CIVIC EDUCATION INITIATIVES IN CENTRAL TEXAS:

A DESCRIPTIVE CASE STUDY

By

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DEDICATION

To adult educators and facilitators of civic education,
for inspiring learners to be agents of change
and to make a difference in the world!

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ABSTRACT

Due to a decline in civic engagement as well as civic education initiatives, many adults are left without opportunities to be able to learn more about the skills and knowledge needed to participate within society. This dissertation documents civic education initiatives offered to adults in Central Texas. The research questions guiding the study were: (1) What is being done to foster civic education in central Texas? (2) How can civic education program facilitators help adults become and stay informed? and (3) How are program facilitators promoting civic engagement? Data sources included conversational interviews, observations, documents and artifacts, and a research journal. Drawing on the pillars of lifelong education and an ecological view of civic engagement, data collected followed case study analysis procedures. Study findings indicate that civic education for adults is currently being offered by two sectors: community-based organizations and higher education institutions. Study findings are presented by research question and through a discussion of the following emergent themes: access to resources, civic education jargon, storytelling, direct experience, sense of belonging, and learner interests. The major contribution of the study is the fact that most program facilitators use and recommend storytelling as a potent strategy to engage adults in civic education initiatives. This strategy aligns with the pillars of lifelong education and the ecological view of civic engagement, which guided data collection and analysis. Through storytelling people connect as human beings and learn from each other. Recommendations for practice as well as suggestions for future research are provided.

I. INTRODUCTION

I work primarily with adults and it's a struggle for a lot of people to find jobs. In the exercise, my response was that I strongly agree that adults need more opportunities to gain the skills and knowledge needed to meet the demands of the workforce. (Andi)

While volunteering, I did a lot of different things. I basically helped with whatever people needed assistance with that day, but after thinking about how civic literacy can be woven into different disciplines, responding to the survey, I agreed that civic literacy is used on a daily basis. (Sarah)

While taking an advanced qualitative research methods course, I conducted a pilot study that consisted of a Q-sort exercise online and an online qualitative questionnaire. Five adult educators from a variety of settings and who were engaged in civic education initiatives (workforce development preparation, English as Second Language classes, and volunteering at a library) served as study participants for this pilot. I used Q-sort, a research method that allows the researcher to get a more in-depth understanding of a participant's point of view (van Exel & de Graaf, 2005) and created a list of 23-items that reflect various beliefs and attitudes of civic education from existing literature. The participants were asked to rank order the items from strongly agree to strongly disagree. In addition, they answered a qualitative questionnaire. Through this activity, the participants were able to express their opinions about the topic and explain their reasoning behind ranking the items presented through the Q-sort exercise.

After analyzing the pilot data, two main themes emerged: critical thinking and personal experience. Every participant referred to some form of critical examination. This was reflected in the questionnaire data by multiple participants agreeing that civic education could be woven into many disciplines. For instance, one participant spoke

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about critical thinking in her classroom. She said: "Civic education should be discussed and taught in any classroom, even if it is sometimes implicit… We discuss any issues my students are curious about and discuss solutions and what they could do." Similarly, all five participants referred to their personal experience in the education context when discussing civic education issues. More specifically, when speaking about why they categorized certain items, one participant said: "This was a chance for me to think more about my priorities when it comes to civic education in my own classroom." Another participant spoke about her experience working with adults who really struggle finding jobs and how that changed her definition of civic education:

> I used to only think of certain things when thinking about civic education, like someone trying to pass a civics exam, but I help people find jobs and this has made me understand that civic education encompasses a whole lot more.

This experience of collecting and analyzing data through a pilot study solidified my notions of how civic education is perceived by adult educators. I was able to reflect on how civic education is being facilitated in a variety of contexts and how personal experiences influence the meaning of what civic education should encompass. It also became evident that there is not a sustained approach to civic education in adult education programs and there is not a unified curriculum to teaching adults the skills needed to successfully be engaged in civic responsibility in their communities. In wanting to know more about this topic, I decided to use my dissertation to explore what is being done regarding civic education in Central Texas.

In this dissertation, civic education is defined as the knowledge and skills that one gains through staying informed on the topics of governmental processes as well as knowing one's rights at local, state, national, and global levels to be able to take action

and work in collaboration with others (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2019). In other words, civic education is envisioned as a more holistic approach to providing tools for individuals to actively participate in society. The topic of civic education has become more of a focus within recent years due to political and social polarization as well as concerns about the future of American democracy (Blevins, 2022). Diverse opportunities are available for adults within formal education settings (e.g., schools, universities, colleges) to participate in civic education. However, within the context of community-based education, these opportunities are rare (Morgan, 2016). Many adults aged 18-24 years do not have access to formal education: in 2020, 14 percent of the population of young adults were not in school or the military, had no degree beyond high school, and were not in the work force, and this is a growing trend (Jekielek & Brown, 2005, p. ii). To a large percentage of the adult population, civic education opportunities are not readily available. Having access to civic education resources requires adults to be connected to the most popular social media networks (e.g., Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn) and have basic knowledge of digital literacy.

Problem Statement

According to Carcasson and Sprain (2012), there are many ways to explain the decline of democracy in the United States. Some of these problems within society include "low voter turnout, distrust of democratic institutions, or the lack of civility displayed in Congress" (Carcasson & Sprain, 2012, p. 15). In addition, in a study conducted by the American Bar Association in 2020 in which 1,000 people participated, it was discovered that less than half of the participants (46%) understood how votes worked in the Electoral College, while only over half of the participants (57%) knew the 19th Amendment (American Bar Association (ABA), 2020). Low civic education rates have led to adults

not being "adequately prepared for their roles as a citizen or a community member" (Wilson, 2002, p. 12). Adults should be able to participate in social and civic life. More specifically, many adults lack knowledge of basic skills needed to participate in society in order to create a more inclusive and more refined world (Hoggan-Kloubert & Mabrey, 2022). For instance, if citizens do not have the skills or knowledge to apply for a job, this can lead to unemployment problems within the community. Moreover, if citizens do not have an understanding of their rights as citizens, voter turnout will remain low and issues will not get solved at the local or national level.

In response to these issues, engaging with a community-based education program creates opportunities for networking, building social capital, as well as preparation for workforce (Flanagan & Levine, 2010). Adult education encompasses more than acquiring a set of knowledge on a specific subject and includes opportunities for personal and social development. A citizen in democracy should be able to pursue "the democratic way of life and to co-shape and, when necessary, improve/change the democratic society" (Hoggan-Kloubert & Mabrey, 2022, p. 169). Civic knowledge is not only important for individuals but necessary for communities to thrive. It is common for people to come together to build a community (Muñoz & Wrigley, 2012, p. 82), but when democracy in the community is shaky or fragile, problems in the community tend to get worse (Carcasson & Sprain, 2012, p. 15). There are geographically dispersed civic education programs and initiatives that help citizens to fix these problems and to adequately gain the knowledge and skills needed to be engaged citizens; however, research documenting these initiatives is scarce (Morgan, 2016).

This topic is so crucial that all entities funded by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) are required to offer Integrated EL Civics (Integrated Education and

Training English Literacy and Civics Education) in their programs. As stated in the TWC (2017) Letter:

> English Literacy and Civics Education Services (EL Civics)—education services provided to adult ELLs, including professionals with degrees or credentials in their native countries, to enable them to achieve competency in English and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. EL Civics services must include instruction in literacy, English as a Second Language (ESL), and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation and may include Workforce Training.

Even though civic education initiates have been employed in community organizations such as public libraries or immigrant work centers, it remains unclear how civic knowledge development has been facilitated. The prioritizing of what and how civic education should be taught remains uncertain (Morgan, 2016). Since there was need to examine these civic education development initiatives to document what is being done within this specific and often neglected context, this study drew conclusions on how these initiatives are assisting adult learners to gain understanding of civic education components, civic responsibility, and lifelong learning.

Research Questions

The purpose of this dissertation was to identify civic education initiatives for adults in Central Texas and document their efforts promoting civic education, civic responsibility, and civic engagement. Therefore, the research questions for this dissertation include:

1. What is being done to foster civic education in central Texas?

2. How can civic education program facilitators help adults become and stay informed?

3. How are program facilitators promoting civic engagement?

Research question 1 was helpful to document and describe civic education initiatives. Research question 2 focused on describing sustainable practices beneficial to civic education development. Lastly, research question 3 brought to light how facilitators can guide adults to use civic knowledge and take action to solve issues in their own lives and communities.

Theoretical Framework

The framework for the dissertation builds on the ecological view of civic education development presented by Wilson (2002) and UNESCO's four pillars of lifelong learning (Delors, 1996). According to Wilson (2002), civic education includes the following areas of responsibility: (a) becoming and staying informed, (b) forming and expressing opinions and ideas, (c) working together, and (d) taking action to strengthen communities.

> *To become and stay informed*, adults must identify problems and community needs affecting them and other citizens, understand human, legal, and civic rights, understand how the government systems work, identify and recognize how individuals can make a difference, and be able to analyze diverse sources of information. For *forming and expressing opinions and ideas*, adults must be able to describe their personal histories, values, beliefs, and roles in the community, learn from others, communicate effectively, and be reflective. *Working together* refers to getting involved and involving others within the community, respecting people, identifying common values, visions, and goals, and resolving conflict.

When t*aking action to strengthen communities,* adults help themselves and others,

educate others, influence those around them, and provide leadership within their

communities. (Wilson, 2002, p. 8)

This ecological view of civic education was helpful during the data collection and

analysis process. It served as a guide to describing the efforts promoting civic

development and civic responsibility in adult education programs.

In addition, UNESCO identified four pillars of education for lifelong learning.

These are: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be

(Delors, 1996, pp. 20-21).

Learning to know refers to the curiosity of wanting to learn throughout a person's

life, which refers to the foundation of lifelong education. Adults must aspire to

want to learn more about the world around them. *Learning to do* involves taking

action after developing knowledge. This is when adults gather knowledge and

skills in order to perform a task. When *learning to live together,* the focus of

learning to more on the relationships. People must develop an understanding of

those within their community. While *learning to be* focuses more on personal

responsibility in order to attain communal goals. Every person has a duty to

contribute to society. (Delors, 1996, pp. 20-21)

Wilson's framework and the pillars aligned seamlessly due to both describing civic

education within the context of adult education. More importantly, intertwined, they

explain the development of civic engagement, which is the ultimate goal of civic

education. In Figure 1, I outline my own theoretical model of civic engagement

development, which is explored at length throughout this dissertation.

Figure 1. *Study Framework*

Figure 1 illustrates the cyclical nature of the dissertation framework where civic education development takes place as an individual and as a social process. Wilson's (2002) ecological view of civic education is combined with the four pillars of education for lifelong learning. More specifically, each pillar is in direct connection with Wilson's model. For instance, to become and stay informed and learning to know emphasize the importance of gaining knowledge. Forming and expressing opinions and ideas aligns with learning to be since both emphasize the individual in the community. Working together and learning to live together both emphasize relationships within the community. Taking action to strengthen communities and learning to do focus on taking the action to make a change within the community.

As mentioned previously, this is a cyclical process, and the spiral indicates how there is not a sequential order to go about civic development. The two pictures on the sides of the graphic indicate the two settings that are being explored in this study: initiatives in the community as well as initiatives in higher education. Also, it is important to mention that even though the pillars of education for lifelong learning are linked to Wilson's (2002) ecological view of civic education, they are all equally important, there is not a step in the process that is more important than the other.

Volunteering Experience

In wanting to know more about my community, I began volunteering at my local library in 2019. I assumed that I would be helping patrons primarily with writing due to my academic background in composition. However, after discussions with the workforce developmental librarian, I quickly learned that unemployment was a serious issue within the community. Problems ranged from community members not being able to keep up with technology advances in the workplace to struggling to find a full-time job that offered benefits.

As a result, we created the "Wednesday Workforce" initiative. The idea behind this free resource was to assist community members in becoming more engaged with their community and family by helping patrons with their specific needs. I assisted patrons with résumés, cover letters, formatting, using the computer, and questions related to the interview process. While meeting with patrons, I was able to understand why people were using the local library to develop their workforce skills. For instance, I met with one woman who was going to multiple classes at various libraries because her husband was recently unemployed, and she wanted to better her English before applying

for jobs. Another woman I worked with was trying to get back into the nursing field but needed to work on her technology skills.

Even though I did not initially plan to help with workforce development, the needs of the community far outweighed my personal desire to teach writing. This experience allowed me to understand that civic education can be seen in a variety of initiatives within one's community; it also led me to wonder what else is being done in my area regarding civic education. I was able to help patrons become and stay informed about the workforce, assist patrons with expressing their thoughts and opinions, work together, and also take action to obtain their personal goals. My experience volunteering and getting to know the patrons at the library sparked my interest in learning more about this current and crucial topic. Because adult learners are currently seeking out programs and services needed for civic engagement, there was a need to explore these initiatives that are being used for services. More and more people rely on these programs to update their skills and sharpen these tools, and it was necessary to examine what was being done to support adult learners.

Organization of the Dissertation

This was a traditional dissertation, and it is organized in five chapters. In Chapter 1, I described the context of the study, the problem statement, the research questions, the theoretical framework, and my motivation to conduct the study. In Chapter 2, the literature review, I discussed relevant topics such as civic education and civic literacy, types of civic skills, civic education in community-based contexts, and civic education in higher education. I also highlighted gaps in the literature in this chapter. In Chapter 3, I described the method and study design. Data sources for this dissertation included conversational interviews, observations, documents and artifacts, and a research journal.

Drawing on the pillars of lifelong education and an ecological view of civic engagement, case study analysis procedures were followed for data collection.

In Chapter 4, I presented the study's findings, which indicate that civic education for adults is currently being offered by two sectors in Central Texas: community-based organizations and higher education institutions. This dissertation documented seven of these initiatives. Study findings are organized according to respective research questions and through a discussion of the following emergent themes: access to resources, civic education jargon, storytelling, direct experience, sense of belonging, and learner interests. Finally, in Chapter 5, I summarized the study's highlights, provided recommendations for program development and program facilitators, as well as suggestions for future research. The major contribution of the study was that most program facilitators used and recommended storytelling as a potent strategy to engage adults in civic education initiatives. Through storytelling, people connect as human beings and learn from each other.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter highlights relevant literature as well as identifies a gap in currently published research to illustrate the need for the present dissertation. The main topics in this chapter include defining civic education and civic literacy, civic skills, civic education within the community-based context, civic education within the higher education context, and the implementation of civic education. It is important to note that there is little research-based information regarding how civic education is being implemented. The majority of findings on this topic, specifically on how civic education is being implemented, comes from organization websites, blogs, and various forms of public information.

Civic Education and Civic Literacy

When researching the topic of civics, it can be difficult to understand what is being explored. The definition of civics is "the study or science of the privileges and obligations of citizens" (League of Women Voters of Delaware, n.d.). Even though the focus is on the privileges and obligations of the citizens, the words study or science can encompass many factors. For instance, civic engagement is a common term that is seen in the literature. Civic engagement is "the work of influencing legitimately public matters using means within the existing political structure" (Rudolph & Horibe, 2016, p. 808). This definition implies that work is being done regarding social or political issues, which means that there is some form of action.

Another term that is commonly associated with civics is civic efficacy. According to Serriere (2014), a citizen who has civic efficacy is a citizen who understands their influence on public matters (p. 45). More specifically, civic efficacy can be seen as a type of agency held by a citizen (Watts & Flanagan, 2007). Civic efficacy is similar to civic

engagement due to the focus on a citizen understanding their obligations, but it also differs in the sense that efficacy is an inward expression, while engagement is an outward expression.

Whereas civic efficacy and civic engagement include additional requirements on top of understanding the roles and responsibilities of being a citizen, civic literacy simply focuses on the understanding component. Acquiring knowledge of civics is less complex than changing perceptions or taking action, but literacy is the foundation. In order for a citizen to become engaged or change their perception, a citizen must first be civically literate.

Through civic education, people acquire knowledge and skills needed to stay informed on the topics of governmental processes as well as knowing their rights at local, state, national, and global levels (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009). Bello (2021) expands on this idea by stating that this knowledge "helps citizens to know the workings of the form of government and their own political and civic rights and responsibilities" (p. 154). Basically, civic education is having the knowledge necessary to be an informed citizen in society. Furthermore, it has been concluded that civic education ultimately gives someone "a basic understanding of the structure and functioning of government as well as the political process through which decisions are shaped" (Hylton, 2018, p. 296). In the same vein, Carcasson and Sprain (2012) state that civic education adequately prepares people with skills, attitudes, and knowledge of the responsibilities of democracy (p. 15). It is clear that civic education focuses on acquiring a specific type of knowledge that revolves around citizenship.

There are minute differences within these various definitions of civic education (see Appendix A). Some definitions focus on the understanding of how decisions are

made within the governmental processes, while other definitions focus on individuals staying informed. Despite these small differences, Musil (2009) explained that a consistent theme within the literature is that civic education is taught and developed over time. The Civic Engagement Working Group created a model that highlights the development of an individual's civic literacy knowledge. This model, typically used to help student learning, is a non-linear spiral that is "a series of separate and unconnected boxes instead of a fluid, integrated continuum" (Musil, 2009, p. 60). Within this civic learning spiral there are six elements which reflect the components needed to effectively be a social, responsible citizen, namely: self, communities and cultures, knowledge, skills, values, and public action elements (Musil, 2009, pp. 59-60). Each element in the spiral is no more important than another. For instance, a person could become civically literate because of an issue happening within the community or a public event that is going on. The point of this spiral is that there is not an exact starting point or level.

In the adult education context, civic literacy can simply be defined as taking everyday literacy skills, such as reading, writing, speaking English, computing, solving problems, and using technology, and combining these with the daily tasks of being an active citizen and community member (Wilson, 2002, p. 7). According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), this knowledge can be gained from a variety of different sources including families, churches, media, labor unions, or community and other organizations (National Assessment Governing Board, 2018). This means that civic literacy is not restricted to one type of context. It can be learned in a formal classroom or at a community event.

Even though there are various definitions of civic education, this dissertation builds on Wilson's (2002, p. 7) definition of civic education. Wilson defines literacy as

the ability to read, write, and speak proficient English to solve problems and use technology to be a lifelong learner in the different areas of an individual's life (e.g., family, workplace, and community). Wilson (2002) further explained civic education as "the development of general skills applied to the everyday tasks of being a citizen and active community member" (p. 7). This means that the skills of being able to read, write, speak English, and solve problems using technology are applied to the responsibilities of becoming and staying informed, forming and expressing opinions and ideas, working together, and taking action to strengthen communities. According to Wilson's definition, literacy is needed before civic education can be developed, and both are needed to be civically literate. This definition aligns with the overall elements that civic education encompasses. This definition was also adopted due to its comprehensive view that best fits the needs for adult learners. Wilson's definition specifically focused on adults.

Civic Skills

As previously mentioned, civic education is needed to be an active, engaged citizen within the community. However, an extensive amount of research exists on why developing civic skills and responsibilities are important for adults (Muñoz & Wrigley, 2012, p. 82). As a case in point, the Center for Civic Education (1994) stated that: "ultimately, a free society must rely on the knowledge, skills, and virtue of its citizens and those they elect to public office…civic education is essential to the preservation and improvement of American constitutional democracy" (p. 1). Civic education instruction is offered at different levels in adult education programs due to the impact it has on adult learners' lives. Thus, Saal and Shaw (2020) agreed that democracy will suffer without informed citizens; issues like COVID-19 and elections emphasize the need for adults to possess civic skills. For instance, if adults do not participate in elections or do not

understand how to obtain information regarding safety protocols or resources related to the COVID-19 pandemic, this will create an environment where citizens have no voice or create a democracy where citizens are left with no skills to solve issues that are applicable to their daily lives.

As previously mentioned, civic education is necessary for the growth and stability of society, but it is also important for the growth of individuals. Obtaining elevated literacy skills is critical to success navigating areas such as health, finances, career, education, and daily life (Larrotta & Chung, 2020, p. 1). Gaining literacy skills is vital for participation in society. Lesaux et al. (2016) expand on the idea of the importance of individuals gaining these skills for advancement. According to Lesaux et al. (2016), today's learners "need to develop an increasingly complex set of advanced literacy skills and competencies in order to access social and economic opportunities" (p. 3). Obtaining literacy knowledge is important for every person; however, obtaining the knowledge of civic literacy is even more important for adults due to the effect it can have on daily life.

Moreover, Flanagan and Levine (2010) expanded on the idea of how civic engagement is vital to participate in society as well as to develop as an individual. They explained that there are many personal and psychological benefits of civic engagement, which include the "fulfillment of the human need to belong and to feel that life has a purpose beyond the pursuit of individual gain" (Flanagan & Levine, 2010, p. 160). These psychological benefits allow for a person to become more engaged within their community, volunteer, find solutions for local problems as well as solving problems in general (Flanagan & Levine, 2010, p. 160). Those who are involved within their community due to their civic knowledge help not only themselves, but also the community in which they live.

An understanding of civic education can influence citizens on a micro level; however, it also affects more than just individuals. For instance, Boggs (1991) believes that civic education is vitally important in adult education because it is essential for people in democratic societies to solve problems by using their knowledge of civics. Democracy and adult education have similar foundations. According to Muñoz and Wrigley (2012), "adult education rests its eclectic practices on theories of democracy and citizenship" (p. 81). This means that the practices often implemented in the context of adult education align with how citizenship and democracy involve the people. Put simply, the wants and needs of the people are an underlying theme within adult education, citizenship, and democracy. Gouthro (2012) comments on this idea by explaining that it is common for adult education to be intertwined with social change and citizenship engagement. Adult education and civic engagement being intertwined can also be seen in Beder's (1989) principles of adult education. These principles include: 1) "to facilitate change in a dynamic society, 2) to support and maintain the good social order, 3) to promote productivity, and 4) to enhance personal growth" (p. 39). Within these principles, the person is always the focus. For instance, a fundamental concept in adult education is to enhance personal growth, which means that a person's self-improvement is a major focus. In addition, these principles align with the core principles of civic participation requiring citizens to be engaged within society.

Civic Education in Community-Based Contexts

Civic education can be seen in a variety of contexts; however, the ways in which civic engagement is taught in community-based organizations are often overlooked. Typically, in this setting, classes offered at community-based organizations or programs are free and are offered to an array of learners (Taylor et al., 2010). Non-profit

organizations are known to help with childcare, "develop and manage housing, assist senior citizens with daily living tasks, provide employment training, supervise youth development projects, and deliver a wide range of other supportive human services" (Marwell, 2004, pp. 266-267). In addition, non-profit organizations (NPOs) are known for playing a vital role in the condition of society (Marwell, 2004). According to Moreno-Albarracin et al. (2021), NPOs are an important part of the social economy, which means that they "are responsible for promoting social and economic transformations with a direct impact on the environment in which they operate" (p. 764). Thus, NPOs have a tremendous impact on the communities in which they are situated.

In the same vein, "grassroots organizations provide many important democratic opportunities for adults, including learning for social change, learning around governance, and learning for active citizenship" (Gouthro, 2012, p. 51). These types of organizations appear when there is a need, and decisions can be made from within the organization rather than seeking leadership from tradition or official organizations (Gouthro, 2012). Community education programs are both created by and based on the needs of community members. According to White (2014), this type of education promotes self-efficacy because citizens are able to work together to solve local issues. The community can be similar to the classroom, which ensures "a more long-term connection to active rather than passive endeavors as citizens" (White, 2014, p. 2). When education takes place outside of the more traditional settings, it can create more of a sense of meaning behind what is being learned. Therefore, community education makes a long-lasting impact on all of those who are involved in the process.

It is important to note that there are not equal opportunities in communities like there are in formal institutions. For instance, civic engagement that is taught in formal

education settings is typically taught through established programs (Pollack, 2015; Slavkin et al., 2010). These programs include established objectives or curriculum. However, in communities, civic education or civic engagement comes with a wide range of issues. For instance, community-based youth organizations are one example of a volunteer or civic engagement opportunity, but these organizations rely on adult volunteers, which can be hard to accomplish in a low-income community (Flanagan & Levine, 2010). Meyer and Fine (2017) elaborate on this issue of civic literacy in disadvantaged circumstances and explain that there is an "upper class bias" in participation, meaning that those who are more advantaged have more opportunities to engage in these matters (p. 327). For instance, people who have the financial means to be able to spend time volunteering are able to do so.

Unbeknownst to many, a lot of the work being done in community-contexts regarding participatory citizenship is being done by one of the most marginalized communities: undocumented immigrants (Meyer & Fine, 2017). When it comes to undocumented immigrants and issues like voter turnout or immigrant rights, "the most dynamic organizing has occurred among the undocumented" compared to national or local organizations (Meyer and Fine, 2017, p. 330). This means that people are going through alternative channels to be active citizens within society. In addition, this population is "engaging in normal politics" despite that "they lack formal rights to participate via normal institutional routes" (Meyer & Fine, 2017, p. 339). It is clear some communities are more neglected than others when it comes to civic literacy, but it does not mean that these neglected populations should suffer because of it.

The lack of civic education program opportunities in communities have negatively affected adults. As stated by Wilson (2002, p. 12), the negative effects led to

the lack of knowledge for (a) obtaining basic skills needed for family life, employment, citizenship, or community life, and (b) adults' roles as a citizen and community members. In addition, Carcasson and Sprain (2012) also underline the shortcomings of civic education programs. More specifically, they pose the question of "whether civic education programs are properly geared to the nature of the problems we face of and in democracy" (p. 15). This question highlights the lack of effectiveness of these programs.

Civic Education in Higher Education

Another context where civic education can be seen is in higher education. Typically, civic literacy is taught at the primary or middle school education level because of the positive impact of providing students at this age with the knowledge to help them engage in civic life (Schulz et al., 2010; Tovmasyan & Thoma, 2008). In higher education, civic literacy is taught more implicitly. One of the hoped-for outcomes for teaching students is to create better citizens that can engage within society. For example, Leake (2012) explains that this objective is often included in syllabi as well as mission statements throughout departments at universities. However, the specifics of how civic education is being fostered remain unclear.

Colleges and universities have always been vocal about their purpose aligning with civic and democratic goals when educating students (Cole, 2016, p. 290). Moreover, colleges and universities provide a unique chance to "level the playing field between lower- and higher-income students by providing resources and opportunities for civic learning and engagement that can positively influence civic outcomes" (Benenson & Bergom, 2019, p. 1666). In other words, the context of the college and university is a chance to prepare future generations to be active citizens.

One example of how civic education is being taught in higher education is through college debate programs. Debate allows "students not only to be better speakers and critical listeners, but also to be more informed, engaged, and responsible citizens" (Hogan, et al., 2017, p. 378). This is an important skill to develop to participate in democracy and to gain understanding of political debates during elections and similar events. According to Hogan et al. (2017), debate programs continue to do what they have always done providing education for citizenship not only through competitive debate but also with educational and civic outreach (p. 378). Learning to participate in debates is a complex but necessary skill to be able to consider different viewpoints.

Another example of how civic education can be seen in the context of higher education is through learning activities such as service-learning projects. These types of projects are catered towards university students, but also involve those in the community. According to Coelho and Menezes (2021), higher education institutions "are set with new demands both in the sense of rethinking their internal practices as well as their interaction with the community, balancing tensions between inclusion and quality" (p. 2). Moreover, the increase of fake news or misinformation regarding the pandemic has created an urgency of preparing students to be critical and engaged citizens (Coelho & Menezes, 2021, p. 2). One specific example of civic education in higher education is the requirement of undergraduate students to take at least two service-learning requirements at California State University, Monterey Bay (CSUMB) in order to graduate socially and civically engaged students that can contribute to society (Pollack, 2015). Another example is the CREATE project that was implemented which involved partnering university faculty with K-12 teachers and students who were labeled as at-risk (Slavkin et al., 2010). Even though civic education is a focus within higher education, it is concluded

through research that civic education is explicitly taught through established programs with a framework such as service-learning curriculum (Pollack, 2015; Slavkin et al., 2010). This means that civic education is taught in cooccurrence with other subjects or projects.

Implementation of Civic Education

Even though there are questions surrounding the efficacy of the programs implementing civic education, there are examples of the skills and responsibilities of civic education being taught. One example is can be seen at places like public libraries. Public libraries have emerged as a safe haven for all community members; more specifically, for adults who are not able to read or children who struggle to keep up with their formal education (Campbell-Hicks, 2016). In addition, typically libraries address local needs with various local factors when implementing any type of educational program (Campbell-Hicks, 2016). Libraries are a trusted and accessible resource that are devoted to doing good for the community that they are in (Meek, 2012). Moreover, public libraries are seen as a space for all community members to come together (Coward et al., 2018). Within the literature, public libraries are primarily the only context where civic literacy is being implemented and documented.

Regarding civic education, libraries are a place where citizens can go to increase civic participation, through services that promote community discussions or reading programs (Kranich, 2005, pp. 90-91). Libraries give patrons information on community issues and also gives patrons a chance to practice public dialogue skills (Meek, 2012). Libraries have many programs, for all ages, that incorporate community issues into the learning process. For instance, most libraries provide some type of workforce development help that gives patrons who struggle with unemployment some resources.

Kranich (2012) elaborates more on the idea of libraries also being a place where patrons can go to share ideas and concerns, which brings people of the community together for decision making on important topics (p. 75). A popular trend has been the transition of libraries being seen as only a place to get books to welcoming community engagement centers where community discourse is welcomed (Meek, 2012). Elaborating more on the idea of the library's role regarding civic literacy, Kranich (2012) explains:

> Libraries have long recognized their role in promoting access to a diversity of ideas, serving as depositories for government, community, and other useful information. But many are also expanding that civic role by facilitating the exchange and sharing of those ideas. Why? Because libraries uphold and strengthen some of the most fundamental democratic ideals of our society; they not only make information freely available to all, but also foster the development of a civil society. They also provide comfortable, inviting, neutral, safe civic spaces conducive to democratic discourse – spaces where citizens can work together to solve public problems. (p. 75)

Aligning with this explanation of the library's role, there has been a shift in how libraries are conducting outreach. More specifically, there has been a change in the activities that are being offered for their patrons. It is common to think that the public library only offers services such as collecting and lending books or programming and events (Hapel, 2020). However, Hapel (2020) explores more modern approaches being implemented that primarily focus on some type of civic engagement. For instance, Aarhus Public Libraries have developed a model, called the "Mash-up Library," where patrons use the library as space that provides activities, but may not offer all of the services (Hapel, 2020). This model gives patrons access to a variety of different services

through partnerships, agencies, or organizations within the community, which gives patrons a new way to look at community engagement.

As previously noted, public libraries are known for catering to the communities in which they are situated. At the Seattle Public Library (SPL), there is work being done with community members to make sure community issues are being addressed. Furthermore, SPL's Social Justice Change Team is also working to create public programming to emphasize conversations surrounding race and social justice. Coward et al. (2018) give examples of civic engagement and literacy being implemented within communities. According to C. Davida Ingram, the manager at SPL, "civic engagement efforts will only be effective if the community is empowered by an outside-in approach" (Coward et al., 2018, p. 17). In addition to the idea of centering activities around issues within the community, at the libraries in Chicago, Illinois, an annual event called "On the Table" has been created where people of the community can come to connect with other community members. Typically, at this event, "people gather in their neighborhoods to share their challenges and ideas for solutions" (Coward et al., 2018, p. 8). The emphasis of this event is bringing the community of Chicago together.

Another example of libraries listening to their community members is the community-wide reading program that was created in Multnomah County, Oregon (Coward et al., 2018). This reading program in Multnomah County focuses on issues of homelessness, affordable housing, and evictions. The purpose of this reading program is to bring in lecturers or other community members who specialize in these areas to give patrons of the library access to information in order for them to make changes with their current living situation, if needed (Coward et al., 2018). Similar to this reading program, other reading programs have been created across the United States in order to get

community members involved in some type of civic education regarding the library. For instance, community-wide reading clubs have become extremely popular in Seattle and Chicago. Kranich (2012) explains that the Kentucky State Library has partnered with more than 130 community partners to create a state-wide reading program, in hopes of building more unity in the state. In the same vein, the Civically Engaged Reader program, which has been implemented in many public libraries, offers patrons the opportunity to read a collection of short stories that revolve around the "central questions of civic life" (Kranich, 2012, p. 82). The connecting thread between all of these public library initiatives is the engagement of community members in hopes of providing answers or solutions to existing problems in the community through some type of civic literacy in order for patrons to be more active within their communities.

Similar to the work being done within public libraries, other projects have been enacted in communities, such as The Literacy Project. According to their website, this project is situated in Western Massachusetts and offers education courses to help participants succeed at work, home, and their community (Our Mission section, para. 1). With these resources being available to adults at various locations, buildings within the communities are used as places to learn. Moreover, the Resurrection Project aims to offer assistance to communities in Chicago. More specifically, one of the missions of the Resurrection Project that is listed on its website is to assistant with leadership development and civic engagement. The project advocates for issues such as education or immigration policies in hopes of preparing future leaders in their communities (Inspire Collective Power section, para. 1). In order for the project to be sustained, a model was created. The pillars in this model are community wealth building, stewardship of community assets, and community ownership that strengthen stakeholders, which leads to

a healthy community (TRP's Model section, para. 2). This model is one of the few structures in place in the community context that offers facilitators a guide to follow.

Other examples of civic education being put into practice in the community-organization context include programs focused on immigration integration. For instance, Wrigley (2012) explores programs that encompass civic education, immigrants, and adult education. According to Wrigley (2012), civic engagement and participation are vital for immigrants to be a part of a community. Wrigley examines three grassroots initiatives that foster civic education among the immigrant population. For instance, the Welcome Back Center Initiative: Reentry for Foreign-Born Professionals was created to help highly educated immigrants who are not employed to find work or gain reaccreditation in the United States. As of now, there are nine centers in the country that focus on promoting these skills through classes and training. Another example is the Advance El Paso: Early Childhood and Parenting Initiative. This program focuses on immigrant parents participating in the United States school system. Parents are encouraged to volunteer in their children's schools, discuss issues with other parents, and set goals for their own education. Lastly, Project SHINE, Philadelphia: Students Helping in the Naturalization of Elders promotes college students working with older immigrants by teaching them English and helping them navigate the naturalization process. This particular initiative focuses on older immigrants because the resources that are offered in the community setting typically move too fast for older adults, which can make the naturalization process overwhelming (Wrigley, 2012). In each of these initiatives, the focus is on immigrant integration, but it is made clear through the work that is being done that civic education is not only important, but necessary to allow adults to contribute to society.

Gap in the Literature

Public institutions are a place for people to learn and discuss about issues affecting community and to find ways to effectively solve these problems (Kranich, 2005). It has been noted that current civic participation has become more of a short-term engagement and there is distrust in democratic institutions (Carcasson & Sprain, 2012). As it has been recently established (TWC, 2017), community-based organizations have a vital role in encouraging civic participation and engagement due to their ability to come together with others for the benefit of the community (Kranich, 2005). In addition, higher education institutions offer a variety of civic engagement activities that allow for growth of their students as well as community members (Hartley, 2009, p. 12), but these initiatives are not well documented. Both community-based organizations and higher education institutions offer a space for people to explore civic issues with others who might have different perspectives (Flanagan & Levine, 2010). However, work remains to be done to strengthen community partnerships and collaborations between the public, organizations, institutions, and stakeholders (Flanagan & Levine, 2010). Likewise, it remains unclear how civic education is being taught and how programs and facilitators are promoting civic engagement and civic responsibility. Studies documenting civic education initiatives across the nation are imperative. There is a need to learn more about the complexities of program development and gain understanding about relevant topics and issues that need to be addressed in civic education initiatives. Similarly, studies illustrating the connections between lifelong learning philosophy and civic education are scarce.

III. METHODS AND STUDY DESIGN

This descriptive case study examines initiatives being implemented in community-based organizations to document civic education initiatives in Central Texas. The goal was to record how facilitators foster civic education development in these contexts. There are many milestones within one's life, and civic engagement is key in the transition from adolescence to adulthood (Flanagan & Levine, 2010). However, before a person can civically engage, they must have a basic understanding of what civic education and engagement entails.

Unfortunately, it is now more common for adults to be disconnected from civic life, which leaves adults unable to participate in bettering schools, creating job opportunities, or reducing poverty (Kranich, 2005). These missed opportunities can cause financial issues as well as negatively affect adults and their children by missing out on educational opportunities and resources. This chapter describes the method and study design for the present dissertation and includes the following sections: qualitative research, case study, setting and study participants, data collection sources, data analysis, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations.

Qualitative Research

According to Merriam (2009), a qualitative researcher is interested in revealing the meaning of a particular occurrence, and qualitative research seeks to understand perceptions, interpretations, or meanings (p. 5). Qualitative research is "investigation that relies heavily on observers defining and redefining the meanings of what they see and hear" (Stake, 2010 p. 36). Due to its nature, qualitative research generates large amounts of data that the researcher must organize, analyze, and report (Merriam, 2009; Patton,

2002). As such, the researcher's understanding of the data is at the forefront of this type of research, and their perspective is necessary throughout the research process.

To effectively conduct a qualitative study, a researcher must understand the qualitative approach. There are four characteristics that are key to understanding qualitative research: (a) the focus is on process, understanding, and meaning, (b) the researcher analyzes and collects the data, (c) it is an inductive process, and (d) the outcome is greatly explanatory (Merriam, 2009, p. 14). All of these characteristics emphasize the importance of the role of the researcher. For instance, one characteristic highlights this type of research being a process where a researcher draws conclusions based off of the data that are collected. This inductive process creates an approach where the researcher's logic is methodical and valued.

Data collected for a qualitative study are dependent on the "researcher's theoretical orientation, by the problem and purpose of the study, and by the samples selected" (Merriam, 2009, p. 86). Due to the information that I sought out for this topic, multiple forms of data were documented to gather information. According to Merriam (1998), in a qualitative study, the research has the opportunity to "respond to the situation by maximizing opportunities for collecting and producing meaningful information" (p. 20). Along with gathering the various types of data, I was open to opportunities that arose, and I adapted in order to best collect, organize, and process the data. In the end, I found that a qualitative design best fit my dissertation.

Case Study

The traditional case study focuses on a specific and complex phenomenon (Yin, 2013). More specifically, a case study is "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit" (Merriam, 2009, p. 46). Similarly, Thomas

(2011) defines a case study as "analyses of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions, or other systems that are studies holistically by one or more methods" (p. 513). The key takeaway of case study is that there is a problem that is being studied through the use of multiple sources of information.

Yin's (2009) six-stage case study process was used as a guide for this dissertation. These six steps include: planning, preparing, designing, collecting, analyzing, and sharing. This linear process allows the researcher to meticulously approach each step in this process. In the planning and preparing stage, the research questions were defined as well as the reasons why the study should be conducted. In the designing stage, the procedures and design of the study were developed. During the collection stage, multiple forms of data were collected.

This is a descriptive case study in which I collected and analyzed data from several cases "categorically bound together" (Merriam, 2009, p. 49). The goal was to look at multiple civic education initiatives to gather a rich set of data. According to Merriam (2009), multiple cases in a study provide a more compelling interpretation of the data. Yin (2013) also agrees with this approach, stating that collecting a wide range of data allows for a chance to thoroughly explore the phenomenon. This design aligned with the study goals, which were to examine the implementation of civic education initiatives and describe how facilitators are fostering civic education development.

Study Setting and Participants

As illustrated in Table 1, study participants came from two settings: community-based organizations and higher education institutions. The work of different organizations and institutions which foster civic education in Central Texas was documented.

Table 1. *Setting and Participants*

Setting	Participants
Community-Based Setting Three initiatives sponsored by community-based organizations (one webinar, one online interactive lecture, and one face-to-face event)	**Interviewed:** • 1 program coordinator at a civics engagement program • 1 library facilitator/program specialist **Observed:** • 7 guest speakers (federal government employees)
Higher Education Setting Four initiatives sponsored by higher education settings (two community colleges and two universities)	**Interviewed:** • 1 facilitator (literacy professor) • 1 event coordinator for a civic engagement institute • 1 program director for a civics lab **Observed:** • 1 guest speaker (a judge)

Snowball sampling and referrals served as sampling techniques to recruit study participants (Merriam, 2009). In addition, criterion-based sampling was helpful in identifying civic education initiatives. Patton (2002) recommends to "review and study all cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance" (p. 238) to establish the research sample. Therefore, building on Wilson's (2002) framework, seven civic education initiatives were identified. Program organizers described the civic education initiatives as a means to encourage the public to (1) become and stay informed, (2) form and express opinion, (3) work together to learn and solve problems, and (4) take action to

strengthen communities. In addition, the civic education initiative being offered had to be free of cost or at a low cost.

Potential participants were contacted via email. There was not a standard script for this email message, as all facilitators and civic education initiatives were different. I would introduce myself and explain the goal of the study as well as the nature of the expected participation. Some initiatives were found through social media postings (e.g., Twitter and LinkedIn) and others though program webpages and referrals. Through email communications we decided whether the program fit the dissertation study. More specifically, these conversations would typically involve a negotiation of the meaning of what *civic education* entails. Once there was an agreement and mutual understanding of *civic education* in the context of the initiative, the facilitators were either asked to participate or asked if they could provide a referral to another initiative, one that better fit Wilson's (2002) framework.

Data Collection

Data collection techniques for a study depend on the researcher's "theoretical orientation, problem and purpose of the study, and the sample" (Merriam, 2009, p. 86). Multiple sources need to be collected to have an in-depth understanding of the data (see Table 2). Therefore, data collection sources included conversational interviews, observations, documents and artifacts, and a research journal.

Table 2. *Data Collection Sources*

Type of Data	*Conversational Interviews*	*Observations*	*Documents & Artifacts*	*Research Journal*

Frequency	6 individual conversational interviews with 5 participants	6 observations (online and in-person) of civic education initiatives	Collected before, during, and after the observations (if applicable)	Notes made throughout the data collection process
Purpose	Documented initiatives related to civic education and facilitators' practices

Illustrated the practices of civic education facilitators | Took notes when civic education components and application were present | Enhanced the context and added meaning to the observations (e.g., handouts, notecards, lesson plans, photos, flyers) | Recorded descriptive and reflective notes that focused on civic education components & application |
| *Gathered via* | Audio recordings | Observation protocol computer typed | Pictures and photocopies | Typed notes on a laptop |

Conversational Interviews

According to Merriam (2009), the purpose of conducting an interview is to understand more about someone's perspective because it is impossible to know or observe someone's feelings, intentions, or perceptions (p. 88). Interviewing allows to find out what is on someone's mind and gather their stories (Patton, 2002, p. 341). For this study, conversational interviews were conducted with relevant participants. Conversational interviews are the most open-ended approach and allow opportunities for "flexibility, spontaneity, and responsiveness" (Patton, 2002, p. 343). A list of questions guided conversational interviews (see Appendix B), but the topics of discussion evolved as the conversation progressed and based on the nature of the program or initiative being documented.

Observations

Observations are useful in qualitative research due to researchers not being able to learn from simply what someone says (Patton, 2002, p. 21). Observations can be a way for the researcher to gain a better perspective of a particular setting. Similar to documents and artifacts, observations can be used to help researchers in future interviews with participants (Merriam, 2009). There are many aspects to consider when observing, and what one observes is dependent upon the research questions guiding the study. It is important to have an agenda before going into each observation. For this study, Merriam's (2009, pp. 120-121) checklist of likely elements that are present in settings was used: the physical setting, the participants, activities and interactions, conversation, and subtle factors. By having a set list of factors to focus on in each observation, it allowed me to have a starting point for each observation. In addition, the protocol was influenced by Wilson's (2002) framework and the dissertation research questions (see Appendix C). The focus for the observations was to document the facilitators' practices. The observations were conducted through two ways: in-person or online.

Documents and Artifacts

Documents are a wide range of materials that relate to a study (Merriam, 2009, p. 139). In qualitative research, documents and artifacts can be used in five specific ways: (1) provide context, (2) create possible questions, (3) provide supplementary information, (4) track changes or development, or (5) verify one's findings (Bowen, 2009, pp. 29-30). Moreover, examining documents and artifacts provide the researcher with sources that can be re-examined and not changed from the influence of the researcher (Bowen, 2009). The difference between artifacts and documents is artifacts are objects while documents are a form of communication (Merriam, 2009). If they were available, documents and

artifacts were collected during the observations. Examples of these documents and artifacts included lesson plans, photographs, and social media posts. I also collected flyers or advertising information that pertains to the initiative that was observed. Photos and photocopies of the documents and artifacts were used to gather this data.

Research Journal

The goal of the journal is to make descriptions during the observations, interviews, as well as while examining the documents and artifacts. These notes are a way to "create a record of the study unfolding over time," which become "exceedingly valuable in analysis" (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018, p. 383). The practice of reflexivity in the context of collecting and analyzing data will help to inform the researcher's decisions and interpretations as well as allow for transparency of the data collection process (Etherington, 2004). To take notes, I used a notebook or laptop at all times during these events for accessibility purposes.

Another goal of keeping a research journal is to specifically take descriptive and reflective notes. Descriptive notes describe the setting as well as other observations made of the participants. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), there are six elements that are included in descriptive notes: portraits of the subjects, reconstruction of the dialogue, description of the physical setting, accounts of particular events, depiction of activities, and the observer's behavior. The portraits of the subjects are when the research provides as much physical and descriptive information about the participants to provide a "picture" of each person involved in the study. When reconstructing the dialogue, the researcher highlights what the participant said as well as body language and facial expressions that are made. The description of the physical setting involves a thorough examination of the setting of the observation site as well as the setting of the interview. Accounts of

particular events are a way for the researcher to provide additional information regarding what is being done at each observation and interview. The depiction of activities describes the activities that the participants are engaging in. Lastly, the observer's behavior is a way for the researcher to reflect on their own biases and beliefs throughout the research process, especially when engaging with participants.

The reflective notes provide more personal descriptions of the research process. Bodgan and Biklen (2007) give five examples of how reflective notes can be used. These examples include reflections on analysis, reflections on method, reflections on ethical dilemmas and conflicts, reflections on the observer's frame of mind, and points of clarification. All of these uses of reflective notes serve as chances for the researcher to reflect on their own thoughts and beliefs in different stages of the research process.

Data Analysis

Analysis is an important part of reporting data, which means that "analysts have an obligation to monitor and report their own analytical procedures and processes as fully and truthfully as possible" (Patton, 2002, p. 434). For this descriptive case study, I followed Stake's (2005) responsibilities for the qualitative researcher:

1. Bounding the case and determining the focus of study

2. Selecting themes/issues

3. Seeking patterns within the data

4. Selecting possible interpretations

5. Creating assertions/generalizations of the study (pp. 459-460).

Regarding the first responsibility, a key step in research, is to articulate a clear focus of what is being explored. Second, selecting themes and issues allow for the development of an understanding of the data while also organizing findings into particular themes or

issues. This step helped me identify emergent themes to report study findings. Seeking patterns within the data takes it a step further by analyzing the categories and developing emergent themes.

Inductive and deductive analysis allowed for patterns and themes to emerge. Inductive analysis is when the researcher allows the data to speak by themselves, while deductive analysis is when data are examined through an existing framework (Patton, 2002, pp. 55-57). During inductive analysis, which is common in the beginning stages of analysis, open coding was used to identify as many codes as possible and to create room for new findings (not included in the study framework). This includes reading and re-reading the data several times to make sure that all codes have been identified. This allowed for the chance to create patterns and themes without the influence of an existing framework. Deductive analysis was also used to examine the data in light of Wilson's (2002) framework of civic education.

Stake's (1995) constructivist approach to analyze data best aligned with the purpose of this study. According to Stake (2005), there are specific phases of data analysis: description, categorical aggregation/direct interpretation, establishing patterns, and naturalistic generalizations. Each phase has a specific purpose in making sense of the data. In order to create new meanings about cases, "direct interpretation of the individual instance" and "aggregation of instances" are used until "something can be said about them as a case" (Stake, 1995, p. 74). There is no set time when analysis starts, searching for patterns within the data can happen from the start of the project. Patterns are typically found when important phrases or meanings appear repeatedly (Stake, 1995). Naturalistic generalizations are made collaboratively with those involved in the study through asking them follow-up questions and questions for clarification.

All the data analysis steps described in this section were helpful in identifying emergent themes meaningful to providing answers to the dissertation research questions. Chapter IV presents a report of study findings by addressing each research question along with a discussion of the emergent themes in relation to the literature. Such discussion aims to confirm what is congruent with existent research. It also seeks to highlight the themes that emerged as a contribution to the literature and the area of civic education for adults.

Trustworthiness

It is the researcher's duty to ensure trustworthiness (Shenton, 2004). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 301), to be trustworthy, a study should have the following elements: credibility, confirmability, and dependability. Credibility is the confidence in the truth of reported in the findings. Credibility for the present study is illustrated though the examples and narratives told by the study participants as they related them to me. Providing enough information and narratives from the interactions with the study participants add trustworthiness to the study. Confirmability means that the findings are not influenced by the researcher's bias, motivation, or interests. Enough description of the civic education initiatives is provided in chapter IV. There was transparency in the process of collecting and reporting the data. Dependability refers to the findings being reported in such way that all data sources point in the same direction. To this effect several data sources were collected to document study findings, interviews, observations, research journal, and artifacts.

Ethical Considerations

To conduct an ethical study, I requested IRB approval from Texas State University. Information about the study was given in advance in the consent form before

the study began (see Appendix D). This consent from provided participants with information about their roles in the study. According to Patton (2002), these protocols typically cover the purpose of collecting information, how the information will be used, what will be asked, how the responses will be handled, and the risk/benefits for the person being interviewed (p. 407). This allows the participants to have clear expectations about the study and their participation.

Protecting the participants' identities and the data collected is of the utmost importance in this study. Names of organizations and institutions are not provided, and the participants were given pseudonyms. In addition, notes taken on my laptop (i.e., on-site observation protocols and research journal) were password protected on my computer. All recordings, documents, and artifacts were also stored on a password-protected file.

There was emphasis on the voluntary nature of participation in the study. Many emails were exchanged, and participants had a clear idea of the purpose and nature of the study to be able to decide whether or not this was an endeavor they wanted to contribute to. The data collection process was people-centered and flexible to the type of setting and mode of delivery of the education initiatives. For example, sometimes I attended events as a participant to be able to show interest in learning and good faith to establish rapport with program facilitators.

IV. FINDINGS

The purpose of the study was to identify and describe civic education initiatives for adults in Central Texas. This research documents efforts promoting civic education, civic responsibility, and civic engagement. The research questions guiding this dissertation included (1) what is being done to foster civic education in central Texas? (2) how can civic education program facilitators help adults become and stay informed? and (3) how are program facilitators promoting civic engagement? This chapter presents answers to each research question by highlighting meaningful emergent themes and supporting data. For the first research question, I describe seven civic education initiatives. To provide answers for the second question, I discuss three emergent themes (a) access to resources, (b) civic education jargon, and (c) storytelling. Finally, to answer the third question I discuss three emergent themes, (a) direct experience, (b) sense of belonging, and (c) learners' interests.

Research Question #1

What is being done to foster civic education in central Texas?

Data to address answers to the first research question came from interviews, observations, documents, pictures, and the research journal I kept. Over an eight-month period, I actively sought out initiatives that were fostering civic education throughout Central Texas. Because civic education encompasses a variety of skills and subjects, I made sure that each initiative was in line with the study framework; that is the ecological view of civic education development (Wilson, 2002) and the UNESCO's (Delors, 1996) pillars of lifelong education. This was done by examining the description of the initiatives on social media posts or on websites and by asking facilitators whether or not the initiative fell into the category of civic education. Typically, my process would be to

search for civic education initiatives online and through social media outlets, then I would reach out to the facilitator or those associated with the initiative to confirm the purpose of the initiative. Then, we would discuss whether or not they felt that the focus of the initiative aligned with elements of civic education. However, for some initiatives, I was not able to get in touch with the facilitator or those associated with the initiative beforehand. In these situations, I would attend the initiative as a participant, conduct the observation, and then reach out to those involved while I was attending (in-person or virtually) or through follow up emails. The process of finding these initiatives and programs involved many conversations before and after they were offered to make sure they were a good fit for the dissertation. This process took eight months to be completed.

Table 3. *Civic Education Initiatives in Central Texas*

Initiative	Focus	Data Collected	Modality
Cesar Chavez Day Teach-In Webinar Community Based Organization	Lecture: Testimonials about life and career in politics Provide resources for public to promote civic education (websites links, email addresses)	• One 60-minute observation of 7 federal government employees • Research journal • Documents • Power Point slides • Social media content	Online Open to the public Group One-time event
Children's Defense Fund - Youth Civics Education & Engagement Community Based Organization	Summary of events offered to the public Based on community needs (e.g., field trip to the capitol to speak with government officials)	• One 60-minute conversational interview with program coordinator • Fieldnotes • Webpage content	Face to face Open to the public Group Based on learner needs Several events
Economy Series at Public Library Community Based Organization	Interactive lecture: Discussed relevant specialized glossary and what the public can do to promote civic education	• One 2-hour observation • One 60-minute conversational interview with (one) same facilitator/program specialist • Research journal • Documents (agenda, schedule)	Online Open to the public Group Based on patrons' needs One-time event
Initiative	Focus	Data Collected	Modality

Civic Illiteracy and the Rule of Law Public university	Lecture: Presented statistical data Discussed conditions needed for civic participation	• One 60-minute observation of one speaker • Research journal • Documents (event flyer) • Social media content (Twitter posts)	Face to face Group Open to the public One-time event
Civic Literacy Lesson Community college	Class: Incorporated civic education in the ESL curriculum to develop skills (debate, discussion, from and express opinion) for democratic participation	• Two 2-hour observations • Two 60-minute conversational interviews with (one) same facilitator • Research journal • Power Point slides	Online Classroom ESL learners Offered as a unit of the curriculum every semester
Careers in Politics Public university	Interactive lecture: Testimonials about life and career in politics Q&A after each speaker's presentation Participate in a mixer to network	• One 3-hour observation of 4 government officials • One 60-minute conversational interview with event coordinator • Research journal • Documents (pamphlet with agenda, speaker bios) • Event pictures • Social media content	Face to Face Open to the public Group Annual event
Civics Lab Community college	Summary of public events offered to students and the public such as Adulting 101 and podcast series with interviews	• One 60-minute conversational interview with program director • Research journal • Social media content (Twitter posts)	Face to face One-on-one Public and students Annual event

A total of seven initiatives were documented (see Table 3). The first three were offered by community-based organizations, and the last four were offered through higher education settings (universities and community colleges). The community-based organizations are represented in yellow, while the higher education settings are represented in green. It is important to note that some initiatives that were included are offered at a national level; however, these initiatives have a regional chapter. For instance, the Children's Defense Fund is a national organization, but there is a local chapter in Central Texas. In addition, there is a combination of programs as well as

initiatives. The goal behind this was to document as many civic education initiatives available in Central Texas.

Table 3 presents seven civic education initiatives offered in Central Texas. The table explains the initiative, focus, data collected, and modality. For 'initiative', the first column gives the name of the civic education initiative or the organization that offered it. 'Focus' explains the format in which the initiative was delivered (e.g., lecture, interactive lecture, summary, class). The 'data collected' column provides a list of data sources that helped document the event. Lastly, the 'modality' column refers to how the public was able to participate in the initiative (face-to-face, online, open to public).

Community-Based Initiatives

Three civic education programs are being offered through community-based organizations. These are: (1) Cesar Chavez Day Teach-In Webinar, (2) The Children's Defense Fund - Youth Civics Education & Engagement, and (3) an Economy Series at a public library.

Cesar Chavez Day Teach-In Webinar. This was lecture on "Lessons from federal leaders supporting migrant youth and families" and was put on by the U.S. Department of Education, specifically the White House Initiative on Advancing Education, Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Hispanics. The goal of this virtual teach-in was to provide those who attended with knowledge of federal resources and programs that could assist with supporting migrant students and families. This event featured administration leaders who shared their personal stories and experiences working with the migrant population. The seven speakers for this event included: (1) A Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, (2) The Executive Director for the White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity,

Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Hispanics, (3) A Senior Advisor for the White House Council on Environmental Quality, (4) The Chief of Staff for Natural Resources and Environment, U.S. Department of Agriculture, (5) The Director of the Office of Head Start, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, (6) The Director of the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and (7) The Director of Migrant Education, U.S. Department of Education. Each speaker introduced themselves, explained the programs they were associated with, and provided resources such as phone numbers to hotlines and email addresses of programs.

The event was advertised online through outlets such as Twitter and the White House website. It was one hour long and was open to the public. For this event, I took notes in the research journal and completed the observation protocol. In addition, I took photographs of PowerPoint slides from the presentation. These photographs show the introductory slides that feature the guest speakers as well as direction for participation. For instance, one slide gave instructions on how to ask questions throughout the presentation and how to get involved with the initiative. I also collected screenshots of postings to their Twitter account as well as their website promoting the event.

Children's Defense Fund - Youth Civics Education & Engagement. The Children's Defense Fund offers a variety of events for children, youth, and adults to gain civic education knowledge. All events for this organization are open to the public and are typically held in-person. The events that are created are heavily influenced by needs of those within the community. However, at the time I was collecting data, there was not an event being offered. Thus, for this initiative, I interviewed a civic education and engagement coordinator who is in charge of promoting civic engagement and creating

opportunities for people in the community as well as creating resources for people to get involved within their communities. I also collected material from their website, which included descriptions of the organization, their events, and information regarding ways to get involved with them.

The Children's Defense Fund offers a program, Freedom Schools, that focuses on five components to help people in the community have a more well-rounded positive outlook on learning. These components include: (1) high-quality academic enrichment, (2) parent and family involvement, (3) civic engagement and social action, (4) nutrition, health, and mental health, and (5) intergenerational leadership development. Within the civic engagement and social action component, the organization promotes learning about different aspects of civic engagement, such as learning about the voting process. For example, they offer opportunities to experience voting booths and filling out ballot boxes. In addition, the Children's Defense Fund offers resources to encourage civic education in Texas. For instance, on their webpage, there is a free guide that focuses on creating change in schools by speaking to one's local school board. The guide explains why someone should engage in their community, how someone can get involved, who funds school budgets, and the difference between the state Board of Education and local school boards. This guide is one of the many examples of civic engagement that the Children Defense Fund offers.

Economy Series. This was presented by a public library and was a three-part series that explored the topic of economy regarding the local community. This series was offered virtually as well as in person and was open to the public. The goal of the *Economy Series* was to address community wealth, sustainability, and the social wellbeing of the community. Each installation of the series focused on a different aspect

of the economy. For example, the first installation focused on the defining economy, the second explored ways to strengthen local economic practices, and the third installation examined cooperatives. I observed the second installation of the three-part series which entailed an interactive lecture, a recap of the previous installation, multiple activities that involved teamwork, and designated times to ask questions. The purpose of this specific installation was to redefine what is commonly understood as economy, identify problems and solutions to help local workforces, and strengthen and define the local solidarity economy.

To gather data for the *Economy Series*, I conducted a 60-minute conservational interview with the facilitator of the event. During the interview and observation, I made notes in the research journal and completed the observation protocol. In addition, I collected materials which included a lesson plan, a copy of the slides from the PowerPoint presentation, and copies of the activities that were completed during the observation. These materials were available to the participants prior to the event. The facilitator sent out an email which included all of these materials so that learners could preview the plans and materials for the upcoming event.

Initiatives Through Higher Education Settings

Four civic education programs were being offered through local universities and community colleges. These are: (1) Civic Illiteracy and the Rule of Law, (2) Civic Literacy Lesson, (3) Careers in Politics, and (4) Civics Lab.

Civic Illiteracy and Rule of Law. This was a one-time, in-person event that was hosted by a public university. The purpose of this event was to bring awareness to the topic of civic illiteracy in the United States. This event was one part of a lecture series of events put on by the political science department in hopes of getting students involved in

important issues. Furthermore, these events put on by the university give students the opportunity to network and collaborate with other students, professors, and professionals in the political science field.

The speaker gave a 60-minute lecture in which he presented statistics on the current rate of civic knowledge in the United States. Along with explaining the lack of knowledge that Americans have of civic literacy, he also went into detail explaining the history of the Constitution and why democracy matters. In his PowerPoint, he presented excerpts of the Constitution to support his lecture. In addition, he also gave examples of how to increase civic knowledge and civic engagement for everyone to get involved with their community. Towards the end of the lecture, there was a chance for audience members to ask questions. For this event, I observed the lecture and took notes in the research journal as well as collected an event flyer. In addition, I collected social media posts that were related to this event.

Civic Literacy Lesson. An English literacy course that was offered at a community college incorporated civic education into the curriculum. This class met twice a week for a total of three hours. In addition, this course was offered to every semester to students at the community college. The purpose of this class was to help non-native speakers learn English as well as learn how to engage in family, community, and careers. In every class, the facilitator included civic education into the lesson. For instance, the class would begin with an introduction, a recap of the previous class, a short lecture on terminology that applied to the lesson, a lecture or activity, and a closing discussion. The civic education component was seen throughout the class but was mainly presented in the group activities. For instance, during both of my observations, there was an activity for

each civics lesson (e.g., mock debate and a mock city council meeting) that encouraged learners to apply what they were learning throughout the lecture.

For this initiative, I conducted two conversational interviews (see Appendix B) with the facilitator of the course. In addition, I made two observations of the online class. Throughout the data collection process, I took notes in the research journal, completed the observation protocol, and took pictures of the PowerPoint slides that were used in class. In addition, I took pictures of other documents (e.g., a Google Doc for a group activity) that were used in class for collective activities.

Careers in Politics. This was promoted and hosted by a public university. This annual event was offered by an organization within the university which focuses on providing students and the community with opportunities to network and learn more about what it means to have a career in politics. Examples of opportunities that this organization offers to university students include research projects, communication training for leaders, and public forums that allow for dialogue surrounding current issues. On their website, it mentions that the organization's values include: political skills, equity and inclusivity, youth involvement, and civic leadership.

The *Careers in Politics* event primarily focused on sharing information about having a career in politics by having guest speakers share their experiences on having political jobs. For this event, there were a total of four guest speakers. Two speakers presented the opening and closing keynote address. Then, the other two guest speakers, hosted a panel that focused on getting involved with politics, policy, and public service in Texas and the local community. Throughout the panel, people were able to ask questions. The last part of the event was a networking session where food was provided. During this

session, people were encouraged to speak with others as well as network with those in the community. The three-hour event cost five dollars to attend.

For the *Careers in Politics* event, I observed the three-hour event. During the event, I took pictures, took notes in the research journal, completed the observation protocol, and participated in the event. I also collected documents such as a pamphlet and social media advertising posts. In addition, I conducted a conversational interview (see Appendix B) with the event coordinator where I was able to learn more about the organization and how it promotes civic education.

Civics Lab. The Civics Lab is an engagement program that is offered at a local community college. This program allows for community college students to gain experience and more of an understanding of political processes and public policy within their community. Along with giving students and community members access to information through their website, the Civics Lab also produces a podcast that highlights members in the community who are making a change. The purpose of the podcast is to shed light on civic leaders in the community so that students can learn more about them. In addition, the program also hosts annual events such as Adulting 101, where students and people in the community can learn how to be more successful inside and outside the classroom. Sessions for the Adulting 101 event include: career, self-care, financial, and leadership, rights, and responsibilities. This particular event was hybrid, meaning that those could attend in person as well as online.

Since there was no event or initiative to observe for the Civics Lab program during the data collection process, I conducted a conversational interview (see Appendix B) with the program director of the Civics Lab. In this conversational interview, I gained more insight into the rationale behind the podcasts and ways that the program is planning

to expand in the future. In addition to the interview, I took notes in the research journal and collected social media posts that pertained to events that were being offered through the Civics Lab program.

Research Question One Discussion

Study findings revealed that civic education initiatives being offered are limited, difficult to identify, and are sporadic. Civic education initiatives are not offered as sustainable programs; even if they are well received, they are not well established (Morgan, 2016). Based on the study participants' narratives, there is a wide range of how initiatives are being offered (i.e., annually, one-time event, lecture series, or as a unit in the curriculum for a college class). The sporadic nature of these events as well as the low number of initiatives being offered, highlighted how limited these events truly are in Central Texas. Out of the seven initiatives that were documented, only three were offered annually. The rest were one-time events. This finding aligns with Wilson's (2002) argument that more and more adults are not acquiring the basic skills needed for family life, employment, citizenship, or community life (p. 2). There is still a need for civic education initiatives that are offered more frequently and in sustainable ways so that all adults can gain understanding about their roles as citizens and community members.

From the data collected, it became evident that current literature focuses on the skills and responsibilities adults need to acquire rather than the wide range of topics encompassed in civic education. For instance, Kranich (2005) speaks about how public libraries are places where people can go to increase civic participation through services like reading programs, which can promote community discussion (pp. 90-91). This means that people who participate in reading programs at libraries can develop important communication skills such as active listening, personal connections, and public speaking.

In the higher education setting, the existing literature mainly points to civic education being taught through existing classes like public debate, and service learning (Hogan, et al., 2017; Pollack, 2015; Slavkin et al., 2010). These classes primarily focus on developing communication skills regarding civic education.

To that end, dissertation findings indicate that civic education can be taught through a variety of topics, which will result in an integration of learning skills and development of civic responsibilities. For instance, the *Economy Series* initiative that was offered by the public library focused on preparing learners to engage more within their communities through creating a sustainable economy by listening and engaging in an interactive lecture, participating in group activities, and learning vocabulary. Through exploring ways to strengthen local economic practices, learners were able to gain knowledge (learn to know), form and express opinion (learn to be), learn to work together (learn to live together), and take action (learn to do) as established by the work of UNESCO (Delors, 1996) and Wilson, 2002. Dissertation findings illustrate that to engage adults in civic education practices, different topics need to be discussed.

Another finding suggests that civic education initiatives available to adults go beyond a basic level of instruction or a basic literacy level, contrary to what the literature may imply (Ramakrishnan et al., 2020; Perren et al., 2013). Existing literature points to civic education initiatives primarily helping adults who may be marginalized, such as adults who are not able to read or have a difficult time keeping up with their formal education (Campbell-Hicks, 2016). Moreover, research highlights that undocumented immigrants are also linked to participating in organizations to become more active citizens (Meyer & Fine, 2018, p. 330). However, based on the topics and civic education initiatives described in this dissertation, there is a wide range in literacy levels and

knowledge in those who participate. More specifically, sophisticated topics are being

discussed (e.g., solidarity economy, civic illiteracy, career in politics) and the delivery

formats agree with current needs (online, hybrid, face-to-face instruction). The focus of

the initiatives go from basic instruction to a dialogue about politics and ideology.

Therefore, the way civic initiatives are commonly viewed regarding the content that is

being taught needs to be re-examined due to this finding.

Research Question #2

How can civic education program facilitators help adults become and stay informed?

Data to address this question came from conversational interviews, documents

(e.g., lesson plans and pamphlets), and research journal notes. Table 4 illustrates

emergent themes, frequency in which they appeared in the data, and a description of the

theme. Three themes emerged from the data to provide answers to research question two.

These are: (a) access to resources, (b) civic education jargon, and (c) storytelling.

Table 4. *Becoming and Staying Informed*

Emergent Theme	Frequency	Description
Access to resources	29	A wide variety of resources and participation opportunities are made available depending on the issue or topic
Civic education jargon	24	Gain knowledge about specialized terms and learn about basic and complex vocabulary words relevant to civic education
Storytelling	17	Stories are shared in order to contextualize the information and share knowledge

Access to Resources

It became evident that providing resources or sharing resources was a key

component in making sure that learners were becoming and staying informed. Alex, the

program coordinator of the Children's Defense Fund, shared her experience creating a

series of lectures and workshops that focused on learners being able to write to a

representative.

> *Everything we do, we try to really ground it in something that's happening in the real world. This summer we're doing a skill building series where we're going to create individual trainings on things like how to set up a public event, how to write a letter to the editor, or how to contact a representative. For every one of those trainings, we're going to have a specific advocacy campaign that we are already working on. For example, the training on how to contact a representative will be focused on the State Board of Education and make sure we have templates and talking points to put together an email campaign for people to reach out to their state board members about revising curriculum. (Alex)*

Alex's experiences working with young adults allowed her to provide information that

could help them get engaged within their communities. Alex stated that her goal is to

provide young adults with assistance bridging the gap between issues in the community

and the ability to access resources to be able to make a change. Her goal is to give

learners access to resources so that they can use them to be agents of change. In order for

participants of the lectures and workshops to learn about contacting a representative,

Alex provided them when templates and talking points to ensure they were well-equipped

to take on this task.

Next, Kyle, the event coordinator of the *Careers in Politics* event that was hosted

at a public university, shared insights into how their organization tries to provide

resources for those who are wanting to become more civically engaged in their

community. Specifically, he spoke about how they teach civic education by having

resources for the learners like guest speakers.

> *We bring the learners in to start the year with our Leadership Summit and that's three days of intensive civic learning. We have sitting house representatives come in and talk about bipartisanship. We have mayors come in and talk about how this line of work. We have communication professionals come in and talk about how to present yourself when you are out in the community, how to use various lines of communication to make an impact. (Kyle)*

Figure 2 illustrates a picture from the *Careers in Politics* event of a resource that was given to learners who attended on how to effectively network.

This resource provided by this organization gave participants information on how to engage with their community. The pamphlet provided specific questions that people could use to make connections and network. By providing learners with a variety of different resources (e.g., pamphlets and guest speakers), they were able to learn information, stay informed, and work together.
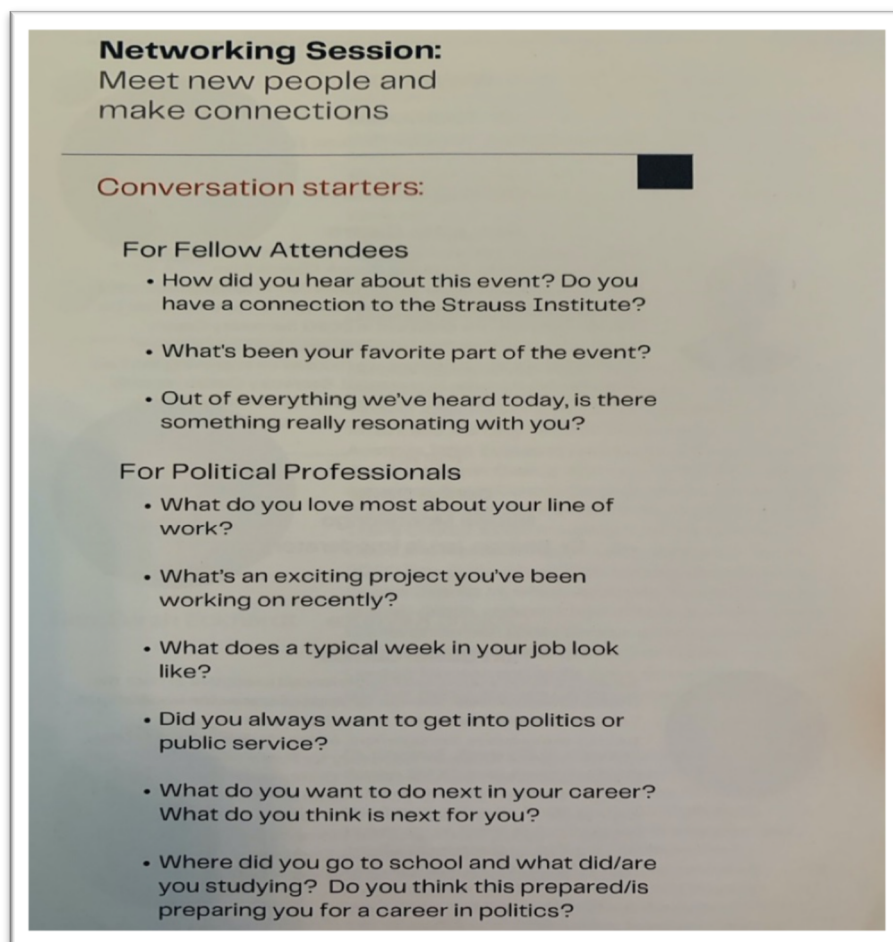

Figure 2. *Careers in Politics pamphlet*

Adding to Alex and Kyle's approaches, James, an English literacy instructor at a community college, spoke about his role as a facilitator and the need to share resources with those who are having a difficult time understanding English. One example he shared was providing students with websites that can assist with their level of proficiency.

> *One thing I have the learners do to keep up with current events as they relate to civic education is reading the news. There are many new websites there for learners and there are also tools where you take a news article and transform it into a more readable format for their level. (James)*

It is evident from James's narrative that resources are used as a tool to support their learning. Another example that James gave was giving learners access to information that they are not aware of.

> *A lot of students are afraid to speak to neighbors, to even go to doctor appointments. For those of them who may be citizens, they're afraid to vote because they don't know how the voting system works or how to locate resources that help them participate in that. They're not aware that they can call their state representative to represent them because this is something that may be foreign to them because they did not practice this in their countries of origin. Or they might be scared that there will be repercussions if they do send letters or call their representatives. Some of them do not know that if they're legal residents, that those state representatives still represent them. Making those connections and providing them with the resources that can help them engage… I think that is what civic or adult educators need to establish. They need to make this connection. (James)*

James stated that in his job, he wears a lot of different hats such as a guidance counselor or case manager due to the learners who are in his classroom. However, a part of his approach to his many duties in the classroom is being able to provide resources for his students so that they can learn inside and outside the classroom.

Amir, the program director of the Civics Lab program at a community college, spoke about ways he tries to give learners access to resources. Amir spoke about how giving the learners information can allow them to make their own decisions.

We have a yearly program called Adulting 101, which is essentially meant to be a platform for life skills… from resume writing to how to fix a car to legal rights as tenants. A variety of subjects can be lessons that are directed towards everyone. Many things being taught at those workshops are things that are still valuable regardless of your age if you've never learned those lessons. At this event, I give a presentation about civic engagement. One year, we had a program where we had a number of local nonprofits and we let representatives speak about their nonprofit and intended for students to walk around to learn more about nonprofits at the hopes of potentially getting involved with them as volunteers, employees, or whatever shape or capacity they wanted. (Amir)

Amir's goal as a facilitator of civic engagement is to provide a variety of different resources so that all learners could find a path. Amir spoke about how a lot of learners he comes into contact with may not know what they want to do with their future, and that by providing these resources allows for students to feel less stressed when making decisions about their future.

Lastly, Jacob, the facilitator of the *Economy Series*, spoke about the types of resources that are available for learners in the environment of a public library. Specifically, he spoke about how locating resources is an essential part of what learners should gain when participating in civic events that are hosted at the library.

I hope they gain consistency and connection to other people, particularly people in the library, when participating in these events. I hope they get connection to resources that can help continue their curiosity and also inform them and help them get to wherever they're trying to go as an individual or cooperatively. I hope that they get a sense of creativity. I hope they can continue to grow in however whichever way. (Jacob)

Jacob highlighted how the library is a place of connection and a place to offer guidance in whatever learners are trying to know. To support this claim, Jacob sent out an email after the *Economy Series* initiative and gave information to resources on topics that emerged during the event. Since the topic of Black cooperatives came up during discussion, these resources included hyperlinks to books about the history of African American cooperatives and information about agricultural resistance and the Black Freedom

Movement. In addition, he promoted upcoming events at the library like the 'Discover the Benefits of Worker Co-ops' webinar. Jacob spoke about the importance of understanding who is coming through the library doors to best serve them and give them the best resources possible.

In sum, the participants revealed how providing access to resources allows for learners to take what they are learning into the real world. In addition, providing access to resources creates an autonomous learner.

Civic Education Jargon

This theme emerged throughout interviews, artifacts, and documents. For instance, when speaking to James, he spoke about ways to inform adults throughout lessons. Specifically, he spoke about teaching learners about terminology in his English literacy class.

> *As an English literacy instructor and also civics instructor, you have to be able to look at what's happening outside and bring it into the classroom. A lot of learners are still unfamiliar with how we even select a president or what the difference between Republicans and Democrats is.*
> *For example, one time, I told students "Tomorrow we're going to learn about the two major political parties in the United States." And one of my students gasped. She was worried that we will be talking about Republicans and Democrats in very polarized ways, but the purpose of that exercise was more about learning factual information and not just express opinions. What do the Democrats stand for? What do the Republicans stand for? And also noting they're not only political parties in the United States, but they are the major political parties. (James)*

James emphasized the importance of equipping learners with information that they do not know or may only have limited experience with. In addition, he made sure to inform learners from an unbiased perspective so that they can make up their own opinions. Another example James gave was a lesson he planned for his class that involved learners being informed of current events and history.

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I'm not saying that all literacy learners must be justice oriented and go to protests and everything, but it is giving them an idea that doing protests in the United States is the democratic way. I listed the 10 most important, successful, and influential protests in United States history. One of them was the Delano Strikes in California. We tied this back to what we learned before about Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta. All of this is piecing it together. It's coming full circle for the students, knowing what we've been reading is connecting to actually what's happening outside…We can provide voice to the minority. (James)

This lesson was not only to help students make connections, but to learn the terms that they were using in class discussions as well as terms that are being used in everyday life. For instance, one topic that was discussed in class was the war in Ukraine. James provided students with information regarding terminology and background information. Below are excerpts from his PowerPoint presentation. He explained specific vocabulary (see Figure 3) and showed how he would give information about a current international political issue (see Figure 4).
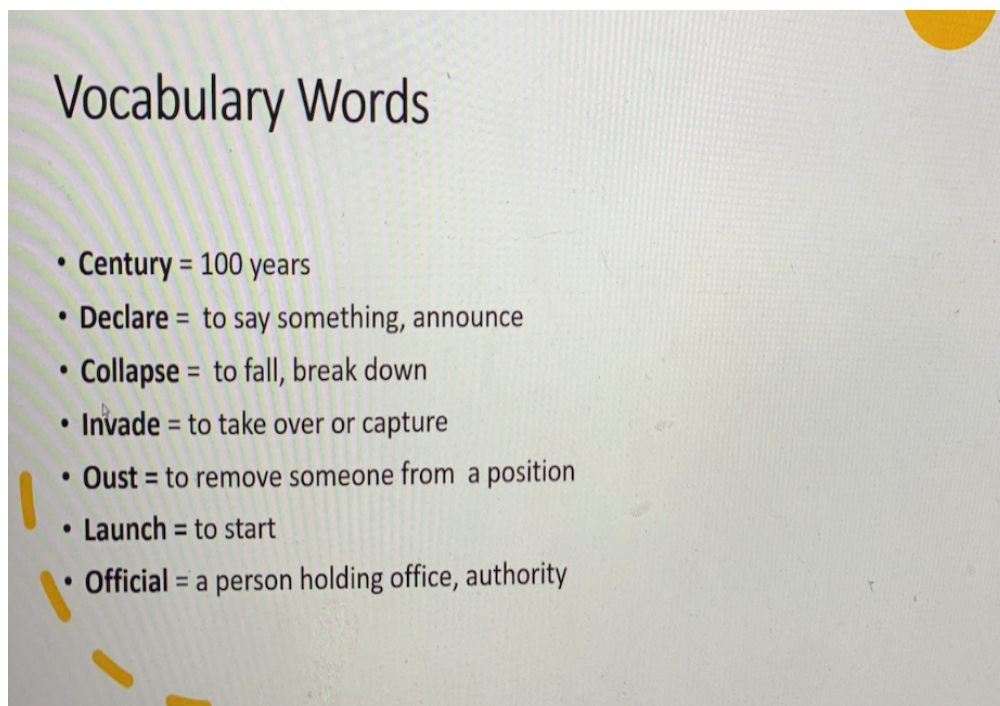

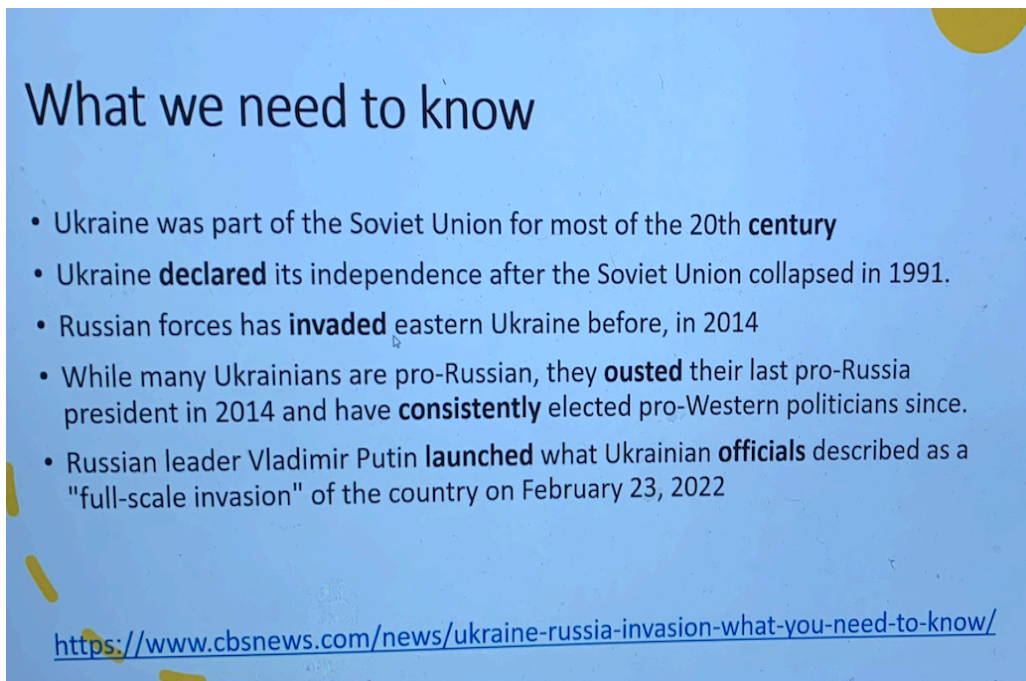**Figure 3.** *Vocabulary for Civics Lesson*

Figure 4. *What we need to know*

After he showed these slides, there was a group discussion on whether or not the United States should get involved in the war. Students had to pick a side and give their opinions and other sources of information to support their position. In order for this group discussion to be possible, there had to be a knowledge of the topic as well as specific terms in order to engage in the class discussion.

Another example of the importance of civic education jargon was seen in Jacob's lesson (see Figures 5 and 6). He talked about how concepts regarding civic education are often perceived by the learners.

> *I think from a civic education standpoint, there can be a lot of alienation around concepts. Not just words or theories or language or access to the media that references it. Also, how these concepts connect in a very real practical ways in our world. Learners attending the library program lack this information. (Jacob)*

Because of this lack of understanding of concepts, terminology, or language used when learning about civic education, while leading the *Economy Series*, Jacob made a point to focus on specific jargon. Below are excerpts from the lesson plan for the program.

	ECO Means Home – Defining economy – (literacy)
Questions, Talking Points, Discussion, Modeling	o **Eco meaning home**
	o Eco (home + together): relationships in a home – references complex relationships between microorganisms, plants, animals, etc.
	o Economy (home + management): How we organize our relationships in a place to take care of each other. How we manage our home can be measured via how healthy are the soil, people, water, animals? How much wealth is generated? Who owns the wealth? How much wellbeing? Etc.
	o Solidarity Economy

Figure 5. *Vocabulary discussion*

Just Transition: (5 min.)

A Just Transition are principles, processes, and practices that can help us implement a healthy economy and environment by embracing current economic models that implement democratic, regenerative, caring, cooperative principles.
Now that we have a sense of some of the terminology and have recognized a few local that are leading the way to this transition, the next workshop will look at how we can strengthen our support by participating and providing individual support (volunteering labor, time, money, materials, etc.) in models that connect to these principles.
We can strengthen these principles of economy in our community.

Figure 6. *Example of a definition of a concept*

These excerpts highlight the importance of understanding economy and various terminology to learn and participate in the program. In addition, Jacob's focus on terminology aligns with James's view of the necessity of teaching jargon to the learners so that they have a foundation of civic concepts.

Alex, a program coordinator, spoke about explaining civic concepts that relate to issues going on in the learners' communities. However, before getting out in the

community, she explained that they need to be well informed about the issue they will discuss with others. An annual event that Alex is a part of is an advocacy training which addresses a different topic each year. During this training, she equips learners with the knowledge they need to be able to identify issues within their community.

> *We start by talking about the people who are the decision makers, the people in power, or the people who have influence over the issue. We do a lot of work around local policy. Obviously, there's so much attention on national policy and that's where young people's minds go to first, which can seem really overwhelming. But we talk a lot about the people in power, what their positions are, and how they affect an issue. Most importantly, we talk about how you engage with people in power.*

Along with giving learners information about those in power within their community, Alex spoke about the importance of explaining how learners can take this knowledge and apply it in their own lives. According to Alex, the first step in civic engagement is understanding who is in charge, why they are in charge, and what they can do before any change can happen.

Lastly, the speaker at the *Civic Illiteracy and the Rule of Law* event focused on vocabulary terms and jargon related to democracy. He provided excerpts of the Declaration of Independence in his PowerPoint presentation to clarify some of the arguments he was presenting at his talk. He primarily spoke about the negative impact of low civic literacy rates and the lack of knowledge about terminology related to civics.

> *In 2021, it was the first time that over 50% of Americans could name all three branches of government. Even though this may seem high to previous years before, our civic knowledge as a nation is not high. One thing we can do to improve this is to look at the wording of the Declaration of Independence. Our previous leaders had hindsight, insight, and foresight. It's important to understand our constitutional rights because a person cannot live a meaningful life without this knowledge. (Guest Speaker)*

According to the guest speaker, this is the generation with the greatest access to information, but it is the least informed. There has to be an understanding of the nation's history in order to have a productive future.

To summarize, teaching jargon relevant to civic education and related topics offered the learners a chance to understand these topics and to grow their language repertoire. Understanding the jargon is a foundational part of civic education.

Storytelling

This theme emerged from data collected through interviews and research journal entries. It was clear that learners talking to one another or creating some sort of dialogue in the learning process was vital for learners to become and stay informed. Alex spoke about how storytelling is central to introducing learners to civic education. The flow and effectiveness of the event is influenced by the stories that emerge during the training session.

> *Our central belief is that telling personal stories is the best way to change people's mind. It is also an effective way to make sure that change is having the best impact on the people who are affected. We teach how people can tell their personal story and how they can connect these stories to their community. We also talk about how someone can use stories to change perspectives. We do a lot of storytelling.*
> *One time during an Advocacy 101 training, it was really quiet. Then, someone mentioned that they didn't have running water in their schools. It turned out that around 75% of the high school students in the room didn't have running water. They got one water bottle a day and if they wanted more, they had to pay for it. It was a particularly poor community and most of the people did not have a disposable income. This really set off a conversation about why this is happening and what can we do to change that. And once that spark gets lit, there's a lot of people in the room making connections. (Alex)*

From Alex's perspective, sharing stories informs about important issues and is a way for people to know that their voice matters, that they are not alone. Alex mentioned that sometimes people do not even realize that issues in their community are actual issues; thus, storytelling creates an awareness.

Amir also spoke about the importance of sharing stories when community college students are taking their next steps, specifically when it comes to career development. Amir explained that the Civics Lab program has started producing a podcast series, where students and community members can learn more about civic leaders in their community.

> *We created a podcast series that is focusing on people who have been civically involved and are working in civically oriented careers. We've had a blend of different people. We had a judge and a former State Department officer who now works within health and human services here in Texas. We had a teacher at a local nonprofit who is a recent graduate of the community college. Our ultimate goal is to have these interviews as a resource for people when they contemplate their next career steps so that nobody feels pressure to know as a freshman or sophomore what they'll be doing when they graduate. At the same time, we encourage people to listen to these stories so even if they don't know what exactly what they're going to do, there is a pathway forward. (Amir)*

Similar to Alex's approach of using stories, Amir believes that stories are a way to connect learners and also inform them on subjects that are necessary to be able to engage with society such as choosing a career path. According to Amir, they talk to those who have careers that relate to civics or politics in some way, but the main takeaway is to show that through stories, we can connect and learn something new.

When Jacob spoke about his work in the library, the theme of stories, conversations, and dialogue also emerged. Jacob explained that the conversations he has with patrons of the library influence his decision making when creating library programs.

> *I very much have a community focused approach and what that means is I generally try to think everyone has strengths and gifts and has a lot of experience and expertise. I like to build things collaboratively with groups of people. So, I spend a lot of time trying to connect and have conversations to get a sense where people are at. I try to understand what they would like to see happen in a library because this is a public space. I try to reach out to groups that make their way through our doors and try to keep an eye on books or media that are of interest to people and try to reflect that back into events and programs. (Jacob)*

Also, Jacob spoke about the importance of storytelling when creating programs for patrons. Specifically, he spoke about goals he has of current programs that he is promoting at the library and his role when facilitating these programs.

> *I think in these programs, if the goal is to try to empower by showcasing and empowering and sharing this story, I believe that the way to do that is to share stories and then enable my position in a way to help share these stories. I want the people who are involved in those types of stories to take the stage, to share. (Jacob)*

Kyle, the coordinator for the *Careers in Politics* event emphasized the benefits of storytelling by explaining why the annual event always features guest speakers. Moreover, he spoke about the importance of building connections and listening to one another at these events.

> *We always want to provide time for unstructured communication. Like, if it's a small group, I think I'd reference norm building. Leadership tactics like norming, storming, forming… these kinds of things. Not essentially that per se, but simply unstructured time to meet one another, build connections, and share stories especially with people who don't live in the same cities. Taste something that is different than what you know. Taste East Texas if you're from El Paso and if you're from Houston, this is what Dallas sounds like. Allowing these opportunities for these connections to happen is extremely important. (Kyle)*

It is evident through Kyle's explanation that making connections with people is rooted in sharing stories. In order to make connections, learners must engage in listening to someone who may have a different background or socioeconomic status. The point that Kyle highlighted is speaking to others' stories to gain different perspectives in order to learn.

Another example of sharing stories could be seen when observing the U.S. Department of Education Cesar Chavez Day Teach-In Webinar. Each of the seven guest speakers made a point to share their story on why and how they started a career in federal government. For instance, one speaker spoke about how her experience being the

daughter to a migrant worker inspired her to go to college and to make it her mission to dedicate her life's work to migrant education.

> *I grew up in the fields. My dad was a migrant worker. I never ever thought that I would have ended up serving in the military or getting a degree in education. However, it taught me that you have to pay it forward. Not everyone gets these opportunities and if you are able to do so, pay it forward. Get involved. For myself, my main purpose is to uplift stories of the Latino community and share resources. (Guest Speaker)*

In sum, she spoke about the importance of sharing experiences in order to collaborate to make the world a better place.

Even though participants spoke about various ways of sharing and listening to one another, storytelling was a specific practice that facilitators used in order to civically educate adult learners. In addition, it was made clear through the participant's statements that facilitators were able to help adult learners by providing access to resources, teaching civic engagement jargon, and utilizing storytelling.

Research Question Two Discussion

Two major points supported in the literature relate to providing access to resources and teaching the jargon relevant to civic education (Clark, 2017). According to participants, the terminology that is used regarding civic education can be foreign, almost like another language. James spoke about using vocabulary to help destigmatize topics like politics or political parties. Similarly, Jacob used vocabulary and definitions throughout his interactive lecture and lesson plan to make sure there was an understanding of all of the terms that were being used throughout the *Economy Series*. In support with providing learners access to resources and teaching relevant jargon, Clark (2017) stated that any civic education curriculum should build the foundational skills and understandings in order for adults to be able to improve their civic efficacy (pp. 223-224).

Vocabulary learning is an important aspect of learning information about a specific topic and a regular practice in different teaching settings.

An important study finding to highlight is the use of storytelling as a tool to promoting civic engagement. This strategy is not discussed in the literature in relation to civic education and engagement. Data from the dissertation point out the usefulness of utilizing storytelling to establish rapport with the audience, gain understanding about the different perspectives, and be engaged in learning. For instance, Jacob started his interactive lecture for the *Economy Series* at the library by asking everyone to share a story. Similarly, Alex utilized storytelling to talk about issues in the community.

In the literature, storytelling is discussed in connection to adult learning (Mirra, 2018; Parker & Hess, 2001; Worth, 2008) to explain how adults benefit when they tell stories. For example, Worth (2008) states that stories are a part of the human existence, a primary form of communication with other people, and help humans to make sense of their experiences (p. 42). In the area of civic education, storytelling has potential to support the acquisition of complex information and make connections to everyday life issues affecting individuals and communities. Stories allow for learners to gain understanding and examine other people's views (Parker & Hess, 2001). Listening to and telling stories is a much-needed strategy to participate and interact in different facets of adult life. If we are able to adopt the perspectives of those unlike ourselves, we are more likely to make decisions and take steps that benefit our interests and the interests of others (Mirra, 2018, p. 4). In other words, through storytelling adults practice and gain empathy to understand and respect each other. According to Clark (2017), learners need to have a reason to empathize with those who are making arguments or to be able to trust other's opinions because if there is no trust, it is easy to discount that information (p.

240). Overall, study findings suggest that civic education facilitators can help adults become and stay informed through teaching relevant jargon, providing access to resources, and utilizing storytelling as a tool to promoting civic engagement.

Research Question #3

How are program facilitators promoting civic engagement?

Data to address this question came from interviews, documents (i.e., lesson plans), and notes from the research journal. The main themes that emerged from an analysis of the data are direct experience, sense of belonging, and learners' interests.

Table 5. *Promoting Civic Engagement*

Emergent Theme	Frequency	Description
Direct experience	32	Promoting civic engagement through field trips, taking action, interacting, and networking
Sense of belonging	18	Adults need to feel welcome and feel they are part of the group, and they are part of something bigger than themselves
Learners' interests	17	Personalizing the learning material, including current events, grounding discussions and learning in real world issues

Direct Experiences

The theme of direct experiences was seen in conservational interviews, observations, documents, and notes from the research journal. It became evident that facilitators giving learners opportunities to authentically engage in their community through providing direct experiences to participate or letting them know that they can participate, was a major component of how facilitators were promoting civic engagement

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in a variety of settings. For instance, Alex spoke about an experience that was provided

for those at the Children's Defense Fund.

> *We bussed twenty-five 16 to 24-year-olds to the Capitol. They were able to speak to representatives about why voting rights is so important to them. This was when the legislature was trying to pass this big voter suppression bill that did not end up passing. We had a couple of learners who went to the Capitol and were really active and engaged. Also, there were a few that learners were like 'Cool, free road trip.' However, most were really shy and hesitant at first, particularly walking into a state representative's office which is a place they have never been before. We were talking to someone's Chief of Staff and one of the students brought up voter registration laws. This student brought it up, did their homework, and was talking to the Chief of Staff about how high schools in his district had really low compliance rates. And the Chief of Staff for a member who was on the House Elections Committee was clearly surprised and was like 'Oh, I've never heard of that law before. Let me take a look at these numbers and give them to the representative.' Whether he did that, who knows, but when we walked out of that room and we did a debriefing session, there was a recognition that they were able to walk into this room and had something to teach this person. They had brought something new and important into that conversation and they were so jazzed up about going to the next office, and I couldn't get them to stop speaking in the next one. (Alex)*

Alex spoke about the importance of giving learners these types of experiences for not

only to learn more about civic engagement, but to give this knowledge back. For

example, she was explaining that she was most proud of providing these opportunities to

learners when promoting civic education.

> *I am really proud when I get to see people who we work with turn around and take the skills they they've learned back to their own communities. In spaces where they don't have an office or not really a presence, they're just going back out and organizing their own communities. They are really taking that leadership role. It is really cool to see the creativity and know they're then passing on those skills to the next generation of advocates and organizers. (Alex)*

In the same vein, when speaking to James, providing learners with the confidence

to be able to go out and participate within their community is an important component of

James's facilitating. James spoke about how some learners in his class may not feel like

they can engage because they are immigrants. They are transitioning to their lives in the

United States which can be a big adjustment. James spoke about his role as a facilitator and why direct experiences are crucial when teaching civic education.

> *I'm glad that I'm able to help the learners make connections on what's happening in the classroom to the outside world. So, in other words, I am giving them the tools, so the literacy class is not just a way of learning a language. It's actually a way for them to participate in community activities and be part of the community that they live in, and I think they're grateful for that…When you integrate civics and language literacy, you give them the confidence to also participate in their community because as I mentioned before, they're transitioning to this community and some of them don't know how to interact. If they're not able to use the language, then the chances that they will participate in many community activities is also very low. I want them to transition to their communities well to transition fully into the new host community that they're in and this is why I make sure activities in my class mirror experiences they can have in the real world. (James)*

The purpose of civic education for James is to help build the confidence of students so they are able to pursue direct experiences on their own which is the key to civic engagement. Similar to James's facilitating practices, Amir's approach focused on providing the experiences for the learners. For instance, like Alex, he took a group of learners to the State Capitol.

> *Every two years, we take students to the Capitol to meet government officials. We have meetings set up with representatives, senators, and state representatives. The students are able to go from office to office and meet with staff and these elected officials to be able to talk about student needs. (Amir)*

Amir spoke about the diverse population of students who attend the community college, and how some students have never had the opportunity to speak to someone in office. By providing students with the opportunity to go to the capital, more students can learn about the governmental process from their own experiences.

Kyle spoke about providing opportunities and being able to open doors for students to be able to be civically engaged. For example, he spoke about an example of how he makes sure students are involved as much as possible during activities.

> *Trying to provide students with a voice in our programming is extremely important. We do events where students can be the moderator of a panel. We want a learner at this organization asking the questions. It's super important to us.*

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Showing our students that they are as big of players as anyone else in the space. Their voices matter as much as anyone else's in the space. Their education, their completion of civic education, their life experience… all of that is more than enough to make all the impact they want, can, or should make. (Kyle)

Kyle emphasized the importance of giving students the chance to participate rather than learn by watching. According to Kyle, the focus needs to be on letting students know they have a voice and one way to effectively do this is through direct experiences. Jacob also promoted civic engagement by giving learners the opportunity to actively participate in the library's program. In the promotional description for the program, it was made clear of what learners could get from participating, but also how learners could engage throughout and after the program had ended. Below is an excerpt from Jacob's lesson plan. Jacob's approach to direct experience was allowing for learners to speak with one another in the program.

Even though participants brought up direct engagements in different ways, it was made clear that direct engagement was a crucial component of promoting civic education. Furthermore, providing learners with direct experiences creates a more meaningful learning experience.

Promotional Description	Join this participatory event where together we will learn how we can individually and collectively strengthen local economic practices that perpetuates more democracy, cooperation, solidarity, and sustainability in our workplaces. Gain skills in teamwork, critical thinking, problem solving, and leadership that you can add to your resume while meeting people who are actively building and practicing economic models that value solidarity, cooperation, and sustainability. What steps can we take to perpetuate a world based on cooperation, solidarity, and sustainability? How can we build community wealth for all workers and beyond?

Figure 7. *Excerpt from Jacob's Lesson Plan*

Sense of Belonging

Another theme that emerged throughout the conversational interviews,

observations, documents, and the research journal was the sense of belonging. Each

facilitator spoke about the importance of learners feeling a part of their community.

Moreover, in the observations, the facilitators would make it clear that a sense of

belonging was a part of teaching civic education. For instance, when Jacob began his

library program, he took time to make a land acknowledgement before starting

introductions. The purpose of this acknowledgement was to recognize the land that the

library was one which was once inhabited by Indigenous people. In addition, he also

asked each participant in the program to give their name, pronouns, and to share a story.

Below is an excerpt of Jacob's lesson plan that explains the "Check In" activity.

	Share name and pronouns.
Check in (10 min)	Answer the question – What brought you here today? Share a favorite gift you have given or received.
	Ask the group "If you are comfortable with sharing, what are some common ways that you spend your time, money, or labor on?" to start economy lecture.

Figure 8. *Excerpt from Jacob's Activity*

This excerpt highlights Jacob's dedication to making sure that all learners feel

comfortable in the learning process. More specifically, he makes sure that learners are

comfortable and feel a part of the group from the very beginning. Jacob also explicitly

talked about the importance of belonging and community when creating programs for the

library.

*The idea is to create relationships and have a space where people from all sorts
or different practices, whether you're working in a community garden or you're
working in a food farm or food forest or you're working in a worker cooperative
or you're working in a producer cooperative or you're involved in a food stand*

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that's giving out free food…the whole idea of these programs is to bring those people together and try to frame the space to have conservations. (Jacob)

Similar to Jacob's approach of creating safe spaces in the learning environment, James also advocates for this in his literacy classroom. Some examples James gave was doing small actions throughout the lesson to ensure that all students feel safe in his classroom. For instance, he spoke of the importance of setting expectations at the beginning of each class every semester.

> *I don't explicitly say 'Hey, this is a safe environment.' However, one of the first things that we do in class is set up our rules and expectations. That's one of the first things that we all agree on and manage everyone's expectations. We need to establish respect. It's an adult's class, so I expect them to respect one another. I will respect them as individuals, and we lay down the rules. It's okay to make mistakes. We don't laugh at other people's mistakes. We correct them. We learn from them. You can also build that through many activities in the first week of class. Make sure to acknowledge where they are coming from or acknowledge their name. I think pronouncing their names correctly is a strategy for a learner-centered classroom. Basically, giving worth to what they bring to the table is important. (James)*

Alex, like James and Jacob, also spoke about how feeling a part of something bigger than oneself or learners feeling like their voices matter is a goal from learning about civics. She spoke about the main thing she hopes people gain from participating at the Children's Defense Fund is that their voices matter.

> *I think the confidence to be engaged in our spaces, to know that they belong in those spaces, and a sense of community to be engaged in those space is what I hope people gain. It can be difficult to feel like you belong especially walking into a building or place that is dominated by an older generation, predominately white males. The white, male demographic does not match most of the people I work with. A lot of them are young women of color. A lot of them identify as Queer, and they don't feel safe or welcome in those spaces and they aren't wrong. There are many spaces in Texas, in particular, where they are not welcome or safe. So, I hope that they know their stories matter and should be enough to shift policy, but when it's not… when it gets hard and discouraging, which it does for me and them… I hope they have a sense of who their community is, of the people around them who care about the same issues and will be there with them to keep fighting about the things they care about even in the face of some pretty overwhelming obstacles at times. (Alex)*

Another example of facilitators utilizing the importance of belonging was during the Cesar Chavez Day Teach-In Webinar. Towards the end of the webinar, a guest speaker spoke about how working for the federal government can be intimidating for those who do not have a career in politics or in government. However, she stated that anyone can work for the government. In addition, she made a point to say that in order for there to be change, people in the community need to apply for government jobs.

As a whole, this theme illustrates that learners having a sense of belonging not only motivates them to become more engaged but builds confidence. In addition, when learners have a sense of belonging, they have a purpose for becoming civically engaged.

Learners' Interests

Lastly, the theme learners' interests emerged in conversational interviews, observations, and notes from the research journal. Along with storytelling, the approach to informing learners with civic education knowledge heavily revolved around the learner. More specifically, most facilitators spoke of being learner-centered in their facilitation practices. For instance, when speaking to James about the type of curriculum he follows in the classroom, he spoke about having content standards, but making sure the voices in his class are heard.

> *The beauty of the literacy course is that we can make connections to those content standards that have been developed for us by the community college. I think when you teach an adult class, it changes because of who participates in your class. I've always said that 'Oh, after my first year teaching this intermediate class, everything's going to be so much easier because I can redo same materials over and over again and not change a thing.' But it doesn't happen that way. I have to revise my curriculum, try to tailor to who attends my class, what they want to learn. Because every semester is very different, and you have a mix of students. Of course, we use the content standards to guide us to what we should be teaching the students, but for the adult literacy class, I think the beauty is the instructor, both the instructor and the learns have a say on what they're going to learn. (James)*

It is clear in James's descriptive of the literacy course that the material that is being taught revolves around what the students want to learn as well as their backgrounds. Specifically, James spoke about consistently having to adapt his curriculum in order to best fit the needs of his students. Also, in line with what James said, Jacob spoke about learner's interests when deciding what to explore in the library's programs. Specifically, Jacob spoke about incorporating current events due to interests of the patrons.

> *I think current events are always important to recognize because people's interest and what they're looking for is always changing, every year, every season and it's important to stay up to date of where people are. It's trying to ensure that we're responding in a way that can approach whatever strengths and needs are coming up at any given time.*
> *Also, I see programming of getting to kind of a larger picture of like what in the world we're trying to build together. What kind of things do we want in our community? (Jacob)*

Jacob spoke about how the library needs to be aware of the needs of the local community. This means that the library serves as a place where the activities, invited guest speakers, and events that are promoted have the interests of the patrons in mind. Another example is when Kyle spoke about how they adapt the learning objectives of their organization around what the learners are passionate about. In the interview, Kyle explained the how this is done.

> *We really challenge our learners, which is one of our biggest vehicles for impacting communities, to figure out what civic oriented mission they want to follow. A good example, one of our students was upset there wasn't enough interaction with local government in the school. He thought that there was a civic shortcoming, so he invited all the City Council, and the Mayor dropped by and had a forum. They had a Q&A and met students. We had about half of City Council able to make it, which is still incredible. About 95 students showed up, packed in an auditorium. We had a mixer before and after, so there's some community involvement and networking going on. The day before that, one of our students wanted to hold a seminar on tenants' rights. So, he felt that some people in the community were not equipped with the knowledge and the skills and the know how to adequately participate in that part of society. So, he held an evening seminar for a small group. He brought experts in the field and armed people with what they needed to be active civic participants in the housing world. (Kyle)*

In this example, it is clear that learners take topics that are of interest to them and are able to voice these topics. Kyle mentioned that the organization provides them with a space to learn, but the focus is ultimately up to what the learners are interested in.

Amir also spoke about making sure components of the *Civics Lab* are curated with the interests of learners in mind. For instance, Amir spoke about expanding the purpose of the Civics Lab to include faculty and staff of the community college.

> *We've been working on directing things towards faculty and staff. We're kicking off a new program called 'Service Academy.' It started as a brainchild of a librarian at one of our campuses. Basically, the 'Service Academy' is going to be an opportunity for faculty or staff to receive professional development credits. It's an opportunity for faculty and staff to pick different aspects, things that they want to learn about. (Amir)*

Based on Amir's statement about faculty and staff being able to pick the different topics to learn about when attending the 'Service Academy,' it was made clear that the program completely relied on the interests of the learners.

Lastly, similar to Kyle, Jacob, and Amir, Alex's approach of informing and educating people regarding civic education skills involves learning about things that are of interest to those who are attending events.

> *I think it's super important to ground an abstract skill in being able to practice it in real life and ideally on an issue that you're passionate about. You can read a textbook about how the electoral process works, but until you are being asked to choose between X number of candidates and trying to understand what their policy platforms are and how they would make decisions that would affect you, it doesn't really mean anything, in my opinion. Everything that we do, we try to really ground it in something that's happening in the real world. (Alex)*

Along with direct experiences and a sense of belonging, most facilitators used the interest of the learner or student to advance their civic education. Promoting civic engagement can be done in a variety of ways, but utilizing direct experiences, a sense of belonging, and learner's interests, facilitators were able to effectively promote civic education in their environment.

Research Question Three Discussion

Based on the narratives of the facilitators, providing opportunities for direct experiences is a central practice to promote civic engagement. For instance, James spoke about creating ways for students to get more involved than just reading a textbook or discussion. He created activities for the learners to experience what was being taught. Regarding the existing literature, the theme of direct experience connects closely to Niemi and Junn's (1998) idea of offering learners participation opportunities. If learners are able to take part in activities that model behaviors or skills that are needed, they typically have a better understanding of the topic at hand (Niemi & Junn, 1998, p. 97). More specifically, Balogun and Yusuf (2019) insist that learners must learn by doing in order to truly understand civic education (p. 45). Learning complex concepts through direct experience is a relevant practice to promote civic engagement.

Adults having a sense of belonging was a key dissertation finding. The remarks made by study participants align with Clark's (2017) assertion that the climate during the learning process is vital to predicting civic behavior (p. 225). Furthermore, it has been stated that the learning climate has a direct relationship with willingness to participate in civic life (Alscher, Ludewig, & McElvany, 2022, p. 1896). Clearly, the climate of the learning environment has a tremendous impact on engagement. However, it is important to note that the finding of sense of belonging primarily focused on adults feeling a sense of connection to the community where they live. Almost all participants spoke about how learners need to feel connected in some way. Giving learners the feeling of belonging to a particular community is necessary in civic education (Auduc, 2006, p. 325). In addition, this finding falls directly in line with UNESCO's (Delors, 1996) pillar of living together as well as Wilson's (2002) responsibility of working together. Along with having a safe

learning climate, adults must feel like they belong in their communities so they can thrive.

The facilitators in the study spoke about ways they promote civic engagement through tying program content to the needs of the learners. Program facilitators promote civic engagement by putting the learner interests to the center of their facilitation practice (Gouthro, 2012; White, 2014; Campbell-Hicks, 2016). Hoagland (2002) furthers this point by stating that facilitators need to be able to make connections between the content and the interests of the learners.

The findings for this research question directly align with the literature, meaning it puts emphasis on the already established effective ways that facilitators can promote civic engagement. It is safe to say that the statements of the study participants indicate that there are different topics to focus on, but they must relate to the learners' interests.

V. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive case study was to collect and analyze data from a variety of different initiatives that were promoting civic engagement to learn more about how facilitators are fostering civic education. The stories, observations, notes and documents that were collected all provided insight into how civic engagement is being promoted in Central Texas. This final chapter is organized in the following sections: (1) study highlights, (2) summary of findings, (3) recommendations, (4) tensions and challenges, (5) future research, and (6) final thoughts.

Study Highlights

The previous chapter provided insight into the various types of civic education initiatives as well as the types of practices used by facilitators. This section of the chapter will present study highlights that are organized by the three research questions used to guide this study.

Research Question #1

What is being done to foster civic education in central Texas?

As previously mentioned, there was not a lot of civic education initiatives being offered. Moreover, primarily, civic education initiatives were offered in two settings: (1) in community organizations and (2) a part of a university or college. In both settings, most of the events or initiatives being offered were one-time events; however, most civic engagement education opportunities were provided based on the needs of adults.

In addition, a lot of what is being done to foster civic education in central Texas is not specifically called civic education. For instance, the library program focused on economics while one civic education initiative was featured in a community college English literacy course. This made me realize that there is a lot of work being done to

foster civic education, but I had to use a different lens when studying and observing these initiatives.

Moreover, there is a lack of access to these initiatives for many adults. For instance, in conjunction with being sporadically offered, these initiatives are difficult to find. Digital literacy knowledge as well as access to mobile devices (e.g., smart phones, tablets, laptops) are needed for adults to be able to access civic education initiatives. Most of the initiatives were marketed online, which leaves those without access to a computer or who lack digital literacy skills without access to civic education. On top of this, there is a marked pattern of inequitable distribution of resources (e.g., budget, materials, experts, physical space) depending on the geographical area and the program or institution.

Research Question #2

How can civic education program facilitators help adults become and stay informed?

Every participant shared various ways that they help adults become and stay informed. More specifically most participants shared specific ways that fell into categories such as access to resources, civic education jargon, and using storytelling. The facilitators agreed that there had to be some type of foundational knowledge of civic education, which included allowing learners access to resources that would help them build this knowledge. These resources included articles, videos, or showing students how to use specific features on a computer. Moreover, participants spoke about adult learners have a lack of an understanding of civic terminology, and how in order to become informed and stay informed, learners needed to know the terminology. However, a large part of how learners become and stay informed is through the process of storytelling.

Most participants spoke about how storytelling was a big part of how adults can become and stay informed. Participants spoke about how creating dialogue or having learners hear from others in their community or even to each other is a vital part in becoming more civically literate. Storytelling is not highlighted in the literature discussing civic education; however, this is an effective method since stories allow adults to experience and share knowledge with others.

Research Questions #3

How are program facilitators promoting civic engagement?

There are many ways that facilitators can promote civic engagement, but all participants spoke about the importance of direct experiences, using learner's interest, and creating a sense of belonging in order to encourage civic engagement. For instance, a lot of participants spoke about providing learners with actual experiences. These experiences ranged from conducting a mock city council debate in class to taking learners to the state capitol. The goal of these experiences was to show that anyone can get engaged, make a difference, and most importantly, have a voice.

As previously mentioned, most of the initiatives that were offered were due to what learners were interested in. More specifically, participants spoke about the importance of using issues or problems that are relevant to the learners' lives to make the initiatives or events more impactful. Participants spoke about how they would get learner input or ask learners questions before, during, and throughout the event or initiative.

Lastly, creating a sense of belonging was a big part in creating the motivation for learners to get inspired to become more civically engaged. The facilitators believed that sometimes learners can feel like they are not a part of their community, and the first step

to ensure they can get involved is to make sure that all adult learns feel like they belong in the classroom, at the event, or in their community.

Summary of Findings

This dissertation documented civic education initiatives in Central Texas by listening to those who are facilitating these initiatives. Since there is a gap in the literature regarding documenting what is being done concerning civic education that is being offered to the community, listening to five facilitators, observing six civic education initiatives, and collecting various forms of data, this study helps to bridge that gap.

Participant's interviews, observations, and practices regarding civic education could be supported by the limited amount of existing literature on the topics of civic education. However, the findings of this study provided new information on how civic education is being fostered, how facilitators are helping adults become and stay informed, and how facilitators are promoting civic engagement. In order to learn more about these findings, UNESCO's (Delors1996) pillars of education for lifelong learning and Wilson's (2002) ecological view of civic education were used as the guiding frameworks for the study. Figure 9 illustrates the themes and findings that were discovered in the data.

The framework for the dissertation builds on the ecological view of civic literacy development presented by Wilson (2002) and the UNESCO's (Delors, 1996) four pillars of lifelong learning. More specifically, Wilson's (2002) ecological view of civic education is combined with the four pillars of education for lifelong learning. The spiral indicates how there is not a sequential order to go about civic engagement development. The two pictures on the sides of the graphic indicate the two settings that are being explored in the study.

Figure 9. *Toward Civic Engagement*

However, Figure 9 illustrates the themes and dissertation findings that enhance

the development of civic education. Dissertation findings are situated around the spiral to

indicate relevant connections to the literature and the study framework as well as the

contributions made by the study. In order for adult learners to have opinions, become and

stay informed, work and live together, and take action and learn to do, there has to be

access to resources, learning based on their interests, and a sense of belonging to

community. In addition, to make connections to the pillars of lifelong learning (learning

to be, learning to know, learning to live together, and learning to do), adults need to learn

the specialized jargon, have direct learning experiences, and engage in storytelling. To

summarize, civic engagement can be developed by using Wilson's (2002) ecological

view combined with UNESCO's (Delors, 1996) pillars of lifelong learning, but this development process is more sustainable when civic education initiatives proliferate.

Recommendations

After presenting study highlights, recommendations for practice that can be implemented in civic education initiatives are provided. Below are recommendations for civic education programs and for program facilitators.

Recommendations for Civic Education Program Development

Programs should be promoted widely to include participants from a variety of audiences. Currently, the information about where and when civic education initiatives are being offered is difficult to find. Advertising the programs widely will alleviate issues such as inequality in educational resources distribution and participation. Currently, it seems like the two populations of learners are segregated to their own educational environments.

Both settings, community-based programs and higher education institutions, should create two-way communication bridges for adult learners to be able to participate in civic education initiatives and expand their social capital. Usually, leaners in community-based programs do not have access to information about civic education initiatives offered by higher education institutions and vice versa.

Programs should be offered on a continuous basis and more frequently. Having more opportunities to participate could help get more people involved in learning about civic education. Most of the programs described in this dissertation happen annually or are offered as a once in a lifetime initiative. For adults to be able to take action on issues affecting their livelihood and participation in society, they need plenty of opportunities to

develop skills such as the capacity to express opinion, look for information on their own, and work in collaboration with others.

Creating a curriculum on the idea that 'one size fits all' would not be a solution in this case since adult learners' needs and realities in the United States are so different. Programs should continue to offer a wide range of topics to educate adults on civic education issues. Data collected for this dissertation points to this need.

Recommendations for Program Facilitators

Facilitators should teach digital literacy (handouts, websites, YouTube videos, etc.). After collecting data for this dissertation and finding participants, it was made clear that in order to find programs, a basic understanding of digital literacy is needed in order to gain access to these initiatives since this is how they are primarily marketed. Facilitators should implement digital literacy activities in order for adults to gain these skills. Similarly, storytelling is a skill that needs cultivating. From study findings we learned that storytelling is an important medium for sharing and acquiring knowledge since people are engaged in learning through telling and listening to stories.

Facilitators design and implement learner-centered tasks (whole process) and activities (practice) to engage adults throughout the learning process. Because a part of becoming civically engaged is learning to live together and learning to know as well as working together, it is necessary that adults develop skills that are applicable to their lives but can also be used in other contexts. By designing and implementing learner-centered tasks and activities, learners can retain the skills that are being taught, be aware of the relevance of the skills, and be more engaged throughout the learning process.

Widen their understanding of what civic education entails. The seven programs that were documented all offered different information and promoted different skills for

learners. For instance, there was a field trip to the capitol where adults could talk to public officials, a class offered by the library to learn about the economy, and a lecture on the topic of civic literacy was offered at a local university to name a few. Due to how civic education is being offered, it is important for there to be an expanded understanding of what civic education involves so adults do not miss opportunities to become more civically literate.

Facilitators should incorporate a collaborative environment where there is time for dialogue as well as opportunities for learners to ask questions. Since a large part of becoming and staying informed, forming and expressing opinions, working together, and taking action involves more than one person, learners should be given the opportunity to connect with one another, with facilitators, as well as those within their community in order to become more civically engaged.

Facilitators should provide ways for learners to have real life experiences becoming civically engaged within their communities. This can be done in a variety of different ways, but these experiences will build confidence in learners. An example in this study included adults visiting the capitol and talking to people in office, expressing opinions, and asking them questions. These real-life experiences allowed adults to take what they were learning about into practice which helped adults develop communication skills and truly understand how this type of civic engagement can be accomplished.

Lastly, educators should provide many opportunities for adults to have access to civic initiatives. Along with teaching digital literacy, there needs to be additional resources to make these initiatives more accessible. For instance, there are many adult learners facing obstacles like finding childcare and transportation or internet access to

participate in these initiatives. Facilitators could be more aware of issues that adult learners face and help them find solutions to make access possible.

Tensions and Challenges

Throughout the process of this dissertation, there were a few tensions and challenges to the implementation of the study. During the eight-month period of the data collection phase, finding programs, organizations, or participants involved in creating and offering civic education initiatives was an ongoing challenge. The snowball sampling approach to gathering participants was used; however, response times were not prompt. For instance, one participant was found through contacting an organization, which responded six months after the initial email was sent. Another example is contacting a speaker of an event that I documented, in which I never heard a response back from him.

In addition, finding organizations that promoted civic education was not an easy task. Typically, organizations and programs promoted their events or classes online, but the exact words of "civic" or "civic education" were rarely used to describe them. However, as a researcher, I was able to align each event selected for this dissertation to the civic engagement framework (Wilson, 2002; Delors,1996). Civic education initiatives were identified through various organizations, social media outlets, word of mouth, and the internet.

I needed to be more flexible in my initial role as a researcher to become a participant and observer for some of the events, classes, and programs that were offered. For instance, sometimes I needed to sign up as an attendee for the events in hopes of connecting with the facilitator or those in charge of the program after the event has been completed. Typically, I would attend the event or program, then introduce myself at the end and explain my study to set up a meeting for an interview with the program

facilitator. Lastly, the frequency in which the civic education initiatives are offered limited data collection. Some initiatives are offered once a year or only once in a lifetime. The same event could not be observed more than once; these became a one-shot observations and interviews.

Future Research

More studies documenting civic education initiatives across the nation would give a broader insight into this topic. For example, an action research project with facilitators who are fostering civic education could be useful. Studying storytelling as a symbiotic teaching method could be innovative in this field. This could potentially offer opportunities for facilitators to reflect, evaluate, and improve practices when it comes to fostering civic education.

Another research project that could be useful is a longitudinal study that tracks civic education initiatives. Such study will allow to document changes over a period of time in relation to the topics being addressed and the population learning needs. This will allow to document trends in facilitating knowledge and practices for teaching and learning. Likewise, it would be interesting to study the impact that funding provided by the Workforce Commission has on civic education initiatives, the topics being addressed, the population being served, facilitators' practices, and outcomes.

Lastly, learning from graduate programs that are offering specializations on civic education and community learning could be relevant. It would be useful to learn more about the curriculum to see how it can transfer from such a formal education setting to more practice and informal oriented settings. In addition, learning from graduate students' experiences taking these courses could also be beneficial to transfer this knowledge into teaching other learner populations.

Final Thoughts

Community organizations and higher education settings are promoting civic education, but their work is rarely documented which leaves researchers and educators with a limited understanding of how adults are learning about civic education across the nation. After completing the dissertation, I feel inspired to be an adult educator and continue to research this topic. People from various backgrounds in a variety of settings are utilizing their professions to motivate and encourage others, to become more engaged, and to voice their concerns. I am hoping that this dissertation will not only inform people about what is going on in Central Texas regarding civic education, but it will also inspire them to contribute to make change possible within their own communities.

While conducting this study, I was quick to realize that there is a lack of uniform initiatives being offered to community members. In addition, I realized that there was an unequal distribution of resources and learning opportunities for adults. For example, at one event, a free stainless-steel water bottle with an engraved monogram of the title of the initiative was given to those who attended, while at other events nothing was given to participants. Some initiatives have abundant funding and others not as much.

Some events had only a traditional model of teaching where there was only a lecture, while others had more interactive models where adults could participate and voice their concerns. Even though these might seem like small disparities, civic education initiatives being offered are already limited, and these disparities can become more of an issue down the road if they are not addressed. Clearly, there is a lot of work to be done to balance the playing field so that all adults can have equal opportunities and resources when it comes to civic education opportunities.

This dissertation serves as the beginning of a research agenda on the topic of best practices to facilitate adult education opportunities focusing on civic education. More work needs to be done fostering civic engagement, closing disparity gaps, and providing adults with as many learning opportunities as possible so that they can affect change within and outside of their communities. As this dissertation comes to a close, I invite researchers, facilitators, and adult educators to continuously engage with their communities. I am hopeful that this dissertation as well as future research on this topic will be valuable to those who want to make change and make the world a better place.

APPENDIX A:

DEFINITION OF RELEVANT TERMS

Becoming and Staying Informed: To become and stay informed, adults must identify problems and community needs affecting them and other citizens, understand human, legal, and civic rights, understand how the government systems work, identify and recognize how individuals can make a difference, and be able to analyze diverse sources of information (Wilson, 2002).

Civic Education: Civic education is the knowledge and skills that one gains through staying informed on the topics of governmental processes as well as knowing one's rights at local, state, national, and global levels to be able to take action and work in collaboration with others (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009).

Civic Engagement: Civic engagement means working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills values, and motivation to make the difference (Ehrlich, 2000).

Civic Literacy: The skills of basic literacy applied to the tasks of becoming and staying informed, forming and expressing opinions, and ideas, working together, and taking action to strengthen communities (Wilson, 2002).

Civic Responsibility: Civic responsibility is active participation in public life of a community that focuses on the public good (Gottlieb & Robinson, 2006).

Community-based Organizations: Organizations that are driven by community residents (University of Michigan School of Public Health, n.d.).

Facilitator: Facilitators, who tend to be mature-age and second-career person who draw from diverse career backgrounds, actively mediate and model curriculum content and purpose when working with learners (Rushbrook, Karmel, & Bound, 2014).

Forming and Expressing Opinions: To form and express opinions, adults must be able to describe their personal histories, values, beliefs, and roles in the community, learn from others, communicate effectively, and be reflective (Wilson, 2002).

Higher Education: Higher education refers to institutions that provide study beyond secondary education such as colleges, universities, or technical schools (National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments, n.d.)

Facilitator: A facilitator is someone who influences others as per their level of readiness and skill (Mujtaba & Preziosi, 2006).

Jargon: Jargon is the technical terminology of a special activity or group (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

Learning to Be: Learning to be focuses on personal responsibility in order to attain communal goals (Delors, 1996).

Learning to Do: Learning to do refers to taking action after developing knowledge and skills (Delors, 1996).

Learning to Know: Learning to know refers to the curiosity of wanting to learn throughout one's life (Delors, 1996).

Learning to Live Together: Learning to live together is when there is an understanding of those within one's community (Delors, 1996).

Lifelong Learning: Learning that should be present during all life stages and is embedded in all life contexts such as work, school, home, or in one's community (Laal, 2011).

Literacy: The ability to read, write, and speak proficient English in order to solve

problems and use technology to be a lifelong learner in one's family, workplace,

and community (Wilson, 2002).

Sense of Belonging: A sense of belonging refers to the need to interact, cooperate, and

engage with others to be able to learn and grow in diverse environments (Over,

2016).

Storytelling: Storytelling involves providing background information, details,

delivering, and formulating how one delivers the story (Mandelbaum, 2013).

Taking Action to Strengthen Communities: Taking action to strengthen communities

is when*,* adults help themselves and others, educate others, influence those

around them, and provide leadership within their communities (Wilson, 2002).

Working Together: Working together refers to getting involved and involving others

within the community, respecting people, identifying common values, visions,

and goals, and resolving conflict (Wilson, 2002).

APPENDIX B:

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEW

1. Tell me about your role in this program.

2. Please describe your professional experience facilitating civic education initiatives?

3. Please tell me more about the initiatives you are a part of/facilitate related to civic education?

4. Describe experiences related to civic engagement that you have had working with those in the community?

5. How did you become a civic education facilitator?

6. What motivates you to do this work? Why do you keep doing it?

7. How do you define civic education?

8. Describe how you work with adults to foster civic literacy development?

9. How do you approach the discussions of current events?

10. Please describe the adults who participate in civic engagement/civic education initiatives.

11. What do you hope that people gain from participating in these programs?

12. How do you promote the events?

13. Who do you partner with or who sponsors these events?

14. What are you proud of in relation to your work promoting civic education and civic engagement?

APPENDIX C:

OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Date:
Time:
Facilitator:
Documents collected:

Introduction: Setting of initiative? How many adults attended? Focus of initiative? What materials distributed? Interactions (verbal/non-verbal) between learners and learners and facilitator?

Descriptive Notes:	Reflective Notes:

Ecological view of civic literacy development: Focus on becoming/staying informed? Forming and expressing opinions/ideas? Working together? Taking action to strengthen community? Interactions (verbal/non-verbal) between learners and learners and facilitator? Activities?

Descriptive Notes:	Reflective Notes:

Pillars of lifelong education: Focus on learning to know? Learning to be? Learning to live together? Learning to do? Interactions (verbal/non-verbal) between learners and learners and facilitator? Activities?

Descriptive Notes:	Reflective Notes:

Closing: How was event concluded? Was there any checking for understanding? What did learners leave with? What action will be taken? What will happen next? What extension activities if any were assigned? What new invitations were extended to continue the work?

Descriptive Notes:	Reflective Notes:

INDIVIDUAL INFORMED CONSENT

Study Title:

Civic Education Initiatives in Central Texas: A Descriptive Case Study

Principal Investigator: Lauren E. Chaney   Faculty Advisor: Clarena Larrotta
       Email: lec63@txstate.edu   Email: cl24@txstate.edu

This consent form will explain why this research study is being done and why you are being invited to participate. It will also describe what you will need in order to participate as well as any known risks, inconveniences, or discomforts that you may experience while participating. We encourage you to ask questions at any time. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and it will be a record of your agreement to participate. You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND
You are invited to participate in a research study to share how you promote civic education for adults in the community. The information gathered will be used as research data in a doctoral dissertation. You are being asked to participate because of your expertise and knowledge on the subject.

PROCEDURES
If you agree to take part in the study, you will be expected to participate in the following:
- An hour-long conversational interview
- Allow the researcher to attend/observe the civic education events as offered at your organization/institution
- Provide materials relevant to the session that will be observed
- Allow the researcher to audio record the interview and to take notes on a laptop during the observation sessions

RISKS/DISCOMFORTS
There is minimal risk participating in this study. All the questions and activities relate to your work with facilitating civic education initiatives. If any of the interview questions make you uncomfortable, you are welcome to decline to answer the question, take a break, or stop participating in the study without any consequences. All information that you share will remain confidential. Participation is voluntary and you will be able to withdraw participating in the study at any time.

BENEFITS
This study will document what is being done regarding civic education. The goals is to inform future initiatives. Study findings will identify best practices facilitating civic education and civic engagement for adults in the local community that can be transferred to a variety of adult education settings.

EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Reasonable efforts will be made to keep the personal information in your research record private and confidential. Any identifiable information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. The members of the research team and the Texas State University of Research Compliance (ORC) may access the data. The ORC monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research participants. Your name will not be used in any written reports or publications which result from this research. Data will be kept for three years (per federal regulations) after the study is completed and then destroyed.

PAYMENT/COMPENSATION

You will not be paid for you participation in this study.

PARTICIPATION IF VOLUNTARY

You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. You may withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions about participating in this study, you may contact the principal investigator or faculty advisor shown at the beginning of this document.

This project was approved by the Texas State IRB on September 28th, 2021. Pertinent questions or concerns about the research, research participants' rights, and/or research-related injuries to participants should be directed to IRB Chair, Dr. Denise Gobert 512-245-8352 (dgobert@txstate.edu) or to Monica Gonzales, IRB Regulatory Manager 512-245-2334 (meg201@txstate.edu).

DOCUMENTATION OF CONSENT

I have read this form and have decided that I will participate. The general purposes, the particulars of involvement, and possible risks have been explained to my satisfaction. I understand I can withdraw at any time.

Printed Name of Participant	**Signature** of Study Participant	Date

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent	Date

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