

Chapter 1 Overview

Civic literacy and involvement are crucial to successful self-government, but lack of civic engagement has become a focus of increasing concern in recent years. Robert D. Putnam’s popular work, *Bowling Alone*, highlights what he calls a “strange disappearance of social capital and civic engagement in America.” He notes the need for “features of social life—networks, norms, and trust—that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives.” Putnam’s work explores political, as well as other connections, of people to their community.

(<http://www.prospect.org/print/V7/24/putnam-r.html>). *We the People... the Citizen and the Constitution (WTP)* is a course of study intended to enhance the civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions that lead to responsible citizenship. Funded by the U.S.

Department of Education through an act of Congress, and originally named the *National Bicentennial Competition*, the program began in 1987 as part of the commemoration of the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution. The program’s goal is to enhance students’ understanding of, and reasoned commitment to, the institutions of American constitutional democracy while guiding them to discover modern applications of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights (<http://civnet.org/civitas/partners/center/history.htm>).

This course, developed by the Center for Civic Education, helps students develop the “networks, norms, and trust” that Putnam asserts are disappearing from the American scene.

Leading scholars and educators collaborated to write the curriculum, which provides students in grades 5, 8 and high school government with a course of instruction on the principles and history of the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights. Students who

complete the course take a multiple-choice test, but the highlight of the program at each grade level is an oral assessment that involves both prepared and extemporaneous responses to critical thinking questions. Students play the role of “experts in the Constitution,” testifying before a mock Congressional hearing (<http://civnet.org/civitas/partners/center/history.htm>). A unit team of at least three students prepares a four-minute answer to cover all parts of a research question (See Appendix 1, Examples of Competition Questions for State Level Hearings, 2002-03). Then the judges ask follow-up questions for six minutes, and students respond to those questions extemporaneously. Among other criteria, students are evaluated on their depth of knowledge, ability to apply academic data to current problems, and understanding of landmark Supreme Court cases (See Appendix 2, The Congressional Hearing Group Score Sheet). High school classes may participate in competitive hearings at district, state, and national levels. The curriculum materials are used in many schools that do not participate in competitive hearings, but the focus of this study is certain practices and characteristics of the classes that are most successful in the competition.

My own experience with *We the People* since 1987 has resulted in my becoming an enthusiastic advocate of this approach to civic education. Because I have observed students’ increased interest in and capacity for civic participation as they prepare for competition, I wished to learn more about the distinctive features of the course as it is taught in the most successful competitive schools. Greater competitive success for my students, I reasoned, would have multiple benefits: each year’s group of students would develop enhanced understanding of the U.S. form of government, and they would be equipped for civic participation both within and outside of school. As a bonus, a tradition

of success would also translate into greater interest among underclassmen, hence perhaps higher enrollments from one year to the next.

The content of *WTP* addresses not only the structure and function of the U.S. Constitutional system, but also its history, philosophical foundations, and how its principles are applied to current problems. Achieving mastery of *We the People* content involves certain assumptions. Students' prepared four-minute testimony must be only the tip of the iceberg, supported by a wealth of additional expertise that will become evident as students extemporaneously respond to follow-up questions. Just as varsity athletics is more demanding than a physical education class is likely to be, this course is more rigorous than the typical high school government class. Successful *WTP* preparation usually involves many hours of extra after school practice. Unit groups must research and practice together. They must write their testimonies and learn to deliver them effectively. The students must challenge one another to think of possible follow-up questions and then do more research to be able to answer them. One incentive for students to choose to enroll in the rigorous *WTP* class rather than the easier standard government course would be the opportunity to earn dual enrollment college credit for *WTP*. Because I believe the benefits to students for participation in competitive *WTP* are undoubtedly worth all the extra work for student and teacher, my perspective is that as many students as possible should consider enrollment in the course. In the same way that *We the People* itself is biased toward encouraging reasoned commitment to the institutions of American constitutional democracy, my bias is unabashed advocacy of *WTP* as civic education.

The purpose of this research project is to analyze characteristics and practices of the most successful programs in competitive *We the People* high school classes. First, how do the program practices of granting college credit and using community resource people correlate with success in competition? Second, what other characteristics or practices are highly correlated with success in *We the People* competition? I used an online survey of *WTP* teachers to investigate practices and characteristics of their classes, and I used competition results data from the Center for Civic Education to analyze their relative success. *We the People* teachers and state coordinators should be able to use these findings to improve their own courses of study, and to lobby their local universities to offer college credit.

In order to address civic illiteracy, citizenship education should not only improve what people know and can do, but also address their attitudes about their civic responsibilities. Aristotle noted, “All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth” (<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Olympus/4600/quotes.htm>). The validity of this concept is especially important for a democracy. Not all political scientists advocate active civic participation by the ordinary citizen, and not all educators advocate active, participatory learning experiences for students. However, my experience as a seasoned classroom teacher leads me to favor both. If success in learning is defined as enhancement in what the learner knows and is able to do, *WTP* students demonstrate far more success than my own students in other courses of study. My preference is to employ active learning simulations, role-plays, reenactments, mock trials, and moot courts in any class that I teach. The format of *WTP* assessment dictates that such

practices receive heightened focus. It is true that those students who choose to enroll in *WTP* are usually innately more interested in political topics than those who do not, and they often come to this course with a head start in such attributes as academic knowledge and inclinations toward leadership. A direct comparison of competencies between *WTP* students and non-*WTP* students, therefore, is an insufficient demonstration of superiority of the course of study itself. However, regardless of their starting points, I have seen enough student gains in skills of writing, reasoning, presentation, leadership, cooperation, and confidence that I transfer teaching behaviors I have learned through *WTP* to all other courses that I teach. If one accepts the premise that active civic participation is preferable to passivity, and that education should give learners the opportunity to practice the behaviors they will need for civic activity, then *We the People* offers a course of study that equips both students and teachers to make a difference.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Character of the Political Culture: Founding Period

Appropriate goals for civic education hinge on the definitions of “responsible citizen,” and “constitutional democracy.” Is the citizen to be prepared for leadership or followership? Which people are to be involved in decision-making? Is the form of government intended to give the people what they want, or tell the people what they need? Is it designed to promote individualism or to encourage equality? In sum, I perceive the critical questions to be “Who participates in self-government?” and “Toward what end?” Consequently, I propose the matrix on p. 71 as a graphic representation to compare various conceptions of civic participation. In 1671, Governor William Berkeley of Virginia (See Position A: Matrix, p.71) wrote, “I thank God, there are no free schools nor printing and I hope we shall not have these hundred years; for learning has brought disobedience, and heresy, and sects into the world, and printing has divulged them, and libels against the best government. God keep us from both” (Schudson 40). Within the next century, both the free press and the common school had become American institutions.

A similar contempt for the judgment of the masses is revealed in some of the deliberations at the Constitutional Convention of 1787. Winton Solberg details in his 1990 edition of Madison’s notes, that Elbridge Gerry, on May 31, referred to the “excess of democracy” (Solberg 84). On the same day, Edmond Randolph noted the “turbulence and follies of democracy” (Solberg 87). Alexander Hamilton, on June 18, took note of

the “vices of democracy” (Solberg 145). The Framers intended to establish a system of government that would be responsible to the people, but at the same time would reflect their better natures. Fresh in their memory was the recent “mobocracy” of the 1786 Shays’s Rebellion in which debt-ridden farmers facing foreclosures had shut down the courts in Massachusetts. Madison’s “deepest concern was to prove that a national republic would protect minority interests and individual rights against the danger of a ‘factious majority’: a majority which, while claiming to embody the popular will, actually preferred its own interests to the public good” (Rakove 48). At the Convention, Hamilton observed, “Give all power to the many, they will oppress the few. Give all power to the few, they will oppress the many. Both therefore ought to have power, that each may defend itself against the other” (Solberg 145). The Constitution of 1787 did not create what the Framers meant by a democracy, but a representative form of government in which they intended, as Madison explained in *Federalist* 10, that “enlightened views and virtuous sentiments” of the most able leaders would “render them superior to local prejudices, and to schemes of injustice”(http://lcweb2.loc.gov/const/fed/fed_10.html). In *Federalist* 51 Madison observed, “A dependence on the people is, no doubt, the primary control on the government; but experience has taught mankind the necessity of auxiliary precautions” (<http://www.jmu.edu/madison/federalist/fed51.htm>), which he believed had been secured through such characteristics as federalism, separation of powers, checks and balances, and the aristocratic form and function of the powerful Senate.

Anti-Federalist writers such as George Mason, Elbridge Gerry, Patrick Henry, and “Brutus” (probably New York judge Robert Yates), maintained that the new Constitution created a government too distant and powerful to be answerable to the people—that self-

government itself was threatened by the plan. The Anti-Federalists had little faith in the aristocratic ruling classes that they said would dominate the new system, and great faith in the common man to perceive and carry out the common good. Melancton Smith wrote that average people such as yeoman farmers, “had less temptations, [and were] inclined by habit ...to set bounds to their passions and appetites” (Ketchum 19). They feared that the Federalists’ plan would negate the gains in liberty that had been won in the American Revolution. The debate between the elitist Federalists and the more inclusive Anti-Federalists frames the “Who acts?” aspect of the complex notion of citizenship (See Position B: Matrix, p. 71). The debate resulted in a compromise that gave the Federalists a strong central government, and the Anti-Federalists a Bill of Rights.

2.2 Character of the Political Culture, Twentieth Century

The character of United States political culture has continued to arouse controversy into modern times. Walter Lippmann’s 1922 book, *Public Opinion*, posited that, since ordinary citizens are incapable of objective understanding of the common good, the United States should opt for his “model of 'democratic realism' based on political representation and technical expertise” (Schugurensky and Myers http://fcis.oise.utoronto.ca/~daniel_schugurensky/assignment1/1922lippdew.html). He maintained that expecting the average voter to be able to make good policy decisions was unrealistic, because the common man’s thinking is merely based on stereotypes manipulated by those in power. Participatory democracy was a nostalgic sham, and policy should be determined in the public interest by experts (See Position C: Matrix, p. 71). John Dewey objected to Lippmann’s elitist technocracy and responded in a review published in *The New Republic* in 1922. Dewey maintained that the public can learn how

to govern itself through intelligent judgment informed by the experts that Lippmann commended (See Position D: Matrix, p. 71). In his 1927 book, *The Public and its Problems* (365), Dewey

admitted that ‘it is not necessary that the many should have the knowledge and skill to carry on the needed investigations; what is required is that they have the ability to judge of the bearing of the knowledge supplied by others upon common concerns.’ For Dewey, once the relevant facts are made public (and in this regard he placed great emphasis on the need of a truly free press), the role of discussion is to determine the exact nature of the common good in that particular situation (Schugurensky and Myers http://fcis.oise.utoronto.ca/~daniel_schugurensky/assignment1/1922lippdew.html).

In addition to controversy regarding elitist/inclusive constructs, later twentieth century thought regarding self-government continues to reflect several models that describe the goals of the civic culture (“Toward what end?”). In a 2001 presentation, Carl Bybee, Ashley Overbeck and Christine Quail explained three current models of citizenship. First, the liberal/legalistic model emphasizes personal, political, and economic rights, and requires informed and effective civic involvement by individuals. Elections, campaigns and voting are the main spheres of civic activity, and this model idealizes free market capitalism. This model reflects Hamiltonian Federalist sentiments. Secondly, Bybee, Overbeck and Quail described the radical communitarian model. Citizenship in this model involves a unified moral commitment; the group is more important than the self. Community eclipses individuality and “free market values which obsessively promote individualism and selfish fulfillment of short-term individual desire” (<http://jcomm.uoregon.edu/~cbybee/teachingapathy/citizenship.html>) are a threat to the body politic. This model is reminiscent of the classical republican approach favored by Anti-Federalists. The third model, which Bybee, Overbeck and Quail label participatory

democracy, calls for a “reinvention of civil life which stands between government and the market and which is not just a tool to achieve other goals, but serves as an ever changing end in itself” (See Position E: Matrix, p. 71). This view combines respect for diversity and individualism with a commitment to human rights and social responsibilities.

I describe citizenship, then, by reference to who is expected to participate (elitist or inclusive) and to the goals to which their participation is directed (liberal/legalistic, communitarian, or participatory). Later Twentieth Century literature illustrates the complexity of this characterization. In 1963, Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba published *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*. This massive work compared five modern democracies in three main dimensions: knowledge of the political system, feelings toward the political system, and attitudes toward the self as a political actor. Almond and Verba determined that the ideal political culture for a democracy, which they called “civic culture” (See Position F: Matrix, p. 71), is balanced: “political activity, involvement, and rationality exist but are balanced by passivity, traditionality, and commitment to parochial values” (Myers, http://fcis.oise.utoronto.ca/~daniel_schugurensky/assignment1/1963almondverba.html).

A finding resulting from this study, and continuing throughout literature on political socialization, is that the single most powerful variable for predicting civic and political engagement is education. It is unclear whether formal education is an independent variable or whether it acts as proxy of other variables, such as social class. Almond and Verba wrote in the midst of the Cold War, and their work concluded that Western democratic culture is the best pattern for self-government. Their work endorses the idea that the ordinary citizen is capable and has the right to participate in self-governance, but

notes a concurrent value in passivity and tradition. Their answer to “Who acts?” allows for inclusion, but the answer to “Toward what end?” is more difficult to classify.

2.3 Character of Civic Education

Just as political scientists have identified different approaches to citizen involvement in government, they have outlined different approaches regarding the proper role and purpose of civic education. If, as the literature suggests, education is the most important factor for predicting political engagement, then the quality of civic education is of great consequence. Richard Merelman in 1999 described four different models. First, citing Pamela Conover, he denoted the hegemonic model (see Position G: Matrix, p. 71), in which civics is taught in order to serve the interests of the political elite, to support a system of unequal power. Secondly, he described the critical model (See Position H: Matrix, p.71), summarized in 1971 by the American Political Science Association (APSA) Committee on Pre-Collegiate Education. Merelman quoted the Committee’s report: “Schools should provide a learning environment in which students can develop a cognitive understanding of the realities of political life,” including a “warts and all” approach that addresses such issues as the importance of self-interest and failures of public policies. The third approach, which Merelman called a transformative model (See Position I: Matrix, p.71), blends hegemony and criticism to prod traditional forms to adapt to change. The fourth approach, Merelman wrote, is a symbolic model of civic education, in which educators content themselves with new packaging of old ideas (See Position J: Matrix, p. 71). He maintained that the creation in 1994 of voluntary national standards of civic education merely creates the illusion of progress toward strengthening the hold of politics on young people. Merelman analyzed the Center for Civic

Education's National Civics Standards document and concluded that it is framed in a hegemonic approach, failing to meet its stated goal: encouraging "informed, responsible participation in political life by competent citizens committed to the fundamental values and principles of American constitutional democracy" Merelman, <http://www.apsanet.org/CENnet/PS/merelman.cfm>). In Merelman's view, the Center for Civic Education fell short in its national standards to improve civic education. However, the Center has produced curricular materials that, in the view of many teachers, do a remarkably effective job of helping teachers address that goal. These materials include the middle school service learning program, *Project Citizen*, and the focus of my study, *We the People; The Citizen and the Constitution*, a curriculum intended for grades 5, 8, and high school study. The framework of the *We the People* textbook is more consistent with Almond and Verba's "western democratic culture is best" approach than with the transformative view advocated by Merelman. However, the research questions that the Center composes each year for state and national level competition, as well as the follow-up questions posed by judges in competitive hearings, do require students to challenge their assumptions and think critically about the implications of their arguments. Judges for state and national competition include practicing attorneys, judges, university professors, and Congressional staffers. They give *WTP* students a taste of what it means to defend one's reasoning against very direct criticism—an opportunity to reflect on any inconsistencies in their thinking. Therefore, while Merelman's analysis of the Center's National Standards document points out a shortcoming in that a hegemonic approach to civic education could be built on these standards, the actual programs implemented, when

considered in their entirety, do address the competencies needed for participatory citizenship.

In 1980, R. Freeman Butts (See Position K: Matrix, p. 71) published *The Revival of Civic Learning: A Rationale for Citizenship Education in American Schools*. He offered recommendations for improving citizenship education programs,

incorporating political values, political knowledge, and the skills of political participation into the curriculum, encouraging common understanding of and commitment to democratic values; and encouraging student understanding of citizenship concepts such as justice, freedom, equality, diversity, authority, privacy, due process, participation, and international human rights (Butts, ERIC abstract).

This description, like that of Almond and Verba, seems to straddle the two “Who acts?” camps, with, for example, the concept of authority favoring elitism, and the concept of “common understanding and commitment” favoring inclusion. Furthermore, regarding the “Toward what end?” question, we see all three approaches: liberal/legalistic: “skills of political participation,” communitarian: “international human rights,” and participatory democracy. Just which democratic values will be emphasized? What manner of participation will be favored?

Noted political theorist Benjamin Barber, currently Kekst Professor of Civil Society at the University of Maryland, authored an important book in 1984, *Strong Democracy* (See Position L: Matrix, p.71). A “strong democracy” is the robust form of civic education consistent with a communitarian model, for which he argued, advocating

democratic responsibility, for strong democratic practices that serve as an apprenticeship for liberty, and for the opening of all political questions to extensive discussion and ultimately responsible and reflective democratic decision-making. For Barber, all of these practices contribute to the creation of a yet-unseen strong democratic citizenry, a group of individuals who exhibit mutual "empathy" without evincing a craving for

collectivism, and in whom the "imagination" is cultivated to include perspectives and concerns beyond those one might regard as immediately one's narrow interests in the absence of a vibrant democratic colloquy (Deneen <http://www.benjaminrbarber.com/bio2.html>).

While political scientists are at odds in specifying what the goals of civic education should be, and what its real effects are, there is considerable unanimity in a key idea found in government textbooks used in the public schools: Schools should be teaching citizenship.

1. In a 1964 government textbook: "In modern societies the school system, in particular, functions as a formidable instrument of political power in its role as transmitter of the goals, values, and attitudes of the polity. The philosophy of American education proclaims that each young person shall have an educational opportunity to develop fully his abilities—a doctrine that is part and parcel of democratic theory" (Key, 12-13).
2. In a 1965 government textbook: "A generation ago a study was made of civic education in eight countries. In summarizing the conclusions of the investigations, Charles E. Merriam pointed out that in every nation the school system was basic in the development of civic interest and loyalty" (Merriam, quoted in Bone, 29).
3. In a 1998 government textbook: "Americans are taught to equate citizenship with electoral participation. Civic training, designed to give students an appreciation for the American system of government, is a legally required part of the curriculum in every elementary and secondary school" (Lowi & Ginsberg 424).
4. In a 2003 government textbook: "Democracy requires citizens who are willing to participate in civic life. Countries in which citizens are able to inform themselves about issues, to vote in elections, to serve on juries, to work for candidates, and to

run for government office are more likely to maintain a strong democracy than countries where citizens do not participate fully in their government; ...democracy is more likely to succeed in countries with an educated public” (Remy 23-24).

2.4 Historical Trends in Civic Culture and Education

The significance of the common school as a vehicle of political socialization has been recognized throughout our history. The congress established under the Articles of Confederation, in its Ordinance of 1785, required that lot number 16 of every township be set aside for the maintenance of public schools. The Ordinance of 1787 reiterated a commitment to education: "religion, morality and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged" (Tyack and James <http://www.apsanet.org/CENnet/thisconstitution/tyack.cfm>). The principle of diffusion of knowledge was widely supported because “people believed it would engender obedient, not critical, citizens...inducting citizens more firmly into the established order” (Schudson 71).

Article 4, Section 4 of the U.S. Constitution of 1787 requires that “The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government...” The Framers of the Articles of Confederation, Constitution, and the later state constitutions considered education to be an essential feature of a government that would protect the common good. While the details of the common school have generally been left to state and local elected officials, the federal government’s concern for education is evident from the very beginning. “During the first century of the new nation, Congress granted more than 77 million acres of the public domain as an endowment for the support

of public schools” (Tyack and James <http://www.apsanet.org/CENnet/thisconstitution/tyack.cfm>). Surplus federal revenue and war expense reimbursements were also granted to the states, and these federal grants were often used to support education. According to Tyack and James, the reverence with which state constitutional conventions held public education is shown in the idealistic language used to declare it to be a shared value—“a common good above the squabbles of political party or sect” (Tyack and James <http://www.apsanet.org/CENnet/thisconstitution/tyack.cfm>).

The vital connection between education and self-government in the United States resonates from the founding fathers to the present. Dr. Benjamin Rush, signer of the Declaration of Independence and highly respected scientist, wrote in 1786, "The business of education has acquired a new complexion by the independence of our country." "The form of government we have assumed," he continued, "has created a new class of duties to every American." Rush believed the survival of the republic required that common schools through colleges be “nurseries of wise and good men” (Tyack and James <http://www.apsanet.org/CENnet/thisconstitution/tyack.cfm>). In 1820 Thomas Jefferson wrote to William Charles Jarvis, "I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education" (Whitman 338-339).

Tyack and James note an address by Justice Joseph Story, “one of the nation's greatest legal minds in the nineteenth century,” who told a group of educators that

‘the American republic, above all others, demands from every citizen unceasing vigilance and exertion, since we have deliberately dispensed with every guard against danger or ruin, except the intelligence and virtue of the people themselves.’ Such assumptions about democracy and education gave rise to widespread agreement on the fundamental necessity of enlightened schooling for the survival of the republic, even among people who otherwise disagreed vehemently over many other issues. Democrats, Whigs, and Republicans each had their own reasons for distrusting government and its actions, but each party, in its own formulation, looked to public education as a means of strengthening a republican form of government by creating upright individual citizens (<http://www.apsanet.org/CENnet/thisconstitution/tyack.cfm>).

The American Political Science Association (APSA) was founded in 1903. Education for active, competent citizenship was among the Association’s top goals from its beginning until the 1920s, and then again in more recent years. In an essay first published in *Political Science and Politics* in 1998, Hindy L. Schachter analyzed the actions of three different committees formed by APSA to address the problem of inadequate education for citizenship. These committees, formed in 1906, 1911, and 1920 each reported student deficits in knowledge, concern, and performance of civic responsibilities. Each committee recommended increased emphasis on civic education in the public schools, but any improvements were negligible, leading the succeeding study group to decry the same problems. Still new task forces were appointed toward the same ends in 1939, and again in 1996. Describing the most recent APSA effort to improve civic education and engagement, Schachter notes,

The Task Force was presented as a response to a specifically modern problem: the loss of social capital in the preceding 25 years. Its creation emerged from ‘deep concerns about the viability of democracy in America’ emanating from the current decline in political participation with a substantial gap opening between older and younger citizens’ participation patterns. (<http://www.apsanet.org/CENnet/PS/schachter.cfm>)

What Schachter describes as a “specifically modern problem” seems to be a continuing concern among political observers who favor an inclusive approach to political participation.

While not all political scientists agree that an inclusive approach to political participation is desirable, the literature on modern civic education is consistent in calling for more participation and in asserting that better education should lead to better citizens. In his 1998 book, *The Good Citizen*, Michael Schudson traces four historical periods in the characterization of citizenship. First, the era of rule by gentlemen (Schudson 9) began in colonial times and extended to the election of Andrew Jackson. Civic education of the masses could be rudimentary, just emphasizing deference to authority, because only gentlemen were expected to govern. The Hamiltonian/Federalist view was based on trust. Common people could be trusted to elect uncommon people to lead them. The common people did not need to concern themselves with policy; they only needed to be able to recognize and reject self-serving power seekers, and then trust their leaders for the details of government. Vestiges of European aristocracy remained in effect, since gentlemen were educated and non-elites were not. The politics of deference dictated that the elites were referred to as “Mister/Sir/Your Honor” while the common man was addressed by his first name (Schudson 19).

Schudson’s second period of civic characterization was the era of mass democracy, from Andrew Jackson to the election of Woodrow Wilson. It was during this period that the most enduring organization of the nineteenth century, the political party, reached its heyday. The party became the main vehicle for providing voter education, and interpersonal authority replaced deference to the personal authority of

gentlemen. One result of the dominance of political party bosses during this period was the problem of widespread political corruption; the parties were not held accountable to the voters. Campaigns were a great American spectator sport as communities became involved in the trappings of exciting parades and demonstrations, without much attention to the substance of policy issues. Citizen participation by means of voting reached higher levels than at any other period, but the party bosses did as they pleased. Alexis De Tocqueville observed, “In no country in the world has the principle of association been more successfully used or applied to a greater multitude of objects than in America.” Tocqueville posited that, though freedom of association is “a dangerous liberty,” political associations are important because they are the “great free schools to which all citizens come to be taught the general theory of association” (Schudson 101). Political parties orchestrated civic education and participation. The non-elites participated symbolically by acting in a script written by a new elite—the party bosses.

A third era of civic ideology, from the Progressive Era beginning in 1900 through the early post-WWII period, was characterized by a new focus on the informed citizen. An enhanced reverence for the Constitution that Schudson calls the “civic American religion” (202) replaced party intensity. Progressive reforms such as initiative, referendum, recall, and corrupt practices acts illustrate a movement to bring policy making into the open, retiring the era of party bosses in many communities. Muckrakers called attention to social problems such as overcrowded and unsafe tenement housing, unwholesome food, and greedy business practices, focusing their readers’ attention on a need for government that was more honest, more democratic, and more efficient. The complexities of Twentieth Century life led many people to believe that government

should employ experts in the science of policy-making. Schudson cites Arthur T. Hadley in a statement reminiscent of John Dewey's approach: "The people as a whole must assume the double duty of voting intelligently on matters which public opinion can decide and leaving to the specialist matters which can only be decided by the specialist" (Schudson 218). Consequently, city managers were hired to translate the will of the people into government practices in ways that should allow the voter to hold his elected officials accountable. Technology in the form of professional poll taking and radio and television communication became integral to the political process.

Schudson dates his fourth era of citizenship practice, a rights-conscious approach, from the 1950s to the present, noting that there are those who maintain that the current emphasis on individual rights weakens the life of the community. Some critics say a rights-conscious approach to citizenship causes too many people to ignore their responsibilities or to think of themselves as victims. Schudson asks,

Has the rise of rights-based liberalism in America established a democratic home but failed to educate anyone fit to inhabit it? Is the effort to realize the sovereignty of the people awash in contradictions—the more people become self-actualizing individuals, the more likely they are to rend to social fabric; the more decisions they take on in elections, referenda, and direct participation in decision-making, the less adequate they are to the myriad choices they are asked to make... the more the protection of rights is vested in the judiciary, the less citizens engage in the discussion and persuasion and democratic give-and take of the legislative process (Schudson 293)?

According to Schudson, the rights-conscious focus of the last half-century is not necessarily a harmful development—just different from prior eras. He proposes a new model for responsible citizenship: the monitorial citizen—a person who knows enough to participate intelligently in governmental affairs. The monitorial citizen is involved in

many different activities, but always watchful for issues in the political environment that may require closer attention. Schudson uses the analogy of parents watching small children at a community pool. They are not directly involved in the children's play, but they are alert and prepared to intervene if needed (Schudson 311). He maintains that the rights-regarding citizen era was a step that can now give way to the monitorial citizen. Rights-consciousness, both for oneself and for others, is a prerequisite for effective monitoring of one's government.

the rise of the rights-regarding citizen has done more to enhance democracy than to endanger it. If the practice of American liberalism today is deeply flawed, this is not because it has a long record of failure but because American political leadership has long stepped around it. A full-bodied expression of liberal ideals has emerged only since 1965. Its continuing faults may run deep, but they may also have much to do with our inexperience in working through what it means to run a country conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all of us are created equal...A rights-regarding citizenship now stands alongside the informed citizen, but it does not substitute for the ideal of the informed citizen. We live in a new complexity, not a transformed simplicity" (Schudson 293).

Schudson's formulation of the fifth model of responsible citizenship, the monitorial citizen, is similar to elements addressed by Dewey and Almond and Verba (See Position M, Matrix, p. 71). Like Dewey's approach that a good citizen need not necessarily understand or be involved in every detail of policy making, and like Almond and Verba's explanation that a good citizen is sometimes passive and sometimes preoccupied with family or parochial concerns, Schudson's monitorial citizen is alert enough to know when his/her active involvement in public affairs is needed, and at the same time willing to "sit out" some controversies.

As the matrix of civic participation theories shows, there is a discernable trend toward greater inclusiveness and greater concern for communitarian goals in the development through time of what it means to be a United States citizen. The same trend is confirmed through historical expansions of opportunities to more fully participate in the civic culture. The Civil War Amendments to the U.S. Constitution mark the awakening of that document's interpretation of what Jefferson called a self-evident truth: equality. The movements toward women's rights, civil rights, rights of the handicapped and greater inclusiveness in education have reinforced the concept that "We the People" means all of us. The *WTP* curriculum helps students develop the skills necessary to function in the monitorial role. It "demystifies government" (Luke, 2 May 2003) because students learn not only about its structure and function, but they also learn that their own voices are significant, how to discipline their reasoning skills, and how to influence the system when they choose to do so.

2.5 Modern Goals of Civic Education

"There is a broad consensus among social studies educators that the core mission of a social studies curriculum is education for democratic citizenship" (Vontz and Nixon, <http://www.indiana.edu/%7Essdc/issuedig.htm>). Preparing students to function as competent citizens, willing and able to both monitor and participate in public affairs in the new complexity cited by Schudson remains a daunting challenge. John Dewey believed that democratic society was essential for human advancement and that schools should be an extension of democratic society, offering students the opportunity to "actively pursue interests in cooperation with others" (<http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/d/dewey.htm>). In 1984, Leslie Hendrikson wrote,

“While experimental research continues to show the usefulness of active learning, descriptive research indicates little application of active learning methods” (<http://www.ericfacility.net/ericdigests/ed253468.html>). In 1971, and again in 1993, the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) conducted multinational studies of civic education. The goal was “to identify and examine in a comparative framework the ways in which young people are prepared for their roles as citizens in democracies and societies aspiring to democracy” (<http://www.indiana.edu/%7Essdc/ieadig.htm>). What should a good citizen know, understand, and be willing and able to do? Judith Torney-Purta, John Schwille, and Jo-Ann Amadeo published the results of the 1993 study in 1999: *The IEA Civic Education Study: Expectations and Achievements of Students in Thirty Countries*. Torney-Purta, Schwille, and Amadeo used in-depth studies of the goals and methods of the various states’ civic education policies to develop assessments that were later administered to almost 90,000 students ages 14-18. Some of the major findings of this massive study are listed below:

1. There is a common core of content topics for civic education across these countries.
2. There is unanimity among the authors of the national case studies that **civic education should be** based on important content that crosses disciplines, and that it should be "**participative, interactive, related to life, conducted in a non-authoritarian environment, cognizant of the challenges of societal diversity, and co-constructed with parents, the community, and non-governmental organizations, as well as the school**" (Torney-Purta, Schwille, and Amadeo 1999, 30). No country, however, has achieved these goals for all students (emphasis added).
3. There is a widely perceived gap between the goals for democracy expressed in the curriculum and the reality of the society and school. Implementing ambitious programs has been difficult, and there is concern about teacher preparation.
4. Although educators often try to convey the excitement of the political process and the importance of participation, students frequently show a general disdain for

- politics. To counteract these tendencies, some countries employ student-generated projects or encourage youth to volunteer in their communities.¹
5. Social diversity is an area where there is tremendous concern in nearly all of these nations, without much sense of the best direction for program development (<http://www.indiana.edu/%7Essdc/ieadig.htm>).

On September 17, 2002, President George W. Bush marked the 215th anniversary of the signing of the United States Constitution by announcing a new initiative to support improved teaching of American history and civics. Results of the 1998 and 2001 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) civics exams indicated that less than one-fourth of America's students are proficient in these subjects. According to the "White House Fact Sheet on Teaching American History and Civic Education," the President began a "We the People" initiative to be administered by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). This effort involves grant solicitation by existing programs, an annual essay contest, and a "Heroes of History" lecture, among other elements. (<http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/edu/fs091702.htm>)

¹ One such community based service learning approach is the Center for Civic Education's middle school curriculum, *Project Citizen*, in which students identify, plan, and carry out a project to meet local needs.

Chapter 3 Program Effectiveness of

We the People...The Citizen and the Constitution

The White House and NEH would do well to study the impact of another “We the People” program. One of the most widespread and significant civic education efforts in the United States is the Center for Civic Education’s curriculum, *We the People... the Citizen and the Constitution (WTP)*. Its program design addresses each of the IEA concerns listed above. Its content includes the common core of topics noted by the IEA study, and its lessons are designed to be “participative, interactive, related to life, conducted in a non-authoritarian environment, and cognizant of the challenges of societal diversity” (Torney-Purta, Schwille, and Amadeo 1999, 30). As the course is carried out, other entities besides school officials have a hand in its development in a given community because the use of various community resource people as guest mentors is integral to its success. The program is widespread, with multiple schools participating in the competition in each state. Research and evaluation of *We the People* indicates that it has powerful effects on students’ civic knowledge and attitudes. In addition, the Center provides, at no cost to teacher or school district, a comprehensive approach to *WTP* teacher preparation and ongoing professional development. According to independent evaluations summarized on the Center for Civic Education website, *WTP* outstrips other forms of civic education. The Program Effectiveness Panel of the U.S. Department of Education’s National Diffusion Network validated the program’s exemplary design and results. In 1988, 1990, and 1991 Education Testing Service (ETS) conducted independent studies of all three grade levels of *We the People* (grades 5, 8, and high

school). ETS findings showed that *WTP* students “significantly outperformed comparison students on every topic of the tests taken.” ETS proclaimed *WTP* a “great instructional success,” at increasing students’ knowledge of the Constitution and Bill of Rights. Furthermore, when ETS compared scores of a random sample of 900 high school *WTP* students with 280 sophomores and juniors in political science courses at a major university, the high school students outperformed the university students in every topic area and on almost every test item (www.civiced.org/research_validation.html).

In a 1993 study, Professor Richard Brody of Stanford University focused on the concept of political tolerance to determine the degree to which the *WTP* program develops the political attitudes essential to a democracy. Majority rule by decision makers characterizes our system, but without respect for the rights of the minority, majoritarian tyranny quickly surfaces. Therefore, political tolerance, or respect for rights of all people, including those with distasteful or abhorrent beliefs, is an important attribute of responsible citizenship. The First Amendment’s guarantees of free assembly, free expression, and right to petition help to institutionalize protection for the unpopular idea. However, official protection means little when a hostile majority attempts to silence that idea. Professor Brody found that *WTP* students “display more political tolerance and feel more politically effective than most adult Americans and most other students.” He concluded that *WTP* students demonstrate more political tolerance because they are “more interested in politics, feel more politically effective, and perceive fewer limits on their own political expression.” In addition, Professor Brody found that the more involved students were with the competitive hearings, the more politically tolerant they were likely to become (www.civnet.org/journal/brody.htm).

Reporting on a Council for Basic Education study, Dr. Ruth Mitchell determined that *We the People* program design provides a strong model for assessing higher levels of student learning, meaning that students move from merely knowledge and comprehension levels of thinking to synthesis and evaluation. Moreover, she found that the competencies developed in such courses have lasting effects for the students (<http://www.civiced.org/mitchell.html>).

In 2001 the Center for Civic Education conducted a survey of *We the People* student alumni, focusing on voting and civic participation. The Executive Summary of this study's report, "Voting and Political Participation of *We the People ...The Citizen and the Constitution* Alumni," 2001, reveals the following comparisons. Among the 341 (self-selected) participating alumni, 82 percent reported that they voted in the November 2000 election. In addition, 77 percent had voted in previous elections. By contrast, the National Election Studies reported 48 percent turnout in the November 2000 election by other respondents aged 18-30 (www.civiced.org/eval_alumni_execsumm.html). Both research and anecdotal reports from participants also indicate that *We the People* experiences help encourage greater interest in politics and public affairs, increased involvement in government decision making at all levels, greater willingness to respect the opinions and rights of others, and better preparation for the privileges and responsibilities of democratic citizenship, than other forms of civic education.

Anecdotal evidence comparing *WTP* to other forms of civic instruction indicates that both *WTP* teachers and students are more enthusiastic and are motivated to increasingly diligent attention to the responsibilities of citizenship. Their comments are consistent with the active style of civic participation advocated by Bybee, Barber, Butts,

and Schudson. The key to this enhancement, according to one *WTP* teacher, is that “the students have to internalize the importance of what they’re learning” (*The Center Correspondent*, summer 1997). Another teacher observed, “The program has re-awakened the democratic flare in me so as to improve my knowledge of governance, leadership, and citizenship, and to inculcate these ideals in students” (*The Center Correspondent*, summer 2001). Deanna M. Morrison, a retired *WTP* teacher from Colorado, who now teaches professional development institutes for *WTP* instructors, states, “*WTP* competitions are very different from other intellectual competitions in that there is no single right answer, there are simply best answers which are most persuasive based on the supportive evidence. This promotes deeper thinking and students love it, and so do the teachers who get involved.” Ms. Morrison also noted, “most (students) carry home at least one of the issues and carry on the arguments with their parents, thus parents get as deeply involved in the program as their kids. Sometimes this helps build bonds between kids and their parents that were not there before. Many parents have described the debates around the dinner table at home to me and they are thrilled to have an intellectual debate with their kids” (2003 Westbrook survey response). In her response to the same survey, Deborah Snow, of East Kentwood High School in Grand Rapids, Michigan, stated, “I have participated in many social studies programs intended to promote civic education, but none accomplish that goal as well as this one. Students do not forget the lessons learned about civic involvement when they leave high school. Civic participation becomes part of their lives.” Ms. Snow and Ms. Morrison each have more than 30 years of teaching experience. Their comments, as well as the more quantitative studies by Education Testing Service, Brody, and the Center’s study of 341

alumni lend weight to my affirmation that *We the People* is effective preparation for participatory citizenship.

Chapter 4 Research Strategy

4.1 Research Targets

The purpose of this research project is to analyze characteristics and practices of the most successful programs in competitive *We the People* high school classes. My dual beliefs that active citizenship is better than passive citizenship, and that *We the People's* participatory pedagogy provides better civic preparation than passive methods, have led me to investigate the differences between the most successful competitive programs and those that are less successful. First, how do the program practices of granting college credit and using community resource people correlate with success in competition? Secondly, what other characteristics or practices are highly correlated with success in *We the People* competition? I created an online survey of *WTP* teachers to investigate practices and characteristics of their classes, and I used competition results data from the Center for Civic Education to analyze their relative success. If my survey analysis reveals that certain characteristics or practices are linked to competitive success, then *We the People* teachers and state coordinators can use these findings to make a good program of civic education even better.

I should state at this point that I do not believe that competitive success is the only, or even the most important measure of the effectiveness of the program. In terms of increasing student knowledge, skills, and inclination toward civic participation, a class of heterogeneously grouped, educationally at-risk students from an inner city school may well make far more progress than an academically advanced class from the suburbs. A rigorously designed study that compares socio-economic status, parent level of education, type of school and overall curriculum development, including pre- and post-tests to show

knowledge gained, would be a fascinating project, and might reveal, for example, that the less-advantaged class actually gained three or four grade levels worth of knowledge, while the more advanced class that defeated them in the state level competition only gained one or two grade levels. However, that is a project for another time. This project is designed to simply take a look at the information provided by current *WTP* teachers, in some areas that I thought might distinguish those whose programs are consistently more successful in the competition. Regardless of competition results, the active engagement of students in cooperatively solving research problems, preparing and presenting their testimonies, and responding to challenging follow-up questions, results in valuable civic education and the confidence that comes from meeting a challenge head-on.

Since the dependent variable in the study is schools' competitive success, the first step was to identify the most successful competing programs for recent years. Appendix 3, "We the People State/National Winners" summarizes the available information about trends in the competition from 1997 to 2002.² It is common for states to have formidable "dynasties"—a single school per state that dominates the state competition almost every year, and then goes on to win a major award at national competition. For example, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Michigan, Nebraska, New Jersey, and Oregon, each have a single school that has won at the state meet at least five out of the six years studied, and

²No state winner is listed for some states. The data available from the Center for Civic Education in contest years 1997, 1998, 1999, and 2000 show only the national award winners for those years. A complete list of state competition participants and winners may be available from each state's program coordinator, but was not provided. The data provided for competition years 2001 and 2002 show at least the state winner for all states and the District of Columbia, as well as some other competing schools. But even for 2001 and 2002, I was unable to get complete state competition participant lists.

then has gone on to win national awards of one kind or another.³ What is it that makes these schools consistently successful? Any student may participate in competition for only one school year, so the winning tradition of the national powerhouse schools is not due to accumulated expertise from experienced students. There must be some other factor that explains their success.

It is axiomatic in the education community that the teacher is the most important factor in student achievement. In 1998 Kati Haycock analyzed recent research from Tennessee, Texas, Massachusetts, and Alabama to identify what makes an effective teacher. She concluded that strong academic and teaching skills and deep content knowledge were most frequently associated with student learning (http://www.edtrust.org/main/documents/k16_summer98.pdf). In 2000, Linda Darling-Hammond of Stanford University reported her 50-state survey of the relationships between teacher quality and student achievement. “Quantitative analyses indicate that measures of teacher preparation and certification are by far the strongest correlates of student achievement in reading and mathematics, both before and after controlling for student poverty and language status” (<http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v8n1/>). In a similar vein, Daniel P. Mayer, John E. Mullens, and Mary T. Moore in 2001 reported characteristics that are most important to student learning: training, talent, and experience of teachers, a focused and rigorous curriculum, time spent using computers, small classes, and school characteristics related to goals, leadership, faculty, discipline policy, and academic environment (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2001/2001030.pdf>). Not only is the

³ Each year, classes from 21 states will receive awards at national competition. There are 10 national finalists, with First, Second, and Third places designated. The remaining schools in the top ten are not ranked, but can consider themselves “fourth.” A regional award is given to the non-finalist school that has the highest score in each of 5 geographic regions: Western, Mountain/Plains, Central, Southeastern and Northeastern. A unit award is given to the highest scoring non-finalist school in each of the six units.

teacher him/herself the most important factor, but the teacher also has a hands-on impact on each of the other factors listed. Most of us remember a teacher or two who combined the science of pedagogy with the art of teaching in a way that made it inevitable that we would learn a great deal. Those personal characteristics of master teachers are unique in significant ways, but a few common traits stand out in the research on effective schools, as summarized by Lawrence Lezotte: they combine rigorous standards with the ability to communicate genuine concern for the individual student, as well as a passion for the content area taught, and they maximize useful instructional time, seizing every teachable moment (<http://www.effectiveschools.com/Correlates.pdf>). A personal touch has much to do with the success of many programs; the same *WTP* teacher has led class after class to state and national success in many of the “powerhouse,” or “championship” schools. Each time such a teacher takes a class to the winner’s circle, he or she accumulates new experiences and understandings that will help the next year’s class to excel again.

However, in addition to the basic rules for good teaching in general, and unique connections between the personalities of powerful teachers and their students, are there practices specific to *WTP* success that should be duplicated by other *WTP* teachers? No dynasty wants to be unseated, so these teachers may not be willing to spell out a step-by-step program. However, they were helpful in their responses to my online survey, allowing me a glimpse into their successful programs.

How widespread is the practice of granting concurrent college government credit to students in competing *We the People* high school classes? In light of the research supporting *WTP*, this question is important because concurrent college credit can be a significant motivator for students to choose *We the People* as their high school

government course. In many schools where a civics/government course is a requirement for graduation, students may choose among several options. They might simply take the regular high school course for high school credit, or they may enroll in more challenging options. For example, there is Advanced Placement U.S. Government, in which college credit depends on the College Board test score. However, a student will not receive college credit if he or she is unable to take or does not perform well on the single College Board test. The College Board also administers College Level Examination Program (CLEP) tests. Whereas the Advanced Placement U.S. Government test requires students to respond to four essay items in addition to multiple-choice questions (http://www.collegeboard.com/ap/students/govpol/us_exam001.htm), the CLEP test includes only multiple-choice items (http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/clep/ex_ag.html). Each university decides whether to accept these test scores for credit at all, and what passing level will be required.

Another option in many high schools is concurrent enrollment in an introductory college government class, where college credit is more certain as long as the student makes satisfactory progress during the school term. He/she knows the grade and credit status throughout the semester. However, according to the previously described studies conducted by Educational Testing Service (See pp. 25-26) the student who is willing to work harder than the minimum required for high school credit, and completes a competition *We the People* course is likely to know more than the typical college student from an introductory political science class. *We the People* for college credit gives the student the “bird in the hand” advantage as well as enhanced civic literacy beyond the

other options available. Eleventh-grade students were queried in one high school this spring about which advanced government course they intend to take next year. Their answers indicate that dual credit for *WTP* would double the size of the *WTP* class. These benefits would not sway the student who merely wants to get his credit the easiest way, but for the more ambitious student, college credit for *We the People* would be an extra motivator. Both the college and the student would benefit due to better preparation for further political science courses.

To what extent do competitive classes use community resource people to enhance the course of study? This issue is related to one of the distinguishing features of effective law-related education. Norma D. Wright explains, "Law-related education is an educational program for citizenship in a constitutional democracy. It is designed to teach students the fundamental principles and skills needed to become responsible participants. Programs are characterized by relevant, high interest course materials; extensive use of volunteer resource persons from the justice system; field experiences (community service projects, court tours, police ride-alongs, internships, etc.); participatory classroom teaching methods and co-curricular activities" (mock trials and other public performances) (<http://www.civiced.org/normarr.htm>). The IEA study cited above on pp. 22-23 also specifies that citizenship education should be "participative, interactive, related to life, conducted in a non-authoritarian environment, cognizant of the challenges of societal diversity, and co-constructed with parents, the community, and non-governmental organizations, as well as the school" (Torney-Purta, Schwille, and Amadeo 1999, 30).

All of these elements involving active involvement by students are inherent in *We the People*. Both the student text and the teacher guide suggest a wide variety of engaging classroom activities that require the use of small group and large group participatory experiences for students. Therefore, any WTP teacher has access to planning ideas for maximum student involvement and participatory learning, as opposed to a primarily lecture-based approach.

Opportunities for students to know and interact with members of the community may take many forms, both in school and outside of school. For example, resource people might visit the class as guest speakers, or to critique students' prepared testimonies and give them practice in fielding the impromptu follow-up questions that many students find quite unnerving. In addition, resource people provide supplemental instruction as they supervise the police ride-alongs and court tours that broaden student experiences. In recent years, educators have noted benefits of mentoring for various groups, especially women, minority, and economically disadvantaged students. Through opportunities to work with mentors, these students are encouraged to become more actively involved with their communities, and to see themselves in future leadership roles.

More specifically, in work to prevent juvenile delinquency, J. David Hawkins has identified three protective factors that are significant in helping children who are at risk for developing violent or problem behaviors. He reported these protective factors in his 1995 article, "Controlling Crime Before it Happens: Risk-Focused Prevention:"

1. individual characteristics such as a resilient temperament and positive social orientation,
2. bonding, meaning positive relationships with family members, teachers, or other adults, and

3. healthy beliefs and clear standards: understanding that drug use and other problem behaviors are completely unacceptable and the youth's belief that he is competent to succeed in school and avoid drugs

Bonding/mentoring opportunities represent the most powerful enhancement of learning other than the expertise of the WTP teacher him/herself, both for students at risk of developing negative behaviors and for those who would never consider such behaviors. In addition to the academic enhancement of course content and experiences beyond the classroom teacher's individual skills, outside resource people who work with a *WTP* class can fulfill all three conditions identified by Hawkins for successful bonding: "opportunity for active involvement, developing the skills needed to succeed, and reinforcement for skilful performance" (http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles/nijj_229.pdf). Furthermore, these experiences enhance the connection between the young citizen and the community where he/she lives, making continued involvement in community life more likely.

How do the program practices of granting college credit and using community resource people correlate with success in competition? With respect to the first part of this question, this is the hypothesis to be tested: Those classes whose students receive college credit for participating in a competitive *WTP* class are likely to outperform (in competition hearings) the classes that do not have that opportunity. Not only does the college credit provide a greater motivation to study and research in depth while preparing for competition, but also serves as an enticement to encourage more of the most capable students to enroll in *WTP* rather than in some other dual enrollment option in the first place. The issue of causality will be difficult to establish. Did a college agree to grant credit for *WTP* because the high school teacher had already demonstrated success in state

and national competition? Or, were students more highly motivated to success in preparing for competition because they were earning dual credit for the course?

With respect to the second part of the question, those classes that include the greatest amount of involvement with outside resource persons are also likely to outperform those that have lesser amounts of involvement. Again, the causal relationship between successful competition and community mentor participation might be elusive. Which was the cause of the other, the mentors' enthusiastic involvement, or the success in competition? I suspect that a complex pattern exists: success builds on enhanced opportunity, which leads to new opportunities and further success. The more important practical question for teachers and schools will be, not establishing a cause/effect explanation, but how to orchestrate complex factors to most effectively enhance civic education.

4.2 Online Survey

Data for this project were gathered through online surveys. My original survey was posted at <http://survey.vt.edu/survey/entry.jsp?id=1024151747650>. The survey incorporated elements suggested by Dr. Timothy Luke, chair of my thesis committee at Virginia Tech, by Dr. Robert Leming, National Program Director of *We the People*, and by Center for Civic Education Research and Evaluation staff. In August 2002, Dr. Leming sent the survey website link to all fifty *We the People* state coordinators, and to the coordinator for the District of Columbia, all accessible through the Center for Civic Education website. In his preface email, Dr. Leming asked the coordinators to forward the link to their competitive *WTP* teachers, in order to gain information about specific

schools' *WTP* programs. As of December 30, 2002, only six individuals had responded to the original online survey, and two of those did so as a result of my personal contact.

On December 31, 2002, I initiated a process of direct contacts to people who were or might be familiar with *WTP*. At the same time, I made minor revisions to the survey, with the final survey available at

<http://survey.vt.edu/survey/entry.jsp?id=1041348686835> (See Appendix 4 for the text of

the final survey). I sent a direct follow-up email to each state coordinator, asking coordinators once again to forward my link to *WTP* teachers in their states. I emailed 88 national leaders in the *WTP* program, including classroom teachers and *WTP* professional development mentors, whose contact information Dr. Leming's staff provided, in order to invite them directly to participate in my survey. Furthermore, I sent an appeal for respondents through three Yahoo groups to which I subscribe: 40 James Madison Memorial Fellowship recipients, 151 Street Law Supreme Court Summer Institute participants, and 101 *We the People* teachers. I sent 162 postcards to *We the People* teachers whose U.S. Mail addresses were provided by the Center for Civic Education. Finally, I emailed the 105 teachers who attended the State Bar of Texas Law-Related Education annual convention in February 2003, asking them to respond to my online survey. There were potentially up to 700 people who received my direct request in one form or another to respond to the survey. Some of the people who received requests through these different contact methods are on more than one of the lists (for example, my own name is on four of the above-mentioned lists). I avoided sending double contacts when I could conveniently do so. For example, when I addressed the post cards, I omitted the names of teachers who had already responded to the survey. However, I did

not meticulously rule out the possibility of double contacts. I do not know how many of the state coordinators relayed my request to teachers in their address books, or who responded as a result of which appeal. Some state coordinators indicated that they did not have ready email contact with their *WTP* teachers.

4.3 State and National Competition Results

I intended to acquire additional information regarding the relative success of the various classes in competition. Since information available from the Center for Civic Education is incomplete, I asked the state coordinators to provide information about participants/finalists/winners at state meets each year from 1997 to 2002. The coordinators who responded to this request for information were those in Washington, Arizona, Idaho, Massachusetts, Missouri, New Hampshire, and Washington, D.C. Survey responses and finalists/winners information were analyzed to determine whether there is a correlation between success in competition and either college credit availability, or degree of participation by outside resource people. More specifically, I used chi-square tests of association to test my two operational hypotheses:

H1: The most successful programs are largely in schools where students have the opportunity to earn concurrent college credit along with their high school *WTP* course.

H2: The most successful programs are those in which there is the greatest degree of involvement from outside resource people. I used a three-point scale for number of hours per week: less than one hour per week; 1-5 hours per week, more than 5 hours per week.

Secondly, what other characteristics or practices are highly correlated with success in *We the People* competition? Teacher experience is one important variable noted in the literature on teacher effectiveness. Other variables that might affect a

school's success include the following matters that are recorded on the respondents' surveys. I used a chi square test of association to test each of the following correlations:

1. Whether students are in grade 12 or a lower grade level: classes made up of older students would be expected to be more successful.
2. School size: the larger the school, the greater student pool there is from which to recruit. I predicted that larger schools would tend to be more successful.
3. Class size: one of the rules of competition is that each of the six units must have at least 3 students on the panel. Therefore, if the class has fewer than 18 students, some of the students must "double up" to participate in 2 units, doubling the amount of information they must research. One might expect greater success in a program where each student can specialize in just one unit. However, in my ten years of participating in the state meet, I have taught three classes that have advanced to the final round at state competition. In two of the three classes, class enrollment has been only 12 or 13. Maybe their success was due to students' broader base of knowledge, as a result of becoming experts in two units.
4. Prerequisite course requirements before students may enroll in *WTP*: courses in U.S. History, civics, government, or speech/debate should enhance students' effectiveness, leading to greater success in competition.

5. Level of student success in the Advanced Placement U.S. Government exam: preparation for this test should improve student seriousness and results, increasing the likelihood of success in competitive hearings.
6. Type of school calendar may have some impact on competitive success, with classes meeting for a greater amount of class time in a school year likely to be more successful.

I used a t-test of the difference between means to analyze each of the following sets of variables.

1. Size of community: attorneys, police officers, and other potential resource people such as college professors may not be available to spend time helping students prepare in small towns. While such mentors are likely to be easier to enlist in a large town than a small town, I do not necessarily expect to find a linear relationship between city size and school success. In small and medium sized towns, the school is a hub for community life, and a magnet for concerned adults to contribute time and energy. However, in urban areas, the lure of school involvement may be overshadowed by other opportunities and activities for such adults.
2. Teacher's total years of teaching experience: teacher experience contributes to expertise in the content and is one of the variables recognized as significant in education research.
3. Teacher's years of experience teaching *We the People*: Each time a teacher leads a class to competition, he or she has the opportunity to take note of things to remember for next year's class.

Chapter 5 Research Goals

Research demonstrating strengths of *We the People...* as civic education is consistent with my own experience as a *We the People* teacher for ten years. My total teaching career encompasses a wide variety of social studies courses in grades 7 – 12, over a period of 28 years. A very common remark as we near the end of the *We the People* semester is virtually unheard of in any other social studies course; students often say, “I wish this class lasted two semesters instead of just one.” They are often still talking about a Constitutional principle or civic responsibility when they exit my classroom at the end of the class period. At the end of the course, they comment that, not only did they learn a great deal about their government, but also about themselves and their peers, and they say that they learned such competencies as writing and presentation skills. Furthermore, students often remark that they now think political issues are interesting, and that they expect to continue their vigilance and involvement in public affairs. Recently, my *WTP* class was invited to explain to local community leaders in the Rotary Club what *WTP* study had meant to them. One student, Erin Weaver, said, “Without *WTP*, I’d be just another ignorant teenager when it comes to current events. Now I’m well enough informed and confident enough to have a conversation with anybody about important public affairs like the role of the UN in international relations and whether the President has too much power.” These, it seems to me, are the marks of authentic education. Since it is likely that the students who elect to enroll in *We the People* in the first place are those who are innately more interested, and come to me with a head start in civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions, I certainly would not attribute complete causality for their increased civic awareness and competence to this course. It

is also true that students who did not enjoy the course are unlikely to be as vocal as those who did, since those who did are usually leaders in their class. However, a student at my school can request a schedule change to drop a challenging class at any time, and most such requests are granted. It has been five years since a *WTP* student requested a way out of the class. Both research and abundant anecdotal evidence indicate that there is something special about *We the People* as education for citizenship. Through nonparametric correlation analysis, I intended to learn more about what that something special is and how to build on what successful teachers have learned about the most effective ways to teach citizenship.

One way to encourage more students to make the extra academic commitment necessary for success in this program would be to offer them college credit for an introductory political science class along with their high school credit. One of the respondents to my early online survey, a *WTP* alumnus who remains involved in helping coach succeeding classes, remarked that he learned more in *WTP* than he did in his first college political science class. It is not unusual for former students to comment several years later that their background understanding from *WTP* is still helping them in college history or government classes. Students who complete *We the People* at Our Lady of Lourdes Academy in Miami, Florida receive credit in a beginning government course at a local college. The all girl school has won state competition repeatedly, and has placed in the top four classes for the past seven years in the national competition. Another program where students earn college credit is LeAnna Morse's class at McAllen Memorial High School in McAllen, Texas. This school almost always wins first place in the Texas state meet, and usually receives a regional award or is one of the ten finalists at national

competition. My hypothesis is that a similar pattern may emerge from data about other classes: college credit is associated with better preparation by the students, as demonstrated by superior results in district, state, and/or national competition. Furthermore, the lure of receiving dual credit for the course would attract more of the academically strong students who are looking for ways to accelerate their college work. A cause/effect relationship would be difficult to prove. Do classes win because college credit is on the line and students work harder? Does the course status as a dual credit class draw only those high school students who are more likely to study seriously? Or, is college credit granted only after the fact to programs that have demonstrated a winning tradition? Either way, information about where and how college credit is granted may prove useful to *WTP* teachers and coordinators.

My belief is that one way to improve the course once students are enrolled is to expand the involvement of community resource people. If a pattern emerges that the most successful classes are those with maximum involvement by these volunteers, my operational hypothesis will be supported. This information, as well, will be useful to *WTP* state coordinators and teachers.

Chapter 6 Results and Analysis

As of March 1, 2003, 141 people had responded to my online survey, 102 of them teachers of classes that participate in the competitive hearing aspect of *We the People*. Among these 102 are eight who report that they are instructors for both high school and college level classes. Other respondents to the survey included 23 high school teachers not involved in competitive *We the People*, and two elementary and eight middle school teachers who use the materials for their students. Two former high school teachers, who now teach at the university level, and one curriculum specialist also contributed their remarks to my survey. Three respondents either did not include their names or did not address the survey questions. Results reveal that students enrolled in competitive *WTP* classes at nine different high schools earn concurrent college government credit (In a tenth school, students formerly earned concurrent credit, but that teacher has since retired, and now there is no competitive *WTP* class. I classified this program in the championship group, because it was the state's winner repeatedly). At eighteen other high schools, *We the People* is either the centerpiece or a major component of the schools' Advanced Placement U.S. Government course, so students may earn college credit if they make satisfactory scores on the College Board AP exam. Thirty-nine teachers reported that their schools offer *WTP* as one class option, and that the AP government class is a course other than *WTP*. Among teachers reporting usual scores of their *WTP* students on the AP exam, eighteen revealed mixed results, twenty-four stated that their students scored at least 3^s, and eighteen reported that their students usually scored 4^s or 5^s. A score of 3 is generally considered "passing," but some colleges will

only grant credit in an introductory course if a student scores 4 or 5 on the Advanced Placement exam.

I labeled 23 of the 102 teachers of high school competitive classes who responded to my survey, in the “powerhouse” or “championship” program group, defined by having won their state level *WTP* competition at least 3 times during the period from 1997 to 2002. In the discussion to follow, I compare the 23 Championship programs to 79 Non-championship programs for each variable, omitting the non-answers from each data set. I used chi square tests of association for the following variables: availability of college credit, extent of involvement by guest mentors, whether the students are 12th graders or not, school size, class size, whether there are prerequisite requirements before students may enroll in *WTP*, Advanced Placement exam scores, gender of *WTP* teacher, and type of school schedule. I used t-test analysis to compare the means of the two groups in the following variables: whether *WTP* teacher also teaches college classes, total years teaching experience, years teaching *WTP*, and city population. In only four variables did I find a statistically significant difference between the two groups: availability of college credit for a competitive *We the People* class; whether or not a *WTP* teacher also teaches college classes (not including those who teach *WTP* for college credit); total years teaching experience; and years teaching *WTP*.

Therefore, my first hypothesis, that college credit for *WTP* would be associated with better competition scores, is supported. My second hypothesis, that increased time with guest mentors would also be associated with better competition results, is not supported.

A comparison of the success of *WTP* for college credit programs with non-credit programs shows what appears to be a significant trend favoring for-credit *WTP* programs. The chi-square test of association yielded a Yates' chi square calculated value of 4.557, which exceeds the chi square critical value of 3.8414 at alpha $p=0.05$ and df 1.

TABLE 1 COLLEGE CREDIT FOR HIGH SCHOOL CLASS		
	College credit for participating in competitive <i>WTP</i> class	College credit dependent on Advanced Placement Exam Score
Championship Programs (17)	6:35%	11:65%
Non-Championship Programs (45)	4:9%	41:91%

Table 1A *	
Calculated chi-square	6.36
Degrees of freedom	1
Critical value at alpha = .05	3.8414
p-value	.0116
Yates' chi-square	4.557
Yates' p-value	.0327

* "Use of chi square tests is inappropriate if any expected frequency is below 1 or if the expected frequency is less than 5 in more than 20% of the cells. However, in 2 x 2 tables, expected frequencies of less than 5 are acceptable if Yates' correction is used" (Preacher).

Five of these nine currently active for college credit programs are included in the 23 Championship programs. In seven of the nine classes, the *WTP* teacher reported that his/her class had achieved considerable competition success before the university agreed to offer concurrent credit. Common requirements for the *WTP* teacher to arrange such an agreement with the college included the following:

- Satisfy college requirements concerning teacher credentials: generally at least a Master's degree in history or government
- Submit a detailed syllabus with list of resources
- Periodic conferences between the *WTP* teacher and college department chair.

The colleges in which high school *WTP* students can earn concurrent credit are University of Colorado at Denver; Indiana University; Barry University in Miami, Florida; Brevard Community College in Melbourne, Florida; Cochise College in Douglas, Arizona; South Texas Community College in McAllen; Utah Valley State College; Mt. Hood Community College in Gresham, Oregon; and Southwest State University in Marshall, Minnesota.

In the t-test for teacher position in college faculty, the difference between means of .17 (Championship) and .05 (Non-championship) and sample sizes of 23 and 79, respectively, is significant at the .1 level. Four of the 23 teachers in the Championship group also teach community college courses (Only one of these is included in those whose *WTP* class results in college credit. I do not know whether *WTP* is the only college course that instructor teaches.). And, four of the 79 Non-championship teachers are college instructors. The value of the t-statistic for this test was 1.95.

TABLE 2 WTP HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS WHO ALSO TEACH COLLEGE CLASSES	
Championship Programs (23)	4: 17%
Non-Championship Programs (75)	4: 5 %

Table 2A t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances		
	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	0.173913	0.050633
Variance	0.150198	0.048685
Observations	23	79
Pooled Variance	0.071018	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	100	
t Stat	1.952476	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.026839	
t Critical one-tail	2.364213	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.053678	
t Critical two-tail	2.625893	

In the t-test for total years teaching, the difference between means of 22.35 (Championship) and 18.48 (Non-championship) with standard deviations of 8.32 and 10.60 and sample sizes of 23 and 79, respectively, is significant at the .1 level. The value of the t-statistic for this test was 1.61. A greater amount of teaching experience is significantly linked with student success in competition.

TABLE 3 TOTAL YEARS TEACHING EXPERIENCE T-TEST: TWO-SAMPLE ASSUMING EQUAL VARIANCES		
	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	22.34783	18.48101
Variance	69.23715	112.2785
Observations	23	79
Pooled Variance	102.8094	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	100	
t Stat	1.609586	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.05532	
t Critical one-tail	2.364213	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.110641	
t Critical two-tail	2.625893	

In the t-test for years teaching *WTP*, the difference between means of 10.48 and 6.27 with standard deviations of 4.13 and 4.21 based on sample sizes of 23 and 79, respectively, is clearly significant at the .1 level. The value of the t-statistic for this test was 4.24. A greater amount of experience in teaching *We the People* is significantly linked to competitive success.

TABLE 4 TEACHER'S YEARS OF EXPERIENCE TEACHING WTP T-TEST: TWO-SAMPLE ASSUMING EQUAL VARIANCES		
	Variable 1	Variable 2
Mean	10.47826	6.265823
Variance	17.07905	17.68484
Observations	23	79
Pooled Variance	17.55157	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	100	
t Stat	4.243781	
P(T<=t) one-tail	2.46E-05	
t Critical one-tail	2.364213	
P(T<=t) two-tail	4.92E-05	
t Critical two-tail	2.625893	

Another variable that is probably important, but difficult to quantify, is the school's prior success. This is the factor that allows Championship schools to be identified in the first place. Several teachers of Championship programs commented in their responses to my survey about the importance of a winning record. Peter Sullivan of Trumbull, Connecticut wrote that a "successful program becomes self-perpetuating. We have won 12 of the 16 Connecticut state championships and 5 in a row. There is instant pride in being a member of the 'next' team, and an expectation of excellence. Students

take very seriously the maintenance of a winning tradition and don't want to be the team that fails to live up to our winning tradition." Peggy Jackson of Moriarty, New Mexico also referred to importance of a "legacy of winning teams." Stan Harris, retired *WTP* teacher from Newburgh, Indiana, noted that the winning tradition was so important in his school that there was a waiting list to get into the class. LeAnna Morse of McAllen, Texas, also addressed the concept that "success breeds success. My kids and I know that it's possible to win and so we are more willing to make extra effort. My students develop a passion for the study and that genuine feeling is evident to judges."

In response to a follow-up question about the most important reasons for their success, several teachers of Championship programs addressed the enthusiasm and qualifications of the teacher. Mary Catherine Bradshaw of Nashville, Tennessee referred to teacher preparation and passion. Drew Horvath, of Indianapolis, Indiana, wrote, "The teacher has to have a true understanding of the Constitution. The teacher must also be able to motivate the students in much the same way that an athletic coach must be able to do." Support from community volunteers, student enthusiasm that develops naturally as students delve into controversial issues, and parental and administrative support were other factors frequently cited as important elements of successful programs.

In none of the other quantitative independent variables analyzed in Tables 5-12 did I find a statistically significant difference between Championship programs and Non-championship programs. Therefore, for the teachers who responded to this survey, none of the following characteristics seem to have a significant relationship to competition success: extent of involvement by guest mentors, whether the students are 12th graders or not, school size, class size, whether there are prerequisite requirements before students may enroll in *WTP*, Advanced Placement exam scores, gender of *WTP* teacher, type of

school schedule, or city size. I discuss each of these variables individually in the following pages.

From one viewpoint, my finding is a disappointment; it does not yield a “recipe for success” in *WTP* competition. From another perspective, however, these results are encouraging. If competitive success were linked to specific characteristics like school size or AP exam scores, then it would seem even more out of reach for the teachers of Non-championship programs that could not modify the critical characteristic(s). This study, then, leads to the somehow very appropriate conclusion that both Championship and Non-championship programs are found in all kinds of schools and communities. The possibility of success in *We the People* competition seems quite inclusive. I began this project with the general understanding from research in student learning that the most important factor is the teacher. Determined to discover what else makes a difference, I seem to have come full circle, developing yet another study that concludes that the most important factor in student achievement is the teacher. The most successful competitive classes do not differ from less successful classes in the characteristics I investigated, other than in characteristics of the teacher. Consequently, it seems that the main program improvement I can recommend based on my study is anything that enhances the teacher’s expertise. Perhaps another project could investigate more details of whether, and how, teachers of Championship programs differ from the less successful teachers. I suggest some possible directions for this further research in a later section of this paper.

Guest mentors like lawyers and police officers help enhance instruction in civic education classes by bringing expertise in areas that may be outside the classroom teacher’s experience. Since the calculated chi-square value for this variable fell short of the critical value for df 2 at alpha $p=0.05$, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. Differences between Championship teams and Non-championship teams are not statistically significant. However, there is a noticeable difference between the groups in the “More than 5 hours a week” category. Perhaps with a larger sample than the 98 classes represented here, or with a more precise measuring scale for time with mentors, more significant correlation between time with mentors and competitive success would be revealed.

TABLE 5 EXTENT OF INVOLVEMENT BY GUEST MENTORS			
	Less than 1 hour per week	1-5 hours per week	More than 5 hours per week
Championship Programs (23)	11:49%	8:35%	4:17%
Non-Championship Programs (75)	44:59%	27:36%	4:5%

Table 5A	
Calculated chi-square	3.511
Degrees of freedom	2
Critical value at alpha = .05	5.991
p-value	.1728

Twenty (87%) of the championship classes consisted of 12th graders, while 54 (68%) of the non-championship classes were 12th graders. In order to perform the chi-square test of association, I collapsed the grade levels lower than 12 into one group, resulting in a 2X2 table. Consequently, I used Yates' correction for 2X2 tables.

Since the calculated Yates' chi-square value fell short of the critical value for df 1 at alpha p=0.05, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. Grade level differences between Championship teams and Non-championship teams are not statistically significant.

TABLE 6 GRADE LEVEL OF <i>WTP</i> COMPETING CLASSES				
	12 th grade	11 th grade	10 th grade	9 th grade
Championship Programs (23)	20: 87%	3:13%	0	0
Non-Championship Programs (78)	54: 68%	17:21%	6:7%	1:1%

Grades 9, 10 and 11 were combined for the chi-square calculation.

Table 6A	
Calculated chi-square	2.849
Degrees of freedom	1
Critical value at alpha = .05	3.841
p-value	0.0914
Yates' chi-square	2.016
Yates' p-value	0.1556

In analysis of school size, the calculated chi-square value fell short of the critical value for df 2 at alpha $p=0.05$; therefore, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. School size differences between Championship teams and Non-championship teams are not statistically significant. However, I should note that the trend noted in the comparison is in the opposite direction than I predicted: a larger percentage of champ programs are found in small schools.

TABLE 7 SCHOOL SIZE (GRADES 9-12)			
	Small: 1000 or fewer students	Medium: Between 1000 and 2000 students	Large: More than 2000 students
Championship Programs (23)	10:43%	9:39%	4:17%
Non-Championship Programs (79)	24:30%	35:44%	20:25%

Table 7A	
Calculated chi-square	1.503
Degrees of freedom	2
Critical value at alpha = .05	5.9914
p-value	0.4716

Just as school size is apparently not related to competitive success, neither is class size. Though there is considerable research that small class size (fewer than 20 students) is associated with higher student achievement, at least in the early grades (kindergarten through grade 3) (Pritchard, http://www.ed.gov/pubs/ReducingClass/Class_size.html), this was not the case in my study of high school *WTP* classes. Since the calculated chi-square value fell short of the critical value for df 2 at alpha $p=0.05$, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. Class size differences between Championship teams and Non-championship teams are not statistically significant.

TABLE 8 CLASS SIZE			
	Small: 12-17 students	Medium: 18-24 students	Large: 25-35 students
Championship Programs (22)	2:9%	12:54%	8:36%
Non-Championship Programs (79)	15:19%	38:48%	26:33%

Table 8A	
Calculated chi-square	1.207
Degrees of freedom	2
Critical value at alpha = .05	5.9914
p-value	0.5468

There are no differences between Championship teams and Non-championship teams in the area of prerequisites before students may take *We the People*. Since the calculated chi-square value fell short of the critical value for df 2 at alpha $p=0.05$, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

TABLE 9 PREREQUISITES		
	No Prerequisite	Some Prerequisite
Championship Programs (23)	13:57%	10:43%
Non-Championship Programs (79)	46:58%	33:42%

Table 9A	
Calculated chi-square	.021
Degrees of freedom	1
Critical value at alpha = .05	3.8414
p-value	0.8847
Yates' chi-square	0.009
Yates' p-value	0.9244

Analysis of Advanced Placement exam scores reveals, once again, no difference between Champ and Non-champ groups. Since the calculated chi-square value fell short of the critical value for df 2 at alpha $p=0.05$, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. However, there is a noticeably larger percentage of Champ Programs where students tend to make mostly 4s or 5s. Perhaps a larger sample would reveal a statistically significant pattern. Also, the way I asked this question in the survey is not the most accurate way to get this kind of information. I asked, “When your *We the People* students take the AP US Government exam, what scores do they generally receive?” The three answer choices were “mixed results,” “at least 3s,” and “mostly 4s and 5s.” When the teacher must generalize this broadly, the information yielded is not very reliable. In order to truly measure this variable, I would need accurate, individual test results from *WTP* and non-*WTP* students who take the AP US Government exam.

TABLE 10 ADVANCED PLACEMENT EXAM SCORES			
	Mixed results	At least 3s	Mostly 4s or 5s
Championship Programs (18)	5:28%	6:33%	7:39%
Non-Championship Programs (38)	10:26%	19:50%	9:24%

Table 10A	
Calculated chi-square	1.758
Degrees of freedom	2
Critical value at alpha = .05	5.9914
p-value	0.4151

There is no difference in gender of teachers between Champ and Non-champ programs.

TABLE 11 GENDER OF WTP TEACHERS		
	Male	Female
Championship Programs (23)	13:56%	10:43%
Non-Championship Programs (79)	45:57%	34:43%

Table 11A	
Calculated chi-square	.001
Degrees of freedom	1
Critical value at alpha = .05	3.8414
p-value	.9747
Yates' chi-square	.041
Yates' p-value	.8395

At one time, I thought that schedule type might be significant. But there are so many kinds of schedules in the “other” category that it is impossible to identify sub-categories for analysis. I discovered that this is another area where my survey was not specific enough. One possible conclusion, that makes intuitive sense and is consistent with the literature on education effectiveness, is that classes with more time on task will be more successful. Part of the time on task issue is reflected in Table 5 above, time with guest mentors, but this variable (Table 12) deals with the official school schedule. However, calculation of a chi square test of association using just Columns A and B below reveals that there is no significant difference.

TABLE 12 TYPE OF SCHEDULE				
	Daily for 1 semester OR every other day for entire year Column A	Daily for the whole school year Column B	Other (Various forms of block scheduling; portion of school year not specified)	No answer
Championship Programs (23)	10: 43%	9:39%	5:22%	1:4%
Non-Championship Programs (79)	42:53%	27:34%	9:11%	2:2%

Table 12A	
Calculated chi-square	.418
Degrees of freedom	1
Critical value at alpha = .05	3.8414
p-value	..5179
Yates' chi-square	.147
Yates' p-value	.7014

In the t-test for city population, the difference between means of 195096 (Championship) and 129982 (Non-championship) with standard deviations of 249878 and 316980 and sample sizes of 23 and 79, respectively, is not significant at the .1 level. The value of the t-statistic for this test was .91. In my sample, population size for the school's community is not a statistically significant variable.

The focus of this study has been primarily competitive *WTP* high school programs, but the curriculum is used in a wide variety of settings and grade levels. One high school teacher noted, "I use the Elementary level book with my English language learners." Another teacher finds the curriculum useful for teaching government to educationally at-risk 10th grade students. Another teacher who prepares her deaf students for competition notes that she would like to see the Center for Civic Education provide more ancillaries to help the teacher develop activities.

To further compare championship programs to non-championship programs, areas of additional research might address the following:

1. More complete information about participants and winners at the state level.

Since the Center for Civic Education does not have complete information, and most state coordinators did not provide lists of participants and winners of state competition, it is impossible to determine just how prevalent the "dynasty" phenomenon is. In other words, the data available to me only show the 21 schools that were award winners at the national level for the period from 1997 – 2002. I do not have access to participant/winner information for the other 29 states each year. There may be a single championship school that almost always wins in each state—or maybe not. More complete information about the state

contests would be a first step to compare practices and characteristics in those programs to other, less successful programs in their states.

2. More specific information about professional development undertaken by *WTP* teachers. Based on the results of my survey, that factors related to the teacher are the most important variables in student achievement, I think this may be the most important issue to investigate. One question I would put in another survey is, “Have you participated in one or more of the Center for Civic Education’s week-long Institutes for *WTP* teachers?” In the comments sections of the online survey responses, several teachers praised *WTP* Institutes. Furthermore, I attended the Texas *WTP* Institute in 2002, finding it to be superb professional development. I did send a brief follow-up questionnaire to the teachers of the Championship programs, and one of the questions I asked this group was whether they had attended such training. Of the thirteen Championship program teachers who responded to this follow-up survey, eleven have attended one or more *WTP* Institutes for teachers. Tim Moore of Milwaukee, Wisconsin wrote that his attendance at the summer institutes has been the key to his students’ success; his students have won the Wisconsin state competition at least 4 of the last 6 years. A mentor for *WTP* institutes has remarked that, in states where a traditional Championship program has been unseated, the new winner was often a class whose teacher had participated in a *WTP* Institute the previous summer. Janice Rocque of East Grand Rapids High School in Michigan, wrote, “Training opportunities through the Center for Civic Education have helped me become MUCH more knowledgeable and able to share that knowledge with students.”

3. Another question I would ask is whether the *WTP* teacher himself/herself has specific legal training. Two teachers of Championship programs, Deanna Morrison and Sally Durrant, are attorneys.
4. Prior record of the school in *WTP* competition: While any given student may only compete once, the accumulated experience of successful competitions both sets an expectation which students will try to reach to preserve school honor, and gives the teacher a greater skill level. It would be interesting to analyze complete data about participants/winners in each state in order to determine just how prevalent the dynasty phenomenon is. A related question would be whether the traditional dominance of such schools has a chilling effect on the likelihood of challengers entering the competition.
5. More specific information about type of school schedule. Teachers responded with a variety of descriptive terms regarding school schedules and calendars, including an assortment of “block” schedules: “4x4 block,” “rolling block,” “alternating block,” “block 8,” etc., that make comparisons difficult due to vocabulary confusion.
6. More detail about guest mentors. I would like to get ideas for ways to increase the involvement of community members. Most teachers who involve mentors, in both Championship and Non-championship schools, get help from lawyers. The second most often mentioned category is law enforcement personnel, followed (in order) by college instructors, other teachers, local elected officials, *WTP* alumni, school administrators, legislative aides, and community activists. Almost all who use guest mentors have them judge practice hearings, and the frequency of these

meetings increases in the weeks just prior to state competition. The most important volunteers for my own classes have been a lawyer, a member of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and *WTP* alumni.

A tension between competitive success and inclusive approach, reflecting the historic controversy regarding whom is to be prepared for active citizenship, surfaced in survey responses. Since the program is competitive, it lends itself to use by advanced or honors classes, and winning classes at state and national competition are often from this elite group. However, several respondents to my survey noted a preference for an inclusive attitude regarding civics education: Everybody should be equipped to participate fully in public affairs. The competitive format of the program has both benefits and drawbacks. On one hand, it serves as a motivator for students to challenge themselves academically, to keep pushing the ceiling of what they can learn. On the other hand, it results in a selective slant. Nevertheless, there is widespread support of the curriculum even among those who are uncomfortable with the elitist results of competition. Regardless of rank at the end of the day's competition, no one can take away the skills and confidence all students have developed in the attempt. For example, one teacher wrote, "I believe that the spirit in which *WTP* was conceived and the purpose for which it was conceived are lost in the competition. The program is still excellent, one of the finest educational programs ever and much more valuable to students learning about the Constitution and our government than the (less participatory approach in her school's) AP American Government course" (Westbrook 2003 survey). Another remarked, "Too often, the *WTP* program is for AP classes...it should not be that way. State winners seem to always be the AP classes with heavy emphasis on law and case

law.” Deanna Morrison, whose classes always had a strong showing in the Colorado state meet, remarked, “We the People is about learning to think, analyze, apply in depth knowledge about the Constitution to the world we live in, in order to improve the quality of our citizenship education. Students in regular classes without college credit can gain enormously from this program.” There are several schools in which, even though only one class participates in the competition, the entire student body, at one grade level or another, studies the curriculum and participates in non-competitive hearings. Roger Desrosiers of Millbury, Massachusetts, wrote, “I teach the program to all students in government classes, not just those who compete. Each class has a culminating noncompetitive hearing and the experience leaves them with the belief that they can be responsible citizens. I can’t say enough positive things about this program.”

Twenty-five different teachers in their responses to my survey wrote comments to the effect that “*We the People* is the greatest learning tool I have experienced in teaching,” and “The curriculum should be mandatory in all classes, all schools.” LeAnna Morse explained why: “*WTP* students learn that a citizen is both one who participates in politics and community groups and one who casts a loyal but watchful eye toward the workings of government officials. The events of 9/11 have forced a rebalancing of ‘liberty v. order.’ *WTP* students know what is at stake.” Another teacher wrote, “I have always felt that this program was the best thing I ever did as a teacher. I feel that *WTP* left a lasting impression on my students and made them better and more informed citizens.” Several teachers noted student growth in speaking and writing skills, as well as in thinking skills, confidence, and teamwork. One teacher noted the higher level of mastery required than that of recognizing the correct answer on a multiple choice test:

“They are asked to apply their knowledge and to come up with current examples to support their reasoning. They really have to use upper level thinking skills to be successful in this program. It is a ton of work for the teacher, but it is so worth it for the kids!” One teacher who uses *WTP* with elementary students commented, “I see so much growth and heightened civic awareness among these ten year old students that I am convinced the program should be implemented in all schools in all states. I frequently receive correspondence from former students about issues we discussed during *WTP* lessons so I know that they continue to apply the knowledge they gained.” Peggy Jackson of Moriarty, New Mexico noted, “*WTP* changes the lives of my students who participate.”

We the People teachers believe the answer to “Who should be prepared to participate in self government?” is “Everybody!” Their answer to “Toward what end?” is consistent with Bybee’s, “participatory democracy,” Schudson’s “monitorial citizen,” and Butts’s “revival of civic learning,” Well informed citizens will exert their energies in different endeavors, depending on their interests, stage of life, socio-economic status, and other factors. There is no requirement that every citizen participate in every aspect of the public discourse. Successful civic education will equip people with the understanding that *We the People* means all of us, and with the knowledge and skills to effectively participate when they choose to do so.

The results of this study indicate that, if a *WTP* teacher wants to be more effective in moving his/her students to the levels of civic participation advocated by political scientists like Bybee, Schudson, Barber and Butts, that teacher should become a more eager student. Whatever the teacher can do to enhance his/her own expertise, to stretch

and grow intellectually, will probably contribute to the high school students' achievement. One of the first activities such a teacher should do is to enroll in one of the Center for Civic Education's *We the People* Institutes for teachers. The ideal *WTP* teacher appears to be one with a wealth of teaching experience who arranges for the high school *WTP* course to also meet the requirements of a local college or university for credit in an introductory government course, and/or is actively teaching college course(s). There are probably additional variables that distinguish Championship schools from Non-championship schools, but I did not discover what they are.

In John Winthrop's Massachusetts Bay colony in 1631, political power at first was completely in the hands of the twelve Puritan leaders who made up the General Court of Massachusetts. As late as 1775, religious or property qualifications limited the right to vote in all 13 North American colonies. From this undemocratic and even unrepresentative beginning developed a form of government characterized by ever-increasing opportunities for civic participation. The Constitution itself chronicles the dismantling of various barriers: Amendments 13, 14, 15, 17, 19, 23, 24, and 26 each expanded the potential for civic participation, and numerous actions by all three branches of government have built on that foundation to open self-government to more and more people. The 1954 school desegregation ruling by the Supreme Court, the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the 1965 Voting Rights Act, and their subsequent enforcement by the executive branch provide just a few of the many examples. Justice Louis Brandeis once called citizenship the "most important political office" (<http://www.halife.com/speakers/quoteso.html>). It is just as essential that students be prepared for and interested in their civic rights and responsibilities, as it is that they be

prepared for career skills. *We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution* “encourage(s) student understanding of citizenship concepts such as justice, freedom, equality, diversity, authority, privacy, due process, participation, and international human rights.” (Butts) It equips them with the civic knowledge, skills and dispositions to exercise what Justice Sandra Day O’Connor called, “the absolute power of the individual to make a difference.”