



We the People: Project Citizen Evaluation Brief 2007



LEFT: Project Citizen Showcase Presentation CENTER: Project Citizen Students at the Congressional Conference on Civic Education 2005 RIGHT: Project Citizen Portfolio, Mississippi

THIS EVALUATION BRIEF PRESENTS SELECTED FINDINGS FROM THE OCTOBER 2007 RMC RESEARCH STUDY

We the People: Project Citizen is a citizenship education program directed by the Center for Civic Education. Project Citizen seeks to promote competent and responsible participation in local and state government by teaching students in Grades 5–12 how to monitor and influence public policy in their communities. In a pre- and posttest study with matching control groups, 409 Project Citizen participants and 341 comparison students from Michigan, Oklahoma, and Colorado were surveyed, tested, and interviewed.

MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO PARTICIPATED IN PROJECT CITIZEN INCREASED MORE (P < .05) THAN COMPARISON STUDENTS IN THEIR

- ★ Knowledge of public policy
- ★ Knowledge of democracy
- ★ Public policy problem-solving skills
- ★ Ability to articulate, research, and advocate policy solutions in essays addressing public policy problems

HIGH SCHOOL PROJECT CITIZEN STUDENTS DEMONSTRATED SIGNIFICANTLY GREATER GROWTH (P < .05) THAN COMPARISON STUDENTS IN THEIR

- ★ Persuasive writing ability
- ★ Knowledge of public policy
- ★ Public policy problem-solving skills
- ★ Civic discourse skills
- ★ Ability to articulate, research, and advocate policy solutions in essays addressing public policy problems

Participants benefited similarly from participating in the program, regardless of student gender, language spoken at home, or participation in extracurricular activities, although some ethnic differences were found.

Teacher experience and skills moderated student outcomes. Students of skilled and experienced teachers had greater increases in knowledge of public policy and improved more in skills for resolving public policy problems.

STUDENT COMMENTS

- *Sometimes as a teenager, you can be looked down upon. Project Citizen gives you a chance to speak out and to make a difference.*
- *We learned about rules, laws, ordinances, and policies and what level of government was involved with each one.*
- *Citizens – I thought they just sat around and paid taxes – but they have to help make decisions.*

