

1978

# An analysis of the perceived, desired, and measured status of citizenship education in selected Iowa schools

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**PELZ, JACQUELINE WEATHERSPOON  
AN ANALYSIS OF THE PERCEIVED, DESIRED, AND  
MEASURED STATUS OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN  
SELECTED IOWA SCHOOLS.**

**IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY, PH.D., 1978**

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An analysis of the perceived, desired, and measured  
status of citizenship education in selected Iowa schools

by

Jacqueline Weatherspoon Pelz

A Dissertation Submitted to the  
Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of  
The Requirements for the Degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department: Professional Studies  
Major: Education (Curriculum  
and Instructional Media)

**Approved:**

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Iowa State University  
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1978

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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

## General Statement of the Problem

There is a renewed interest in citizenship education in the American public schools. Born of frustration, this interest seeks to find a solution to rising crime rates, moral and political corruption, and declining interest in active political participation.

In 1977, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare sponsored a national conference entitled "Education and Citizenship for the Common Good." The participants of this conference expressed concern over the complete absence of any concerted or cooperative effort to improve the quality of citizenship and life in this nation (McCarthy, 1977). The development and implementation of an effective citizenship education program is a problem facing those responsible for curricular decisions in the American schools today.

Curricular decisions require dependable information. The decision to implement a new citizenship education curriculum, or any curriculum, in a community should be based on as much accurate information as possible. The status of the current program should be reviewed. The needs of the students should be analyzed. In addition, an assessment of the perceptions of a community toward the current program and desires for future programs should be conducted.

### Purpose of the Study

It is the purpose of this research to gain information on the present status of citizenship education and to explore the impact of the current programs on the students. It is also the purpose of this research to analyze community goals and perceptions concerning present and future citizenship education programs and to determine the dependability of this information.

### Hypotheses to be Tested

1. There is no significant difference in the community perception of the effectiveness of the citizenship education curriculum between the group of school districts whose community members ranked citizenship high as a school goal and the group of school districts whose community members ranked citizenship low as a school goal.

2. There is no significant difference in the scores received by seventh grade students on the cognitive citizenship education test between those from school districts whose community members ranked citizenship high as a school goal and those from school districts whose community members ranked citizenship low as a school goal.

3. There is no significant difference in the scores received by twelfth grade students on the cognitive citizenship education test between those from school districts whose community members ranked citizenship high as a school goal and



those from school districts whose community members ranked citizenship low as a school goal.

4. There is no significant difference between the results obtained by all students, by seventh grade students, and by twelfth grade students on the cognitive citizenship education test when scores are categorized by districts.

5. There is no significant difference between scores achieved by seventh and twelfth grade students on the cognitive citizenship education test.

6. There is no significant difference between scores achieved by male and female students on the cognitive citizenship education test.

7. There is no significant difference between scores obtained on the cognitive citizenship education test by students living in the town and rural areas.

8. There is no significant difference between scores achieved on the cognitive citizenship education test when scores are categorized by parental occupation.

9. There is no significant difference between cognitive citizenship education test scores achieved by students who have previously had a civics or government course and those who have not.

#### Definition of Terms

In the interest of consistency and clarity, several terms used throughout this study are defined.

Citizenship and citizenship education will find meaning in the goal statement "Learn how to be a good citizen" from Educational Goals and Objectives: A Model Program for Community and Professional Involvement distributed by Phi Delta Kappa (in the remainder of this study all references to this program will be cited as the Phi Delta Kappa Needs Assessment program). The specific goal statement is further clarified in these more specific goal phrases:

- A. Develop an awareness of civic rights and responsibilities.
- B. Develop attitudes for productive citizenship in a democracy.
- C. Develop an attitude of respect for personal and public property.
- D. Develop an understanding of the obligations and responsibilities of citizenship.

Needs assessment is defined by English and Kaufman (1975, p. 64) as:

"the formal process for identifying outcome gaps between current results and desired results, placing those 'gaps' in priority order, and selecting the gaps of highest priority for closure. A needs assessment provides the anchors of a bridge. . .the dimensions of the current state of affairs and the required state of affairs to which a curriculum bridge is to be built."

This definition coincides with the working model set forth in the Phi Delta Kappa Needs Assessment program which was used as a basis for this study.

Perception is defined in the Encyclopedia of Educational Research (1960, p. 94) as "the process whereby organisms become aware of objects and events." Perception operates through the sense organs and applies to a wide variety of processes. The continuum ranges from concrete perceptions dealing with form and content to abstract perceptions of value and meaning. In this study, perception will deal with those processes at the abstract end of the continuum. Abstract perceptions may be influenced by preconceived attitudes of individuals based on past experience, values, or immediate need.

#### Assumptions

The following assumptions are pertinent to the conduct of this study and interpretation of results:

1. The measurement instruments used accurately measured perceived needs, goal ratings, and cognitive citizenship information.
2. The precollected data from phase one of the Phi Delta Kappa Needs Assessment were obtained and processed accurately.
3. The data collected from student self-reports were reported honestly and in good faith.

### Limitations

The limiting factors to this research study are:

1. The sample size (nine schools) for the correlational part of the study, involving the first three hypotheses, was too small to meaningfully test the hypotheses involved.
2. One school self-administered the citizenship cognitive test.
3. Data were collected only from districts which agreed to participate.
4. Because of the rural nature of these schools, great care must be taken in generalizing from these schools and students to the rest of Iowa.

## CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

## Introduction

The review of the literature is divided into three sections. The first section, entitled "Citizenship Education: A Place in the Curriculum," will outline a historical framework for the citizenship education curriculum. The second section, entitled "Citizenship Education: Influences on the Curriculum," will review current research in the field of citizenship education. The reported studies will be categorized by the curricular influences of society, knowledge, and the learner. Section three, entitled "The Need to Assess," will discuss philosophical and practical considerations of needs assessment and its potential role in affecting curriculum decisions.

## Citizenship Education: A Place in the Curriculum

A curriculum is not stagnant. It is molded by the needs of the society it serves. Each component of a curriculum makes up a greater or lesser portion of the total curricular program depending on the current ideology. Citizenship education has been subjected to this cyclical pattern of curriculum change. The remainder of this section will highlight the changes in citizenship education that have taken place in the history of American education.

Citizenship education held a place of prominence in the early history of American education. The founders of the American Republic stressed the importance of education to the success of the nation. The transmittal of our American heritage to future generations was one of the cornerstones of the American public schools.

The early education system incorporated civic training. Civics textbooks were in use as early as 1790 (Langton and Jennings, 1968). The emphasis of the curriculum during the decade of 1790 to 1799 was placed on the 3R's and citizenship education was taught through a history course. Important facts and concepts were memorized by the students.

A change began to formulate around 1910. There was a consensus among educators that civics should not be taught through history, but as a special course. Tanner and Tanner (1975) believed this change was a result of the new social and educational outlook and because teachers seemed neither willing nor able to apply historical facts to contemporary conditions. In a series of reports published by The Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education of the National Education Association between 1915 and 1918, impetus and direction was given to the curriculum of the American high school. The reports stated that schools should concentrate, among other things, on citizenship education in addition to the 3R's. The new social studies was to be concerned with

teaching democratic values, providing a sense of community, contributing to the socialization of the child, and providing a common learning based on the fundamental characteristics of democracy (Sykes, 1967).

The commission was also largely responsible for determining the content of civics courses and placing them at a grade level. An introductory civics course was incorporated into the ninth grade curriculum and an additional government course was prescribed for the twelfth grade.

Civics retained its place of importance in the curriculum from 1930 to 1950. In fact, Sykes (1976) cited the teaching of democratic values as the primary purpose of the social studies curriculum in most schools during that era.

The curriculum reform movement of the years 1950 to 1970 saw a trend toward correlation and integration of subject matter. The broad fields curriculum was introduced. Taba (1962, p. 393) described the broad fields curriculum in the following manner:

"The broad fields curriculum is essentially an effort to overcome the compartmentalization and atomization of curriculum by combining several specific areas into larger fields. History, geography, and civics were combined into social studies."

The critics of broad fields curriculum felt this reform movement undermined the importance of citizenship education and relegated it to an incidental status in the total

curriculum. It was felt that so many separate disciplines had been combined under the title of social studies, the purpose of the subject was no longer clear. In 1969, a Commission on the Social Studies was appointed by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Its charge was to review the place of social studies in the total curriculum. The resulting report published in 1973 stated: "The new social studies movement stresses the need to decrease the emphasis placed on social science disciplines which detracted from the original goal of the social studies, citizenship education" (Taylor, 1974). The report also stated the new goal of the social studies curriculum is the social education of the evolving individual with the basic purposes of (1) socialization, (2) decision-making, (3) values and valuing, (4) citizenship, and; (5) knowledge acquisition (Taylor, 1974).

During the years of 1970 to 1975, national and local assessment projects sought to determine the present status of the citizenship education curriculum. The largest and most prestigious project was the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Citizenship objectives were determined and subsequently measured. Results were published by the Education Commission of the States in 1969-1970 and updated in 1974-1975.

The results of the National Assessment project as well as many others provided impetus for the building of a new



curriculum. The new direction advocated for citizenship education was described by Engle (1972):

"to provide curricular content reflecting the reality of political and social life, and further, to furnish a model of active and mindful civic behavior worthy of emulation. . .encouraging and providing a climate for participation within school walls."

The movement to reestablish citizenship education as a viable and effective course of study is currently underway.

#### Citizenship Education: Influences on the Curriculum

The field of curriculum development recognizes three major curricular sources and influences: society, knowledge, and the learner. Various research studies have been conducted in the area of citizenship education to delineate these influences and record their impact.

The first curricular influence to be explored from a research base is the influence of society. Hutchins (1968) stated that:

"No educational system can escape from the political community in which it operates. The system must reflect what the political community wants it to do."

Patrick (1969) compared the political attitudes of ninth grade midwestern students in a working class metropolitan area and in an affluent suburb. The study showed variation in political attitudes by community type. Patrick concluded from his finding that, "the socioeconomic composition of a student's

community is related significantly to the type of civics instruction the student receives and to the student's political attitude."

A similar study was conducted in three differing Boston area communities by Litt (1963). Results of the study showed differences were apparent by community in both the quality of civics instruction and the political attitudes of the students. The study further pointed out that the attitudes of adult leaders were related to the attitudinal outcomes of the civics instructions in these three schools.

The data on citizenship collected by National Assessment revealed that subjects in affluent suburbs performed on the citizenship measures at levels above the national norm, and subjects in rural and inner-city groups performed below the national norm (Johnson, 1975).

Research also showed that variances occurring in political socialization and citizenship knowledge were dependent upon social status within a community. Hess and Torney (1968) conducted a study that included more than 17,000 elementary school children. Results showed political socialization differences between social classes. The study concluded that the family and community in high-status areas tend to provide models for high political interest and support for active political involvement. Diminished support and interest were found in lower and middle class levels.

Other researchers supported the findings of Hess and Torney. Patrick (1969) found that "students representative of different socioeconomic strata come to civics instruction with markedly different political attitudes and beliefs." Greenstein (1969) reported that students from lower socioeconomic status homes tend to rank lower than their more privileged age mates on measures of political efficacy, political sophistication, and toleration of dissent and political nonconformity. A summary of this research is stated by Hess and Torney (1968, p. 195): "The acquisition of more activity and initiatory aspects of political involvement is strongly affected by social status."

Another curricular influence is the nature of knowledge. Each discipline has inherent characteristics and differences in structure. Taba (1962) pointed out that each discipline contributes something different to the mental, social, and emotional development of the individual. Therefore, each subject or content area needs to be organized and used in a different way.

A survey of the literature does not conclusively show one curricular structure in citizenship education to be more effective than another in meeting the needs of the individual learner. Many studies do exist, however, that report the inadequacy of the citizenship education curriculum employed in most school districts.

Most offerings in citizenship education still follow the format which stemmed from the Committee on the Social Studies of the Commission for the Reorganization of Secondary Education in 1916. A survey by Steeves (1968) of 281 school districts showed civics has retained its place as either a full year or semester offering at the ninth grade level. Problems of Democracy was the other course commonly available to students. This course was generally offered as an elective in the twelfth grade year.

Critics of the present curriculum pointed to ineffectiveness. Torney and Hess (1969) found that "while most Americans acquire positive attitudes toward our political system at an age as early as three, this support is not translated into actions by the schools." Langton and Jennings (1968) found no relationship between the civics curriculum and the political beliefs and behavior of high school students. In a later publication, Langton and Jennings (1969, p. 865) stated:

"Our findings certainly do not support the thinking of those who look to the civics curriculum in American high schools as a major source of political socialization. When we investigated the student sample as a whole, we found not one single case of ten examined in which the civics curriculum was significantly associated with students political orientations."

They then presented the following plea to reorganize and restructure the citizenship education curriculum:

"If the educational system continues to invest sizeable resources in government and civics courses at the secondary level, as seems most probable. . .there must be a radical restructuring of these courses in order for them to have any appreciable payoff. Changes in goals, course content, pedagogical methods, timing of exposure, teacher training, and school environmental factors are all points of leverage. Until such changes come about, one must continue to expect little contribution from the formal civics curriculum in the political socialization of American preadults."

Proponents of curricular change suggested the discipline of citizenship education is best served by the following organization and presentation: (1) Organizing content by concepts and questions along lines of sciences and humanities; (2) Making instruction more realistic, interesting, and relevant, including controversial subjects; (3) Increasing student capability to organize and interpret information; (4) Teaching students to be active seekers of knowledge rather than passive receivers; (5) Teaching students to make factual and value judgments, and (6) Arming students with protection against assault of inculcators and propagandists (Turner, 1970).

There are several new citizenship education programs on the market which have been designed to offer a new direction. They follow the organization and presentation suggested by Turner. The program which has been most extensively tested is American Political Behavior developed by John J. Patrick. A descriptor of the American Political Behavior course stated,

"The content of the course was designed to overcome basic inadequacies of the content of typical civics courses and to narrow the knowledge gap and conceptual lag that have severely affected secondary school civics instruction" (Patrick, 1972, p. 179).

In this course, the relationships of social factors of political behaviors are emphasized along with the development of particular skills of critical thinking and inquiry. This is in contrast to the use of memorization employed in past citizenship education courses. Patrick (1972) reported ten experimental groups using the American Political Behavior course scored significantly higher on political knowledge and skills than did corresponding control groups.

The third curricular influence is the learner. . .the individual. The learner brings to the classroom a unique set of developmental, intellectual, and environmental characteristics. Taba (1962) stated that knowledge about the learner is relevant to making three important curriculum decisions:

(1) The selection and arrangement of content, (2) The choice of the learning experiences, and (3) The implementation of optimum conditions for learning.

Research studies have provided considerable insight into the relationship of age, sex, and family background of the learner to the citizenship education curriculum.

Reported research clearly indicated a relationship between age and the capacity to deal with political information. Hess and Torney (1968) reported political development consistent with the cognitive development model of Piaget. While much of the political socialization process occurs in the elementary school, abstract concepts (democracy, for instance) are not understood until the eighth grade. Hess and Torney also found a direct relationship exists between age and an increasing concern about political issues, an understanding of political parties, and an increasing participation in political activities.

Adelson and O'Neil (1966) in a supportive study reported "the growth of cognitive capacity as conceived by Piaget allows the emergence of ideological beliefs." They found an eleven-year-old has little capacity to speak from a coherent view of the political order. The eleven-year-old is confused as to the abstract concept of government. The child in the fifteen to eighteen age range is able to grasp the importance of social institutions.

Studies by Jaros and Fleron (1968) and Bourke (1971) indicated that political socialization is not completed in childhood or adolescence, but political information continues to be modified with age. Jennings and Niemi (1968) reported adults are more sophisticated and knowledgeable than high school seniors in political affairs.

Sex differences have an impact on the approach of an individual to the citizenship education curriculum.

Greenstein (1965) found boys demonstrated at a very early age greater knowledge of political affairs than did girls. Easton and Dennis (1969) found male participation began earlier than female and concluded, "the political realm is apt to be a better rooted part of the young male's conceptual and attitudinal framework." Durio (1976) suggested that girls are socialized early to view political behavior as largely a male activity.

Hess and Torney (1968) found sexual differences consistent with expected roles. Boys consistently displayed more active involvement than girls, while girls form a more personal attachment to the political system. They also found that in absorbing and learning the rules of our political system boys and girls differed only minimally.

Studies reporting the influence of family background are few. Research by Hess and Torney (1968) indicated that family influence in transmitting political attitudes is minimal. The family transmits preference for a political party, but in most other areas its most effective role is to support other institutions in teaching political information and orientations.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress reported influences of parental education. "Americans who had at least one parent educated past high school also appeared to know of



more ways to influence public opinion and public officials and more often attempted to do so" (Johnson, 1975, p. 43).

### The Need to Assess

Needs assessment on both a local and national level is impacting curricular decisions. In this section, philosophical and practical viewpoints of needs assessment will be reviewed.

The democratization of goal setting is the heart of needs assessment. Community participation is actively recruited to establish goals and priorities for the school curriculum. A philosophical justification for this community-based process is expressed by a number of authors.

Alvin Toffler (1970, p. 17) author of Future Shock, stated a general philosophy concerning the democratization of goal setting:

"In short, in politics, in industry, in education, goals set without the participation of those affected will be increasingly hard to execute. The continuation of top-down technocratic goal-setting procedures will lead to greater and greater social instability, less and less control over the forces of change; and ever greater danger of cataclysmic, man-destroying upheaval. To master change, we shall therefore need both a clarification of important long-range social goals and a democratization of the way in which we arrive at them."

Krug (1950, p. 16) specifically applied this same philosophy to education. He stated:

"The salvation of American education generally depends on widespread and effective interest in education on the part of people who are not professional educators. This group includes not only parents but all other citizens whose lives affect and are affected by the course of our society. The schools belong to the general public: citizens in general, therefore, should have much to say about the curriculum."

Miel (1946, p. 47) also emphasized the need for goal setting to precipitate community involvement:

"Unrest is not likely to eventuate in action so long as men know no alternative to what they have. Therefore, closely related to dissatisfaction as a factor causing men to desire change is some goal or series of goals that promises, if achieved, to lead to a better state of affairs."

Philosophical considerations of the need to assess are now being given practical application. During the later half of the decade beginning in 1960, public clamor for accountability in the schools led the United States Office of Education to issue a directive specifying procedures for statewide needs assessment programs. The Iowa law, Evaluation of Educational Program, Section 280.12, Code of Iowa, was established in 1974. It reads as follows:

The board of directors of each public school district and the authorities in charge of each nonpublic school shall:

1. Determine major educational needs and rank them in priority order.
2. Develop long-range plans to meet such needs.
3. Establish and implement continuously evaluated year-by-year short-range and intermediate-range plans to attain the desired levels of pupil achievement.

4. Maintain a record of progress under the plan.
5. Make such reports of progress as the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall require.

School districts in Iowa are seeking to fulfill specifications of the Iowa mandate. Many districts have enlisted help in community-based goal setting from outside organizations. Programs such as the Westinghouse Learning Corporation's Educational Services and the Phi Delta Kappa Needs Assessment Program purport to administer a quality, broad-based needs assessment program.

The practical objectives of the needs assessment programs are to assess the status of the current curriculum and to prioritize curriculum goals. Once this is done, a responsible decision can be made concerning the inauguration of new educational practices and the deemphasis of outmoded or obsolete elements in the educational program.

The institution and application of a needs assessment program should be viewed in the framework of some critical assumptions. A list of these assumptions has been published by English and Kaufman (1975, pp. 6-11).

1. Reality can be known, understood and represented in symbolic form.
2. Reality is not static: assessment must be a continuing process.
3. Perceptual fields can and should be changed relative to the ends of education.

4. Everything can be measured.
5. The aims or outcomes of education can be made specific.
6. The recipients and supporters of the schools should be involved in determining their goals and effectiveness.
7. There is a relationship between organizational specificity and productivity.
8. Productivity and humanization are compatible as dual outcomes of improved schools.

#### Summary of the Review of the Literature

The role of citizenship education in the public school curriculum has varied widely in the history of American education. The extremes included a prominence in the early educational system to an incidental status in the 1960's. There is currently an attempt in the educational arena to redefine citizenship education and to establish a citizenship education curriculum which effectively meets the needs of the students of today.

Current research in the area of citizenship education has established that civics instruction varies by community and by social status within a community with suburbs performing above the national norm on citizenship measures. Repeatedly, studies pointed out the inability of current citizenship education programs to affect changes in the

political beliefs and attitudes of students. Research studies involving characteristics of the learner and citizenship education showed a direct relationship between increasing age and political understandings. Other research showed boys had a greater political knowledge than girls and family influence in transmitting political attitudes was minimal.

Needs assessment may be viewed from a philosophical and practical approach. The philosophical commitment is to give diverse segments of the community a voice in the directional management of their school district. The commitment represented in this philosophy is now mandated by the Code of Iowa, Section 280.12 and realized by school districts through participation in systematic programs such as the Phi Delta Kappa Needs Assessment program.

### CHAPTER III: RESEARCH PROCEDURES

This chapter on research procedures describes the various aspects of data collection and processing. Specifically described are the sources used for collection of the data, the sample from which the data were collected, and the conduct of the study.

#### Sources of Data Collection

Data used in this study were collected in three separate phases by three different instruments. The data forming the foundation of the study were collected from some of the many school districts participating in the Phi Delta Kappa Needs Assessment program. A second data source was a questionnaire designed to collect information about various aspects of the citizenship education curriculum. The third and primary data source was a cognitive citizenship education test.

#### Data Source: Phi Delta Kappa Needs Assessment Program

The total Phi Delta Kappa Needs Assessment Program consists of three phases. Phase one entails a priority ranking of goals by a representative group of the community. This process establishes the needs of a school district. Phase two of the program translates the needs decided upon by the goal setting process into performance objectives. The third

phase of the program involves management of school resources by the stated objectives.

During 1975 and 1976, Dr. Anton Netusil, Professor of Education, Iowa State University, assisted many Iowa school districts in completing phase one of the needs assessment program. School districts elected to participate in this program in order to comply with the needs assessment standard adopted by Iowa law. Students, parents, school staff, and community members were asked to prioritize goals for their school system and rate their perception of the existing school program. These data were then used to establish curriculum needs for individual districts.

The instruments administered by Dr. Netusil to obtain the initial needs assessment data were the Phi Delta Kappa Individual Goal Rating Sheet and the Phi Delta Kappa Individual Rating of the Level of Performance of Current School Programs (see Appendix A). These instruments are part of the total needs assessment package developed by the staff of the Northern California Program Development Center at Chico, California and distributed by the Commission on Educational Planning of Phi Delta Kappa (Phi Delta Kappa, 1975, pp. 4-6).

For this study, only data from the community members (selected at random) were analyzed. At community meetings, participants were asked to contribute their ideas and perceptions of school programs by rank ordering a set of eighteen

goals and by rating how well these same goals were being met by their district.

The instrument used to rank goals was the Phi Delta Kappa Individual Goal Rating Sheet. This instrument consisted of the following eighteen goals:

1. Learn how to be a good citizen.
2. Learn how to respect and get along with people who think, dress and act differently.
3. Learn about and try to understand the changes that take place in the world.
4. Develop skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
5. Understand and practice democratic ideas and ideals.
6. Learn how to examine and use information.
7. Understand and practice the skills of family living.
8. Learn to respect and get along with people with whom we work and live.
9. Develop skills to enter a specific field of work.
10. Learn how to be a good manager of money, property and resources.
11. Develop a desire for learning now and in the future.
12. Learn how to use leisure time.
13. Practice and understand the ideas of health and safety.
14. Appreciate culture and beauty in the world.
15. Gain information needed to make job selections.



16. Develop pride in work and a feeling of self-worth.
17. Develop good character and self-respect.
18. Gain a general education.

Community participants were asked to place a value on these goals, rating each on a continuum from one to five. The highest priority goals were given a number five and lowest priority goals received a one. From these individual rankings, a mean value was determined for each goal by community.

At the same community meeting, participants also recorded their perceptions of existing school programs by completing the Individual Rating of the Level of Performance of Current School Programs instrument. This instrument asked community members to rate the effectiveness of current school programs in meeting the eighteen stated goals. On a continuum of one to fifteen, labels included: 1-3 Extremely poor; 4-6 Poor; 7-9 Fair but more needs to be done; 10-12 Leave as is, and; 13-15 Too much is being done. From the individual perception rating, a mean value was determined for each goal by community.

Of the eighteen goals dealt with in the Phi Delta Kappa Needs Assessment Program, this study used the data collection concerning only goal one, "Learn how to be a good citizen" (see page four for definition) as a basis for further research.

Data source: questionnaire

The second source of data was a questionnaire concerning

the nature of the current citizenship education curriculum in the participating school districts (see Appendix B). The questionnaire was sent in April, 1976, to the administrators of forty-two of the school districts participating in the Phi Delta Kappa Needs Assessment program. The questionnaire, developed by the researcher, requested information about length, placement and content of their citizenship education courses and instructional strategies employed. Respondents were asked to check or order items they felt appropriately described their citizenship education program.

Data source: cognitive citizenship education test

The third and primary data source for this study was the Educational Goal Attainment Test: Civics (see Appendix C). This cognitive measure is part of a collection of tests entitled "The Education Goal Attainment Tests" authored by Tuckman and Montare. These tests were specifically developed to coordinate with the Phi Delta Kappa goal statements. A descriptor from the manual reads:

"The eighteen goal categories used in the Education Goals and Objectives program developed at the Northern California Program Development Center and distributed by Phi Delta Kappa, Inc. served as the major basis for test development. The Educational Goal Attainment Tests attempt to provide instrumentation to assess the broad range of educational goals, both cognitive and affective, that are common to many communities" (Phi Delta Kappa, 1975, p. 1).

The civics test is divided into three parts. Part one contains knowledge items, part two consists of attitude items, and part three behavior items. Only part one of the test was administered. It consisted of ninety-nine multiple choice knowledge items. The test manual described part one as containing "knowledge items that measure information a student has acquired and retained" (Phi Delta Kappa, 1975, p. 2).

A reliability study was conducted on this test by the New Jersey Department of Education. Data were collected from 1,739 seventh and tenth grade students. Split-half reliability estimates (corrected by Spearman-Brown Formula) show the following reliability coefficients for knowledge of citizenship: seventh grade, .832; tenth grade, .828; total, .855.

Content validity was established for the battery of Phi Delta Kappa Needs Assessment tests. Over 1800 items were written by specialists from all areas of the curriculum following a content outline. After editing and revision, an item analysis was performed to eliminate inconsistent and ambiguous items. The validity data were not published for these tests. "The authors suggest that the content validity of these tests be determined within the local educational agency planning to use the tests" (Phi Delta Kappa, 1975, p. 32).

### Description of Sample

The school districts selected for participation in this study were from the larger group of forty-two Iowa schools involved in phase one of the Phi Delta Kappa Needs Assessment program from which Dr. Netusil collected data during 1975 and 1976.

The selection process involved identifying the five school districts whose community members ranked the goal "Learn how to be a good citizen" the highest on the priority scale and the five school districts whose community members ranked the goal the lowest. Goal rankings ranged from a high rank of 3.17 to a low rank of 2.44. A t-test verified that the mean goal rankings were significant between the two groups of school districts. Of the ten selected school districts, one school district did not wish to cooperate in the study, leaving a sample size of nine schools.

The nine selected school districts were distributed throughout Iowa. Most school districts incorporate small towns and tend to be rural in nature. A student self-report of rural or urban residence indicated 41.4 percent of those tested live in a town or its outskirts and 56.0 percent live in the country.

The nine sample school districts all had relatively small enrollments. The district enrollments ranged from 182 to 814, with the mean enrollment for the nine schools at 519.

Within the sample of nine school districts, seventh and twelfth grade students (n = 646) were given the cognitive

Table 1. Demographic, financial, structural, and enrollment data for participating schools

School Code Number	Quadrant of Iowa	Assessed Valuation Per Child	Organizational Structure	District Population	School District Enrollment
1	Northeast	\$131,278.00	K-8-4	950	182
2	Southwest	\$ 81,005.00	K-8-4	3,225	680
3	Northwest	\$148,722.00	K-5-3-4	2,000	395
4	Northeast	\$165,293.00	K-6-6	1,550	450
5	Southwest	\$ 73,066.00	K-6-6	3,200	814
6	Southwest	\$ 83,209.00	K-6-6	1,483	306
7	Northwest	\$101,227.00	K-6-6	3,600	770
8	Northwest	\$ 68,189.00	K-6-6	2,250	630
9	Northwest	\$142,440.00	K-6-6	1,930	440

citizenship test. Report by grade indicated 54.7 percent of those tested were in the seventh grade and 43.9 percent were in the twelfth grade. Female and male subjects were evenly represented with 48.7 percent being female and 49.1 percent being male.

Table 1 contains descriptive information about the participating school districts.

### Research Procedures

A letter of intent explaining the research project was sent to each selected district asking for cooperation in the study. Permission to test seventh and twelfth grade students was obtained from nine of the ten districts. To insure uniform data collection, a proctor was sent to eight of the districts to administer the test. One district agreed to participate in the study only if the cognitive test were administered by their classroom teacher instead of the proctor.

The cognitive test was given during the month of May, 1977. Seventh and twelfth grade students were tested by class unit. Uniform directions were given by the proctor. A school code number, plus data concerning grade, age, sex, residence, parental occupation, and previous civics courses were coded on the answer sheets by students. Individual test booklets were used by students and answers were recorded on IBM answer sheets. No time limit was imposed but most students finished the test in a fifty-minute period.

Items on the cognitive measure were scored and the number correct was recorded for each individual. From these scores, means were computed for each school district and for sub-groups within districts.

A t-test was used to determine if significant differences occurred between means of the selected groups on the cognitive citizenship test and the perception rating of the effectiveness of the current citizenship program.

Single classification analysis of variance was used to determine differences between mean scores when categorized by school, grade, sex, residence, and occupation. (Source of statistical procedures was Kirk, Roger. Experimental design. Procedures for the behavioral sciences). Because the variables of previous civics instruction and grade were shown comparable through a frequency cross-tabulation, no further statistical treatment was applied to the variable of civics instruction (see Table 2).

Kirk (1968, p. 43) stated the assumptions of normal distribution and random sampling must be met when using the F ratio. In this study all seventh and twelfth grade students were tested in each school and all schools were public schools representing a cross-section of students from a community. It was therefore reasonable to assume that observations were from a normally distributed population.

A simple block design was used to hold the school variable constant in determining differences of sex, grade, and residence. The Duncan Multiple Range difference of means test was run to pinpoint the significantly different schools and the significantly different classes of parental occupation.



Table 2. Percentage of seventh and twelfth grade students that have and have not had civics instruction

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	Have Had Civics Instruction	Have Not Had Civics Instruction
Seventh Grade Students	7.8 %	92.2 %
Twelfth Grade Students	98.2 %	1.1 %

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## CHAPTER IV: RESULTS OF RESEARCH

This chapter will present the research findings and interpretation of those findings relative to each of the nine stated hypotheses.

## Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis sought to determine if there was a significant difference between means of the group of school districts ranking the citizenship goal high and the group of school districts ranking the citizenship goal low on the perceived effectiveness of the current citizenship education program in their communities. Specifically stated the hypothesis reads:

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the community perception of the effectiveness of the citizenship education curriculum between the group of school districts whose community members ranked citizenship high as a school goal and the group of school districts whose community members ranked citizenship low as a school goal.

The t-value obtained ( $t = 0.23$ ) indicated there is no significant difference in the mean perception rating of the two groups and the null hypothesis was retained (see Table 3). School districts in which community members ranked citizenship relatively high as a school goal did not perceive their citizenship education program to be any more effective than did those districts ranking citizenship lower as a goal.

The ranking of the citizenship education goal and the rating of the existing citizenship education program are not congruent and appear to be two unrelated processes (at least for these nine schools).

This finding supports the practical objectives of a needs assessment program: to prioritize goals, to assess the current program status, and build a bridge between the two. In order for this process to be valid and effective, the needs assessment participant must be able to distinguish between the ranking of an ideal goal and the rating of reality (the existing program).

#### Hypotheses 2 and 3

Hypotheses two and three were to determine if differences existed between the means of the group of districts ranking citizenship high as a goal and the group of districts ranking citizenship low as a goal on the cognitive citizenship test at the seventh grade and twelfth grade level. They read:

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the scores received by seventh grade students on the cognitive citizenship education test between those from school districts whose community members ranked citizenship high as a school goal and those from school districts whose community members ranked citizenship low as a school goal.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the scores received by twelfth grade students on the cognitive citizenship education test between those from school districts whose community members ranked citizenship high as a school goal and those

Table 3. t-test of mean differences between districts ranking citizenship high as a school goal and districts ranking citizenship low as a school goal on variables of perception (community perception of current citizenship education program) and cognitive test scores for the seventh and twelfth grade students

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-Value	2-tail Probability
Perception					
Districts ranking goal high	5	8.62	0.69	0.23	0.83
Districts ranking goal low	4	8.54	0.18		
Cognitive Citizenship Test (seventh grade)					
Districts ranking goal high	178	50.35	13.64	-1.85	0.06
Districts ranking goal low	175	53.16	14.76		
Cognitive Citizenship Test (twelfth grade)					
Districts ranking goal high	138	73.30	15.94	0.14	0.90
Districts ranking goal low	145	73.06	13.20		

from school districts whose community members ranked citizenship low as a school goal.

The t-value for the seventh grade means on the cognitive test between the districts ranking the citizenship goal high and the districts ranking the citizenship goal low was  $-1.85$  ( $p = 0.06$ ). The t-value for the twelfth grade means on the cognitive test between the districts was  $0.14$  ( $p = 0.90$ ). With a significance level of  $0.05$  both null hypotheses two and three were retained (see Table 3).

The results of the statistical treatment indicated that students from districts in which community members ranked citizenship high as a school goal did not perform any differently on a cognitive citizenship test than students from districts in which community members ranked citizenship low as a school goal.

If the traditional statistical standard of  $0.05$  level of significance were relaxed to  $0.06$ , a significant difference would occur between the two groups of districts at the seventh grade level ( $p = 0.06$ ). Under this condition, hypothesis two could then be rejected and significant differences declared.

Whether or not a significant difference is declared in statistical terms at the  $0.05$  level, the researcher feels justified in stating that the seventh grade students from districts ranking citizenship low as a goal out performed the seventh grade students from districts ranking citizenship high as a goal on the cognitive measure. Community members

from districts in which seventh grade students achieved higher scores on the cognitive test ranked citizenship lower as a priority goal. Likewise, community members from districts in which seventh grade students achieved lower scores on the cognitive test ranked citizenship higher as a priority goal.

This finding also supports the objectives of the needs assessment program. If student performance is satisfactory, community members no longer perceive a need for emphasis in this area and rate citizenship lower as a priority goal. Likewise, if student performance is poor, community members perceive a need for emphasizing the program and rank citizenship higher as a priority goal.

It is not surprising that the major and near significant differences show up at the seventh grade level. Patrick (1969) and Lett (1963) concluded quality of civics instruction and political attitude are influenced by community. These variances would more likely show up in the seventh grade before students are traditionally exposed to formal civics instruction in the ninth and twelfth grades. Seventh grade students would more accurately reflect the general emphasis on citizenship than would twelfth grade students recently inculcated with citizenship information.

## Hypothesis 4

The fourth hypothesis dealt with differences between mean cognitive scores by sample districts. It reads:

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference between the results obtained by all students, by seventh grade students, and by twelfth grade students on the cognitive citizenship education test when scores are categorized by district.

F values computed by single analysis of variance indicated significant differences in student scores did exist between districts (see Table 4). Students in some districts scored significantly higher on the cognitive citizenship education test than students in other districts. The null hypothesis was rejected.

These results are congruent with the findings of Patrick (1969) and Litt (1963). Both authors concluded that there is a significant relationship between the quality of civics instruction and the community in which the student lives.

Duncan's Multiple Range test identified three districts that scored significantly different from the other districts. These districts are identified by code numbers two, six, and eight (see Table 5). District number two received a mean score on the cognitive citizenship education test that was significantly lower than the other districts. Districts six and eight scored significantly higher than the other districts.

The data received from the Citizenship Education Questionnaire gave some insight into the type of citizenship

Table 4. Analysis of variance of mean test scores by districts on the cognitive citizenship education test

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A. Total district results					
<u>Source of Variation</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F Ratio</u>	<u>F Probability</u>
Between groups	8	14449.00	1806.13	5.98	<0.01
Within groups	628	189565.00	301.86		
Total	636	204014.00			

  

B. Seventh grade results					
<u>Source of Variation</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F Ratio</u>	<u>F Probability</u>
Between groups	8	7391.94	923.99	4.95	<0.01
Within groups	344	64185.19	186.58		
Total	352	71577.13			

  

C. Twelfth grade results					
<u>Source of Variation</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F Ratio</u>	<u>F Probability</u>
Between groups	8	3404.00	425.50	2.06	0.04
Within groups	274	56512.00	206.25		
Total	282	59916.00			

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Table 5. Districts performing significantly different on the cognitive citizenship education test as identified by Duncan's Multiple Range test

Individual Districts Code Number <sup>a</sup>	Mean Score	Districts Differing Significantly From Individual District
1	65.28	2
2	54.01	1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8
3	64.00	2
4	58.63	6, 8
5	57.96	6, 8
6	67.62	2, 4, 5
7	62.98	2, 8
8	69.60	2, 4, 5, 7
9	57.81	6, 8

<sup>a</sup>See Table 1 for demographic data of districts.

education program maintained in each district. Comparisons of these reported programs were made for the three districts that varied significantly.

All three districts indicated on the Citizenship Education Questionnaire that their citizenship education program was incorporated into other curriculum areas. District number two (the district scoring significantly lower) reported an instructional strategy emphasis and a course content emphasis similar to the citizenship education curriculum proposed by curriculum reformers. Class discussion, simulation, and debates were the reported instructional techniques. Course content centered around developing each individual by giving the student the opportunity to think and reason and encouraging participation in the decision-making process.

Districts six and eight (the districts scoring significantly higher) reported a more traditional curriculum. Instructional strategy reportedly centered on lecture, class discussion, and simulation. Learning structure of national, state, and local government was listed as a top priority in both of these districts.

The data suggest students exposed to a more traditional citizenship education curriculum perform better on a cognitive citizenship education measure. This finding is contradictory to the study by Patrick (1972).

Because the district variable appeared to be a significant factor in performance on the cognitive citizenship education measure, district differences were blocked in testing for differences on the cognitive citizenship test between grade, sex, and residence.

#### Hypothesis 5

Hypothesis five sought to determine if significant differences occurred between seventh and twelfth grade students on the cognitive test. The specific hypothesis reads as follows:

Hypothesis 5: There is no significant difference between scores achieved by seventh and twelfth grade students on the cognitive citizenship education test.

With blocking for district differences, an analysis of variance of the cognitive score means produced a significant F value ( $F < .01$ ). Seventh and twelfth grade students performed significantly different on the cognitive citizenship education test (see Tables 6 and 7). The null hypothesis was rejected.

This research is supportive of studies that indicated civics is traditionally taught in the ninth grade. Seventh grade students are seldom exposed to a formal civics curriculum. Of the seventh grade students in this study, only 7.8 percent reported they had taken or were taking a civics course.

Table 6. Mean scores of seventh and twelfth grade students on the cognitive citizenship education test

<u>Grade</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>
Seventh	353	51.75	14.26
Twelfth	283	73.18	14.58

Table 7. Analysis of variance of means obtained from seventh and twelfth grade students on the cognitive citizenship education test

<u>Source of Variation</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F Ratio</u>	<u>F Probability</u>
Grade 1 (treatment)	1	65702.94	65702.94	333.43	<0.01
School 1 (block)	8	8123.78			
Residual	626	123355.00	197.05		

## Hypothesis 6

The sixth hypothesis dealt with performance differences on the cognitive test when categorized by sex. It reads:

Hypothesis 6: There is no significant difference between scores achieved by male and female students on the cognitive citizenship education test.

An analysis of variance of this data, with blocking for district differences, indicated no significant differences occurred between male and female performance on the cognitive test ( $F = .76$ ). Mean scores of male and female performance on the cognitive measure showed almost identical performance (see Tables 8 and 9). The null hypothesis was not rejected.

These results are in conflict with research by Greenstein (1965), Easton and Dennis (1969) and Durio (1976) which reported boys have greater political knowledge and socialization than girls. It is in agreement with findings by Hess and Torney (1968) that boys and girls differ only minimally in absorbing and learning the rules of our political system.

## Hypothesis 7

Hypothesis seven explored the existence of differences on the cognitive test by students reporting to live in a town or a rural area. Precisely stated, the hypothesis reads:

Hypothesis 7: There is no significant difference between scores obtained on the cognitive citizenship education test by students living in a town and rural areas.

Table 8. Analysis of variance of means obtained from male and female students on cognitive citizenship education test

<u>Source of Variation</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F Ratio</u>	<u>F Probability</u>
Sex 1 (treatment)	1	29.01	29.01	.10	0.76
School 1 (block)	8	13812.69			
Residual	620	186997.31	301.61		

Table 9. Mean scores on cognitive citizenship education test by male and female students

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Number of Cases</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>
Female	314	61.32	16.30
Male	317	61.28	19.41

The analysis of variance, with blocking for district differences, yielded no significant differences in means of cognitive scores of rural and town students ( $F = 0.42$ ). The test score means of rural students were higher, but not significantly higher (see Table 10 and 11). The null hypothesis was not rejected.

These results are in contrast to data collected by national assessment that indicated subjects in rural areas perform below the national norm. It must be noted, however, that the difference between town life and rural life in small Iowa communities is often relatively small. Under a different reporting system, all students may have been classified as rural students.

#### Hypothesis 8

The eighth hypothesis sought to determine if students performed differently on the cognitive citizenship test when categorized by parental occupation. The hypothesis reads:

Hypothesis 8: There is no significant difference between scores achieved on the cognitive citizenship education test when scores are categorized by parental occupation.

An analysis of variance of the mean scores produced a significant  $F$  value ( $F = 0.05$ ). It can be inferred from this value that parental occupation is a significant factor in student performance (see Table 12). The null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 10. Analysis of variance of means obtained by rural and urban students on cognitive citizenship education test

<u>Source of Variation</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>Mean Squares</u>	<u>F Ratio</u>	<u>F Probability</u>
Residence (treatment)	1	193.42	193.42	0.64	0.42
School (block)	8	14205.51			
Residual	618	185568.25	300.27		

Table 11. Means on cognitive citizenship education test categorized by rural and urban student report

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Number of Cases</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>
Town	267	60.865	17.74
Rural	361	61.856	17.95
Town Female	140	60.514	16.11
Rural Female	168	62.339	16.18
Town Male	124	61.323	19.52
Rural Male	191	61.529	19.28



The Duncan Multiple Range test failed to identify any parental occupation that varied significantly from others. While parental occupations do appear to significantly affect student scores, no one individual occupation can be isolated as producing greater effects than the others.

Previous research to support the findings of this study is not in agreement. Hess and Torney (1968) reported very limited family influence on political information and orientation. The National Assessment project (Johnson, 1975) reported influences of parental education. Students with at least one parent educated past high school knew more about the structure and function of government than did other students. The researcher assumes this higher education is reflected in parental occupation.

The rankings of specific occupational categories are reported in Table 13. Although exact educational backgrounds are not known, the high ranking of professionals and the low ranking of factory workers agree with National Assessment findings.

#### Hypothesis 9

The final hypothesis was concerned with differences in scores between those that have had a civics course and those that have not had a civics course. It reads:

Table 12. Analysis of variance of means obtained from students on citizenship education cognitive test classified by parental occupation

<u>Source of Variation</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>Mean Squares</u>	<u>F Ratio</u>	<u>F Probability</u>
Between Groups	8	4937.0	617.12	1.95	0.05
Within Groups	620	196052.0	316.21		
Total	628	200989.0			

Table 13. Means on cognitive citizenship education measure categorized by parental occupation of students

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Number of Cases</u>	<u>Mean</u>
Clerical/office (secretary, filing)	14	65.07
Other	31	64.97
Professional (teacher, doctor, minister, dentist)	65	64.91
Agri-business (farmer or farm-related activities)	293	62.23
Construction (plumbing, carpenter)	86	60.70
Marketing (selling any product)	57	60.58
Services (dry cleaning, barber)	19	57.79
Transportation (truck driver)	17	56.06
Manufacturing (factory)	47	54.04

Hypothesis 9: There is no significant difference between cognitive citizenship education test scores achieved by students who have previously had a civics or government course and those who have not.

A cross-tabulation of data pertaining to grade level and civics course completion revealed strict adherence to grade level blocks (see Table 14). Because the difference in scores by grade level was significant, significant difference was assumed in performance on the cognitive citizenship education test by those students who have previously had a civics course and those who have not. The null hypothesis was rejected.

Because of their parallel relationship, it is difficult to separate the effects of grade level and course completion on the scores of seventh and twelfth grade students. It may be stated, however, that twelfth grade students who have completed a citizenship education course scored significantly higher on the cognitive citizenship education measure than seventh grade students who had not completed a course.

Table 14. Distribution of seventh and twelfth grade students who have and have not completed a civics course

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	<u>Have Completed</u> <u>Number (Percent)</u>		<u>Have Not Completed</u> <u>Number (Percent)</u>		<u>Total</u>
Seventh	27	( 7.8)	319	(92.9)	346
Twelfth	269	(98.2)	3	( 1.1)	274

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## CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Summary

The purpose of this research was to gain information on the present status of citizenship education, to explore the impact of current programs on the students, and to analyze community goals and perceptions concerning present and future citizenship education programs.

Data used in the study were collected from three different sources. Citizenship goal ranking and perceptions of existing citizenship education programs were collected from community members as a part of the Phi Delta Kappa Needs Assessment program conducted in participating districts. A cognitive citizenship education test was administered to 646 seventh and twelfth grade students in nine of the districts involved in the Phi Delta Kappa Needs Assessment program. A questionnaire concerning the nature of the current citizenship education program in the nine sample school districts was the third data source.

The data were analyzed with respect to nine hypotheses. Differences in means between the groups of districts ranking the citizenship goal relatively high and the group of districts ranking the citizenship goal relatively low on the variables of community perception of the current citizenship program and cognitive

scores achieved by seventh and twelfth grade students were determined with t-tests. Analysis of variance provided insight into performance differences achieved by students when categorized by school, grade, sex, residence, parental occupation, and completion of a civics course.

### Conclusions

1. Results of analyzed data showed no significant differences occurred between the perception rating of current citizenship education programs by community members when categorized by districts ranking citizenship high as a goal and low as a goal. Community members from districts ranking citizenship high as a school goal did not perceive their current citizenship program to be better or worse than districts ranking citizenship lower as a goal.

Community members from both groups of districts perceived the citizenship program in their school district to be fair with a desire for more to be done. The community perception ratings ranged from 9.57 to 7.92, all falling within the "Fair, but more needs to be done" category (7 - 9) on the Phi Delta Kappa rating sheet (see Appendix A). The feeling expressed by community members toward their current citizenship program reflects a widespread feeling of inadequacy documented time and again in the literature of this curricular area.

2. The results of this research showed no significant difference at the 0.05 level between seventh grade student performance on the cognitive citizenship measure when categorized by districts ranking citizenship high as a school goal and districts ranking citizenship low as a school goal. Although significant differences were not declared, a p value of 0.06 left liberal room for the researcher to interpret that seventh graders from districts in which community members ranked citizenship low as a priority goal performed better on a cognitive citizenship measure than seventh graders from districts in which citizenship education was ranked higher as a priority goal. It appears from this finding that community members rank the goal of citizenship higher as more emphasis is needed in this area of the curriculum.

3. Results of this study showed no significant differences occurred between twelfth grade student performance on the cognitive citizenship measure when categorized by districts ranking citizenship high as a goal and districts ranking citizenship low as a goal. In contrast to wide differences at the seventh grade level, twelfth graders performed very much the same, whether they were from a district ranking citizenship high as a goal or a district ranking citizenship low as a goal.

The question that must now be dealt with is why did the differences show up in the seventh grade cognitive scores,



but not in the twelfth grade scores or the perception ratings of the current school program. It is the judgment of the researcher that the priority ranking of goals for a school encompassed a feeling for the quality of citizenship in a community not strictly limited to the citizenship education curriculum in the school. It may have been derived from the quality of 4-H clubs, scout programs, church youth programs, or athletic programs. Communities that provide these activities may tend to provide higher quality citizenship education programs in their schools. The seventh grade cognitive scores are the better reflection of citizenship in a community because students have not been exposed to the traditional ninth and twelfth grade courses. The perception of the current program may also fail to reflect differences in citizenship in a community because of the limited, and in some cases nonexistent, formal curriculum present in most schools. It may be difficult for community members to be really tuned in to the exact nature of the citizenship curriculum in their school. Community members have a feeling for citizenship in their community. This feeling is a composite feeling, not a mirror image of their perception of the current school program. If community members feel they are already doing well in the area of citizenship education, they rank citizenship as a goal below another area they feel needs more attention.

4. Analysis of the cognitive citizenship test scores indicated that there is a significant difference in how students from different school districts perform on the test. Significant differences are found at the seventh grade level, twelfth grade level, and by total district sample. It is apparent that some citizenship education programs are more effective in producing cognitive results than others.

The performance on the cognitive test score did not appear to be influenced by assessed valuation, school size, or location. Poorer districts seemed to be teaching citizenship as well as richer districts, small districts as well as large, and southern Iowa districts as well as northern Iowa districts.

The five highest ranking schools on the cognitive test reported a citizenship education program that fit the description of a more traditional curricular approach. This finding is logical. A traditional course would stress the cognitive area more than an involvement course. However, current literature warns the reader against assuming that knowledge of citizenship facts is synonymous with good citizenship.

The classroom teacher administered the test in one school in contrast to the proctor administering the test in all other districts. This district ranked eighth out of nine schools on the cognitive test.

It is the considered judgment of the researcher that there is a wide inconsistency in the role citizenship education plays in the total curriculum in Iowa schools. Districts described their citizenship programs with varied responses on the citizenship curriculum questionnaire (see Appendix B). A few examples are, "No established program", "Integrated into the total curriculum", "Taught in nine grade only", and "Electives only". Answers were equally inconsistent when dealing with method of instruction and goals for existing programs. There appears to be no well-defined expectations or objective for citizenship education courses in the curriculum of Iowa schools.

5. Results of this research indicated a significant difference was to be found between scores of seventh grade students and twelfth grade students. The seventh grade means on the cognitive test ranged from 43.31 to 63.22 with an overall mean of 51.75. A comparison to a total possible score of 99 indicates the average seventh grade student knew approximately one-half of the answers. The twelfth grade means ranged from 65.62 to 78.06 with an overall mean of 73.18, indicating twelfth grade students knew approximately three-fourths of the answers. The variability of test scores around the mean for seventh grade students and twelfth grade students was almost identical.

The significant difference in cognitive scores between seventh and twelfth grades point out the effectiveness a citizenship education course has in altering the cognitive score of a student. This conclusion is based on the self-report that only a very small percentage of seventh grade students had taken a citizenship education course. The specific nature of the test items (see Appendix C), imply that maturation is not the sole cause of this improvement.

6. When male and female performance was analyzed by analysis of variance, no significant difference was found. The mean scores for male and female were almost identical. This finding indicates that females can perform as well as males on a cognitive citizenship measure, although the political arena and active citizenship involvement is still perceived as a world dominated by men.

7. The data analyzed in this study showed no significant difference in performance on the cognitive citizenship test between rural and town students. Rural students did consistently perform better than town students, but not to a significant degree.

It is difficult to relate this finding to the discussion of rural/urban performance found in the literature because of the rural nature of small towns in Iowa. Students reporting themselves as a town resident

as opposed to a rural resident may well have been classified rural under a national reporting system.

8. Analysis of scores when categorized by parental occupation showed significant differences. While no occupation could be identified by the Duncan Multiple Range test as being statistically different, the ranking of occupation by means adhered closely to previous research. Students from homes in which parents are involved in professional occupations performed better than students from blue-collar homes. The largest reported occupational field was agri-business. Students from these homes also out-performed students from blue-collar homes.

9. The data collected showed a significant difference in the cognitive citizenship education test scores between those that have had a civics course and those that have not. The alignment of data corresponded almost identically to grade level categories. Seventh grade students who have not had a citizenship course did not perform as well as twelfth grade students who have had a citizenship course.

The study has achieved its purpose. Information concerning the present status of citizenship education in Iowa schools was collected. It revealed a wide variability in citizenship programs and objectives. Most citizenship courses are offered after the seventh grade.

A significant increase in student cognitive knowledge is also made between the seventh and twelfth grade. Current citizenship programs do have an impact on students. The amount of impact varies by district. The districts having the most success teaching cognitive citizenship knowledge are the districts offering a more traditional program. An analysis of community goals and perceptions of present and future citizenship education programs revealed perception ratings of current programs are not concurrent with goal rankings and goal rankings appear to be inversely related to cognitive scores. The citizenship education goal is ranked lower as students perform higher on the cognitive test, indicating community members rank a goal higher as they see a need for improvement.

#### Recommendations

This study surveyed many aspects of citizenship education in Iowa public schools. The following recommendations are made:

1. A more complete analysis needs to be made of the citizenship education program in those districts where students performed significantly better than students in other districts. In searching for better ways to teach and learn, it is advantageous to study those who are already doing a better job.

2. Goals and objectives of the new social studies movement need to be filtered into the Iowa schools so they may be acted on in a concrete way. During the course of the study, the researcher was contacted by several administrators who were searching to implement or improve an effective citizenship education program in their district. Research in the field of citizenship needs more practical application.

3. Better measurement instruments need to be developed to test citizenship knowledge and attitudes, whether they are taught and formed by traditional methods or those involving more student participation. The standardized tests available are very limited and not entirely satisfactory.

4. A more precise classification system needs to be implemented to distinguish rural Iowa students as either having a farm background or a small town background.

5. A more introspective look is needed into the question, "what role should and can the public school play in producing fine citizens?" The priority rankings given citizenship as a school goal by community members in this study ranged from 3.17 to 2.44 on a scale of 5 high and 1 low. These middle rankings indicate that even though community members see a need for improvement in the citizenship curriculum, it is not a top priority goal and other goals take precedent. Citizenship as a priority goal may be relegated to secondary status because of its nebulous nature. What is good

citizenship? What attributes make a good citizen? Whose job is it to mold good citizens? These questions have no concrete answer and their lack of definition pose a problem to the community member as a rater. Compare this indefinite quality of citizenship to the goal statement, "Develop skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening." The nature of this curricular area is well defined with the school the undisputed mentor.

Citizenship appears to have a broader scope than just a school subject. The inputs are many. The individual, the family, the peer relationships, the community, and the school are all major contributors to the product of a good citizen. It may be necessary to analyze the relative contributions of these other variables before determining the appropriate role for the school in the area of citizenship education.



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The researcher would like to thank the members of her committee for their advice and patience: Dr. Lynn Glass and Dr. Harold Dilts, co-chairmen; Dr. John Menne, committee member; Dr. Anton Netusil, committee member; and Dr. Dominick Pellegrino, committee member.

In addition to her committee, the researcher would like to express appreciation to Dr. William McCormick and Dr. Karilee Watson for their special words of encouragement in times of short-sightedness.

The researcher dedicates this dissertation to her family, who have shown tolerance, support and understanding: Joanna Pelz, Jenny Pelz, Bill Pelz, Margaret Weatherspoon and James Weatherspoon.





4

APPENDIX A:  
PHI DELTA KAPPA RATING INSTRUMENTS

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These consist of pages:

Appendices A, B and C.

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