

What is a Good Citizen?

Critical Analysis and Corroboration of a Citizenship Core Competency

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**The Citizenship
Outcomes Assessment
Committee**



Southwestern Illinois College

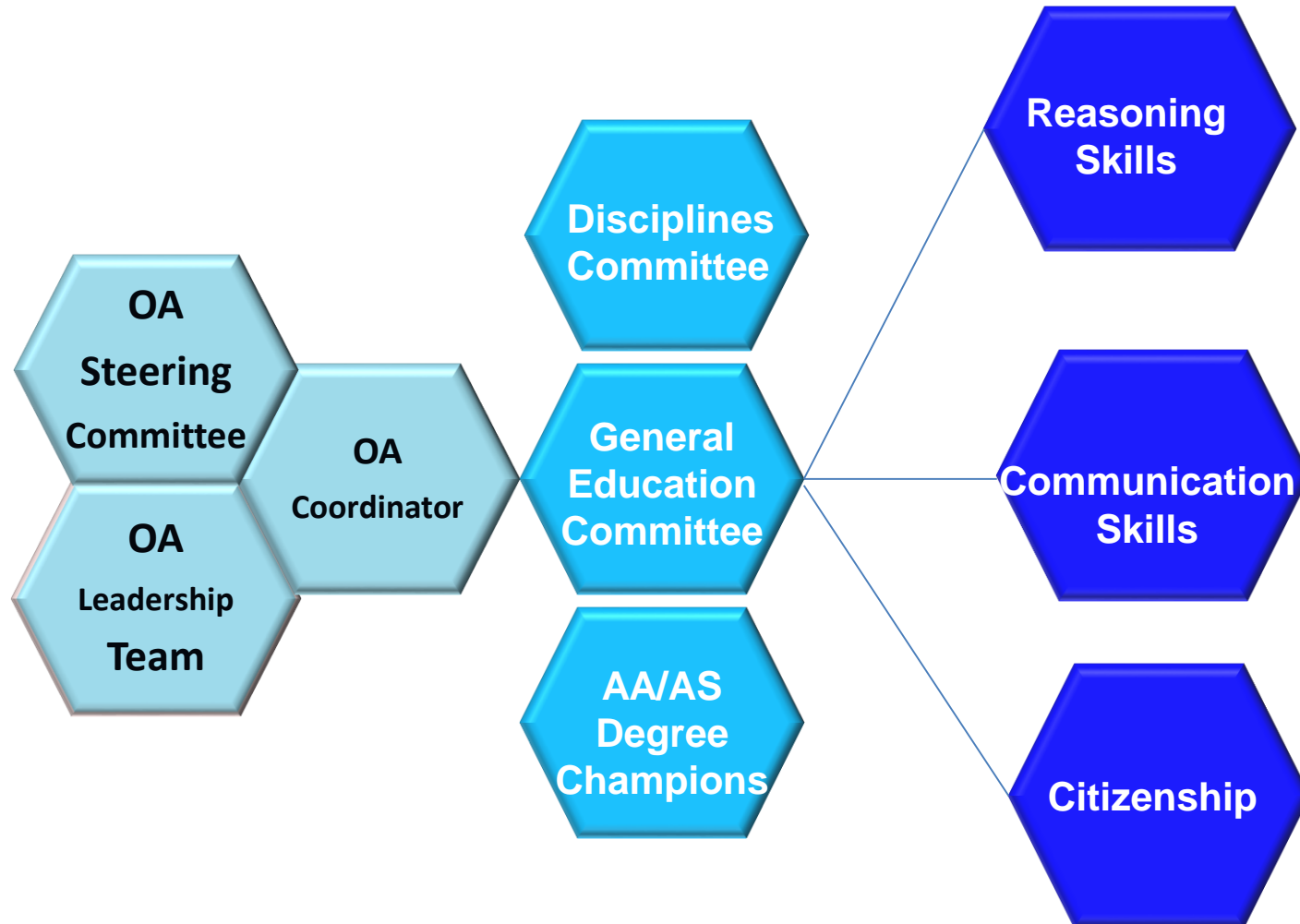
SWIC

- Located approximately 19 miles east of downtown St. Louis
- 3 campuses: Belleville, Granite City, and Red Bud
- 26 off-campus sites including Scott Air Force Base and East St. Louis Community College Center
- Annual Unduplicated Headcount: over 20,000 students

Outcomes Assessment at SWIC

- 2001 - General Education Committee formed to identify common competencies
- 2002 - Introduced 7 focus groups
- 2007 (Spring) - Civic & Social Awareness Focus Group developed a survey (a *lengthy* survey)
- 2007 (Fall) - Developed 3 categories for college-wide core competencies:
 - Communication Skills
 - Reasoning Skills
 - Citizenship

Outcomes Assessment Committees Organizational Structure



Defining the **Citizenship** Core Competency

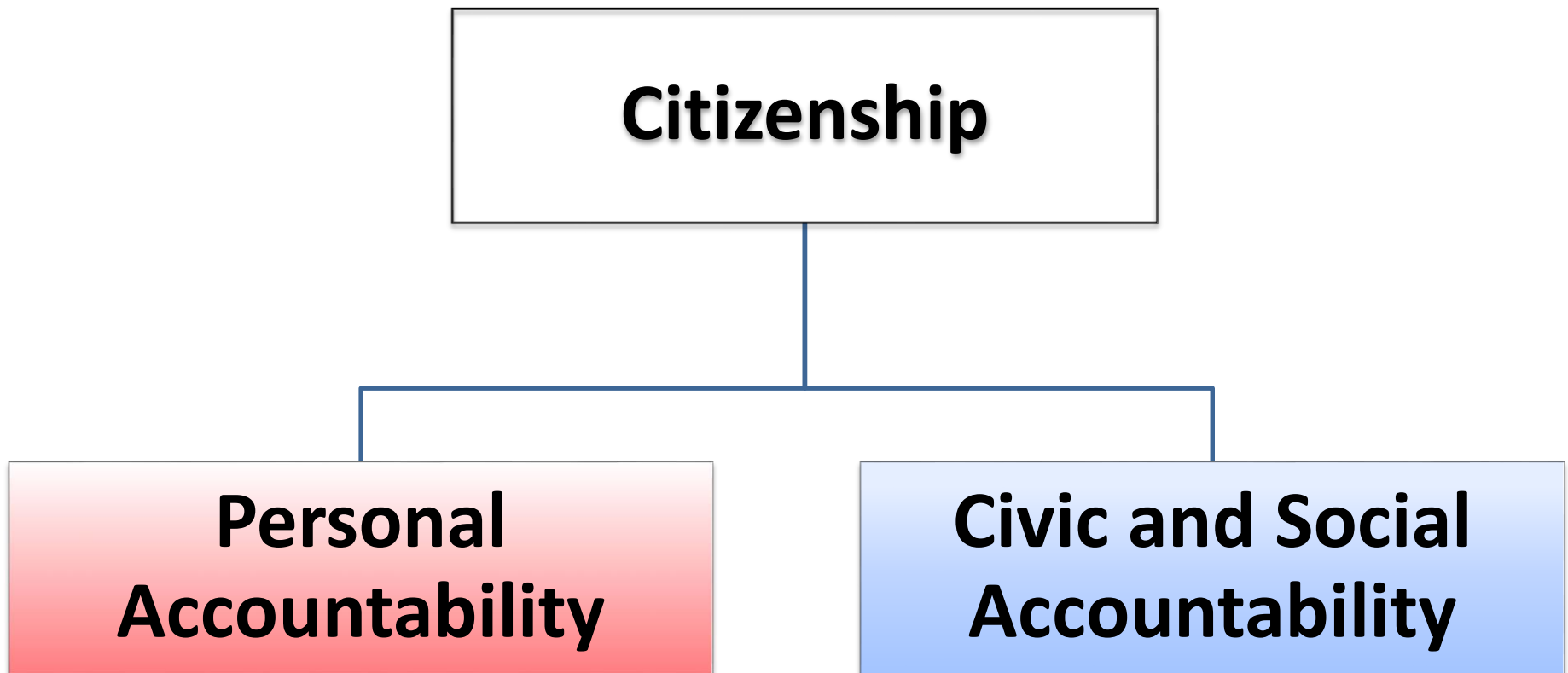
- Committee established in Fall 2007
- Reviewed original definition from the focus group
- Studied data from the lengthy Spring 2007 survey
- Established two components of the Citizenship core competency
 - Personal Accountability
 - Civic and Social Accountability

Validation of the **Citizenship** Core Competency

- Committee discussions
- Open faculty forum
- College-wide faculty vote
- Committee review of comments
- Post on website

The **Citizenship** Core Competency

Two tracks are considered.



The **Citizenship** Core Competency

The ability to recognize and assess the implications of our behaviors to ourselves and the community and to adapt as needed.

The definition and assessments consider:

- **Knowledge**
- **Dispositions**
- **Actions**

Civic and Social Accountability

Knowledge: Define the individual's local, national, and global roles and responsibilities.

Disposition: Express civic dispositions.

Action: Demonstrate these responsibilities and dispositions through choices and behaviors.

The **Citizenship** Core Competency

Example:

➤ **Knowledge**

I know how to register to vote.

➤ **Disposition**

It is important to exercise my right to vote.

➤ **Action**

I regularly exercise my right to vote.



Assessment of Civic and Social Accountability in the Citizenship Core Competency

A 20-question survey was developed to assess the knowledge, dispositions, and actions of the students relative to the core competency.

Survey questions used a 5-point Likert-type scale (1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree or 1-never to 5-always).

The survey has been administered several times by established protocols.

handout

Civic Assessment Results

<u>ISSUE</u>	<u>KNOWLEDGE/SKILL</u>	<u>DISPOSITION</u>	<u>ACTION/BEHAVIOR</u>
Voting	I know how to register to vote	It is important to exercise my right to vote	I regularly exercise my right to vote
Be informed	Being concerned about state and local issues is an important responsibility for everybody	It is important to be informed of national and global issues in order to be a responsible citizen in a democracy	I keep up to date with political affairs.
Affect others—individual	We all have a responsibility to consider how our behavior affects those around us	It is important to interact with people in a respectful manner even if you don't agree with them	<i>I try to be kind to other people.</i>
Affect others—national	The U.S. has responsibilities in the global society	It is important that we as a country, think about how our actions impact other nations	
Community	Being actively involved in community issues is my responsibility	It is important to contribute in an active way to one's community.	I participate in my community I try to help when I see people in need.
Diversity	-Learning about other cultures helps me understand the world and my place in it. -Diversity in the workplace leads to more creative thinking and better decisions	It is important to view an issue from diverse perspectives in order to truly understand it	-I am comfortable when working with someone of a racial/ethnic group other than my own. -I do not have trouble interacting with people who are different
Environment	Each individual must take responsibility for protecting the environment	It is important to preserve the earth for future generations	<i>I take actions to preserve the environment</i>

By working with others in the community, I can help make things better

New questions in italics

Boxed questions had averages > 4.5 or = 4.5

Summary of Survey Results

- Overall students did better on disposition than knowledge.
- Students performed worst on action/behavior.
- Highest performance categories - affect others (individual)
- Worst performance categories - Community involvement
- Worst question results:
 - < 3.5 (Both are action questions)
 - Q19 *I regularly exercise my right to vote*
 - Q20 *I participate in my community*

Summary of Survey Results

- Even though most students thought that community involvement is important, many students did not know how to become involved in the community and did not perform what they thought was community service.
- Most students think political engagement and voting are important, yet many students are not engaged in the political process and do not vote in elections.

Informal Survey About Citizenship

To find out how students define citizenship, an informal survey was conducted with students. The survey was one open-ended question:

What is a good citizen?

There were 148 responses to the survey, across a range of disciplines.

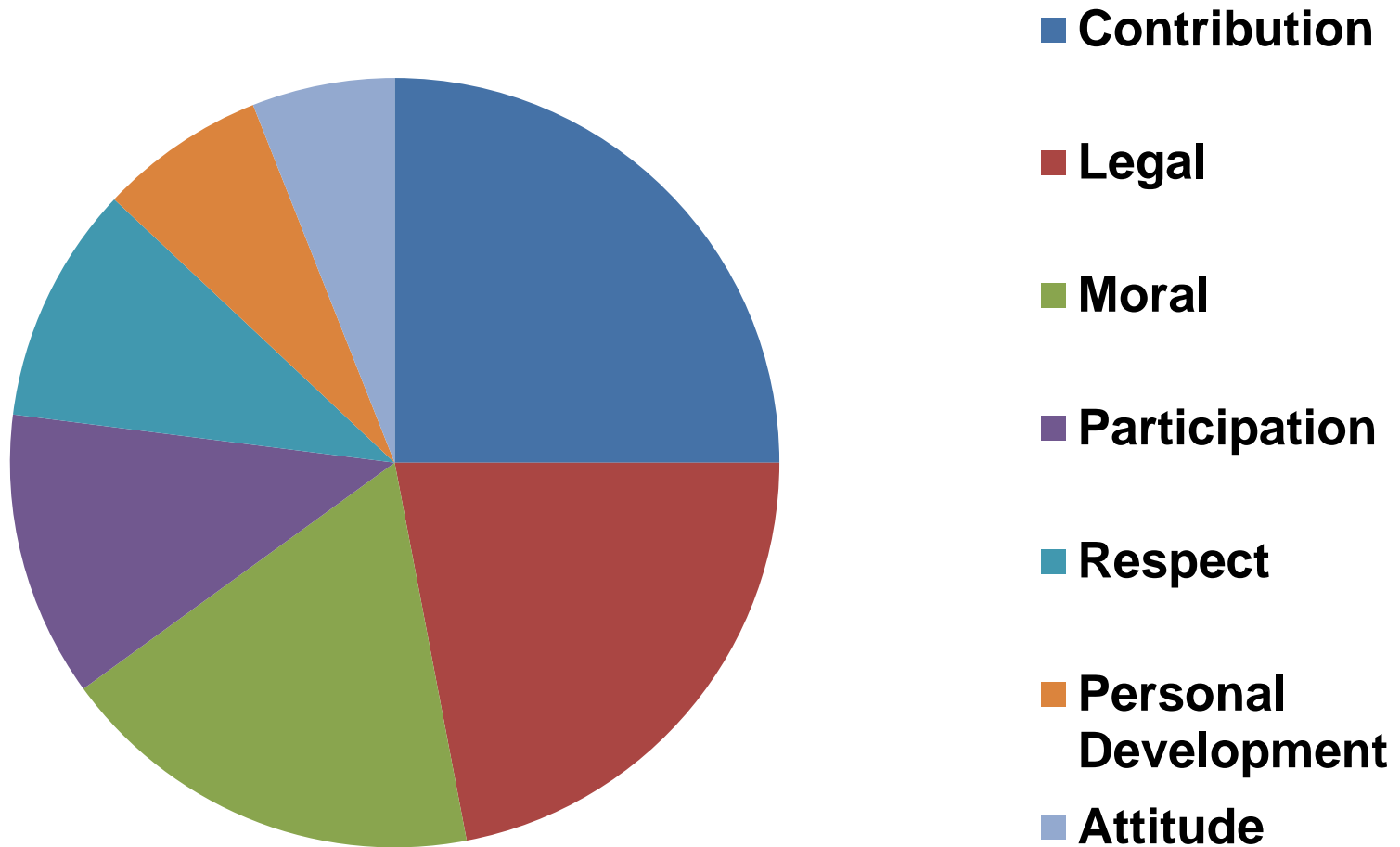
The results of the survey were critically analyzed, and categories for the responses began to emerge.

Student Definition of a Good Citizen

Seven categories emerged from the analysis of the survey results:

- **Contribution** - make a difference, give back, etc.
- **Legal** - native born, follows rules, pays taxes
- **Moral** - do the right thing, good character
- **Participation** - voting, community involvement
- **Respect** - treating others with respect
- **Personal development** - better yourself, get education, good job
- **Attitude** - patriotism, nationalism, etc.

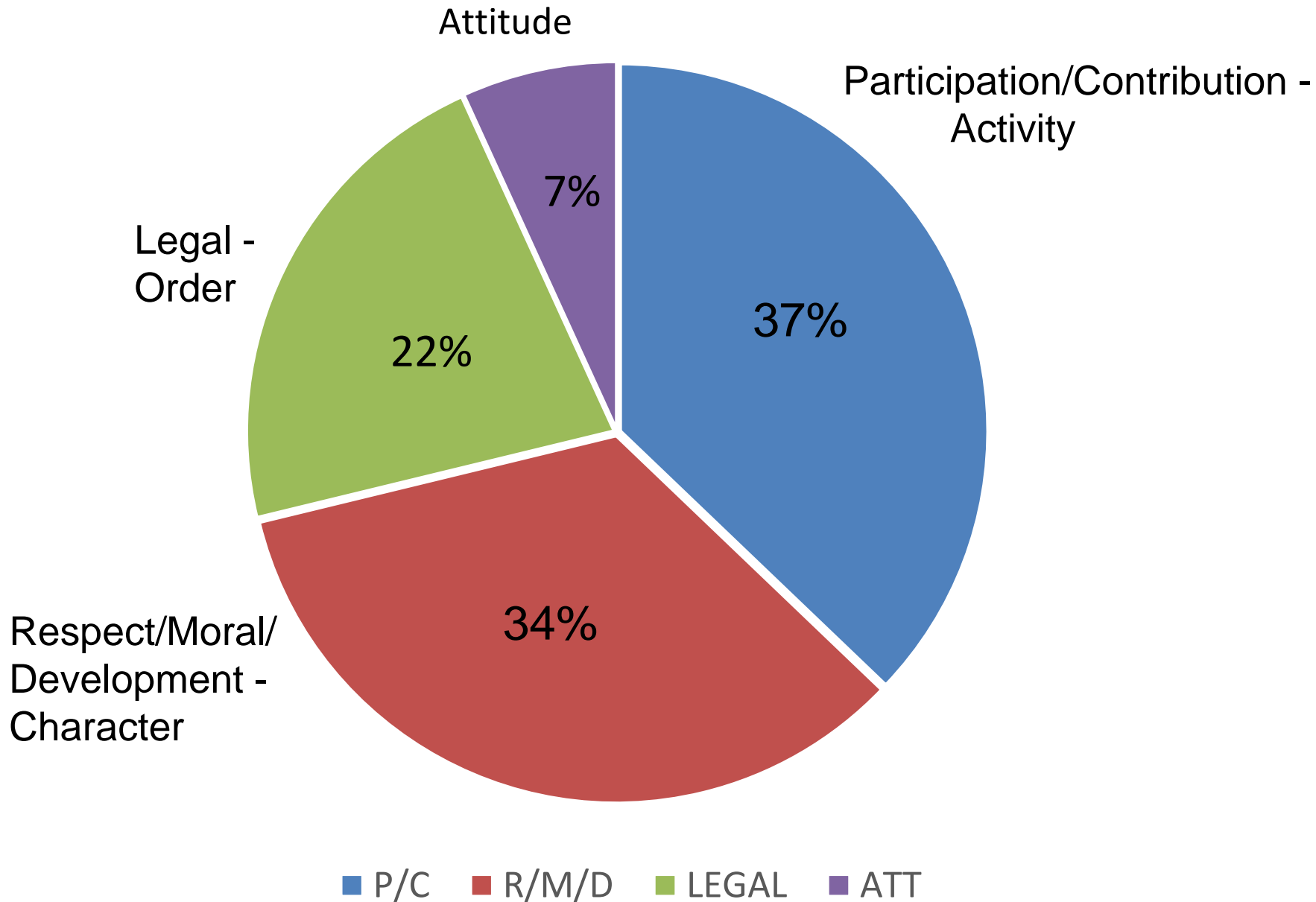
Student Definition of a Good Citizen



Comparison of Student Definition with Civic Survey Items

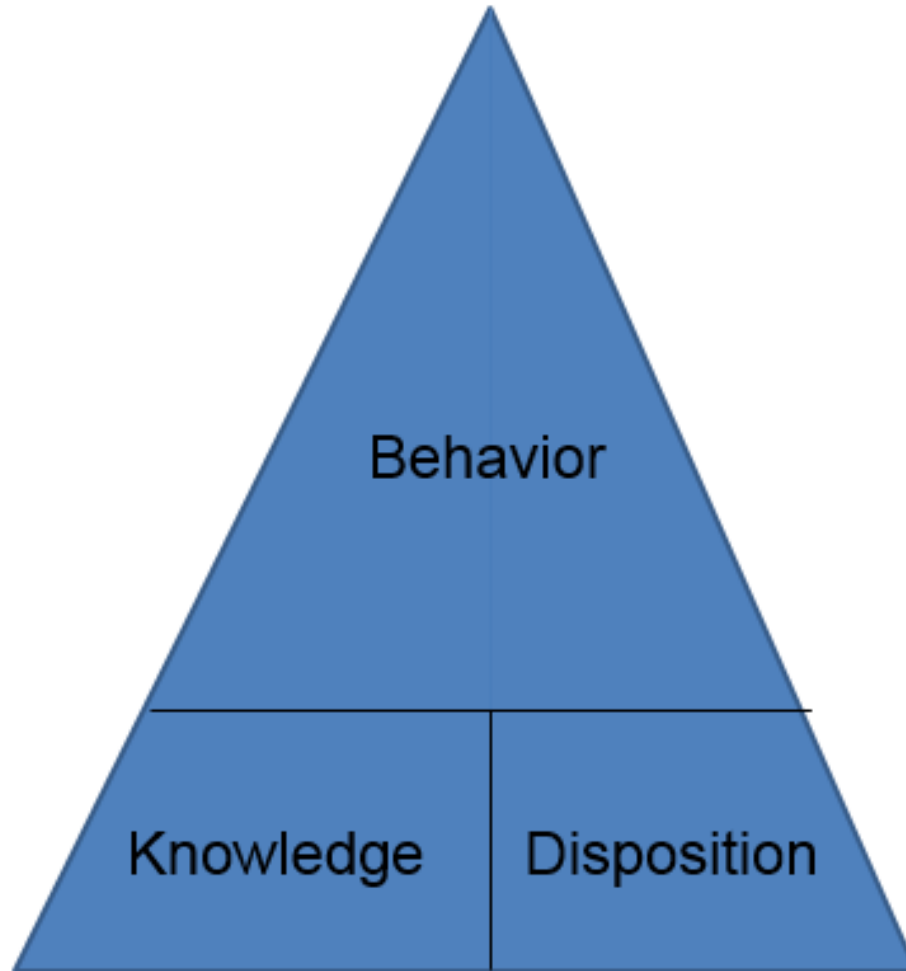
<u>Civic Survey</u>	<u>Student Definition</u>
<p>Community Involved Contribute/Assist others</p>	<p>Contribution, Participation, Respect, Moral</p>
<p>Diversity – interpersonal relationships</p>	<p>Moral, Respect</p>
<p>Environment – preserve for future generations</p>	<p>Moral, Respect</p>
<p>Political Voting Be informed</p>	<p>Participation</p>
	<p>Attitude, Legal</p>

Student Definitions - Grouped



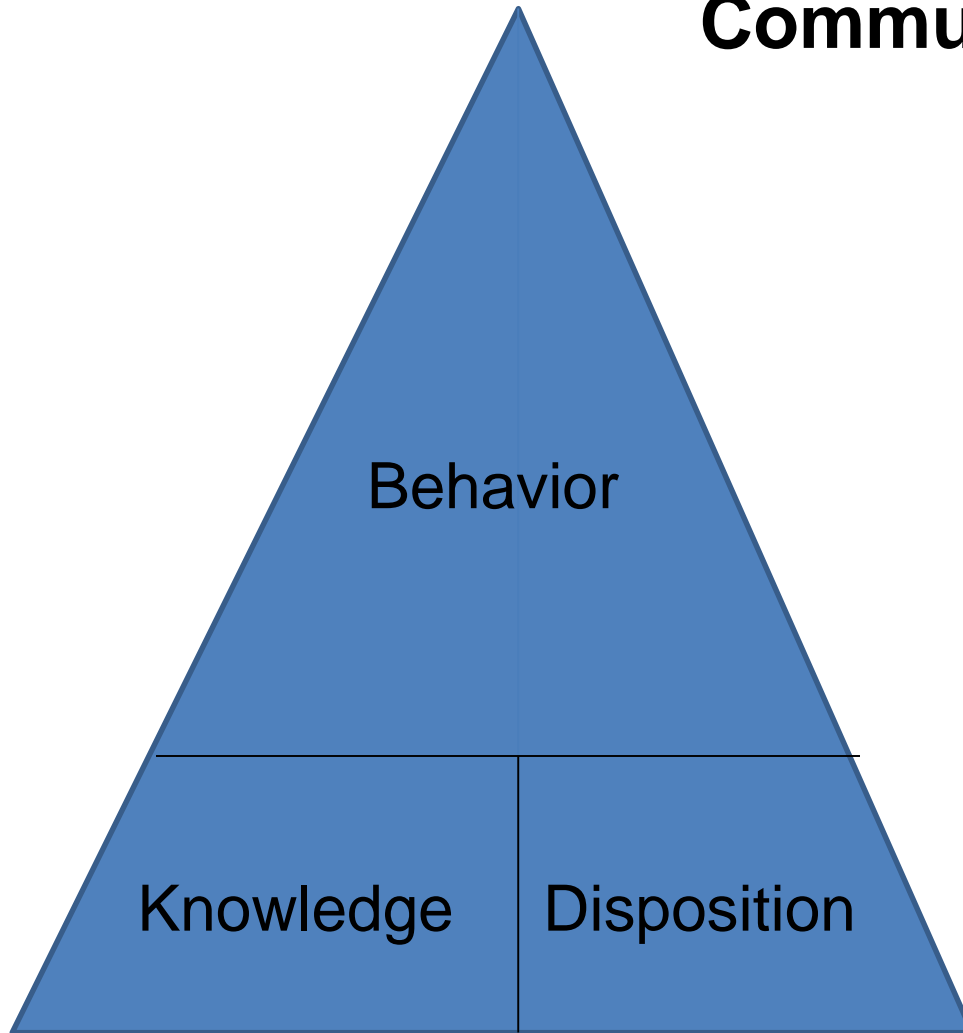
Two Aspects of Civic Engagement

A Civic Hierarchy



Self-Government

**Other-Directed/
Community-minded**



Self-Government

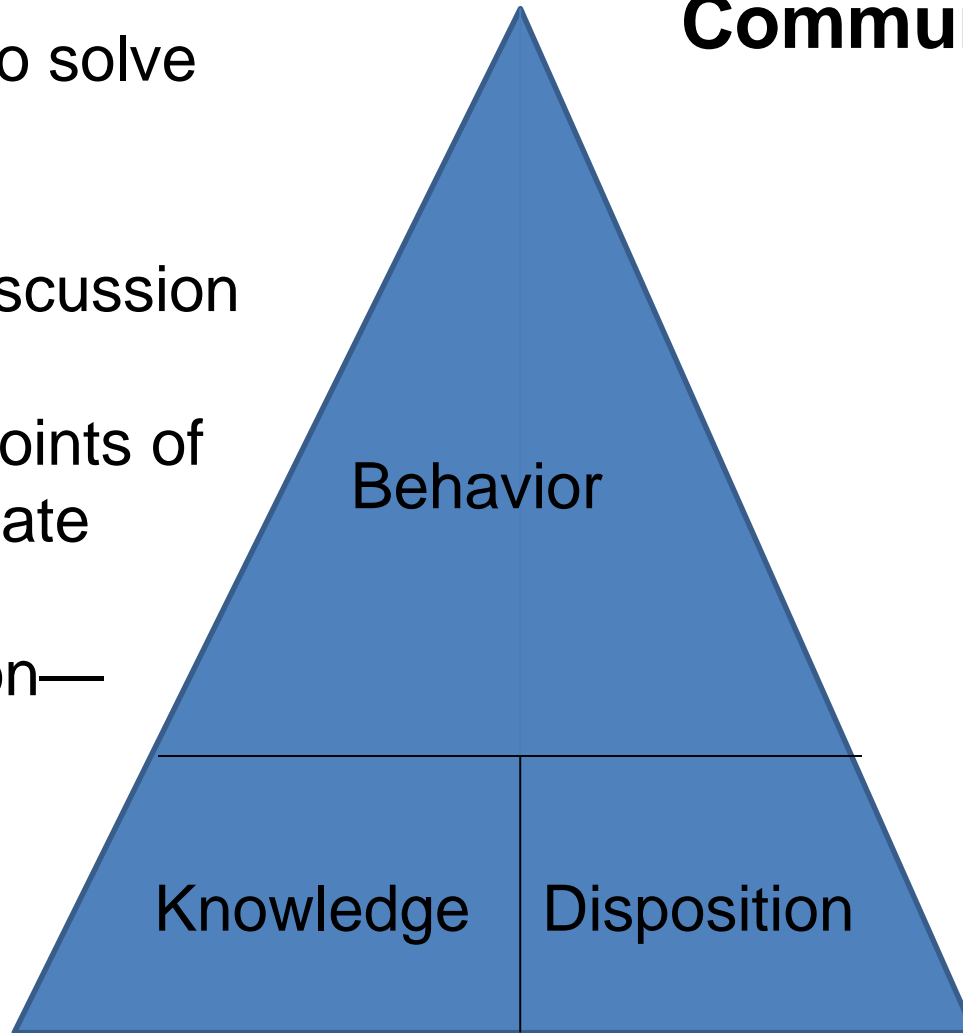
Taking action to solve problems

Deliberative discussion

Accept other points of view as legitimate

Express opinion—
vote

Other-directed / Community-minded



Behavior

Knowledge

Disposition

Self-Government

Taking action to solve problems

Deliberative discussion

Accept other points of view as legitimate

Express opinion—vote

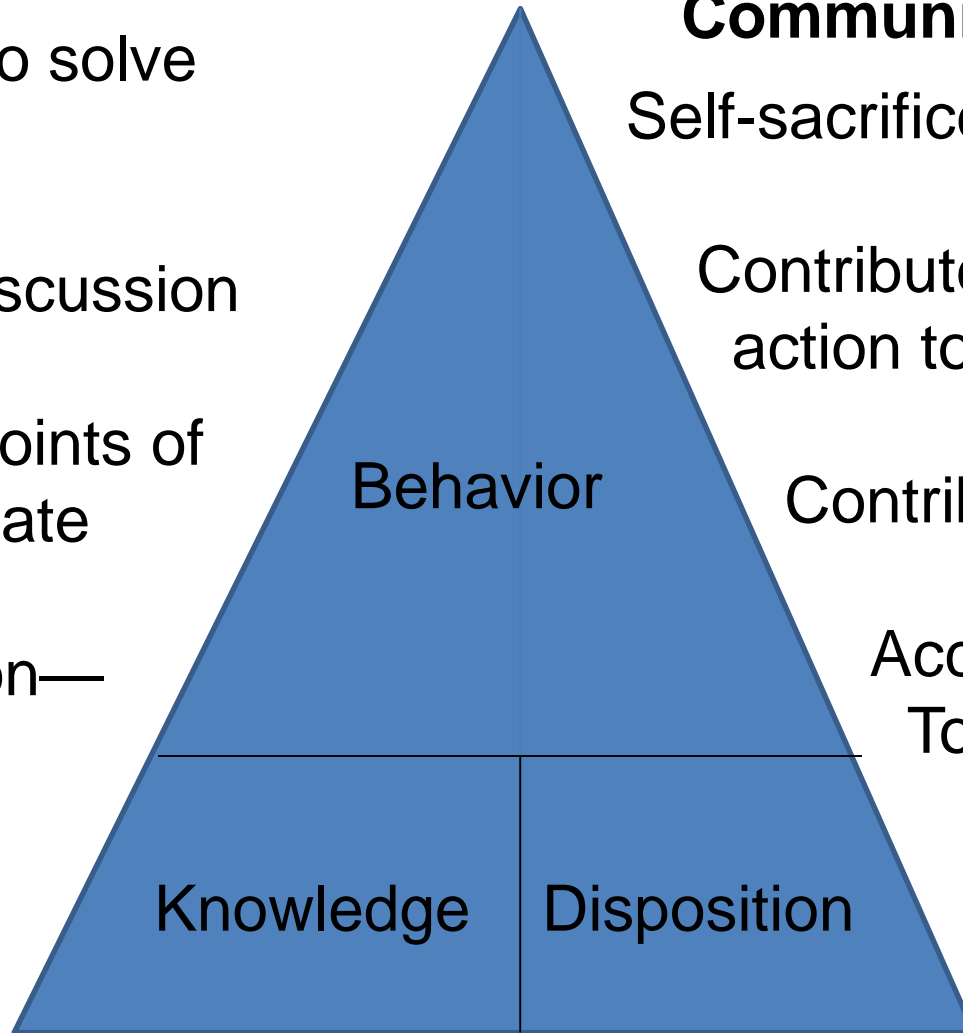
Other-directed / Community-minded

Self-sacrifice for others

Contribute—Organize
action to address needs

Contribute—Volunteer

Accept diversity
Tolerance



Comparison of Student Definition with Civic Survey Items

Student Definitions - Grouped

Self-Government

Other-Directed/**Community-minded**

Taking action to solve problems

Self-sacrifice for others

Deliberative discussion

Environment

Accept other points of view as legitimate--**diversity, respect**

Contribute—Organize action to address social needs—

Informed, assist, environment

Express opinion—**vote**

Participate—Volunteer to **assist others**

Informed

Accept **diversity**

Tolerance

Minimum Legal Requirement

Respect

Red text identifies civic survey issues

Self-Government

Taking action to solve problems

Participate/Contribute/Moral

Deliberative discussion

Participate/Contribute

Accept other points of view

As legitimate—**Respect**

Express opinion—vote

Participate

Other-Directed/ Community- minded

Sacrifice-self for others

Moral/good character

Contribute—Organize action
to address social needs

Participate—Volunteer to
assist others

Personal Development

Accept diversity

Respect

Be tolerant

Minimum Legal Requirement

Follow the law

Items in red are student definition categories

Exceptions in the Comparisons

- The emphasis on “being informed” varies greatly between the Committee and students—only 6 students specifically mentioned being informed.
- Although the ‘legal’ aspect was not included in the Committee’s civic survey, it fits in well with the other citizenship track, personal accountability.
- The students express attitudes (like patriotism and nationalism) as part of Citizenship, but those topics do not appear in the definition and assessments put forth by the Committee.

The Paucity of the Political

- Of the 148 students who responded to the survey:
 - 27 (18.24%) mentioned anything related to the political/self-government side of citizenship.
 - 8 (5.4%) mentioned voting.
- It appears that the political side of citizenship is more important to the Committee than it is to the students.

Conclusions

- Even though different vocabulary and expressions are used, the definition of Citizenship is consistent between the committee and students.
- The emphasis in students' definitions is on the community side, not the self-government side.
- Lack of participation in elections and lack of involvement in the community are issues of concern.

Continuing Work

- Continue to develop and promote curricular and co-curricular activities to encourage voter engagement and involvement in the community.
- Develop curricular and co-curricular activities to encourage and allow students to “be informed”.

Other Studies

Westheimer and Kahne (2004)

- Asked the same question
- Identified 3 types of citizens
 - Personal responsibility—contributes to a food drive
 - Participatory—organizes a food drive
 - Justice-oriented—solves the problem of hunger
 - Westheimer, Joel and Joseph Kahne, “Educating the ‘Good’ Citizen: Political Choices and Pedagogical Goals, *PS* April 2004, p. 2

Sherrod (2003)

- Open-ended question—what is a good citizen?
[responses > 5%, p. 290]
 - Obey the law—46.7%
 - Help others/improve things—46.2%
 - Respect others/tolerance—17%
 - Patriotic—11%
 - Be productive—7.5%
 - Be informed—6.2%
 - Be honest—5%
 - Lonnie R. Sherrod, “Promoting the Development of Citizenship in Diverse Youth,” *PS* April 2003, p. 290.

References

- Galston, William A. “Civic Education and Political Participation,” *PS* April 2004: 263-266.
- Hess, Diana, “Controversies about Controversial Issues in Democratic Education,” *PS* April 2004: 257-261.
- Macedo, Stephen, et. al. *Democracy at Risk: How Political Choices Undermine Citizen Participation and What We Can Do About It*. Brookings Institution Press, 2005.

References, cont.

- Ross, E. Wayne, “Negotiating the Politics of Citizenship Education,” *PS*, April 2004: 249-251.
- Sherrod, Lonnie, R. “Promoting the Development of Citizenship in Diverse Youth,” *PS* April 2003: 287-292.
- Westheimer, Joel and Joseph Kahne, “Educating the ‘Good’ Citizen: Political Choices and Pedagogical Goals,” *PS* April 2004: 1-7.

Acknowledgements



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- **Citizenship Core Competency Committee**
- **Joyce Ray**
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