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From Heritage Sites to Civic Consciousness: A Process-Oriented Framework for Place-Based Civic Learning in Thailand

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Abstract

This study examines how place-based learning in cultural World Heritage sites contributes to civic learning among secondary students in Lower Northern Thailand. Drawing on place-based education, citizenship education, and critical pedagogy, the study conceptualizes heritage sites as socio-cultural learning spaces where learners connect historical understanding with lived community experiences. A qualitative case study was conducted using participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and student reflective accounts. Data were analyzed through thematic analysis supported by triangulation and iterative coding procedures. The findings reveal a developmental process through which learners move from place engagement to meaning-making and identity formation, leading to civic consciousness and community-connected civic agency. Heritage-based learning encouraged students to critically reflect on local histories, cultural values, and contemporary social issues while fostering a stronger sense of civic responsibility, community engagement, and global citizenship awareness. Based on these findings, the study proposes a process-oriented framework for place-based civic learning that explains how experiential engagement with heritage can contribute to transformative civic development. The study contributes a context-responsive model from Thailand that extends current discussions of citizenship education beyond dominant Western perspectives and offers practical implications for designing participatory civic learning experiences that support transformative and globally oriented education.

Keywords: Citizenship Education; Community Engagement; Critical Pedagogy; Global Citizenship; Identity Formation