

Active Citizenship and Young People:

The Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study 2006



National Foundation
for Educational
Research

The Views of Young People

The Citizenship Longitudinal Study is a nine-year long research project which is finding out about young people's views and experiences of citizenship education. Last year over 13,000 Year 9 students (aged 13 to 14 years old) who first filled in a questionnaire when they were in Year 7, gave us their opinions by filling in a questionnaire again.

Learning about citizenship

Young people told us they were more likely to have heard of citizenship by the time they were in Year 9 (2005) than they had been in Year 7 (2003). Twenty four % of students said that they had learned about citizenship 'a lot' in 2005, compared to only 16 % in 2003.

Understanding citizenship

Students told us they were **most likely** to think that citizenship meant learning about the law, and behaving fairly and well. Their top three responses were that citizenship is about:

Fair treatment
for all
(35%)

Being a good
citizen
(33%)

Responsibilities and
obeying the law
(27%)

What does citizenship mean to you?

Young people said they were **least likely** to think that citizenship meant being active and involved. Their bottom two responses were that citizenship is about:

Being active in
the community
(15%)

Voting, politics
and government
(10%)

As well as this, around 120 students across the country took part in face-to-face group discussions, and gave their views on citizenship education.

Being active

- Despite the low numbers of students who connected 'citizenship' with active participation in the questionnaires, face-to-face discussions with students highlighted that they did think the following things were important:
 - Belonging to a community (especially the school community).
 - Belonging to and caring about their local neighbourhoods.
 - Being asked about, and allowed to have a say in, things that affected them (especially in school).
 - Being given opportunities to take part in their schools and communities, and to take responsibility for themselves and other students.

Here are some of the things that students said about being 'active citizens' in their schools:



How much do you, or your friends, agree with these views? How do they compare with what happens in your school? Think about why you agree or disagree.

More Information:

If you would like more information please go to:
<http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research-areas/citizenship/>