

Common Misconceptions and Partial Understandings

ENGLISH Program

Global Competencies



Citizenship

This resource supports educators in developing a deeper awareness of what **citizenship** means. By exploring the common misconceptions and partial understandings related to this competency, we can move towards a shared understanding across Manitoba schools.

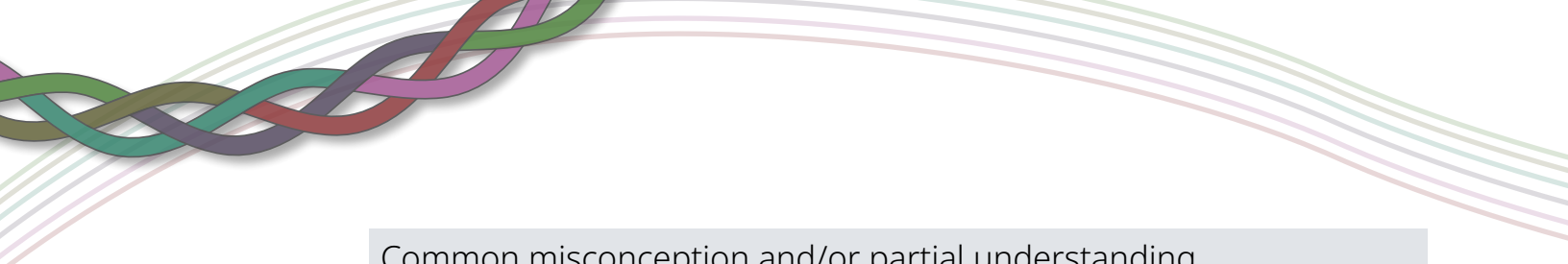
Common misconception and/or partial understanding

Citizenship can be described primarily as teaching civics education and helping learners to become “personally responsible citizens” (Westheimer).

Extending our understanding of citizenship

The word *citizenship* is used differently, depending on the context. As an educational concept, it has a different meaning depending on the jurisdiction in which it is used. Manitoba’s definition of the competency of citizenship goes beyond civics education and provides opportunities for learners to

- explore a variety of topics and issues
- foster consideration of diverse perspectives to interact effectively with others
- take action for the well-being of self, others, and the natural world



Common misconception and/or partial understanding

Large school events such as “culture days” are a sufficient way to learn about diverse cultures and perspectives.

Extending our understanding of citizenship

Large-scale events such as “culture days” or school-wide awareness or fundraising campaigns have value but are not the only way learners practise citizenship. Everyday acts of citizenship impact school communities in important ways. Learning about diverse cultures, viewpoints, and experiences while exploring complex issues in the local and wider community can occur regularly. Practising empathy, embracing inclusive practices, and supporting equity as crucial concepts for decision-making help to improve communities every day.

Common misconception and/or partial understanding

Citizenship practices belong primarily in humanities courses.

Extending our understanding of citizenship

Citizenship as a concept might have more regular applications in a social studies course, but learners can be practising the core elements of citizenship in all courses, such as evaluating different factors that lead to decision-making, looking at multiple viewpoints, and finding solutions for the betterment of the world.

Common misconception and/or partial understanding

Taking action can be reserved for school-wide initiatives or charity events.

Extending our understanding of citizenship

Learners need daily opportunities to take action, such as finding ways to organize classrooms more inclusively, promoting peer-to-peer conflict management, or finding more efficient recycling or composting methods. These daily opportunities will empower learners to see they can make a difference in their day-to-day lives.

References

Westheimer, Joel. *What Kind of Citizen?: Educating Our Children for the Common Good*. Teachers College Press, 2015.