

The Citizenship Education System in Canada from 1945-2005
An Overview and Assessment

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ABSTRACT

There has been a significant interest amongst immigrants in obtaining Canadian citizenship, dating all the way back to the end of World War Two in 1945. This thesis is particularly interested in what knowledge and skills these immigrants obtain as a result of their experiences in the citizenship education programs provided by the federal government prior to them becoming official citizens of Canada.

This thesis has a number of objectives. First, it intends to track the evolution of citizenship policy in Canada from 1945 to the present time, with a particular focus on the changes made to the citizenship education system. Secondly, an assessment of the adequacy of the changes made to the citizenship education system will be conducted, focusing primarily on whether or not those changes have provided newcomers to Canada with the knowledge and skills necessary to be active and informed citizens. Finally, suggestions will be offered as to how citizenship education programs can best provide new Canadians with a more well-rounded quality of citizenship.

The evolution of citizenship policy and the assessment of the changes made to citizenship education from 1945 to the present time reveal a number of findings, with many of them pointing to citizenship education policy and programming in Canada as being inadequate. The findings identify a lack of political leadership and financial resources provided for citizenship training initiatives, as well as a painfully basic citizenship education curriculum provided for newcomers to Canada.

The central contention of this thesis is that the federal government regards citizenship education as little more than a short-term goal. In other words, the priority is to speed up the processing of newcomers rather than to develop good citizens. Immigrants are provided with basic knowledge and language skills, but are largely left to fend for themselves once official citizenship has been attained. This short-term focus has resulted in a diminution of the quality and importance of Canadian citizenship and has impaired the ability of new citizens to feel comfortable participating in Canadian society.

The significance of these findings is that policy makers need to develop a long-term citizenship education strategy that focuses on providing long-term benefits to new citizens to Canada. Such a strategy will help to maximize the potential contributions of the growing immigrant population to Canadian society and will provide much needed clarity of roles and responsibilities to citizenship education service providers and instructors.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background

This thesis tracks the evolution of the citizenship education system for newcomers to Canada from 1945 to 2005. The study purposely begins in 1945 because that marked the start of a new era, both in Canadian citizenship and immigration. In the case of citizenship, it marks the beginning of the era in which Canada bestowed citizenship on newcomers. In the case of immigration it marked the beginning of an upward surge in levels of immigration to Canada which has reached approximately 200,000 to 225,000 per year over the last ten years. That large influx of newcomers has led many Canadians to ask some very important questions related to citizenship, including the following:

- Are we equipping these newcomers to Canada with the tools and skills necessary to help maximize their potential participation and contribution to the well-being of Canadian society?
- Are these newcomers well aware of both the rights and responsibilities associated with Canadian citizenship?
- How familiar are these newcomers with Canadian culture, values and beliefs?

1.2 Research Objectives and Questions

The thesis has three central objectives. The first objective is to provide a thorough analysis of the evolution of the federal government's citizenship education/orientation policies and programs from 1945 to 2005. The second objective is to assess the adequacy of those citizenship education/orientation policies and programs. The third objective is to ascertain what can be done to provide newcomers with an even better education and

orientation to Canadian citizenship. In keeping with those three objectives, the three central research questions are:

1. How have citizenship policies and programs for training and orientation changed over time?
2. Have the citizenship education and orientation policies and programs provided newcomers with sufficient education and orientation to all aspects of Canadian citizenship?
3. What improvements are needed to the citizenship education and orientation policies and programs to provide newcomers with even better education and orientation?

1.3 Central Contention

The central contention of the thesis is that the major obstacle towards improving citizenship education programs in Canada is the federal government itself. When compared to hot topics such as immigration policy and multiculturalism policy, citizenship has long been viewed as somewhat of a “junior partner”. The reality is that parliamentarians, both in the House of Commons and the Senate, have differing views on what Canadian citizenship should entail. Meaningful attempts to bridge this gap and to discuss compromises and alternatives over recent years have been few and far between. As far as citizenship programs themselves are concerned, the resources provided to them have been woefully inadequate and they generally lack leadership and direction, which greatly restricts what these programs can offer. In essence, citizenship policy in Canada tends to be viewed as nothing more than a short-term goal, with an eye towards processing newcomers faster than ever before instead of enhancing and cultivating the

tools and skills newcomers sorely need to succeed once official citizenship has been attained. My central contention is that this view of citizenship, and by extension citizenship education programs, produces citizens who are ill-prepared to participate and contribute to the well-being of Canada. Uncertainty regarding citizenship administration and policy leads to inconsistencies and inefficiencies regarding the quality of these citizenship education programs.

1.4 Organization

In addition to this introductory chapter, this thesis consists of three chapters. Chapter Two charts the evolution of citizenship policy and programs in Canada from 1945 until the present time, with a particular emphasis on citizenship education. Chapter Three discusses the content and overall state of citizenship education programs in Canada. Chapter Four assesses the adequacy of the citizenship education system and offers some suggestions for potential improvements to the system.

1.5 Literature Review

The literature consulted for this thesis is focused primarily in two areas: citizenship policy/administration and citizenship education programs. There is very little available that combines the two, which is what this thesis will attempt to do. Nevertheless, the extant literature consists of some important studies which have provided an important base of information for this thesis.

Leslie A. Pal's Interests of State: The Politics of Language, Multiculturalism and Feminism in Canada has been a vital tool in the development of this thesis. A large portion of Pal's book is devoted to the development of citizenship policy and administration in Canada since the establishment of the Citizenship Branch within the

Department of the Secretary of State after the end of World War Two in 1945 up until the end of his study in 1989. The central theme of the material surveyed is that citizenship policy has experienced fluctuating levels of federal government support, which has significantly affected program content over an extended period of time.

Carma Cornea's M.A. thesis entitled Canadian Citizenship Policy: A Study of Two Parliamentary Committees, and Joseph Garcea's article entitled "The Third Phase of the Canadian Citizenship Project: Reform Objectives and Obstacles" have provided more recent updates that build on Pal's work. Cornea's thesis points out the marked differences of opinion held by both Senate and House of Commons committees charged with the task of recommending a renewed direction for citizenship policy in Canada. Garcea's article points out a number of missed opportunities by Conservative and Liberal governments to enact a new Citizenship Act and thus give citizenship policy much needed clarity and direction. The two works essentially update and confirm Pal's contention that citizenship policy is very much neglected by those in power. For the purposes of this thesis, this serves as a major barrier to potential improvement of citizenship education programs.

Canadian Citizenship: Sharing the Responsibility, a report of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, chaired by Senator Noel Kinsella, provides very important recommendations as to what direction citizenship policy should take in Canada. Kinsella has been one of the most active Parliamentarians with respect to citizenship policy, and his recommendations are especially useful for the purpose of this thesis. Essentially, this report attempts to find ways to improve upon the current Citizenship Act. What makes this report particularly useful for this study is its emphasis on citizenship education and the major role it can play in strengthening the value of

Canadian citizenship. The committee strongly believes that a renewed emphasis on citizenship and citizenship education will: increase political, social and economic participation; ensure a greater understanding of what Canadian citizenship entails; foster a greater sense of community; and help develop a commitment to the well-being of Canada.

Kinsella strongly believes that citizenship education can play a major role in strengthening Canadian citizenship, provided that such programs are given the support and resources required to succeed from the federal government. It is here where the second half of the literature consulted is employed in this study. This literature, produced by academics and teaching professionals who specialize in citizenship education and language training programs, focuses on the content and quality of citizenship education programs in Canada, with particular attention paid to the experiences of adult immigrants in the system.

Tracey Derwing and Reva Joshee are two of the more active academics when it comes to writing about citizenship education programs in Canada, and their wide variety of works will be cited often in this thesis. Both provide detailed discussions of the evolution of the citizenship education process, particularly in the late 1980s and early 1990s when the citizenship application process was changed from an interview with a judge to preparing for a twenty-question multiple choice test so as to reduce stress on the bureaucracy regarding the processing of newcomers. They both take their analysis to a higher level by asking service providers, instructors, federal officials and students what they themselves think of the quality of the programs. The general sentiment that they commonly find is that these programs do the best with the marginal resources provided to

them, but that the potential exists for these programs to make a bigger impact in student's lives if the government gives them greater support. This analysis is of great importance to this thesis.

Literature provided by citizenship education and language training professionals is also of significance to this thesis. Robert Courchene, Mari Haneda and Roumiana Illeva, just to name a few, share their classroom experiences and interactions with adult immigrant students in their attempts to analyze the adequacy of the current citizenship education system. All three find that the current array of programs are geared more towards survival information and facts that will help one pass the multiple choice test so that they can attain official citizenship status. This may be useful for the short-term, but none of these professionals finds this method of instruction to be satisfactory in so far as the development of good citizens over the long-term. All three advocate a participatory teaching approach that will empower and engage the students in more meaningful discussion about what it means to be Canadian and what makes Canada so unique. In addition to a critique of current programs, these professionals discuss a wide variety of innovative teaching techniques, designed with the goal of improving course content and the overall classroom experience so that newcomers will become more confident and comfortable regarding participation in their new home.

A document that is central to the analysis of the suitability of citizenship education content presented to newcomers to Canada is A Look at Canada, produced by Citizenship and Immigration Canada and distributed to all who seek to become Canadian citizens. This 40-plus page booklet contains the material that each prospective citizen is expected to learn so that they can pass the citizenship exam. It covers a wide range of

topics, such as the environment, Aboriginal peoples, regions of Canada, important symbols and historical dates, levels of government, voting, and rights and responsibilities. The variety of material presented is admirable and it is useful in preparing for the exam, but the main criticism of this document applies to the majority of the citizenship education programs across the country: there is nothing being offered here that helps develop good citizens over the long-term after the awarding of official citizenship. The approach that should be taken regarding citizenship education in Canada should be one “that would emphasize dispositions and skills over the memorization of discrete facts...this would make the awarding of citizenship more meaningful to both the applicant and the country.”¹ The development of participatory and critical thinking skills should be the primary focus of citizenship education programs, as it will help encourage newcomers to Canada to be active rather than passive citizens, which in turn will enhance the well-being of Canada.

1.6 Contribution

An updated analysis of the evolution of citizenship policy and particularly of citizenship education programs is very much needed as the levels of immigration taking place in Canada continue to rise, and as concerns over the content and quality of Canadian citizenship continue to be raised. By combining the literature on citizenship and citizenship education, I believe my thesis will make a unique contribution to existing literature. It is my hope that the forthcoming overview of the historical difficulties and changes associated with citizenship administration and policy will provide much-needed context to the difficulties and changes associated in developing effective citizenship

¹ Tracey Derwing and Reva Joshee, “Citizenship Education for Adult Immigrants in Canada 1947-1996,” *PCERII Working Paper Series*. (Edmonton: PCER, 2004), 18.

education programs. I also hope that my overall assessment of the adequacy of the citizenship education system and the conclusions I reach will at the very least stimulate additional analysis and discussion in a policy area that does not generate much attention, despite the fact that it affects many people as well as the future and well-being of our nation.

Chapter Two

The Evolution of Citizenship Policy and Programs: 1945-2005

2.1 Introduction

The first step that needs to be taken before one can assess the adequacy of the current citizenship education system in Canada, and offer potential improvements to it, is to examine the lengthy journey taken to get where we currently stand today. The main objective of this chapter is to chart the evolution of the policy and programs of citizenship in general as well as citizenship education in Canada from the end of World War Two in 1945, which coincides with the influx of immigration to Canada, up until the present time, in which immigration levels continue to remain relatively high.

This historical overview sheds light on the instability and uncertainty long associated with citizenship education policy in this country. In general, citizenship has long been a policy area that has received fluctuating levels of support from the federal government. Financial support for these programs has long been viewed as being insufficient, despite what is generally believed to be the growing importance of citizenship in this country. In terms of political support, these programs have long suffered from a lack of leadership and an inability amongst politicians to agree on what objectives need to be pursued via legislation. This chapter outlines the historical uncertainty and difficulties associated with citizenship in Canada. It shows that over time the importance of citizenship in government circles has diminished as the profile of immigration and multiculturalism has been heightened. On the whole, it reveals that the evolution of general citizenship policy and programs has not been favourable to the development of citizenship education in Canada.

The chapter consists of three major sections devoted in turn to the following: the creation of the Citizenship Branch in 1945 as a response to the interest in Canadian citizenship after World War Two and its work thereafter; the influences behind the Citizenship Acts of 1947 and 1977, as well as the attempts to enact new citizenship legislation years later; and the key citizenship education programs introduced during this time period.

2.2 The Citizenship Branch

Before an examination of the Citizenship Branch can be made, I believe it is important to discuss what the federal government's role in citizenship policy and programming was leading up to the years prior to the end of World War Two in 1945. The federal government played an active role in citizenship during these turbulent times, and it is during these times where one can witness the seeds of citizenship education being sown in Canada. At this particular point of time, Canada employed a number of restrictive policies towards immigrants, most notably among them the denial of voting rights to various segments of the population. However, "by 1940 almost one fifth of the Canadian population was of origins other than British or French"², which required the federal government to pursue a new strategy regarding citizenship. Citizenship was later being promoted by the federal government as a way of encouraging patriotism and of mobilizing support in Canada for the war effort. This promotion occurred through a variety of activities sponsored by the federal government. "Within this range of activities fell a set of initiatives designed to develop a sense of Canadianism among members of the so-called 'foreign-born' population and a related set of initiatives meant to educate

² Reva Joshee, "Citizenship and Multicultural Education in Canada," in *Diversity and Citizenship Education: Global Perspectives*, ed. James A. Banks (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 132.

‘old-stock’ Canadians about the threat that prejudicial attitudes posed to national unity”.³ The work of the Advisory Committee for Cooperation in Canadian Citizenship (CCCC), established in 1941 to advise the Minister of National War Services, was particularly useful here. The mandate of the CCCC sought to accomplish two things: “first, to inform ‘new Canadians’ about government policy, and, second, to inform ‘old stock’ Canadians and the government about the concerns of ‘new Canadians’”.⁴ Therefore, for the purposes of this paper, citizenship education for newcomers to Canada was initially associated with knowledge of and support for government policies. It is also here where we begin to see an emphasis on cultural diversity developing in this field of study.

As the War was drawing to a close in 1945, some federal officials felt that there was a need to continue the work of the CCCC and of the Nationalities Branch, which had operated within the Department of National War Services and was responsible for ethnic affairs. The interest in Canadian citizenship continued to grow across the country, due largely in part to the surge in the levels of immigration taking place as the end of the War was in sight. This upward trend resulted in government officials working closely with external bodies such as the Canadian Council of Education for Citizenship, “a national voluntary organization that brought together educators with an interest in citizenship issues”⁵, to prepare to expand the focus of citizenship and citizenship education across Canada.

³ Reva Joshee, “Citizenship and Multicultural Education in Canada,” in *Diversity and Citizenship Education: Global Perspectives*, ed. James A. Banks (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 138.

⁴ Reva Joshee, “The Federal Government and Citizenship Education for Newcomers,” *Canadian and International Education for Newcomers* vol.25, no.2 (December 1996), 110.

⁵ Reva Joshee, “Citizenship and Multicultural Education in Canada,” in *Diversity and Citizenship Education: Global Perspectives*, ed. James A. Banks (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 132.

The Nationalities Branch was renamed the Citizenship Branch as soon as the War ended in 1945 to reflect the increased priority accorded to citizenship policy in Canada. The Branch, located in the Department of the Secretary of State, was the central hub of activity for citizenship initiatives and sought to rectify past policies that were found to drive “various racial groups into closed section organizations rather than in inducing them to participate in general Canadian life”.⁶ The work of the Branch fit in perfectly with the Department of the Secretary of State, whose responsibilities were:

to promote effective citizenship among immigrants to Canada and Canadians through projects designed to foster mutual understanding and cooperation among groups in Canada; to grant citizenship and provide evidence thereof; to assist in the continuing development of federal cultural policy and programmes, to encourage and support artistic and cultural projects of national significance which are complimentary to or outside the concern of the federal cultural agencies; to provide planning and organization of various official and public events and celebrations, and advice on questions of precedence and protocol; to ensure the equality of status of Canada’s two official languages in federal government institutions and to encourage their continued use and development in Canadian society at large; to assist in the coordination of federal policies of education support and research in the universities and educational institutions of Canada; and to provide translation and simultaneous interpretation services to the Government and its agencies.⁷

Frank Foulds, the first director of the newfound Citizenship Branch, then sought to embark on a vision that saw the Branch playing the role of a “‘liaison agency’, fostering citizenship after the formal [citizenship] certificates and ceremonies were completed”.⁸ The Branch was therefore given a mandate by the federal government to promote their vast citizenship program similar to the vision Foulds intended, with its objectives designed

⁶ Leslie A. Pal, *Interests of State: The Politics of Language, Multiculturalism and Feminism in Canada*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993), 78.

⁷ Canada, Secretary of State, “Secretary of State: Departmental Programmes and Affiliated Agencies,” (no date), 1.

⁸ Pal, 78.

to reinforce Canadian identity and unity; to encourage cultural diversification within a bilingual framework; to preserve human rights and fundamental freedoms; to increase and improve citizenship participation; and to develop meaningful symbols of Canadian sovereignty.⁹

To this end, the Branch was provided with the resources necessary to achieve this mandate.

Sufficient resources at that time in the Branch were dedicated towards citizenship education activities, where “in addition to developing and distributing curriculum material, it also provided grants to the [Canadian Citizenship] Council (and later other organizations) to engage in educational activities”.¹⁰ The Branch was also active in establishing partnerships with key stakeholders, working with fellow government agencies such as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the National Film Board, as well as with voluntary organizations such as the Canadian Association for Adult Education and the Canadian Teachers’ Federation.

The introduction of the Citizenship Act in 1947, which will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter, served to increase the responsibility of the Citizenship Branch. Secretary of State Paul Martin Sr. envisioned the Act as providing “an underlying community of status for all our people in this country that will help bind them together as Canadians”.¹¹ There was a growing sense in the corridors of government that Canadian citizenship needed to be recognized as distinct from British citizenship. The Branch was therefore charged with the task of promoting this new sense of citizenship to newcomers to Canada, with a particular emphasis on rights and responsibilities, “of how

⁹ Canada, Secretary of State, “Secretary of State: Departmental Programmes and Affiliated Agencies,” (no date), 2.

¹⁰ Reva Joshee, “Citizenship and Multicultural Education in Canada,” in *Diversity and Citizenship Education: Global Perspectives*, ed. James A. Banks (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 139.

¹¹ Pal, 79.

government works, and of the great traditions of constitutional liberty and even justice that are the root and source of our individual liberty.”¹² However, the Citizenship Act did present a number of obstacles for the Branch as well, finding itself in a crowded policy field and thus competing with other departments and agencies for resources, particularly those that were primarily concerned with immigration. By the end of the 1940s and at the beginning of the 1950s, the Branch was being forced to operate with much more limited resources, and found itself relegated to producing and distributing information materials for newcomers regarding details for applying for citizenship as well as conveying to them the Canadian way of life. It is here where we begin to witness the degradation of the role of citizenship within the federal government.

In 1950, the Citizenship Branch was shifted over to the newly created Department of Citizenship and Immigration, as Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent agreed with the sentiment that it had been “apparent for some time that the relationship between the Citizenship Branch and the Immigration Branch should be as close as possible, so that uniformity of policy and treatment could be achieved and overlapping of services avoided”.¹³ St. Laurent was adamant that the Immigration Branch, then housed in the Department of Mines and Resources, needed to be moved so as to devote more attention to the increasingly complex nature of the portfolio. It was then decided that the Citizenship Branch would be an ideal partner for Immigration to work with. At the start, the Branch focused its activities mainly on its relations with the ethnic community, “but as the operations of the Immigration Branch expanded from 1950 onwards, its direct

¹² Tracey Derwing and Reva Joshee, “Citizenship Education for Adult Immigrants in Canada 1947-1996,” *PCERII Working Paper Series*. (Edmonton: PCER, 2004), 3.

¹³ Freda Hawkins, *Canada and Immigration: Public Policy and Public Concern*, Canadian Public Administration Series, (Montreal & London, McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1972), 95.

responsibility for immigrants, which the Citizenship Branch did not have, drew the Immigration Branch further into the settlement and integration areas.”¹⁴ It is here where we begin to witness tensions developing between the citizenship and immigration portfolios.

The Citizenship Branch felt somewhat encroached upon by the Immigration Branch in this new department, and thus felt a need to re-organize itself. The Branch now had three divisions:

a liaison division concerned with the coordination of citizenship training programs sponsored by provincial departments of education and national organizations and societies; an information division responsible for the preparation and distribution of material to the foreign language press, and to organizations and individuals requesting information of a general citizenship character; and a research division, which was to produce citizenship training manuals and data relating to ethnic and cultural groups.¹⁵

Essentially, their goal at this point in time was to help foster good citizenship for all Canadians, both old and new.

In order to achieve these goals, newcomers had to be educated to understand and accept the Canadian way of life. At the same time, established Canadians had to be prepared to accept newcomers so that the latter would be welcomed and therefore feel a sense of belonging to the broader Canadian community.¹⁶

Even with limited resources, citizenship education was acknowledged as a priority area by the Branch.

In the early part of the 1960s, the Citizenship Branch continued to be “lost in the labyrinthine bowels of a department whose responsibilities had grown steadily with the surge in immigration”.¹⁷ As a result, the Branch continued to be plagued by limited

¹⁴ Hawkins, 97.

¹⁵ Pal, 82.

¹⁶ Reva Joshee, “Citizenship and Multicultural Education in Canada,” in *Diversity and Citizenship Education: Global Perspectives*, ed. James A. Banks (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 140.

¹⁷ Pal, 94.

resources as well as a lack of leadership. This also affected the Branch's ability to redefine its goals and objectives in a department that required rapid adaptation to the growing complexities facing it. In fact, the Branch was on the verge of being disbanded until the election of Lester Pearson and the Liberals in 1963. The Liberal government ordered a thorough review, via a White Paper on Immigration, of the Citizenship Branch,

which started in 1964 and which was part of a larger effort involving the whole of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, led to the recognition and acceptance of a new and more appropriate set of priorities for the Citizenship Branch. With the creation of the Department of Manpower and Immigration early in 1966, the Branch became, once again, part of the Department of the Secretary of State.¹⁸

This move revitalized the citizenship function of the federal government. The Citizenship Branch was moving towards a greater role "in social and community development, assisting the Department [of Manpower and Immigration] in dealing with problems relating to community acceptance of immigrants but having no specialized immigration interest".¹⁹ Pearson had instead made cultural affairs a central priority of his new government, and provided the Citizenship Branch with a mandate to engage the public by providing programs that focused on fostering cultural development and citizen participation, which is essentially the core of what citizenship education programming is all about. This much needed clarity and direction allowed the Branch to coordinate more effectively with the provinces and community organizations in the development of citizenship education programs. These programs were primarily concerned with knowledge about the Canadian way of life and of the surge of interest in cultural diversity.

¹⁸ Hawkins, 98.

¹⁹ Hawkins, 154.

In the latter part of the 1960s, more government reorganization took place which affected the mandate of the Citizenship Branch. The Department of Manpower and Immigration wanted to restrict its focus to immigrants as individuals, being concerned primarily with issues of employment. It was proposed that the Department of the Secretary of State

would be more concerned with the social, political, and cultural integration of immigrants. The Citizenship Branch would continue to work with the provinces and voluntary organizations in the provision of classes for immigrants in language training and citizenship.²⁰

The Branch was becoming overloaded with responsibilities and once again found itself in the position of lacking the resources and manpower to fulfill this new mandate. Several high-ranking officials within the Branch were not thrilled with undertaking these additional responsibilities. In fact, the Department of the Secretary of State virtually ignored the additions to its mandate,

except in relation to language training in which it simply carried out, without innovation, the requirements of the language training and textbook agreements concluded with the provinces, and the continuation of a small grants program to voluntary agencies.²¹

Little to no communication or co-ordination existed between the Secretary of State and the Department of Manpower and Immigration, which resulted in confused objectives and ineffective programs. There was also renewed discussion regarding the possible abolition of the Branch if it could not handle its newfound responsibilities. Morale amongst the staff, therefore, was at an all-time low.

The election of Pierre Trudeau saved the Citizenship Branch from potential extinction in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Trudeau envisioned the Secretary of State

²⁰ Hawkins, 155.

²¹ Hawkins, 364.

and the Citizenship Branch playing an important role in more than just general citizenship issues, expanding into emerging policy areas such as youth and women's issues. The Branch had long desired to play a role in issues of social development, and Trudeau granted its wish. The reasons behind this expansion of responsibility were "the importance of national unity for the Trudeau government and the rising tide of 'citizen participation'".²²

The Department of the Secretary of State and the Citizenship Branch within it was the subject of numerous Cabinet proposals seeking to invigorate the citizenship function of government. These proposals dealt with five policy objectives that sought "to reinforce Canadian identity and unity; to encourage cultural diversification within a bilingual framework; to preserve human rights and fundamental freedoms; to increase and improve citizenship participation; and to develop meaningful symbols of Canadian sovereignty".²³

As far as citizenship education programs were concerned, these objectives meant a shift "from an activist orientation emphasizing cultural diversity to a focus on volunteerism and volunteer participation".²⁴ These programs, as far as newcomers to Canada were concerned, were now geared towards providing the skills necessary to become active participants in society and helping them become confident in using those skills. In short, the goal was citizenship promotion.

Later in the 1970s, the momentum behind citizen participation had stalled in government circles. With the increased promotion of citizenship came "the dawning realization that citizens' groups funded and supported by the state might become a third

²² Pal, 101.

²³ Hawkins, 365.

²⁴ Reva Joshee, "Citizenship and Multicultural Education in Canada," in *Diversity and Citizenship Education: Global Perspectives*, ed. James A. Banks (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 143.

pillar of critics of government programs and policies, joining the opposition parties and the media”.²⁵ The federal government instead chose to move away from an emphasis on diversity and citizenship participation towards one of national unity and dealing with the separatist threat in Quebec. Also, the work of the Citizenship Branch suffered from numerous personnel changes as well as organizational in-fighting regarding policy choices. Still, “while the Citizenship Branch thereafter lost some of its élan, and the government as a whole lost interest, the roots of ‘citizen participation’ among groups and organizations themselves were now firmly established”²⁶, particularly with respect to official language minority groups and multiculturalism, the impact of which will be explored later in this study.

Citizenship and citizenship education received renewed attention once again in the 1980s as a result of the patriation of the Constitution and the adoption of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Programs now focused on a number of core concepts of citizenship including “freedoms, justice, due process, dissent, the rule of law, equality, diversity and loyalty”.²⁷ The federal government’s introduction of “More of a Welcome Than a Test”, which will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter, was emblematic of their attempts to revitalize citizenship education. The Secretary of State also commissioned a census of citizenship education programs across the country, seeking to identify ways of improving the slate of programs being offered. Recommendations that ensued included increased funding for staff training and

²⁵ Pal, 119.

²⁶ Pal, 123.

²⁷ Reva Joshee, “Citizenship and Multicultural Education in Canada,” in *Diversity and Citizenship Education: Global Perspectives*, ed. James A. Banks (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 144.

production of educational materials, as well as an increased emphasis on networking and partnerships with the voluntary sector.

In the 1990s, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration was created and it remains the home of citizenship to this day. In 1992, the federal government introduced Language Instruction for Newcomers (LINC) programs, and since that time “it has been the policy of the federal government that introductory English as a Second Language classes focus on language for integration.”²⁸ A hallmark of this program is the transfer of responsibility for the education and promotion of citizenship values, rights and responsibilities from the federal government to the local and voluntary sectors, particularly language teachers. As far as citizenship education is concerned, the federal government has focused its attention primarily on processing newcomers expeditiously, and has limited its role to producing and distributing educational study materials such as “A Look at Canada”, which is a required read for all of those interested in becoming a Canadian citizen.

2.3 Citizenship Legislation

Work on citizenship legislation in Canada commenced as soon as the Citizenship Branch was established after the end of World War Two in 1945. Although the first attempt towards passing citizenship legislation died on the order paper, it was introduced again in 1946, where it was subsequently passed by Parliament and later to take effect in 1947 as the Citizenship Act. Paul Martin Sr. describes the importance of the adoption of the legislation in the post-war years in these words:

Sectional differences and sectional interests must be overcome if we are to do our best for Canada. Citizenship means more than the right to vote; more than a

²⁸ Tracey Derwing and Ron I. Thompson, “Citizenship Concepts in LINC Classrooms,” *PCERII Working Paper Series*, (Edmonton: PCER, 2005), 2.

right to hold and transfer property; more than the right to move freely under the protection of the state; citizenship is the right to full partnership in the fortunes and future of the nation.²⁹

The legislation was a direct response to the increased presence of immigrants in Canada after the end of the War and also spoke to the need for all Canadians, young and old, immigrant and non-immigrant, to join together so that “a constructive national consciousness [can] be built”³⁰, as asserted by Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent upon the passage of the Act.

Prior to the 1947 legislation, citizenship was widely regarded in Canada as a British concept. Newcomers to Canada from outside of the Commonwealth nations were subject to the 1914 Naturalization Act, which required such citizens to reside in Canada for at least five years and to demonstrate within that time frame that they could exhibit qualities associated with good citizenship. After that time period had passed, those citizens would then be able to partake in the privileges associated with being a citizen of Canada. Immigrants from Commonwealth countries, on the other hand, were already considered to be British, and thus were able to enjoy those rights upon their arrival. The 1947 Citizenship Act, therefore, was a clear break from past legislation as the government attempted to shift the focus on citizenship amongst the public from Great Britain to Canada. The Act went on to set clear guidelines on who could become a citizen, how to acquire citizenship, and how one could lose citizenship.

The 1947 Citizenship Act was very important with respect to citizenship education because it provided the federal government with the authority to design

²⁹Greg Wood, “Introduction,” in *From Subjects to Citizens: A Hundred Years of Citizenship in Australia and Canada*, (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2004), 2-3.

³⁰David Smith, “Indices of Citizenship,” in *From Subjects to Citizens: A Hundred Years of Citizenship in Australia and Canada*, (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2004), 22.

programs in that field. As far as newcomers to Canada were concerned, the Act “gave an opening to citizenship advocates, many of whom were associated with the adult education movement in Canada, to develop and implement a variety of programs based on an activist orientation to citizenship”³¹, with a particular emphasis on relaying to immigrants the importance and acceptance of unity and cultural diversity in Canada. The federal government felt it could play an important role in assisting these advocates by developing promotional and teaching materials that would help guide newcomers through the citizenship process upon their arrival to Canada. Such materials would describe in great detail the Canadian way of life as well as how democracy in Canada functions.

Revisions to the 1947 legislation were enacted several years later in the form of a second Citizenship Act, which took effect in 1977. A new Citizenship Act was deemed necessary largely due to the need to adapt previous citizenship legislation to the changing needs of Canadian society, as well as to tout the emerging role of multiculturalism in Canadian society as a positive trend. The ultimate goal of the 1977 legislation was to establish that Canadian citizenship was a right and not a privilege. The option of maintaining dual citizenship and reducing the waiting period for application for Canadian citizenship from five years to three were also included in the legislation so as to make Canadian citizenship more appealing to immigrants.

In the years that followed, a number of attempts have been made by governments, both Liberal and Conservative, to introduce new citizenship legislation in Canada. The hallmarks of these citizenship debates have been a stunning lack of urgency to pass legislation, despite an acknowledgment that new legislation is needed, and differences

³¹ Reva Joshee, “Citizenship and Multicultural Education in Canada,” in *Diversity and Citizenship Education: Global Perspectives*, ed. James A. Banks (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 132.

between the House of Commons and the Senate³² as to what direction new citizenship legislation should take.

The attempts to create a new Citizenship Act began in 1987 under the Progressive Conservative government led by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. The P.C. government had three goals in mind for the citizenship legislation it wanted to introduce:

The first was to eliminate or revise some of the problematic criteria and procedures for granting, refusing, and revoking citizenship. The second was to render the Citizenship Act consonant in wording and spirit with the provisions in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms that had been entrenched in the Constitution Act, 1982 regarding the various rights and freedoms of citizens. The third was to foster a stronger sense of national identity and national unity.³³

These policy goals were the basis of a white paper commissioned by the federal government entitled “Citizenship 87: Proud to be Canadian”. This paper tackled a number of issues with respect to citizenship, such as revocation of citizenship, qualifications to become a Canadian citizen, and the ensuring of equal treatment in the granting of citizenship. However, this particular attempt to reform citizenship legislation “was almost immediately overshadowed by and subordinated to both the constitutional reform agenda of the Meech Lake Accord and the Charlottetown Accord, and even some statutory reform initiatives”³⁴, such as the Multiculturalism Act of 1988. The Mulroney government promised to revisit citizenship legislation later in its mandate, but they never did and soon went on to lose power in 1993 to the Liberal Party.

While serving as the Official Opposition, the Liberals had long dogged the Progressive Conservatives about their inability to enact new citizenship legislation. While

³² For a more detailed examination of these differences, please see Carma Cornea, “Canadian Citizenship Policy: A Study of Two Parliamentary Committees”, (M.A. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1997).

³³ Joseph Garcea, “The Third Phase of the Canadian Citizenship Project: Reform Objectives and Obstacles,” in *Continuity and Change in Canadian Politics: Essays in Honour of David E. Smith* (Scarborough: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 196.

³⁴ Garcea, 199.

serving as the governing party, the Liberal government was certainly “more productive than its Progressive Conservative predecessor in producing and processing legislation to overhaul the 1977 Citizenship Act, [but] it was not successful in enacting any of it despite several major efforts for more than a decade prior to the 2004 election”.³⁵

In its attempts to enact new citizenship legislation, the Liberals were guided by three policy goals, which included:

enhancing the integrity of the citizenship system by improving policies and procedures for granting, refusing, revoking, and annulling citizenship to enhance protections against potential abuses both by those who treated it as a ‘citizenship of convenience’ for personal economic benefits and those who posed a threat either to personal or national security; enhancing safeguards for the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizenship candidates and naturalized Canadians pursuant to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms; and enhancing national identity and unity through the articulation and transmission of shared citizenship identity and values.³⁶

The Liberals attempted to pass such legislation on three occasions between 1998 and 2003; the content in each of the bills was similar, but unfortunately the results were similar. On all three occasions, the proposed legislation died on the order paper. In the end, the Liberals failed in their quest to pass citizenship legislation, just like their predecessors.

The failure to revise the 1977 Citizenship Act lies in a

“political vortex of interests and imperatives created by the contending preferences of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders within the citizenship and immigration policy community and the political dynamics of the legislative and electoral cycles of Parliament”.³⁷

It is somewhat disappointing to see that citizenship legislation is seemingly not a priority to pass through Parliament before election time, but the larger contributor to the inability

³⁵ Garcea, 201.

³⁶ Garcea, 205.

³⁷ Garcea, 213.

to pass citizenship legislation is the rather marked positions taken on the subject by both the Senate and the House of Commons. The two chambers have long been unable to agree on what objectives need to be pursued in potential revisions to existing legislation.

The Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, chaired by Senator Noel Kinsella, issued a report in 1993 entitled “Canadian Citizenship: Sharing the Responsibility” which contained several recommendations regarding revisions to existing citizenship legislation in Canada. The Senate took on this task in the wake of the failures of the Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords, placing “considerable value on the citizenship policy and program as a means of fostering a greater degree of national identity, harmony and unity”.³⁸ This report sought an update to existing citizenship legislation, calling for an Act that could reflect “the pluralist, officially bilingual and multicultural nature of Canadian society and that it provide a clear statement of citizenship rights and responsibilities”.³⁹ As far as amendments to existing legislation were concerned, this was the only recommendation offered.

The remainder of the recommendations in the Senate report has Senator Kinsella’s fingerprints all over it. Those recommendations are “rooted in his belief that the federal government had to be much more proactive in promoting citizenship among all Canadians, and not just newcomers, by expanding the scope of citizenship education”.⁴⁰ The Senate Committee strongly believed that citizenship legislation needed to include added measures that encouraged citizens to build skills such as public participation and decision making. Emphasis on these skills via citizenship education and

³⁸ Garcea, 201.

³⁹ Senate, Report of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Canadian Citizenship: Sharing the Responsibility*, May 1993, 14.

⁴⁰ Garcea, 201.

promotion, the Senate Committee argued, would help citizens become more active in the governance and well-being of Canada. The Committee suggested that these skills should be reflected in school curriculum, both for children and newcomers, as it is their contention that Canada “cannot exist or prosper without sustained dialogue about public problems and aspirations”.⁴¹ It is suggested that such skills could be obtained through a renewed emphasis on Canadian studies and educational materials, where students could learn more about the makeup of Canadian society, experiences of different segments of the population in Canada and the role Canada plays in the world community.

In 1994, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration released its own report on potential revisions to citizenship legislation entitled “Canadian Citizenship: A Sense of Belonging”, chaired by M.P. Judy Bethel. This House of Commons committee report was quite the opposite from the report released by its counterparts in the Senate as it “devoted most of its recommendations to statutory amendments and only a few to matters of citizenship administration and programming”.⁴² Although this report was mainly concerned with issues of residency and the tightening of criteria with respect to the granting and revoking of citizenship, there are a few recommendations in particular worth mentioning. The House Committee suggested the inclusion of a declaration of the vision and core principles associated with Canadian citizenship to any legislation introduced to the House. The Committee notes that Canada “is changing rapidly, and some perceive an increasing fragmentation of Canadian society. In the face of this, our Declaration must stress our common Canadian

⁴¹ Senate, *Canadian Citizenship: Sharing the Responsibility*, 15.

⁴² Garcea, 202.

values, the values that unite us rather than divide us”.⁴³ The values that would be noted in such a declaration would include equality, tolerance, unity and respect. Any potential declaration would have to identify the rights associated with citizenship, such as the right to vote and the right to mobility within Canada, as well as the responsibilities associated with citizenship. The Committee placed considerable emphasis on two components with respect to responsibilities: knowledge and participation. Potential citizens have a responsibility to familiarize themselves with the regions of Canada, our values, our history, our contributions and our institutions. Participation, it is recommended, needs to be regarded as more than just voting; “some participate in the community through volunteer work, membership in organizations working for the common good and being a helpful neighbour, to name just a few such activities”.⁴⁴ This particular view of participation is one that the Committee strongly believes needs to be advocated.

The House Committee also addresses the issue of the knowledge of Canada and of an official language as a requirement for gaining citizenship status. They recommend waiving those requirements on compassionate grounds when merited, especially to those potential citizens who make a concerted effort to learn a new language, but struggle to fulfill the requirements as a result. As for the testing of knowledge of Canada and language for citizens who do not struggle with learning an official language, the Committee hopes that “the tests would not be so simple as to trivialize the importance of knowing something about Canada”.⁴⁵ In essence, attaining citizenship should not be

⁴³ House of Commons, Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, *Canadian Citizenship: A Sense of Belonging*, June 1994, 5.

⁴⁴ House of Commons, *Canadian Citizenship: A Sense of Belonging*, 7.

⁴⁵ House of Commons, *Canadian Citizenship: A Sense of Belonging*, 25.

regarded as easy; the passing grade should be relatively high and the questions should be of a challenging nature.

A more recent attempt in introducing citizenship legislation occurred in 2005 with another report issued by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration entitled “Updating Canada’s Citizenship Laws: It’s Time”, chaired by M.P. Andrew Teledgi. This report answers a number of questions posed by then-Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada Joseph Volpe. The Committee again reaffirmed the need for a declaration that addresses rights and responsibilities associated with citizenship in any new legislation as well as the need for able applicants to demonstrate knowledge of Canada and of one of its official languages as a requirement for gaining citizenship. The one notable difference in this particular set of recommendations concerns the role of citizenship judges. With the adoption of citizenship exams, the role of citizenship judges has been greatly reduced. Many have argued that this has rendered the position of citizenship judge as purely symbolic, and even obsolete. The Committee disagrees with that assessment, recommending instead that

citizenship judges should be maintained and their duties should continue to include presiding over citizenship ceremonies and exercising discretion in respect of questions of residency and adequate knowledge in the granting of citizenship.⁴⁶

This report never garnered sufficient attention in the House of Commons, as Prime Minister Paul Martin and the Liberal government later lost their bid for re-election to the Conservative Party in early 2006.

What does the future hold for possible revisions to citizenship legislation under Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the Conservative Party? Early indications suggest

⁴⁶House of Commons, Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, *Updating Canada’s Citizenship Laws: It’s Time*, October 2005, 13.

that citizenship is not a priority of the new government's agenda. Citizenship and Immigration Minister Monte Solberg has suggested in the past that the current system is in need of evaluation and that "the previous Liberal government's target of 300,000 new immigrants to Canada each year was too high"⁴⁷, causing lengthy delays in processing applicants for citizenship and immigration. Consequently, expect a lengthy delay in the next round of citizenship legislation to take place, especially given the realities associated with a minority government in place.

Where does citizenship education stand amidst all of these attempts to create and revise citizenship legislation in Canada? In the years following the introduction of the 1947 Citizenship Act, citizenship education was only referred to implicitly; statutory changes were the focus, and one had to read between the lines to point out subtle references to citizenship education. Even when those references were identified, citizenship education did not appear to be a priority amongst the recommendations offered. Only in the Senate Committee report and the recommendations offered by Senator Kinsella is citizenship education explicitly mentioned as potentially playing an important role in increasing the value of citizenship in Canada.

2.4 Important Citizenship Education Programs (1945-2005)

Upon its inception in 1945, the Citizenship Branch felt it could best play a role in citizenship education programming by establishing partnerships with external organizations such as universities and community centres, providing these agencies with educational materials that promoted the Canadian way of life at the time. This arrangement prevailed until the 1950s, when the provinces demanded a greater say in the

⁴⁷ CBC, "Solberg hints at lower immigration target," <http://www.cbc.ca/story/canada/national/2006/05/11/immigration-target.html>

planning and delivery of these programs, especially since education was part of their jurisdiction. The Citizenship Branch preferred to work with non-governmental organizations in the design of citizenship education materials, and then provide these materials to the provinces, which would then carry out these programs. The provinces balked at this idea, and instead wanted a greater emphasis on language training; “specifically, they thought that, since the federal government was responsible for allowing new immigrants into the country, it should also be responsible for the cost of language training for these newcomers”.⁴⁸ The federal government did not buy into this argument, but the two sides reached a compromise in the latter part of the 1950s in the form of Citizenship Instruction and Language Textbook (CILT) agreements, where the federal government “agreed to provide language training manuals to the provinces. The provinces, in turn, agreed to be responsible for the distribution of citizenship materials provided by the federal government”.⁴⁹ This particular agreement, despite being disbanded in 1989 when it was found that the payments transferred to some provinces were not being used for their intended purposes, is quite noteworthy as it explicitly links citizenship education with language training in the programs being offered to new Canadians, a connection that remains evident to this very day. These agreements were also the primary contributor to citizenship education programming in Canada for several decades.

Citizenship education programming in Canada received a significant boost in the 1980s with the passage of the Constitution Act and the subsequent adoption of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. A number of citizenship education programs ensued as a

⁴⁸Reva Joshee, “The Federal Government and Citizenship Education for Newcomers,” *Canadian and International Education for Newcomers* vol. 25, no. 2 (December 1996), 112.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 112.

result of these events. The federal government created an educational document in 1985 entitled “The Canadian Citizen”, which intended to inform newcomers “about Canada’s form of government and the privileges, rights and responsibilities of citizenship”.⁵⁰ This document also provided information on a wealth of topics, ranging from political parties and elections to how legislation is passed. The booklet stresses the importance of participating in elections and of contributing ideas towards the well-being of society. The goal of this particular program is to prepare the applicant for a variety of questions that would be put to them during their interview with a citizenship court judge.

Another major initiative introduced in the 1980s was “More of a Welcome Than a Test” in 1987, a collection of citizenship-related materials sent to citizenship programs across the country.

This binder of materials contained a directory of citizenship programs and courts, a description of the process, and a discussion of ways in which instruction could move beyond the bare minimum by incorporating the principles of participatory education.⁵¹

“More of a Welcome Than a Test” was the federal government’s attempt to encourage program providers to teach more than just facts so as to better prepare newcomers for their interview with the citizenship court judge. Although well intentioned, this program faced a number of issues:

it was a cumbersome binder that was not easily reproduced, and, in many instances, the material required modification for a specific class of learners. Given that many programs utilized volunteer instructors, it was unlikely that these materials would be adapted.⁵²

⁵⁰ Canada, *The Canadian Citizen* (Ottawa: Citizenship Registration and Promotion Branch, Department of the Secretary of State, 1985), 1.

⁵¹ Tracey Derwing and Reva Joshee, “Citizenship Education for Adult Immigrants in Canada 1947-1996,” *PCERII Working Paper Series*, (Edmonton: PCER, 2004), 4-5.

⁵² *Ibid*, 5.

As far as the federal government was concerned, there just was not a financial and organizational dedication to update the material when needed, nor did they attempt to ascertain whether or not the binder was being widely-used. This program was later abandoned.

In 1992, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada introduced a new brand of citizenship education programs called Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC), which was to be delivered through English as a Second Language (ESL) classes and instructors at the community level.

It is the explicit policy of LINC that adult immigrant students not only receive language instruction, but that the content of such instruction be Canadian-based, and that LINC curricula encourage active participation in the Canadian way of life.⁵³

Essentially, the LINC program takes the view of language instruction as being “not just an essential element of human capital in accessing education and training, [but] key to their successful integration as it impacts access to employment, housing, as well as many other services.”⁵⁴ In addition, this language instruction is regarded as a perfect opportunity to teach newcomers about Canadian society, rights, responsibilities and values so that they may feel confident in participating in their new home.

What is noteworthy about the LINC program is the transfer of the bulk of the responsibility for citizenship education and promotion from the federal government to local and voluntary organizations. “The program provides funding to service provider organizations (SPOs) that offer language instruction to adult immigrants for up to three

⁵³ Tracey Derwing and Kama Jamieson and Murray J. Munro, “Citizenship Education for Adult Immigrants: Changes Over the Last Ten Years,” *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research* Vol.44, No.4 (Winter 1998), 384.

⁵⁴ John Biles and Mary-Lee Mulholland, “Newcomer Integration Policies in Canada,” (December 30, 2005), 51.

years from the time they start training. Each SPO must meet certain guidelines and benchmarks outlined by the program.”⁵⁵ Ottawa recognized that community and voluntary organizations could not bear the financial brunt of this program alone, and thus “indicated that it would be willing to fund a variety of program models; it encouraged flexibility and programs that were especially designed to meet learners’ needs”⁵⁶, such as funding distance education and television training modes of learning. LINC programs serve as the primary citizenship education classroom experience for adult immigrants to Canada to the present time.

The primary citizenship education document for all potential Canadian citizens today is “A Look at Canada”, released by Citizenship and Immigration Canada and updated on several occasions since 1995. Essentially, “A Look at Canada” is a more updated and much more thorough edition of its predecessor from the 1980s, “The Canadian Citizen”. Prior to the increased emphasis on “A Look at Canada” in the 1990s, applicants for citizenship were required to be interviewed by citizenship judges.

Judges were required to ask questions with regard to a small body of knowledge specified in the Citizenship Act, but they were free to ask other questions as well, depending on their perceptions of the language ability and educational level of the individual. This flexibility gave the judges the opportunity to make the interviews meaningful to all the applicants, regardless of their backgrounds.⁵⁷

The requirements that were stated in the Citizenship Act that needed to be demonstrated by applicants for citizenship in the interview were those regarding language and knowledge.

⁵⁵ Biles and Mulholland, 52.

⁵⁶ Tracey Derwing and Ron I. Thompson, “Citizenship Concepts in LINC Classrooms,” *PCERII Working Paper Series*, (Edmonton, PCER, 2005), 3.

⁵⁷ Tracey Derwing and Reva Joshee, “Citizenship Education for Adult Immigrants in Canada 1947-1996,” *PCERII Working Paper Series*, (Edmonton: PCER, 2004), 7.

The language requirements are (a) a sufficient command of vocabulary in one of the official languages to function in daily life and (b) an ability to comprehend and produce simple statements in the past, present, and future tenses. The knowledge requirements entail an understanding of the information conveyed in the study materials, *A Look at Canada* and *The Canadian Citizen*⁵⁸, both of which include synopses of Canadian history, geography and government.

If the judge felt as though the applicant put forth the effort to do well in the interview, he or she would be granted citizenship.

A judicial interview was how citizenship was granted until the mid 1990s, when a wave of fiscal prudence was widespread throughout the federal government. As far as the citizenship process was concerned, there was

a prevailing view that the cost of the judges' salaries was too high (approximately \$65,000 per annum). Second, a sizeable backlog of hearings had accumulated in the larger centres, particularly Toronto and Vancouver, which led to lengthy delays. The consequence of all of these factors was the elimination of the hearings and the judges' positions.⁵⁹

The remaining judges who were still under contract were left to preside over the official citizenship ceremonies. Taking the place of the interview was a written test based on the contents of "A Look at Canada", where "applicants now take a 20 question multiple choice test. If applicants answer 12 or more questions correctly, they are notified that they should come to a ceremony to take the oath of citizenship."⁶⁰ "A Look at Canada" has been revised over the years to go beyond geography and government to include topics such as environmental protection and the role played by Aboriginal peoples in Canada,

⁵⁸ Tracey Derwing, "Instilling a Passive Voice: Citizenship Instruction in Canada," in *Socio-political Aspects of ESL* eds. B. Burnaby and A. Cumming, (Toronto: OISE Press, 1992), 194.

⁵⁹ Tracey Derwing and Reva Joshee, "Citizenship Education for Adult Immigrants in Canada 1947-1996," *PCERII Working Paper Series*, (Edmonton: PCER, 2004), 8.

⁶⁰ Tracey Derwing and Reva Joshee, "Citizenship Education for Adult Immigrants in Canada 1947-1996," *PCERII Working Paper Series*, (Edmonton: PCER, 2004), 8.

and includes a section of sample study questions about various aspects of Canada that could be included in the citizenship exam.⁶¹

Currently, the federal government's approach to citizenship education is of a celebratory nature. The Department of Citizenship and Immigration sponsors Citizenship Week every October, in which the goal is to remind Canadians, new and old, about our shared values and the rights and responsibilities associated with being a Canadian citizen. During this time, the contributions of immigrants to Canadian society are highlighted, and reaffirmation of one's commitment to Canada is encouraged.

Although the disbanding of the CILT agreements in 1989 was a blow to the provincial governments with respect to federal funding and support, the provinces continue to retain jurisdiction over education and have been quite innovative in citizenship education programming in recent years. The Government of Ontario has been at the forefront of advancing citizenship education through its Ministry of Citizenship, which has "sponsored citizenship instructor training courses in Toronto and at a TESL Canada Summer Institute in Ottawa"⁶², in addition to commissioning the creation of several educational materials to supplement those courses and aid instructors. Other provinces, particularly Alberta and Manitoba, are in the process of emulating what Ontario has started. Expect the provincial role in the development of citizenship education programs to continue to increase in the coming years, especially as the federal government continues to withdraw as a major financial and political supporter.

⁶¹ Canada, *A Look at Canada*, (Ottawa: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2004). Please see Appendices for the sample questions provided for the citizenship test.

⁶²Tracey Derwing, "Instilling a Passive Voice: Citizenship Instruction in Canada," in *Socio-political Aspects of ESL* eds. B. Burnaby and A. Cumming, (Toronto: OISE Press, 1992), 201.

2.5 Conclusion

The evolution of general citizenship policy in Canada, and citizenship education by extension, from 1945 to the present time has been one marked by instability and uncertainty.

From an administrative standpoint, citizenship and citizenship education has long been plagued by insufficient funding as well as a lack of long-term commitment and leadership from the federal government. In addition, we have witnessed citizenship become a junior partner to immigration and multicultural policy over that time. As far as citizenship education is concerned, this has resulted in programs riddled with inefficiencies and confused objectives, even neglect in some instances.

The inability to enact new citizenship legislation in the past few decades is also a hallmark of this particular time period. Although disagreements between politicians are to be expected given the environment they work in, there appears to be little common ground shared at all on the topic of reforming citizenship policy beyond the recognition that reform itself is necessary. The House of Commons prefers to revise legislation from a statutory point of view, while the Senate instead would like to see a greater emphasis on citizenship education and promotion as a basis for potential reform. There also appears to be a stunning lack of urgency to pass such legislation. Governments of both political stripes have openly declared their intentions to enact new citizenship laws, but none have delivered on their promises. One would be hard-pressed to believe that the current Conservative government will be any different from its predecessors. Therefore, the evolution of citizenship policy from a political standpoint indicates that the importance of

citizenship has greatly diminished over time, and has not been conducive to the development of citizenship education programs in Canada.

I am in agreement with Senator Noel Kinsella about the need to emphasize citizenship education as a focal point in reshaping and renewing citizenship policy in Canada. Some of the more prominent citizenship education programs were mentioned in this chapter; all were well-intentioned, but all were also far from perfect. Chapter 3 will endeavour to determine why this is the case by critically analyzing the content of the citizenship education programs offered to newcomers to Canada today, and by soliciting the opinions of key stakeholders involved with the programs, namely government officials, service providers, and perhaps most importantly of all, the students. The central question to be explored now is whether newcomers are adequately aware of what Canadian citizenship entails. Are newcomers being equipped with the skills necessary to contribute to their new society?

Chapter 3

The Current State of Citizenship Education Programs

3.1 Introduction

The timeline outlined in the previous chapter points to the federal government viewing citizenship education as little more than a short-term policy goal. This chapter will detail just how detrimental that outlook is regarding the current slate of citizenship education programs being offered across Canada. Approaching citizenship education with a short-term focus may allow governments to process newcomers to Canada at a more expeditious pace, but such a limited focus does not facilitate the creation of a well-informed citizenry, and it hinders new citizens from maximizing their potential for contribution to Canadian society.

I argue in this chapter that citizenship education programs have become increasingly depersonalized over the years, which has adversely affected the quality of the programs offered, and arguably the quality of citizenship that newcomers attain. To further illustrate this point, the opinions of citizenship education students, service providers and government officials will be solicited so as to gauge the current state of affairs in this discipline.

In general, today's citizenship education programs tend to familiarize newcomers to Canada with important facts about Canada's history, government, rights and responsibilities, and with survival English language skills. The goal of these programs is to provide newcomers with the information they need to pass the multiple-choice test required of all prospective citizens, and to provide the basic language skills needed to gain employment. But what good are these programs to newcomers after they have attained official citizenship? Another objective of this chapter will be to attempt to point

out the inadequacies associated with this limited focus regarding citizenship education in Canada, with a particular emphasis on program content.

This chapter contains three sections. The first section gives voice to the stakeholders involved in the present citizenship education system. The second section explores whether or not the current slate of programs offered across Canada provides a learning experience that is meaningful to newcomers. The third and final section of this chapter is devoted to arguing how a short-term outlook towards citizenship education adversely affects the quality of citizenship newcomers will obtain.

3.2. Stakeholders' Opinions of the Citizenship Education System

There is a widespread consensus amongst academics interested in the field of citizenship education that changes to the present system need to be made in order to improve the quality and efficiency of programs being offered to newcomers to Canada. In order to ascertain what precisely needs to be targeted for change, a survey of stakeholders who have a lot invested, both financially and personally, in the citizenship education system needs to be conducted. Such a survey needs to include government officials who design the programs, the service providers and instructors at the community level who carry out the programs, and the students who are active participants in the programs as required in order to attain Canadian citizenship. A number of concerns are shared amongst these stakeholders, and a consensus for certain types of change seems to emerge.

The reaction to the changes made in the citizenship education system in recent years amongst government officials is of a mixed variety. In a study of the change from the judicial interview to the multiple choice exam undertaken by Tracey Derwing and Reva Joshee, they found that “none of the officials [they] talked to was completely

satisfied with it, but those who were further removed from contact with the applicants were more positive than those who worked directly with newcomers.”⁶³ The ones most pleased were the bureaucrats, as the change to the multiple choice exam has allowed them to process citizenship applications in a more efficient and expeditious manner. Officials who were much closer to the programs and the policy area were not as elated as the bureaucrats who insisted upon greater efficiency. Derwing and Joshee spoke to a number of officials who were familiar with the citizenship education system both under the judicial interview as well as the multiple choice exam, and for them the difference between the two was palpable. One official remarked that

we treat these people like cattle, we herd them in for the test and we herd them through the ceremony. The meaning is lost. We have cheapened citizenship by depersonalizing it. It used to be there was a lot more emotion – now it’s paper, paper, paper. They took away all the integrity and meaning, by taking away the interview.⁶⁴

In the interview with an applicant, the judge could probe much deeper into how the applicants feel about what it means to be Canadian and how they could contribute to Canada; the test does not encourage such thoughtful introspection amongst applicants.

It is widely acknowledged that citizenship in general has not been a major priority for the federal government for some time now, which means “that there are few resources allocated to the area and that it receives little political attention.”⁶⁵ As shown in the previous chapter, the responsibility for citizenship and citizenship education has been bounced around to several departments since the end of World War Two, and interest in

⁶³ Tracey Derwing and Reva Joshee, “Citizenship Education for Adult Immigrants in Canada 1947-1996,” *PCERII Working Paper Series*, (Edmonton, PCER, 2004), 9.

⁶⁴ Tracey Derwing and Reva Joshee, “Citizenship Education for Adult Immigrants in Canada 1947-1996,” *PCERII Working Paper Series*, (Edmonton, PCER, 2004), 9.

⁶⁵ Tracey Derwing and Reva Joshee, “Citizenship Education for Adult Immigrants in Canada 1947-1996,” *PCERII Working Paper Series*, (Edmonton, PCER, 2004), 16.

the field tends to wane shortly after its transition to a new department. As the years have progressed, the amount of contact between the federal government and the educational service providers, namely the English as a Second Language community, has also diminished. It is assumed that citizenship education programs would teach newcomers both important language skills as well as about the Canadian way of life. However, funding for these programs has gradually been cut over the years as it is not seen as a priority spending area for the federal government, which adversely affects staffing and materials related to the programs being offered. In essence, this means that citizenship education programs are expected to do more with less. There is acknowledgement amongst government officials that the status quo shortchanges the education experience of newcomers to Canada, but the lack of a political will and of a financial commitment stymies any potential drive to achieve real change in these citizenship education programs. The programs also suffer largely in part from sharing a federal department with immigration, which has historically trumped citizenship when it comes to the priorities of government.

There have been a number of surveys undertaken in recent years of service providers and instructors who are charged with the task of teaching applicants for citizenship about Canada. Tracey Derwing has surveyed those involved in the programming side of citizenship education both before and after the implementation of the multiple choice exam. What Derwing found when she reviewed the feedback she received was that the quality of citizenship education remains in dire straits despite the wholesale changes made over the last decade.

Citizenship education in preparation for a judicial interview as well as for the multiple choice exam has been greatly affected by the level of financial support from the federal government and the provinces. Derwing found that “nearly every respondent felt that funding is inadequate; some programs operate solely on the basis of student fees (generally \$10.00 to \$15.00), while others receive no funding whatsoever.”⁶⁶ Such inadequate funding levels manufacture strain in a number of areas of citizenship education, particularly on the program staff. Service providers and instructors find themselves increasingly unable to handle the growing size of their classrooms, and have become quite frustrated with the lack of assistance provided to them. Also, most of the instructors are employed on a volunteer basis because the lack of funding renders service providers unable to attract instructors with a salary commensurate to their training and experience in the field. “Although the budgets for programmes utilizing volunteer instructors and coordinators can be reduced in this way, the quality of instruction is affected by an accompanying high turnover.”⁶⁷ As a result, service providers who face financial strain are now forced to hire instructors based more so on their personality and potential for conveying concepts to the students, with traits such as “an open mind, a willingness to teach in the evenings, an interest in the area, and personal experience with the citizenship process”⁶⁸ weighing heavily upon the selection process. The ability to be able to send staff away to receive additional training is also hindered by budget restrictions.

⁶⁶Tracey Derwing, “Instilling a Passive Voice: Citizenship Instruction in Canada,” in *Socio-political Aspects of ESL* eds. B. Burnaby and A. Cumming, (Toronto: OISE Press, 1992), 195.

⁶⁷Tracey Derwing, “Instilling a Passive Voice: Citizenship Instruction in Canada,” in *Socio-political Aspects of ESL* eds. B. Burnaby and A. Cumming, (Toronto: OISE Press, 1992), 196.

⁶⁸ Tracey Derwing and Kama Jamieson and Murray J. Munro, “Citizenship Education for Adult Immigrants: Changes Over the Last Ten Years,” *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research* Vol.44, No.4 (Winter 1998), 390-1.

Funding levels continue to head in a downward spiral, with many of the same concerns of the previous decade still being noted by citizenship education programmers today. The consensus amongst service providers and instructors is that they are doing the best they can with the finances provided to them, but that they are capable of greatly enhancing the educational experience of their students if only the federal and provincial governments would enhance their commitment. Unfortunately, the amount of contact between the citizenship education community and government officials has steadily decreased over time, so one should not expect such a scenario to unfold any time soon.

Service providers and instructors have been critical of the citizenship education system's narrow focus and objectives over the last decade. Back when the judicial interview existed, Derwing asked programmers to identify the main objectives of their work:

86 percent of respondents cited preparing students for the Court hearing, 26 percent said they wanted to teach something about Canada, 12 percent stated that they wanted to help their students participate in Canadian society, and 6 percent mentioned that a main objective was to improve students' English skills. Only 20 percent of the respondents identified the development of participatory skills as even a secondary objective.⁶⁹

Although some responses were driven by instructors concern over their students language proficiency and the short time frame they were given to operate, the consensus amongst the citizenship education community was that the programs were designed primarily to get the students prepared for their interview, and that there was minimal time available to teach anything about Canadian culture or participatory skills. Similarities can be found a decade later with the introduction of the multiple choice exam based on "A Look at Canada".

⁶⁹ Tracey Derwing, "Instilling a Passive Voice: Citizenship Instruction in Canada," in *Socio-political Aspects of ESL* eds. B. Burnaby and A. Cumming, (Toronto: OISE Press, 1992), 197.

Many organizations that used to hold citizenship classes now give individuals a copy of *A Look at Canada* and counsel them to study it on their own. Several agencies have compiled lists of multiple-choice questions and answers based on the content of *A Look at Canada*, which they give to applicants in lieu of a citizenship preparation course.⁷⁰

A decade later, the focus of these courses remains primarily on test preparation, and little else.

Another common concern expressed by service providers and instructors over the course of a decade has been dissatisfaction with the course materials provided to them, with the main complaint being that the course content in those materials is static, unimaginative and therefore does not engage students in more meaningful discussions about what it means to be a Canadian citizen. “The topics of geography, history, levels of government, voting, and the rights and responsibilities of Canadian citizens are the mainstay of the classroom”⁷¹ across the country; however, the static nature of these topics does not allow instructors to be creative in their presentation to students, raising fears that students might become disinterested in Canadian issues after the course is complete and they have attained official citizenship.

In some cases, service providers and instructors have noted that the educational materials distributed to them tend to add to the confusion that most students were dealing with before they enrolled in the program. The information presented in “The Canadian Citizen” as well as in its predecessor “A Look at Canada” is done so in a manner that “makes them far too difficult to understand for all but the most proficient students of

⁷⁰ Tracey Derwing and Kama Jamieson and Murray J. Munro, “Citizenship Education for Adult Immigrants: Changes Over the Last Ten Years,” *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research* Vol. 44, No.4 (Winter 1998), 386.

⁷¹ Tracey Derwing, “Instilling a Passive Voice: Citizenship Instruction in Canada,” in *Socio-political Aspects of ESL* eds. B. Burnaby and A. Cumming, (Toronto: OISE Press, 1992), 197.

English.”⁷² In cases where visual aids would serve to help familiarize those who have difficulty with English with the concepts being presented, they are either hard to decipher or simply unavailable in the first place. In fact, “an overwhelming majority of respondents said that they were sorely in need of visual materials such as large, good quality photographs, maps and charts.”⁷³ A few instructors have gone out of their way in recent years to find additional materials to supplement those provided to them by the federal government so as to enhance the learning experience of their students. “These individuals often felt that this supplemental information was essential to help students to become participating, integrated Canadian citizens, even though local information cannot be tested in the nationally-oriented citizenship test.”⁷⁴ Such additional materials would take the form of photocopied handouts from textbooks and articles or pictures from magazines and newspapers. Service providers and instructors have also indicated an interest in utilizing other teaching methods beyond that of lectures and reading, such as videos and class trips to important Canadian institutions, but insufficient funding and the short time frame of the courses works against the introduction of these approaches.

In recent years, there has been a greater realization in the citizenship education community, amongst both government officials and service providers, that

an integrated approach to content and the development of English language skills seems warranted, since without access to an official language, no amount of knowledge regarding citizenship issues is of very much use. That is, comprehension of the political system, rights and responsibilities is an essential

⁷²Tracey Derwing, “Instilling a Passive Voice: Citizenship Instruction in Canada,” in *Socio-political Aspects of ESL* eds. B. Burnaby and A. Cumming, (Toronto: OISE Press, 1992), 196.

⁷³Tracey Derwing, “Instilling a Passive Voice: Citizenship Instruction in Canada,” in *Socio-political Aspects of ESL* eds. B. Burnaby and A. Cumming, (Toronto: OISE Press, 1992), 196.

⁷⁴Tracey Derwing and Kama Jamieson and Murray J. Munro, “Citizenship Education for Adult Immigrants: Changes Over the Last Ten Years,” *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research* Vol. 44, No.4 (Winter 1998), 389.

component of citizenship, but unless one has access to an official language, it appears virtually impossible to participate actively in Canadian society.⁷⁵

The introduction of the LINC program through the English as a Second Language community in 1992 is the most recent attempt to address this problem and helps somewhat in alleviating some of the concerns raised by instructors.

Prior to the introduction of the LINC program, ESL courses had “an emphasis on employment issues and very little in terms of general social content. The intent of the LINC policy was for language teachers to promote the development of citizenship values.”⁷⁶ The language of the classroom literally changed from one of learning how to gain employment upon arrival to Canada to one of learning how to transition into becoming a Canadian citizen, with a particular focus on imparting to the students the values that all Canadians share.

LINC providers and instructors have identified a number of positive developments in the field of citizenship education, showing that some of the concerns of the past decade are slowly starting to be rectified. Chief amongst the positive changes has been a recognition that citizenship courses can offer more than test preparation services for their students. One instructor told Derwing and Thompson in a survey of LINC instructors that they “have never considered it our role as LINC teachers to prepare students for the citizenship exam, but we do feel it is part of the program to develop attitudes, skills, and knowledge that are essentially Canadian”⁷⁷, in addition to equipping students with essential English language skills. The curriculum had adapted in many

⁷⁵Tracey Derwing, “Instilling a Passive Voice: Citizenship Instruction in Canada,” in *Socio-political Aspects of ESL* eds. B. Burnaby and A. Cumming, (Toronto: OISE Press, 1992), 196.

⁷⁶Tracey Derwing and Ron Thompson, “Citizenship Concepts in LINC Classrooms,” *PCERII Working Paper Series*, (Edmonton, PCER, 2005), 2.

⁷⁷Tracey Derwing and Ron Thompson, “Citizenship Concepts in LINC Classrooms,” *PCERII Working Paper Series*, (Edmonton, PCER, 2005), 11.

cases to include topics such as Canada's cultural diversity and certain traits of cultural behaviour exhibited in Canada, "such as what to do if your neighbour's father dies, or when it is appropriate to shake someone's hand."⁷⁸ Citizenship instruction in the LINC program is also evolving beyond the lecture format in many instances, with a greater willingness amongst instructors to engage the students in meaningful discussion on a wide array of topics central to Canadian citizenship, as well as experiencing Canadian citizenship up front and close via activities outside the classroom, such as touring government buildings and local institutions.

Most involved with the LINC program are happy with the contributions it has made to citizenship education, but some frustrations within the community continue to linger. Providers and instructors continue to lament the lack of contact they have with government officials, meaning that there is little coordination as to what the curriculum should contain. As a result, teachers set up their courses as to how they think they can best serve their students' needs, meaning that some students will get a better education in language than citizenship, and others more so in citizenship. Some instructors feel that the success of LINC is in fact "based less on how well the curriculum has been prepared than on how good the teachers are."⁷⁹ Instructors continue to complain that the quality of educational materials is seriously lacking, with teachers taking a greater initiative in finding materials of their own to use in the classroom. Some instructors also cited problems associated with language proficiency of their students and the time restrictions of their course. One instructor mentioned to Derwing and Thomson that "there is not

⁷⁸Tracey Derwing and Ron Thompson, "Citizenship Concepts in LINC Classrooms," *PCERII Working Paper Series*, (Edmonton, PCER, 2005), 10.

⁷⁹ Tracey Derwing and Ron Thompson, "Citizenship Concepts in LINC Classrooms," *PCERII Working Paper Series*, (Edmonton, PCER, 2005), 12.

remotely enough time to develop language competence to a level where citizenship can become a topic.”⁸⁰ As a result, instructors do not have sufficient time to talk about more controversial topics such as involvement in foreign conflicts, and when the topics are brought up in class by students, they lack the language skills to develop a cogent argument for or against a certain position. The fear amongst instructors is that discussing controversial issues may be too soon for many of their students, and that citizenship education needs to continue to stick with the basics first and foremost. Still, most involved with LINC are on the whole pleased with what they have accomplished to date, while acknowledging that improvements still need to be made.

Ultimately, the feedback and opinions of the newcomers to Canada who take part in citizenship classes are of utmost importance in gauging whether or not the citizenship education system is working, and is of immense help in determining possible changes. For the most part, students who are enrolled in the citizenship education system “want to know about Canada. They want to know about the environment, so that they can establish themselves and become Canadian citizens.”⁸¹ Unfortunately, surveys of applicants for Canadian citizenship, such as the one conducted by Derwing and Joshee in 2004, indicate that this is not happening. Much of the disappointment that students harbor in the current citizenship education system lies in the multiple choice exam. Most of the students surveyed by Derwing and Joshee complained that the test was too easy and that it did not probe more deeply into why they wanted to become Canadian citizens. One student said that

⁸⁰Tracey Derwing and Ron Thompson, “Citizenship Concepts in LINC Classrooms,” *PCERII Working Paper Series*, (Edmonton, PCER, 2005), 12.

⁸¹ Tracey Derwing and Ron Thompson, “Citizenship Concepts in LINC Classrooms,” *PCERII Working Paper Series*, (Edmonton, PCER, 2005), 11.

an interview with a judge would be better. A judge could determine the real intentions of a person. The questions should be aimed at people's real feelings for the country. This country would be built better with people who want to improve it – a test can't get at those issues.⁸²

Another applicant complained that the test was not very challenging despite its importance in determining who is eligible for Canadian citizenship:

The test was too easy; you should know everything, for example, about the economy. People must know about multiculturalism. It should be more subjective – not the same questions everywhere. An interview would be better.⁸³

Responses such as these indicate a genuine willingness of most newcomers to Canada to learn more about what it means to be a Canadian and how they could best contribute to Canada. They want to be able to discuss this in more depth than the test allows with their educators and their fellow students. Answering questions such as those posed by the Citizenship Instruction Review Project by 1987⁸⁴ rather than those posed by “A Look at Canada” would go a long way in helping newcomers realize just what it is to be a Canadian citizen. It is very heartening to see that most newcomers do not want to take the easy route to citizenship by simply memorizing “A Look at Canada”, which provides them with the short-term information they need to pass the exam but provides little on how to be a good citizen in the long-term after the exam. Any potential changes to the citizenship education system should involve extensive consultation with immigrants themselves.

The major concern shared by all three groups of stakeholders who have a vested interest in the citizenship education system is that it is becoming increasingly

⁸² Tracey Derwing and Reva Joshee, “Citizenship Education for Adult Immigrants in Canada 1947-1996,” *PCERII Working Paper Series*, (Edmonton, PCER, 2004), 10.

⁸³ Tracey Derwing and Reva Joshee, “Citizenship Education for Adult Immigrants in Canada 1947-1996,” *PCERII Working Paper Series*, (Edmonton, PCER, 2004), 10.

⁸⁴ See Appendix B for the full list of questions developed by the Citizenship Instruction Review Project that were intended to help newcomers to Canada realize what it means to be a Canadian citizen.

depersonalized. The field suffers from both political and financial neglect, which greatly diminishes the quality of the programs it offers to immigrants. As a result, there are fears that newcomers are being shortchanged regarding their education and integration into Canadian society. The next section discusses some potential prescriptions which could help to ease those concerns, with a particular focus on educational strategies that could be employed in the classroom to maximize the learning experience of students.

3.3 Potential Improvements to the Citizenship Education System

In terms of potential positive impact on citizenship education programs in Canada, the biggest changes need to be initiated by the federal government, which has been identified as a major obstacle both financially and politically to improving citizenship education throughout this study. The most immediate impact that could be made by the federal government is that of increased funding, which would help to provide citizenship education programs with the flexibility and resources necessary to be able to deliver both quality language and citizenship instruction to newcomers. As it stands now, programs across the country are finding it increasingly difficult to provide those services in an effective manner, with some even in danger of ceasing operations altogether because they lack adequate resources to continue on. In a time where immigration levels in Canada continue to rise and as more and more people are interested in becoming Canadian citizens, the status quo as far as funding is concerned is just not acceptable.

The federal government has indicated a willingness in the past to fund a variety of program models, such as those expressed in an internal study of immigration policy and program development in 1991: “Different forms of training responsive to client needs –

full time, part-time, classroom-based, workplace-based or neighbourhood-based training –will be identified locally...televised training, home study, and other distance education models will also be explored.”⁸⁵ Such a financial commitment will give the citizenship education program staff the time and the tools necessary to teach more effectively, fulfill the objectives that the federal government has set out to achieve in this field, and will help to further equip newcomers to Canada with the skills necessary to participate and contribute to Canadian society. It is a necessary investment to make in order to ensure prosperity and to foster good citizenship in Canada for years and years to come.

In order for such changes to take effect, citizenship education programming and even general citizenship policy as a whole needs to be embraced as a priority policy area that requires more attention than it has been getting. If the topic is not being given its due at the Cabinet table or even at the departmental level, there will not be any momentum to see substantial changes implemented. Senator Kinsella has taken a leadership role in this area in the Senate, but there needs to be a greater dialogue and increased exchange of ideas in both the House of Commons and in the public service.

The biggest criticism of citizenship education programming in Canada from those who have long surveyed the situation is that it shortchanges students when it comes to learning about Canadian culture and issues. Joshee, Derwing and Thompson are among the leading advocates calling for changes to existing programs. They believe that the citizenship education classroom experience needs to adapt in a manner that allows applicants the opportunity to discuss and display their commitment to Canada, as well as talking about “competing values, current issues facing Canadians, and a deeper

⁸⁵Tracey Derwing and Ron Thompson, “Citizenship Concepts in LINC Classrooms,” *PCERII Working Paper Series*, (Edmonton, PCER, 2005), 3.

understanding of how Canada came to be the country it is today.”⁸⁶ Such a fresh perspective on citizenship education will help produce well-informed citizens, and in turn Canadian society will benefit greatly from the informed contributions these new citizens will make.

In order for this fresh perspective on citizenship education to take place, the federal government needs to acknowledge the importance of culture in its citizenship education policy. In matters regarding cultural affairs, the federal government typically plays roles in

direct support to artists and artistic endeavours (via the Canada Council and other federally-funded granting programs such as book publishing); in the creation of national cultural institutions like the CBC, the National Arts Centre and the Canada Council; [and] in law and regulation (e.g., the Canadian content rules on radio, the cultural property export review law, the laws on ownership of newspapers and TV/radio).⁸⁷

The federal government has the resources at its disposal to invest in cultural programs and must have the political will to use that capital because “the preservation of a distinctive, creative, successful Canadian culture is the key to the preservation of a distinct Canadian identity in an economically-integrated North America.”⁸⁸ Obviously, the federal government is active in promoting Canadian culture on a number of fronts, but this promotion should extend itself to include citizenship education. With immigration levels continuing to rise in Canada, this segment of the population cannot be ignored; they must be educated as to how Canada is unique and distinct from other

⁸⁶Tracey Derwing and Ron Thompson, “Citizenship Concepts in LINC Classrooms,” *PCERII Working Paper Series*, (Edmonton, PCER, 2005), 17.

⁸⁷James R. Mitchell, “Canadian Culture and Canadian Identity,” in *From Subjects to Citizens: A Hundred Years of Citizenship in Australia and Canada*, (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2004), 290.

⁸⁸Mitchell, 292.

countries so as to prevent them from seeing Canada as being an Americanized culture. They need to be aware of what makes Canada special.

There is a consensus amongst educators and service providers who specialize in citizenship education that Canadian culture needs to become a higher priority in the curriculum presented to newcomers.

For Canadians, who share a continent and one of their two official languages with the United States, the issue of culture and identity has been at times almost a national obsession. Canadians have debated and they have legislated to protect their culture and their cultural institutions; they have used public funds to subsidize artists and artistic endeavours in every domain of cultural activity.⁸⁹

Currently, the course content in citizenship education programs offers students only a rudimentary experience in this area as there is only enough time allotted to impart basic language and knowledge skills. However, citizenship education professionals believe that an increased emphasis on Canadian culture in the classroom will help newcomers forge an informed and healthy commitment to Canada, and to develop skills that will enable them to feel confident in participating in their new home. “Democracies require an encompassing community that can inspire its members with a feeling of belonging”⁹⁰; if such a focus were employed in the citizenship education classroom, there would be less time spent on the memorization of names and dates necessary to attain official citizenship and more on helping immigrants transition smoothly into Canadian society.

A number of educational professionals who back the idea of teaching matters relating to Canadian culture have devised a number of methods in which the topic could be taught and discussed in the citizenship education classroom. It is generally accepted that culture is not

⁸⁹Mitchell, 287.

⁹⁰ Francois Houle, “Canadian Citizenship and Multiculturalism,” in *From Subjects to Citizens: A Hundred Years of Citizenship in Australia and Canada*, (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2004), 218.

an object to be described...[nor] a unified corpus of symbols and meanings that can be definitely interpreted; [it] is contested, temporal, and emergent; it has an essentially changing character and process nature and is characterized as much by multivocality, diversity, conflicts and contradictions as by consistency.⁹¹

Although the topic of culture is constantly evolving and may be divisive and controversial to some newcomers upon initial exposure, it is agreed amongst educators that at the very least an effort must be made to discuss the topic with candidates for citizenship. There is no universally agreed-upon model of cultural instruction in the citizenship education community, but a number of common threads can be found to develop a strategy that could be employed in the citizenship education classroom. The educational approaches that will now be discussed all differ in terms of focus, but all work to achieve a common goal of building confidence in both teachers and students regarding cultural instruction.

Robert Courchene advocates cultural issues as needing to become a central component of education for newcomers to Canada and is guided in his approach to cultural instruction by the following characteristics of culture identified by fellow academic Louise Damen:

1. Culture is learned. If it can be learned, it can be taught and acquired.
2. Cultures and cultural paradigms change. It is more important to learn about how to learn a culture or adapt to these changes than to learn the “fact” and “truths” of the moment.
3. Culture is a universal fact of human life. No human group or society is without culture. Cultural patterns and themes are related to universal human needs and conditions.
4. Culture provides sets of unique and interrelated, selected blueprints for living and accompanying sets of values and beliefs to support these blueprints. Strong networks of relationships and meanings link these relationships and value systems. These networks provide life support systems for those who interact within them.

⁹¹ Roumiana Ilieva, “Exploring Culture in Texts Designed for Use in Adult ESL Classrooms,” *TESL Canada Journal*, Vol.17, No.2, (Spring 2000), 51.

5. Language and culture are intertwined and interactive. Culture is transmitted in great part through language; cultural patterns are in turn reflected in language.
6. Culture functions as a filtering device between its bearers and the great range of stimuli presented by the environment. The filtering device is both protective and limiting. Intercultural communicators must traverse the boundaries of their own filtering systems or screens and enter the systems of others.⁹²

Courchene is steadfast in his belief that culture needs to be the focus of instruction for immigrants. In the guiding principles listed by Courchene, I take particular notice of point number five. As mentioned previously in this paper, LINC programs in Canada attempt to instill in their students basic language skills as well as good citizenship. The addition of Canadian cultural issues to the citizenship education curriculum in LINC would be ideal as the infrastructure is already in place, and it would help to address the perceived lack of focus in LINC program content by expanding and enhancing the dialogue in the classroom amongst newcomers. Such an approach could be based on the work of E.H. Schein, as his research has led him to identify six main facets of culture: heroes and heroines; stories and myths; traditions and rituals; history; behavior norms; and values and beliefs. Although there will not be universal agreement as to what should be contained within those six points, Courchene notes that at the very least it provides an important stimulus for discussion which could be of potential benefit for a renewed direction for the citizenship education classroom.⁹³

Courchene believes that if cultural education is to become the centerpiece of any citizenship education strategy, it must take place in what he refers to as a “new cultural vision”. The core elements he proposes in his vision are of a reflective and consensus-

⁹² Robert Courchene, “Teaching Canadian Culture: Teacher Preparation,” *TESL Canada Journal*, Vol.13, No.2 (1996), 3.

⁹³ See Appendix C for Robert Courchene’s attempt to list examples of Canadian culture based on E.H. Schein’s framework.

building nature. Chief amongst his proposals is a need to re-examine our history with newcomers to Canada, to openly discuss moments where we as a nation have discriminated against others and how we have learned from our mistakes through legislation. As a result of those discussions, it is Courchene's hope that we can better understand how Canadian values have been shaped over the years and how immigrants have contributed to that process, particularly through the introduction of their culture into our own. Ultimately, Courchene's vision "adheres to the view of our country as represented in our constitution, but [it is] also a vision that allows for people and groups to belong to the country in different ways."⁹⁴ Courchene would like to see this new cultural vision adopted and implemented by governments of all levels in their work, just as he hopes citizens of Canada, both old and new, do in their daily lives.

It is important to realize that Canadian citizenship does not mean one should shed their prior values and beliefs once accepted as a citizen; rather, "as long as we as a people decide that we would like to open our country to new Canadians from around the world, we will be opening our doors to new ideas, new customs, new values, in short new ways of being a Canadian."⁹⁵ Also, as Canada continues to become "an increasingly multicultural society, and in an increasingly interdependent world, it might be worth emphasizing how much citizens in Canada share with citizens throughout the world."⁹⁶ The adoption of the vision advocated by Courchene would welcome an in-depth cultural discussion on new ideas and shared values rather than ignore them.

⁹⁴ Courchene, 7.

⁹⁵ Courchene, 8.

⁹⁶ Canada, Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, "Recent Work in Citizenship Theory", a report authored by Will Kymlicka for the Corporate Policy and Research Division, (Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services, 1992), 47.

However, there are a number of inherent difficulties associated with teaching cultural topics in the citizenship education classroom. The first issue identified by Courchene is that of cultural consciousness-raising of both students and teachers. The major concern here is that students will learn very little about Canadian culture if their teachers lack knowledge on the subject. As mentioned in the previous chapter, training programs to upgrade the knowledge base of teachers has not been a priority of the federal government with respect to citizenship education; teachers are expected to do the best they can with the knowledge they possess and the materials that are distributed to them in the limited time frame they are provided with. Courchene fears that such recent trends in the citizenship education classroom will render teachers unable to educate newcomers about Canadian culture and unable to adequately understand the experiences of their students.

Courchene advocates employing consciousness-raising techniques in the classroom that “place learners in the situation of the other, to help them live the experience of the other and, as a result, gain a deeper understanding of how he or she feels.”⁹⁷ One such technique that could be employed is cultural compare and contrast exercises, which is the basis of a program designed by the *Ministere des Communautes culturelles et de l’Immigration* of the Quebec government in 1994. The Ministry produced a list of values that all Quebecers share, and developed a process whereby newcomers would be able to internalize that list. That process consisted of the following steps:

1. Ask new residents to observe the day-to-day behavior of Quebecois as it relates to one of the nine values identified (e.g., respect for the environment) and then to discuss their observations and insights.

⁹⁷ Courchene, 10.

2. Compare their observations and insights with the true state of affairs to temper their judgments.
3. Lead them to reflect on the meaning of the observable behavior by tying it to the underlying values.
4. Draw their attention to the legal consequences of unacceptable behavior; tell them about their rights and responsibilities and resources as a citizen.⁹⁸

It is Courchene's hope that such an approach to cultural education, if adopted across the country, will allow both the student and the teacher to better understand the cultures they encounter in the classroom.

The second issue mentioned by Courchene as important in formulating a cultural education strategy is that of teacher preparation, because "ESL teachers need to know their own culture before they can share it with others."⁹⁹ Courchene proposes a number of ways that teachers can more effectively teach their students about culture, all of them involving additional training. Amongst the proposals regarding teacher preparation is increased access to training programs where teachers would be able to refresh themselves on topics of Canadian culture, which in turn would help enable them to better communicate the subject to their students. At the same time, such programs would be tailored to include additional training in multicultural and antiracist education so that teachers can be better prepared to teach in an increasingly diverse classroom. To this end, Courchene proposes that "all teachers should be required to spend at least one practicum in a multicultural classroom. This is especially critical for future teachers from urban and rural centers who have been schooled in predominantly white classrooms."¹⁰⁰ By extension, this additional training should allow teachers to better analyze the materials they utilize in the classroom and determine whether or not the content within is suitable

⁹⁸ Courchene, 9.

⁹⁹ Courchene, 11.

¹⁰⁰ Courchene, 12.

for their students. For example, they should be able to identify cultural stereotypes in educational materials much more effectively.

Finally, Courchene discusses tolerance and conflicting cultural visions as being a potential stumbling block in teaching Canadian culture.

One of the most difficult problems teachers face on a daily basis is how to strike a balance between what they perceive should be taught in terms of Canadian culture—they realize students are going to need this knowledge to succeed in society—and the integration of cultural knowledge from students from other countries, also part of Canadian culture.¹⁰¹

With the classroom becoming increasingly multicultural, teachers go to great lengths to ensure that they do not offend their students. Conversely, Courchene believes that teachers must incorporate overtly Canadian traditions into their curriculum because that knowledge is necessary if newcomers are to adjust to living in Canadian society and because it will help answer the many questions newcomers ask about Canada upon their arrival, allowing them to successfully navigate potentially difficult public situations that may arise once they are exposed to the Canadian way of life. However,

teaching Canadian culture in the classroom does not mean that we cannot also teach or celebrate some of the important traditions of our Chinese, Somalian, or Vietnamese students. On the contrary, universal traditions such as New Year's provide excellent opportunities for sharing our cultural knowledge.¹⁰²

Ultimately, such an approach would help highlight commonalities between cultures, and in turn students would come away with an awareness and appreciation of other cultures.

In a response to Robert Courchene's article, Virginia Sauvé comments on and adds to the list of potential problems she sees with teaching culture to newcomers. First, she finds it difficult to teach Canadian culture because the very nature of it is constantly evolving, and ultimately she finds it uncomfortable to teach culture when we ourselves

¹⁰¹ Courchene, 13.

¹⁰² Courchene, 14.

cannot fully describe it. Sauv , like Courchene, believes that an effort must be made to relate Canadian culture to students, but it must be done with great care. She recommends to teachers “that when they share their own personal views on cultural do’s and don’ts, they be sure to advise their students that there are many different and equally acceptable ways of doing things depending on the context.”¹⁰³ Students and teachers need to constantly think about and openly discuss their observations of the dynamic nature of Canadian culture.

Sauv  also launches into a tirade regarding the devaluation of the ESL professional over the past few years, especially the limited program focus and the inability to prepare teachers for the increasingly diverse nature of the classroom. She says that “traditional teacher preparation programs have given teachers techniques, but no opportunity to develop the critical thinking skills to know when such techniques are appropriate and when they are not.”¹⁰⁴ In addition to the multicultural and antiracist courses mentioned by Courchene as a basis for improved teacher preparation, Sauv  proposes additional refresher courses in Canadian history, political studies, critical thinking and conflict resolution that teachers could avail themselves of for professional development purposes, where

teachers can learn about the lives of new groups of incoming newcomers, about the languages they speak, and how those languages ‘see’ the world, the cultures in which they have lived, the experiences they have endured, the health issues they have, and the work opportunities available to them here at this time.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Virginia Sauv , “Working With the Cultures of Canada in the ESL Classroom: A Response to Robert Courchene,” *TESL Canada Journal* Vol.13, No.2 (1996), 18.

¹⁰⁴ Sauv , 19.

¹⁰⁵ Sauv , 19-20.

Also, Sauv  recommends that consideration be given to employing more immigrant educators amongst the staff, so as to help accelerate the learning experience of the students in the classroom and to help provide alternative points of view in the cultural discussions that ensue.

Sauv  notes that perhaps the biggest obstacle of all in attempting to integrate cultural education into the classroom is that of limited time and resources. She finds this frustrating as there is so much that newcomers to Canada need to know, such as

to know how to deal with racism when it occurs. They need to know how to deal with injustice in the workplace when it happens. They need to know how to solve health problems that threaten to commit their lives to the misery of social assistance forever. They need to know how to understand their children when they come home with ideas and behaviors that are totally foreign to everything they have ever known¹⁰⁶, just to name but a few possible instances.

In a response to Sauv , Courchene says that educators cannot stand idly by just because it will take a lot of hard work to overcome the obstacles before them. Rather,

our challenge as a profession and a society is to find an effective means of sharing our cultural knowledge with new Canadians, so that they may act on it, internalize it, transform it, and return it to us in a new form that also incorporates the content of their first culture.¹⁰⁷

ESL professionals are counted upon to play a big role in acculturating newcomers to Canada so that they will feel comfortable participating in and contributing to society, and they cannot shy away from that responsibility no matter how difficult the task may be. Experimentation with certain educational approaches can make the difference in creating a worthwhile learning experience for their students.

Roumiana Ilieva and Mari Haneda both advocate a cultural education strategy where students effectively determine the classroom experience, with teachers serving

¹⁰⁶ Sauv , 23.

¹⁰⁷ Robert Courchene, "A Response to Virginia Sauv ," *TESL Canada Journal* Vol.13, No.2 (1996), 25.

mainly as facilitators of discussion. Ilieva suggests that students take a lead role in discussing Canadian culture by acting as participant observers or ethnographers.

By paying close attention to everyday interaction in observed social settings and by keeping records of what they have seen and their thoughts and feelings in these situations, students will be equipped with material to explore in classroom discussion with a view to voicing their experiences, searching for possible reasons behind those experiences, and starting to recognize the symbolic and contextual meaning of everyday verbal and nonverbal behavior.¹⁰⁸

Essentially, such a strategy seeks to empower the student into exploring the complex nature of Canadian culture, where they would discuss their findings with their cohorts and ultimately draw their own conclusions from their experiences, rather than impose a certain set of talking points upon them. Ultimately, it is hoped that the diversity of opinion in the classroom will challenge students as to their own cultural assumptions and help them become more aware of their present cultural surroundings and how they can actively participate in those settings.

In addition to wanting students to become participant observers of Canadian culture, Haneda proposes that they also need to develop into observant participants at the same time. After actively participating in and reporting on a variety of cultural activities, students need to be able to answer a number of questions about their cultural observations, such as “(a) What do/did you see? (b) What is/was happening? (c) How does this relate to your lives? (d) How did you react to that? Is this a problem for you? and (e) How do you plan to deal with situations like that?”¹⁰⁹ According to Haneda and Ilieva, answering such questions will help students to critically analyze certain aspects of

¹⁰⁸ Roumiana Ilieva, “Living with ambiguity: Toward culture exploration in adult second-language classrooms,” *TESL Canada Journal* Vol.19, No.1 (2001), 10.

¹⁰⁹ Mari Haneda, “Learning Culture through Ethnographic Inquiry: A Response to Roumiana Ilieva ‘Living with Ambiguity’”, *TESL Canada Journal* Vol.19, No.2 (2002), 94.

Canadian culture, negotiate their potential role in Canadian society and help them deal with issues that may arise from their cultural exploration such as culture shock.

As for the role of teachers in the cultural exploration approach advocated by Haneda and Ilieva, they “need to act as learners who explore culture together with their students in the classroom and with colleagues outside class.”¹¹⁰ Beyond serving as both moderators and facilitators of classroom discussion, teachers need to be able to foster critical analysis and participatory skills amongst their students and to convey to them the complex and evolving nature of Canadian culture.

Finally, Ilieva calls for a marked improvement in the quality of cultural educational materials in the classroom. As discussed previously in this chapter, a frequent criticism of the citizenship education system is that its materials are sorely lacking in terms of providing relevant information beyond historical facts and do little to engage the reader to think critically upon what they have read. Educational materials such as textbooks play a crucial role in the overall classroom experience for newcomers because “they help set the canons of truthfulness and, as such, also help recreate a major reference point for what knowledge, culture, belief, and morality really are.”¹¹¹ In a study conducted by Ilieva as to the quality of cultural instruction materials in Canada, she finds that they view cultural knowledge as “knowledge of unquestioned cultural ‘facts’ and discrete sets of behaviors” and that materials ultimately “need to be deconstructed and more open-ended questions discussed”.¹¹² If teachers and students are embracing the need for change, then so must the materials they work with. The consensus amongst the

¹¹⁰ Haneda, 97.

¹¹¹ Roumiana Ilieva, “Exploring Culture in Texts Designed for Use in Adult ESL Classrooms,” *TESL Canada Journal* Vol.17, No.2 (Spring 2000), 53.

¹¹² Ilieva., 58-59.

stakeholders involved in the citizenship education community is that the present quality of education being delivered by teachers to students is inadequate; a large portion of blame for that inadequacy must be placed on the inability of educational materials to engage those stakeholders in a more meaningful discussion about what being a Canadian entails. A greater focus on Canadian culture in said materials is necessary to rectifying the problem.

3.4 Conclusion

One of the goals of this chapter was to better understand the experiences as well as the concerns of those who are involved with the citizenship education system from the political level as well as the community level. All of the stakeholders surveyed believed that the citizenship education system is capable of accomplishing much more than it does currently and that changes to existing programs are necessary if newcomers are to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to transition smoothly into Canadian society. However, the federal government is widely regarded as an impediment to that change because of its history of neglecting citizenship education both financially and politically, regarding it as little more than a short-term priority. As it currently stands, citizenship education in Canada is painfully basic in nature; the goal of current programs provides only rudimentary information about Canada and limited language skills needed to find a job. One educator sums up the federal government's subsequent lack of leadership and innovation in citizenship education as "typically pragmatic—they don't care about the quality of citizenship instruction for adults, nor do they care about the kind of citizens they are creating."¹¹³ This critique, albeit rather harsh, is not without merit and is one

¹¹³ Tracey Derwing and Reva Joshee, "Citizenship Education for Adult Immigrants in Canada 1947-1996," *PCERII Working Paper Series*, (Edmonton: PCER, 2004), 12.

shared by many in the citizenship education community who are frustrated with the status quo. The federal government is setting a dangerous precedent for its unwillingness and inability to address the concerns of the citizenship education community; if they do not believe the citizenship education system is worth spending time fixing, then why should immigrants put forth the extra effort to be informed and active Canadians? The federal government needs to be more proactive in the field of citizenship education so as to ensure that immigrants will continue to be willing participants and contributors in Canadian society.

Another goal of this chapter was to go beyond the doom and gloom scenarios one tends to associate with citizenship education and to find some positive remedies that could help to improve the citizenship education classroom experience of newcomers to Canada. A recommendation frequently mentioned amongst academics familiar with the topic is the introduction of Canadian cultural content into existing classroom curriculum. The presentation of facts and dates is important for the citizenship exam, but that knowledge is of limited value once official citizenship has been acquired. By discussing the unique and diverse nature of Canadian culture in the citizenship education environment, newcomers can develop important skills such as critical analysis and respect for different viewpoints. If newcomers are to transition smoothly into Canadian society, citizenship education programs need to do a better job of engaging them about what it means to be a Canadian beforehand; accordingly, adjustments to the citizenship education curriculum is a step that must be taken.

As dire as it may sound in this chapter, citizenship education in Canada is not a lost cause and is not beyond repair. The citizenship education community needs to

continue to press the federal government as to its importance. It is crucial for introducing immigrants to the Canadian way of life as well as for ensuring the long-term vitality of Canada as a whole. A healthy democracy requires informed citizens who participate in society and make a variety of contributions to the well-being of the nation. This is especially important to keep in mind as far as Canada is concerned; as immigration levels continue to rise in this country, so does the potential for our democracy to grow even healthier.

Chapter 4 Conclusion

4.1 Summary of Findings

This thesis analyzed the state of the citizenship education system for newcomers to Canada from 1945 to the present with three central objectives in mind. The first objective, which was dealt with in the second chapter, was to provide an historical analysis of the evolution of citizenship education policies and programs, and citizenship policy in general. The second objective, which was dealt with in the third chapter, was to provide an assessment of the adequacy of those particular policies and programs. The third objective, which was also dealt with in the third chapter, was to provide some potentially useful prescriptions for improving the existing citizenship education system that many currently consider to be inadequate and ineffective in helping adult newcomers to learn about Canada and their roles either as permanent residents or as official citizens of this country.

Based on those central objectives, three research questions formed the basis of this study. First, what is the nature of the changes made to citizenship education policies and programs since 1945, and has the impact of those changes been beneficial? Secondly, has the citizenship education system provided newcomers to Canada with the appropriate knowledge and skills necessary to being a well-rounded citizen? Lastly, what changes are needed to the citizenship education system so as to enhance the quality of education newcomers receive regarding Canada? This concluding chapter attempts to answer these questions in a concise manner.

Citizenship policy in general, and citizenship education by extension, has undergone numerous changes since 1945; however, the problem is that many of these

changes tend to produce the same results: uncertainty and instability. The evolution of citizenship policy in Canada is marked by confused objectives, ineffective programs, inadequate resources and poor communication.

The Citizenship Branch was founded in 1945 to promote citizenship as a distinctly Canadian concept instead of a purely British one, hoping especially to capitalize on the growing interest in citizenship amongst immigrants as the War was coming to a close. The goal was to promote good, informed citizenship and to encourage participation in Canadian society. Although these goals have not been significantly altered since the Branch's inception, the ability to achieve them effectively has been. Momentum for citizenship policy initiatives tends to stall rather quickly in Canadian politics. The citizenship portfolio has switched departments numerous times since 1945, with the intention each time being that it would receive the interest and attention it is due in its new home; rarely has that been the case. Instead, citizenship finds itself competing with other emerging policy fields such as immigration and multiculturalism for political attention and vital resources. As history shows, citizenship very often loses that battle. Administratively, there is little long-term interest in advancing citizenship issues.

Amongst politicians who have an interest in citizenship policy, there is little consensus on what direction such policy should take. Senators such as Noel Kinsella believe that interest in Canadian citizenship can be renewed by employing a strategy focused on citizenship promotion and education, where "citizens must be encouraged to be politically responsible and informed of their rights, communicate their views clearly, and reflect civic dispositions in order to ensure that democratic debate concludes with the

common good being pursued.”¹¹⁴ Conversely, the House of Commons in its citizenship committee work focused primarily on statutory amendments that would help to “develop a strong, national community in Canada and clearly distinguish the legal rights of citizenship.”¹¹⁵ Additionally, recent history shows that the federal government, whether it be Liberal or Conservative, lacks in urgency to pass citizenship legislation that they promised to deliver to Canadians. From a political standpoint, the importance of citizenship policy continues to diminish.

Citizenship education programs in Canada have undergone tremendous change since 1945. Originally, they were designed to assist outside organizations in program delivery and in the development of educational materials to be used to inform new Canadians about Canadian history, society, government, rights and responsibilities. Over the years, programs have evolved to take on additional tasks such as preparing students for the questions they will encounter in citizenship interviews with judges, and later exams based on “A Look at Canada”. In recent years, programs have shifted more so to the community level and have combined citizenship instruction with language training via the LINC program, with the federal government playing a supporting role as far as resources for programs are concerned.

Although I believe that the bulk of the impact of the changes made to the citizenship education system have not been entirely beneficial, I must quote a past Parliamentary Secretary of Citizenship and Immigration who once offered the following remarks to the House of Commons:

It is important to note that what has never changed is a sense that ‘citizenship’ is about joining the Canadian family, and a great family it is. It is about sharing in

¹¹⁴ Cornea, 114.

¹¹⁵ Cornea, 117.

the values, traditions, and institutions which define us as a people and unite us as a nation and which made us the finest country in the world according to the United Nations *Human Development Report* for six years in a row. That's no coincidence. It is because of who we are and what we represent and the 'citizenship' of Canadians is part of that greatness that is ours.¹¹⁶

The essence of Canadian citizenship has not changed; what needs to change is how we communicate Canadian citizenship to those who are interested in it.

Citizenship education research in recent years has been particularly strong with regards to the solicitation of opinions from stakeholders directly involved in the citizenship education system. In this thesis, a summation of the thoughts of government officials, service providers and of students is provided, with the consensus amongst all three groups being that change is needed in citizenship education.

Government officials had a mixed reaction to changes made to the citizenship education system. On one hand, the changes made to the citizenship application process, particularly with the introduction of the citizenship multiple choice exam, benefit the bureaucracy by reducing the amount of time required to process newcomers. On the other hand, policy makers have noted that the changes have led to the depersonalization of the citizenship education system; it receives precious little in both resources and attention, and policy makers are thus expected to do more with less. As a result of this increasing depersonalization, the quality of citizenship education programs and arguably the state of Canadian citizenship in general has been adversely affected

Service providers and instructors state that they are doing the best they can with the limited resources given to them, particularly as far as the LINC program is concerned. They find financial assistance to be inadequate and are highly critical of the short-term

¹¹⁶ Micheline Labelle and Francois Rocher, "Debating Citizenship in Canada: The Collide of Two Nation-Building Projects," in *From Subjects to Citizens: A Hundred Years of Citizenship in Australia and Canada*, (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2004), 269.

focus of the content of the programs they are asked to deliver. The lack of a long-term approach to citizenship education creates strain for program staff and runs the risk of shortchanging the educational experience of students, with the fear being that students, like their federal government, will view citizenship from a purely short-term point of view.

The consensus among the newcomers to Canada that take part in citizenship education classes is that they do not feel encouraged to discuss Canada, but instead they listen to others talk about Canada. Most students are willing to learn more about Canada, but are not able, or are not sufficiently engaged, to participate. Citizenship education programming in Canada has long been dominated by the view that it should serve primarily as a test preparation service for students. Students do learn about the essentials of Canada as well as basic language skills, but are not equipped with skills to facilitate participation and critical analysis. In essence, students end up with the knowledge necessary to attain official citizenship, but once they recite the oath of citizenship they are forced to fend for themselves in a new society.

Obviously, the status quo is not addressing the wide-ranging concerns of those involved in the citizenship education community. This thesis attempted to discuss potential prescriptions that would be of potential use in addressing these concerns. Ideally, such prescriptions would view citizenship education as a long-term effort designed to provide long-term benefits to the newcomers who take part in the programs. As such, a major focus of any such changes should be placed on changes to the content and curriculum presented in the citizenship education classroom.

It is far too easy for one to sit back and claim that the ultimate cure for citizenship education lies mainly in increased funding and political attention from the federal government. Obviously both are needed if citizenship education in Canada is to be revitalized, but programming innovation is required if students are to be provided with a better quality of education than they have been receiving. The current approach to citizenship education places significant weight on learning facts rather than developing skills and thus does not engage students, or even teachers for that matter, to discover for themselves and to discuss with others the importance and uniqueness of Canadian citizenship.

Canadian culture needs to be at the forefront of a new citizenship education programming strategy. By incorporating cultural education into the existing citizenship education infrastructure, students will develop additional skills building further on the basic knowledge and language skills they already receive. The variety of cultural education techniques mentioned in the study all encourage students, as well as teachers, to take a more active role in learning about Canadian society. By observing their surroundings and sharing their findings with their peers, newcomers will acquire skills that will help them participate in their new home, to help them critically analyze situations and problems they may encounter once they are citizens, as well as instilling in them awareness and tolerance of different points of view they may encounter while living in such a diverse and unique country as Canada.

The topic of culture may be difficult to teach because of its constantly evolving nature and because of its potential for volatility in an increasingly diverse citizenship education classroom, but an effort must be made. As our democracy grows, so does the

need to have well-informed, participant citizens. The integration of cultural content into citizenship education will help to enhance the quality of citizenship that newcomers to Canada will attain.

4.2 Significance of Findings

What implications do these findings have for citizenship and citizenship education in Canada? First, I believe that these findings expose the basic, short-term focus of citizenship education policy and programming in Canada. Becoming a Canadian citizen should be considered a momentous occasion for both the recipient and the giver; unfortunately, the giver, meaning the federal government, has continued to devalue the importance of citizenship education by denying it the resources and attention required to promote a well-rounded quality of citizenship for newcomers. If newcomers to Canada are expected to play a role in their new society, then a better job needs to be done to provide them with the tools and skills necessary to play such a role. The federal government has considered citizenship education insignificant for a very long time, and that is worrisome as far as the development of new citizens and the maximization of their potential contributions to Canada are concerned. Anything less than a long-term citizenship education strategy that focuses on long-term benefits for new citizens to Canada should be considered unacceptable.

Another significant revelation of this study is the thankless, underappreciated role that citizenship educators play in providing newcomers with the information they need to know.

ESL teachers are the frontline Canadians from whom immigrant newcomers get their picture of who and what Canadians are. From [them] they learn to see

Canada through [their] eyes to some extent; they learn how to access essential services; and they learn what at least some Canadians expect of them.¹¹⁷

They do the best they can with the resources and materials provided to them, and oftentimes go out of their way to make the classroom experience more meaningful for their students, be it through innovative teaching methods, the acquisition of additional materials or by contributing to the dialogue in the citizenship education community as to how to improve citizenship education. An effort must be made to provide teachers with the additional resources and skills necessary so that they in turn can provide their students with the knowledge they need.

4.3 Areas for Future Research

Most of the existing literature on citizenship education in Canada is geared toward children more so than adult immigrants. Parents and educators have the luxury of time and patience in fostering good citizenship in their children, but the same cannot be said for newcomers to Canada. The programs in which they take part are constrained by time limits and limited resources, and thus their knowledge base is much more restricted as a result. The citizenship education policy community in recent years has been largely concerned with how best to make use of the limited amount of time they spend with newcomers in the classroom and what should areas should be a priority during that time. This final section will be devoted to what new policy options have been proposed and where future research should be concentrated.

A major problem within the citizenship education community in the past has been that “little systematic research has been carried out in the area of citizenship education, yet schools and federal departments alike bear major responsibilities for assuring the

¹¹⁷ Sauv , 20.

socialization of the population for the roles, rights and responsibilities of citizenship.”¹¹⁸

In recent years, there has been a more concerted effort in academia to rectify this problem. In 1998, a group of academics converged upon the University of Calgary to convene a meeting of the Citizenship Education Think Tank to establish a research agenda that would be designed

to assist in the development of strategies to facilitate full and active participation of diverse communities in Canadian society, in encouraging and assisting the development of inclusive policies, programs and practices of public institutions and federal departments/agencies, as well as increasing public awareness, understanding and informed public dialogue about multiculturalism, racism and cultural diversity in Canada.¹¹⁹

The goal of this conference was to re-establish the importance of citizenship education in Canada.

During the meeting of the Citizenship Education Think Tank, the academics in attendance were divided into a number of discussion groups where the asking of questions and the suggestion of ideas was encouraged so as to facilitate a dialogue on what direction citizenship education research in Canada should take. For example, one group was charged with the task of discussing the various conceptions of citizenship held by students, educators and policy makers and the various factors that influence those conceptions.

This group saw the need for large-scale survey studies which examined perceptions, dispositions, underlying concepts and values of citizenship, supplemented and complemented by qualitative studies which focused on observations of actions on the part of students, teachers, as well as actors in various types of institutions.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Yvonne Hebert et al, “Towards a Research Agenda for Citizenship Education in Canada: Final Report of the Citizenship Education Think Tank,” for discussion at a follow-up meeting of the Citizenship Education Research Network (1998), 3.

¹¹⁹ Hebert, 3.

¹²⁰ Hebert, 11.

The results of all of the group discussions were recorded and were brought to the group as a whole, where a consensus for a future direction for research was established.

The Think Tank emerged from their meetings with four major research themes: citizenship conceptions and contexts; citizenship practices; citizenship values; and citizenship skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours. “The tasks were to identify research strategies, to sketch out the research projects, to set priorities, to identify human and financial resources as well as to propose timelines.”¹²¹ All participants agreed that their research had to be proactive and of benefit not just for themselves, but for the entire citizenship education community. If not, their research would collect dust and citizenship education would remain an ignored topic. In essence, new research is needed so that a momentum for policy and program change can be initiated and to pose a greater challenge to the status quo approach to citizenship education.

Also, research that tracks and follows up on those who have been awarded official citizenship in recent years would be of great benefit to the citizenship education community. Anneke Rummens, in her work on Canadian identities, suggests that “more research might also be undertaken on identity development/formation, construction and negotiation within, among and by recent immigrant and refugee groups in Canada more generally.”¹²² To what degree did these recent immigrants to Canada develop a sense of Canadian identity, or in other words, a sense of belonging to Canada as a result of their experiences and skills acquired in the citizenship education classroom? Such research would help to ascertain where potential changes could be made so as to help newcomers

¹²¹ Hebert, 36.

¹²² Joanna (Anneke) Rummens, “Canadian Identities: An Interdisciplinary Overview of Canadian Research on Identity,” commissioned by the Department of Canadian Heritage for the Ethnocultural, Racial, Religious and Linguistic Diversity and Identity Seminar in Halifax, Nova Scotia (November 1-2, 2001), 23.

develop a stronger sense of Canadian identity while being educated about Canadian citizenship. As more and more immigrants apply for Canadian citizenship, the need for this type of follow-up research is urgent.

Citizenship education research should also look into the role played by the provinces regarding such programs. One cannot forget that while federal resources are important in the grand scheme of things, the provinces ultimately hold jurisdiction over areas of education. Joseph Garcea, James Frideres, and Reva Joshee are currently working on a project entitled “Citizenship Training/Orientation for Adult Immigrants and Refugees in the Prairie Provinces and Ontario”. The main objective of that project is to conduct an examination of the roles and responsibilities played by those provinces in citizenship education policy and programming, as well as to assess the organizational capacity of those provinces and their ability to deliver those programs efficiently and effectively. That research on citizenship education for adult immigrants will complement and build upon this thesis in a number of ways. In addition to speaking with federal, provincial and local officials familiar with citizenship education programs regarding the issues they face and whether or not they are being dealt with accordingly, they are examining what options for change are presently being considered at the governmental level and what should be done to shed the historical legacy of neglect and ineffectiveness that this thesis has associated with citizenship education in Canada.

We need to know more about the quality of education that adult immigrants to Canada receive so as to determine the quality of citizenship they attain as a result of the programs they attend. It is encouraging to see that there is an increase in interest in this very important topic in the academic community. Now more than ever, there seems to be

a genuine momentum in the citizenship education community to find ways of moving beyond the status quo. We need to maintain a dialogue on this issue, so that we do not shortchange newcomers to Canada as to the importance and uniqueness of citizenship. Immigrants have long played an essential role in the well-being of Canadian society; we need to ensure that they continue to feel confident and comfortable in making those contributions.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Citizenship Test Questions based on “A Look at Canada”

Section 1: Questions about Canada

Aboriginal Peoples

1. Who are the Aboriginal peoples of Canada?
2. What are the three main groups of Aboriginal peoples?
3. From whom are the Métis descended?
4. Which group of Aboriginal peoples make up more than half the population of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut?
5. Why are the Aboriginal peoples of Canada working toward self-government?

History

1. Where did the first European settlers in Canada come from?
2. Why did the early explorers first come to Atlantic Canada?
3. What three industries helped the early settlers build communities in the Atlantic region?
4. Who were the United Empire Loyalists?
5. When did settlers from France first establish communities on the St. Lawrence River?
6. Which trade spread across Canada, making it important to the economy for over 300 years?
7. What form of transportation did Aboriginal peoples and fur traders use to create trading networks in North America?
8. What important trade did the Hudson’s Bay Company control?
9. What did the government do to make immigration to western Canada much easier?

Confederation/Government

1. What does Confederation mean?
2. What is the Canadian Constitution?
3. What year was Confederation?
4. When did the *British North America Act* come into effect?
5. Why is the *British North America Act* important in Canadian history?
6. Which four provinces first formed Confederation?
7. Which was the last province to join Canada?
8. When is Canada Day and what does it celebrate?
9. Who was the first Prime Minister of Canada?
10. Why is the *Constitution Act, 1982* important in Canadian history?

Rights and Responsibilities

1. What part of the Constitution legally protects the basic rights and freedoms of all Canadians?
2. When did the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms become part of the Canadian Constitution?
3. Name two fundamental freedoms protected by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

4. Name three legal rights protected by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.
5. List three ways in which you can protect the environment.
6. Who has the right to apply for a Canadian passport?
7. What does equality under the law mean?
8. Name six responsibilities of citizenship.
9. Give an example of how you can show responsibility by participating in your community.
10. List four rights Canadian citizens have.
11. What will you promise when you take the Oath of Citizenship?

Languages

1. What are the two official languages of Canada?
2. Give an example of where English and French have equal status in Canada.
3. Where do most French-speaking Canadians live?
4. Which province has the most bilingual Canadians?
5. Which province is the only officially bilingual province?

Symbols

1. What does the Canadian flag look like?
2. What song is Canada's national anthem?
3. Give the first two lines of Canada's national anthem.
4. Where does the name "Canada" come from?
5. Which animal is an official symbol of Canada?
6. What is the tower in the centre of the Parliament buildings called?

Geography

1. What is the population of Canada?
2. What three oceans border Canada?
3. What is the capital city of Canada?
4. Name all the provinces and territories and their capital cities.
5. Name the five regions of Canada.
6. Which region covers more than one-third of Canada?
7. In which region do more than half the people in Canada live?
8. One-third of all Canadians live in which province?
9. Where are the Canadian Rockies?
10. Where are the Great Lakes?
11. Which mountain range is on the border between Alberta and British Columbia?
12. Where are the Parliament buildings located?
13. Which country borders Canada on the south?
14. What are the Prairie Provinces?
15. Which province in Canada is the smallest in land size?
16. What is a major river in Quebec?
17. On what date did Nunavut become a territory?

Economy

1. What are the three main types of industries in Canada?
2. In what industry do most Canadians work?
3. What country is Canada's largest trading partner?
4. Which region is known as the industrial and manufacturing heartland of Canada?
5. Which region of Canada is known both for its fertile agricultural land and valuable energy resources?

Federal Government

1. Who is Canada's head of state?
2. Who is the Queen's representative in Canada?
3. What is the name of the Governor General?
4. What do you call the Queen's representative in the provinces?
5. What is Canada's system of government called?
6. What are the three parts of Parliament?
7. Explain how the different levels of government are different.
8. What do you call a law before it is passed?
9. How are members of Parliament chosen?
10. Who do members of Parliament represent?
11. How does a bill become law?
12. What are the three levels of government in Canada?
13. Name two responsibilities for each level of government.
14. What is the government of all of Canada called?

Federal Elections

1. How many electoral districts are there in Canada?
2. In what electoral district do you live?
3. Who has the right to vote in federal elections?
4. What three requirements must you meet in order to vote in a federal election?
5. What is written on a federal election ballot?
6. What do you mark on a federal election ballot?
7. How is the government formed after an election?
8. How is the Prime Minister chosen?
9. When does an election have to be held according to the Constitution?
10. Name all the federal political parties in the House of Commons and their leaders.
11. Which party becomes the official opposition?
12. What is the role of the opposition parties?
13. Which party is the official opposition at the federal level?
14. Name the Prime Minister of Canada and his party.
15. Name your Member of Parliament and the party he or she belongs to.
16. What is a voter information card?
17. Who has the right to run as a candidate in federal elections?
18. Who do Canadians vote for in a federal election?
19. What do political parties do?
20. Which federal political party is in power?
21. How are senators chosen?

22. What should you do if you do not receive a voter information card telling you when and where to vote?
23. After a federal election, which party forms the new government?

Section 2: Questions about your region

1. What is the capital city of the province or territory in which you live?
2. List three natural resources important to your region's economy today.
3. Who is your city councilor, alderperson, reeve or regional councilor?
4. What is the name of your mayor?
5. What is the name of your provincial representative (member of the Legislative Assembly, member of the provincial Parliament, member of the National Assembly or member of the House of Assembly)?
6. What is the name of the premier of your province or territory?
7. Which political party is in power in your province or territory?
8. What is the name of the leader of the opposition in your province?
9. What is the name of your lieutenant governor or commissioner?

Appendix B: Questions that Applicants for Citizenship Should Consider (National Working Group on Citizenship Education, inspired by the Citizenship Instruction Review Project)

1. Where am I in relation to the world and in relation to the rest of Canada?
2. Where am I in relation to where I came from and in relation to where others came from?
3. How do I know that I'm in Canada? What makes Canada unique?
4. What symbols are associated with Canadian identity and how do they relate to me?
5. Who lives around me? What do they do and how did they get here?
6. What sort of political and economic environment am I in? What jobs are available to me? What is the nature of the economy? What future opportunities are open to my children and me? How did this situation come about? What are the political and economic situations elsewhere in the country?
7. What facilities/services are available to me? What concerns do I have regarding them? What can I do to resolve my concerns?
8. How did Canada become a country? Who are the key players?
9. What is the government and what is my relationship to it? What autonomy does it have over me and how did that come about?
10. What are my rights? How did these rights come about? Do we all have the same rights? How can I exercise my rights?
11. What laws/rules do I have to follow?
12. Do I want to be a citizen? What will becoming a citizen enable me to do? What responsibilities do I have as a citizen?
13. What obstacles do I face as a citizen? Who else is concerned about them? What can I and others do about them?

Appendix C: Cultural Literacy List for Canadians compiled by Robert Courchene based on the framework established by E.H. Schein

1. Heroes and Heroines

Paulina Johnson
Gordie Howe
Billy Bishop
Terry Fox
Jean Vanier
Margaret Lawrence
Madeline de Vercheres

2. Stories and Myths

The Sweater/Le Chandail
Evangeline
Indian Legends (Glooskap, Hiawatha)
The Tooth Fairy
The Boogeyman
La Sagouineon

3. Traditions and Rituals

The Grey Cup
Hockey Night in Canada
Clam Bakes
Turkey Shoots
Spring Cleaning
Bees (quilting, barn building)
Church suppers and bazaars
Christmas, Easter, New Years

4. History

Arrival of Aboriginal peoples
Founding of Fort Royal
Founding of Quebec
Establishment of Red River settlement
The Riel Rebellion
Building the railroad

5. Behavior Norms

Stand in line for buses, tickets, concerts
Respect public property
Be punctual for work and appointments
Treat older people with respect—give them seat on the bus, open doors

6. Values and Beliefs

Tolerance

Multiculturalism

Biculturalism

Peace

Spirit of compromise

Time as a precious commodity, a nonrenewable resource