

Vocabularies of citizenship: a survey of British Columbian secondary students' experiences and understandings in the field of citizenship education.

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# Vocabularies of citizenship: a survey of British Columbian secondary students' experiences and understandings in the field of citizenship education

Elbert, Jamie

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## Abstract:

Beginning in earnest in the 1990s, research and political communities have taken a strong interest in citizenship education both in Canada and worldwide, but in the context of secondary schools this has resulted in theoretical papers rather than empirical analyses of student experiences. The student voice is particularly important to the study of citizenship education given the complexity of constructed civic subjectivities and rapidly changing definitions of community, including the relationships between local, national and global. Canada has been characterized as post-national or even without identity, and its young people are caught between the persisting narrative of young apathy when it comes to politics and civic duty. Drawing on theories of local and global citizenship, this exploratory mixed methods study of 104 British Columbian secondary students investigates student vocabularies of citizenship in order to map current youth understandings of citizenship and their experiences in their secondary education. In discussing the results, I challenge the narratives of Canadian citizenship as a meaningless signifier and youth as apathetic, and investigate scholarly concerns regarding the depoliticization of citizenship, and the potential conflict inherent to the globalization of youth identities. Finally, I discuss citizenship practices in citizenship education with reference to established scholarly research and the study's findings of the present study.

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