colleague in another department at the school in which they were both teaching. Josh had been interested in using social media generally during his teacher education program in college, but he did not have specific uses in mind for it. Upon starting his teaching career, Josh began to value pedagogies which would develop student-teacher relationships because he saw the benefits of these relationships to his students and to their learning in class. Around the same time, Josh met a teacher in the English department at his school, who was already a frequent Twitter user.

This colleague said that he used Twitter with his class particularly for the purpose of building community with his students. This rationale resonated with Josh, who started to try Twitter with his own students. Josh continues to find value in using Twitter to build community among his students, their parents, and the broader Waterloo community, whether through tweeting about their sports accomplishments, their in-class work, or in connecting his school's Gay-Straight Alliance with other GSAs in Iowa.

Matt also came to use Twitter through a personal connection, although Matt's initial objectives, that Twitter helped him to meet, were not for his students but for himself. Talking to his friend who was already using Twitter for education caused Matt to want to explore using Twitter to develop a professional learning network. As soon as Matt started using Twitter, he got connected to other social studies teachers, and with them he developed #SSChat, an online community which continues to exist. Within this community, Matt started crowdsourcing lessons, using Google Docs to share resources and collaborate on lesson plans. Through this process of developing lessons with other teachers, Matt realized that he wanted to have his students connect to others as he had been able to do, and so he began connecting his students with the students of some of his collaborators. One of the fruits of these collaborations was that Matt began to use Twitter with his students for civic education. Even though Matt's initial objectives were for himself and not for his students, his initial prompt to use Twitter was a personal connection that related to his objectives.

Toby's introduction to Twitter came at the intersection of two events: his classes for his Master's program and his school's transition to providing every student with their own laptop computer. Toby explained that he did not decide to use Twitter because his school was improving the computer access for its students, but that change, combined with the discussions

he was having in his educational Master's program, prompted him to want to try using Twitter with his students. At the time, one of Toby's objectives for his students was to spark discussion among them, and the conversations he was having in his Master's program combined with his students' increased access to the internet made him think that Twitter might provide a way in which he could start discussions in class. Although this connection is more about Toby making sense of conversations with peers in his Master's program rather than a specific invitation to Twitter from friend, it is still an example of how Twitter appeared to be the right tool introduced at the right time for Toby.

Sam's use of Twitter with his students resulted from his choice to use it personally; he thought the features that were unique to Twitter could be useful or interesting in his teaching of civics. Thus, Sam was self-scaffolded into his use of Twitter; although his introduction to the platform did not come via an influential peer, he was still prompted to use Twitter and scaffolded his use of the platform for his classroom himself. Sam did not discuss how long he was using Twitter personally before using it with his students, but it is clear that over time Sam found that Twitter had potential for use in the teaching of civics.

Summary. Teachers were scaffolded into their use of Twitter, whether introduced by a peer, or through peer-to-peer conversations in a professional development or graduate school context, or through their own initiative, as a tool which could be used in the classroom, and this introduction came at a time when the teachers had already done some thinking about what they wanted their students to be able to know and do. Thus, teachers were introduced to Twitter as a tool which could meet objectives they had identified for their students.

The Relevance of Twitter

My second research question asked: *after the initial prompt to use Twitter, what was the*

teacher's process of choosing to use Twitter in civic education? (RQ1b). A common process

across the teachers was that their consideration of how Twitter, with its specific affordances,

compared to other social media platform options, and its relevance to or use by students. Again,

there was variability in the commonness of this experience. Collectively, teachers identified three

unique features or affordances of Twitter --- namely, ***that Twitter has the ability to connect with***

people outside of the classroom (Gao et al., 2012); that ***Twitter allows topics from outside of the***

class to be brought into class in real time (Gao et al., 2012); and ***that Twitter is inherently***

participatory -- that seemed to match their goals or concerns in teaching civics.

Considerations of students and social media. For instance, three of the five participants

in this study: Abbey, Josh, and Sam, mentioned the relevance of Twitter to students given the

many other platforms that occupy the social media landscape. The focus of the participants'

discussion of Twitter and other social media platforms was centered on how often students used

Twitter compared to other platforms, and to what degree Twitter was relevant for learning. These

teachers brought up other social network sites without prompting, comparing other platforms

generally or specifically with Twitter. In each case, the teacher brought up other social media

platforms as a way of offering evidence in support of his or her use of Twitter over other options.

These comparisons with other platforms were also a way in which the teachers could explain that

they used Twitter in their classes for civic education because of the unique features or

affordances that Twitter could provide but which other considered platforms lacked: 1) the

ability to connect with people outside of the classroom; 2) the ability to include topics from

outside of class into the classroom in real time; and 3) the participatory nature of Twitter.

Of the three participants who mentioned other social media platforms by name, both

Abbey and Josh discussed the fact that their students used other social media platforms more

frequently than they use Twitter. Abbey noted that some of the students "see Twitter as being something old, kind of like the previous group of kids were like, 'oh, Facebook? That's for old people….my mom's on Facebook.'" Similarly, Josh mentioned that Twitter is not always the social media platform of choice, particularly given that social media as a whole is "such a changing landscape." Similarly, Josh noted that students use Snapchat and Instagram more often than Twitter, and his use of Twitter has caused some friction in class because for some class activities his students prefer other platforms or technologies. Neither Josh nor Abbey were deterred from using Twitter in class for civic education, however, because of their own interest in the platform and because it serves their purposes well.

All three who mentioned other social media platforms mentioned Snapchat because of its popularity among their students (Pew supports these teachers' perceptions that Snapchat is more popular among teens (ages 12-17) than is Twitter; Pew, 2018b). However, both Abbey and Josh noted that they have been unable to develop educational uses for Snapchat. Abbey observed that her students were on Snapchat, but she said that she had not been "able to adapt around that with the way I was using [Twitter]." In other words, the ways in which Abbey wanted to and did use Twitter with her class -- following the accounts of government officials, following hashtags, following news stories -- were incompatible with the affordances of Snapchat. Similarly, Josh said that he had yet to find educational uses for Snapchat. In short, the features of Snapchat do not align with the civic education objectives for the teachers in this study, although it did seem as though Abbey, Josh, and Matt would be open to using Snapchat if it better aligned with their objectives in the future. Moreover, teachers did consider their students' technology uses and preferences but did not uncritically adopt these technologies in their teaching.

The third social media platform, mentioned by Josh and Sam, was Instagram. Josh was the only participant who had used Instagram in class; he used Instagram as a way of demonstrating primary and secondary sources, which he also did on Twitter. However, he did not want to have a class Instagram account because he did not see the usefulness of posting pictures for prompting discussion, sharing news stories, or following current events. (Josh did not specify whether Instagram might be useful for connecting his students with the students in the other high school in his district.) Sam perceived that his students saw Instagram as a repository for gossip, and this seemed to dissuade him from wanting to use it in his classes.

Identified affordances of Twitter for civics. Although teachers provided arguments against using other social media platforms in their classes, these served mainly to support their rationales for using Twitter with their students. Each of these three teachers made the case that not only are there reasons to avoid using other platforms such as Facebook, Snapchat, and Instagram, there are reasons to choose Twitter in class for its specific affordances tied to teaching civics. First, Twitter provided *access to people outside of the classroom*, which was particularly important to Abbey, Josh, Sam, and Matt, who emphasized using Twitter to connect with students, parents, public officials, and others outside of the classroom. Twitter represents a way for Abbey and Josh to expose their students to the world outside of their isolated area. It provided a way for all of the teachers to provide a realistic and viable means through which their students could communicate their opinions to political leaders. Second, the majority of teachers (Abbey, Josh, Matt, and Toby) valued being able to see and share *news stories and current events in real-time*, an affordance of Twitter which is not available through Snapchat or Instagram. Twitter afforded a place where Abbey, Josh, Toby, and Sam could expose their students to current events and "fake news," which could then be critically evaluated.

Third, the teachers saw Twitter as *inherently participatory* and student participation on Twitter was important to Abbey, Josh, Matt, and Sam. Twitter afforded a place through which all students could be treated as equals, regardless of any real or perceived boundaries; because Twitter is public, they could view and contribute content without requiring previous expertise in using Twitter or sophisticated technical skills. Thus, Twitter was relevant (or irrelevant) not mainly because of its degree of popularity among their students; rather, Twitter was relevant because it helped teachers to meet their objectives for student learning.

Summary. Overall, what is clear from the conversations with these teachers is that Twitter was not chosen as the social media platform to use for civic education because most of a teacher's students were already using it. Of the five participants, only Matt reported that a majority of his students were already Twitter users prior to the introduction of the platform in class, and no teachers said that their rationale for using Twitter was a perception that students were already using it. In contrast, three of the five teachers in this study explained that they chose to use Twitter over social media alternatives because they thought that Twitter provided a space for their students to connect and relate to other students, their parents, specific groups, and the larger community. In short, the teachers in this study did not choose to use Twitter in their teaching of civics because students were using it already or because they perceived it to be popular; rather, Twitter provided a way to foster connections, real-time access to current events, and student participation in their learning, and this made it the relevant platform to use.

Chapter Six:

Rethinking Objectives & Divergences: Stories of Connection, Civics, And Social Media

Findings

This chapter continues the analysis of the cross-case themes which emerged from the analysis across the teacher-cases. In the sections below, the remaining two common themes, (Digital) Citizenship and Student Worth, are discussed. These themes explore how teachers conceive of and teach citizenship and how that impacts their teaching of civics in a social media space. Additionally, the teachers in this study were concerned about their students' self-worth, and viewed this as having an impact on their students' civic education. The use of Twitter as a space for increasing student worth is discussed below.

(Digital) Citizenship

In this study, my third focus of inquiry was: *what are the teachers' objectives for students' civic learning? (RQ1c).* A common objective across all five of the teachers was teaching citizenship. Each of the five participants for this study spoke about *citizenship* as a focus of their teaching, often speaking about how citizenship was understood and practiced in both online and offline spaces. While only some of the teachers specifically used the term *digital citizenship*, each of the teachers discussed aspects of citizenship in online spaces. This section will provide a brief synthesis of how the teachers in this study conceived of citizenship and how their teaching of citizenship aligned with their objectives. Following this synthesis, I will connect the teachers' understanding of citizenship with the literature on digital citizenship.

As was mentioned briefly in the case study of Josh in Chapter 4, there are two definitions of *digital citizenship* in the literature. The first, put forth by Ribble, Bailey, and Ross (2004) defined digital citizenship as the standards of behavior expected during the use of technology. To

further explain these standards of behavior, Ribble et al. (2004) identified nine categories of behaviors that play a role in digital citizenship: 1) *etiquette,* or online standards of behavior; 2) *communication,* or online exchange of ideas and knowledge; 3) *education,* or teaching and learning about technology and its uses; 4) *access,* or unlimited online participation by members of society; 5) *commerce,* or buying and selling in online spaces; 6) *responsibility,* or taking responsibility for actions; 7) *rights,* or freedoms and protections granted to everyone in an online space; 8) *safety,* or physical safety in online environments; and 9) *security,* or online strategies to protect people and data. This understanding of digital citizenship is focused on behaviors, in contrast to the one offered by Mossberger, Tolbert, and McNeal (2004), who understand digital citizenship as "the ability to participate in society online" (p. 1). Both of these definitions are important in understanding how the participants in this study understand the term "digital citizenship" and what relevance it has to their teaching of civics.

Broadly, the teachers in this study thought of citizenship as informed participation in society. Specifically, the teachers' objectives for teaching citizenship within civics education encompassed four of the nine dimensions: 1) **safety**; 2) **etiquette**; 3) **communication**; and 4) **access**. For instance, two of the teachers in this study, Abbey and Toby, thought about *safety* in relation to citizenship; Abbey taught her students about how they could be deceived, while Toby spoke about appropriate boundaries between adults and minors. Three of the teachers, Abbey, Josh, and Sam, spoke about *etiquette* as a component of citizenship, by which they meant how students behaved towards others online; this was reflected in their teaching their students how to behave appropriately, such as teaching students how to write to political leaders. Four of the teachers thought that *communication* was an aspect of citizenship, whether reaching out to political leaders (Abbey, Sam, and Matt) or reaching out to other people in the community

(Abbey, Josh, Sam, and Matt). All of the teachers thought that *access* was an aspect of communication, whether access to political leaders (Abbey, Sam, and Matt); access to accurate information (Abbey, Josh, Matt, and Toby); or access to their community (Abbey, Josh, Sam, and Matt). Although these two definitions of *digital citizenship* do not explicitly take into account a person's need to be a well-informed citizen, for most of the teachers in this study, accurate knowledge was also key to civic participation, and thus, to citizenship.

Moreover, each of the teachers saw these aspects of citizenship in both online and offline spaces as fluid, rather than conceiving of offline citizenship and digital citizenship differently. For instance, Matt thought that the distinction between digital citizenship and offline citizenship was non-existent; he also felt that speaking about digital citizenship detracted from seeing that citizenship takes place concurrently in online and offline spaces and that the same people can be engaging in civic actions on and offline. Further, using the term *digital citizenship* allows people to minimize, discount, or dismiss entirely civic engagement that happens online, which Matt felt was limiting and neglectful.

Similarly, Josh did not value distinctions between the places where citizenship occurs. As was discussed in Josh's case study in chapter 3, *digital citizenship* was a concept Josh thought about in relation to his teaching of civics, but, unlike Matt, he clearly made a distinction between expectations for online student behavior and his understanding of citizenship. Josh feared that his students would not behave online in ways that aligned with the behaviors identified by Ribble, Bailey, and Ross (2004); Matt believed that his students would act appropriately online. However, Josh's understanding of citizenship was broad, encompassing a variety of civic actions, and his expectations of student behavior in online spaces mirrored similar expectations he has for his students in offline spaces. Additionally, all of Josh's examples of civic actions

could or did occur offline: donating to a food bank, starting a recycling program, belonging to a GSA, or contacting political leaders. Josh also liked to post news stories to his Twitter feed on the weekend, so that kids were thinking about history and connections even when they were not in class, another way in which Josh saw citizenship as happening, and moving between, online and offline spaces.

Abbey also did not see a distinction between online and offline citizenship. Abbey's primary concern was that her students were civically active, and her use of Twitter to encourage this was intended to provide her students with another tool which could help them to more easily and more expansively participate in civic life. Abbey saw both the possibilities of civic engagement on Twitter, particularly with elected officials who could be reached quickly through the platform, and also as a tool which broke down the barriers of physical isolation that existed for her students because of their geographic location. Abbey did not use Twitter in class because she thought citizenship existed online differently than it did offline; it was not intended to replace other civic behaviors. Rather, Abbey's use of Twitter in class was grounded in increasing civic participation by adding to the ways in which students could be effectively involved in civic life. For Abbey, participation in civic life was not an option, and so she worked diligently to both convince her students of its importance and their importance to society while also equipping them with the tools to be effectively civically engaged.

Sam also saw Twitter as a tool which can increase his students' civic engagement. For Sam, Twitter was one space in which one could follow and participate in political conversation, and which, particularly during increased periods of political awareness and excitement, could help students to take a greater interest in civics. As Abbey was driven in her Twitter use by the geographic isolation of her students, Sam was driven by his belief that he needs to prepare his

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students for adulthood. Again, in a way similar to Abbey, Sam saw Twitter as an efficient platform for connecting students to the wider society and as an effective tool through which they can communicate to elected representatives and others in order to advocate for themselves or others. Sam saw Twitter as a tool which increases civic engagement and participation, as a way of participating in society but not at the exclusion of other ways of doing so.

This was also true for Toby, who believes citizenship as it exists on Twitter is not divorced from citizenship that exists offline. Toby's intentions for using Twitter with his students centered around developing their interest in being attentive to current events and their ability to know when they are watching "fake news" or being deceived by news or governmental sources. Toby wanted his students to trust their ability to gauge information, which was a skill applicable to both legacy and online news sources. For Toby, this was one of the additional benefits of using Twitter for civic education. Toby wanted his students to be attentive to current events and to be able to evaluate whether information that they come across, on social media, legacy media, or through other sources, is accurate. In teaching his students to evaluate claims and to identify "fake news" from real news, he thought that using Twitter would provide a more accessible medium through which they can see information about current events. Toby saw this as a lifelong skill; he hoped that his students would continue to use Twitter, continue to follow the news, and continue to think about the source and possible bias in sharing information. Distinguishing digital citizenship from other types of citizenship was not helpful for Toby in his teaching of civics.

This finding -- that these teachers did not see real distinctions between digital and traditional citizenship -- calls into question the usefulness of the framework developed by Bennett and his colleagues (Bennett, 2008; Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009; Bennett, Freelon, &

Wells, 2010; Bennett, Freelon, Hussain, & Wells, 2012). As mentioned in Chapter 1, Bennett and his colleagues theorized two types of citizenship, termed "Dutiful" and "Actualizing" (Bennett, 2008; Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009; Bennett, Freelon, & Wells, 2010; Bennett, Freelon, Hussain, & Wells, 2012). *Dutiful styles* of citizenship view civic participation as a *duty or responsibility* and respond to that responsibility through conventional civic actions such as: participation in a political party or civic organizations, writing letters to elected officials and to the editors of newspapers, and voting. In contrast, *Actualizing Citizenship* stems from a belief that civic participation is a citizen's *personal* contribution to society, and corresponding actions could include participation in marches, protests, boycotts or online movements such as #ArabSpring, #MeToo, and #BlackLivesMatter movements, and voting. Bennett and his colleagues theorized that many youth today have an "Actualizing Citizenship" style; thus, while traditional measures of civic engagement show low rates of youth participation, they argued that young people are actually engaging in civic action in other ways, especially through the internet and social media, that are more representative of an "Actualizing Citizenship" style. (For a further exploration of Bennett's framework, please see Chapter 1 above).

Based on this study of teachers' use of Twitter for civic education, all of the participants strived to attend to elements of both *Actualizing* and *Dutiful Citizenship* perspectives. Each of the teachers did not recognize the clear distinctions of the *Actualizing* and *Dutiful Citizenship* model: they attended to some elements of each perspective, ignored other elements of each perspective, and in some cases blended some of the elements of both perspectives. For instance, each of the participants encouraged personal civic participation, an element of *Actualizing Citizenship*, but they did not encourage students to participate in boycotts, marches or protests, another element of *Actualizing Citizenship.* The most common specific action that these teachers were trying to

promote was for their students to reach out to government officials, which is an element of *Dutiful Citizenship*. One of the ways in which teachers blended elements of *Actualizing* and *Dutiful Citizenship* was in their use of current events, using online sources of news for debate and discussion. As noted in Chapter 1, an element of *Actualizing Citizenship* is the co-creation of information via sharing news over social media; an element of *Dutiful Citizenship* is the use of legacy news sources for information. Teachers in this study wanted their students to connect to online news sources or to find current events and news on Twitter, but they asked their students to share those stories or information through in-class discussion, rather than online. For instance, Matt's specific attention to the #ArabSpring hashtag or Josh's attention to the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag were not to ask students to participate in those streams but rather to help students to learn what was happening and to connect current events to the history that they were studying in class.

Further, the participants of this study are also focused on meeting students where they are. These participants viewed Twitter as an effective tool for civic engagement and a wide variety of forms of civic participation, primarily for its ability to contact public figures and government officials; its ability to sustain interactions with peers, parents, members of the community, and political leaders; and its access to current events in real-time. None of these participants was teaching his or her students that civic participation occurred only in online spaces, and none discounted any of the behaviors Bennett and his colleagues ascribed to *Dutiful* Citizenship. In fact, because of these teachers' use of elements from both perspectives as well as instances of blending elements from both perspectives, it is easy to see how these teachers would equally support students who held *Dutiful* and *Actualizing Citizenship* perspectives (Bennett,

2008; Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009; Bennett, Freelon, & Wells, 2010; Bennett, Freelon, Hussain, & Wells, 2012).

Overall, the participants in this study do not see in practice the distinction theorized by Bennett and his colleagues between *Dutiful* and *Actualizing Citizenship.* This framework did not capture the hybrid nature of the way in which these teachers are teaching, nor did it seem to attend to the many variables at play for their students based on those students' contexts. These teachers do not use Twitter mainly because their students are already using it, or because their students are actively civically engaged online, or because they want to encourage only personal or online civic participation. Rather, they used it because Twitter provided ways to reduce isolation, break down barriers of communication, and to connect to people and current events in real time.

Although each of the participants in this study believed that they need to teach their students at least some of the behaviors associated with Ribble, Bailey, and Ross's (2004) definition of digital citizenship, the participants did not see those behaviors as falling solely under the purview of digital citizenship; they conceived of digital citizenship as resembling citizenship in offline spaces, to the point where Matt thought that the term *digital citizenship* offered a false dichotomy between the ways people practice citizenship in online and offline spaces.

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Student Worth

As mentioned above, and in answer to my third research question, citizenship was a common objective across all five teachers. Although "student worth" may not be characterized as or fit the language of educational objectives, for four of the five teachers in this study, it was a critical component of their teaching of civics. Civic engagement is often spoken about in the literature as consisting of rights and responsibilities, and, as stated earlier in my literature review, a component of civic engagement is *civic attachment*, the feeling or belief that an *individual matters* to the group (Flanagan, 2004; Flanagan & Faison, 2001). Part of civic education, therefore, is teaching students that their participation in society is meaningful and matters. In this study, four of the five participants approached civic education, or education more broadly, from the perspective of teaching their students that they had not only a *responsibility* but also a *right* to participate in civic life.

For instance, it was clear that Abbey valued her students; the ways in which Abbey taught was grounded in this appreciation of who her students were. Abbey felt that her students were limited based on their geographic isolation, whether because those who grew up there tended to remain there into adulthood; because historically students had not thought broadly

about future vocational choices; or because people from Abbey's area were easily ignored by elected officials. In mentioning each of these, Abbey also spoke about wanting to teach students in ways that gave them options to overcome these limitations. Abbey spoke about civic participation as a way for the students in her isolated area to reach beyond geographical boundaries and participate in the wider world. Throughout our conversation, Abbey focused her attempts to increase her students' civic engagement through the lens of how that engagement could show her students that they were important beyond their local community. This view also privileged the use of Twitter for Abbey: by using Twitter for civic engagement, her students were able to connect with and impact the world beyond their town. Finally, well beyond the value of civic participation was the value of the students themselves: Abbey wanted her students to know that they have worth and importance beyond any boundaries that exist because of where they live or who they are.

Josh also modeled being an advocate for those who are marginalized: much of our conversation focused on people in his community who needed help in seeing themselves as equal members of the community. Josh saw fostering relationships between students as a significant part of this advocacy, whether by bringing students together across his community in ways which are difficult, given the way the districts have been drawn, or helping students in the school's gay-straight alliance to connect with other similar groups at other schools. Josh's reasons and expectations for using Twitter in class were fostering these connections, between himself and his students, and between his students and other members of the community. Josh saw this relationship-building as the foundation of being an effective teacher. Whether it was the gay-straight alliance using Twitter to keep up with members of other GSAs around Iowa or African-American students seeing a white teacher make connections between Martin Luther

King, race riots, Ferguson, and the #BlackLivesMatter movement, Josh advocated for the inclusion of all people into the community. Across all of these examples, Josh's intent was to make students who felt ostracized or separated feel included, valued, and important, not only through school programs but also through supportive relationships with teachers. Josh wanted his students to understand what they were learning, make connections, and feel supported. For Josh, being in relationship with others; advocating for those who are marginalized; including a plurality of voices into the conversation; and learning how to understand information in order to make well-informed opinions were all ways in which to engage civically.

Matt also saw teaching as at the service of helping his students to see themselves as citizens who needed to participate in the life of their community, and that they were already capable of doing this. The processes through which they created, shared, received feedback, and revised their work was the method through which Matt taught them both to that what they think and produce is worthwhile, and because of that, they needed to be active members of society.

In many instances, Sam spoke about his hopes and concerns for his students in the same way as some of the other participants in this study, but in Sam's case, the meaning of those words was different because of the vastly different context in which Sam taught. A primary objective for Sam as a teacher was to prepare his students for adulthood, and he saw his students' civic engagement as a way that his students could be productive adults. Similar to Abbey, Sam used Twitter to help them to understand how this might be possible for his students. Like Abbey, Josh, and Matt, Sam wanted his students to feel like they matter: he wanted them to make a difference and to believe that they could and should reach out political officials and other leaders and expect a response. Unlike the other participants in this study, Sam and his students were not marginalized, and so it is easy to believe that there was no inherent deficit which they need to

overcome in order to be heard or feel included or respected. However, while Sam's students may have had have significant advantages that the students of the other participants do not enjoy, Sam's students may have needed just as much convincing as any other students that they had worth. Further, the sincerity of Sam's beliefs about the value his students had was genuine.

Overall, it was clear that all but one of these teachers were focused on helping his or her students to feel that their ideas and work were worthy of respect and attention, that each of them mattered to the group (society) as individuals. Abbey, Josh, Sam, and Matt each taught their students that the students' opinions and work had value, going to great lengths to not only communicate this value to the students themselves but also to the wider community. Additionally, these teachers felt that it was an important part of their role to convince their students that they could and should participate in civic life because their opinions and work mattered. Finally, each of these saw Twitter as a way to both share and validate student work. They believed by sharing student work or student ideas via Twitter, students could feel connected to and validated by others.

Alignment with Constructivist Civics Teaching with Twitter

In this study, my fourth focus of inquiry was: *given what teachers experience when teaching civics with Twitter, what models do these experiences align with? To what extent are these experiences aligned or not aligned with the model of constructivist civics education with Twitter? (RQ1d).* Each teacher's case was compared against the three dimensions of the model for constructivist civics teaching that I introduced in chapter 2: that *learners construct knowledge*; that *learning should be social*; and that *learning should be realistic* (see Table 4 in Chapter 2 for the full model). As mentioned in chapter two, over a decade of research on how people learn has suggested that the most promising environments for learning are those where

learners construct their own knowledge, learning occurs in a social environment, and learning environments should be realistic (Vygotsky, 1978; Spiro & Jehng, 1990). Research on civics education has similarly recommended that civics teaching use participatory pedagogies that help students to evaluate sources (Niemi & Chapman, 1999; Torney-Purta et al., 1999; Torney-Purta et al., 2001; Gibson & Levine, 2003; Kahne & Middaugh, 2008; Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009); that schools should be open and students should be involved in the community (Hahn, 1999); and teachers should use specific and relatable contexts (Gibson & Levine, 2003; Niemi & Junn, 2005; Pasek, Feldman, Romer, & Jamieson, 2008; Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 1996; Hess & Posselt, 2002; Syvertsen, et al., 2007). Moreover, Twitter's affordances (e.g. users interact with tweets of their own construction and those of others; Twitter is a social environment in which users encounter peers and experts; and Twitter provides access to information in real-time) seemed particularly synergistic with these themes. Thus, I theorized that these Twitter-using teachers would embrace the social media to enact constructivist-oriented civics education. Overall, I found that teachers varied in how well (or not well) their reported practices aligned with this model for constructivist civics teaching with Twitter; two of the five teachers aligned strongly with the model, two others aligned moderately well, and one aligned poorly with it. The degree to which each teacher aligned with each dimension of the model can be seen below in Table 5.

	High	Medium	Low
Learners construct knowledge.	Abbey and Matt included unpopular or minority opinions so that students would construct their own beliefs. Toby's students learned source evaluation by evaluating information on Twitter and comparing it to their learning through the Big History Project.	Josh intended for his white students to use Twitter to connect with their black peers in another school to develop an understanding of each other, but this did not come to fruition.	Sam choreographed his students' use of Twitter because he did not trust them to use it independently.
Learning should be social.	Abbey's students tweeted to the community and government officials. Matt invited peers from other schools, parents, and other community members to virtually participate in class.	Josh intended for his students to interact with peers via Twitter. This was effective with his GSA; it was not effective with his history students connecting to their counterparts at the other district high school.	Sam's students used a class Twitter account at Sam's direction, which limited their ability to interact with others. Toby used tweets offline and in-class; Toby's only use of Twitter that was social was optional and unassessed.
Learning should be realistic.	Abbey taught students to tweet at politicians while they were preparing to vote for maximum effect. Matt asked students to interact with people who were living through history-making events. Toby used current events to teach source evaluation.	Josh's intention was to foster real and meaningful relationships between his students and the students at the other district high school, but this has not happened. Sam's intention of teaching students to contact government officials to prepare them for adulthood was realistic, but it was limited by how he told students to whom to tweet.	

Table 5. Teachers' alignment with constructivist civics teaching with Twitter.

Abbey and Matt's experiences of teaching civics with Twitter aligned strongly with all three dimensions of the proposed model. Both Abbey and Matt used Twitter to include a multiplicity of voices in their classrooms for the purposes of presenting as many opinions as possible; this social space gave their students the ability to construct their own understanding of

civics topics. Both Abbey and Matt also aligned well with the third dimension of the model, that learning should be realistic; for example, Abbey taught her students to tweet at government officials when votes were happening as a way of best influencing them, while Matt had his students engage with people who were living through history-making events. Overall, both Abbey and Matt aligned strongly with the proposed model of constructivist civics teaching with Twitter.

The experiences of Josh and Toby of teaching civics with Twitter aligned moderately well with the proposed model; in both cases, their reported practices resonated better with certain aspects of the model than with others, especially when their intentions were not realized. For example, Josh wanted to use Twitter as a way of bridging the racial divide between students from the two high schools in his district, an intention which is social, constructive, and realistic. Josh's barriers to meeting this goal were not because of the limitations of Twitter or a lack of desire to foster these connections; rather, Josh had to navigate long-held racial tensions, which was taking time. Thus, Josh's *intended* use of Twitter in the teaching of civic education seemed to align with the model, but his actual teaching practice did not. Similarly, Toby's focus on teaching source evaluation through Twitter aligned well with the first and third dimensions of the model, that learning is constructed and realistic; his intent was that his students would construct an understanding of how to identify and use accurate information through realistic activities like debating current events. However, Toby's use of Twitter did not emphasize the social aspect of learning, as tweets were used offline and in-class, and his use of Twitter to pose questions to students was optional and unassessed, and thus did not contribute to the social experience of learning. In short, both Josh and Toby's experiences of teaching civics with Twitter aligned moderately well with the proposed model.

Of the teachers in this study, only Sam's case aligned poorly with the proposed model. Sam's teaching did not align with the first dimension of the model, that learners construct knowledge. He was upfront about his distrust of his students' use of Twitter, and he did not want them to have a great deal of freedom with the platform because he did not think they were mature enough to handle it. Sam's use of a class Twitter account combined with the prescribed way in which he asked his students to use Twitter (telling them to whom to tweet and with what message) were social in that students were interacting with others, but the lack of freedom to explore unscripted interactions limited the social aspect of their learning considerably. Similarly, Sam's use of current events and his intentions of teaching students how to contact government officials were realistic; this was the only dimension of the model with which Sam aligned moderately well.

In summary, teachers varied with respect to their degree of alignment with my initial model of constructivist civics teaching with Twitter. As can be seen in Table 5, the teachers' experiences of teaching civics with Twitter best aligned with the third dimension of the model, that learning should be realistic. Each of the teachers sought to make their teaching realistic; three of them did this well while two others intended for their teaching to be realistic but were unable to match their own expectations. Although this third dimension of the model was the best aligned with the experiences of the teachers in this study, overall the model of teaching civics with Twitter aligned at least moderately well to the majority of teachers' experiences. Therefore, the proposed model of constructivist teaching of civics with Twitter identifies the components of the experiences of teachers who are using Twitter to teach civics.

Chapter Seven:

Discussion, Implications, Limitations, & Conclusions

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine high school social studies teachers' use of the social media platform Twitter in order to understand how a teacher's context, objectives, and experience factored into their reasons and practices of using Twitter to teach civics. The five teachers who participated in this study came from different contexts, had different objectives, and dealt with different issues, but taken together, their experiences provided a vibrant picture of teaching civics with Twitter. Further, these teachers' experiences were compared to a proposed model of constructivist teaching of civics with Twitter, which was derived from my prior review of relevant research and theory, in an effort to understand theory-to-practice connections, and vice versa.

The analysis of these cases revealed four common themes: the importance of teachers' initial prompts to use Twitter and process of incorporating it into their teaching; the relevance of Twitter to high school civic education; the teachers' objective of teaching citizenship both online and offline; and the use of Twitter to reflect student worth. In the next sections I reflect on my findings in light of the review of relevant research and theory presented in Chapters 1 and 2. Specifically, I discuss several areas in the knowledge base related to civics, social media, and education that these findings illuminate, such as prior understandings of civic education; current thinking on social media in education; and the intersections between content, pedagogy and technology that these teacher cases bring to the foreground. Following the exploration of these findings, I discuss the implications of this study for theory, research, and practice. The final

section of this chapter discusses the limitations of this study, which should be considered for future research.

Revisiting Effective Civic Education Methods

As previously discussed in Chapter 2, civic education is measured across three competencies: civic *knowledge*, civic *skills*, and civic *action* (Gould et al., 2011). The most effective methods for teaching civic knowledge have been shown to be participatory, in which students created discussion, held debates, or engaged in interactive experiences (Niemi & Chapman, 1999; Torney-Purta, Schwille, & Amadeo, 1999; Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001; Gibson & Levine, 2003; Kahne & Middaugh, 2008). Civic skills, such as the ability to evaluate sources and debating issues, were best learned through specific and relatable contexts that students understood and the use of current events in class (Gibson & Levine, 2003; Niemi & Junn, 2005; Pasek, Feldman, Romer, & Jamieson, 2008; Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 1996; Hess & Posselt, 2002; Syvertsen, et al., 2007). Finally, civic action was best learned through involvement in the community (Niemi & Chapman, 1999; Torney-Purta, et al., 1999; Torney-Purta et al., 2001; Gibson & Levine, 2003; Kahne & Middaugh, 2008).

Teachers in this study reported engaging in some of these methods deemed effective for teaching civics, specifically participatory activities such as discussions, practicing source evaluation through specific and relatable contexts, and the use of current events, while others remained elusive. Teachers focused on these methods particularly because they were concerned with ways in which students could participate in civic life immediately so as to develop skills that could be used throughout life. Additionally, teachers were attentive to using teaching methods which would support students' effective civic engagement, as a way of increasing interest that could be sustained over a lifetime.

Considering Social Media in K-12 Education

This study's findings also contribute to the knowledge base about teaching with social media in K-12 education generally, and in secondary civics education specifically, both of which are under-explored terrain in the current social media in education literature (Greenhow & Askari, 2017; Greenhow, Galvin, Brandon & Askari, under review; Manca & Ranieri, 2016; 2013). Moreover, Gao et al. (2012) reviewed the educational research on how and why educators use Twitter specifically and categorized their findings into four dimensions of learning with Twitter: who participates in learning; when learning happens; what is learned; and how learning happens. This study aligns with Gao et al.'s conclusions: 1) that Twitter expands the pool of learners and instructors; 2) expands learning content; and 3) fosters interactive learning.

First, Gao et al. (2012) argue that Twitter expands the pool of learners and instructors. The researchers noted that using Twitter connected students to a variety of others who were interested in their course of study, including peers, practitioners and professionals in their fields, and interest groups. Similarly, the teachers in this study wanted their students to reach out to others via Twitter, including their parents (Josh and Matt); members of their local community (Abbey, Josh, and Matt); political leaders (Abbey, Josh, Matt, and Sam); and to other students, in their own class or school, or outside of their district (Josh, Matt, and Toby). In some cases, these connections were explicitly to include others in the class's community of learners, such as when Matt had students reach out to their parents and other adults to ask their opinions on the day's topics. In other cases, the connections to learning were less explicit, such as when Josh and Matt shared student work on Twitter in hopes that the community would see, and perhaps comment on, student accomplishments. Regardless, each of these connections potentially expand the learning community.

Second, Gao et al. (2012) argue that Twitter expands learning content. The researchers noted that using Twitter broadens the information to which students are exposed, by allowing students to contribute and share information, examples of key concepts, and news stories related to class content. This study supports this earlier finding in several ways. One example of extending learning content through Twitter was Abbey's making connections between tweets from modern-day presidents and the founding documents of the United States. Another example was Matt's invitation for students to engage in creative work in response to assessments, which connected civics content with a variety of creative skills. Additionally, Sam's outreach to public figures to participate in his class, such as the Curator of the Smithsonian and former Secretary of Labor Robert Reich, brought new voices and analysis of history to Sam's students. A last example from this study of how Twitter expanded learning content was Matt's use of Twitter to connect students with people around the world experiencing history-making events, such as those in Egypt during the Arab Spring, which provided those students with a perspective on those events that they otherwise would not have had.

A third finding from Gao's review was that Twitter fostered interactive and collaborative learning. The researchers noted that using Twitter increased the time and space that they could spend working together with peers, instructors, or interested others outside of class or asynchronously. In some classes, students were learning how to communicate with political leaders by actually reaching out to them (Abbey, Josh, Matt, and Sam). Students were asked to interact with family and community members (Abbey, Josh, Matt, and Sam), and in some cases members of the community were invited to interact with students (Abbey, Matt, and Sam). In some cases, students reached out to students across the state, country, or world and learn with them (Josh and Matt). Students also interacted with a variety of people specifically to ask

questions during history-making events (Abbey and Matt). Finally, some of the teachers used Twitter to foster discussion outside of class, (Josh and Toby).

On the other hand, teachers did not do use Twitter for informal learning or to foster reflective thinking as was found in previous research (Gao et al., 2012). Although previous studies discuss the benefits of social media for informal learning (e.g., Greenhow & Askari, 2017) and the connections between formal and informal learning that social media can help bring about, these connections were not discussed by the teachers in this study. Teachers in this study did not use Twitter for informal learning out of concerns for privacy, both their own and also the privacy of their students. This aligns with the teachers' and administrators' well-founded concerns over privacy (Chapman, Eaton, Greenhow, Ankenbrand, & Riley, under review; Riley, Eaton, Greenhow, Ankenbrand, & Chapman, under review). Out of their concern for privacy, the teachers in this study did not conceive of Twitter as a tool for informal learning.

New insights on social media in education. Finally, this study also expands the knowledge base about the affordances of Twitter for K-12 education by suggesting two new insights into the ways in which the use of social media in education can be understood. The first of these insights was Twitter's capacity to amplify *student voice*. The teachers in this study were convinced that students' opinions and work needed to be seen as valuable contributions, and learning activities they planned were grounded in that belief. Twitter provided these teachers with a way of communicating this belief to students and others, and also provided a way of sharing student work with parents and the larger community. Examples of this included: tweeting at politicians, not to practice that skill but to learn how to offer one's opinion and that it was appropriate to do so (Abbey, Matt, and Sam); having students tweet so that the community can see what they were thinking or had accomplished (Abbey, Josh, and Matt).

The second new insight from this study was that, through their use of Twitter, teachers were able to foster *student agency*. By this, I mean that teachers were using Twitter to value their students' work so as to convince their students of the inherent value of that work. For instance, both Abbey and Matt spoke at length about having students work on assignments that *mattered*; they used Twitter to communicate the value of this student work with their communities and students in other schools. Using Twitter to promote student work communicated to students that they were able to do things that matter; that their work was the opposite of busywork; rather, it communicated that are meant to be impactful and real now, not in the future.

Both of these new insights, *student voice* and *student agency*, align with the call of the updated National Educational Technology Plan (Office of Educational Technology, 2017) to personalize learning in ways that promote equity and accessibility among all students. By planning activities which promoted *student voice* and fostered *student agency*, the teachers in this study were personalizing learning. The effect of these personalized learning activities was to include all students in the work and conversation of society. In other words, because Twitter can amplify *student voice* and foster *student agency*, it expands learning in diverse, equitable, and accessible ways.

Redefining Citizenship Styles

This study used the citizenship framework developed by Bennett and his colleagues as part of its theoretical foundations in examining the use of Twitter in civic education (Bennett, 2008; Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009; Bennett, Freelon, & Wells, 2010; Bennett, Freelon, Hussain, & Wells, 2012). In this section, I re-consider the Actualizing and Dutiful Citizenship frameworks in light of my findings. First, Bennett's framework outlined distinctive types of citizenship, which differed in the ways they accessed and used information; the types of civic

practices in which they engaged; and the groups to which they would belong. The teachers in this study did not observe or teach to these distinctions; rather, they sought to include and teach to both citizenship styles in their teaching of civics. Further, although each of the teachers in this study used Twitter and found it beneficial for civic education, none of them wanted to exclude the more traditional practices or legacy media sources identified by Bennett as part of the *Dutiful Citizenship* model (Bennett, 2008; Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009; Bennett, Freelon, & Wells, 2010; Bennett, Freelon, Hussain, & Wells, 2012).

There are several examples of the teachers in this study incorporating aspects of both *Actualizing* and *Dutiful Citizenship* styles. The teachers were attentive to newer forms of civic engagement, such as following streams on Twitter as a way of keeping up with current events and participatory media creation. Both of these represent elements of the *Actualizing Citizenship* style: rather than receiving news from legacy news sources such as newspapers, Bennett argued that people with an *Actualizing Citizenship* style connected to news through what they shared and what they viewed in their feeds through social media (Bennett, 2008; Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009; Bennett, Freelon, & Wells, 2010; Bennett, Freelon, Hussain, & Wells, 2012). To varying degrees of success, teachers in this study attempted to do this, and thus were including methods and preferences that Bennett would argue were aligned with the *Actualizing Citizenship* style.

At the same time, teachers were also using legacy media sources to encourage traditional civic participation such as communicating with political leaders, aligned with the *Dutiful Citizenship* style. All five of the teachers in this study supported or encouraged legacy media consumption, either by sharing news stories from traditional news sources (Josh and Toby); or using tweets as discussion prompts (rather than having students tweet in response to them;

Abbey, Josh, Matt, Sam, and Toby). All of the teachers also used text-based knowledge transmission, central to a *Dutiful Citizenship* style: from the use of primary sources to the use of electronic texts (Bennett, 2008; Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009; Bennett, Freelon, & Wells, 2010; Bennett, Freelon, Hussain, & Wells, 2012). Importantly, all five of the teachers were supportive of traditional forms of civic participation, as evidenced by four teachers' concerted efforts to teach their students how to reach out to politicians or focus on teaching students how to identify and refute "fake news" in order to better prepare them to vote in future elections.

The fact that the teachers in this study included methods of teaching, information gathering, and civic engagement that were attentive to both *Actualizing* and *Dutiful Citizenship* styles is noteworthy. Teachers taught in ways that attended to both types of citizenship because they thought their students would benefit from both traditional and newer ways of accessing news, of learning about the U.S. government, and of participating in civic life. The ways the teachers in this study taught, which blended *Actualizing* and *Dutiful Citizenship* styles together, represents the complexity of citizenship as it is understood and practiced (or not) among young people today. In attending to various types and practices of citizenship, the teachers in this study were trying to meet their students where they were, indicating, perhaps, that citizenship is more fluid, and less binary, than Bennett's model suggests.

Applying Social Media to Problems of Civic Education

One of the ways in which the literature bases of civic education and social media in education intersected through this study was in the way that the concept of *openness*, central to effective civic education, was bolstered by the open nature of social media. Civic education is most successful when classrooms are *open* and *democratic*; this openness described a school and classroom climate in which students felt comfortable asking questions or challenging what

teachers are teaching; where discussion of controversial topics was encouraged; where learning

occurred through active discussions and debates; where disagreements between students were

allowed or encouraged; and that are safe spaces where students can think and question without

fear of being shut down or being humiliated (Hahn, 1999). Students from classrooms with these

open characteristics scored higher on measures of civic knowledge and civic skills than students

from more *closed* classrooms (e.g. classrooms in which the climate did not encourage or allow

disagreement or discussion of controversial topics) (Torney-Purta 2002; Gibson & Levine, 2003;

Campbell, 2005; McIntosh et al., 2007; Pasek, et al., 2008).

Similarly, the use of social media in education has been shown to break down barriers to

learning (Manca & Ranieri, 2013; 2016). Manca and Ranieri in their review of the research on

Facebook as a tool for learning and teaching (2013; 2016) found three main educational

affordances of this social media: 1) it combined learning and information sources; 2) increased

one's community of learners and 3) expanded the contexts of learning. In particular, their review

showed that social media supported some of the primary methods through which an open

classroom climate is practiced: discussion, interaction, and collaboration among students as well

as between teachers and students. These affordances could provide students with a safe space to

ask questions, discuss controversial topics, disagree with peers or instructors, and raise minority

opinions, all of which are components of an open classroom climate which is supportive of

effective civic education.

The question then becomes: did the teachers in this study use this previously identified

affordance of social media to create or maintain an open civic classroom climate? There is

evidence that they did. The teachers in this study used Twitter to create or maintain an open,

democratic classroom climate, as advocated in the civic education literature, and the ways in

which they did this resonated with what previous research has found. For instance, they used Twitter to expand the contexts of learning beyond the classroom walls and enhance their students' connection to the community or the larger society. Each of the teachers in this study used Twitter to break down barriers and to promote student thought, student voice, and student agency, hallmarks of open and democratic classrooms.

This finding is important because a lack of openness in classroom or school climate has been one of several common problems identified in the literature as impeding the success of civic education. In previous civic education literature, these climates which hindered effective civic education had policies which prevented discussion or discouraged students from speaking (Hahn, 1999). Each of the teachers in this study used Twitter in some way for discussion, whether as a prompt in class or as an out-of-class activity. Although the teachers in this study did not have difficulty with either classroom climate or fostering student discussion, it is possible to see how a teacher who was working in a school which did not promote student discussion could benefit from using Twitter as a means to have students debate topics and share their ideas.

Model of Constructivist Teaching of Civic Education with Twitter

One of the research questions for this thesis was to evaluate to what extent the model I proposed provided a theoretical understanding of how, from a constructivist orientation, effective civic education practices were aligned with the affordances of Twitter. (To see the model, refer to Table 4 in Chapter 2.) I proposed this model as a way of understanding why a constructivist way of teaching civics and using Twitter as part of that teaching might be efficacious. I examined each teacher's case as well as analyzed across the teacher-cases to assess to what extent the teachers' experiences of teaching civics with Twitter aligned with the three dimensions of the proposed model. (The three dimensions were: learners construct knowledge;

learning should be social, and learning should be realistic.) As was described above in the case of each teacher as well as in the cross-case analysis, teachers varied in the degree to which they embraced elements of constructivist civics teaching with Twitter.

The first dimension of the model, that learners construct knowledge, was moderately aligned with the experiences of the teachers in this study. One of the hallmarks of effective civic education is learning through participatory methods (Niemi & Chapman, 1999; Torney-Purta et al., 1999; Torney-Purta et al., 2001; Gibson & Levine, 2003; Kahne & Middaugh, 2008). The teachers who aligned with this dimension of the model either used Twitter in participatory ways or intended to do so but were prevented from succeeding because of contextual factors. Given the participatory nature of Twitter, as well as the variety of ways in which the teachers in this study used Twitter to encourage their students' interactive learning, Twitter appears to be a tool that supports participatory civic education.

The second dimension of the model, that learning should be social, had the widest range of alignment with the experiences of the teachers in this study. Although the teachers varied in their experiences of creating social learning environments, each teacher had the intention of connecting students with people outside of the classroom. The teachers in this study thought it was beneficial for their students to learn in a social environment, but they had difficulty balancing factors that competed with this intention, such as concerns for privacy. Although Twitter seems like a good environment in which to foster social learning, it is clear from the experiences of the teachers in this study that the lived reality of creating social learning environments, particularly through online spaces, is complex.

The strongest alignment of the model with the teachers' experiences was along the third dimension of the model, learning should be realistic. One of the problems identified with civic

education was that civics classes did not spend enough time on contexts related to students' lives (Lopez et al., 2006). Most of the teachers in this study provided a number of examples of how they used Twitter in ways that were relevant to their students' lives. Given the variety of issues that are important to students, as well as the breadth of material civics teachers are asked to cover, Twitter seems like a useful space to connect course material, teacher objectives, and student interests in realistic ways.

The lived experiences of the teachers in this study aligned, well in some ways, with the three dimensions of the proposed model of constructivist teaching of civics with Twitter. A possible shift in the model would be to better account for the experiences of teachers whose intentions do not match their teaching. More importantly, the model should be adjusted to account for the importance of Twitter in showcasing student worth, not only because of the intrinsic value of student worth to student growth and development, but also because of the related benefits to effective civic education of students seeing themselves as worthy of participating in society. Overall, the model identified important aspects of teaching civics with Twitter, and it is possible that through further study, the model will be adjusted in order to better match the lived experiences of civics teachers.

Implications

This study has implications for educational theory, research, and practice as well as potential policy implications. This study contributes to two fields of educational theory and research: civic education and social media; in particular, it updates the literature base on civic education to include how social media can be used for civic education, and it increases the body of literature on the use of Twitter in K-12 education, a subfield which is currently limited. This study also contributes to the conceptualization of the use of social media in education more

broadly and also offers a strong critique of Bennett's framework of citizenship within the field of education. Finally, this study has implications for teacher education programs in both social studies teaching methods and educational technology. In terms of teaching practice, this study showed how Twitter is currently being used in civics education classrooms, which provides a lens into how teachers are thinking and teaching about citizenship. Each of these implications is explored in the sections which follow.

Implications for Theory

Based on the experiences of the teachers in this study, some work should be done to revise the framework of citizenship developed by Bennett and his colleagues (Bennett, 2008; Bennet, Wells, & Rank, 2009; Bennett, Freelon, & Wells, 2010; Bennett, Freelon, Hussain, & Wells, 2012). The teachers who participated in this study conceived of citizenship more broadly than the binary categories of *Actualizing Citizenship* and *Dutiful Citizenship* theorized by Bennett. The teachers also thought that civic engagement, as seen in particular civic actions, was more fluid than Bennett had conceived. Given the common concern over low levels of youth civic participation and this study's finding that citizenship exists in both online and offline spaces concurrently and in similar ways, further theoretical work should be conducted in order to better account for the breadth of understanding of citizenship as experienced by the teachers in this study.

An additional area for the development of theory is to further our understanding of how people learn with social media. By proposing a model which aligned the affordances of a particular social media platform, Twitter, with principles of social constructivism, and evaluating that model with teachers' practices of teaching with that social media platform, this study found there are useful synergies between social constructivism and how teachers conceive and enact

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their teaching with social media. Further, this study showed that the participants in this study used Twitter in their classes in focused and particular ways; part of their success with the platform may be tied to how its use was tied to their objectives. Future research should further explore the links between social constructivism and the use of social media as a pedagogical tool in classrooms. Additional research should examine the model proposed in this study more fully, to determine whether the effects of Twitter seen here were because of the alignment between best practices in civic education, the affordances of Twitter, and social constructivism, due to teachers' focused use of Twitter in their classrooms; or a result of other factors.

Implications for Research

In addition to future theoretical work, this study has several implications for future research on civics education and social media. Two of the findings of this study have implications for initial and on-going development of teachers, while the other two findings have implications for future research on other tools for civic education which blend online and offline forms of citizenship, the effects of technological tools on student civic participation, and the effects of technological tools on student worth and of increased student worth on civic participation.

This study's findings pertaining to the prompt and process of teachers' choosing to use Twitter have implications for future research in teacher education. One of this study's findings was the key role played by a slightly more technologically savvy peer in a teacher's adoption of Twitter. Additionally, a teacher's introduction to Twitter came at a time when the teacher had specific objectives for student learning or goals for student connection. A second, related finding was the process through which teachers chose to use Twitter, considering both student

preferences and the affordances of Twitter in making their decisions about how to use the social media platform.

One of the implications of these findings is the need for further research on the teaching of and about social media in teacher education and professional development programs. Given the finding that teachers' adoption of Twitter was connected to their experience and awareness of what they wanted to do with their students, a future research question is: are pre-service teachers too novice in their practice to be effectively introduced to social media for use in the classroom? Further, how could the model of a slightly more capable peer who could provide support shape teacher education around the use of social media for learning? There is a parallel research implication for teacher professional development: how can effective professional development about the incorporation of social media into the classroom be designed in order to include a slightly more capable peer and an exploration of teachers' objectives?

This study's findings also have implications for research into the student experience of civic education with social media. Two of this study's findings pertained to the goals that teachers have for students, namely: teaching civics in ways that incorporated both online and offline experiences of citizenship, and convincing students of their worth and agency. Further research should be done to examine the ways and tools that teachers are using to teach citizenship in ways that blend online and offline civic practices (one example: civic education games). Research should also be done to assess the effectiveness of these blended practices on student civic knowledge and civic participation, both during their time in school and later into adulthood. Similarly, the future research should evaluate the effects of social media on student worth should be assessed, as well as what other tools, activities, or elements of school culture

could foster students' sense of self-worth. Finally, research should be conducted which evaluates the effect of student worth on civic engagement.

Implications for Practice

This study also has several implications for civics teachers and for any teachers who are interested in using social media in their classrooms. One of the common themes which emerged from this study was that the participants came to use Twitter in their classes because they were introduced to Twitter by peers who were also using the platform for in their classrooms. Importantly, the participants in this study also had ideas about what they wanted to do in their classrooms when they were introduced to Twitter. Teachers who are curious about using social media in their classrooms should find a colleague or peer who is already using social media for educational purposes; this person could help the teacher to learn the social media platform as well as provide support as the teacher begins to implement its use in his or her own classroom. Additionally, teachers should reflect upon their goals for their students as they consider adopting social media in their classrooms. A second finding of this study was that teachers' process of choosing to use Twitter considered both their students' social media preferences as well as the affordances of Twitter and their alignment with the teachers' intentions for using social media in class. Teachers who want to use social media in their classrooms should reflect on both their students' preferences and the affordances of any social media platform they consider.

The objectives of the teachers who participated in this study also have implications for other teachers. Based on this study's finding that teachers are incorporating elements of both online and offline citizenship into their teaching, teachers should think broadly about the civic skills and civic actions they teach. The teachers in this study did not think it beneficial to separate online and offline civic practices, choosing instead to see them as parts of the whole that

made up civic engagement. Other teachers might consider doing the same as a way of inviting all students to find ways to participate in civic life.

Finally, the teachers in this study were concerned about student worth. They used Twitter to amplify student voice and foster student agency. This is a practice that other teachers could adopt, and could also serve as a prompt for teachers to think about other ways that they could attend to student worth through their teaching.

Limitations

This study has several limitations which may have implications for future research. Each of the participants in this study had positive experiences with using Twitter for civic education, and each participant intended to continue to use Twitter in their classrooms. Although qualitative research does not aim to generalizable its findings about a phenomenon (Hoyt & Bhati, 2007), there is no counterpoint in this study to the participants who support using Twitter in their classrooms. Therefore, a limitation of this study is that it did not include the voices of teachers who have used Twitter for civic education and who no longer do so because it did not work for them. Having these voices in this study would have presented a fuller picture of what it means to teach civics with Twitter. Including these voices should be a consideration of future research. Another limitation of this study is that there are aspects of civic education, such as democratic values and knowledge of the U.S. Constitution, with are not addressed in Bennett's model (Bennett, 2008; Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009; Bennett, Freelon, & Wells, 2010). Because this study focused on the aspects of civic education that Bennett did address, this study does not address all of the complexities of civic education. Finally, despite an awareness of the potential threats to validity and the steps taken to avoid them referenced in chapter three, it is possible that

not all of these threats were entirely avoided. In spite of reviewing my data analysis with two other researchers, it is possible that my analysis was influenced by the model I proposed.

Conclusions

Overall, this study contributes much to the conversation happening around rates of youth civic participation, and offers directions for future research and suggestions for ways in which the use of social media could be incorporated into civic education. Civic engagement and civic participation among young people have recently been areas of interest and concern. This dissertation study examined how high school social studies teachers were using the social media platform Twitter to teach civics, as well as whether their experiences aligned with a proposed model of constructivist civics teaching with Twitter. This study showed that teachers were prompted to use Twitter by an influential peer at a time when the teachers could see the affordances of Twitter as beneficial for the goals they had for their students. Teachers chose to use Twitter after consideration of their students' social media preferences because the affordances of Twitter aligned with their objectives, particularly incorporating both online and offline citizenship and increasing student worth. For the most part, teachers' experiences aligned well with the model of constructivist teaching with Twitter.

The results of this study have important implications for researchers and practitioners. This study's findings show the importance of the manner in which teachers are introduced to and supported in using social media in education. Teachers who participated in this study also conceived of citizenship broadly, in ways that incorporated online and offline civic learning and civic action which are fluid. This understanding of citizenship and its application to teaching have implications for connecting with a wide range of students. Importantly, the study's findings add to the literature base of the use of social media in K-12 education. This study showed that

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teachers were using Twitter to amplify student voice and foster student agency, which are new insights for this field. Additionally, the alignment of the teachers' experiences with the model adds to the conceptualization of a theoretical framework for social media in education.

Through the use of the social media platform Twitter, the teachers in this study sought to introduce their students to a variety of ways of participating in civic life. Although the teachers used Twitter in ways that continued to align with some of the established best practices in civic education, in using Twitter, they broadened the ways in which they taught about citizenship, making it accessible and applicable to as many students as possible. This study showed that teachers were concerned with students knowing that they had a right and responsibility to participate in civic life, because their intrinsic worth made them valuable members of society. Overall, this study provides insights into how teachers are conceiving of civic education in ways that will meet their students where they are and guide them into civic participation.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

Interview Protocol

I'd like to thank you once again for being willing to participate in the interview aspect of my study. As I have mentioned to you before, my study seeks to understand how teachers and students are teaching and learning about civic education with Twitter. The study also seeks to understand why teachers use Twitter and if and how it is an effective tool for civic education. The aim of this research is to document the possible process of civic learning with Twitter. Our interview today will last approximately one hour during which I will be asking you about your teaching, your decision to use Twitter in class, and the outcomes you hope to see as a result of using Twitter in class. Are you ok with me recording (or not) our conversation today? If yes: Thank you! I will need you to fill out this consent form indicating that I have your permission to audio record our conversation. Please let me know if at any point you want me to turn off the recorder or keep something you said off the record. If no: Thank you for letting me know. I will only take notes of our conversation. Before we begin the interview, do you have any questions? If any questions (or other questions) arise at any point in this study, you can feel free to ask them at any time. I would be more than happy to answer your questions.

Grand Tour Question
Thinking about your experience of teaching civics and of using Twitter to teach civics, can you describe what that has been like?

Related to Research Question 1
- ❏ What grade levels and subjects do you teach?
- ❏ How long have you been teaching?
- ❏ How long have you been teaching at your current school?
- ❏ Can you describe your experience using technology with students?

Related to Research Question 1a, 1b, and 1d

- ❏ What gave you the initial idea of using Twitter to teach civics?
- ❏ How did you move from the idea of using Twitter to thinking through to actually using Twitter in your classroom?
- ❏ Can you describe how you use Twitter with your students?
- ❏ How do you introduce Twitter to your class?
- ❏ Has using Twitter with students worked out the way you thought it would?
- ❏ What are the most important aspects of civics that you want your students to learn?
- ❏ What examples of being a good or active citizen do you include in your teaching?
- ❏ Does it seem to you that your students are interested in civics? What makes you think so/not?

Related to Research Question 1c
- ❏ In thinking about using Twitter to teach civics, what do you hope that your students get out of that experience?
- ❏ What do you hope students will be able to do because they are using Twitter?
- ❏ How do you think using Twitter as part of civics education benefits students?
- ❏ Have there been any challenges or barriers in using Twitter with your students?
- ❏ When you teach civics, what do you hope that your students are learning?
- ❏ When you teach civics, what do you hope your students do with what they learn?
- ❏ Are there ways in which students are able to interact with civics content or civics practices in ways they would not have had you not used Twitter? Please describe.

Related to Research Question 1d
- ❏ Why do you think using Twitter might be effective specifically for teaching civics?
- ❏ Did you find that anything about your teaching changed when using Twitter?
- ❏ Did you find that anything about your way of interacting with students changed when using Twitter?
- ❏ Did you find that anything about the way in which students interacted with each other changed when using Twitter?
- ❏ Do you think your students understand citizenship differently after using Twitter?

Final prompts to push past saturation
- ❏ What surprised you during the time when your students were using Twitter for class?
- ❏ If you were to talk to other civics teachers about using Twitter with students, what would you most want them to be aware of?
- ❏ What about teaching civics with Twitter have we not talked about yet?

Informed Consent Form

Research Participant Information and Consent Form

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Researchers are required to provide a consent form to inform you about the research study, to convey that participation is voluntary, to explain risks and benefits of participation, and to empower you to make an informed decision. You should feel free to ask the researcher any questions you may have.

Study Title: Meeting Them Where They Are: The Use of Twitter in Youth Civic Education
Researcher and Title: Amy Chapman, doctoral candidate; Dr. Christine Greenhow, Associate Professor
Department and Institution: Educational Psychology and Educational Technology program, Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology, and Special Education, Michigan State University
Address and Contact Information: Amy Chapman, 10 Perry Street, #11, North Grafton, MA 01536; 908.268.3765; chapm276@msu.edu

1. **PURPOSE OF RESEARCH**
   - You are being asked to participate in a research study of how teachers are teaching about civics, in particular how and why teachers are using Twitter with students when they teach civics.
   - From this study, the researchers hope to learn why and how teachers are using Twitter to teach about civics, and whether and in what ways using Twitter to teach civics is effective.
   - You have been selected as a possible participant in this study because you are (or will be this academic year) currently teaching civics and using Twitter with students to teach civics.

2. **WHAT YOU WILL DO**

- As part of this study, I will be interviewing selected teachers. Each interview is designed to last approximately one hour and will be audio-recorded with the participant's permission.
- These interviews will focus on your use of Twitter in your civics classes and will be conducted at a location convenient to you.
- This research will not require additional time or activities from participants.
- Your participation in this study will last no more than four months.

3. POTENTIAL BENEFITS

You will not directly benefit from your participation in this study. However, your participation in this study may contribute to the understanding how teachers teach civics with Twitter.

4. POTENTIAL RISKS
- There are no known or foreseeable physical or economic risks associated with participation in this study.
- Potential psychological risks associated with participation in this study include discomfort or embarrassment during interviews.
- You should not reveal anything during interviews or observations that could result in you or others getting into legal trouble.

5. PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY
- The data for this project will be anonymized, meaning that I will change your name in the data and reports from this study.
- All reports that come from this data will use pseudonyms in order to protect your anonymity. Data that is coded (using pseudonyms) will not be kept with the key matching a pseudonym with someone's real name. No one other than the researcher will be able to link data to you.
- Information from this study which has been stripped of identifiers and which uses only pseudonyms will be kept indefinitely for possible future research. Identifying information will be destroyed upon completion of the study.
- Information about you will be kept confidential to the maximum extent allowable by law (such as in the case of a court order).
- Information about you will be stored on a password protected computer. The files themselves will also be password protected.
- Audio recordings will be kept electronically and will also be password protected. Audio recordings will not be used for purposes other than research.
- Data that uses pseudonyms will be available to my dissertation advisor at Michigan State University and the Michigan State University Institutional Review Board.
- Your school will not have access to the data that identifies you.

- The results of this study may be published or presented at professional meetings, but the identities of all research participants will remain anonymous.

6. Your rights to participate, say no, or withdraw
- Participation in this study is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty,
- criticism, or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.
- You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.
- You have the right to say no.
- You may change your mind at any time and withdraw from the study.
- You may choose to stop participating at any time.
- If you would like to withdraw from the study at any time, simply contact me through the phone number or email address below to let me know you are withdrawing.

7. Costs and Compensation for Being in the Study
- There are no costs to you for participating in this study.
- You will not receive money or any other form of compensation for participating in this study.

8. Contact Information
If you have concerns or questions about this study, please contact the researcher, Amy Chapman, 10 Perry Street, #11, North Grafton, MA 01536, 908.268.3765, chapm276@msu.edu.

If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, Fax 517-432-4503, or e-mail irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 4000 Collins Rd, Suite 136, Lansing, MI 48910.

9. Documentation of Informed consent.

Your signature below means that you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

_____   _____
Signature   Date

I agree to allow audiotaping of the interviews.

 Yes   No   Initials_____

You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

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