

Types of Citizenship Promoted in ESL Programs for Adult Immigrants in Toronto

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Presentation Outline

- Conceptualizations of citizenship
 - Citizenship concepts in ESL programs
 - Textbook analysis and classroom observations
 - Conclusion: What type(s) of citizenship are promoted in ESL programs?
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Conceptualizations of Citizenship

- ❑ The term citizenship is multidimensional; connotes at least four different dimensions: status, identity, civic virtues and agency (Schugurensky, 2005).
 - ❑ Citizenship as status: most common understanding, often equated with nationality or membership to a particular nation-state.
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Conceptualizations of Citizenship

- ❑ Citizenship as identity is about *feeling* like a member of a particular community.
 - ❑ Citizenship as civic virtues alludes to attitudes and behaviours expected of “good citizens”.
 - ❑ Citizenship as agency refers to the idea of citizens as social actors. Westheimer and Kahne (2004), identified three implicit conceptions of the good citizen: responsible, participatory, and justice-oriented.
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Citizenship Concepts in ESL Programs – Textbook Analysis and Classroom Observations

- ❑ Derwing & Thompson's LINC analysis:
 - ❑ -little Canadian content, even less about Canadian cultural values
 - ❑ -texts focus on superficial, written from general, middle-class perspective
 - ❑ -citizenship concepts introduced in class discussions when initiated by students – carefully
 - ❑ -students' low language proficiency cited as big reason for the cautiousness
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Citizenship Concepts in ESL Programs – Textbook Analysis and Classroom Observations

- ❑ Canadian Concepts 4 to 6 – Textbook analysis:
 - ❑ -little Canadian content
 - ❑ -superficial dealings with cultural values
 - ❑ -culture defined as static and definite
 - ❑ -devoid of controversial aspects of Canadian history, culture or society
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Citizenship Concepts in ESL Programs – Textbook Analysis and Classroom Observations

- ❑ ESL classroom observations:
 - ❑ -teachers respectful of students; don't shy away from discussing controversial issues – when raised by students
 - ❑ -curriculum and time restraints, lack of personal interest prevent deeper analysis of issues raised
 - ❑ -students equipped with practical knowledge, devoid of controversies
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Conclusion: What Type(s) of Citizenship are Promoted in ESL Programs?

- ❑ ESL programs incorporate all four dimensions of citizenship, however lean most on the concept of citizenship as status, the least on citizenship as agency.
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Questions

- ❑ Are ESL programs the ideal venue for promoting citizenship models?
 - ❑ How much can ESL programs and instructors be expected to promote citizenship as agency, given that their primary responsibility is to equip students with language skills within a limited amount of time?
 - ❑ What guidelines, resources or support programs are available to programs and instructors with regard to incorporating citizenship concepts in their language lessons? By whom?
 - ❑ Whose job is it to help integrate adult immigrants into Canadian society as full and equal participants? Should the federal government be held accountable? Why isn't it more involved?
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References

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 - ❑ Westheimer, J. & Kahne, J. (2003). "What Kind of Citizen? Political Choices and Educational Goals." In *Encounters on Education*, eds. Schugurensky, D. & Myers, J. Faculty of Education, Queen's University, 2003.
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