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I. Project Summary

In the last decade there has been a growing concern with the state of young people's knowledge of, interest in, and involvement in American government and civil society. A number of studies have addressed questions of interest and involvement—some quite extensively—but there has been little research about students' knowledge levels. The 1998 NAEP Civics Assessment provides the basis for such research. The Main Assessment included items testing 4th, 8th, and 12th graders' knowledge of five aspects of government drawn from the 1994 voluntary *National Standards for Civics and Government* along with their knowledge of skills and civic dispositions deemed essential for effective and responsible citizenship. The Trend Study, which duplicated in all respects a portion of the 1988 assessment, allows a determination of the extent to which students' knowledge has changed in the past decade. Like the main assessment, it included a variety of knowledge components.

The overall results—scale scores and achievement levels for the main assessment and average percentages correct for the trend study—have been reported. But none of the knowledge categories or other components have been analyzed. We intend to analyze these aspects of the assessment. As guideposts, we will rely heavily on the categories specified in the national standards and, for the trend study, categories previously established by the principal investigator. Specifically, beginning with the trend study, we intend to: a) determine which specific aspects of 4th, 8th, and 12th graders' knowledge have increased or decreased over the past decade, and to do so overall and for subgroups of students; and b) determine variations in students' knowledge of government, politics, and civics across the domains—content, skill, disposition, and context—specified in the 1998 civics framework and the 1994 national standards, and to do so overall and for subgroups of students. Insofar as the research questions demand, our analyses will take on a

multivariate form.

The significance of the proposed research comes from the close relationship between the knowledge and skills components and the voluntary national standards, as well as from the centrality of civic dispositions. Should we find low levels of knowledge about a given component, an obvious remedy over time is for curriculum designers to place greater emphasis on this topic or topics. While this is always a theoretical possibility, the similarity of assessment and standards should make application of what is learned about students' knowledge relatively feasible and direct. In addition, the research will enhance collaboration between political scientists and educators, a partnership that has recently begun to pay off in terms of curricular design and preparation of classroom material.

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. Theoretical Framework and Previous Literature

Calls for more and better civic education have risen steadily in recent years as evidence has grown of widespread disinterest, disengagement, and distrust of both government and civil society. The movement away from civic awareness and action has been especially evident—and particularly disturbing—among young people because it suggests still further declines in the future.

We propose analyzing the 1998 NAEP Civics Assessment (both Trend Study and Main Assessment) to learn more about young people's understanding of government, politics, and civics. The main assessment cast a wide net in terms of its conception of civics, including within its scope various knowledge components, skill components, and awareness of civic dispositions. The Trend Study, while less comprehensive, also included a variety of knowledge components. To date, none of these components has been analyzed; only the overall scores have been reported. Nor has there been any examination of the different response tasks that made up the main assessment—i.e., multiple choice and constructed response items.

Specifically, we propose three primary goals:

- § To determine which specific aspects of 4th, 8th, and 12th graders' knowledge have increased or decreased over the past decade, and to do so overall and for subgroups of students.
- § To determine variations in students' knowledge of government, politics, and civics across the domains—content, skill, disposition, and context—specified in the 1998 NAEP civics framework and in the 1994 voluntary National Standards for Civics and

Government. We will do so overall and for subgroups of students.

§ To relate course-taking and teacher and classroom practices to student knowledge levels.

We will pay special attention to multiple choice versus constructed response items, to varying levels of intellectual skills, and to understanding participatory skills and civic dispositions.

In all three tasks, our methods will include multivariate analyses in which we control for a variety of individual achievement, school, home, and demographic characteristics.

We begin by reviewing past research on levels of knowledge found in the American public. Our review also addresses concerns about declining knowledge levels, knowledge held by young people, the significance of low knowledge levels, and the relationship of low knowledge levels to civic education. We also briefly touch on declining levels of interest and trust. Most of this work has been done by political scientists, but as we point out, educational researchers and practitioners have increasingly taken note of these matters.

Levels of Political Knowledge

Low Levels of Knowledge. At least since the advent of scientific sample surveys in the 1940s, citizens' knowledge of government and politics has been regarded as somewhere between disappointing and disastrous. Most Americans know little about current issues; few can name their state or congressional representatives; many are uncertain of how their government works; and a large proportion are ill-informed about or unable to apply the basic principles on which our political system is based to hypothetical situations.¹

¹The review of the literature in this proposal draws heavily on the PI's coauthored work in Niemi and Junn

In one of the earliest studies of the American public, Hyman and Sheatsley (1947, 412-14) identified a “hard core of chronic ‘Know Nothings,’” whose size was “of considerable magnitude,” and who were “generally uninformed” about issues of the day. Drawing on numerous surveys over the next fifteen years, Erskine (1963) reported similarly discouraging data on the knowledge held by Americans about “textbook,” domestic, and international matters. What was most significant was not so much the inability to recall isolated facts and figures but the breadth and depth of the ignorance.

The extent of the public’s ignorance became more evident when sociologists and political scientists explored the ideological and issue-based foundations of American voting behavior. In *The American Voter* (Campbell et al. 1960), for example, the authors spoke of “widespread lack of familiarity with prominent issues of public policy, along with confusion on party positions that remains even among individuals familiar with an issue” (186). In an analysis of the electorate’s use of ideological concepts that are common in elite political discussion—in particular, the notions of liberalism and conservatism—the authors concluded that “the concepts important to ideological analysis are useful only for that small segment of the population that is equipped to approach political decisions at a rarefied level” (250). In a later study, one of the authors of that volume coined the term *nonattitudes* to express voters’ frequent and extreme lack of issue awareness and political understanding (Converse 1964).

Young people have not been spared this sharp criticism, though a focus on life cycle and generational questions came relatively recently. A variety of studies have now shown that teenagers and young adults are ignorant of American history, geography, and politics (not to

mention literature and other subjects, on which see Ravitch and Finn 1987; Hirsch 1988, “Pop Quiz” 1988). For the most part, such studies have been less systematic than those of older adults, but the findings and conclusions have been equally pointed. In 1993, for example, a survey showed that students at elite colleges were often ignorant of basic political facts, such as the names of their senators, the line of presidential succession, the name of the prime minister of Great Britain, and so on (“General Knowledge” 1993).

Increasingly, stories of such gaps in young people’s learning have been based on the history and civics assessments of the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP). In one of the earliest such reports, Vandermyn (1974, 23) noted that “performance falls far below the [social studies educators’] panel’s standards.” A decade later, Ravitch and Finn (1987) excoriated students and schools alike for the lack of historical knowledge shown by two successive history assessments. With respect to civic knowledge per se, the authors of *The Civics Report Card* for 1988 engaged in understatement, expressing “disappointment” that so few students reached appropriate levels of competence (Anderson et al. 1990, 40). Most recently, in 1998, the use of achievement levels (and a newly designed test) generated a much stronger conclusion—that a third of the students in grades 4, 8, and 12 scored *below* basic, where basic itself means only “partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient [grade-level] work,” and only a tiny portion of students at each of the three grades achieved an “advanced” understanding of the subject (Lutkus et al. 1999).²

In spite of the impressive array of evidence stretching now to a half-century, social

²It should, of course, be borne in mind that the 1998 assessment tested what students *should* know and what

scientists were not easily convinced that citizens could be this lacking in knowledge. They made numerous efforts to show that the “problem” lay in question wording or other deficiencies of survey methodology or that it was rooted in aspects of the political system. Lane (1959), for example, argued that voters had individual ideologies that were coherent and meaningful but not based on the common left-right parlance of journalists and politicians. Mann and Wolfinger (1980) found that voters *recognized* political figures whom they could not remember when asked unaided *recall* questions; similarly, voters could recognize and understand ideological terms describing the political parties even though they seldom used such terms spontaneously (Converse 1964; Barnes, Kaase et al. 1979). RePass (1971) found that while individuals were ignorant of public policy issues “across the board,” they most often knew about a smaller set of issues that were of specific interest or concern to them. Page and his colleagues reported that knowledge about issues depended on *candidate* clarity (Page and Brody 1972) and on the length of time that an issue was before the public (Page and Shapiro 1992, 12-13). Barnes, Kaase et al. (1979) and Niemi and Westholm (1984) noted that voters’ knowledge depended to some extent on a nation’s party system, and that the two-party system in the U.S. worked against certain types of citizen awareness. In addition, methodologists suggested that at least some of the apparent ignorance about issues was due to fundamentally poor question wording in public surveys (Achen 1975; Green 1988; Krosnick 1991).

These arguments and perspectives provide some important qualifications to the overall argument. Nonetheless, there is no longer any doubt that the political and civic knowledge of

most American adults, young and old, is very low. “Study after study documents the breadth and depth of citizen ignorance” (Lupia and McCubbins 1998, 1). “Nothing strikes the student of public opinion and democracy more forcefully than the paucity of information most people possess about politics” (Ferejohn 1990, 3). “The public’s lack of information was so well established [after early surveys] that scholars lost interest in studying the subject” (Smith 1989, 159). “Large numbers of citizens plainly lack elementary pieces of political information...[and] are woefully ill-informed about major issues, including issues frequently and visibly in the news” (Sniderman, Brody and Tetlock 1991, 15).

Declining Levels of Knowledge? Perhaps more to the point here is that knowledge levels may be declining. Certainly there is a popular perception that this is the case. Infused in reports of low levels of knowledge among today’s young people (e.g., Ravitch and Finn 1987; NASS 1999; Project Vote Smart 1999) is the implication that the current generation is less knowledgeable than past generations. Occasionally this is made explicit, as in a Pew Research Center (1990, 1) report: “a major comprehensive examination of what young people know... reveals a generation that knows less.”

Tangential evidence, for which there are better over-time comparisons, also suggest declining levels of knowledge. Perhaps most closely connected to knowledge per se is the well-documented drop in newspaper reading³ along with the belief that newspapers have more in-depth coverage of the news (see citations in Neuman, Just, and Crigler 1992, 49-50). Other changes are also well-documented, but their connection to knowledge is more tenuous. The most

³Figures from *Editor and Publisher* show that newspaper circulation as a percentage of the population has

visible such change is in voter turnout, which has declined since the Kennedy-Nixon election of 1960.⁴ Interest in politics and commitment to social activism have both declined among college freshmen (Astin et al. 1997, 28, 45, 57; Sax et al. 1999); distrust of governmental institutions has become widespread (Hibbing and Theiss Morse 1995; Nye et al. 1997); civil society has, arguably, deteriorated badly (Putnam 2000). Many of these changes have occurred over a generation, but declines have continued or strengthened in the past decade. Importantly, it is clear that these changes are generational in origin (Miller and Shanks 1996; Putnam 2000). For example, though young people generally vote at lower rates than older adults, “cohort analyses” indicate that today’s youths participate less than comparably aged individuals in the past.

Careful scholarly studies of the extent of civic knowledge over time are in fact very limited, and the evidence is less clear than common perceptions would lead one to believe. The best comparison of knowledge levels across time is that by Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996), and their conclusion is equivocal. They point out that “citizens appear no less informed about politics today than they were half a century ago” (133). But they also note the possibility that “this stability results from the neutralization of potential gains promised by the expansion of public education and the communications revolution” (133). Their inability to choose between alternative interpretations is not much aided by cohort comparisons. While they find that “knowledge gaps between the youngest age cohorts (eighteen to twenty-nine year olds) and older ones are actually substantially greater in 1989 [when they conducted a survey] than they were in the 1940s and 1950s,” this comparison is based on only five items for which data were available

dropped steadily since about 1950, including another five percentage points since 1990.

(172).

The NAEP 1988 study also contributed conflicting information (Anderson et al. 1990, chap. 1). Trend data from 1976-82-88 showed an overall decline across all three years among 12th graders, though the decline was actually limited to whites between 1982 and 1988. There was no change between 1976 and 1982 among 8th graders and a slight (not statistically significant) increase in 1988. Whittington (1991), comparing items reported by Ravitch and Finn with those found in much earlier tests, also reported mixed results.

Variable Knowledge of Topics

Far less attention has been paid to variations in knowledge levels across topics. In part this is because it is difficult to categorize knowledge in meaningful ways. Domestic politics vs. foreign affairs is a relatively clear distinction, but some positions (U.S. president) and information (dollars spent on the military) are common to both. The distinction between people and processes seems relatively clear, though there can be overlap (as when a person such as a president or governor is involved in a process such as law-making). Another reason for lack of attention is that few studies contain a sufficient number of knowledge items to permit any kind of comparison across subject lines. Individual surveys, for example, often contain only a handful of such items, and comparisons across surveys must contend with different populations, time periods, survey contexts, and so on (see, e.g., Jennings 1996).

Nonetheless, it is clear that individuals know certain kinds of things more than others. Simply within the realm of institutions and processes, Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996, 70-71)

⁴Though turnout jumped in 1992 owing to interest in Ross Perot's candidacy, it dropped in 1996 to barely half

found items that upwards of 90 percent of the population could answer correctly and others that 20 percent or less could answer. There were similar variations in the 1988 NAEP civics assessment, a point reviewed in more detail below. Interestingly, the two studies were in agreement that Americans are relatively well-versed in the rights of the accused.

Though it is difficult to categorize knowledge by subject, efforts in this regard are important if one wishes to relate knowledge levels to curriculum and other aspects of the school. If one discovers, for example, that widespread knowledge of certain subjects is due to television dramas (which is suspected as a cause in the case of rights of the accused), one might wish to take that into account in the development of classroom material. Conversely, if one discovers that certain kinds of knowledge are more subject to school influence than others (Niemi and Junn 1998, chap. 6), it might be significant both for construction of classroom material and for better understanding of test results.

Consequences of Low Knowledge Levels

What are the consequences of a knowledge deficit? Does it really matter if people are uninformed? Perhaps surprisingly, this is a topic about which there is much current debate in the political science community. In brief, some political scientists argue that citizens do not need to know a great deal to operate politically because they can reasonably rely on “short-cuts” or “heuristics” (as virtually all adults do when making consumer purchases of automobiles, appliances, and so on). Moreover, people can readily be educated when the occasion calls for it (as happened with respect to the Electoral College in November and December of 2000).

There are, however, multiple concerns that stem from the low levels of knowledge among

of the adult electorate, and it was just above that low point in 2000 despite a very close race.

ordinary citizens: a) the connection between political knowledge and the ability to form meaningful opinions and act in accordance with them, a connection that tightens with each addition increment of knowledge (Bartels 1996; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Althaus 1998); b) the possibility that an uninformed populace can be manipulated (Page and Shapiro 1996); c) the association between ignorance about politics and anti-democratic views (Stouffer 1954; McClosky and Zaller 1984); and d) the presumption that lack of information contributes to low levels of political participation (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1994; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996, 224-27).⁵

As if to illustrate the last point, the report of a survey sponsored by National Association of Secretaries of State noted that 15-24 year-olds' "vague understanding of citizenship [and of the voting process itself] deters them from getting involved in the political process" generally and from voting in particular (NASS 1999, 17). For some (young and old) who did become involved, the inability to act in accordance with one's preferences was demonstrated in dramatic fashion in November, 2000, when the nation witnessed that some portion of the population could evidently not correctly cast a ballot for president.

Relationship to Civics Education

The literature reviewed above is about the level of citizen knowledge very broadly conceived. While it includes information about young people, little of it addresses civic education directly. In the past half-dozen years, however, there has been growing concern specifically about the state of civic education and the lack of knowledge (and involvement) that

⁵Each of these points is elaborated in Niemi and Weisberg (2001, chap. 6).

it produces. A list of major projects and reports gives some indication of the extent of this concern:

- § Publication of *Expectations of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for Social Studies* (National Council for the Social Studies 1994)
- § Publication of *National Standards for Civics and Government* 1994 (Center for Civic Education 1994)
- § IEA International Civic Education Project, 1995-present (Torney-Purta, Schwille, and Amadeo 1999)
- § Formation of The Task Force on Civic Education for the Next Century by the American Political Science Association, 1997-present (“Task Force on Civic Education” 1997)
- § Report of the National Commission on Civic Renewal (National Commission on Civic Renewal 1998)
- § Publication of the *NAEP 1998 Civics Report Card for the Nation* (Lutkus et al. 1998)
- § Survey of state policies and practices related to civic education (Tolo 1999)
- § Survey of young adults by the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS 1999)
- § Social Science Education Consortium annual meeting focuses on Political Science/ Civic Education (Downey and Stoltman, forthcoming)
- § Report to political scientists on enrollments in government classes in high school (Niemi and Smith 2001)

Collectively, these reports and projects include prescriptions for civic education classes (*Expectations; National Standards*), tests of student knowledge (Torney-Purta et al.; NAEP), a survey of young adults’ attitudes about politics and government (NASS), assessments of the extent of civic education (Tolo; Niemi and Smith), and general study of civic education (Task Force). Also, they reveal cooperation and consultation across academic disciplines and types of groups. Faculty in education, political science, and public policy are all represented. Within

education, university researchers/teachers, state curriculum specialists, and classroom teachers have been involved. And a variety of organizations have shown concern—some that deal specifically with civic education, as one would expect, but others (National Commission; Secretaries of State) that are involved only because of what they perceive as the importance of the issues at hand.

In addition, individuals and groups are now turning to efforts to increase the amount of and improve the quality of civic education. The Secretaries of State, for example, held a series of regional meetings to generate ideas for programs that might address some of the problems identified by their survey. Some, though by no means all of these ideas involved advances in civic education. The APSA Task Force will hold a retreat in March, 2001, for which the agenda includes “linking the work in youth civic development to those of civic education and engagement.” The National Conference of Social Studies created a new Task Force in 1999, part of whose charge is “to recommend products, programs, services, and initiatives that reflect the civic mission of NCSS” and “to recommend ways in which NCSS can exercise leadership by building mutually beneficial relationships with partners who share our interest in citizenship education” (<http://www.ncss.org/citizenship/home.shtml>). It is not likely that all of these efforts will be successful. Yet they demonstrate that gains in knowledge about civic education are likely to have an impact on practice in the not-too-distant future.

B. Proposed Research

In Section IIA, we wrote in a general way about the analyses we will undertake as well as the rationale for them. Here we describe these analyses in more detail. The discussion is divided into two sections because of fundamental differences between the trend study and the main

assessment.

The Trend Study

Design Aspects and Prior Analysis of the Trend Study. In 1988, approximately 11,000 students in grades 4, 8, and 12 were assessed using, respectively, 48, 150, and 144 multiple choice items.⁶ Assessments were made in “winter” and “spring” sessions. The test items were grouped into four categories, intended to evaluate students’ knowledge of “Political Processes,” “Rights, Responsibilities, and the Law,” “Democratic Principles and the Purpose of Government,” and “Structures and Functions of Political Institutions.” The 1998 Civics Assessment included a small component, dubbed the “trend study,” designed to replicate the 1988 assessment with the exception of: a) the number of administrations (only a winter administration); b) the size of the sample (smaller at each grade level); and c) the number of test items (fewer for 8th and 12th graders). In all other respects, however, such as instructions given to students, the background questionnaire, and access for students with disabilities and limited English proficiency, the 1998 round duplicated the 1988 round as closely as possible.⁷

An initial, overall, report of the trend study has been completed and is awaiting publication (Weiss et al. 2001). It gives a good overall summary of results, providing (for each year) the average percentage correct over all items, the average percentage correct within the four

⁶This description, taken from Anderson (1990, 91), is not quite right for the 12th grade. See Niemi and Junn (1998, 163) about the exact items used in the 12th grade.

⁷The three design changes in the 1998 round have several implications. First, only the winter administration from 1988 should be used for comparison purposes. The PI has already obtained the appropriate files for this purpose from the Educational Testing Service. Second, it will be harder to obtain statistically significant results because of the smaller number of students. Third, inferences about understanding of specific knowledge components will be somewhat weakened by the smaller number of items. In a few cases, it may be impossible to make any reasonable comparison using the intended categorizations (see below).

knowledge categories described above, and the percentage correct for all individual items. As in most NAEP reports, the major results are also shown for a variety of types of respondents, grouping them by individual characteristics (gender, race/ethnicity), family background (parental education), school characteristics (public or private), and so on.

Planned Analyses of the Trend Study. We wish to undertake analyses of the 1988-1998 data that differ in several respects from what has already been done. First, we will explore over-time variations in students' knowledge of specific subject matter. In an analysis of the 1988 assessment, Niemi and Junn (1998) devised a more theoretically meaningful classification of items than that used in the original design and analysis. While their classification paralleled the original categorization to some degree, it used more refined categories. Thus, for example, the "rights and responsibilities" category included items both about criminal and civil law (such as the right to a lawyer, the Miranda warning, the ban on double jeopardy) and political or general rights (such as first amendment rights, the right to participate in a boycott, the right to organize a recall election). "Structures and functions" included items about the state as well as the national government. And items requiring certain skills, such as the ability to make inferences from tables and charts, were not differentiated from simple recall questions.

The categories developed by Niemi and Junn, along with the average percentage correct, are shown in Appendix C of this proposal. Variations in knowledge across these categories is striking, ranging from less than 60 percent to more than 80 percent (excluding the category with only three items).⁸ More important than overall knowledge levels, however, was Niemi and Junn's finding (ch. 6) that school factors related differently to various kinds of items. In a

⁸In contrast, three of the umbrella categories used in the original study have average percentages correct of 61

multivariate equation, controlling for a variety of individual achievement, school, home, and demographic characteristics, the items in the rights' categories were least strongly related to school factors, arguably because students learned about these subjects outside of the school. Similarly, gender differences on these items were smallest. At the other extreme were “structures and functions,” largely items about the structure of the federal government. These were most strongly related to school factors, suggesting that knowledge of this category originated more heavily in school classrooms and activities. Correspondingly, gender differences were greatest for this category.

Just as the static analysis of the items was enhanced by a finer and more careful categorization, over-time analysis should also be more insightful when considered in greater detail. We thus intend to see how subject matter trends vary across the categories used by Niemi and Junn as well as how these trends vary across population groups. By having more—and more homogeneous—categories, it is likely that we will be better able to determine whether knowledge of specific aspects of government and politics have changed and, if so, among whom.

Our approach will not be a “scattershot” analysis. Instead, there are a number of hypotheses that we wish to consider based on ways in which the late 1990s differed from the late 1980s. Noting, for example, the third-party efforts of Ross Perot to secure a presidential nomination in both 1992 and 1996, we expect to find that students (at least 12th graders, who were already in high school in the second of these years) were better able to answer questions about the nomination process in the 1998 assessment. Similarly, the greater emphasis on campaign finance reform in the 1990s suggests that students will be better able to identify

Political Action Committees (PACs). On the other hand, the passage of time since the Civil Rights Movement and since the adoption of the 24th amendment (as well as the relaxation of registration requirements) might have led to a decline in knowledge about what is required for voting in a national election.⁹

Where appropriate, our analysis will take on a multivariate form. This will apply particularly to the analysis of the main assessment (see below). Here as well, however, there will be instances in which we wish to know whether a given variable is related to knowledge levels and, especially, whether that relationship has changed in the past decade. A good example is gender. In the 1988 assessment, it was observed that males scored higher than females at the 12th grade level; this was true in the simple bivariate relationship (Anderson et al. 1990, 42) and in a multivariate relationship (Niemi and Junn 1998, 120). If the bivariate relationship is reversed in 1998 (as it was in the main assessment; see Lutkus et al. 1999, 36), we will want to see whether this reversal can be accounted for by other variables that may also have changed.¹⁰ To the extent that the reversal is maintained in a multivariate context, we can be more confident that it represents a meaningful change in the relationship between gender and civic knowledge.

We also wish to take advantage of the multi-grade design of the NAEP assessments to see

⁹Because of the use of a smaller number of items in 1998, we may not be able to analyze all categories specified by Niemi and Junn. Even so, it seems preferable to take account of varying subject matter—even if that means being unable at times to draw any conclusions. If we are to make judgments about what students evidently learn in school, what subject matter they should learn better, and so on, our analyses need to be relatively specific in this respect. We should also note that categorization of questions into subject-matter categories has typically been done on the basis of their manifest (face) content rather than by some statistical clustering procedure. This is equally true for NAEP committees, for Niemi and Junn, and for other analysts (e.g., Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996).

¹⁰This is a noteworthy example in that there are external reasons to expect a reversal of the relationship between gender and knowledge. Males historically turned out to vote at higher rates than females. But in the 1980s women began to vote at marginally higher rates than males in presidential elections; in the 1990s, women slightly widened that margin and eventually extended it to turnout in midterm elections (Stanley and Niemi 2000, 16; updated for 1998 at www.census.gov).

whether there was as much learning between grades as in 1989. In the Report Card for the 1988 study, for example, it was noted that 58 percent of the 8th graders and 82 percent of the 12th graders were aware that the federal government regulated food and drugs (Anderson et al. 1990, 59). Regardless of the overall path of knowledge between the two assessments, it will be enlightening to see whether the between-grade differences have changed.

Finally, insofar as possible, we also intend to bring in other over-time data, especially from pre-1988 NAEP citizenship studies. We note, however, that this may only be possible at the level of individual items—if at all. The *Civics Report Card* for 1988 (Anderson et al. 1990) shows trend comparisons between 1976, 1982, and 1988. Changes in sample design along with the use of only a portion of the 1988 questions in 1998 would seem to make an exact comparison with the 1976 and 1982 study impossible. An even bigger impediment may be the inability to retrieve information for the 1976 and 1982 studies. The PI has had various conversations with researchers at ETS and has received some printed material from them about the earlier assessments. It is not yet clear, however, whether it is possible to find exact question wordings and response distributions. (To be fair, I should note that ETS was not responsible for the earlier assessments.)

The Main Assessment

Design Aspects and Prior Analysis of the Main Assessment. For the 1998 Main Assessment, nearly 22,000 students in grades 4, 8, and 12 were assessed. The sample design was that commonly used for NAEP studies and need not concern us here (see Lutkus et al. 1999, Appendix A). The content of the assessment, however, was newly designed and bears some discussion.

The assessment covered three interrelated components: knowledge, skills, and civic dispositions. In addition, each of these three components could be applied to a number of contexts (e.g., state versus nation). The knowledge component was itself divided into five categories, paralleling the voluntary *National Standards for Civics and Government* (see Appendix D of this proposal). These components were given differing emphases as grades 4, 8, and 12. Thus, for example, only 10 percent of the 4th grade assessment was devoted to the U.S. and world affairs (Category IV) but this grew to 14 percent at the 8th grade and 20 percent of the 12th grade. The skills component also consisted of multiple parts. First, there were intellectual skills, such as identifying, explaining, and evaluating. Second, in lieu of measuring participation itself, the assessment included questions “designed to measure whether students can identify participatory skills, recognize their purpose...,” and so on (Lutkus et al. 1999, 4). Finally, it was considered important for the *civics* assessment to address civic dispositions—various traits of private and public character, such as respecting individual worth and human dignity. While NAEP could not assess students’ dispositions directly, an effort was made to measure students’ knowledge and understanding of their importance.

One other noteworthy point about the 1998 assessment (in contrast to the 1988 assessment) is that it contained short constructed response, and extended constructed response items in addition to multiple choice items. The assessment was divided in this way at each grade.

The *NAEP 1998 Civics Report Card* (Lutkus et al. 1999) reports—for each of the three grade levels—average scale scores (arbitrarily set at 150), scores by percentiles, and the percentages in the four ranges of performance defined by the three achievement levels. The *Report Card* also gives examples of specific questions, indicating the content category of the

question and the percentage correct for multiple choice items or the percentage acceptable or complete along with illustrative responses for constructed response items. Additional examples can be found on the NCES website. The achievement level results are also shown for standard subgroups. Additional chapters also cover teacher policies and practices and various classroom practices.

Planned Analyses of the Main Assessment. As with the Trend Analysis, one of our primary goals is to explore students' knowledge of specific subject matter. We are particularly interested in seeing how well students performed in each of the subject areas and on the various intellectual skills used to structure the assessment. Especially informative will be the responses to categories I (civic life, politics, and government) and IV (the U.S. and world affairs), areas that were relatively untouched by the previous civics assessment.

In part, this should be a straightforward task in that issues are classified both by knowledge component (referred to as content area on the web site) and by intellectual skill component (cognitive domain). In other respects, however, it will not be straightforward at all. Because of the rotating design, in which any one student is asked only a portion of all the assessment questions, we need to be aware of how many students were asked a given item as well as of the equivalence of questions in various blocks. We also have some concerns about completion rates; in many instances, 10-20 percent of 8th and 12th graders failed to answer constructed response items (see the percentage marked "omitted item" on the web site). Nonetheless, the samples were large (roughly 6-8,000 per grade) and the total number of items was considerable (90, 151, and 152, respectively at grades 4, 8, and 12), making it likely that careful analysis will allow inferences about most, if not all of the components.

It ought to be possible as well to analyze students' knowledge and understanding of participatory skills and civic dispositions. However, on the material made public so far (*The Report Card* and the web site), items have not been labeled with respect to these components. In other respects, as well, these are the most difficult of the civics components to evaluate. As *The Report Card* makes clear, it is not within the scope of NAEP to assess directly the skills and dispositions of students. Moreover, the ideal assessment regarding participation might involve observations of students years after they graduated from high school. Nevertheless, as the *Civics Framework* (1996, 31) notes with respect to dispositions, their importance "can scarcely be overstated." And again, "traits of private character...are essential to the well-being of the American nation" and "traits of public character...are indispensable for the nation's well-being" (31-32). Thus, a thorough analysis of the *civics* assessment requires that we pay attention to these domains, as difficult as that may be.

As part of the analysis of variations in knowledge levels across the components of the 1998 assessment, we will consider group correlates of knowledge. For the assessment as a whole, of course, these variations are available in *The Report Card*, as they are for sample items on the web site. It is likely, however, that group variations will not be identical across subject areas, skills, and dispositions. In analyzing the 1988 assessment, for example, Niemi and Junn (1998, chap. 5) found that gender differences were variable: boys knew more about political parties and war and foreign affairs while girls knew more about elections. One especially interesting difference was that girls were better able to interpret charts and texts. Given the greater emphasis on interpretation in the 1998 assessment, we are now in a better position to examine this point.

Our analysis of group correlates will include multivariate methods. As is well known,

bivariate correlations may be spurious, in that observed relationships are due to outside influences rather than to causal connections between the observed measures. Controlling statistically for multiple factors helps sort out such matters (without, of course, fully identifying causal connections). For example, a frequent finding with respect to political participation (e.g., Schlozman, Burns, and Verba 1994; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980, 91) is that gender and racial differences disappear when viewed in a multivariate context—though such differences with respect to knowledge remained large in 1988 even with numerous controls in place (Niemi and Junn 1998, chap. 6).

Finally, we will continue the effort to relate course-taking and teacher and classroom practices to student knowledge levels (Niemi and Junn 1998; Smith and Niemi 2001). We will pay special attention to possible differences between multiple choice and constructed response items, asking whether various instructional practices are more strongly related to students' ability to answer one of these kinds of items. Similarly, we will consider whether classroom and instructional practices are related to better performance on higher level intellectual skills and on understanding participatory skills and civic dispositions.

C. Significance of the Research

The close relationship between the knowledge and skills components and the voluntary national standards, as well as the centrality of civic dispositions, make application of what is learned about student knowledge more direct and feasible than is typically the case. Thus, for example, should it be found that students know relatively little about a given knowledge component, textbook designers, curriculum specialists, and teachers alike might want to pay special attention to that topic. One such possibility is category IV, the U.S. and world affairs. It

is likely that this category is under-emphasized in current civics courses. Low scores in this area, along with the emphasis given it in the Standards and the assessment, would make it ripe for expansion.¹¹

From a less applied perspective, a significant research question concerns the contribution of knowledge to various aspects of civic life. It has long been known that level of education is related to most forms of civic and political participation and to the degree of political tolerance of diversity. In recent work, however, there has been increased recognition of the role of knowledge per se (Delli Carpini 1996; Bartels 1996). Because, by definition, all of the students at a given grade level in the NAEP assessment have the same education level (as conventionally measured), they provide an excellent sample on which to test the strength of the connection between knowledge about governmental structures and processes and knowledge of participatory skills and civic dispositions. Specifying this connection may provide insight into the causal mechanisms that relate knowledge and participation (without completely identifying them, of course).

We also seek to continue the PI's efforts to make civic education a more visible and meaningful area of research in political science. The PI has written elsewhere of the extent to which civic education was long ignored by political scientists. That is now changing, due in part to the widespread concern about youthful disengagement that we described above. Despite expressed concern, however, little actual research on civic education is being done by political

¹¹Political scientists themselves are slowly but surely becoming interested in applied aspects of civic education, often in collaboration with education faculty. One such application is to a curriculum intended to better teach students the value of political tolerance (Wood et al. 1994). Recent applications include material intended for state legislative interns (Rosenthal, Hibbing, Kurtz, and Loomis 2000) but recently revised and extended into a short school curriculum (Rosenthal and Fisher 2000).

scientists. We hope to demonstrate interesting and informative ways in which the NAEP data can be used and, more generally, to develop greater interest in research and application of the content and execution of pre-college teaching and learning about government and politics.

D. Project Personnel

PI—General Qualifications. Since his graduate training, the PI has been interested in how young people learn about politics, government, and society—or what in the political science profession is sometimes called “political socialization.” His accomplishments in this area have been recognized in several ways—all of which are broadly relevant to the present proposal. First, he served a three-year appointment as Chair of the Education and Professional Development Committee of the American Political Science Association (APSA) and is a continuing member of the APSA Task Force on Civic Education for the Next Century. He is a continuing member of U.S. National Advisory Committee for the Civic Education Project of the International Association for the Evaluation of Education (IEA) and was one of two North American advisors for a project sponsored by the International Bureau of Education (UNESCO) (which unfortunately was not carried through to completion). He has been on a number of committees of the Educational Testing Service; in this capacity he has written and evaluated questions for achievement tests at various levels.

PI—Work with NAEP, and with Transcript Data. The PI was involved in all phases of the 1998 Civics Assessment, as a member of the Planning Committee (1995-96), the Civics Test Development Planning Committee, (1996-97), the Background Questionnaire Development Committee (1996), and the Expert Review Panel (Achievement Levels) (1998). He is currently a member of the Civics Standing Committee. In addition to this formal involvement, he observed

an administration of the assessment as well as the scoring of open-ended items. Finally, he is a coauthor of the yet-to-be published trend study, *The Next Generation of Citizens: NAEP Civics Assessments -- 1988-1998*.

The PI coauthored (with Jane Junn) *Civic Education: What Makes Students Learn*, based on the 1988 Civics NAEP. Of particular relevance to this grant proposal is that the book emphasizes variations in levels of knowledge across subject areas, pointing out subject matter that students know well along with subjects of which they are largely ignorant. The authors also related what students know to the probable sources of student knowledge and to the likely content of courses in civics/American government.

The PI has also published work based on another NAEP assessment, the 1994 History NAEP, along with the 1994 High School Transcript Study (Niemi and Smith 2001; Smith and Niemi 2001). All of the above work includes multivariate analyses, with independent variables derived from the general background questionnaire, the subject-specific background questionnaire, and the transcript study.

Co-PI—General Qualifications. The co-PI specializes in the application of quantitative methods to the study of American politics. He has published research on political participation in American national elections as well as on the voting behavior of members of the United States Congress. He has extensive experience with quantitative analysis at a variety of levels. He regularly teaches data analysis courses, focusing both on theoretical and applied work, for undergraduates and for graduate students. He is coauthor of a monograph that introduces new graduate students in the social sciences to the quantitative methods they will encounter in published research. He has applied advanced quantitative methods in the study of American

politics and has published papers developing new models for understanding individual choice.

While he was trained as a political scientist, his interests and work have a significant interdisciplinary component. As an undergraduate he majored in both mathematics and political science, and while in graduate school he took courses in economics. He is coauthor of *Understanding Multivariate Research*, which explains regression analysis with examples drawn from published work in political science, sociology, marketing, and other disciplines. In addition, he has recently been appointed Assistant Professor in the Department of Government at the University of Notre Dame, with a joint appointment in the Laboratory for Social Research, which serves several social science disciplines.

Co-PI—Work with Large-Scale Data Sets. The co-PI has extensive experience with the statistical analysis of large data sets, especially survey data. His dissertation and much of his published work is based on various parts of the National Election Studies (NES), an extensive series of studies extending back to 1952. Most of these studies are based on hour-long interviews, resulting in large amounts of material about each respondent. They sometimes include split-half samples and other design complexities. The NES surveys are all based on nationally representative probability samples, but the sampling is increasingly complex, including single-shot surveys, “rolling” cross-sections, panel studies, and over-sampling of select populations. The data sets also combine auxiliary data (such as election results) with the survey data. In the co-PI’s studies of Congress, he has assembled and used data sets routinely exceeding 100,000 observations. He is proficient in using and programming many software programs for statistical analysis, including SPSS (in the Windows and UNIX environments), STATA, LIMDEP, and Gauss.

Research Assistants. RA's will be drawn from the Department of Political Science at the University of Rochester and the University of Notre Dame. Students in both schools are adept at both file management and statistical analysis. One potential RA at Rochester has already had some experience working with the Transcript Study data.

E. Management Plan

The major management issue for this project is the ability of the PIs to work collaboratively at a distance. Both PIs are experienced in this mode of operation, having worked with multiple co-authors, both at their home institutions and elsewhere. The fact that Sanders received his Ph.D. from Rochester—and was Niemi's student—means that the PIs have similar outlooks on data analysis and on research more generally.

Both PIs will be responsible for conceptualization, analysis, and writing, so the division of labor will not be sharp. However, Sanders has greater computer and statistical skills and will consequently have a more direct hand in supervising, and at times in doing, computer programming. Niemi's previous work with NAEP civics data means that he will take the lead in drafting reports. Niemi will also have primary responsibility for the overall organization of the project and for managing the account.

Approximate Time Line.

7/1/01-12/31/01 Analysis of trend data; write paper

1/1/02-8/31/02 Analysis of main assessment; write paper(s)

4/02 or 9/02 Present paper at annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association
or the American Political Science Association (conditional on acceptance)

9/1/02-12/31/02 Revise paper(s), submit for publication.

We intend to write at least two papers based on this work—a shorter paper focusing on the trend study and a longer one focusing on the main assessment. One or both papers will be presented to professional conferences. It is anticipated that both papers will be published in professional journals. An effort will be made to publicize the results in education as well as in political science. One specific venue is *Social Education*. Walter Parker (Professor of Education, University of Washington), the editor of a new research feature in that journal, has already solicited a short manuscript summarizing our planned work. The summaries in this section are intended for the practitioner audience.

F. Resources

The resources needed most urgently are time to complete the work, a small amount of research help to assist in statistical processing, and a stand-alone computer for the co-PI. All three are provided for in the budget. Most importantly, if the present proposal is funded, it is anticipated that the PI's teaching load will be reduced by at least one course during the 2001-2002 academic year. The co-PI has some flexibility in terms of his work schedule inasmuch as part of his teaching responsibility is to make computing/statistical advice available at Notre Dame's Laboratory for Social Research. Neither investigator is expected to teach during the summer.

A stand-alone computer for the co-PI is needed so that he and a research assistant can do statistical processing while abiding by strict procedures for handling restricted data sets. (The PI has a license—control number 001103528. We would seek to have Sanders added to this license or, if necessary, to apply for his own license.) Though the NAEP data sets are quite large, ordinary PCs now have sufficient space and computing power to handle them.

Assistance from NAEP specialists may also prove important on occasion for information about sampling (especially about weighting decisions). The PI has worked with many individuals involved in the NAEP process, which makes it easier to direct specific questions to the right individuals when necessary.

Experience tells us that despite constant improvements in file construction and documentation of the NAEP material—and despite the fact that basic access has already been established—problems will arise that will take time to understand and then to solve. For this reason, we have requested a grant period of 18 months. Combined with time off for the PI, we believe that the grant period and the amount of effort planned are appropriate and sufficient to complete the project.

G. Section 427 Compliance

There are two components of our proposal in which we must provide for equitable access. First, in carrying out the research, we will employ several graduate research assistants; students with special needs will have an equal opportunity to fill this role. The available pool of assistants consists of students in the graduate programs of the Departments of Political Science at the University of Rochester and the University of Notre Dame. These programs, controlled by their respective universities, do not discriminate on the basis of gender, age, race, color, national origin, or disability. Nor shall we discriminate in our choosing of research assistants. More than simply verbal assurances, however, we point to the fact that the PI has a long track record of working with minority students, nontraditional students (in terms of age), and with female faculty and students.

Second, the proposed analysis will include attention to gender and racial/ethnic differences

in knowledge. Among other things, we will note whether any differences disappear when considered in a multivariate context. In previous work utilizing NAEP and High School Transcript data, the PI has investigated gender and race/ethnicity differences in some detail, finding in one instance that racial/ethnic differences in course-taking could not be attributed to underlying interests but originated instead in locational differences in course-taking patterns (Niemi and Smith 2001).

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Justification for Budget:

Year 1 (2001)

PI's salary (partial)	\$26,000
Benefits @ 19.24%	5,002
Graduate RA's	1,000
Benefits @ 10.5%	105
Equipment	1,000
Supplies	200
Total, Year 1	\$33,307

Principal Investigators: Support is requested to give the PI time off from teaching during the 2001-2002 academic year.

Graduate Students (Research assistants): To assist with data analysis. Assistants will be drawn both from the University of Rochester and the University of Notre Dame.

Equipment: For stand-alone computer for co-PI to comply with necessary security requirements.

Supplies: Paper, printer cartridges, long distance phone charges.

Year 2 (2002)

PI (1/18)	\$ 8,625
Co-PI (1/9)	6,294
Benefits @ 11.5%	1,716
Graduate RA's	1,000
Benefits @ 10.5%	105
Travel	2,055
Supplies	250
Total, Year 2	\$20,045

Principal Investigators : Partial summer compensation.

Travel: PI's to Washington, DC for peer review meeting.

Round trip airfare	
Rochester, NY-Washington, DC	\$725
South Bend, IN-Washington, DC	425
Ground transportation/one meal (two persons)	80
Total	\$1,230

PI or co-PI to a national or regional convention	
Round trip airfare	\$525
Per diem (two days)	300
Total	\$825

Total (7/1/01-12/31/02)

Personnel	\$42,919	
Benefits	6,928	
Travel	2,055	
Supplies	450	
Equipment	1,000	
Total direct costs	\$53,352	
Indirect costs @59.5%	\$31,744	
Total project costs		\$85,096

Appendix A - Vita of Principal Investigator

Richard G. Niemi

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Home

45 Boniface Drive
Rochester, New York 14620
Ph: (716) 244-3127

DATE OF BIRTH: January 10, 1941; Green Bay, WI

ACADEMIC TRAINING

1962 B.A. Lawrence College, magna cum laude
1967 Ph.D. University of Michigan

AWARDS AND GRANTS

1962 Phi Beta Kappa
1962-63 Woodrow Wilson Fellowship (honorary)
1962-65 National Defense Education Act Fellowship
1964 Pi Sigma Alpha
1965-66 National Science Foundation Fellowship
1969-70 National Institute of Mental Health Research Grant
1970-72 National Science Foundation Research Grant
1972-73 Ford Foundation Faculty Research Fellowship
1973 National Science Foundation Research Grant
1975-77 National Science Foundation Research Grant
1978 National Election Study support for two projects
1980-81 National Science Foundation Research Grant
1982 Swedish Bicentennial Fund Grant
1982 National Science Foundation Research Grant
1983-84 John Simon Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship
1984 Duncan Black Award (Best paper in 1983 *Public Choice*)
1984 National Science Foundation (International Program) Grant
1985-86 National Science Foundation Research Grant
1989 Fellow, Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences
1991 Visiting Researcher, March, Kobe University, Japan.
1994-95 National Science Foundation Conference Grant
1995-97 National Science Foundation Research Grant
1997-98 American Educational Research Association (AERA) Grant
1997-99 U.S. Department of Education (NAEP) Grant
1999-2001 National Science Foundation Research Grant

EMPLOYMENT

- 2000- Don Alonzo Watson Professor of Political Science, University of Rochester; Professor, 1976-99; Associate Professor, 1971-75; Assistant Professor, 1967-71
- 1999- Assoc. Chair, Dir. of Undergraduate Studies, Department of Political Science, University of Rochester
- 1989-91 Senior Associate Dean, College of Arts and Science, University of Rochester
- 1987 Interim Dean, College of Arts and Science, University of Rochester
- 1986-89 Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, College of Arts and Science, University of Rochester
- 1985 Ida Beam Visiting Professor, University of Iowa
- 1983-86 Distinguished Professor of Graduate Teaching, University of Rochester
- 1979-83 Chairman, Department of Political Science, University of Rochester
- 1976-80 Chief Evaluator, Rochester Plan for Improvement of Education in the Health Professions
- 1974 Thord-Gray Visiting Professor, University of Lund, Sweden; Visiting Professor, 1981
- 1970 Instructor, NSF College Science Improvement Program, Juniata College
- 1962-67 Assistant Study Director, Survey Research Center, University of Michigan

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Editorial Boards: *Public Choice*, 1973-90; *American Journal of Political Science*, 1978-81; *Political Behavior*, 1984-87; *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 1987-1997; *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 1990-92; *American Politics Quarterly*, 1987- ; *Representation*, 1995-; *Politics Groups and the Individual*, 1996-; *Social Science History*, 1998-; *State Politics and Policy Quarterly*, 2000-

Co-editor, 1981-87, Sage Papers on *Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences*

Editor, 1998-1999, co-editor, 1994-97, Sage book series, *Contemporary American Politics*

Editor, special issue on political socialization, *Political Psychology*, September, 1999

Educational Testing Service, Committee to revise the Graduate Record Examination (quantitative), 1994

Research Committee on Comparative Representation and Electoral Systems, International Political Science Association, Council, 1991-94; Program Chair, 1994; Co-Chair, 1994-97

Education and Professional Development Committee, American Political Science Association, Chair, 1995-97

National Assessment of Educational Progress: Planning Committee, Civics Assessment Planning Project. 1995-96; Background Questionnaire Development Committee, 1996; Civics Test Development Planning Committee, 1996-97; Expert Review Panel (Achievement Levels), 1998; Civics Standing Committee, 1997-

"What Education for What Citizenship?" Research project sponsored by the International Bureau of Education (UNESCO), Advisor, 1995-98

IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Education) Civic Education Project, National Expert Panel for U.S. Phase I 1995-97; National Advisory Committee for U.S., phase II 1998-

Task Force on Civic Education for the Next Century, American Political Science Association, 1997-

Social Science Education Consortium, 1998-

Economic and Social Research Council (UK) Education and Citizenship Project, Advisor, 2000-

PUBLICATIONS

Books:

Term Limits in the State Legislatures (with John Carey and Lynda W. Powell), Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000.

Civic Education: What Makes Students Learn (with Jane Junn), New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.

Comparing Democracies: Elections and Voting in Global Perspective (edited with Lawrence LeDuc and Pippa Norris), Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1996.

Minority Representation and the Quest for Voting Equality (with Bernard Grofman and Lisa Handley), New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Vital Statistics on American Politics, 1999-2000 (edited with Harold W. Stanley), Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2000; 1st ed., 1988.

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Appendix B - Vita of Co-Principal Investigator

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Assistant Professor, Florida State University, 1996-2001

Education

Ph.D., Political Science, University of Rochester, 1997
Dissertation: *The Evolution of Individual Decision-Making in American Presidential Elections*
B.A., Political Science and Mathematics, Duke University, 1991

Publications

“Uncertainty and Turnout.” *Political Analysis*, Winter 2001.

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Legislative Behavior:

The Political Economy of Congressional Careers” (with Lawrence S. Rothenberg)

“Modeling Legislator Decision-Making: An Historical Perspective” (with Lawrence S. Rothenberg)

Electoral Behavior:

“The Dual Effects of Political Awareness on Turnout”

“Measuring the Effects of the National Voter Registration Act: The Registrants Remain the Same”

Miscellaneous:

“Does Bayes Really Rule? Identifying Non-Bayesian Behavior from Survey Data”

Grants and Awards

Summer Support for Preparing a Distance-Learning Course, Office of the Provost, FSU, 1999

Summer Support for Preparing a Web-Supported Course, Office of the Provost, FSU, 1998

First-Year Assistant Professor Award, Council for Research and Creativity, FSU, 1997

Best paper by a graduate student presented at the 1994 annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association

National Science Foundation Graduate Fellowship, 1992-1995

Appendix C - Components of Civic Knowledge among 12th Graders in Niemi and Junn, *Civic Education: What Makes Students Learn* (1998)

Component	Average % correct	Number of items
Criminal and civil justice	82	15
General rights of citizens	80	17
State and local government	66	22
Political parties	55	7
Lobbying	63	7
Women and minorities	68	5
Structure and functioning of U.S. government	59	47
Making inferences from texts, tables, charts	71	8
Comparative perspective	73	6
Theoretical perspective	43	3

Source: Niemi and Junn (1998, chap. 2).

Appendix D - Components of the 1998 Civics NAEP

Knowledge Component (based on Center for Civic Education 1994)

- I. What are civic life, politics, and government?
- II. What are the foundations of the American political system
- III. How does the government established by the Constitution embody the purposes, values and principles of American democracy
- IV. What is the relationship of the United States to other nations and to world affairs?
- V. What are the roles of citizens in American democracy?

Skills Component

“Intellecion skills [that are] essential for informed, effective, and responsible citizenship are categorized as *identifying and describing*, *explaining and analyzing*, and *evaluating, taking and defending* positions on public issues.”

“Participatory skills [that are] essential for informed, effective, and responsible citizenship are categorized as interacting [working cooperatively with others], monitoring, and influencing [politics and government].”

Civic Dispositions

“Inclinations or ‘habits of the heart’...that pervade all aspects of citizenship...[including] the dispositions to become an independent member of society; respect individual worth and human dignity; assume the personal, political and economic responsibilities of a citizen; abide by the ‘rules of the game’...; participate in civic affairs in an informed, thoughtful and effective manner; and promote the healthy functioning of American constitutional democracy.”

Context

“Context in which students learn about civics include the home, school, community, state, nation, and world.”

Source: Civics Framework for the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress (1996, chap. 3).