REALMS OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION: CONCEPTS AND PERSPECTIVES
FOREWORD

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This paper focuses on citizenship education which is yet to gain discipline/subject status in the school curriculum in Zimbabwe. Different elements of citizenship education have been addressed under Education for Living, Political Economy, and Social Studies.

This discourse by Dr. C.T. Nziramasanga provides some insightful overview of the nature and values of citizenship education. We are delighted to share his insights as part of our Working Paper Series.

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REALMS OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION: CONCEPTS AND PERSPECTIVES

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Introduction

Citizenship Education is a subject that bothers me and should do so to all conscientised Zimbabweans. For no nation that neglects Citizenship Education expects to endure long. In other more appropriate terms, no democracy such as ours, that disregards Citizenship Education can expect to remain free and democratic.

The reasons for the necessity of Citizenship Education are numerous and obvious. The fact that Zimbabwe's political Independence is just ten years old is common knowledge. For about a century the majority of this nation could not vote; the population was then fairly homogenic and now, Zimbabwe has rapidly become multi-cultural and non-racial. More people are eligible to vote from the eighteen-year olds to the senior citizens, and yet fewer people than eligible dare vote during national and local elections. One is inclined to assert that among other reasons advanced by potential voters, the lack of effective Citizenship Education designed to bring about awareness and knowledge of the citizens’ rights and responsibilities is responsible for such apathy.

Philosophically, the rationale for Citizenship Education is evident. Any democracy, such as ours, committed to the principles of equality, egalitarianism, liberty and fraternity, must have a learned citizenry if it is to function well and stably. A free, informed and equal people lead ordered lives which contribute to the establishment and maintenance of a society.
Great minds in the field of Citizenship Education, Aristotle, Plato, John Locke, and Martin Luther King Jr, to name just a few, argue that there is only one purpose of such education: to fit people to live in the polis (nation) for without the important element of civic virtue, the nation itself would flounder. The civic virtue then, is the explicit knowledge, mastered to the point of habit, and is about the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, and the tremendous duties and obligations imposed by the national constitution on them. Civic virtue is knowing one's legal, social, and civic rights, and knowing that each citizen's freedom ends where another's begins. Citizenship Education, provides the knowledge of one's legal system, that taxes are what we pay for and the services rendered through the state in a civilized society.

Ten years after the attainment of our political Independence, what are our public and private schools doing about this form of education? What does the national curriculum provide on Citizenship Education? What is presently available in the primary and secondary school curriculum to meet the dire need for citizenship upbringing?

A cursory observation of our school youths roaming the streets after school hours shows their general attitudes toward the state, public property and services. It is not uncommon to see our youths vandalize public telephone booths, pull down road traffic signs or even throw stones at street lights. One hears many of the youth occasionally ask:- Why should I attend a political rally instead of studying? Why should I vote in both national and local government elections? Why should I participate in the National Service programme? Why, anyway, is it ever important to know who the member of parliament for my constituency is? Why should I care? Isn't he/she there to earn himself/herself money? These general observations, and many others that require a major research on its own, show the ignorance the school-leavers and some adults have about their national, regional, local and individual rights and responsibilities. Additionally, the questions and sentiments cited above show how much citizens without Citizenship Education do not know that they too are very important decision-makers of national, regional and collective decisions.

In the view of this writer, our youths, cum some adults, do not realize that decision-making is an inescapable component of citizenship. As citizens, they have the right and responsibility to participate in
making decisions about the affairs of the state such as making and implementing laws, attaining national goals, defending the nation and its institutions, laws, customs, citizens and traditions.

The questions referred to above, also suggest that our school youths do not know and may not care to know the laws, economic, political and social issues that regularly affect them. The youth, due to mere absence and lack of a comprehensive formal Citizenship Education curriculum, have hazy and/or fussy knowledge of our legal system, and the local government functional machinery (except those few who participate in junior Councilors scheme), the national statutory laws affecting children, teenagers, adults, the industrial and commercial sectors, the working class, civil servants, the armed forces, and the entire education system of the country. It is paramount therefore, that our youths, be they in school, clubs, or brigades, know that these matters affect citizens' decision-making capabilities.

Lately, the Curriculum Development Unit (C.D.U.) began small but significant steps toward remedying the situation. The Primary School Social Studies syllabus, through its "Living and Working Together" series attempts to provide Citizenship Education, though at a very elementary level. The series, among other topics provides pupils with studies about 'rules and laws', 'wealth and money', 'social services' and 'voluntary organizations' (C.D.U. 1982), (Longman Zimbabwe's "Living and Working Together" series Grades 1 to 7, 1987). While this curriculum is a commendable effort, the suggested content is far from the ideal.

At secondary school level, there is virtually nothing specified as a Citizenship Education curriculum. What the writer has identified are two references. First, the Murapa, R. & Sithole's M. (1986) Junior Secondary Civics for Zimbabwe booklet which attempts to provide a fairly good scope of Citizenship Education but is more concerned with "civics" than Citizenship Education. Second, is the as yet abortive "Political Economy" Syllabus.

As late as July 1990, two documents have surfaced from the Curriculum Development Unit entitled "Education for Living" for Junior Secondary schools and the 'O' level syllabus. Among other numerous topics impinging upon human existence, the proposed syllabi merely include "Law and Justice" (p. 9-10) and (p. 10-11) in both junior and senior secondary school syllabi respectively. The
absence of a comprehensive curriculum on Citizenship Education at the full range of our secondary school level gives great concern as mentioned earlier.

This discourse, however, does not intend to debate the entire Zimbabwean school situation but attempts to state a position and answer major questions concerning Citizenship Education and decision-making responsibilities and practices germane to our schools. First, it examines the role of decision-making in Citizenship Education by addressing four key questions given below, and then critically examining realms of an ideal Citizenship Education programme. The questions basic to the role of decision-making in Citizenship Education include:–

(a) What is citizenship decision-making?

(b) How do our youth relate to our political, economic and ideological decision-making processes?

(c) What should be the objectives of a school based/sponsored Citizenship Education curriculum?

(d) What are the realms or the scope and sequence of a Citizenship Education curriculum for Zimbabwe?

What Is Citizenship Decision-making

For simplicity and clarity in this essay, a decision should be taken to mean a choice made from two or more alternatives. Citizenship Education, in my own opinion, refers to that education the school should teach to our youngsters for the purpose of making them know:

(i) how to relate to each other;
(ii) the best forms of social and political participation
(iii) The rules and Laws governing our society and nation
(iv) the operation of our economic and governmental system;
(v) and the students' own rights and responsibilities to and within their society and nation.

As the definition above states, citizenship decision-making always encompasses political, economic, moral, societal and individual choices related to the governance of the entire nation. Such decisions take
place in schools, families, businesses, clubs and associations, national
government and in international links. When our national leaders
make painful and difficult decisions about allocating the scarce
resources to maintain the essential services, youths and adults react
to those decisions and rightly so and in turn make their own
decisions which may not affect the national decisions. The ability to
do so derives from the nature of Citizenship Education one has
had and from how extensively conscientised one is.

Group Governance

Fundamental to the concept of citizenship decision-making lies the
notion of government and the governed. In all group-governed
societies, the individual citizen must govern himself/herself; all groups
must of necessity first govern themselves in some degree and fashion
of some kind to survive. Governing oneself or groups requires
formulating and making rules governing behaviour, relations,
distribution of resources among the individuals and within the groups.
In that manner, governments, in group governance, make political,
economic, social and educational decisions, rules, laws, sets of goals
and implementation plans affecting each and all the citizens for
better or worse.

The rules, decisions, laws and plans made, regulate the conduct of
the members of society. Some decisions mean rules governing groups;
some involve granting very important responsibilities to some age
groups of the nation such as the Zimbabwean law allowing 18-year
olds voting and adulthood rights and responsibilities surrounding such
exercise of citizen rights and responsibilities.

One other important component of citizen decision-making as a group,
concerns the distribution of resources among the people and within
the society as a whole. Political decisions are made, some of them
involving the allocation of goods and services citizenry thinks are
desirable and important. Such may include health services, transport
services or food. In any case where and when such group governance
decisions are made, additional decisions such as raising revenue result
in establishing taxes required of all citizens. All these decisions call
for group consensus, individual knowledge and understanding of
both the functional system of the national, local and regional
governance, and the citizen’s constitutional rights and responsibilities.
Goal setting for accomplishing these decisions presents another facet of both group and individual governance. To raise funds for carrying out the decisions, for example, municipal governments, district councils, cabinet, parliament and or the presidency, have set goals for providing specific funds. Governments levy taxes to finance the armed forces, police, courts, health, education and many other services. Do the students know these goals? Do citizens know that it is their specific and legal responsibility to contribute to the taxes and to ensure that such taxes are properly and prudently used for the benefit of all citizens? Are they constantly aware that through representative governance they are part of the process of decision-making that sets up the national and or group decisions?

Citizen decision-making also occurs in other human groups such as voluntary organizations, workers’ unions, families, tennis or golf clubs though less formally. However, their governance decisions may also affect citizen’s rights and responsibilities at both local and national levels. For instance, if a club decides to barr certain people from its membership in a manner considered unconstitutional, that decision violates the constitutional rights of other bona fide citizens. This illustration shows that group decisions conflict with individual decisions and that "decisions conflict with decisions" in any society. Learners need to develop intellectually, knowing and practising decision-making and conceptualizing the complexities.

The other area of Citizenship Education concerns the models or patterns in which youths, as citizens, participate in national and local decision-making processes. They do so in two ways. First, youths and or citizens, as individuals constantly face the mammoth task of choosing among myriads of alternative courses of action relating to either group or individual governance. Furthermore, they often cooperate with other people or groups in such group decision-making functions as voting in an election, serving in a committee or team.

Youths, as present and future adult citizens, will always face unbelievable variety of decisions relating to the selection of national leaders, management of their own affairs, resolving national and regional conflicts and disagreements, international inter-dependence issues, and many others. They need to learn how to react to group decisions regarding peace, law and order, and integrity within the leaders, and even regarding school rules. For instance, during the
sixties and the seventies, thousands of young Zimbabweans made sacrificial decisions to go to war to fight an oppressive system tormenting their nation. There were many and better other alternative choices open to them but they decided for war. Some decided for war from within in collaboration with those from without.

The few and simple examples suggested above demonstrate the citizenship decision problems we all face as individual citizens; they deal with questions of loyalty, support, resentment, compliance and or participation in group governance.

Professor R.C. Remy (October, 1979:9), has graphically put these problems in three fundamental questions:-

1. Under what conditions should I (as a citizen of a family, or a city or nation of the global community) be loyal to and proud of my group and when should I be critical?

2. Under what conditions should I (as citizen of a given group) comply with the laws, rules or norms of that group and support its political authorities, and when should I defy rules and authorities?

3. Under what conditions should I (as citizen of a given group) actively participate in the political life of the group and if necessary sacrifice for the common good and when should I defend or assert my private interests or withdraw to nurture my private life?

In my view, these three questions set out four fundamental components of Citizenship Education, namely:- citizen confrontation with the need for choice and an occasion for making such choice; the determination on the part of the citizen, of important values, goals, attitudes and factors affecting the decisions; a citizen's identification of alternative courses of action within the framework of the laws of that society or nation; and finally, the way in which the citizen can predict the positive/negative consequences of the alternatives in view of the decided national or individual goals.
These elements should lead us to the question of the nature of citizenship expected of citizens in a given society. What are the realms of that citizen's participation? When can Citizenship Education be purely educational without deteriorating into indoctrination or propaganda? In the next section of the discourse we examine these and many other issues confronting curriculum planning for Citizenship Education in Zimbabwe.

Realms And Perspectives

Social Studies education in Zimbabwe as already alluded to above, needs to address itself to the issue of Citizenship Education as a major component of formal education. The kind of Citizenship Education needed should be that which emphasizes the transmission and development of civic knowledge, skills, attitudes and values if the youths have to develop long lasting national consciousness and patriotism. In addition, such education should more than encourage citizen participation in development programmes, current political, economic and civic affairs; it should also train them in decision-making skills within the realm of national policies, practices and administration.

This objective certainly demands the development of more meaningful Citizenship Education curricula which highlight both theoretical knowledge and participatory skills relevant to the nation. Theoretical knowledge provides the intrinsic national and individual attitudes and values. These developed, the learners, consciously and conscientiously engage, either individually or collectively, in tackling national development programmes. Virtues of public interest and priorities, national unity; citizens' rights and responsibilities, meaningfully and practically become ingrained in the learners' school and living experiences.

More often than not, we educators and leaders have relied on political rallies, sloganeering and pamphleteering to develop citizenship awareness and virtues. Contrary to this noble view, the debate over the necessity of Citizenship Education, beginning with Plato and aristotle, to the middle ages and modern times, demonstrates convincingly that genuine and permanent citizenship consciousness develops through definite and deliberately planned teaching and training, (Scaff, L. 1975). In our context, we have left Citizenship Education to chance and time, the mass media, and political rallies though useful in themselves. Since these strategies tend to be
doctrinaire and propagandistic in outlook, school-based Citizenship Education rationally and soberly presented, and openly debated and criticized by the learners before they are internalized and fully practiced develops positive attitudes. The fact that school-based Citizenship Education is graded and developmental, allows learners to absorb, assimilate, and practice it as a specific form of knowledge, argues for its strengths. Taken thus, Citizenship Education would incorporate participation in a wide range of domains and perspectives. What are or can be the realms of school-based Citizenship Education? What should be emphasized most and who makes the decisions about these issues?

The following part of the essay attempts to answer some of these questions by surveying curricula materials that were available to the author during the research. The discussion concerns itself mainly with what should ideally be rather than what is being done in the present Zimbabwe.

In curriculum terms, the question of the scope of Citizenship Education balances the debate about its necessity. Some would argue that Citizenship Education is political science; some contend that it is civics and current affairs; some political literacy (Cricketal, 1978), and others still would take it as nothing but an element of national history. Robert H. Salisbury (1978) argues that Citizenship Education belongs to the political realm, and supports Aristotle's view that 'man is a political animal' and therefore needs not be taught how to be a citizen. However, the modern more inter-linked world demonstrates that citizenship-related education encompasses economic, societal, social and participatory functions; that citizenship proper derives from the school, the work place, the social club, family, religious associations, and, on a limited scale, from political rallies and slogans.

One view advances citizenship is 'Behaviour'. This dimension of Citizenship Education argues that whatever the school, community or nation gives its youth, should result in a specific and acceptable form of behaviour relevant to that society.

This concept of Citizenship Education as behaviour contends that such education unfolds from acquiring explicit knowledge regarding rules and beliefs about what each citizen should and might do, such as voting, serving on civic boards, committees or organizations.
Such is a very significant feature of Citizenship Education as it calls upon the learners at all age-levels to be participants in national affairs and programmes. They should know first what their citizenship rights and responsibilities are, and then behave them as their beliefs and practices. In this way learners should be presented with knowledge about citizenship as a societal phenomenon involving the aggregate effects of individual and collective participation in national affairs. In summary, Citizenship Education as behaviour can be viewed as 'participatory citizenship education' consisting of instrumental citizen participation at both micro and macro levels, and, as supportive participation at the similar levels.

What this school of thought highlights is the emphasis of knowledge about citizenship and its attendant rights and responsibilities which should result in the development of citizens who can positively participate in the affairs of their nation, and that they can also participate individually and or collectively in the decision-making processes at both macro and micro levels. However, this is not the only realm of citizenship.

**Citizenship As Compliance**

In addition to the dimension examined above, is another school of thought which views Citizenship Education as compliance. According to this dimension, one of the major roles of Citizenship Education should be to shape the expectation of the youth. To do this effectively we should devote the plans and programmes of Citizenship Education to cultivating in the learners the supportive participation attitudes for national development projects and policies. Obviously there are assertions of compulsory and or persuasive compliance implied.

The expectations-shaping role of Citizenship Education inevitably assumes that compliance on the part of the learner is certain. The pupils and students learn that to obey laws, pay taxes, report crimes and criminals, is positive compliance with and participation in the law-making and implementation processes in their country. However, how certain we can be about such assumptions is difficult. Compliance after receiving Citizenship Education stands largely elusive as it may produce non-compliant behaviour.
The other side of the issue is that compliance may be misinterpreted and abused by both the teachers, school administrators and policy makers. Compliance as a good social virtue may be used as a strategy to deny learners the freedom of critical analysis, thinking and decision-making. The curriculum, the advocates of compliance argue, should be designed in such a balanced way that the learners would study and understand citizenship as a necessary virtue of any citizen. The argument assumes that teaching would also be balanced and without the pressures of the hidden curriculum. It surmises that when and if the learners discuss the *pros* and *cons* of their participation, they can be assumed to participate in the democratic decision-making processes of their nation and in so doing are shaping theirs and its image.

Bringing about balance in the Citizenship Education curriculum is beset with problems. To begin with, some form of unwilling compliance would always surface even in ideal conditions. For instance, in a socialist democratic process, there would always be the opportunity of disagreement which may be interpreted, like in any form of democracy, as positive compliance when and if it supports the official positions, or as reactionary when it shows displeasure. However, when both such reactions occur as a result of Citizenship Education, they strengthen the significance of the national philosophy. Citizens accept or reject proposed national programmes at times to the extent of refusing compliance. The more important concern of Citizenship Education as compliance, however, is not to develop an uncritical individual citizen who is merely supportive, and the ‘obey-the-law fashion guaranteed’ person. Neither should compliance Citizenship Education the youth who never wishes to upset the *status quo* and preferring to accept official decrees without understanding and assessing the purpose for them. In effect compliance Citizenship Education should be concerned with the deeper human need for law and order in contrast to chaos and anarchy.

The stance presented above augments the significant thesis that Citizenship Education amounts to a form or part of political education involved with inculcating and articulating national consciousness, values and aspirations. Admittedly, Citizenship Education can be pervasive and unsettling to the *status quo* and national traditions. Certainly one of its purposes should be to awaken the youth to
their national duty, heritage and rights. Citizenship Education enables them to know and understand themselves, their nation and the developments occurring therein.

One other important side of Citizenship Education as compliance is the fact that citizen action, participation and criticism become instruments of solving social, political and economic problems. Through studying Citizenship Education, young citizens change their self-interest image to one of common purpose and action. For any developing nation like Zimbabwe, this should be the fundamental goal of Citizenship Education curriculum. It makes the citizenry come to understand and cherish the common good. Individual and collective participation by learners of Citizenship Education generates public policy consensus and reduces conflicts likely to develop due to ignorance. Generally and ultimately such knowledge undermines the class consciousness of society and develops a reasonably visible classless nation where the common good is more paramount to its citizenry than otherwise. In short, increased, carefully designed citizenship curriculum remains a sure way of minimizing social conflict and enhancing maximum advantage to the entire nation.

To ensure positive and productive participation and compliance, a Citizenship Education curriculum should be carefully planned, with its goals and functions clearly defined. Teachers should be carefully trained and educated in the field of citizenship if they have to teach it effectively.

In summary, we have identified two broad concepts of Citizenship Education as: citizenship as behaviour (participatory citizenship); and citizenship as compliance. Implied in these concepts is the knowledge acquisition component. Below are these broad concepts analyzed for specific perspectives that need to be considered in planning and implementing Citizenship Education curriculum.

Patterns Of Citizen Participation

Participatory citizenship, emanating from proper Citizenship Education, takes various and often controversial forms which Verba, S. and N. Nie (1970) call 'modes of participation'. This refers to patterns of acting on the part of citizens. For many centuries, voting, as the principal obligation of every citizen, has been unquestionably equated with how healthy a political system may be especially when the
action is voluntary. Thus the voting patterns of a nation have often been used as a thermometer for citizen participation in national affairs. Voter turnout tends to be singularly assumed to indicate the health of that political system. However, as history shows, many people have been forced to go and vote without really knowing and understanding what they did, let alone, the significance of their vote on the decisions eventually made by those elected. Citizenship Education provided throughout the youth’s school career removes the dangers referred to above. Admittedly, politicians of varied persuasions are uncomfortable with larger voter turnouts.

Philosophers and scholars in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Western Europe, tended to consider voting the central process of any democratic system of government. Their argument seems to suggest the assertion made above that a large voter turnout tends to indicate a high displeasure likely to lead to revolt and anarchy. On the other hand, too small voter turnout could mean alienation, apathy, dissatisfaction or disenchantment with the order of the day.

Elections in modern societies such as the United Kingdom, France, the United States of America, and some developing nations, show a pattern of low voter turnouts leaving leaders ideally comfortable with things as they are. For instance, the U.S.A. Presidential and Congressional elections of 1988 experienced a lower turnout of voters than the actual registered and eligible voters. The intensive participation and political mobilization of the masses in the Weimar Republic produced the Hitler political hysteria.

The whole argument raises the question of whether citizens should be taught voluntary voting or not. When voting becomes a matter of individual choice, does it not tend to unsettle the status quo? If compulsory and or public, how far does it remain a reliable guide to citizenship participation? Be that as it may, both these form of citizen participation have generally become the most used barometer for measuring the degree of citizen awareness and national consciousness. In some more politicized and literate societies, thinkers have extended this form of participation from national to voluntary organisations and associations. When found there, it is assumed to be the sign of a healthy democratic nation. This writer, however, asserts that this form of participation comes best when citizens are
well educated into their rights and responsibilities and when they have thorough knowledge and understanding of that form of participation.

For effective participation by our youth either in school activities, associations or national programmes to occur, there ought to be the learning of specific content and concepts, and the development of identifiably necessary skills making for positive citizenship. The writer agrees with John Stuart Mills' most articulately advanced argument that productive citizenship can be learned and taught in formal and informal schooling (Patcman, C. 1970), and further transferred into real life situations. Cognitive bankruptcy of appropriate and ideal knowledge and skills of citizens participation results in the citizenry acting upon the whims of impulse and emotion.

In a study conducted in the U.S.A. by Milbrath, L., et al. (1977), it was found out that citizenship consciousness among school-going youths can also be determined by the degree of their participation in or membership of political organisations, attendance at election meetings and rallies, collecting/giving funds to regional, national and local projects. At times when youths work for a political candidate for national or municipal election, they quickly and rather permanently internalize the Citizenship Education attained in the classroom. So, a curriculum of Citizenship Education marrying theory with participation graded from easy to complex, should bring about some of the desired results. However, citizen participation based mainly on political involvement tends to discourage the learners from learning and practising other important civic responsibilities. Suffice to note here however, that citizen participation as a right and responsibility as demonstrated by the research referred to above is a complexity of skills and attitudes backed by sound knowledge and requiring continuous education, training and development.

Community Related Citizenship Education

One other important dimension of Citizenship Education concerns the macro-level of youth participation in community projects. The dimension places emphasis on educating the youth about their responsibilities to participating in community affairs individually and collectively - which we might call, for lack of a better term, 'instrumental citizenship.' This pattern of Citizenship Education emphasizes value commitments and tends to restrict citizen participation
to individuals and or small groups. Its greatest danger however, is
to developing tendencies towards localism and regionalism at
the expense of national image.

Community participation becomes a private commodity to benefit the
minority who might degenerate into parochialists and regionalists.
The community based Citizenship Education can, however, be very
important for developing patriotism and nationalism if taught well
and constructively. For instance, where community participation
occurs, the youth, in times of unrest in neighbouring states and
national security seems threatened, generally turn quickly into
vanguards of national security and image.

The view advanced above supports Rouseau’s stand that with
sufficient participatory experience, the youth of a community rationally
shares the values of their immediate and wider community with
the entire nation. This optimism on the part of Rouseau and his
disciples can be challenged as counter-productive in a society which
cherishes the group-participation consciousness since local and individual
concerns tend to override national programmes which may be too
remote from their immediate needs and survival. Participation
becomes ‘justified participation’ which generally results in concern
asserts that this conclusion reflects the whole argument that Aristotle
had been advocating for a society in which all its citizens, irrespective
of the distance between their communities, should develop positive
community and national conscious participation. Better still Citizenship
Education alone remains the ideal way to providing knowledge and
skills concerned with the youth’s and also adult’s responsibilities to
their communities, country and other citizens.

In conclusion then this essay identifies two major realms of Citizenship
Education, namely: Citizenship Education as behaviour as its focus;
and Citizenship Education as compliance, a necessary but perhaps
unplausible realm. The two realms could both be viewed to be
necessary in a Citizenship Education curriculum if participation and
knowledge appear in all forms, be they positive or seemingly counter
productive to society. More important however than all this, should
be incorporated the development of visible attitudes and values
derived from adequate knowledge attained in school. For this to
happen, a carefully planned Citizenship Education curriculum is
mandatory.
REFERENCES


Remy, Richard (1979), *Handbook of Basic Citizenship Competencies*. (Manuscript), NCSS publication.

**UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPTS**


