



**CIESC-SCECI/CSSE-SCÉE**

Comparative and International Education Society of Canada/  
La société canadienne d'éducation comparée et internationale

Canadian Society for the Study of Education/La société canadienne pour l'étude de l'éducation

**Peer Review Collection, 2011**

## Table of Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Editorial Introduction.....   | 3  |
| About the Authors.....  | 4  |
| Citizenship Education: A Unique Subject by Definition and History, Catherine Broom.....   | 7  |
| Framing Canadians in Two Citizenship Study Guides, Trevor Gulliver.....   | 16 |
| Discordant Anthems: ESL and Critical Citizenship Education, Douglas Fleming and Brian Morgan.....   | 30 |
| Conflict-Dialogue Pedagogies as Learning Opportunities for Ethnocultural Minority Immigrant Students, Christina A. Parker.....  | 43 |
| Immigrant Graduate Students, Employability and Citizenship: Transformation through Experience and Reflection, Olenka Bilash and Wenying Shi.....  | 57 |
| Holding the Talking Piece Gives me a Chance to Make a Sentence out of What I am Thinking”: Children’s Responses to the Use of Peace Circles at One Primary School in the United States, Leigh M. O’Brien..... | 79 |

**While copyright of these papers belongs to CERN, the authors retain the right to share their papers with their students and post them on their personal websites. The authors are also solely responsible for the content that is included in their papers. Scholars may quote from these papers and include them in their courses, as long as recognition is given to both the author and to CERN.**

## **Editorial Comments**

This is the first CERN Collection to be posted online. The idea for this Collection arose from the desire to provide presenters of outstanding CERN papers at CSSE with the opportunity to revise and elaborate on the work they presented at the conference, with due consideration to the feedback received from the audience. In addition, each paper was blind reviewed by two peers. The CERN Collection will be produced annually. Presenters of papers are invited to submit their papers to the editor ([catherine.broom@ubc.ca](mailto:catherine.broom@ubc.ca)) within one month after the CSSE conference. Those interested in serving as reviewers are also invited to email the editor.

Citizenship Education is a living discipline. As the first paper in this Collection argues, while Citizenship Education is associated with history, it is a unique, continually evolving subject in its own right due to its historically rooted and developed conceptions and purposes. The five papers that follow illustrate Citizenship Education's "living" nature. Scholars in the field grapple with the connections between individuals and current social, political, and economic structures in relation to the meaning of "good citizenship." The latter term embeds Citizenship Education in philosophy in the sense that it explores ethics (what is right; what should be) in contemporary society.

Canada has been home to First Nations people for thousands of years. In the last two centuries, the nation's population has changed and grown due to immigration. Early in the twentieth century, immigration policies were exclusionary. Over the century, Canada's society has been transformed through social reform and advocacy. Canada currently promotes itself as a multicultural, or pluralist, nation in which all individuals are welcomed and treated equitably. This ideal is encoded in Human Rights Codes and The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. From it, emerges the challenge of balancing cultural plurality with national coherence. Gulliver explores this tension in his paper on the content of guides that new Canadians are expected to study. His thoughtful research and analysis raises some significant questions about the relations between government and institutional policies and practices and a socially just and equitable society—a theme echoed in many of the papers contained in the Collection.

Fleming and Morgan's research complements Gulliver's paper. Through a critical discussion of the Canadian Language Benchmarks developed for teachers of new immigrants to Canada, the authors analyze the features associated with "good citizens" in government guides. These simplistic, government constructions lack many of the features that good citizens are theorized as having in current scholarly literature, such as critical thinking skills. Questions about government intentions and policies are again raised.

The second part of Fleming and Morgan's paper present a case study. The authors describe an outstanding teacher whose practice highlights the shortcomings of government documents. The study illustrates the power of good teaching to break problematic government "knowledge" (in Foucault's words) discourses. Dr. Fleming won CSSE's New Scholar Award based on this co-authored paper with Morgan.

Teaching practice thus provides opportunities to nurture a different conception of the good citizen to the one found in government guides--one that is engaged and critically minded. Parker's paper explores the potential of teaching to develop this conception of the good citizen through an investigation of practices that can best engage cultural minority children in Eastern Canada. Parker won the 2011 CERN Grad Student Paper Award for her paper.

Issues and tensions related to enacting a socially just, pluralist state are further illustrated in Bilash and Shi's case study exploration of the employability and cultural challenges faced by new immigrants and students to Canada. The paper ends with recommendations to educational institutions, individuals, and teachers that aim to address these difficulties.

Effective teaching practice is also the focus of the last paper in this Collection. The author, O'Brien, explores the strengths and weaknesses of using Peace Circles in the classroom in order to foster good citizenship. She illustrates the importance of careful and critical exploration of this teaching method and argues for particular attention to be paid to listening to and valuing the voices of all, including those of the students themselves, in order to develop an authentic democracy.

In sum, the peer reviewed papers in this Collection thoughtfully and critically interrogate the meaning, aims, and processes of Citizenship Education in the first decade of twenty first century Canada. They illustrate the subject's close connections to key values and issues in contemporary, associated life.

I hope you enjoy reading through these papers and considering their significance to Citizenship Education. I would like to extend my thanks to the reviewers and to Olenka Bilash and Lorna McLean for their support and feedback in putting the Collection together.

Catherine Broom, Editor  
The University of British Columbia, Okanagan

## About the Authors

**Olenka Bilash** is professor of second language education in the Department of Secondary Education, Faculty of Education, University of Alberta. Her research interests include: oracy and literacy development, teacher professional development, innovative teaching and learning, identity formation and transformation and global citizenship awareness education. She may be contacted at: [obilash@ualberta.ca](mailto:obilash@ualberta.ca)

**Catherine Broom** is an assistant professor at the University of British Columbia, Okanagan. She has more than 17 years of high school and university teaching experience in Canada and overseas. She has written on the history of modern schooling; Post Modern theories and methods; critical thinking; social studies history, methods, and philosophies; and local and global citizenship. She may be contacted at: [catherine.broom@ubc.ca](mailto:catherine.broom@ubc.ca).

**Douglas Fleming** is an assistant professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa. His research interests include critical citizenship theory, second language policy, and teacher agency in ESL curriculum decision making. He has been a program supervisor and curriculum writer for a variety of institutions, including Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the Toronto and Surrey School Districts and several immigrant-serving agencies. He has also been a teacher since 1984. He may be contacted at: [dfleming@uottawa.ca](mailto:dfleming@uottawa.ca).

**Trevor Gulliver** joined Bishop's University's School of Education in 2009 after completing a doctorate at University of Ottawa. His research explores issues of power and identity in ESL textbooks, with a particular interest in discursive constructions of national identity. He has taught English as a Second Language in South Korea and Canada and worked on numerous language teacher professional development projects with teachers from various countries. He is involved in the growth of the new BA Double Major in English Second Language Teaching and Secondary Education offered at Bishop's University. He may be contacted at: [tgullive@ubishops.ca](mailto:tgullive@ubishops.ca).

**Brian Morgan** is an associate professor in the Department of English at Glendon College/York University in Toronto, Canada. His research interests include research and theory on language and identity, critical EAP pedagogies, and language teacher education. He is a co-author and consultant of several curricula based on the Canadian Language Benchmarks and the recent co-editor (with Vaidehi Ramanathan) of the 2007 TESOL Quarterly special issue on *Language Policies and TESOL: Perspectives from Practice*.

**Leigh O'Brien** is a professor at the School of Education, State University of New York at Geneseo. Her research interests include autobiography in education, diversity and education (especially regarding gender and ability), and education for democracy. She has presented her work widely, at the state and national levels as well as internationally, and has authored or co-authored numerous papers and several chapters. She was co-editor of one book. She may be contacted at: [obrienl@geneseo.edu](mailto:obrienl@geneseo.edu).

**Christina A. Parker** is a Ph.D. Candidate at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto. Her research examines inclusion in peacebuilding

education and the experiences of newcomer immigrant students in Southern Ontario. She is interested in how conflict dialogue processes could work to foster a sense of inclusion for diverse identities and how such practices can challenge young people to engage in authentic dialogue and conflict learning. Currently, Christina is an instructor at Ryerson University where she teaches Conflict Resolution in Community Services. She may be contacted at: [christina.parker@utoronto.ca](mailto:christina.parker@utoronto.ca).

**Wenyng Shi** currently works as Learning Strategy Advisor in the English Language Program in the Faculty of Extension, University of Alberta. Her research interests include: immigrants' career transition and profession integration, international students' barriers and coping strategies, sessional instructors' professional development, and Chinese children's bilingual education and global citizenship awareness education.

## Citizenship Education: A Unique Subject by Definition and History

Catherine Broom, Assistant Professor, University of British Columbia, Okanagan

### Abstract

Debates about the relations between History and Citizenship Education have a long history. Currently, some scholars are supporting closer associations between History and Citizenship Education. This paper argues for Citizenship Education to maintain its own unique identity apart from that of History with reference to the definitions and histories of each subject. It argues that Citizenship Education is in danger of collapsing into History if the two subjects are too closely related. It concludes by describing how a separate and unique Citizenship Education program might be developed in school curricula.

**Key Words:** citizenship education; history; history of education

### Contemporary Interest in Citizenship Education and History

Citizenship Education is stimulating interest among scholars in a number of nations including Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Evans (2003), for example, describes several international initiatives by UNESCO illustrating a growing interest in Citizenship Education internationally. In Canada, Herbert's *Citizenship in Transformation* (2002) includes a number of perspectives on the topic. Osborne (1985, 1996, 2003, 2004, 2005), Reid et al. (2010), and Sears and Hughes (1996) and have written on Citizenship Education, as have Briley (1997), Crick (2000), Evans (2003), Froese-Germain (2004), Kilgour (1997), McKay (1997), and Yagos (2005).

Further, policy and curriculum developers have also been engaged in discussions about Citizenship Education. A study by the Council of Ministers of Education in 2001 found that Ministry policies:

...are shifting to conceptions that forefront its multi-dimensional and global character...attention to principles and practices of democratic decision-making, multiple perspectives, persisting public issues, political literacy, and purposeful participation and community involvement from the local to the global are apparent, and reflect an important shift in tone and emphasis from earlier policy emphases in Civics programs. (Evans, 2003, ¶ 26)

In British Columbia (BC), this interest has led to the development of a new Civics 11 course, dedicated to "Civic Studies." It aims to develop "good citizens" (Ministry of Education, 2005). Good citizens are described as being knowledgeable of government structures and "actively" involved in civic issues. The aim of this curriculum is:

To enhance students' abilities and willingness to participate actively and responsibly in civic life. Civic Studies 11 offers opportunities for students to deliberate individually and with others on civic matters—local to global—for the purpose of becoming informed decision makers empowered in civic action. (Ministry of Education, 2005, p. 11)

Interest in Citizenship Education is occurring at a time when the study of History Education is also being written about and advocated (Levesque, 2008; Sandwell, 2006;

Seixas, 2004). For example, the American National History Standards Project of the 1990s developed a number of National Standards for History demanding a focus on history education. In Canada, Seixas (2002, 2004) has developed a Centre for Historical Consciousness and Clarke has set up a funding and information network for history education (THEN/HIER).

As both history and citizenship education are topical and associated, scholars have explored the connections between them. Recently, some scholars have begun to support closer links between the two subjects (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Christou & Sears, 2010; Sandwell, 2006). Barton and Levstik, for example, argue that the aim of history is to develop students' citizenship in pluralist nation states: "Instead, we will ground our evaluation of history education in its potential to prepare students for participation in a pluralist democracy" (p. x). This paper argues against closely connecting History and Citizenship Education, for Citizenship Education is then in danger of collapsing into History. It makes its case by drawing on conceptual differences rooted in the history of each subject. It concludes with recommendations that explore how Citizenship Education can be understood and taught in schools as a unique subject.

### **Argument One: Citizenship Education is Conceptually Different to History**

Citizenship Education has different definitions and purposes to History. It is closely related to political science and political philosophy as it explores the connections between individuals and social, political and economic structures. It aims to teach students knowledge and particular values and attitudes about the nation in which they are living and to encourage certain types of behaviour, particularly those deemed necessary in democracies (Sears & Hughes, 1996). Thus, scholars have explored various conceptions of citizens by identifying a number of ideological positions associated with political orientations, personal characteristics, and socio, economic and cultural conditions (Reid et al., 2010). These varying conceptions understand "good citizens" to act in particular ways towards and within social-political governance forms and structures.

Sears and Hughes (1996), for example, have identified "citizen" categories ranging from passive and traditionalist conceptions to more active and transformative conceptions. These are aligned with the political spectrum, with more passive conceptions associated with conservatism and more active conceptions with liberalism. More radical conceptions tend to be associated with more left-wing political philosophies. More recently, Westheimer and Kahne (2004) have created another typology in which they identify three types of citizens: the personally responsible one, the participatory one, and the justice-oriented one.

In contrast, History comes from the Greek word "historein" and means knowledge acquired through "research" or "inquiry" into events that occurred in the past. It is the critical interpretation of documents that aims to answer a contemporary question (Collingwood, 1956). This interpretation is the product of inductive study of primary documents informed by historical procedures, tools, empathy and creative thought (Seixas, 2004; Levesque, 2008; Sandwell, 2006). Historical accounts are presented as narratives (an analytic story form), but these should be written critically and not as unfolding, "progressive" narratives. Historians should also keep in mind the interpretative nature of their inquiries, as well as the substance and the procedures of history (Levesque, 2008). History aims at expanding our understanding of ourselves: "History is 'for' human self-knowledge" (Collingwood, 1956, p. 10). Areas of historical study are broad. They are linked



to and encompass political history but may also go beyond these to explore other historical topics or themes, such as the Scientific Revolution in Europe. They can also encompass various types of history (such as social history) and can be informed by varying theoretical orientations (including race, gender and class).

## **Argument Two: Citizenship Education has a Unique History**

As Thomas Carlyle wisely observed, “The present is the living sum-total of the whole past” (Carlyle, 2011). To understand the present, we can delve into the past, for events and concepts that have occurred in the past have formed our current concepts and structures. The following section presents three brief moments in time that have been vital to developing the nature and form of Citizenship Education today.

### **i. Historical and Contemporary Philosophic Roots**

Citizenship Education’s authentic foundation can be argued to exist in political philosophy, which has long explored questions and themes central to Citizenship Education. In the West, for example, roots go back to the beginning of recorded western history. Plato (1999) argued in *The Republic* that an education matched to individuals’ abilities would create good citizens—individuals whose actions maintained a just society. Rousseau (1979) also linked education with citizenship. He felt that society was corrupt and hoped that, through a personalized education tailored to students’ developing capacities, men could be shaped into good citizens. In the twentieth century, Dewey (1916) aimed to create a continually improving democratic society in *Democracy and Education*. He defined a democratic society as one in which individuals were connected to others through shared concerns, or community-mindedness, and where groups interacted openly with others:

We find some interest held in common, and we find a certain amount of interaction and cooperative intercourse with other groups...the two elements in our criterion both point to democracy. The first signifies not only more numerous and more varied points of shared common interest, but greater reliance upon the recognition of mutual interests as a factor in social control. The second means not only freer interaction between social groups...but change in social habit -- its continuous readjustment through meeting the new situations produced by varied intercourse. (Dewey, 1916, Section 7)

### **ii. The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: Developing Modern Public Schools and Citizenship Education**

Public schools developed with industrialization and nationalism. Prussia was one of the first nation-states to establish public schools during the late 1700s. Government officials aimed to create “good citizens”—patriotic supporters of current government structures (Boyd, 1975; Cordasco, 1976). France, England, the United States, and Canada (Wilson, 1970) soon followed. Some scholars argue that these early schools aimed to inculcate values in children that would make them into good workers and passive citizens (Osborne, 1985). Textbook analysis supports this perspective (Broom, 2011). Many texts aimed to develop individuals who supported contemporary political structures and to inculcate morality, nationalism, and Christian values.

Citizenship Education, called Civics and offered as a separate course in British Columbia (which followed international trends in establishing mass public schooling [Dunn, 1980]), aimed to develop students' sense of patriotism. Students in the university, business, and manual training programs all had to study civics using the same textbook, illustrating curriculum developers' beliefs that all students had to be educated to be "good citizens."

As a new nation just patched together through legislation in 1867, some governmental officials understandably argued for the deliberate patriotic teaching of Canadian History and civics in order to build national identity (Tomkins, 1986). This was illustrated in a competition held in the late 1800s for the writing of a new textbook about the Canadian nation (Tomkins, 1986, p. 226). The winner's textbook was used in schools. These new nation-building texts conceived of good citizens as loyal to current institutions, informed about and active in political and legal institutions, and aware of their responsibilities to vote. The *History of Canada* by J. Jeffers (1884), for example, presented a positive account of the creation of the nation of Canada and much factual information on governmental structures and processes (Broom, 2011).

### **iii. The Twentieth Century: Developing "Social Studies," as Interdisciplinary Citizenship Education**

At the beginning of the Twentieth Century, social and economic changes in the United States led to advocacy for educational reform. As a result, the National Educational Association (NEA) established a number of committees to provide recommendations. One of these committees released its report in 1916 titled *The Social Studies in Secondary Education*. The report aimed to develop a contemporary course of study that would develop good citizens (Broom, 2008; Evans, 2004; Nelson, 1994). The course, labelled Social Studies, had as its main aim the creation of good citizens:

From the nature of their content, the Social Studies afford peculiar opportunities for the training of the individual as a member of society...More specifically, the Social Studies of the American high school should have for their conscious and constant purpose the cultivation of good citizenship...[to form]...“the thoroughly efficient member” of that neighbourhood...characterized...by a loyalty and a sense of obligation of his city, State, and Nation. (Nelson, 1994, p. 17)

Dunn, the report's writer, described himself as having a "long experience in civic education," and as the "Special Agent in Civic Education" at the Bureau of Education (Nelson, 1994, p. 14). The report recommended subsuming subject content (primarily History, Economics and Geography) into an interdisciplinary course that explored contemporary society and its issues using child-centred pedagogy, such as problem-based learning, in order to further the growth of the nation.

### **Citizenship Education Today**

Currently, Citizenship Education conversations (such as Evans 2003; Osborne 1996, 2003, 2004, 2005, Reid et al., 2010) illustrate its complexity at a time when pluralism, multiple identities, and multiculturalism are key concepts. For instance, in Herbert's *Citizenship in Transformation* (2002), writers agree that citizenship revolves around pluralism, the development of individuals who work for the common good, deliberation, and the creation

of a civic culture in which individuals participate and political virtues, such as freedom and equality, are protected. However, they disagree on how these are to be achieved. Some writers argue for more attention to be paid to women, labour, and natives. Others question how the conflicting needs for diversity and social cohesion can be balanced. Finally, others question the possibility of Citizenship Education to achieve its aims and see identity formation as a personal process. Evans (2003) identifies the same issues of pluralism, globalization, inclusion, multiple identities, activism, and diversity, but also adds that conceptual models and instructional suggestions aimed at developing knowledge, critical thinking, and participation have been developed.

### **Citizenship Education as a Unique Subject and Possible Pedagogies**

In short, Citizenship Education and History are complex fields within which exist a number of ideological positionings based on political, social, philosophic, and cultural orientations and aims. These varying positions intersect and conflict within and across the subjects of History and Citizenship Education and have led a number of scholars to explore the connections between the two subjects. Currently, some scholars are arguing for closely overlapping conceptions (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Christou and Sears, 2010; Sandwell, 2006). However, if the connections between Citizenship Education and History are stressed, Citizenship Education runs the risk of collapsing into History. Further, a review of the conceptual definitions, aims, and histories of Citizenship Education illustrates that it is a separate subject to that of History.

Citizenship Education should thus embrace its differences to History and recognize its aim as developing critical thinkers who contribute to a continually developing political, social, and economic entity. Student-centred pedagogies such as issues (problem)-based exploration of current society can be used. In this case, Citizenship Education can be linked to Social Studies, as in the original 1916 report. It can have open to it, under its broad interdisciplinary approach, all of the social science disciplines including History, Anthropology, Archaeology, Sociology, and Economics.

Citizenship Education, in other words, is broader than and different from (yet also linked to) History. This option provides rich opportunities for Citizenship Education to continue its own existence and purpose while being able to engage with and link to History on its own terms: Citizenship Education can draw on all the social sciences in an interdisciplinary study of contemporary political and social life with the aim of developing individuals who contribute to associated, public life and the public good, both of which are themselves complex terms that require deliberation.

### **Recommended Citizenship Education Methods**

Citizenship Education can be enriched by bringing in the social sciences and thus providing a variety of different perspectives, pedagogies and methods of study, all revolving around the concept of governance, sociocultural forms, ideologies and individuals. Oregon's high school curriculum (2003) provides a good example. It has students explore current and historical societies through the "lenses," methods and perspectives of various social sciences including Economics, Political Science, History, Geography, and Sociology. Nova Scotia's grade nine course on Atlantic Canada (Department of Education, 2003) also integrates a

number of social sciences, including Anthropology, Sociology and Law, in a contemporary study of the region using a number of themes such as identity.

Integrating the social sciences into an interdisciplinary Citizenship Education program and drawing on current work in these “living” and continually evolving disciplines can enrich the subject. For example, Anthropology studies can deepen students’ understanding of the connections between culture and forms of governance and engage them in exploring concepts such as socialization, myths, and symbols. Students can also consider issues like colonialism and racism. Methods can include participant observation and interviews. Sociology studies can explore the interrelations between social structures and formal and informal governance procedures. They can have students consider the connections between power, personality, and class and the significance of globalization and identity today. Methods can include developing and testing hypotheses through surveys or mini-experiments.

Political science can provide multiple theories and perspectives of political structures and exploration of political behaviour and the meaning of governance. Methods can include statistical analysis and interpretation as well as case and comparative studies. Economics can help students understand the significance of resources and their management, the relations between economic inequities and government, and the significance of globalization to governance at various levels. Methods can include literature reviews of policies, developing and testing hypotheses, and developing and testing models. Studies of International Relations can highlight the interactions between power, wealth, security, and terrorism and government foreign policies on key topics such as human rights. Methods can include current events discussions, documentary film making, and case studies.

Psychology can enrich students’ understanding of individual perception, motivation and behaviour, social interaction, and the influence of media. Methods can include observation and reflective self-analysis. History studies can provide understanding of the present (Collingwood, 1956); its methods, such as primary document analysis, can aid in the development of critical thinking.

All of these studies can be enriched by embedding them in experiential and authentic activities that link with the community (Broom & Bai, 2011). For example, students can lobby their local governments over a local issue of concern; they can run a “student parliament” at the school with access to discretionary funds to develop social and cultural events and political power to take part in and influence the development of school policies. Older students can take on leadership roles in nurturing younger students.

## **Conclusion**

Citizenship Education can maintain its unique identity as a subject that is separate, but linked, to History through connecting to its own conceptual definitions, aims, and history. For Citizenship Education to be most effective, however, it needs to address criticisms of its (sometimes and historically-rooted) use for deliberate patriotic education or indoctrination (Osborne, 1985, 2003, 2004; Bliss, 2002; Seixas, 2002). It can do this through having more philosophic-like aims. That is, Citizenship Education should come to embrace the past and present in a broad and rich exploration of what it means to be a “good person” (within various social-political-economic forms and thus also a “good citizen”) in historical and contemporary times, with the aim of continually improving the current society and its complex social, political and economic forms and processes. It can draw on multiple

disciplines for this study, including Philosophy to explore metaphysics and ethics. In particular, it can draw on Philosophy's long and ancient tradition of political philosophy. Questions to consider include: what is a "good person" and a "just and good society"; what is the aim of life and of individuals; what does a "successful" life look like and how is it lived; and what does a "successful" society look like and how is it achieved? Questions can also consider what governance structures are best considering our "human nature" and can critically interrogate democracy itself, as Plato did.

Plato (1999) stated in *The Republic* that democracy was one of the worst forms of government as it released people to only care about fulfilling their own pleasures:

And so he lives, I think, after this, spending money and pains and study upon unnecessary pleasures no less than the necessary...he carries on his pleasures, maintaining if you please a sort of equality among them; he gives over the role of himself to any pleasure that comes along...And not a word of truth, I said, does he receive into the fortress of his soul. (Plato 1999: book viii)

Plato believed that only tyranny, which followed on and from democracy, was worse. He argued that the best form of government was one in which philosopher-kings, educated in a fifty-year program which included Philosophy, Math, and Dialectic and first-hand experience of war, would be "forced" to serve as kings. These were, he believed, the only fit rulers. A good starting point for a critical Citizenship Education would be to begin with a critical discussion of Plato's argument and to consider what political structures best nurture and sustain individuals as well as foster "social flourishing," another term worthy of critical interrogation.

## References

- Broom, C. (2011). Change and continuity in British Columbian perspectives as illustrated in Social Studies Textbooks, 1885-2006. *The Journal of Educational Media, Memory and Society*, 3 (2).
- Broom, C. and Bai, H. (2011). Exploring service learning pedagogy as citizenship development. *The Journal of Global Citizenship & Equity Education*, 1 (1).
- Broom, C. (2008). Change and continuity: A historical study of citizenship education in British Columbian social studies guides, 1930-2006. In K. Daly et al., *learning democracy by doing: alternative practices in citizenship learning and participatory democracy*. University of Toronto: TLC, pp. 98-110.
- Barton, K. C., & Levstik, L. S. (2004). *Teaching history for the common good*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Bliss, M. (2002). Teaching Canadian national history. *Canadian Social Studies*, 36, 2, [http://www.quasar.ualberta.ca/Css/Css\\_36\\_2](http://www.quasar.ualberta.ca/Css/Css_36_2)
- Boyd, W., & King, E. (1975). *The history of western education*. London: Adam & Charles Black.
- Briley, R. (1997). In defence of history: Teaching the past and the meaning of democratic citizenship. *Canadian Social Studies*, 3 (4), 204.
- Carlyle, T. (2011). *Thomas Carlyle quotes and quotations*. Retrieved July 2011 from: [http://www.famousquotesandauthors.com/authors/thomas\\_carlyle\\_quotes.html](http://www.famousquotesandauthors.com/authors/thomas_carlyle_quotes.html)
- Collingwood, R. G. (1956). *The idea of history*. New York: Galaxy.
- Cordasco, F. (1976). *a brief history of education*. Totowa, NJ: Littlefield, Adams, and Co.
- Crick, B. (2000). *Essays on citizenship*. London: Continuum.

- Christou, T., & Sears, A. (2010). Rapprochement: toward an inclusive approach to history and citizenship education in Canada. *Canadian Issues/Thèmes Canadiens* (Winter 2010): 17-21.
- Department of Education, Nova Scotia. (2003), Global history 12. <http://www.ednet.ns.ca/pdfdocs/curriculum/globalhistory12.pdf>. Accessed November 23 2010.
- Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and education*. New York: The Free Press. [http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Democracy\\_and\\_Education](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Democracy_and_Education). Accessed 18 November 2010.
- Dunn, T. (1980). The rise of mass public schooling in British Columbia 1900-1929. In J. D. Wilson, D. C. Jones (eds.), *Schooling and society in 20th century British Columbia* (23-51). Calgary, Alberta: Detselig Enterprises Limited.
- Evans, M. (2003). Educating for citizenship in schools in Canada. *Orbit*, 33 (2), <http://proquest.umi.com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca>. Accessed 18 September 2010.
- Evans, R. (2004). *The social studies wars*. New York: Teachers College Columbia.
- Froese-Germain, B. (2004). Reflections on educating for citizenship. *ATA Magazine*, 84 (4): 26-34.
- Herbert, Y. (Ed.). (2002). *Citizenship in transformation in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Jeffers, J. (1884). *History of Canada*. Toronto: Canada Publishing Co.
- Lévesque, S. (2008). *Thinking historically: educating students for the twenty-first century*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Kilgour, D. (1997). Teaching democracy. *Canadian Social Studies*, 32 (1), 7-8.
- McKay, R. (1997). Character education: Take a closer look. *Canadian Social Studies*, 32 (1), 4-5.
- Ministry of Education, (2005). *Civic Studies 11 Integrated resource package*. Victoria, Province of British Columbia.
- Nelson, M. (Ed.) (1994). *The social studies in secondary education: a reprint of the seminal 1916 report with annotations and commentaries*. ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Servied No. ED374072)
- Oregon Department of Education. (2003). *Social sciences Grade-Level map of Oregon's common curriculum goals, content standards and eligible content* <http://www.ode.state.or.us/teachlearn/subjects/socialscience/curriculum/gradelevel/gradelevelmapping.pdf>. Accessed 2 November 2010.
- Osborne, K. (1985). In defence of history. In J. Parsons et al (eds.), *A Canadian social studies* (pp. 55-69). Edmonton: Faculty of Education Publication Services.
- Osborne, K. (1996). Education is the best national insurance: Citizenship Education in Canadian schools, past and present. *Canadian and International Education*, 25 (2), 33-58.
- Osborne, K. (2003). Teaching history in schools: a Canadian debate. *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 35 (5), 585-626.
- Osborne, K. (2004). History and social studies: Partners or rivals. In A. Sears, I. Wright (eds.), *challenges and prospects for Canadian social studies* (pp. 73-89). Vancouver: Pacific Educational Press.
- Osborne, K (2005). Teaching for civic engagement. *Education Canada*: 45 (1), 13-15.
- Plato. (1999). *Great dialogues of Plato* (W. H. Rouse, trans.). New York: Signet. (Original work published circa 386 BC)
- Reid, A., Gill, J., & Sears, A. (Eds.). (2010). *globalization, the nation-state and the citizen: dilemmas and directions for civics and citizenship education*. New York and London: Routledge.

- Rousseau, J.-J. (1979). *Emile or on education* (A. Bloom, trans.). New York: Basic Books. \ (Original work published 1762)
- Sandwell, R. W. (2006). *To the past: history education, public memory, and citizenship in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Sears, A., & Hughes, A. (1996). Citizenship Education and current educational reform. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 21 (2), <http://proquest.umi.com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca>. Accessed 29 September 2010.
- Seixas, P. (2002). The purpose of teaching Canadian history. *Canadian Social Studies*, 36 (2), [http://www.quasar.ualberta.ca/Css/Css\\_36\\_2](http://www.quasar.ualberta.ca/Css/Css_36_2). Accessed 21 July 2010.
- Seixas, P. (Ed.). (2004). *Theorizing historical consciousness*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Tomkins, G. (1986). *A common countenance: stability and change in the Canadian curriculum*. Scarborough: Prentice-Hall.
- Westheimer, J. & Kahne, J. (2004). What kind of citizen? The politics of educating for democracy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 41 (2), 237-269.
- Wilson, J.D. (1970). Education in upper Canada: Sixty years of change. In J. D. Wilson & R. M. Stamp (eds.), *Canadian Education: A history* (pp. 190-213). Scarborough: Prentice-Hall.
- Yagos, G. (2005). Educating for citizenship. *Education Canada*, 45 (4), 51.

## Framing Canadians in Two Citizenship Study Guides

Trevor Gulliver, School of Education, Bishop's University<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

Theorists of nations and nationalism understand nations as “imagined communities” (Anderson, 2006; Billig, 1995), which are constructed discursively through texts such as novels, newspapers, and, as I will argue, citizenship study guides intended for newcomers to Canada. These study guides, used in English as a second language classrooms, involve imaginings of Canada, Canadians, and Canadianness. Using concordance software, I extracted all descriptions of “Canadians” in two Citizenship and Immigration Canada study guides used in government-funded language instruction. I then sorted the descriptions of “Canadians” thematically and analyzed the frequency, variety, and assumptions of these imaginings of Canadians. I found that the study guides imagine Canadians as being diverse, prosperous, creative, and tough and as valuing diversity, equality, and military service.

**Key Words:** ESL; imagined communities; citizenship

Texts brought into classrooms intended for newcomers to Canada present students with representations of Canada and Canadians (Gulliver, 2009). They present some values as Canadian values and some behaviours as more Canadian than others. The behaviours presented as “Canadian” are positively evaluated either implicitly or explicitly. Through these nationalizing representations, such texts work to discursively construct an “imagined community” (Anderson, 2006) and invite newcomers to Canada to position themselves inside or outside of this construction.

In this paper, I discuss representations of Canadian identity in two government-produced study guides for newcomers to Canada: *A look at Canada* (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2007) and *Discover Canada: The rights and responsibilities of citizenship* (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2009). Using concordance software, I extract all references to “Canadians” in these study guides. I then identify and assign eight themes to these imaginings of Canadians: Canadians are diverse and value diversity, Canadians serve in the military, Canadians are equal and value equality, Canadians work hard and are prosperous, Canadians are proud, Canadians create, Canadians honour the Queen, Canadians are tough, and Canadians play hockey. For each theme, I describe the frequency, character, and extent of that set of representations, noting briefly where the two texts differed in their engagement with that theme.

### Literature Review

As May notes (2008), educational theorists and researchers of the social contexts in which English as a second language (ESL) is taught have long discussed and debated the connections between language, education and nationalism. In Canada, this debate has included examination of the representations of Canadian culture in language teaching texts (both ESL textbooks and study guides) intended for newcomers to Canada. Drawing upon

---

<sup>1</sup> Travel funding for presentation of this paper was provided by the Senate Research Committee of Bishop's University.



theories of nationalism that understand nations to be imagined communities constructed through texts and discourses, these representations of Canada and Canadianness can be studied as discursive constructions of a particular imagined community.

### **Nationalism in Education**

It is, in part, through education systems that discourses on national identity are presented and reproduced. Students in ESL classes are “not only learning a linguistic system; they are learning a diverse set of sociocultural practices, often best understood in the context of wider relations of power” (Norton & Toohey, 2002, p. 115). Educational institutions play a major role in defining the terms within which national identities are formed (Balibar, 2002; Bourdieu, 1991; de Cillia, Reisigl, & Wodak, 2009; McCarthy & Dimitriadis, 2005) and may present students with a limited range of social positions (Anthias, 2006; Bhambra, 2006; Yuval-Davis, Kannabiran, & Vieten, 2006). Education has, in Canada as elsewhere, served as a tool for assimilation (Derwing & Thomson, 2005; Ng, 1993, citing Clubine, 1991) and English has played a role in “cultural colonialism” in which “culture [replaces] biology as the touchstone of racial definition” (Goldberg, 2002, p. 69). Consequently, there is a need for caution when teaching “Canadian values” or “the Canadian way of life” in ESL classes.

Previous studies have identified discourses in ESL textbooks that support national policies on globalization, industrialization, economics, the natural environment, social control, and consumption (Chen, 2005; Gulliver, 2010; Lee, 2005; Liu, 2005; Suaysuwan & Kapitzke, 2005). Presentations of national culture in both practice and theory tend to posit intranational sameness while emphasizing international difference, conceiving of national cultures too homogeneously (Clark & Gieve, 2006; Guest, 2002; Ibrahim, 1999; Kubota, 1999, 2001; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Palfreyman, 2005).

### **Teaching “Canadianness”**

Published research in the field of TESOL, particularly in the Canadian context, has examined the challenges to and implications of teaching Canadian culture in ESL classrooms (Derwing & Thomson, 2005; Courchène, 1996; Fleming, 2003; Ilieva, 2000; Sauv , 1996; Thomson & Derwing, 2004). Views of culture and nation in TESOL research differ in the extent that they emphasize the ways in which culture is shared by members of a community or realized by the individual; the ways in which culture is coherent, cohesive, and stable or in flux and sometimes not consciously understood by those “within” the culture; and the ways in which culture is defined by nationhood or involves the intersections of numerous forms of social identification and groupings.

In a study of ESL textbooks used in Canada, Derwing and Thomson (2005) found that many textbooks lacked “substantive Canadian content” (p. 23) and noted that many claims about Canadian identity “could just as easily be applied to many Western countries” (p. 24). They found that a third of the texts in use contained only the most superficial references to Canada (p. 23) and could be set anywhere in North America were it not for the use of Canadian place names and images of Canadian money. Of the substantive content the textbooks did contain, Thomson and Derwing (2004) found mainly *explicit* cultural content, such as facts about Canadian geography, history, and law, with less *implicit* cultural knowledge, such as discussion of cultural values of “multiculturalism, peace, civil responsibilities” (p. 22).

## Critiquing Facts and Values Orientations

Other researchers in Canada have critiqued representations of national cultures as a set of knowable and known facts and values for their under-representation of diversity within nations, their superficiality, their central positioning of the values associated with majority cultural groups, their marginalisation of non-dominant cultural “facts and values,” and their association with a transmission mode of teaching (Courchêne, 1996; Fleming, 2003; Ilieva, 2000; Sauv , 1996).

Fleming (2003), for example, emphasizing the contested and constructed nature of national identities, cautions against treating students as passive objects, observing that “definitions of Canadian identity are changeable, multifaceted, and, most important, contested” (p. 66). He argues for an observation of the ways in which ESL curriculum and texts may encourage teachers “to conceive of their students as passive objects to be molded into a monolithic version of Canadian national identity” (pp. 65-66).

One often cited example of a text that presents Canadian culture as a set of knowable “facts and values” is *Canada: A source book for orientation, language and settlement workers* (Employment and Immigration Canada, 1991), a government-produced text intended to help second language teachers and settlement workers meet the needs of newcomers to Canada. Characterised as “a notorious set of teaching guidelines that the federal government commissioned for Language Instruction to Newcomers to Canada (LINC)” (Fleming, 2003, p. 66), this text includes notes on expected behaviour, facts about Canadian politics, history, and geography, and claims as to the values Canadians hold:

“Do not defecate or urinate anywhere other than a private toilet.”

“Canada is a federation of ten provinces ...”

“Canadians respect authority, but they demand justification for its actions.”

(Employment and Immigration Canada, 1991 cited in Derwing & Thomson, (2005, p. 47)

Such texts produce, at best, a superficial presentation of Canada and at worst bring into official discourses traces of racist depictions of immigrant behaviour.

If culture is “characterized as much by multivocality, diversity, conflicts, and contradictions as by consistency (Rosaldo, 1993)” (Ilieva, 2001, p. 7), then the view of national culture that informs ESL pedagogy and citizenship education should be one that emphasizes the ongoing construction of culture through conflicting and competing discourses. Culture, for Ilieva (2001), is “a negotiation of meanings among particular individuals in particular communities locked in an interplay of power relations” (p. 7). Such a view implies a pedagogical stance that would emphasize diversity and difference with particular attention to the ways in which certain perspectives have been silenced or marginalised. The teacher becomes neither a presenter of cultural facts nor a facilitator of investigation of shared cultural values. Rather, the teacher becomes involved in facilitating students’ attempts to develop their own voice and perspective on culture, questioning the students on their own perspectives and the assumptions they make, aggravating possible contradictions, and bringing into the discourse marginalised perspectives. Theories of nation and nationalism that understand the nation as an imagined community support citizenship education that moves beyond a facts and values orientation to the teaching of culture.

## Theories of Nation and Nationalism

Theorists of nationalism have challenged belief in the apparent objectivity of nations (Anderson, 2006; Bhabha, 1990a,b; Billig, 1995; Renan, 1882/1990). Anderson (2006) argues that nations are socio-cultural concepts or as he calls them: *imagined communities*. People believe themselves to be members of a national community despite having never met the vast majority of people in that community. They imagine themselves as sharing common traits and characteristics and believe that those traits are unique and representative of them.

To say that a nation is an imagined community should not be taken as implying that it is an imaginative community. These imagined communities “are reproduced as nations and their citizenry as nationals” (Billig, 1995, p. 6) on a daily basis through the repetition of “a whole complex of beliefs, assumptions, habits, representations and practices” (p. 6). The representation of Canada and Canadians in study guides and ESL textbooks is one example of the everyday reaffirmation of nation.

If nations are not merely *imagining* communities but *already imagined* communities, then within these communities some imaginations are more privileged than others (Stanley, 2006). Established tropes that are inoffensive to, or that articulate, dominant interests become legitimised while alternative and contradictory imaginings of nation and community become subsumed or delegitimised. Thus, descriptions of “the Canadian way of life” achieve consensus for imaginings that support current relations. They also limit alternative imaginings of Canada by reaffirming an imagination that has been widely diffused through novels and maps (Anderson, 2006), newspapers (Billig, 1995), road signs (Jones & Merriman, 2009), and language textbooks (Gulliver, 2009). These study guides for new Canadians present particular imaginings of Canadians and of Canada as an already imagined community, which should be critically reexamined in citizenship classrooms.

## Methodology and Tools

### Choice of Texts

In November 2009, the Federal Government introduced a new study guide, *Discover Canada: The rights and responsibility of citizenship* (Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), 2009), to replace the previous study guide *A look at Canada* (Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), 2007). *Discover Canada* was publicly lauded as a much-needed replacement for *A look at Canada* (Chapnick, 2009; Kitts, 2010; Granatstein, 2009). While *A look at Canada* was first published in 1977 and has been revised many times (Chapnick, 2009), the version referred to here will be the 2007 edition. I examine both study guides, in part to see to what extent the imaginings of Canadians vary between the two.

The study guides were produced for use by newcomers to Canada who are preparing to take the Canadian Citizenship test. The colourful guides introduce Canada through short texts on Canada’s history, geography, government, and regions. Oaths, anthems, flags, and images of landscapes accompany the texts. Each contains study questions to aid preparation for the citizenship test. *A look at Canada* (CIC, 2007) was widely used in Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) classes (Gulliver, 2009). *Discover Canada* (CIC, 2009) is currently recommended for preparation for the Canadian citizenship test

(Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), 2010 November). That alone makes these study guides deserving of critical analysis.

As government authored and authorized texts, however, they become even more significant. Van Dijk (2001) writes that discourses become influential when (1) they are obligatory; (2) they come from “authoritative, trustworthy, or credible sources, such as scholars, experts, professionals, or reliable media (Nesler et al., 1993)” (p. 357); (3) “there are no public discourses or media that may provide information from which alternative beliefs may be derived (Downing 1984)” (ibid.); and (4) they are unchallenged by prior knowledge. As these texts contain information needed for the Canadian citizenship test, they are “obligatory.” As government produced texts, these study guides may be thought of as coming from an authoritative, trustworthy, or credible source. The texts present discourses on Canadian identities, some of which may be unfamiliar to new Canadians making them difficult to contradict. Finally, these influential texts may shape other course materials and textbooks that could be used in ESL classes. The Toronto Catholic District School Board, for example, has produced a companion guide for teachers in LINC and adult ESL classes (Citizenship & Immigration Canada, 2011, February; Toronto Catholic District School Board, 2010). As potentially influential texts, there is an even greater need to critically examine them.

### Identifying Representations of Canadians

In order to map the ways in which these two texts construct particular identities, behaviours, and knowledges as “Canadian,” I have extracted concordances from the texts. Concordances are alphabetically arranged lists of all the examples of a specific word that can be found in a database; the extracted word is presented with a small span of surrounding words that provide a co-text (See Figure 1).

Figure 1: Screenshot of concordance for “Canadians” using AntConc concordance program



Concordances are often used in dictionaries, language teaching, and linguistic research. Concordances can be used when “investigating the characteristics associated with the use of a language feature; ... examining the realizations of a particular function of language; ... characterizing the variety of language; ... and mapping the occurrence of language features through a text” (Conrad, 2002, p. 76). These concordances may reveal lexico-grammatical patterns (Coffin & O’Halloran, 2005), which can then be analyzed for frequent collocations and evaluative language that semantically positions the keyword.

Concordance software enables analysts to quickly assemble concordances from texts. I used AntConc concordance freeware to extract from the study guides spans of texts 100 characters wide that contained the word “Canadians” and transferred my concordances to a database. Then, I coded these references to “Canadians” thematically by examining the actions, beliefs, and characteristics attributed to “Canadians” in the surrounding co-text. As these attributions infuse the term “Canadians” with meaning other than that of a group of individuals possessing legal citizenship in Canada, I see these as discursive constructions of an imagined community. In the 101 instances of “Canadians” (67 in *CIC*, 2009; 34 in *CIC*, 2007), I identified eight themes with many of the references corresponding to more than one theme. Once I had thematically coded the references to “Canadians,” I examined how the prominent themes were introduced and varied in the two study guides, with particular focus on the extracted texts.

The value of such an approach is that it enables me to identify systematically and with close reference to the text the ways in which these guides imagine a community. Concordances enable a researcher to provide close textual support for any claims made about the performances of the text. This is facilitated even more by the transferability of the text to a database for sorting and coding.

Such an approach is also limited, though, in that it ignores the many constructions of imagined community that do not contain the word “Canadians.” Texts can also construct an imagined national community in a wide variety of ways, including through the use of images such as maps or currency, through reference to specific individuals, through routine deixis, and through pronouns. I cannot claim to exhaust the representations of the imagined community of Canada in these texts, only to have identified some of the discursive constructions of “Canadians” and to have systematically grounded my interpretations of those constructions in the text.

### **Imaginings of Canadians**

The eight themes that I have identified reflect the implications and assumptions of the texts. I present these in order of the frequency with which they appeared in *Discover Canada* (CIC, 2009); the frequency of these themes differs greatly in *A look at Canada* (CIC, 2007), in which some of these themes did not appear at all. The themes include the following: (1) Canadians are diverse and value diversity, (2) Canadians serve in the military, (3) Canadians are equal and value equality, (4) Canadians work hard and are prosperous, (5) Canadians are proud, (6) Canadians create, (7) Canadians honour the Queen, and (8) Canadians play hockey. In the discussion that follows, I explore some of these imaginings of Canadians.

## Canadians Are Diverse and Value Diversity

In both study guides, Canadians are imagined as valuing and celebrating diversity: “Today, diversity enriches Canadians’ lives, particularly in our cities” (CIC, 2009, p. 25) and “Canadians celebrate the gift of one another’s presence and work hard to respect pluralism and live in harmony” (CIC, 2009, p. 8). Diversity is also something that Canadians achieve: “The prosperity and diversity of our country depend on all Canadians working together to face challenges of the future” (CIC, 2009, p. 27).

For Canadians to treat each other as equals apparently requires effort. The claim that Canadians “try to understand and appreciate the cultures, customs and traditions of all Canadians, whether they were born in Canada or came here from another country,” (CIC, 2007, p. 7) treats diversity as an achievement and assumes that inequality and discrimination against people from other cultures is a social norm that Canadians, in particular, try to overcome—that it is Canadians, in their Canadianness, that make this diversity work.

The assertions that Canada is a diverse society is supported by demographic data, which is used to emphasize both the extent to which diversity exists and the extent to which Canada has a majority population. Canada is presented as diverse by the enumeration of the populations of neither British nor French origin: “Aboriginal peoples make up about three percent of all Canadians, or roughly 790,000 people. About 69 percent are First Nations, 26 percent are Métis and five percent are Inuit” (CIC, 2007, p. 14) and “In Vancouver, 13% of the population speaks Chinese languages at home; in Toronto, the number is 7%” (CIC, 2009, p. 13).

The same texts, however, emphasize the existence of a majority population, discussing that population in terms of religious affiliations, settlement patterns, and ethnic background. These texts point to the choices, identities, and lifestyles of “the majority of Canadians” or “most Canadians”: “The great majority of Canadians identify as Christians” (CIC, 2009, p. 13); “While the majority live in cities, Canadians also live in small towns, rural areas and everywhere in between” (CIC, 2009, p. 44); “The majority of Canadians were born in this country and this has been true since the 1800s. However, Canada is often referred to as the *land of immigrants*” (CIC, 2009, p. 12); and “The largest groups are the English, French, Scottish, Irish, German, Italian, Chinese, Aboriginal, Ukrainian, Dutch, South Asian and Scandinavian” (CIC, 2009, p. 12).

These representations of a majority population and the behaviour of a majority population are then used to legitimate expectations of the behaviour of new Canadians:

English- and French-speaking people have lived together in Canada for more than 300 years. This is an important part of our Canadian identity—more than 98 percent of Canadians speak either English or French or both. You must be able to speak English or French to become a Canadian. (CIC, 2007, p. 8)

The expectation that “you be able to speak English or French” is legitimated by reference to the behaviour of the majority population. Discursive constructions of majority populations are important as they are used to legitimate practices of inclusion and exclusion as well as less formalized cultural norms.

In *Discover Canada* (CIC, 2009), 23% of themes noted imagined Canadians as being diverse. In *A look at Canada* (CIC, 2007), this theme was even more prevalent with 36% of the themes noted referencing diversity in some way.

## Canadians Serve in the Military

*Discover Canada* presents military service as a central part of Canadian identity. Canadians, we are told, serve in wars, win wars, feel proud of their victories, and honour the sacrifices of those Canadians who have died.

The study guide represents Canadians as serving in wars willingly and in large numbers: “More than 600,000 Canadians served in the war, most of them volunteers, out of a total population of 8 million” (CIC, 2009, p. 21); “More than one million Canadians and Newfoundlanders (Newfoundland was a separate British entity) served in the Second World War” (CIC, 2009, p. 23); and “Over 7,000 volunteered to fight in the South African” (CIC, 2009, p. 21).

Furthermore, Canadians win wars. Canadians took part in “victories that strengthened national pride in Canada” (CIC, 2009, p. 21) and in “the liberation of Italy in 1943-1944” (p. 23). Canadians “captured Juno Beach as part of the Allied invasion of Normandy on D-Day, June 6, 1944” (CIC, 2009, p. 23).

Canadians not only participate in wars, they honour those who have done so: “Canadians remember the sacrifices of our veterans and brave fallen in all wars up to the present day” (CIC, 2009, p. 22) and “Canadians wear the red poppy and observe a moment of silence at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month” (CIC, 2009, p. 22).

War becomes an arena in which Canadians show their national character: “On the battlefield, the Canadians proved to be tough, innovative soldiers” (CIC, 2009, p. 21); the capture of Vimy Ridge secured “the Canadians’ reputation for valour as the ‘shock troops of the British Empire’” (CIC, 2009, p. 21). Canadians are honoured for “the most conspicuous bravery, a daring or pre-eminent act of valour or self-sacrifice” (CIC, 2009, p. 41) through the awarding of the Victory Cross.

While noting that military service is not compulsory in Canada, *Discover Canada* positively evaluates military service as a “noble way to contribute to Canada and an excellent career choice” (CIC, 2009, p. 9), encourages participation in the reserves or emergency services, and tells new Canadian readers that “by helping to protect your community, you follow in the footsteps of Canadians before you who made sacrifices in the service of our country” (CIC, 2009, p. 9).

The earlier study guide, *A look at Canada*, also references military accomplishments but to a much lesser degree. In *Discover Canada* (CIC, 2009), 21% of extracted references to ‘Canadians’ referred to military service. In *A look at Canada* (CIC, 2007), only 3% of the extracted references mentioned military service, and these focused on peacekeeping: “We are proud of the fact that we are a peaceful nation. In fact, Canadians act as peacekeepers in many countries around the world” (p. 7).

## Canadians Are Equal and Value Equality

The study guides characterize Canadians as having equality and valuing equality. Canadians are said to believe in “fair play” (CIC, 2009, p. 10). *Discover Canada* (CIC, 2009) reports that “Canadians believe in the equality of men and women” (p. 24). The text provides no explanation and little co-text that would explain what this equality looks like and no evidence to support this claim. The sentence disappeared from a later version of the guide.

Several of the references to Canadians that I tagged as being about *equality* referenced the democratic process, rights, and responsibilities (CIC, 2007, pp. 34, 37, 38): Canadian

citizens “enjoy many rights, including equality rights, language rights and religious rights, just to name a few. But Canadians also have responsibilities” (CIC, 2007, p. 3). Canadians exercise their rights by voting in elections (p. 32), creating new political parties (p. 33), and electing representatives (p. 29).

In *Discover Canada* (CIC, 2009), 20% of themes noted imagined Canadians as being free, equal, or enjoying equality. This theme was much more prevalent in *A look at Canada* (CIC, 2007) with 49% of themes noted in descriptions of Canadians referring to equality or freedom.

### **Canadians Work Hard and Are Prosperous**

Discover Canada (CIC, 2009) represents Canadians as working hard and enjoying prosperity:

In 1951, for the first time, a majority of Canadians were able to afford adequate food, shelter and clothing. Between 1945 and 1970, as Canada drew closer to the United States and other trading partners, the country enjoyed one of the strongest economies among industrialized nations. Today, Canadians enjoy one of the world’s highest standards of living – maintained by the hard work of Canadians and by trade with other nations, in particular the United States. (CIC, 2009, p. 24)

This prosperity “depend[s] on all Canadians working together to face challenges of the future” (CIC, 2009, p. 27). Elsewhere, hard work is constructed as a positive value that enabled Canadians to “build a prosperous society in a rugged environment” (CIC, 2009, p. 10).

In *Discover Canada* (CIC, 2009), 12% of themes represented Canadians as being prosperous or living in a prosperous society. In *A look at Canada* (CIC, 2007), only 8% of themes noted in descriptions of Canadians referenced prosperity.

### **Canadians Are Proud**

In imagining an abstract entity, “Canadians,” these texts make claims about how Canadians feel and what they believe. One emotion that the study guides assert is shared by Canadians is pride, primarily pride in being Canadian. The texts also construct Canadians as proud of their diversity and uniqueness: “Canadians are proud of their unique identity” (CIC, 2009, p. 10); “religious groups live and work in peace as proud Canadians” (CIC, 2009, p. 12); and “As Canadians, we are proud that many different cultural and ethnic groups live and work here in harmony” (CIC, 2007, p. 8).

Eight percent of the themes noted in descriptions of Canadians in *Discover Canada* (CIC, 2009) and 5% of themes noted in *A look at Canada* (CIC, 2007) imagined Canadians as having pride or being proud.

### **Canadians Create**

The texts imagine Canadians as being creative and innovative in sciences and arts: “Canadians have made significant contributions to literature in English and in French” (CIC, 2009, p. 25); *Discover Canada* includes a list of “Canadian” inventors (CIC, 2009, pp. 26-27). As members of the imagined community of Canada, “Canadians” are able to take pride in the creative accomplishments of those they may not personally know, have possibly never



met, and in whose creative lives they have not played a significant role: “Canadian artists have a long history of achievement in which Canadians take pride” (CIC, 2009, p. 25). Creating a connection through joint membership in an imagined community, the achievements of particular Canadians become the achievements of Canadians and a source of pride for all Canadians.

In *Discover Canada* (CIC, 2009), 7% of themes noted imagined Canadians as being creative or enjoying the creativity of other Canadians. This was not a salient theme in the extracted descriptions of Canadians in *A look at Canada* (CIC, 2007).

### **Canadians Honour the Queen**

The Queen figures much more prominently in the new study guide. Despite the increased visibility of the monarchy in this guide, however, Canadians’ monarchic inclinations are downplayed; although “we profess our loyalty to a person who represents all Canadians and not to a document such as a constitution, a banner such as a flag, or a geopolitical entity such as a country” (CIC, 2009, p. 3), this sense of loyalty infects us only at specific times: “when Canadians wish to honour the Sovereign” (CIC, 2009, p. 40) and “most visibly during royal visits to Canada” (CIC, 2009, p. 29). Unlike most of the Canadian values above, this valuation of the Queen is not presented as a ubiquitous or continuing feature of Canadians behaviour.

In *Discover Canada* (CIC, 2009), 5% of themes noted discussed Canadians’ perception of or representation by the Queen. This was not a salient theme in descriptions of Canadians in *A look at Canada* (CIC, 2007). While *A look at Canada* contained one picture of the Queen (CIC, 2007, p. 13), *Discover Canada* contains three (CIC, 2009, pp. 2, 8, & 28).

### **Canadians are Tough**

Canadians are not only “tough, innovative soldiers” (CIC, 2009, p. 21), they also prosper in difficult terrain. Again, the texts speak of the beliefs of ‘Canadians’ declaring that it was “a belief in ordered liberty, enterprise, hard work and fair play” that enabled Canadians to build “a prosperous society in a rugged environment from our Atlantic shores to the Pacific Ocean” (CIC, 2009, p. 10). In *Discover Canada* (CIC, 2009), 4% of themes noted imagined Canadians as being tough; this was not a salient theme in the extracted descriptions of Canadians in *A look at Canada* (CIC, 2007).

### **Canadians Play Hockey**

Finally, hockey is mentioned thirteen times in *Discover Canada* and not at all in *A look at Canada*; it only entered into the data in a statement about Canadians once: “Many young Canadians play hockey at school, in a hockey league or on quiet streets – road hockey or street hockey – and are taken to the hockey rink by their parents. Canadian children have collected hockey cards for generations” (CIC, 2009, p. 39). This statement about Canadians could not be classified under any other theme.

## **Conclusion**

*A look at Canada* and *Discover Canada* present new Canadians with imaginings of Canadians, constructing for them an already imagined community, to which they can align themselves or which they can reject. (Albeit, the texts' role as study guides make these influential discourses, requiring the performance of these discourses by those preparing for citizenship.) Specific behaviours and beliefs are imagined as being Canadian. Canadians are, according to the texts, united and unwavering in their love for diversity, equality, hard work, war, hockey, and the Queen, when she is in town.

Teachers of newcomers to Canada should be aware of the extent to which texts, particularly citizenship education or language teaching texts, share imaginings of Canadians. Teachers involved in citizenship education should also be prepared to question the extent to which the nation-building discourses in the text align with powerful interests outside of the classroom. A critical awareness of the particular constructions of these texts encourages teachers to question the extent to which the texts present gendered or racialized views of citizenship, or deny in advance that sexism and racism exist within the imagined community.

Teachers and students should also become aware of contradictions and incoherencies between these discursive constructions of community, noting the ways in which representations of "Canadians" vary with time, with audience, with context, and with the producer of the text. Such an awareness better prepares the teacher to open the representation up for active discussion and debate. An understanding of these imaginings of Canadians as discursive constructions that are, consequently, open to contestation and questioning invites a more active and critical discussion. The already imagined Canadians of the texts are brought into question and the already imagined community of the textbook becomes reimaginable in the classroom.

## **Implications for Further Research**

These study guides represent "Canadians" through bare assertions without offering supporting evidence or through attributions to Canadians without any quoted speech that would give a voice to these Canadians. Such dialogically contracted claims suggest that Canadians are knowable and known, disallowing alternative imaginings. However, the imaginings of Canadians differ from one study guide to the other. Further research could explore this contradiction and its implications for citizenship education.

Although these study guides work to construct a nation in ways that do not welcome alternative readings, teachers and students can challenge the understandings of the texts. Critical discourse analysis offers tools and techniques for challenging texts that can be adapted for the language classroom (Cots, 2006). Students could be encouraged to confront cultural stereotypes (Guest, 2002), conduct ethnographic inquiries into the lives of Canadians around them (Ilieva, 2002), note when the passive voice hides agency (Schneider, 2005), and evaluate the ideological agenda of texts (Stapleton, 2005). Further research could explore these pedagogical possibilities.

## References

- Anderson, B. (2006). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (Revised Ed.). London, UK: Verso.
- Anthias, F. (2006). Belongings in a globalising and unequal world: Rethinking translocations. In N. Yuval-Davis, K. Kannabiran, & U. M. Vieten (Eds.), *The situated politics of belonging* (pp. 17-31). London: Sage Publications.
- AntConc (version 3.2.1) [Concordance software]. Retrieved March 11, 2011, from <http://www.antlab.sci.waseda.ac.jp/software.html>
- Balibar, E. (2002). The nation form: History and ideology. In P. Essed & D.T. Goldberg (Eds.), *Race critical theories: Text & context* (pp. 220-230). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Bhabha, H. K. (1990a). DissemiNation: Time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation. In H. K. Bhabha (Ed.), *Nation and narration* (pp. 291-322). London: Routledge.
- Bhabha, H. K. (1990b). Introduction: Narrating the nation. In H. K. Bhabha (Ed.), *Nation and narration* (pp. 1-7). London: Routledge.
- Bhambra, G. K. (2006). Culture, identity and rights: Challenging contemporary discourses of belonging. In N. Yuval-Davis, K. Kannabiran, & U. M. Vieten (Eds.), *The situated politics of belonging* (pp. 32-41). London, UK: Sage Publications.
- Billig, M. (1995). *Banal nationalism*. London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.
- Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and symbolic power*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Chapnick, A. (2009, November 13). At last, an honest 'Look at Canada'. *Ottawa Citizen*. Retrieved from <http://www.immigrationwatchcanada.org/>
- Chen, J-J. (2005). Official knowledge and hegemony: The politics of the textbook deregulation policy in Taiwan. In Y. Nozaki, R. Openshaw, and A. Luke (Eds.) (2005). *Struggles over difference: Curriculum, texts, and pedagogy in the Asia-Pacific* (pp. 59-77). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2007). *A look at Canada*. Ottawa, Canada: Minister of Public Works and Government Services.
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2009). *Discover Canada: The rights and responsibilities of citizenship*. Ottawa, Canada: Minister of Public Works and Government Services.
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2010, November). *The Citizenship Test*. Retrieved March 11, 2011 from <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/citizenship/cit-test.asp#ready>.
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2011, February). New resource for teachers complements citizenship study guide. *CIC Ontario e-News*. Retrieved March 11, 2011 from <http://www.bettermail.ca/m/530/40145/#3>
- Clark, R. & Gieve, S.N. (2006). On the discursive construction of 'the Chinese learner'. *Language, Culture, and Curriculum*, 19, 54-73.
- Coffin, C. & O'Halloran, K. (2003). 2005 in the text? Finding the global groove. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 2, 143-163.
- Conrad, S. (2002). Corpus linguistic approaches for discourse analysis. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 22, 75-95.
- Cots, J.M. (2006). Teaching 'with an attitude': Critical Discourse Analysis in EFL teaching. *ELT Journal Volume* 60(4), 336-345.
- Courchène, R. (1996). Teaching Canadian culture: Teacher preparation. *TESL Canada Journal*, 13(2), 1-16.
- de Cillia, R., Reisigl, M., & Wodak, R. (1999). The discursive construction of national identities. *Discourse & Society*, 10, 149-173.

- Derwing, T.M., & Thomson, R.I. (2005). Citizenship concepts in LINC classrooms. *TESL Canada Journal*, 23(1), 44-62.
- Employment and Immigration Canada. (1991). *Canada: A source book for orientation, language and settlement workers*. Retrieved August 29, 2008 from: <http://www.eric.ed.gov/>
- Fleming, D. (2003). Building personal and nation-state identities: Research and practice. *TESL Canada Journal*, 20(2), 65-79.
- Goldberg, D. T. (2002). *The racial state*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers.
- Granatstein, J.L. (2009, December 21). How do we make newcomers into Canadians? *The Globe and Mail*. Retrieved June 19, 2011, from Canadian Newsstand Major Dailies. (Document ID: 1925327641).
- Guest, M. (2002). A critical 'checkbook' for culture teaching and learning. *ELT Journal* 56, 154-161.
- Gulliver, T. (2009). Imagining Canada, imagining Canadians: National identity in English as a second language textbooks (Doctoral dissertation, University of Ottawa, Canada). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 70(10), AAT NR52332
- Gulliver, T. (2010). Immigrant success stories in ESL textbooks. *TESOL Quarterly* 44, 725-745.
- Ibrahim, A. (1999). Becoming black: Rap and hip-hop, race, gender, identity, and the politics of ESL learning. *TESOL Quarterly*, 33, 349-369.
- Ilieva, R. (2000). Exploring culture in texts designed for use in adult ESL classrooms. *TESL Canada Journal*, 17(2), 50-63.
- Ilieva, R. (2001). Living with ambiguity: Toward culture exploration in adult second-language classrooms. *TESL Canada Journal*, 19(1), 1-16.
- Jones, R. & Merriman, P. (2009). Hot, banal and everyday nationalism: Bilingual road signs in Wales. *Political Geography*, 28(3), 164-173.
- Kitts, D. (Producer). (2010, August 18). The New Canadian Citizenship [Television series episode]. In *The Agenda with Steve Paikin*. Toronto, Canada: TVO
- Kubota, R. (1999). Japanese culture constructed by discourses: Implications for applied linguistics research and English language teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, 33, 9-35.
- Kubota, R. (2001). Discursive constructions of the images of U.S. classrooms. *TESOL Quarterly*, 35, 9-38.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2003). Problematizing cultural stereotypes in TESOL. *TESOL Quarterly*, 37, 709-719.
- Lee, D.B. (2005). New Ideologies of Everyday Life in South Korean Language Textbooks. Chapter 7 in Y. Nozaki, R. Openshaw, and A. Luke (Eds.), *Struggles over Difference: Curriculum, texts, and pedagogy in the Asia-Pacific* (pp. 117-129). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Liu, Y. (2005). The construction of culture knowledge in Chinese language textbooks: A Critical Discourse Analysis. In Y. Nozaki, R. Openshaw, and A. Luke (Eds.), *Struggles over Difference: Curriculum, texts, and pedagogy in the Asia-Pacific* (pp. 99-115). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- May, S. (2008). *Language and minority rights: Ethnicity, nationalism and the politics of language*. New York: Routledge.
- McCarthy, C. & Dimitriadis, G. (2005). Governmentality and the sociology of education: Media, educational policy, and the politics of resentment. McCarthy, C. Crichlow, W. Dimitriadis, G. & Dolby, N. (Eds.), *Race, identity, and representation in education* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.) (pp. 321-335). New York: Routledge.

- Ng, R. (1993). Racism, sexism, and nation building in Canada. From C. McCarthy & W. Crichlow (Eds.), *Race, identity and representation in education* (pp. 50-59). New York: Routledge.
- Norton, B. & Toohey, K. (2002). Identity and language learning. In R. B. Kaplan (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of applied linguistics* (pp. 115-123). Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Palfreyman, D. (2005). Othering in an English language program. *TESOL Quarterly*, 39, 211-233.
- Renan, E. (1990). What is a nation? (M. Thom, Trans.). In H. Bhabha (Ed.), *Nation and narration*. (pp. 8-22). London: Routledge. (Original Work published 1882)
- Sauvé, V. (1996). Working with the cultures of Canada in the ESL classroom: A response to Robert Courchène. *TESL Canada Journal*, 13(2), 17-23.
- Schneider, J. (2005). Teaching Grammar Through Community Issues. *ELT Journal*, 59(4), 298-305.
- Stanley, T. (2006). Whose Public? Whose Memory? Racisms, Grand Narratives and Canadian History. In Ruth W. Sandwell (Ed.) (2005). *To the Past: History Education, Public Memory, And Citizenship in Canada*. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press.
- Stapleton, P. (2005). Evaluating web-sources: Internet literacy and L2 academic writing. *ELT Journal*, 59(2), 135-143.
- Suaysuwan, N. & Kapitzke, C. (2005). Thai English language textbooks, 1960-2000: Postwar industrial and global changes. In Y. Nozaki, R. Openshaw, and A. Luke (Eds.), *Struggles over difference: Curriculum, texts, and pedagogy in the Asia-Pacific* (pp. 79-97). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Thomson, R.I. & Derwing, T.M. (2004). Presenting Canadian values in LINC: The roles of textbooks and teachers. *TESL Canada Journal*, 21(2), 17-33.
- Toronto Catholic District School Board. (2010). *Citizenship Resource*. Retrieved from <http://atwork.settlement.org/>
- van Dijk, T. A. (2001). Critical discourse analysis. In D. Tannen, D. Schiffrin, & H. Hamilton (Eds.), *Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (pp. 352-371). Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2001.
- Yuval-Davis, N., Kannabiran, K., & Vieten, U. M. (2006). Introduction: Situating contemporary politics of belonging. In N. Yuval-Davis, K. Kannabiran, & U. M. Vieten (Eds.), *The situated politics of belonging* (pp. 1-14). London: Sage Publications.

## Discordant Anthems: ESL and Critical Citizenship Education

Douglas Fleming, Assistant Professor, University of Ottawa;  
Brian Morgan, Associate Professor, York University

### Abstract

This paper advances a notion of critical citizenship within the context of English as a Second Language (ESL) pedagogy. We first draw on the research literature to define both passive and participatory orientations towards citizenship preparation. The promotion of coherent national identities is then examined in light of globalization and the emergence of diasporic communities. Such tensions are examined concretely through an examination of the “hidden curriculum” within the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB). The extent to which CLB serves to normalize a passive engagement with citizenship is then detailed in light of alternative exemplary resources and classroom approaches.

**Key Words:** English as a Second Language; critical citizenship; second language pedagogy; immigrants; language policy and planning; curriculum; language assessment; case study

The introduction of critical pedagogy or critical applied linguistics in the English Language Teaching profession (see e.g. Benesch, 2001; Crookes, 2010; Norton & Toohey, 2004; Pennycook, 2006; Vandrick, 2009) has come as a welcome corrective to the narrow pragmatism and ideological neutrality that has preoccupied field specialists. We argue that the emerging strength of these critical perspectives has special relevance to citizenship education in the Canadian context. Through an ideological lens—one that foregrounds the politics of knowledge, texts, and identity formation—a critical approach enhances and expands our awareness of the complex ways in which English as Second Language (ESL) programming contributes to the normalization of particular citizenship beliefs and outcomes for newcomers to the Canadian polity.

This article first briefly examines the tensions that exist within the academic literature in terms of how citizenship is conceived along a continuum of passivity or participation with particular reference to second language learners. Drawing on poststructural theories of identity/subjectivity we then explore how preferred notions of both the “model citizen” and the idealized nation-state are cultivated and advanced through policy and pedagogy. We then turn more concretely to an extended examination of Canadian national English as a second language (ESL) policy development and a central document in this context: *The Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB)* (Pawlikowska-Smith, 2000) in terms of the goals associated with citizenship education, pedagogical tasks, hidden curricula and hierarchical forms of citizenship. This is followed by an examination of an exemplary classroom study. We conclude this article with remarks on how these practices shed light on the CLB, Canadian language policy and second language citizenship education.

### Conceptualizing Citizenship

Citizenship has been a deeply problematic notion within academic discourse since its inception as a separate field of study. Marshall (1950) noted that even though national citizenship formally confers equal status to all members of particular societies, inequalities of class prevent poorer members of society from participating as fully as those who are richer. In effect, “modern citizenship conferred the legal capacity to strive for the things one would

like to possess but did not guarantee the possession of any of them” (Isin & Wood, 1999, p. 28). As Crick (2007) makes clear, debates about how to define what citizenship is are still central to concerns evident in the academic literature. This concern is marked by increasingly nuanced discussions as to how being a citizen can be actively taken up as a participatory role, rather than as a passive status simply conferred by a nation state (Kennedy, 2007; Print, 2007; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

Although concerns surrounding citizenship have been central to much of the research pertaining to Canadian ESL provision (Derwing, 1992; Thomson & Derwing, 2005; Joshee & Derwing, 2005), the academic literature has rarely examined how identity/subjectivity is constructed in ways that are explicitly specific to the immigrant experience and how the uniqueness of this experience, in turn, might be reflected in immigrants’ perceptions of their newfound civic rights and responsibilities.

As we have argued previously on the basis of empirical research (Fleming, 2008; Morgan, 2002), immigrants undergo a radical shift in self-perception through the immigrant and second language learning experience. In this context, poststructuralist notions related to *identity* are more useful models in explaining how immigrants reconstruct the multiplicity of elements that make up the individual in the context of adopting a new citizenship. In the empirical studies that the authors conducted, newcomers to Canada often described how they reevaluated their own subjectivities in order to reconstruct new ones. This is often described as new beginnings in which old attitudes and expectations are cast off in favor of a new identity shaped in unpredictable ways through interaction with their new environment. In our estimation, this demonstrates the close relationship between the construction of immigrant and nation-state based identities (Fleming, 2003).

Notions of *becoming* a citizen of any nation-state thus require consideration of how identities or, more specifically, political subjectivities are formed and prepared for civic life and continuity. Building on Deleuze and Guattari (1987) and Norton’s (2000) feminist poststructuralist model, we argue that the citizen-subject is not the autonomous, free-reasoning individual commonly depicted in liberal discourses but a form of subjectivity shaped by the dominant discourses of nationhood. At the same time, we recognize the limitations of the nation-state in winning consent and determining the ultimate forms and practices through which citizenship is manifest. Through powerful instruments such as schooling and mass media, dominant messages regarding the “public good” are vigorously advanced, yet not always received in ways anticipated by their creators (see e.g. Gulliver, 2010; Rutherford, 2000). Theorized in this way, the conditioning of citizen-subjects is always incomplete or partial, always subject to localized *agency* and “disruptive” meaning-making generated by socio-political or ethno-linguistic minorities. Thus, it is our contention that citizenship practices in ESL have a transformative potential beyond the parameters of time and place—and of school and programme. As Morgan and Vandrlick (2009) have argued,

There is a tendency in schools and society to misjudge immigrants and refugees as partially formed citizens based on their surface “errors” in English. Yet, the newcomer’s or outsider’s eyes and ears are alert to power in ways no longer available to habituated, domesticated insiders, who see but no longer perceive the beauty, horror and complacency around them. (p. 515)

For those of us familiar with ESL classrooms and citizenship curricula, it is often the case that we find ourselves reflecting critically on our assumptions following the “uncommon sense” with which our students assess and challenge values presented to them as emblematic

of Canadian life. We are, hopefully, changed for the better through these interactions, and as a consequence act in ways that further the collective ideals upon which the imagined nation is constructed and sustained. The newcomer, the so-called “learner,” in this sense is also the “teacher”—a potential source of counter-discursive readings that over time serve to transform and/or hybridize the socio-political spaces into which he or she is ostensibly integrated. Through collaboration in classrooms and communities, individual, collective and even nation-state identities should be viewed as sites of conflict, contradiction, and change, particularly in light of the threats and opportunities posed by globalization (see Block & Cameron, 2002; Kumaravadivelu, 2008; Stasiulis & Bakan, 2005).

### **Citizenship Practices and Adult ESL in Canada**

As Benesch (1994) notes, citizenship preparation is an integral aspect of second language education where large numbers of immigrants are being integrated into modern nation states. Within the Canadian context, federal policy documents (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2006) make it plain that ESL programming is for the dual purposes of teaching the second language and integrating newcomers. The crucial importance of adult ESL programming for the integration of newcomers has also been acknowledged in a plethora of teaching materials and curriculum guidelines (Ilieva, 2000), and in the academic literature (Wong, Duff & Early, 2001).

For nation-states such as Canada, the integration of newcomers is a pressing need in light of globalization and the unprecedented number of migrants on the move world-wide. Western countries are increasingly competing with one another to attract skilled immigrants and take advantage of these vast diasporas in ways that preserve and strengthen democratic institutions, social cohesion and economic vitality (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2006).

The series of events that led to the creation of the current adult ESL program structure in Canada started in 1990, when the federal government initiated a major policy shift in response to changing demographic and economic forces. In response to the perception that higher levels of immigration were vital to Canada’s long-term economic and political interests, priority was given to second language education on a centralized and consistent basis for the first time. ESL programming was seen as central to the removal of barriers to newcomer integration and the ability of the nation state to reap the full financial benefits of immigration.

As Fleming (2007) has written, the principal response to this perceived need was the creation of Language Instruction to Newcomers to Canada (LINC), which with its various provincial counterparts has become the dominant adult ESL programming in Canada. It has gradually replaced most other English training programs in the country and has been instrumental in the development of a myriad of national assessment and curriculum projects. In general, LINC provides only limited amounts of guidance in terms of methodology and delivery. At the programming level, ESL provision has thus become decentralized as part of the trend for federal agencies to relinquish responsibilities for direct service.

LINC learners are not usually eligible for living allowances or significant subsidies except for limited support for transportation and childminding. Learners generally participate in the program for roughly 900 hours of instruction and are assessed prior to entering the program by independent agencies. Some variation in program delivery models exists, but in most cases LINC, and the provincial programs associated with it, feature



continuous enrolment, unilingual instruction, limited access to computer assisted learning, and frequent changes of instructors.

At the same time as LINC was being developed, the federal government funded the creation of the *CLB*. A long process of consultations led to the creation of a working document in 1996 and a finalized version in 2000. The *CLB* covers the full range of English proficiency (from beginning to full fluency), incorporates literacy and numeracy, emphasizes tasks, features stand-alone descriptors per level, encourages local curriculum development, and includes proficiencies related to learning strategies, socio-cultural and strategic competencies.

Associated with the *CLB* are implementation documents, curriculum guidelines, instructional resources pertaining to literacy and numeracy, sets of assessment materials and a representative national centre in Ottawa that coordinates a wide-range of language training curriculum initiatives. Publishers have also used the *CLB* as a basis for a wide variety of instructional materials.

*CLB* development is overseen by the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (CCLB), a non-profit organisation founded in 1998 and funded by the federal government. As is often the case with national language policy implementation (Shohamy, 2007), the absence of a federally mandated curriculum has meant that the assessment and placement instrument, in this case the *CLB*, has become the *de facto* guideline for instructional content in most jurisdictions and not a set of randomly chosen assessment criteria. It is no wonder, under these circumstances, that some scholars and curriculum resources centers have referred to it unambiguously as a curriculum document (Fox & Courchène, 2005; Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2006).

As the document recommends, teachers and assessment officers might feel free to extract the language embedded within the sample tasks and to add other content as they see fit. However, the content already found within the document is, as we shall demonstrate below, the starting point for those educators who use it. Thus, the content is privileged, in the sense that its importance is stressed by its inclusion. Absent content is not privileged and, as we detail below, reveals serious shortcomings within *CLB*. Because of the *CLB*'s nature as a national curriculum document, the content found within it (and excluded from it) takes on an official character.

Contradictory views on whether the document is an instrument for assessment or task/curriculum development are found within the *CLB* itself. Even though the author states in its introduction that the *CLB* is “not a curriculum guide” (Pawlikowska-Smith, 2000, viii), she states, in the very next paragraph, that the *CLB* describes, “what adult ESL instruction should prepare adult ESL learners to do.” Thus, the *CLB* clearly sets up tasks which learners are meant to perform in order to advance to the next level of instruction. Teachers, the document states, are expected to organize learning opportunities for the successful completion of these tasks. The claim that the *CLB* is not meant to inform curriculum development is rather dubious. As Fox and Courchene (2005) point out,

although the *CLB* is neither a curriculum nor test according to its developers, providing details regarding text length and sample tasks leads anyone using the document to use these as guidelines for task development. (p. 13)

This point is reinforced by a study of LINC teachers conducted by Haque and Cray (2007), in which their respondents confirmed that the *CLB* was something they could not ignore as a set of reference points for curriculum development. Making pedagogical decisions in

reference to curriculum guidelines requires a fair degree of professional autonomy (Fleming, 1998).

Unfortunately, the insecurity inflicted on ESL programming within Canada through various funding strategies and conditions has served to deprofessionalize the field (Burnaby, 2008; Haque & Cray, 2007). In comparison to other educational sectors, adult ESL teachers are often paid far less (e.g. salaries based solely on contact hours with students) and have limited access to paid professional development in workplaces that are often transitory and poorly supported in terms of resources. For adult ESL teachers, such constraints may serve as powerful disincentives for the development of context-sensitive pedagogies related to critical citizenship. Moreover, constraints of time and resources also lend themselves to an over-reliance on commercially published materials with content that, in some cases, is superficially and/or stereotypically Canadian (e.g. Thomson & Derwing, 2004).

Our contention is that there is no simple solution to the problem of the de-professionalization of the ESL teachers. Measures such as occasional workshops, tailor-made commercial texts or on-line banks of exemplar lesson plans (as is sponsored by the CCLB) do mitigate the issue somewhat. However, teachers should be regarded as implementers of policy rather than simple instruments of policy. As Morgan (2009) has argued, teachers must be provided with sufficient training and professional development to mitigate, complement or resist these official documents so that their pedagogy reflects the realities and local experiences of their learners. The central, agentive role of teachers as interpreters and enactors of policy should be honored and utilized (Ramanathan & Morgan, 2007).

In sum, the *CLB* performs the function of institutionalizing ESL instructors by providing them with a template for their classroom practices and framing their assessment procedures. Under these circumstances, privileged content, in the sense we have talked about above, is difficult to augment or resist. It is an examination of this privileged content that we now turn to, through a detailed examination of the *CLB*.

### Detailed Description and Analysis of CLB

*The Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Adults* (Pawlikowska-Smith, 2000) is made up of over 200 compact pages. The bulk of the document consists of the actual benchmarks, arranged in 12 levels, from basic English language proficiency to full fluency. It is on these pages that our attention is focused. The preface and introductory articles provide an interesting segue into the rest of the text. In an obvious reference to the original policy initiatives that gave rise to the *CLB*, the Board of Directors for the CCLB make use of the preface to tell the fictional story of a 25-year old immigrant from Indonesia who is confused about how his English level had been assessed by his previous school when he changes institutions. According to the preface, this situation is occurring less and less frequently. In addition, so the preface emphasizes, immigrants are now able to refer to the *CLB* in such high stakes situations as demonstrating their English language ability to employers and to gain entrance to educational institutions. This shift is described by the authors of the preface as no less than a “revolution.”

Even more tellingly, the preface also states that, as a result of the *CLB*, learners will be able to “plot out for themselves, in advance, their own paths of language learning to attain their goals” (p. v). This is an important point. If learners can predict how their learning will progress upon entrance into the “*CLB* movement” (as the preface characterizes programs that have adopted the *Benchmark(s)*), this document appears to be more than a

simple description of English language ability at particular levels of proficiency. Leaving aside the problem of whether “one size fits all,” this document now seems to become a set of learning objectives meant to inform curriculum development.

This ambiguity continues into the text’s introduction, which states that the *Benchmarks* are “a national standard for planning second language curricula for a variety of contexts” (p. viii), while stating categorically that it is “not a curriculum guide: they do not dictate local curricula and syllabuses” (p. viii). The document even attempts to “have its cake and eat it too,” in terms of methodology. Even though the author states that the *CLB* is “not tied to any specific instructional method” (p. viii), the introduction emphasizes the need for instructors to adhere to common hallmarks of the communicative approach (Brown, 2001): learner-centered instruction, task-based proficiency, and communicative competency.

The document seems to view English language learners as having rights and responsibilities that pertain almost exclusively to being good consumers. The content includes the need for learners to understand their rights and responsibilities as a “client, customer, patient and student” (p. 95), but not as workers, family members, participants in community activities, or advocates. In the entire document, there are only three references that could be considered to be associated with citizenship. These are: “understand rights and responsibilities of client, customer, patient and student” (p. 95); “indicate knowledge of laws, rights, etc.” (p. 116); and “write a letter to express an opinion as a citizen” (p. 176). It is disappointing to see such small and vague references to citizenship in such an important document and is revealing to note that the word “vote” does not appear anywhere in the document. Further, these references to citizenship occur at the very highest levels of proficiency (at the point at which one is writing research papers at universities). The document, by implication, links the exercise of citizenship rights to English language proficiency.

Issues related to trade unions and collective agreements are only mentioned twice (again, at the stage at which one is able to write research papers). Labour rights, such as filing grievances, recognizing and reporting dangerous working conditions, and the enforcement of legislated standards of employment are nonexistent. At the same time, however, space in the document is devoted to participating in job performance reviews, giving polite and respectful feedback to one’s employer, and participating in meetings about lunchroom cleanliness. The document thus tends to trivialize the exercise of citizenship.

## **Discussion**

The content found within the *CLB* was in great contrast to the conceptions of citizenship described by immigrants in a recent study Fleming (2010) conducted of learners enrolled in a LINC program. In a series of 25 in-depth interviews, a group of Punjabi-speaking learners made it clear that they predominantly thought of being Canadian in legalistic terms. Their conceptions centered on rights, adherence to law, and respect for national multicultural policy. These learners, many of whom worked as agricultural labourers or semi-skilled construction workers, provided concrete examples of their struggles to obtain safe working conditions and access to basic standards of employment such as overtime or statutory holiday pay. Consumer rights, such as the few cited in the *CLB*, did form a part of their concerns. However, an over-riding aspect of their conceptualizations of citizenship was in reference to employment rights and voting, both of which, as we noted above, were virtually non-existent in the *CLB*.

Needs assessment has always been an integral component of second language curricula and syllabus design (e.g. Nation & Macalister, 2010). In our examination of citizenship education needs in the Canadian ESL context, a fundamental question is how (or by whom) such needs are defined. The *CLB*, tended to approach “Canadian-ness” in terms of normative standards, including various forms of social behavior, which could be taken to imply the existence of a dominant and singular culture to which second language learners have to conform. To reiterate: citizenship rights at the basic level of English language proficiency found no place in the document. Rights related to voting, employment or group membership were virtually non-existent. The participants in the above-cited study, however, spoke of being Canadian predominantly in terms of citizenship rights, multicultural policy and the obligations of being citizens. As we discuss below, any curriculum based on the concerns of the learners themselves would look very different from one based on the official assessment/ curriculum document.

A parallel here can be made with the way in which needs analyses have been problematized in workplace settings. As Jasso-Aguliar (1999) points out, unbalanced distributions of power have rarely been questioned by researchers examining how goals and objectives are determined in vocational training contexts. All too often, the opinions of employers and other powerful outsiders are privileged over those expressed by workers and less powerful insiders. As a result, second language programming goals in the workplace are skewed towards the needs of managers and not those workers actually taking the training.

As a stand-alone text, content analyses of the *CLB*—of tasks and themes stated, implied and concealed—provide numerous examples to support its depiction as a *hidden curriculum* (Jackson, 1968), one that promotes a dutiful, obedient and passive engagement with the politics of the nation-state. Analyses on these terms alone, however, might not provide a complete understanding of the full range of coercive processes involved, or the whole array of techniques through which institutional power is exercised in liberal democratic societies. That is, while it is important to critique the propositional content of a document such as *CLB*, such critiques are easily allayed through the strategic expansion and inclusion of items identified as necessary for participatory citizenship practices. Indeed, evidence of this occurrence can be found in subsequent LINC curriculum documents (e.g. Toronto Catholic District School Board, 2000) that include explicit themes and related tasks that are critical-analytic and participatory in relation to Canadian society.

As to whether such themes are merely ornamental—window-dressing to placate academics and community activists concerned with immigrant settlement—is a complex question worth considering. For example, Pinet’s (2006) study of the production, interpretation and implementation of a LINC document arising from the *CLB* describes how one teacher created her own transformative syllabus, exploring issues of racism and sexism in Canadian society based on the presence of “human rights” and “workers’ rights” as thematic inclusions in the LINC 4-6 guidelines. Though this utilization of the guidelines was perceived as too ideological and/or marginal to students’ needs by some colleagues, the fact that she was able to correlate her syllabus to explicit themes in the guidelines served to legitimize her more critical approach. Still, as Pinet shows, she is only one of six informants to interpret the document in a transformative way. The other five used relatively more passive, transmission-based approaches in implementing ESL citizenship material. Choices present do not necessarily translate into choices taken.

Clearly, there exists a whole array of identity-forming discourses that condition the range of meanings practitioners generate in their interactions with curricula. Nation-state power, in this respect, is deployed and negotiated not only in the content on display in an

official document but also in the local strategies that manage the document's reception, the inter-textual and contextual conditions through which preferred meanings are validated and particular social practices legitimized. Through this articulation—whereby curricular documents, funding policies, and prevailing attitudes around language education work in concert—the passivity of a hidden curriculum may persist in spite of cosmetic changes made to its appearance. In this sense, Canadian ESL policy structures can be seen as mitigating against critical practices that address social inequalities, hence reinforcing a hierarchical structure to Canadian citizenship that exists both within the nation state (Bannerji, 2000) and within a globalized frame (Stansiulis & Bakan, 2003). These tendencies are discussed in more detail by Morgan (2002).

### **In the Classroom: Exploring Critical Citizenship**

We conclude this article with a discussion of how alternative curriculum designs and exemplary classroom practice can address the concerns we have outlined above. First, we will briefly describe a case study below which looks at critical citizenship instruction in a Chinese settlement agency in Toronto that co-sponsors several LINC and provincially funded adult ESL classes. Notably, many of the students in Morgan's class<sup>2</sup> had recently immigrated to Canada from Hong Kong in advance of China's 1997 re-acquisition. The political stability they sought, however, was undermined by an imminent referendum on the province of Quebec's separation from the Canadian federation, a development frequently raised and questioned in the mixed-level (intermediate to advanced) ESL class Morgan taught: "Would Canadians go to war to prevent Quebec's separation? What would happen to the Canadian dollar?" Like most Canadians, students were unsure of what the actual referendum question meant. Similarly, the meaning and implications of words such as *sovereign* and *sovereignty* in comparison to *independence* or *separation* were particularly confusing, as witnessed by the number of students searching in their bilingual Chinese-English dictionaries for explanations.

Morgan made this the focus of a lesson, drawing on students' L1 literacy strategy of "bottom-up" or "lexis-centred" reading (Parry, 1996; Bell; 1995). Through their use of bilingual dictionaries and the application of decompositional strategies based on L1 word formation (see e.g. Zhou & Marslen-Wilson, 1994), several students discovered and debated intrinsic word properties that they saw as contributing to the political controversy surrounding the referendum question. The class discussion soon shifted towards broader concerns—debates over how Canada should respond to the outcome of a 'yes' vote, and to comparisons with Hong Kong post-1997. These discussions were remarkable for their unprecedented level of engagement with social issues and the complex and often contradictory negotiations of transnational identities taking place (i.e. to what extent are we now Chinese *and* Canadian?). Much of the dictionary work and small group conversations took place in L1, but as a foundation for whole class, L2 discussions, in which stronger English-speakers helped out weaker ones in expressing their views in the target language.

In sum, this example of participatory citizenship in a L2 was enabled by L1 use and traditional L1 literacy strategies, a classroom approach notably absent in the *CLB* document. What might be observed—indeed stigmatized—as methodologically and acquisitionally

---

<sup>2</sup> Morgan's study is based on data (teacher's notes, examples of students' work, interview data) generated from an action research methodology (Burns, 2007) and characteristic of "naturalistic" validity criteria (see e.g. Lynch, 1996). The study followed the ethics protocol of Morgan's university.

remedial (i.e. bilingual dictionary translation), or indicative of a lower-order cognitive task (i.e. decoding) through a *CLB* framework, was re-contextualized in ways that enhanced critical engagement and an understanding of language and power around the Quebec referendum that could exceed the ideological awareness of native speakers and longstanding citizens. Such outcomes were not unexpected in that the lesson itself reflected a teaching approach that Morgan (2002) describes as a community-based pedagogy for adult ESL. A key aspect of this approach is that social needs/issues should be conceptualized as equal to, and sometimes prior to linguistic concerns, narrowly defined. Towards this end, greater allowance for L1 use, bilingual or translanguaging practices (Creese & Blackledge, 2010) is encouraged in order to enhance the participatory voice of newcomers, which may subsequently add further incentive to acquire the rhetorical and structure components of the target/dominant language.

Our focus on the exemplary classroom practice above draws attention to current challenges and gaps in the field. For one, it seems paradoxical to be promoting participatory citizenship in ESL within societies notable for their declining participation in conventional public practices of democracy (i.e. voting, membership in formal political parties). While such educational resources might first appear as exclusively serving the integration needs of newcomers, they should also be seen as reminding the native born of the privilege of being Canadian or American. In this respect, “participatory” practices in ESL—and the lavish public display of flag-waving citizenship ceremonies—serve the additional function of countering political cynicism and indifference in the general populace by suggesting the intrinsic value of citizenship conferred (Honig, 2001).

At the same time, we have argued that policy and curricula should not be evaluated in textual isolation. Policy-makers may appear to respond constructively to stakeholder criticism and address existing gaps through the inclusion of more participatory content yet deny the material resources necessary for the development and realization of such content in classroom settings. The Canadian research cited in this article strongly corroborates this type of situation and its pedagogical effects (Burnaby, 2008; Haque & Cray, 2007). Professional insecurity and poor working conditions are the norm for non-credit adult ESL programming. As noted, scarcity of Canadian-specific resources (Thomson & Derwing, 2004) and the lack of paid professional development opportunities also mean that critical citizenship materials and locally relevant lesson plans are less likely to be generated. In the Canadian context, as well, existing funding models in which minimum attendance numbers must be maintained serve to prioritize lower level ESL and LINC programs, where survival English skills and the most basic and passive forms of task-based citizenship instruction in L2 are likely to occur. More advanced ESL students—those most capable of critical inquiry and active citizenship in a L2—are also the most likely to leave a LINC class on short notice when job opportunities arise. For those who remain in lower level classes, an additional obstacle may arise through interactions with teachers whose ESL preparation has been informed by dominant monolingual ideologies, English-only approaches, and subtractive bilingual models in the TESOL field, all of which may serve to devalue the students’ knowledge, political experiences and insights as might be expressed through their L1.

These are the concerns that are explicitly raised in the Ontario LINC 4 & 5 Curriculum Guidelines, and inform a set of cautions that the authors raise in its introduction:

using the Canadian Language Benchmarks to develop these curriculum guidelines imposes certain limitations. Competencies that may be more suitable to particular topics could not be used because they do not correspond to the Benchmarks assigned to LINC 4 and 5. For

example, International Human Rights, Native Peoples and National Unity do not easily lend themselves to the pragmatic, functional competencies described in the *CLB* at these levels and are more suited to competencies such as critical analysis (Reading, Benchmark 9) or expressing and analyzing opinions (Listening/Speaking, Benchmark 8). Consequently, these topics may not have been addressed as profoundly as the issues warrant but were included anyway because learners expressed an interest in them. (Hajer, et al., 1999)

In this passage, the authors noted the subordination of socially relevant content (i.e. citizenship) to particular language ideologies, such as monolingual instruction and maximum L2 exposure within the *CLB* and consciously chose to ignore these limitations. As they argue, meaningful citizenship content would not have found a place within the Ontario LINC 4 & 5 Curriculum Guidelines (or any other document informed by the *CLB*) without their conscious decision to ignore the implied connection found within the *CLB* between citizenship rights and English language fluency. This demonstrates that the promotion of critical citizenship in ESL programs and classrooms is dependent on an awareness of larger social contexts and how textual and extra-textual factors can impact upon second language pedagogy in both productive and restrictive ways.

Another crucial issue for the ESL classroom involves our response to students' own expressions of indifference or resistance when presented with critical citizenship resources that we have created or endorsed. Not all L2 students value time spent on civic or public concerns. The notion of politics can invoke painful memories for some or a sense of inadequacy in others based on prior identity experiences (e.g. gender, race) and/or ascribed roles in which public participation is discouraged or prohibited. Still, the student who at one moment claims, "I am not interested in politics" can show a remarkable propensity to debate so-called domestic affairs at the next. Lankshear and Knobel (1997) address this issue by recommending a more "holistic" approach, in which the personal and the political are more closely and deliberately aligned in the promotion of critical literacies and active citizenship:

Struggles within the private sphere to win a more equitable distribution of domestic work and decision-making power inside the family, and struggle by migrants to negotiate a viable and satisfying identity within their new life situation, become facets of actively constructing and practicing citizenship. (Lankshear & Knobel, 1997, p. 101)

This conflation of the personal and political is an area of particular strength within critical ESL pedagogies, especially through illustrated in the work of feminist scholars whose perspectives on critical narrative and L2 autobiography have illuminated social inequities in unique ways unmet through conventional modes of inquiry (see e.g. Steinman, 2005; Vandrick, 2009). The challenge for teachers, as this research indicates, is to find ways of building upon the private, everyday concerns of students and connecting them to issues of equity and social justice in the broader community. It is a challenge that emphasizes the local agency of teachers and the need for teacher educators to enhance this capacity in TESOL pre-service and in-service programming (Morgan, 2010). It is a challenge and an opportunity that both of us look forward to exploring further in our research and teaching.

## References

- Bannerji, H. (2000). *The dark side of the nation: Essays on multiculturalism, nationalism and gender*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.
- Bell, J. (1995). The relationship between L1 and L2 literacy: Some complicating factors. *TESOL Quarterly*, 29, 687-704.
- Benesch, S. (2001). *Critical English for academic purposes*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Benesch, S. (1994). ESL, ideology, and the politics of pragmatics. *TESOL Quarterly*, 27, 705-716.
- Block, D., & Cameron, D. (Eds.).(2002). *Globalization and language teaching*. London: Routledge.
- Burnaby, B. (2008). Language policy and education in Canada. In N. Hornberger (Ed.). *Encyclopedia of language and education*.(Part 1, 331-341). New York: Springer.
- Burns, A. (2007). Action research: Contributions and future directions in ELT. In J. Cummins & C. Davison (Eds.), *The international handbook of English language teaching* (pp. 987-1002). New York: Springer.
- Brown, H. D. (2001). *Teaching by principles*. New York: Barnes and Noble.
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2006). *Report to Parliament*. Ottawa: Communications Branch, Citizenship and Immigration.
- Creese, A., & Blackledge, A. (2010). Translanguaging in the bilingual classroom: A pedagogy for learning and teaching? *Modern Language Journal*, 94, 103-115.
- Crick, B. (2007). Citizenship: The political and the democratic. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 55, 3, 235- 248.
- Crookes, G. (2010). The practicality and relevance of second language critical pedagogy. *Language Teaching*, 43, 333-348.
- Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1987). *A thousand plateaus*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Derwing, T. (1992). Instilling a passive voice: Citizenship instruction in Canada. In B. Burnaby & A. Cumming (Eds.), *Socio-political aspects of ESL* (pp. 193-202). Toronto: OISE Press.
- Fleming, D. (2010). Racialized forms of citizenship and the *Canadian language benchmarks*. *Canadian Journal of Education*. 33, 3, 588-616.
- Fleming, D. (2008). Becoming citizens: Punjabi ESL learners, national language policy and the *Canadian language benchmarks*. In M. Manteno, P. Chamness & J. Watzke (Eds.), *Readings in language studies: Language across disciplinary boundaries* (pp. 143-158). St. Louis, MO: International Society for Language Studies.
- Fleming, D. (2007). Adult immigrant ESL programs in Canada: Emerging trends in the contexts of history, economics and identity. In Cummins, J. & Davison, C. (Eds.), *The international handbook of English language teaching*. (pp. 185-198). New York: Springer.
- Fleming, D. (2003) Building personal and nation-state identities: Research and practice. *TESL Canada Journal*, 20, 2, pp. 65- 79.
- Fleming, D. (1998). Autonomy and agency in curriculum decision-making: A study of instructors in a Canadian adult settlement ESL program. *TESL Canada Journal*, 16, 1, 19-35.
- Fox, J., & Courchène, R. (2005). *The Canadian language benchmarks* (CLB): A



- critical appraisal. *Contact*, 31, 2, 7-28.
- Gulliver, T. (2010). Immigrant success stories in ESL textbooks. *TESOL Quarterly*, 48, 4, 725-745.
- Hajer, A., Lawrence, C., Rajabi, S., & Wysokinski, S. (1999). *LINC 4 & 5: A computer integrated curriculum based in Canadian Language Benchmarks 4-6*. Toronto: Toronto Catholic District School Board. Funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- Haque, E., & Cray, E. (2007). Constraining teachers: Adult ESL settlement language training policy and implementation. *TESOL Quarterly*, 41, 634-642.
- Honig, B. (2001). *Democracy and the foreigner*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Ilieva, R. (2000). Exploring culture in texts designed for use in adult ESL classrooms. *TESL Canada Journal*, 17, 2, 50- 63.
- Isin, E. F., & Wood, P. K. (1999). *Citizenship and identity*. London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.
- Jackson, P. (1968). *Life in classrooms*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Jasso-Aguilar, R. (1999). Sources, methods and triangulation in needs analysis: A critical perspective in a case study of Waikiki hotel maids. *English for Specific Purposes*, 18, 1, 27-46.
- Johnson, K. (1979). Communicative approaches and communicative processes. In C. Brumfit and K. Johnson (Eds.), *The communicative approach to language teaching*. pp. 192-205. New York: Oxford University Press. Is this reference in your paper?
- Joshee, R., & Derwing, T. M. (2005). The unmaking of citizenship education for adult immigrants in Canada. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 6, 61-80.
- Kennedy, K. (2007). Student constructions of active citizenship: What does participation mean to students? *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 55, 3, 304- 324.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2008) *Cultural globalization and language education*. Cumberland, RI: Yale University Press.
- Lankshear, C., & Knobel, M. (1997). Critical literacy and active citizenship. In S. Muspratt, A. Luke, & P. Freebody (Eds.), *Constructing critical literacies: teaching and learning textual practice* (pp. 95-124). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Lynch, B (1996). *Language program evaluation*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- [Marshall, T. H. \(1950\). \*Citizenship and social class and other essays\*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.](#)
- Morgan, B. (2010). Fostering conceptual roles for change: Identity and agency in ESEA teacher preparation. *Kritika Kultura*, 15, 034-055 [On-line Journal]. Available at <http://150.ateneo.edu/kritikakultura/images/pdf/kk15/fostering.pdf>
- Morgan, B. (2009). Fostering transformative practitioners for critical EAP: Possibilities and challenges. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 8, 86-99.
- Morgan, B. (2002). Critical practice in community-based ESL programs: A Canadian perspective. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, 1, 141-162.
- Morgan, B. & Vandrick, S. (2009). Imagining a peace curriculum: What second language education brings to the table. *Peace & Change: A Journal of Peace Research*, 34, 510-532.
- Nation, I.S.P., & Macalister, J. (2010). *Language curriculum design*. New York: Routledge.
- Norton, B. (2000). *Identity and language learning*. Harlow: Pearson.
- Norton, B., & K. Toohey, K. (Eds.) (2004). *Critical pedagogies and language learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Parry, K. (1996). Culture, literacy, reading. *TESOL Quarterly*, 30, 665-692.

- Pawlikowska-Smith, G. (2000). *Canadian language benchmarks 2000*. Ottawa: Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks.
- Pennsylvania Department of Education (2006). ESL resources. Retrieved February 12, 2007 from <http://www.pde.state.pa.us/able/lib/able/pubs/focus0503.pdf>.
- Pennycook, A. (2006). Postmodernism in language policy. In T. Ricento (Ed.), *Introduction to language policy: theory and method* (pp. 60-76). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Pedersen, P. (1995). *The five stages of culture shock: Critical incidents around the world*. Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Press.
- Pinet, R. (2006). The contestation of citizenship education at three stages of the LINC 4 & 5 curriculum guidelines: Production, reception, and implementation. *TESL Canada Journal*, 24, 1, 1-21.
- Print, M. (2007). Citizenship education and youth participation in democracy. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 55, 3, 325-345.
- Ramanathan and Morgan (2007). TESOL and policy enactments: Perspectives from practice. Introduction to the special issue on language policy. *TESOL Quarterly*, 41(3), 447-463.
- Rutherford, P. (2000). *Endless propaganda*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Shohamy, E. (2007). The power of English tests, the power of the English language and the role of ELT. In J. Cummins & C. Davison (Eds.), *The international handbook of English language teaching* (pp. 521- 532). New York: Springer.
- Stasiulis, D., & Bakan, A. (2005). *Negotiating citizenship: Migrant women in Canada and the global system*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Steinman, L. (2005). Writing life 1 in language 2. *McGill Journal of Education*, 40, 65-79.
- Thomson, R. I., & Derwing, T. M. (2004 or 2005?). Presenting Canadian values in LINC: The roles of textbooks and teachers. *TESL Canada Journal*, 21(2), 17-33.
- Toronto Catholic District School Board. (2000). *LINC 1-5 curriculum guidelines: A computer integrated curriculum based on Canadian language benchmarks 2000*. Retrieved: April 14, 2007, from [http://atwork.settlement.org/sys/atwork\\_library\\_detail.asp?doc\\_id=1003153](http://atwork.settlement.org/sys/atwork_library_detail.asp?doc_id=1003153)
- Vandrick, S. (2009). *Interrogating privilege: Reflections of a second language educator*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Westheimer, J. & Kahne, J. (2004). What kind of citizen? The politics of educating for democracy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 41, 2, 237-269.
- Wong, P., Duff, P., & Early, M. (2001). The impact of language and skills training on immigrants' lives. *TESL Canada Journal*, 18 (2), 1- 31.
- Zhou, X., & Marslen-Wilson, W. (1994). Words, morphemes and syllables in the Chinese mental lexicon. *Language and Cognitive Processes*, 9, 393-422.

#### Acknowledgements

Our heartfelt thanks goes out to the participants in our empirical studies that we cite above and to the anonymous reviewers for *Citizenship Education Research* who provided insightful and helpful suggestions on earlier drafts of this article.

## **Conflict-Dialogue Pedagogies as Learning Opportunities for Ethnocultural Minority Immigrant Students**

Christina A. Parker, Ph.D. Candidate, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE),  
University of Toronto

### **Abstract**

Southern Ontario is home to immigrant students with diverse ethnocultural ancestries (Statistics Canada, 2006), some of whom do not have the same democratic learning opportunities as their culturally mainstream peers. Teaching students as though they were all the same does not create equitable social relations (Bickmore, 2005, 2008). Ethnic-minority immigrant students carry many diverse histories, perspectives, and experiences that serve as resources for critical reflection about social conflicts (Banks, 2006; Nieto, 1992). However, many visible minority and lower socioeconomic class students seem to have fewer opportunities to engage in issues-based discussions than do mainstream students (Dull & Murrow, 2008; Hemmings, 2000; Hess & Avery, 2008). This article examines how using conflict-dialogue pedagogies to guide curriculum engagement with alternative viewpoints contributes to these students' inclusion in the classroom. To date, evidence as to how these tools create space for democratic learning opportunities for diverse students is lacking. Based on classroom observations, interviews, document analysis, and a personal journal, this article reports interim results to illustrate how peacebuilding dialogue processes were implemented in three elementary classrooms, and how diverse students, particularly newcomer immigrants, experienced these pedagogies in relation to their own perspectives, histories, and identities.

**Keywords:** peacebuilding; conflict dialogue; democratic citizenship education; newcomer immigrants; minority education; elementary classrooms

Engaging students in open, inclusive dialogue about conflictual issues develops their skills for democratic civic engagement (Haas, 2008; Hahn, 1998; Hess & Posselt, 2002; Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schultz, 2001). Such conflict-dialogue processes provide opportunities for students to practise tolerance and inclusion and become participatory citizens (Avery & Hahn, 2004). Conflict management processes and other pedagogical tools guide and shape the conflict-dialogue experiences of diverse students. While some in-service professional and curriculum development encourages teachers to implement conflict-dialogue practices in the classroom, there has been little research on how teachers implement such processes with ethnocultural minority students.

Research (Torney-Purta et al., 2001, and others) has shown that open discussion of conflictual issues promotes the average student's civic engagement, but little evidence exists regarding how or whether diverse and marginalized students are engaged by particular dialogue practices. Many ethnocultural minority students seem to have fewer opportunities than mainstream students to engage in issues-based discussions, for reasons that have not been clearly identified (Dull & Murrow, 2008; Hess & Avery, 2008). Even less is known about which curricular and pedagogical tools for issues dialogue best create (or impede) democratic and inclusive learning opportunities for such students.

Although some studies have explored students' experiences with conflict dialogue, few have studied diverse students' experiences of particular conflict-dialogue pedagogies in elementary classrooms. This article focuses on how three classes of first- and second-

generation ethnocultural minority immigrant elementary students, aged 9 to 13, experienced and responded to conflictual issues pedagogies and discussions in relation to their identities. It also examines the influence various conflict-dialogue pedagogies may have on facilitating inclusive spaces for diverse students to participate in social studies and language arts curricula. By exploring how conflict-dialogue processes facilitate or impede students' social and academic engagement, this research adds to the body of literature on conflict-dialogue in school settings while also responding to its limitations in attending to student diversity.

### **Dialogue, Difference, and Conflict in Education for Democracy**

A curriculum may normalize hegemonic assumptions about race, gender, sexuality, and power, thereby silencing or ignoring the Other (hooks, 1994; McCarthy, 1988). Moreover, when such a curriculum adopts a so-called neutral stance, it treats conflict as something to be avoided, implicitly inviting students to maintain white, male-centred, heterosexual, and middle-to-upper class norms and values (Apple, 1979/2004; Kumashiro, 2000). This avoidance of conflict limits opportunities for students to engage in discussion and to explore alternative perspectives. In contrast, a curriculum that airs conflicting perspectives invites and supports critical thinking, exposing the ideological underpinnings of the existing system. All curricula include implicit learning opportunities embedded in classroom and school practices. This is known as the hidden curriculum (Jackson, 1968). While the hidden curriculum in North American schooling typically avoids conflict (Apple, 1979/2004), it is possible for explicit (or implicit) conflict learning opportunities embedded in the curriculum to cut against this grain, and instead to encourage critical, inclusive engagement. Implicit and explicit curricular experiences that purposefully generate conflict dialogue and address issues of power and difference can create spaces for inclusion of multiple histories, experiences, and perspectives (Bickmore, 2005).

Further, the identities of the individuals involved in any conflictual discussion play a significant role in the ways these individuals understand and approach social and political issues in classroom settings. Here I discuss identity not as a singular construct, but as an ever-changing, fluid process. Identity in this sense is multiple and transformative in nature, while also subject to radical historicization, a process that is “produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies” (Hall, 2000, p. 17). In this way, identity is constructed and understood through difference. Conflict-dialogue processes thus create opportunities for students and teachers to engage with their multiple identities and to draw on their diverse lived experiences and perspectives to interpret and respond to specific issues. Diverse students better navigate their multiple worlds between home, school, and community when teachers' pedagogical strategies engage their personal experiences and identities (Cummins, 2001; Parker, 2010; Phelan, Davidson, & Cao, 1991). By contrast, when power and difference are ignored, conflictual issues pedagogies can be detrimental, particularly for students who carry marginalized identities (Hess & Avery, 2008).

In societies characterized by social inequality, the dominant group's ways of thinking are legitimized when unproblematized dominant world views are embedded in curriculum content, and delivered in a top-down manner (Freire, 1970/1994). This inhibits the possibility of authentic, critical dialogue, which Freire (1970/1994) has argued how critical thinking is crucial for democracy and social development:

True dialogue cannot exist unless the dialoguers engage in critical thinking—thinking which discerns an indivisible solidarity between the world and the people and admits of no dichotomy between them—thinking which perceives reality as process, as transformation, rather than as static entity-thinking which does not separate itself from action, but constantly immerses itself in temporality without fear of the risks involved. (p. 73)

Through developing critical consciousness—that is, understanding gained through praxis, a combination of action and reflection—transformative dialogue evolves. Davies (2004) has theorized that, “Dialogue (the two acts of speaking and listening) is actually about emergence: the bringing out of new and previously hidden meanings and understandings” (p. 216). In this way, dialogue, and critical and creative thinking, are ways to engage in social transformation. For such dialogue to be democratic and transformative, however, socially constructed norms concerning power and hegemony must be addressed explicitly (Davies, 2004). In this context, conflict dialogue presents a way to achieve such recognition of difference because of its goal of eliciting diverse and critical perspectives that question dominant assumptions.

### **Diversity, Identity, Power, and Peace-building Education**

In a safe, inclusive classroom, diverse students freely and confidently learn from and with their peers by actively and respectfully exchanging multiple and divergent perspectives with peers and teachers (Fine, 1993; Hahn, 1998; Larson, 2003). A curriculum characterized by interruptive democracy—frequent generation of dialogue and deliberation—engages students in praxis (Davies, 2004). For instance, in such a curriculum, teachers encourage students to challenge hegemonic assumptions, while also promoting inclusive spaces for multiple identities. Such a curriculum includes organized forms of conflict dialogue—such as councils, circle time, diverse student representation on governing bodies, and critical pedagogy—to address inequalities such as class, ethnicity, gender, and global injustices (Davies, 2004). Conflict dialogue that is inclusive of multiple and diverse perspectives contributes to guiding diverse students through democratic learning experiences.

Further, curriculum content that presents diverse perspectives in conjunction with inclusive, engaging pedagogical tools, supports conflict learning for diverse students. For instance, critical study of master and alternative narratives creates opportunities for students to understand how such narratives work (Funk & Said, 2004). The study of fictional characters or events represented in literature also addresses power relations among participants with different identities. Such engagement with difference, in turn, supports processes of empathizing with the Other (Zembylas, 2007). Conflict can be used for learning opportunities in the classroom, as “Schools lie in the nexus of political manipulation, fear, and societal conflict but also [they] can be a potent forum for change” (Weinstein, Freedman, & Hughson, 2007, p. 65).

The diverse and multiple identities, such as ethnocultural, sexual, and gender identities, of students and teachers influence the ways in which conflict-dialogue is approached in schools. To support diverse students’ identities as they engage in conflict-dialogue, teachers must be equipped with culturally appropriate pedagogies (Delpit, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2004). There is an evident need for curriculum to engage explicitly in constructive conflict, to provide learning opportunities for diverse students.

Apple’s (1979/2004), Freire’s (1970/1994), and Davies’ (2004) theories suggest that inviting students to explore conflicting perspectives on unresolved issues facilitates

education for democratization. Below are two tables that outline principles for teacher facilitation and potential student outcomes and responses to different kinds of dialogue. The first table attempts to identify how teachers' praxis for critical conflict-dialogue engagement may be enacted in diverse classroom settings. Conflict-dialogue pedagogies may or may not be sensitive to diverse students' identities. The literature shows that equity issues embedded in curriculum (e.g., experiences of historically marginalized, oppressed groups) are often skimmed over or not mentioned at all (Bannerji, 2000; Osborne, 1995). In contrast, the infusion of conflictual issues dialogue provides opportunities to voice multiple, contesting perspectives—some of which are relevant to diverse students' identities. Based on this literature review, the categories presented below were generated and used to conduct the initial analysis of the data. Table 1 identifies principles for teacher facilitation and potential outcomes for diverse students' ethnocultural and social identities across three different classroom cases. Table 2 illustrates how diverse ethnocultural minority students may respond to and experience different kinds of dialogue about diversity and conflict.

Even with the implementation of these principles for facilitating conflict dialogue, there are still multiple and differing ways in which diverse students engage with and experience conflict-dialogue processes. The broad range of categories is intentional for this purpose; where multiple identities and experiences cross boundaries depending on the conflictual issue and the pedagogical process that facilitates the discussion of it and the personal identity of the individual student.

## **Research Method**

This study is a critical examination of issues-based discussions and activities in Grades 4 to 7 social studies, history, and language arts curricula, in classrooms with ethnocultural minorities. This research employed ethnography with a critical perspective to conduct an in-depth study of students' experiences with conflictual dialogue pedagogies in different units of study over the course of one school year in three elementary school classrooms in two schools. Data collected included approximately 110 classroom observations, ranging from 40 to 120 minutes each that were documented through handwritten fieldnotes; two one-hour formal interviews with each teacher; approximately 30 student group interviews, each 30 to 45 minutes long, with groups of two to seven students at a time; classroom documents, including students' work samples and teachers' planning materials; and a researcher journal. The qualitative data gathered were interpreted thematically to explore how teachers in three classrooms facilitated democratic learning opportunities for diverse students (Creswell, 2008). This study adds to the extant body of research by examining how various conflict-dialogue processes differentially facilitated or impeded the participation and engagement of diverse students. My research questions were:

1. How do the teachers in three public, urban, and diverse Grades 4 to 7 classrooms implement conflict dialogue in their social studies and language arts curricula? How do these pedagogies shape learning opportunities for their diverse students?
2. How do diverse, visible minority, and immigrant students experience these conflict-dialogue processes (content and pedagogy) in relation to their own perspectives, histories, and identities?

**Table 1**

*Principles for Facilitation and Potential Outcomes*

| Principles for Facilitation                                | Potential Outcomes   |
|--|--|
| Acknowledge conflict, power, and diversity                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explicitly recognize social power structure and social conflict within curriculum content</li> <li>• Raise consciousness of critical multiculturalism about conflictual issues through dialogue about difference and conflict</li> <li>• Discuss diversity</li> </ul> |
| Teacher selects engagement norms                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage self-directed responses and perspectives</li> <li>• Encourage opportunities to handle conflictual issues</li> </ul>   |
| Teacher sets inclusive and conflictual dialogue pedagogies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage activities, strategies that increase potential for inclusion through pedagogical tools for conflict dialogue</li> </ul>   |

**Table 2**

*Responses to Different Kinds of Dialogue About Diversity and Conflict*

| Dialogue                                 | Responses   |
|--|---|
| Silencing                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nonverbal observer takes on lesser, quieter role</li> <li>• (Non)response to opportunities to engage in conflictual issues dialogue</li> </ul>                       |
| Voicing                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voicing similar and different perspectives, divergent points of view</li> <li>• Peer-to-peer dialogue about difference and conflict</li> </ul>                       |
| Including social and individual identity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speaking from individual/group identities (ethnocultural, religious, gender)</li> <li>• Drawing on personal background knowledge, history, and experience</li> </ul> |

The preliminary findings, presented below, are drawn primarily from observational data. All proper names have been changed to protect participants' identities. Following ethical protocols, permission and consent to conduct this study was given by the school board, principals, teachers, parents, and participating students.

## **Findings**

### **Aria Public School, Grade 4, Ms. Marlee**

Ms. Marlee is an African-Canadian teacher who had previously taught special education for five years. When I observed her class, from December 2010 to April 2011, it was during her first year teaching Grade 4 students in a regular, integrated classroom. During this period, I conducted 35 observations of her class of 23 (nine boys, 14 girls), half of East Asian descent (mostly Chinese), and half of South Asian descent (mostly Indian, Sri Lankan, and Pakistani). There was one Black female student, who was Christian—also a minority in this class. Paying keen attention to the demographic makeup of the class allowed the question of cultural identities to be explored.

I observed Ms. Marlee facilitating a religious conflict between two girls, Fatima (Muslim) and Tina (Christian). Ms. Marlee voiced her perspective on the issue: that we should all practise acceptance and understanding of other cultures to maintain a harmonious community. Fatima and Tina, who were both usually vocally dominant in class, chose to self-silence during this discussion. The topic appeared to be closed for discussion.

A few weeks later, during the same social studies unit, students were reading aloud from a textbook about the Arctic Lowlands. In a sidebar, there was an Inuit creation story. Ms. Marlee stopped the class read-aloud to reflect on this story, and used this moment to ask students to write creation stories from their own cultures. Sharing their different creation stories continued the discussion about diversity within and among religions, and provided opportunities for all the students to share their familial beliefs, fostering a sense of social and identity inclusion for diverse students. While only about eight students came prepared to tell their stories in front of the class, many others engaged in the discussion, feeling free to voice similar and different perspectives as they asked and responded to questions about their religious beliefs. For instance, Farat, typically a quiet boy, added to Fatima's story by providing additional details about followers of Islam.

Between February and April, I observed these students studying the medieval period. Ms. Marlee acknowledged the power structures in her class by assigning different roles to her students—giving lower-status students higher positions (e.g., the normally quiet Farat was named king, while a quiet girl was named princess), while the higher-status students were given lower positions (e.g., a dominant girl, Swetha, was named a serf). Ms. Marlee introduced students to power and hierarchies during classroom discussions about the medieval period. In one discussion, she encouraged Tina, a Christian minority in this classroom context, to voice her perspective by asking her to relate her role to her personal religious identity:

- T: Very few people read, but among the top people who could read were the clergy. Tina, you should know this. What position were you assigned?
- Tina: Abbess.
- T: What are you a part of?



Tina: Clergy.

T: The church controlled a lot of the knowledge and it was to their benefit to have the other people be illiterate, because reading is power and the church just educated people within the clergy. (Field notes, March 28, 2011)

This conflictual dialogue about diversity showed how Ms. Marlee taught her Grade 4 students about power and hierarchies during a historical period. By stimulating a dialogue that enabled Tina to explore the idea that knowledge is power and that the medieval church controlled knowledge, the class was able to develop an awareness of how higher and lower classes were formed and preserved within medieval societies, and how social structures operated at that time. Furthermore, Tina had specifically asked her teacher to have a role within the church, demonstrating her comfort in speaking about her Christian religious identity among her classmates. Ms. Marlee appeared to be equally comfortable using Tina as an example to raise the issue of power within the Christian Church during medieval times.

The two girls who had initially chosen to self-silence in the heat of the religious conflict between them later found their voices through this pedagogically inclusive activity, which encouraged them to speak from their individual and group ethnocultural and religious identities. Based on observations of such discussions, it was evident that when opportunities to dialogue about difference were integrated into the curriculum content, students' sense of social and identity inclusion was developed in ways that strengthened their engagement in the classroom.

### **Aria Public School, Grade 5, Mrs. Amrita**

Mrs. Amrita had immigrated to Canada from India nine years previously. She had taught at Aria for the last six years. There were 26 Grade 5 students (13 boys, 13 girls), seven of whom were of East Asian descent (mostly Chinese). All but one of the remainder were of South Asian descent (mostly Indian, Pakistani, and Tamil Sri Lankans). The exception was a Black boy who had recently immigrated from Somalia. I observed 39 of Mrs. Amrita's social studies, science, language arts, health, art, and mathematics classes.

In a social studies unit, the class was studying the differences between the rights and responsibilities of Canadian citizens, through teacher-led recitation and discussion, and through individual and small-group activities, which culminated in a class election. Mrs. Amrita openly acknowledged social power structures when she shared her own immigration experiences with her students. She then encouraged the four students in the class who had only recently immigrated to Canada to voice their experiences too. These particular newcomers all responded to her invitation. Clearly, they felt safe enough to share this part of their identity.

For a writing assignment, students wrote about their or their parents' experiences of immigrating to Canada. In the debrief of this exercise, Mrs. Amrita adapted her norms for engagement. She explained that she was not going to force anyone to share, and would give students the choice of whether to voice their experiences by calling only on those who raised their hands. Students were exposed to different and conflicting perspectives during this sharing period, but (uncharacteristically) did not ask each other questions as they usually did. Instead, Mrs. Amrita provided comments and often related the students' stories to her own experience.

For another activity, students were asked to fill out a sample immigration points survey with their family. No one in the class shared whether their family had passed this

sample survey and been accepted into Canada, but a few students whispered to me, when I was walking around the classroom, that their parents had failed the actual (current) Canadian points test. I realized that this was a particularly sensitive task for students and even though it was an activity to encourage discussion about diversity, it also barred some diverse students from participating because they were embarrassed to share such sensitive family information with their peers.

Both Mrs. Amrita and many of her students expressed beliefs that they were free to openly engage in discussion about social conflicts and diversity with each other. Mrs. Amrita's identity as a relatively recent Indian immigrant and the students' East and South Asian backgrounds appeared to provide an implicit level of comfort during discussions about diversity. In most instances, students' participation patterns and inclination to share and engage in such discussions illustrated their social and identity inclusion.

Overall, the students in Mrs. Amrita's class experienced both implicit and explicit conflict-dialogue learning opportunities that often encouraged students to voice their perspectives. The norms for engagement, however, allowed them to pass, or self-silence, particularly when the conflictual issue was sensitive and identity-linked.

### **Georgetown Public School, Grade 7, Mr. Hiroshi**

Mr. Hiroshi was in the second year of his teaching career, and was teaching Grade 7 for the second time at Georgetown. Of mixed Japanese and European ancestry, Mr. Hiroshi was in his mid-20s when I observed his class between December 2010 and April 2011. There were 29 students (14 girls, 13 boys), all but three of whom were of South Asian descent (mostly Indian and Tamil Sri Lankans). Of the three, two were Black boys, and one was a half-White female. I observed Mr. Hiroshi and his students during language arts, mathematics, history, geography, and health classes.

In a history lesson, Mr. Hiroshi invited students to reflect on the uprising and protests in Egypt in January and February 2011. He explicitly asked students to acknowledge power as they discussed this social conflict in relation to the curriculum content. He posted a newspaper article on the class Twitter account and brought it in for discussion the next day, placing it on the current events board. Upon seeing a photo of a boy picking up a rock in Tahrir Square, one of the students made a connection to the Rebellions of 1837, in which rebels also picked up whatever was available to them to fight the British colonial government. The following snippet from observational data illustrates how this social conflict connected to students' personal experiences and identities:

T: I was thinking about how people were rebelling in 1837 and how you were all connecting that to what's happening in Egypt and one thing I want you to be aware of is what's going on in the world. (*Asking students directly:*) Does it affect any of us? Right here and right now as we're sitting here, does it affect us? Can I use you as an example, Mona?

Mona: Yes. . . . My neighbours and my family are still there.

T: So it may not affect a lot of you now directly, but in a quest to make us think about things in our schema [here on the current events board] we want to recognize what's happening in the world. (Field notes, Feb 4, 2011)

Mr. Hiroshi used students' choices to create groups for a reenactment of a town hall meeting that reflected social power structures and social conflict within the curriculum when the class

studied the 1837 Rebellions, taking on the roles of the Family Compact or government, moderates, and rebels/radicals. A small group of four or five girls in the class were known as the quiet ones. Their reticence had become very apparent when Mr. Hiroshi led the class through an opinion spectrum activity (strongly agree, somewhat agree, disagree), in which students shared their perspectives on school uniforms, summer holidays, and teachers' responsibilities. Originally, all the members of this quieter, all-female group were in the moderate category, meaning they would play the mostly nonverbal observer role, speaking only a little, and maintaining their silence during a loud and enthralling conflictual dialogue between the Family Compact and the rebels. The day before the reenactment, however, Smira, a particularly quiet girl, and a friend asked Mr. Hiroshi for permission to join what had been the all-male, Family Compact/government group, and he gave that permission. Being in this new role, one with power, provided Smira with the opportunity to voice and act a high-status position as a member of the powerful Family Compact. During the town hall meeting Smira, her friend and supporter standing staunchly beside her, found her voice as she presented her speech.

In Mr. Hiroshi's class, students consistently engaged in discussion about diversity and social conflicts. The issues discussions, led by Mr. Hiroshi, encouraged both individual and small-group reflection and connected to students' experiences and histories. Through the study of both current and historical events, a range of diverse students, including quiet ones and those of lower social status, were given opportunities to collectively shape their perceptions and understandings of their world. Mr. Hiroshi presented issues that he found interesting and fascinating (war-related games, facts, and news articles) and it appeared, from most students' level of engagement, that most agreed with their teacher's position on the conflictual issues explicitly presented. The agreement and multitude of connections amongst and between students and Mr. Hiroshi meant that there was little to no open disagreement about plausible alternative perspectives on some conflictual issues. Mr. Hiroshi expressed this sentiment himself during our interview where he said, "The stuff I didn't agree with, they didn't agree with either" (December 17, 2010). Such a position could indicate that if students did not concur with their teacher's position, their response may have been to self-silence.

Observational data indicated that students in Mr. Hiroshi's class were provided with multiple and inclusive learning opportunities about diverse social conflicts that often reflected the ethnocultural identities in the room. Through various conflict-dialogue pedagogies, such as teacher-led discussion, frequent small-group discussions, problem-solving tasks, debates, structured academic controversies (Johnson & Johnson, 2009), town hall simulations, and the use of online learning tools, many ethnoculturally diverse, minoritized students consistently found their voices. Encouraged by the norms for engagement, they spoke in and out of role from both individual and group identities to critically engage in dialogue about social conflicts.

## **Discussion**

Social studies and language arts curricula offer numerous opportunities for acknowledging power and explicitly recognizing social power structures and social conflict within curriculum content by connecting various cultural, historical, and social issues, using diverse conflict-dialogue processes. The above vignettes from three different classes illustrate the different ways ethnocultural minority students grappled with expectations and norms for

engagement when volunteering or being selected to dialogue about social conflicts, such as wars, religions, and cultural or social exclusion. All three teachers used a variety of conflict-dialogue pedagogies to encourage their diverse students to study how conflicts can be resolved peacefully and restoratively by exploring and including multiple perspectives. In all three classrooms, the teachers were not afraid to voice the differences among the identities represented by the students in the class.

By acknowledging power and explicitly integrating and eliciting students' diverse cultural knowledges, the teachers guided students to make connections to their identities and to their peers within their current sociopolitical context. Through dialogue about difference and conflict, Mrs. Amrita connected to her students by discussing the processes of immigrating to Canada and the meaning of being Canadian; Ms. Marlee provided Tina with a role for her strong, but in this context, minority religious identity; and Mr. Hiroshi addressed Mona's anxiety about her family in Egypt, by purposefully relating her experience to the discussion, thereby encouraging the other students to form connections to this international conflict. All three teachers, each with classes of similar demographic composition, both similarly and differently implemented conflict-dialogue pedagogies about social issues. Their choices invariably contributed to most students feeling safe in sharing their personal lived experiences during open classroom discussions.

The teachers in this study employed conflict-dialogue pedagogies and discussions about diversity that provided opportunities for students to switch their positions, statuses, and roles while acknowledging and subsequently responding to social power structures. Higher- and lower-status students responded differently to different pedagogical approaches. In Ms. Marlee's medieval unit, she purposefully played with students' social status roles, by inverting the power structure she saw within her classroom. Mr. Hiroshi drew on students' personal opinions and responses to conflictual decisions to assign them to a radical, moderate, or powerful position. Across these different cases, teachers used various conflict-dialogue processes to encourage and include students' diverse perspectives. Through individual reflective writing tasks, small group discussions, and whole-class, teacher-led discussions, distinctive efforts to both implicitly and explicitly connect to students' experiences and identities were evident. However, while critical consciousness about power and inequity was encouraged through a critical study of power between "what-was-then and what-is-now," students still appeared to engage most often in agreement and consensus, despite their differences. Mr. Hiroshi articulated his understanding of this implicit consensus among students, pointing out that he and his students generally shared the same perspective on social issues. Even skilled teachers, who are conscious of opening space for dialogue, need to be cognizant that some students, may purposely choose to perform consensus or remain silent during conflictual issues dialogue out of fear of peer or teacher reprisal, particularly when discussing a politically charged issue (Bekerman, 2009; King, 2009; Schultz 2010). Thus, providing multiple and differing opportunities for dialogue are vital for encouraging potentially marginalized and silent voices.

Overall, the research findings illustrate how some diverse students, particularly new immigrants, may experience barriers in the classroom when not given the opportunity to engage in activities that support the inclusion of their ethno-cultural identities. It also shows how teachers' choices to uncover hidden curricula embedded in classroom practices offered spaces for the inclusion of Others. As diverse immigrant students acculturate to classroom settings, they inevitably encounter cultural barriers within the explicit, planned classroom curriculum. The pedagogical and content choices of these three teachers in the instances described above show how the consistent infusion of constructive conflict dialogue provided

democratic learning opportunities that led to the inclusion of voices that may have otherwise been left unheard.

## Conclusion

Teachers may feel ill equipped to manage controversial and politically charged material in inclusive and constructive ways, especially in classrooms with diverse students (Bickmore, 1999, 2005; Torney-Purta et al., 2001; Yamashita, 2006). The cases illustrated in this paper maybe atypical. Choosing to take the ‘risk’ to address social issues in the classroom is a rarity in many elementary school classrooms, where teachers are confronted with many institutional impediments, such as strict time-tabling and skimming curricula content within a regime of high stakes testing accountability (Barton & Levstik, 2003; Hess, 2009; Pace, 2011). Teachers’ sense of their own expertise in curriculum content and pedagogy influences how they facilitate or avoid conflictual issues discussions (Bekerman, Zembylas, & McGlynn, 2009; Oulton, Day, Dillon, & Grace, 2004). Challenging diverse students to move beyond compliance and silence when conflictual issues arise is a complex process, particularly when silence holds multiple meanings for different cultural groups (Schultz 2010). Teachers can integrate culturally relevant pedagogies and discussion-based teaching about conflict and diversity to open up the confines of the curriculum and better support diverse ethnocultural minority students’ identities and citizenship (Delpit, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2004). In some contexts, the complexity of identities shapes the ways in which issues are taken up and explored. For instance, group identities are paramount in some communities and schools. When patriotism towards one’s community is strong, the idea of acknowledging the Other may be challenging for those who want to maintain that everyone is the same (Kymlicka, 2003). In this way, Freire’s (1970/1994) term, *conscientization*, illustrates this process of engaging in critically understanding the world from a marginalized position, which is made possible when people engage in learning about their own social position and take action to do something about it—in other words, praxis.

In this study, facilitating conflict-dialogue processes in critical, multicultural education fostered a space for the inclusion of many diverse identities, and created opportunities for students and teachers to engage with their multiple identities by drawing on their diverse lived experiences and perspectives to interpret and respond to various social conflict issues. While certain conflictual issues garnered more consensus-based perspectives, rather than explicit conflictual discussion, the teachers still employed processes that opened up the space for dialogue about difference. Insights gleaned from this qualitative study in three different classrooms explore how conflictual issues were facilitated through dialogue pedagogies with different classes of ethnoculturally diverse, minority students. The teachers introduced in this article demonstrated how their implicit and explicit liberatory praxis offered their diverse students opportunities to choose consciousness over dysconsciousness (King, 2004). When social-conflict issues were explicitly discussed and connected to students’ diverse identities, even the typically quieter students found their voice in classroom discussions. This finding demonstrates how education for democracy supports the engagement of diverse voices. Claudia Ruitenberg (2010) has written, “Young people should be given opportunities to experience this kind of disagreement and the affective commitments that drive it” (p. 52). In this way, conflict-dialogue pedagogies allow for promising democratic citizenship learning opportunities that foster inclusion within a multicultural learning environment.

## References

- Apple, M. (2004). *Ideology and curriculum* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge. (Original work published 1979)
- Avery, P. G., & Hahn, C. L. (2004). Diversity and U.S. 14-year-olds' knowledge, attitudes, and experiences. In W. Stephan & P. Vogt (Eds.), *Education programs for improving intergroup* (pp. 195–210). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Banks, J. A. (2006). *Cultural diversity and education: Foundations, curriculum, and teaching* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Bannerji, H. (2000). Geography lessons: On being an insider/outsider to the Canadian nation. In H. Bannerji, *The dark side of nation: Essay on multiculturalism, nationalism, and gender* (pp. 63–86). Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press.
- Barton, K. C., & Levstik, L. S. (2003). Why don't more history teachers engage students in interpretation? *Social Education*, 67(6), 358–361.
- Bekerman, Z. (2009). Identity versus peace: Identity wins. *Harvard Educational Review*, 79(1), 74–83.
- Bekerman, Z., Zembylas, M., & McGlynn, C. (2009). Working toward the de-essentialization of identity categories in conflict and postconflict societies: Israel, Cyprus, and Northern Ireland. *Comparative Education Review*, 53(2), 213–234.
- Bickmore, K. (1999). Elementary curriculum about conflict resolution: Can children handle global politics? *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 27(1), 45–69.
- Bickmore, K. (2005). Foundations for peacebuilding and discursive peacekeeping: Infusion and exclusion of conflict in Canadian public school curricula. *Journal of Peace Education*, 2(2), 161–181.
- Bickmore, K. (2008). Peace and conflict education. In J. Arthur, I. Davies, & C. Hahn (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of education for citizenship and democracy* (pp. 438–454). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2008). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and Evaluating quantitative and qualitative Research* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice.
- Cummins, J. (2001). *Negotiating identities: Education for empowerment in a diverse society* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: California Association for Bilingual Education.
- Davies, L. (2004). Education for positive conflict and interruptive democracy. In L. Davies, *Education and conflict: Complexity and chaos* (pp. 203–224). London, England: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Delpit, L. (2006). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom*. New York, NY: New Press.
- Dull, L., & Murrow, S. (2008). Is dialogic questioning possible in social studies classrooms? *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 36(4), 391–412.
- Fine, M. (1993). "You can't just say that the only ones who can speak are those who agree with your position": Political discourse in the classroom. *Harvard Educational Review*, 63(4), 412–433.
- Freire, P. (1994). *Pedagogy of hope*. New York, NY: Continuum. (Original work published 1970)
- Funk, N., & Said, A. A. (2004). Islam and the West: Narratives of conflict and conflict transformation. *International Journal of Peace Studies*, 9(1), 1–28.

- Haas, C. (2008). Citizenship education in Denmark: Reinventing the nation and/or conducting multiculturalisms? *London Review of Education*, 6(1), 59–69.
- Hahn, C. (1998). Democratic inquiry and discourse: Classroom climates in cross-national perspective. In C. Hahn, *Becoming political: Comparative perspectives on citizenship education* (pp. 177–234). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Hall, S. (2000). Who needs “identity”? In du Gay, P., Evans, J., & Redman, P. (Eds.) *Identity: A reader* (pp. 15–30). London, England: Sage/The Open University (D853 Reader).
- Hemmings, A. (2000). High school democratic dialogues: Possibilities for praxis. *American Educational Research Journal*, 37(1), 67–91.
- Hess, D. (2009). *Controversy in the classroom: The democratic power of discussion*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hess, D., & Avery, P. (2008). Discussion of controversial issues as a form and goal of democratic education. In J. Arthur, I. Davies, & C. Hahn (Eds.), *Sage handbook of education for citizenship and democracy* (pp. 506–518). London, England: Sage.
- Hess, D., & Posselt, J. (2002). How high school students experience and learn from the discussion of controversial public issues. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, 17(4), 283–314.
- hooks, b. (1994). Theory as liberatory practice. In *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom* (pp. 59–75). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Jackson, P. (1968). *Life in classrooms*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.
- Johnson, D., & Johnson, R. (2009). Energizing learning: The instructional power of conflict. *Educational Researcher*, 38(1), 37–51.
- King, J. E. (2004). Dysconscious racism: Ideology, identity, and the miseducation of teachers. In G. Ladson-Billings & D. Gillborn (Eds.), *The RoutledgeFalmer reader in multicultural education: Critical perspectives on race, racism and education* (pp. 71–83). London, England: RoutledgeFalmer.
- King, J. T. (2009). Teaching and learning about controversial issues: Lessons from Northern Ireland. *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 37(2), 215–246.
- Kumashiro, K. (2000). Toward a theory of anti-oppressive education. *Review of Educational Research*, 70(1), 25–53.
- Kumashiro, K. (2004). *Against common sense: Teaching and learning toward social justice*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Kymlicka, W. (2003). Being Canadian. *Government and opposition*, 38(3), 357–385.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2004). Culture versus citizenship: The challenge of racialized citizenship in the United States. In J. Banks (Ed.), *Diversity and Citizenship Education: Global Perspectives* (pp. 99–126). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass/Wiley.
- Larson, B. E. (2003). Comparing face-to-face discussion and electronic discussion: A case study from high school social studies. *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 31(3), 347–365.
- McCarthy, C. (1988). Rethinking liberal and radical perspectives on racial inequality in schooling: Making the case of nonsynchrony. *Harvard Educational Review*, 58(3), 265–279.
- Nieto, S. (1992). *Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multicultural education*. White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Nieto, S. (1999). Critical multicultural education and students’ perspectives. In S. May (Ed.), *Critical multiculturalism* (pp. 191–215). London, England: Falmer. Not in paper?

- Nieto, S. (2002). Multicultural education and school reform, in *Language, culture, and teaching: Critical perspectives for a new century*. (pp. 27–50). London, England: Lawrence Erlbaum. Not in paper?
- Osborne, K. (1995). “To the schools we must look for good Canadians”: Developments in the teaching of history in Canadian schools since 1960. In K. Osborne, *Defense of History: Teaching the Past and the Meaning of Democratic Citizenship* (pp. 49–82). Toronto, ON: Our Schools/Our Selves.
- Oulton, C., Day, V., Dillon, J., & Grace, M. (2004). Controversial issues: Teachers’ attitudes and practices in the context of citizenship education. *Oxford Review of Education*, 30(4), 489–507.
- Pace, J. (2011). The complex and unequal impact of high stakes accountability on untested social studies. *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 39(1), 32–60.
- Parker, C. A. (2010). Finding our way home (at school): A study of students’ experiences of bringing their home culture into the classroom. *Journal of Teaching and Learning*, 7(1), 17–29.
- Phelan, P., Davidson, A. L., & Cao, H. T. (1991). Students’ multiple worlds: Negotiating the boundaries of family, peer, and school cultures. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 22(3), 224–250.
- Ruitenberg, C. W. (2010). Conflict, affect, and the political: On disagreement as democratic capacity. In *Factis Pax*, 4(1), 40–55.
- Schultz, K. (2010). After the blackbird whistles: Listening to silence in classrooms. *Teachers College Record*, 112(11), 2833–2849.
- Statistics Canada. (2006). *2006 census*. Retrieved from <http://www40.statcan.gc.ca/101/cst01/demo53c-eng.htm>
- Torney-Purta, J., Lehmann, R., Oswald, H., & Schultz, W. (2001). *Citizenship and education in 28 countries: Civic knowledge and engagement at age 14*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement.
- Weinstein, H., Freedman, S., & Hughson, H. (2007). School voices: Challenges facing educational systems after identity-based conflicts. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice* 2(1), 41–71.
- Yamashita, H. (2006). Global citizenship education and war: The needs of teachers and learners. *Educational Review*, 58(1), 27–39.
- Zembylas, M. (2007). The politics of trauma: Empathy, reconciliation and peace education. *Journal of Peace Education*, 4(2), 207–224.



## **Immigrant Graduate Students, Employability and Citizenship: Transformation through Experience and Reflection**

Olenka Bilash, Professor, University of Alberta

Wenying Shi, Learning Strategy Advisor, University of Alberta

### **Abstract**

This longitudinal case study about one immigrant doctoral student draws on research from three fields: citizenship education, career planning for immigrants and international students in post-secondary education. Wenying's story is used as a means to understand this demographic group and some of the challenges they face with employability; issues of professional career transitions; gaps in their professional knowledge, skills, and experiences; evolution of understandings and acts of citizenship; and need for explicit socio-cultural teaching. With data gathered through a dialogic critical friend process, the study reveals the power of self reflection, career planning surveys, informed academic and peer support, critical pedagogy and ecological theory in Wenying's transformation. The paper offers six insights for immigrant graduate students and recommends five systemic changes that could increase social justice for international/foreign and immigrant graduate students in Canada.

**Key words:** immigrant graduate students; employability; career planning; citizenship education

With growing numbers of international graduate students coming to study in Canada each year (King, 2008; Desjardins and King, 2011), universities are facing challenges to the support services they provide – are their international centres, career and placement offices and employment opportunities in libraries, labs and as research assistants sufficient to provide cultural learning opportunities for full participation of these students? Further, with the majority of doctoral earners becoming landed immigrants before graduation<sup>3</sup>, international graduate students not only facilitate global knowledge mobilization, but for those who stay, also shape Canadian society, an area of research unexplored in the academy. Thus, more questions arise: do universities provide graduates with the skills needed to pursue careers comparable to those of their “Canadian-born and -educated” counterparts? What must universities do to succeed at providing for what International Trade Minister Stockwell Day described as a major export industry for Canada? (Roslyn Kunin & Associates, Inc., 2009).

In this paper we present themes from a longitudinal case study of the efforts of Wenying, an immigrant doctoral student from China, who grappled with the meaning of employability in her search for work in Canada. It reveals some impressions of Canada, citizenship, and Wenying's experiences of our institutions and values. Although only one immigrant graduate student's story is told in this paper, the authors shed new light on the challenges facing students like Wenying and identify some needed supports such as building inter-institutional collaboration, institutional infrastructure and university and public awareness.

---

<sup>3</sup> In 2007, King reported that “Canada continued to be a desired destination for foreign doctoral students.” (p. 23) and that the majority of these nearly 23% of doctorate earners “planned to remain in Canada” (p. 23). In another study of doctoral graduates in Ontario, Desjardins and King (2011) state that “more than two-thirds of immigrant graduates became landed immigrants before graduating from their doctoral program in 2005” (p. 15).

## **Significance**

In November 2010, International Trade Minister Stockwell Day released a report (“Economic Impact of International Education in Canada”, 2009) that revealed that in 2008 about seven percent of undergraduate students in Canada were international, an increase from five percent in 2001. Dr. Doug Owram, former Vice President (Academic) and Provost at the University of Alberta, and currently UBC Okanagan’s Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC) notes that:

Mr. Day’s study put the number at 178,000 postsecondary international students in Canada. Yet relative to some of our Commonwealth partners, our numbers are still low. Australia, with about two-thirds Canada’s population, had over 300,000 in the same year. New Zealand’s level was much higher, relative to overall university enrolment. Great Britain maintains its longstanding role as a major exporter of advanced education, with more than 2.3 million international students. In spite of recent growth, therefore, Canada is still far from a leader in the field. (Owram, 2010)

Further, Owram argues that if education of international students is a major export industry for Canada and of significant benefit to the economy,

it is more important than ever that Canadian universities consider carefully the implications of international enrolment. Do we have the policies in place to support growth and do we see our universities assuming an international leadership role in the field? If we do, we have a responsibility to ensure that the students have every opportunity to succeed and that the reputation of Canadian universities is enhanced overseas in the process. (Owram, 2010)

## **Related Literature**

The questions raised in the introduction are broad and require exploration by many; this paper is more focused and utilizes literature conducted in three fields of research: citizenship education, international students in post-secondary education, and immigrant career planning.

### **Citizenship Education**

Westheimer and Kahne’s (2004)<sup>4</sup> answer to “*what kind of citizen do we need to support an effective democratic society?*” yielded three descriptions of citizenship: the personally responsible citizen, the participatory citizen and the justice-oriented citizen. The personally responsible citizen focuses on honesty, integrity, self-discipline and hard work and may contribute time, money or both to charitable causes such as volunteering, donating to a food or clothing drive or helping those who are less fortunate. The participatory citizen is distinguished by a higher level of civic participation, being actively involved in “...civic affairs and the social life of the community at local, state, and national levels” (p. 2). By understanding the government and

---

<sup>4</sup> This paper won the Outstanding Paper of the Year award for research in social studies from the American Educational Research Association and Best Paper of the Year award from the division on Teaching and Learning of the American Political Science Association.

other institutions, as well as the importance of taking action to help those in need, this citizen organizes a food or clothing drive, instead of just contributing to them: “In the tradition of De Tocqueville, proponents of participatory citizenship argue that civic participation transcends particular community problems or opportunities. It also develops relationships, common understandings, trust, and collective commitments” (p. 3). The justice-oriented citizen seeks systemic change rather than promoting charity or volunteerism. This perspective values collective work connected to life and issues of the community and critical engagement and analysis of social issues and injustices. It seeks social, political and economic strategies to change a situation or address the roots of problems.

### **International Students in Post-secondary Education**

According to King’s (2008) Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED) Canadian universities were overall successful (2004/2005) in preparing doctoral students for professional careers (p. 18). Many participants (73%) reported having solid plans regarding employment and further studies, especially in engineering and science; most described working in research, development, or teaching (p. 18); and nearly 64% expected that their annual salary would be or exceed \$55,000 (p. 20). However, the study does not discuss international students’ employability even though foreign students comprised almost a quarter (23%) of the population (p. 15), and as stated in the first footnote, the majority of them become landed immigrants during their studies.

Ehrenberg, Jakubson, Groen, So, and Price (2007) investigated how the American Graduate Education Initiatives (GEI) influenced attrition and graduation probabilities during the 1990s, but with no attention to the foreign students’ experiences. Other researchers have explored challenges and coping strategies facing women, both as doctoral students (Maher, Ford, and Thompson, 2004) as well as those already in academia (Acker & Armenti, 2004; Karumanchery-Luik & Ramirez, 2003). Among the unique challenges and coping strategies we also see racialization addressed (Sethna & Mujawamariya, 2003; Zong, 2001; Zong, 2004). In a report on the results of a survey on Chinese professional immigrants, Li Zong (2004) reported that 79% of the respondents had been working as professionals in China before immigration; however only 31% of them worked as professionals in Canada, 41.1% were engaged in low social status non-professional jobs, and 22.4% had never worked in Canada. Despite the large number of studies on post-secondary education, research on international students has primarily been addressed through knowledge mobilization, gender and race and not employability.

### **Career Planning for Immigrants**

The impact of several decades of credentialing in the employment market has meant that future employees must plan carefully to have the prerequisites for their desired future career. In this paper career planning describes the process that takes place after immigrant doctoral students 1) establish their goals; 2) identify their marketable skills, strengths, and weaknesses in the Canadian context; and 3) develop a realistic timeline which shows what, when and how to develop essential career-required attitudes, knowledge, skills, and experiences. A career barrier is any obstacle that stands in the way of achieving a career goal (Crites, 1969).<sup>5</sup> Crites (1969) describes barriers of both internal conflicts and external frustrations.

---

<sup>5</sup> Although dated, this definition continues to be used.

External career barriers of immigrants often include obstacles in having foreign credentials and work experience recognized (e.g. Basran & Zong, 1998; Henry, Tator, Mattis & Rees, 2000; Krahn, Derwing, Mulder & Wilkinson, 2000; Zong, 2001; Reitz, 2001); difficulties in translating educational achievements into occupational advantage (e.g. Grindstaff, 1986; Trovato & Grindstaff, 1986); racial discrimination; and employers' lack of knowledge of foreign credential practice (Alboim, Finnie, & Meng, 2005). Internal career barriers may include stress, less job satisfaction, and career immaturity (Leong & Chou, 1994) and low self-esteem, depression, extreme work ethic, and self-rejection (Diller, 1999).

In examining how university graduates overcome internal barriers, Zikic, Novicevic, Harvey & Breland (2006) discuss a three-phase proactive career exploration process of building knowledge, intention and determination in order to explore and manage one's career options. It involves: 1) building knowledge and information about oneself and the environment (Blustein, 1997; Jordan, 1963; Stumpf, Colarelli, & Hartman, 1983); 2) developing the intent of choosing an alternative career path/occupation (Schein, 1978); and/or 3) growing the determination and commitment to further one's career (Kanfer, Wanberg, & Kantrowitz, 2001). The awareness of alternative career paths reduces pressure on the individual, helps them develop increased confidence in finding a future career, and overall increases the quality of their daily lives (Schein, 1978).

The career exploration process involves the completion of an experiential survey organized around Boyer's (1990) four scholarships in academic work - discovery, integration, application, and teaching. Designed to identify academic gaps for mainstream students it has suggested ways to strengthen the American academic system (Golde and Dore, 2001; Gale and Golde, 2004; Golde and Walker, 2006). However, it is aimed primarily at students who already understand the basic premises of living, thinking, and functioning in Western society and does not address the needs of immigrant students who are expected to *adapt* to a new society *and* learn a new way of academic functioning. In fact, researchers may mistakenly apply findings from graduates of some faculties to all graduate students:

Foreign students represent a group that has undeniable advantages over other immigrant groups. Foreign students at Canadian universities and colleges have generally high proficiency in English and as a result are in more of a competitive position in finding employment in Canada. ... They are immersed in Canadian history, culture and values, which prepares them for the social and cultural challenges that may arise in the workforce or in the community. (Peykov, 2004, p. 4)

While foreign students may have some advantages over other immigrant groups, this paper will show that they do not always gain knowledge about Canadian culture nor opportunities to integrate in all faculties. Thus, as we shall see from Wenying's experience, the scholarly knowledge and skill development expectation of graduate programs of studies might be more correctly considered an additional barrier for immigrant students to overcome.

McAlpine and Norton (2006) question the appropriateness of both the content and the process of career preparation within doctoral programs and in so doing shed light on an understanding of the deficit of Western education in an internationalized campus. McAlpine and Amundsen (2007) suggest doctoral students experience tensions and challenges in integrating into academia because they do not perceive that research, teaching, and service work in universities overlap and interact. The authors propose a more general and integrative framework of contexts to guide both research and action.

The task of implementing the four scholarships in academic work has been challenged by some researchers who examined more practical aspects of doctoral education such as providing peer learning (Boud & Lee, 2005) and writing support (Aitchison & Lee, 2006). One strength of this approach is that it addresses practical issues relating to provisions which support doctoral students' learning. However, the pedagogical perspective offers less attention to enriching students' experience in and understanding of a new culture.

The linear student development approach proposed by many above has shown a clear and logical procedure for academic career preparation; a weakness is perhaps that this perspective lacks an integrative quality, centering on different forms of scholarship rather than on students' holistic experience, as noted by Colbeck and Wharton (2006). Their concern indicates that the notion of scholarships approach does not identify or address the uniqueness of immigrant students' experiences, which are in shifted and shifting landscapes of professional inquiry. Therefore, the notion of scholarships in academic work leaves room for other approaches such as critical pedagogy which focus more on personal, especially disadvantageous, individual's experience – the understanding and action that the justice-oriented citizen would seek.

As we shall see later, the career preparation process offered Wenying and some of her peers an opportunity for self-directed learning that filled the gaps between what the immigrant doctoral students knew and realized and what they needed to learn (e.g. career exploration and planning, licensing, knowledge, skills, attitude, and networking).

### **Research Approach**

This longitudinal case study draws upon data collected through both action research and a critical friend process. The action research component reported later in the paper involved four international graduate students and confirmed that Wenying was not alone in her experiences and perceptions.<sup>6</sup> The dialogic critical friend process is akin to what the school reform movement has advanced as a critical friend group (CFG). Action research studies have long purported the value of critical friends as an integral part of its four step research methodology, citing them as assisting in triangulation, data validation, as well as a catalyst for reflection (Ainscow & Connor, 1990; Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Costa & Kallick, 1993; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1982; Key, 2006; McNiff, 1988): "A critical friend takes the time to fully understand the context of the work presented and the outcomes that the person or group is working toward. The friend is an advocate for the success of that work" (Costa & Kallick, 1993, p. 50). In this study, the second author, Wenying's doctoral supervisor, acted as her critical friend.

In the school reform movement a CFG is used for the intentional establishment of a professional learning community or community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Like a critical friend, a CFG is developed on the premises of trust, support and shared interests as well as a critical stance to facilitate learning and change and has proven to help teacher-members to translate theories and standards into teaching practices that support student learning (Dunne & Honts, 1998; Dunne, Nave & Lewis, 2000; Lieberman & Miller, 1999). In a variety of studies the documents generated by CFG participants (records of community building and professional learning activities, notes and minutes from monthly meetings structured through the use of conversational protocols, discussions of texts and notes about working through dilemmas of practice) have been analyzed and interpreted (Ballock, 2007;

---

<sup>6</sup> This study passed all university ethics requirements.

Murphy, 2001; Nave, 2000) to understand both the process and product of the CFG.

Dunne and Honts (1998) have identified three typical stages of the development of a CFG, which they note takes time to develop: a support stage; an improvement stage; and a stage in which participants question the fundamental practices and purposes of the organization and institution. The trusting relationships established in the first stage help to build the culture of collaboration and sharing among teachers that is necessary to develop the changes that take place when the CFG enters the second or third stage. Further, in mature CFGs, members move recursively back and forth among the activities common to each of the three stages in order to best meet their collective needs (Ballock, 2007).

We have adopted and adapted the approach of the CFG to our own work. In the support stage student and supervisor formed a relationship. Olenka was mainly a listener, reader, responder and guide to Wenying as she navigated through a new notion of a Western university. Wenying wrote and Olenka responded, sometimes in writing and sometimes orally. In stage 2, Wenying sought others (authors, professors, courses, other graduate students and reflective tools) to help her clarify her understandings and experiences. Because Wenying is a well disciplined writer and had already learned how writing acts as both a diary and a forum for self expression, she generated hundreds of pages of diary notes. Further, she focused all of the papers in her courses on understanding employability and often shared them and other writing in email messages with Olenka. In stage 3 lengthy and detailed discussions saw Olenka both learning from Wenying about the immigrant graduate student experience and also guiding and challenging Wenying through requests for clarity or pointing out contradictions orally and in writing.

From Wenying's diary and reflections, hundreds of pages of email exchanges between the authors and between Wenying and her action research group, and many drafts of her papers during the first two years of her doctoral study, as well as citations from a literature review and newspaper articles, a 50 page chronological narrative was created. Considerable discussion took place about the first time a topic emerged and the shifting interpretations of that topic over time. As Wenying's English ability increased and she discovered reflective catalysts such as a career planning survey, peer support, and research literature, her understanding of academic and Western culture became clearer and she was often able to connect seemingly isolated events in her program. The narrative was then coded thematically with six themes emerging: words do not mean the same thing across cultures; systemic flaws and employability; employment opportunity hope and despair; social justice as a way to help others; and ecological theory as a way to understand one's place in the whole. A seventh theme that permeates all of the others is empowerment through reflective processes. The paper presents the *etic* themes mostly chronologically through excerpts from Wenying's *emic* story. The citations found in the paper are identified as being written in semester 1, 2, 3 or 4 of Wenying's four semester-two year residency of course work or as summer 1, 2 or 3, taking place either between semesters 2 and 3, after semester 4, or in her third year respectively. Further we have agreed to write the paper by referring to Wenying in the third person, as this best enables both authors to describe the evolution of thinking about employability of an immigrant doctoral student.

### Wenying's Story

Wenying, an international graduate student from China and a co-author of this paper, immigrated to Canada to pursue a better life for herself and her daughter. With a Master's

degree in English education and 19 years of experience teaching in a university English Department, first at a provincial teacher education college, then at a medical university, Wenying had earned numerous teaching awards. As owner of an English language school and several bilingual day care centres, Wenying had also become a respected and successful business woman in China. She took these credentials and work ethic to look for employment immediately in the spring of her arrival in Canada. She found contract work in day care centres, developing pre-school curriculum, teaching other teachers from China in Canadian programs, and teaching TOEFL preparation courses.

### Words Do Not Mean the Same Thing

Although Wenying took advantage of every Canadian employment opportunity that came her way, she also continued to search for the *career path* that would lead her to the security she had heard Canada offers and the success (financial, status, influence) that she was accustomed to in China. When she read a description about the Doctor of Philosophy degree in a university calendar (Secondary Education Graduate Program Handbook, the University of Alberta, 2006-2007, p. 9), she thought that she had found her *ticket* to be able to do in Canada what she had done *at home* in China.

Like most newcomers to a culture, Wenying interpreted her new world through her understandings of parallel structures and concepts in her *home* world: she assumed similar/identical meanings of what it meant to be a university student, a graduate student, a professor; of what made a good paper; of what *studying* and *success* meant. Although she never expected an easy journey to her targeted destination – being a professor in Canada – her first two semesters were fraught with challenges beyond what she could have imagined. At the end of her second semester of studies she reflected back on her first months as a graduate student:

At that time, I was very busy trying to understand what studying meant in my new environment as well as the environment itself. Everything including studying, career, and life were isolated pieces. Each was overwhelmingly difficult. I suddenly found I couldn't understand the professors' and the classmates' talk. All the concepts were new and subtle. I couldn't relate them to my past experience or future. When I finally found a topic to which I could contribute with my opinion, I was often too slow and missed the chance. My classmates talked like a machine gun without pause. Even if I got a chance to speak, the professors' and the classmates' puzzlement were discouraging enough for me to avoid another try. The inability to understand a new academic world and express myself explicitly had a crippling effect on my sense of identity as a teaching professional. (semester 2)

Wenying needed to *unlearn* certain knowledge, competencies, and values, and then *relearn* the new conceptualizations (Hofstede, 1991). Her loss of identity reflects the influence of what Hofstede (1991; Shaules, 2007) calls *deep culture*:

Every person carries within him or herself patterns of thinking; feeling; and potential acting which were learned throughout their lifetime. Much of it has been acquired in early childhood, because at that time a person is most susceptible to learning and assimilating. As soon as certain patterns of thinking; feeling and acting have established themselves within a person's mind; (s)he must unlearn these before being able to learn something different; and unlearning is more difficult than learning for the first time. (p. 4)

Through other graduate students, her community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991), Wenying quickly learned the currency of graduate student life in a culture of research, but with little experience from China applying for grant applications, publishing or conducting research, she struggled to earn the social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1972) necessary for achievement:

I suffered tremendously by overwhelming concepts, strange terminologies, difficult knowledge, never-ending reading and written assignments. My health was affected both physically and emotionally. I couldn't see the connection of all the hard studying with my future career. I was like a robot just doing what was required, what others told me or what others did. I was soon punished by this initial ignorance and disconnection. Some of my assignments were returned to rewrite and my scholarship applications were rejected due to low grades. (semester 3)

The perturbation of this inner cultural collision is not uncommon for foreign students. Bilash and Kang (2008) have described cross-cultural differences of Korean teachers during a study abroad program:

This process of perturbation usually involves an encounter of different thoughts, cultures, worlds, and conflicts between different perspectives in learning, as well as resistance to accepting the new and changing the already established. These conflicts lead to what Maturana and Varela (1987) have called disequilibrium and require emotional discomfort to regain equilibrium. The process does not necessarily mean an ultimate rejection of new ideas; rather the temporary emotional discomfort is a part of the learning, of the passage to a deeper and reciprocal understanding. (p. 296)

What Wenying was experiencing would eventually become described as temporary emotional discomfort, but it was far more disturbing while living through it. This time of *survival* left little space for attention to more than individually-oriented *personally responsible citizenship*.

### **More Confusion - Systemic Flaws**

Although sometimes Wenying felt overwhelmed by the multitude of obstacles on her personal and academic path, she was able to keep her hopes strong by turning to the avenue of her passion – teaching. With Alberta being the home to eight bilingual programs, including one in Mandarin, Wenying applied to teach in her mother tongue. Nine months after submitting her application to a government body that reviews international teaching credentials, which included official transcripts and a recorded oral interview, she was informed that she had failed the oral component of the process, not because of her pronunciation, but because of her grammar. She was advised to remedy the grammatical mistakes in her speech by either writing a TOEFL exam or taking an ESL class. She decided to take an ESL course until she found that the tuition fees were far more expensive than she could afford as a single mother. Her diary at this time notes:

My upbringing in China had taught me that everyone should be productive and make a contribution to society. So having taught English for 19 years in a university and being part way through a Canadian PhD degree in education, how could I depend on government welfare money so as to be qualified to teach in an area I felt would much underutilize my professional expertise? (semester 3)



Eventually Wenying found a “free” ESL course to help. In order to be eligible to enter it, a licensing officer instructed her to have an assessment through the Canadian Language Benchmarks Assessment (CLBA). She received full marks in all four skill areas and was told by the assessor that there was no relevant course for her to enter. She presented the written results to the provincial licensing evaluator, hopeful that she would receive the key to open the door to a teaching credential, but instead was advised that the CLBA ESL testing criteria were lower than their own. She was granted another interview but within a month received another rejection letter:

Although our interview on January 19, 2007 demonstrates that you are able to communicate in English, it does not demonstrate an ability to consistently use correct grammar and sentence constructs. Some examples from our interview are: “I began to enter my PhD”, “How teacher can invite the student”, “all my application was accepted.” I understand that both the University of Alberta Faculty of Extension and Grant MacEwan College offer courses in pronunciation and clear speaking that may be of assistance to you. I would recommend that you contact either of the institutions to enroll in a course or courses that will help you in the above areas. (personal communication, January 26, 2007)

Wenying had found a flaw in the system and also hit a roadblock. “No bridge of advice or road of remedy had yet been built to help someone who made grammatical errors in their oral English” (semester 3). “The long, costly, complicated and difficult process left me questioning the province’s teachers’ licensing system and the credibility of the evaluators’ work, especially in light of the multilingual and multicultural beliefs, which I was studying for my Canadian citizenship exam” (semester 3). Although Wenying had had her foreign credentials and work experience recognized, a barrier that many immigrants face (e.g. Basran & Zong, 1998; Henry, et al., 2000; Krahn et al., 2000; Reitz, 2001; Zong, 2001), she still felt powerless in the face of incongruencies in the system. Even phone calls by insiders like her supervisor, could not right this injustice.

This was both another major perturbation for Wenying, as well as an opportunity to learn about government agencies and how the system worked, in a way that no one could teach her, and in a way that was creating a base for becoming a *participatory citizen*.

### **An Employment Opportunity**

Recognizing Wenying’s disillusionment at the end of her first year of studies, Olenka arranged for her to become the co-instructor of an undergraduate ESL methodology course in the following academic year. Although the university had had challenges with international students teaching courses related to the Canadian context, Olenka felt that Wenying would bring an invaluable immigrant perspective to this particular course and that her more experienced co-instructor would be able to mentor her through the institutional expectations. Wenying’s reflection on this opportunity:

What happened was a quick adjustment of my mind set, learning strategies, and life skills so as to survive all those unexpected, intense, and tough challenges of the previous year. The news came so suddenly and was too good to be true. Am I qualified to teach Canadian pre-service teachers since I was regarded as unqualified to teach public school due to inaccurate English by Alberta Education evaluators? What would I teach and how would I teach them? Why did my supervisor trust me in doing this important work? With excitement and

nervousness, I started the teaching task and completed it with a strong sense of accomplishment and confidence. (semester 3)

This teaching experience proved to be a breakthrough in Wenying's professional identity.

My self-image changed dramatically from the inside out. The co-TA assignment, for the first time, led me to see clearly where the arduous task of doctoral studies was leading me. I needed to have a successful experience. For me at that time, success meant avoiding conflict and completing the teaching assignment. In order to make this teaching successful, I was very cautious with all relationships. (semester 4)

She had:

acquired from other graduate students a sense of how to survive the academic game. . . . Actually I hid my ideas. I just worked hard to do my share of the work and didn't try to influence anybody. I didn't need anybody to like me; all I needed was a smooth process and no complaints. In adopting the goal to survive rather than thrive, I attempted to meld into my surroundings by assuming a subordinate role to my co-instructor and adopting instructional strategies that were conservative and would not challenge students unnecessarily. (semester 4)

### **Hope and Despair**

In summer 1, Wenying discovered a report on graduate student employment released by the university's unit for helping with careers and job opportunities. It revealed the results of the University's self-conducted graduate student employment survey: "since graduating in 2000, the majority of respondents have enjoyed steady employment and rising salaries. The vast majority of respondents indicated that their university studies were critical both in securing employment and performing effectively in the workplace" (Kennedy & Snicer, 2006, p.2).

However, during the same period, she also encountered research reported earlier by Zong (2004). She wondered if the immigrant professionals in his study were those who sought professional employment without having Canadian credentials, and if that may have contributed to their difficulty in securing employment. Further, she wondered about the employment situation of those who had acquired a Ph.D. degree in her Faculty of Education. She chatted with a variety of her Chinese and international graduated student peers and found their stories discouraging. "For Chinese, education is highly valued and non-professional jobs have low social status" (semester 3). This may explain why Chinese doctoral degree holders make up 27% of all students whose mother tongue is neither French or English and 8% of all doctoral degree holders, although they comprise only 3% of the general population" (Desjardins and King, 2011, p. 14).

The contradiction between the university survey results, the literature report, and Wenying's personal inquiry led her to workshops on career planning and also to wondering about her future employment and that of those immigrants like her:

Was I alone as an immigrant graduate student in having traveled this path? If so, what did others do to prepare themselves for an academic career? And if not what supports existed to help me and students like me to become more empowered? How was it that I had not learned about them? If supports existed, what did they provide and how was that content

decided upon? Or, had I accidentally ‘stumbled upon’ a way to help myself while others did nothing? (summer 1)

At the beginning of her third semester she took the initiative to find and pursue workshops on job searching and read articles on immigrants’ professional development and immigrant graduate students’ career preparation (Blustein, 1997; Fischer & Zigmund, 1998; Golde, 2000, 2001; Gowricharn, 2001; Grindstaff, 1986; Kanfer et al., 2001; Lovitts, 2001; Nagle et al., 2004; Zong, 2004;). The individual self reflective three-step career exploration process described earlier fosters the identification of personal values and the development of self-directed behavior (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Hall, 1976, 2002). Through career exploration (Blustein, 1997; Sullivan, 1999), Wenying learned that she had to inquire with others about what the Canadian jobs entailed and eventually discovered a surprising misfit between her perception of job titles and their required skills and expectations. The reflective transformational process also helped her to overcome additional perturbations, emotions she had never known before:

As a new Ph.D. student and a new immigrant seeking and needing professional recognition, I was full of puzzlement, disturbance, shock, loss, resentment, loneliness, and depression. This was something I had never imagined existed nor could be so destructive to one’s well-established and very positive professional identity. Worst of all, I had no language to define and describe these feelings. I did not know what had happened, what had gone wrong, what’s the matter with me, how I had become so negative. All that was left inside was a secret hatred and a sorrow for me. (semester 3)

Wenying’s experiences seem to be akin to what Acker and Armenti (2004) found about other women in academia: sleeplessness and unhealthy well-being seem to be the price women pay for academic careers. The authors relate the bodily impact to what Foucault (1995, original 1975) describes as surveillance, a key element in power networks such as those in the academy, and to McLaren’s work: “although surveillance begins as an external practice, ‘part of its effectiveness relies on its moving “inside” through the self-monitoring of the individual being watched’ (2002, p. 108)” (as cited in Acker and Armenti, 2004, p.19). As Wenying became more aware of the power networks and demands of the academy, her struggles to gain social capital took a greater toll on her health.

## **Social Justice**

Wenying suspected that she was not alone in suffering, and immediately sought to both help other students to try to bring the issue to the fore and to find a solution. She was clearly functioning as a *justice-oriented citizen*. In her fourth semester, she completed all ethical and research design requirements for an action research study and formally explored the experiences of four other international immigrant graduate students. They were each from a different faculty and in the early phases of their graduate programs. The male and three females were in their mid-30s and early 40s and had been academic professionals in their home countries - two were university assistant professors, one was an associate professor, and one was a researcher for a local government. They met about eight times over four months and sometimes included Olenka in meetings. Since Olenka was the instructor of the course she followed Wenying’s weekly action research reports closely. The 12 hours of focus group research interviews were transcribed and coded and revealed three important

thematic commonalities: poor career preparation, need for social capital, and the power of reflection.

1. Wenying's peers began by completing an adapted version of the career preparation survey that she had done. Most reported poor<sup>7</sup> effectiveness of graduate programs in preparing them for the professional career they wished but until completing the survey they were not aware of these factors.<sup>8</sup>

2. Although all participants had passed their TOEFL requirements, were receiving good grades in all of their written assignments, and were able to *survive* in doing their day to day business at the university, they frequently talked about not feeling comfortable going for breaks with their Canadian peers because the other graduate students talked about topics to which they could not relate – the latest episodes on popular television shows, local politics and events, and jokes that they did not understand. *I am still not sure how to behave in this (English) environment. What I believe is appropriate may seem awkward to Canadians. These two things make me shy.* (Nick) How could they build social networks and social capital without “the secret, privileged, hidden or otherwise esoteric information or knowledge of an insider in the local culture?” (Wenying, semester 4). Moreover, could they learn it without the guidance of an insider?

3. Wenying devoted many additional hours talking and exchanging emails with her action research participants and peers. Their in-depth reflective discussions about insufficient opportunities to practice, use and improve English led participants to become more conscious of their fears and able to label their inabilities. “(R)eflective learning involves assessment or reassessment of assumptions . . . and . . . becomes transformative whenever assumptions or premises are found to be distorting, inauthentic or otherwise invalid” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 6). Reflective learning assisted them in examining their biases and habits and move toward a new understanding of the topic being discussed. The new notion of career preparation had also become a transformative concept for them. However, as Bilash and Shi (2007) have also pointed out in their ‘transformational staircase,’ the understanding alone does not lead to action or actual change.

By sharing doubts and opinions, exploring roots of some of their taken-for-granted beliefs and observations, reflecting, gaining new experiences, sharing with peer participants, talking to professors, attending job-search seminars, listening to guest speakers, and talking to professional consultants, the participants and researchers developed trust amongst one another. The cognitive and emotional perturbations (Maturana, 1988) gradually led to an understanding of what some of the requirements for a successful academic career were and where their shortcomings lay. The gaps that needed filling included gaining adequate skills

---

<sup>7</sup> Results of the survey revealed that none of them had yet taught as a principle course instructor. Most of them perceived that they had received poor or no training in basic teaching skills, including curriculum development, lecturing, leading discussions, creating and/or grading assignments, and composing examinations. Most of them did not feel that they had received adequate faculty guidance in formulating a research topic, or conducting research in collaboration with faculty members. Most were not aware of research funding through faculty grants. None had assisted in writing a grant proposal. None had published as a sole author or co-author. Most had consulted department, university and government agencies, friends, professors, and professional consultants for advice about employment opportunities inside and outside academia, how to find a job, and about how to write a resume.

<sup>8</sup> Since this survey was originally designed for all graduate students, and not specifically international graduate students, it seemed at first glance that perhaps the international graduate students were not getting the same opportunities as their peers. Although inquiring with their home departments or supervisors was beyond the scope of the mini research study, it is an area of interest in future research. It may well be that with time these international graduate students would have some of these other graduate student experiences.

and experiences in independent teaching, researching, and community service; gaining cultural understandings by finding ways to develop social capital, recognizing that *failure* is not the same in the western environment and that there is no shame in seeking outside support; learning to function effectively in a North American academic culture (Asian students come from a social system that honours tradition and hierarchical relationships. It is difficult for them to take initiative if it means challenging authority or even identifying a fault in the system. For graduate students over 35 years of age, a good education usually meant a secure job); and recognizing that informed peer support can have a positive influence on career preparation.

Structures within the university must give more attention to explicitly teaching professional immigrant graduate students about what they need to succeed in their graduate programs, reflective processes that will offer them ways to explore the many doors that a graduate degree will open, and cultural knowledge that will help them become insiders. From the results of this study, albeit with only four participants, it may be that immigrant graduate students can learn more from one another than from local peers (Bilash and Shi, 2007, p. 16-17).

### **Beyond the University**

As Wenying continued her own job search inquiries in summer 2 and beyond, her mood also shifted. At first she was highly motivated to find a large number of jobs for which she felt qualified:

The success of the co-teaching experience marked the first step of my teaching career although this step was still clumsy, with a little uncertainty, un-preparedness and over-cautiousness. But I had crossed the boundary from a student to a teacher. It was not a returning to a teaching field where I had been actively involved for the past 19 years. It was something brand new, in a foreign environment, for foreign students, transmitting foreign concepts, using foreign techniques, with foreign colleagues, towards foreign goals. But they were not totally *foreign* this time because I was included which meant we were not foreign to each other any more. Rather than continually being perceived as an outsider, I had established a position as a professional member of a larger mainstream community. This sense of belonging worked as a forceful push from a temporary co-teaching position to a dream for something bigger which associates with the entire list of fundamental human needs: autonomy, power, self-actualization, security, comfort, and relaxation. Acceptance enabled me to re-establish my ambition of asserting myself as a contributor in the realm of teacher education. (semester 4)

However, rejection of applications for permanent well paying non-immigrant associated positions again perturbed her determination:

It is clear that I must make finding a job a priority. I have lost interest in my studies. Clearly this topic – or maybe any topic – will not lead me to a career. (semester 4)

### **Ecological Theory**

In summer 2 Wenying discovered system's thinking through ecological theory. Ecological theory is the "scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation, throughout the life course, between an active, growing human being, and the changing properties of the

immediate settings in which the developing person lives, as this process is affected by the relations between these settings, and by the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded" (Bronfenbrenner, 1989, p. 188). Based on the interaction of microsystems within mesosystems and exosystems ecological theory acknowledges that "[a] person's behavior is, therefore, a representation of the complex interaction among the myriad factors that constitute her or his life, referred to as the ecosystem" (Cook, Heppner & O'Brien, 2002, p. 196). Followers purport that an ecological perspective includes environmental interventions that focus on social support and on individually oriented interventions targeted toward increasing individuals' abilities to deal with environmental barriers to their goals and objectives.

Ecological theory allows me to see my immediate environment as an interrelated living body. As an individual, even if marginalized as an outside newcomer, I feel I can influence the environment as a change agent because the environment is living and changing. The ecological perspective let me see my own blindspot - not seeing the full process of social reality formation (Scharmer, 2000). In the early stage of my career development, I did not see the full process of coming-into-being of social action. I did not see its descending movement from thought and consciousness to language, behavior, and action. I only saw what the others did without ever questioning how their thoughts were formed and if there was a need to improve them. I formed my understandings of the new world based on a seemingly fixed reality.

Gradually, I began to rethink immigrant graduate students' rights and responsibilities. First, the participants' past life histories, their current mode of engagement in a particular program and envisioned future should be recognized and addressed. Thus, it opens a way to think about participants' agency in adopting alternative strategies to achieve competent participation. Second, the norms and practices of an existing community can be challenged by introducing new discourse genres into practices, through which both students (even marginalized ones) and professors can function as change agents. (summer 3)

Wenying was thinking and behaving like a *justice-oriented citizen*.

### Insights

Wenying's reflections on two years of employability experiences as an immigrant doctoral student led to major shifts in her perspectives and new direction in her action and citizenship. "The university is not really a microcosm of society. Graduate students can be supported and protected in the university" (Summer 3). When they get into the mainstream marketplace they come face to face with Canadians who have never pursued post secondary education, whose English is colloquial, whose daily culture is far from that of the predominantly middle class University population, and the competition of the *network* that family and friends have built up over a lifetime. However, through understanding ecological theory and experiencing informed academic and peer support through the autopoietic process (Maturana, 1988), Wenying began to see the relevance of developing and relying on inner and external resources. She offers six insights of hope (Snyder, 1996; 2000) for immigrant graduate students in Canada:

1. employment requires both life experience and academic credentials

The knowledge capital at a university is not enough to live well in a larger world. As a new immigrant who started life from university, I naturally took everything learned from it as truth and as the only learning resource. When I gradually turned my eyesight away to the vast unknown world and imagined how I could play a part there, I felt paralyzed and thought I was not adequately prepared for understanding it and participating in it as an active member. Then I saw that immigrant students can be active change agents and influence their immediate environment, rather than being passive and helpless victims of a changed cultural landscape. (Summer 3)

2. everyone needs *mentors* – models of success and people you can trust

In the middle of my third academic year, a former graduate from the Faculty of Education guided me to see an outlet towards a much wider and promising world outside campus and I felt life come back to me again. He was a former international student and was very active in learning and volunteer work. He had hoped that his intensive volunteer work on campus would win recognition of his ability and lead to a job opportunity. Several years had passed and he received no significant gains. He was disappointed and began directing his energy to local community and government service work. The return was fast and rewarding. He soon established his own business, which became very profitable. At the same time he won respect and recognition. He was hired as a sessional instructor by the university because of his business influence. He was the key person who had guided me out of the ivory tower.

The second influential person was a career counsellor. After it was suggested that I apply for a community service job, I went to her for advice because I felt I was being forced to take a non-academic job. My heart was full of self-pity. She guided me to be able to see a career path more broadly – as both a series of steps or procedures and a dynamic interactive process. At the same time, I often ask myself how I developed an interest in a service job. I think it is probably because I would like new immigrants to understand the meaning of education in their lives before committing to a non-academic job. (Summer 4)

3. one has to leave one's department in order to be seen as a professional

A PhD student who used to teach as a sessional instructor in the department has been teaching in another institution for two years. This phenomenon made me want to explore her reasons for doing so because the pay is similar and it's much more convenient for her to teach in her own department. Her answer was illuminating to me. It described how she had always been treated as a student. Even if she worked as a sessional instructor, she felt that she was regarded as a student. Moreover, she felt isolated in that department. There was no close and friendly relationship among colleagues. She described her current workplace, where I also work, as a positive one. She felt that the administrators were awesome, colleagues very supportive of one another and she didn't feel any pressure from co-workers. The most attractive part was that her substitute teaching gradually led into summer teaching, then a job as a contracted instructor, a permanent contract, and now she is in the process of applying for a tenure track position. All these have happened within a short period of two months. (summer 3)

4. everyone needs to feel valued, at home and in the marketplace

Throughout my job search process, although my husband (I married a Canadian born) has reassured me again and again of my value, I have never been convinced because I don't think his opinion reflects market value. In my second interview by a community service centre, the human resources director kept saying I was overqualified and couldn't help

wondering why I should choose their organization which in her words, is small and underpaid. I thanked her sincerely because she recognized my value. In the end, they may not offer me a job or I may not accept it. But this experience is powerful enough to regain my self-confidence. (summer 3)

5. reflection and empowerment are powerful transformational forces

Education is the process of learning to create a new identity. Work in the education field is a way of creating products and performances as well as lives by expanding our consciousness, shaping our dispositions, satisfying our quest for meaning, establishing contact with others, and sharing a culture. One aim of education is to enable individuals to become the architects of their lives and through that process to continually renew themselves. This I achieved through reflective processes such as career searching, autopoiesis (overcoming perturbations) and a critical friend. (summer 3)

6. inner trust and self-belief are as important as external acknowledgement

After reading the students' feedback on my first teaching as a primary instructor, I felt like a loser for two months. Some of their comments were just the opposite of my personal evaluation which was that I was effective and successful. How could students not appreciate the new knowledge and skills they acquired through the instructor's strategic and effective teaching? While students' evaluation dominated my thoughts about my self image, a peer graduate who was familiar with the whole teaching process, said to me: "Wenying, I just can not be convinced that this is not a successful experience." Then he shared his experience when he got negative feedback. He also told me how his father, a university professor, had been hated by his students throughout his teaching career because of his strictness. Later I got to know from a previous instructor that the reason she changed to teaching ESL students is because of a bad evaluation. She said: "I was heart-broken because students did not learn to respect teachers and knowledge. Now I enjoy teaching international students because their tradition and culture have taught them respect and appreciation." (Summer 2)

I had chosen to believe those negative comments and ignore the positive ones and my personal judgment. I had allowed others to evaluate my performance and allowed them to destroy my confidence and hope. But at that moment, student evaluation was the only source of feedback and was provided through official channels. To new teachers, our graduate program obviously did not provide needed mentorship in guiding beginning instructors to understand their first feedback. (summer 3)

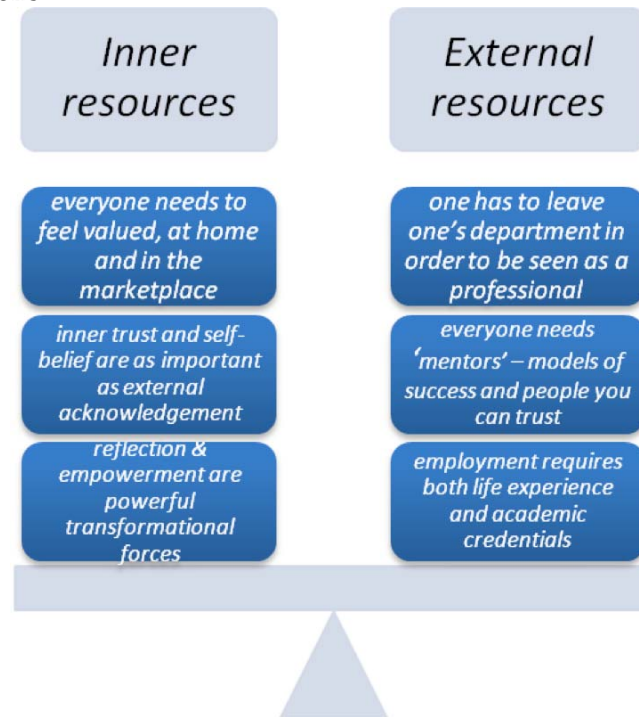
### **Afterthoughts and Recommendations**

Wenying's journey taught her many relevant things, namely, that words, titles and concepts do not have the same meanings across the world; that Canadian institutions have flaws that need to be addressed; that employment opportunities are offers of hope and sustenance to international graduate students; that structured reflective processes can lead to empowerment; that peers' successes are highly motivational; and that through the guidance of insiders she can acquire the cultural and social capital to become a valued member of Canadian society and a justice-oriented citizen. The reported difference of job opportunities for international Ph.D. students in education and the social sciences, as compared to engineering and science (Desjardins & King, 2011) may be due to the fact that these fields are heavily value-embedded and profoundly and significantly influenced by political, social and cultural traditions, as well as systems and beliefs. Long term success of students in these



fields, even with accepted in- and out-side of Canada credentials, may require an infrastructure that directs and supports the development of more social and cultural capital.

**Figure 1:** Wenying's lessons



Throughout Wenying's evolutionary process Olenka repeatedly pondered the question of Wenying's suffering: while intellectual growth is always fraught with perturbations, in a just and caring society how can the degree of pain and alienation that accompanies this journey be minimized? Perhaps the following five systemic changes could increase social justice for international/foreign and immigrant graduate students in Canada:

1. Canadian universities may benefit from collaborating with Canadian embassies around the world in producing an information campaign about realistic employment expectations in the Canadian job market and the non-equivalencies of job skill sets despite job titles to distribute to students and immigrants about employment.
2. Universities might create special guided career-planning process workshops for international and immigrant graduate students so that they can benefit from processes that Wenying experienced. Further, Supervisors and Departments might actively direct international graduate students to participate in such workshops.
3. Workshops on sociocultural learning might be designed to help international graduate students develop the confidence to participate in daily university life and better equip them to develop the long term social and cultural capital they need for fuller contribution to Canadian society, e.g. by watching typical sit-coms together and discussing their *humour*.
4. Peer support and modelling, offered by those who have succeeded within the system, such as people like Wenying, might be sought and built in to

university programs. Such models can be strong potential change agents. Informing chairs and deans of such programs and their benefits can help them to find ways to build faculty or university-wide infrastructure for these students.

5. Surveys conducted with universities' graduates need to find ways to discern groups of graduate students, in particular those who are international and immigrant graduate students, so that we can both document their successes and their frequency as well as better understand the less successful scenarios and their numbers.

In order for Day's vision (Roslyn Kunin & Associates, Inc., 2009) to be realized and Owram's questions (Owram, 2010) to be answered, there is need for additional research on the needs and experiences of international graduate students, especially those outside of science, engineering and life sciences. Wenying's intention is clearly to become a good citizen, not only by passing the citizenship test, but also by not being a financial burden to her new home and by contributing to overcoming the social injustices in her new country.

Having experienced a different education system, and having worked in different academic-cultural environments, immigrant graduate students must learn the differences between the academic and professional systems of their home countries and those of their new host country. As they *unlearn* certain knowledge, competencies, and values, and then *relearn* new conceptualizations, they need support. The career planning survey, the action research CFG with Olenka Bilash and graduate student peers, ecological theory and critical theory all provided Wenying with support to see the academic world, employability and their agentic potential differently.

### References

- Acker, S., & Armenti, C. (2004). Sleepless in academia. *Gender and Education, 16*(1).
- Aitchison, C., & Lee, A. (2006). Research writing: Problems and pedagogies. *Teaching in Higher Education, 11*(3), 265-278.
- Ainscow, M., & Conner, C. (1990). *School-Based Inquiry: Notes and background reading*. Cambridge Institute of Education.
- Alboim, N., Finnie, R., & Meng, M. (2005). The Discounting of immigrants' skills in Canada: Evidence and policy recommendations, *IRPP Choices, 11*(2), 1-26.
- Arthur, M. B., & Rousseau, D. M. (1996). *Introduction: the boundaryless career as a new employment principle*. In M. B. Arthur, & D. M. Rousseau (Eds.), *The boundaryless career* (pp. 3–20). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ballock, E. (January, 2007). *Developing a Process for Purposefully Examining and Improving CFG Work*. Paper presented at the National School Reform Faculty Research Forum.
- Basran, G., & Zong, L. (1998). Devaluation of foreign credentials as perceived by visible minority professional immigrants. *Canadian Ethnic Studies, 30*(3), 6-23.
- Bilash, O., & Kang, J. (2008). Living well in a changing world: What Korean teachers of English say about a study abroad program in Canada. *Journal of Educational Thought, 41*(3), p.295-309.
- Bilash, O., & Shi, W. (May, 2007). *Levelling the Playing Field: providing an infrastructure of support to help immigrant graduate students compete for academic opportunities*. Unpublished paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, Edmonton, AB.

- Blustein, D. L. (1997). A context-rich perspective of career exploration across the life roles. *Career Development Quarterly*, 45, 260-74.
- Bourdieu, P. (1972). *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge University Press 1977.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1989). Ecological systems theory. *Annals of Child Development*, 6, 187-249.
- Boud, D., & Lee, A. (2005). Peer learning as pedagogic discourse. *Studies in Higher Education*, 30(5), 501-515.
- Boyer, E. L. (1990). *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate*. Princeton, NJ: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.
- Carr, W., & Kemmis, S. (1986). *Becoming Critical: Education, Knowledge and Action Research*. Basingstoke: Falmer Press.
- Colbeck, C. L., & Wharton, M. P. (2006). The public scholarship: Reintegrating Boyer's four domains. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, 129, 7-19.
- Cook, E. P., Heppner, M. J., & O'Brien, K. M. (2002). Career development of women of color and White women: Assumptions, conceptualization and interventions from an ecological perspective. *Career Development Quarterly*, 50, 291-305.
- Costa, A., & Kallick, B. (1993). Through the Lens of a Critical Friend. *Educational Leadership*, 51(2), 49-51.
- Crites, J. O. (1969). *Vocational psychology*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Desjardins, L., & King, D. (2011). Expectations and Labour Market Outcomes of Doctoral Graduates from Canadian Universities. *Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics – Research papers*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 81-595-M - No. 089.
- Diller, J. V. (1999). *Cultural diversity: A primer for the human services*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Dunne, F., & Honts, F. (1998). "That group really makes me think!" *Critical friends groups and the development of reflective practitioners*. Paper presented at the AERA Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA.
- Dunne, F., Nave, B., & Lewis, A. (2000). Critical friends: Teachers helping to improve student learning. *Phi Delta Kappa International Research Bulletin (CEDR)* (28), 9-12.
- Ehrenberg, R., Jakubson, G., Groen, J., So, E., & Price, J. (2007). Inside the black box of doctoral education: What program characteristics influence doctoral students' attrition and graduation probabilities? *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 29(2).
- Fischer, B. A., & Zigmond, M. J. (1998). Survival skills for graduate school and beyond. In M. S. Anderson (Ed.), *The experience of being in graduate school: An exploration* (pp. 29–40). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline and punish*. New York: Vintage. (Original work published in 1975)
- Gale, R., & Golde, C. M. (2004). Doctoral education and the scholarship of teaching and learning. *Peer Review*, 6(3).
- Golde, C. M. (April, 2000). [\*Findings from the Survey on Doctoral Education and Career Preparation\*](#). Paper presented at the Plenary Session on Recent Research Findings, Reenvisioning the PhD conference, University of Washington, Seattle, W.
- Golde, C. M., & Dore, T. (2001). *At cross purposes: What the experiences of today's doctoral students reveal about doctoral education*. Philadelphia: Pew Charitable Trusts.
- Golde, C. M., & Walker, G. E. (Eds.). (2006). *Envisioning the future of doctoral education: Preparing stewards of the discipline*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Gowricharn, R. (2001). Introduction: Ethic Minorities and Elite Formation. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 2, 155-167.

- Grindstaff, C. F. (1986). *A Sociology-demographic profile of immigrant woman in Canada, 1981, by age at immigration, for women age 30-44*. London: University of Western Ontario Press.
- Hall, D. T. (1976). *Careers in organizations*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman.
- Hall, D. T. (2002). *Careers in and out of organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Henry, F., Tator, C., Mattis, W., & Rees, T. (2000). *The colour of democracy*. Toronto: Harcourt Brace & Company.
- Hofstede, G. (1991). *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Jordan, J. P. (1963). Exploratory behavior: the formation of self and occupational concepts. In Super, D.E. (Eds), *Career Development: Self-Concept Theory, College Entrance Examination*, New York, NY, pp.42-78.
- Kanfer, R., Wanberg, C. R., & Kantrowitz, T. M. (2001). Job search and employment: A personality-motivational analysis and meta-analytic review. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(5), 837-855.
- Karumanchery-Luik, N., & Ramirez, H. (2003). "Teaching for Legitimacy; or, Teaching from the Margins," pp. 79-89 in Keahey, D., & Schnitzer, D. (Eds.), *The Madwomen in the Academy: 43 Women Boldly Take on the Ivory Tower*. Calgary: University of Calgary Press.
- Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (1982). *The Action Research Planner*. Victoria, Deakin University Press.
- Kennedy, T., & Snicer, T, J. (2006). *The CaPS Employment Survey of University of Alberta Graduates of 2000*. Retrieved September 10, 2007, from Career and Placement Services, University of Alberta, Web site: <http://www.ualberta.ca/CAPS/>
- Key, E. (2006). *Do they make a difference? A review of research on the impact of critical friends groups*. Presented at the National School Reform Faculty Research Forum, Denver, CO, January.
- King, D. (2008). Doctoral graduates in Canada: Findings from the Survey of Earned Doctorates, 2004/2005. Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics – Research papers. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 81-595-M—No. 065.
- Krahn, H., Derwing, T., Mulder, M., & Wilkinson, L. (2000). Educated and underemployed: Refugee integration into the Canadian labour market. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 1(1), 59-84.
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Leong, F. T., & Chou, E. C. (1994). The role of ethnic identity and acculturation in the vocational behavior of Asian Americans: An integrative review. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 44, 155–172.
- Lieberman, A., & Miller, L. (1999). *Teachers – Transforming their world and their work*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Lovitts, B. E. (2001). *Leaving the Ivory Tower: The Causes and Consequences of Departure from Doctoral Study*. Lanford, Md.: Rowan & Littlefield.
- Maher, M., Ford, M., & Thompson, C. (2004). Degree progress of women doctoral students: Factors that constrain, facilitate, and differentiate, *Review of Higher Education*, 27(3).
- Maturana, H. R. (1988). Reality; The search for objectivity or the quest for a compelling argument. *Irish Journal of Psychology, Special Issue on Radical Constructivism, Autopoiesis and Psychotherapy*, 9 (1), 25-82.

- Maturana, H. R., & Varela, F. J. (1987). *The tree of knowledge*. Boston: New Science Library.
- McAlpine, L., & Norton, J. (2006). Reframing our approach to doctoral programs: An integrative framework for action and research. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 25(1), 3-17.
- McAlpine, L., & Amundsen, C. (2007). Academic communities and developing identity: The doctoral student journey. In P. Richards (Ed.), *Global issues in higher education* (pp. 57-83). NY: Nova Publishing.
- McLaren, M. (2002). *Feminism, Foucault, and embodied subjectivity*. Albany, State University of New York Press.
- McNiff, J. (1988). *Action Research: Principles and Practice*. Basingstoke, Macmillan.
- Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.
- Murphy, M. (2001). Critical friends groups: An urban high school's five-year journey toward the creation of professional learning communities. Ed. D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, United States -- Illinois. Retrieved September 7, 2005, from ProQuest Digital Dissertations database. (Publication No. AAT 3017169).
- Nagle, R. J., Suldo, S. M., Christenson, S.L., & Hansen, A. L. (2004). Graduates perceptions of academic positions in school psychology. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 19, 311-326.
- Nave, B. (2000). Among critical friends: A study of critical friends groups in three Maine schools. Ed. D. dissertation, Harvard University, United States – Massachusetts. Retrieved September 7, 2005, from ProQuest Digital Dissertations database. (Publication No. AAT 9968318).
- Owram, D. (2010). The International Student and the Canadian university: Part 1. *University Affairs*. Retrieved from <http://www.universityaffairs.ca/international-student-and-the-canadian-university.aspx>
- Peykov, P. (2004). Immigrant skilled workers: Should Canada attract more foreign students? (SIPP Public Policy Paper No. 27). Retrieved July 14, 2007, from University of Regina, Saskatchewan Institute of Public Policy, [www.uregina.ca/sipp/documents/pdf/pp27\\_Immigration.pdf](http://www.uregina.ca/sipp/documents/pdf/pp27_Immigration.pdf)
- Reitz, J. G. (2001). Immigrant skill utilization in the Canadian labour market: Implications of human capital research. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 2(3), 347-78.
- Roslyn Kunin & Associates, Inc., (2009). *Economic Impact of International Education in Canada*. Retrieved from <http://www.international.gc.ca/education/impact.aspx?view=d>
- Scharmer, C. O. (2000). *Presencing: Learning from the future as it emerges*. Paper presented at the Conference on Knowledge and Innovation, Helsinki School of Economics, Finland. <http://www.ottoscharmer.com>
- Schein, E. H. (1978). *Career dynamics: Matching individual and organizational needs*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Secondary Education Graduate Program Handbook. (2006-2007). [Brochure]. University of Alberta, AB: Author.
- Sethna, C., & Mujawamariya, D. (2003). "Mission Impossible? Employment and Education Equity for Women Students and Professors at the University of Ottawa," Pp. 205-227 in Martinez, A., & Stuart, M. (Eds.) *Out of the Ivory Tower: Feminist Research for Social Change*. Toronto: Sumach Press.
- Shaules, J. (2007). *Deep Culture: The Hidden Challenges of Global Living*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Snyder, C.R. (2000). *Handbook of Hope: Theories, Measures, & Applications*. Academic Press, San Diego, CA.

- Snyder, C. R. (1996). To hope, to lose, and hope again. *Journal of Personal and Interpersonal Loss*, 1, 3-16.
- Stumpf, S. A., Colarelli, S. M., & Hartman, K. (1983). Development of the Career Exploration Survey. (CES). *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 22, 191-226.
- Sullivan, S. E. (1999). The changing nature of careers: a review and research agenda. *Journal of Management*, 25, 457-484.
- Trovato, F., & Grindstaff, C. F. (1986). Economic status: A census analysis of immigrant women at age thirty in Canada. *Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 23(4), 569-687.
- Westheimer, J., & Kahne, J. (2004). [What Kind of Citizen? The Politics of Educating for Democracy](#). *American Educational Research Journal*, 41(2).
- Zikic, J., Novicevic, M., Harvey, M., & Breland, J. (2006). Repatriate career exploration: a path to career growth and success. *Career Development International*, 11(7), 633-649.
- Zong, L. (2001). Occupational attainment for recent Chinese professional immigrants in Canada. *Taipei: Academia Sinica*, 1, 46-59.
- Zong, L. (2004). International Transference of Human Capital and Occupational Attainment of Recent Chinese Professional Immigrants in Canada. *American Review of China Studies*, 2004, 5(1&2), 81-89.

## **“Holding the Talking Piece Gives me a Chance to Make a Sentence out of What I am Thinking”: Children’s Responses to the Use of Peace Circles at One Primary School in the United States**

Leigh M. O’Brien, Ella Cline Shear School of Education, State University of New York,  
Geneseo

### **Abstract**

From June 2007 to August 2010, the author worked with staff and volunteers at Avalon Primary School as they began implementing Peacemaking Circles.<sup>1</sup> Grounded in restorative practices, Circles have been shown to provide opportunities for building community and resolving conflicts. Participants share feelings, build relationships, and problem-solve, and, when there is wrongdoing, play an active role in addressing the wrong and making things right (Riestenberg, 2002). Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed in each of and across the three years of the project. Here I focus on a subset of the data collected to ask: How do children feel about participation in Circles? How do their perceptions differ from the teachers’ and other adults’? At this school, children and teachers generally perceived Circles positively. However, children’s responses often differed from those of their teachers’ regarding why they liked (or disliked) Circles as well as how frequently they were held, and a number of the children reported that little had changed in their classroom and school. Particularly interesting in terms of answering the questions posed are the responses of children whose voices were not fully “heard.” The findings argue for not only asking children what they think but also taking their responses seriously.

**Key Words:** Peacemaking Circles; conflict resolution; children and research

### **Introduction**

As the quote in the title suggests, children say the most amazing things, many of which we could learn from. But are we really listening? This paper argues that if educators and researchers are interested in supporting the development of children’s sense of belonging and promoting civic participation, we must listen, and listen well. We often purport to support democratic education and to believe in the value of classroom community, but our rhetoric sometimes does not align with our practice. In the following, I outline and reflect on the struggles inherent in one school’s efforts to implement and assess the effectiveness of Peacemaking Circles, with a focus on students’ voices.

Peacemaking Circles, based on the concept of restorative practices, provide an opportunity for building community and resolving conflicts within school settings. Ideally, Circles allow students to share their feelings, build relationships, and problem-solve, and, when there is wrongdoing, to play an active role in addressing the wrong and making things right. The philosophy underlying these practices holds that children are happier, more productive, and more likely to make positive changes in their behaviour when those in positions of authority do things *with* them, rather than *to* them or *for* them (Riestenberg, 2002).

From June 2007 to August 2010, the author worked as an “external evaluator” with volunteers from a local restorative justice center and the staff at Avalon Primary School in Avalon,<sup>2</sup> New York, as they gradually began to implement Peace Circles.<sup>3</sup> At Avalon, a small, rural kindergarten-to-grade-four school, a team comprising the principal, school staff, Restorative Justice Center (RJC) volunteers,<sup>4</sup> and the author met approximately once a

month to design, discuss, and assess the project.<sup>5</sup> Here I focus on a subset of the data collected during the three years of the project to explore these questions: *How do children feel about participation in Peace Circles?* and *How do their perceptions of Circles differ from the teachers' (if they do)?*

## Perspectives

According to the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP<sup>6</sup>), implementing Circles in schools is beneficial: *teachers* benefit because behavioural interruptions decrease; *students* benefit because they are more focused on classroom instruction and learn to resolve conflicts; and *the school community* benefits because detentions, suspensions, and expulsions decrease, thus creating a more positive school climate. Several groups have undertaken evaluations that demonstrate the positive effects of restorative approaches, summarized by Porter (2007). In the four instances cited by Porter, the introduction of restorative practices led to a *dramatic* decrease in detentions, suspensions, disciplinary referrals, and incidents of *disruptive* and *disrespectful* behaviour.<sup>7</sup>

For those who believe the development and enrichment of communities of learning in schools can contribute to the public good (e.g., Ayers, 2001; Meier, 2003), restorative practices such as Peace Circles appear promising. Porter positively summarizes most of the studies on the implementation and assessment of restorative practices in schools.<sup>8</sup> However, there are at least two problems with the studies cited. First, the data are suspect given they come from IIRP and its affiliate, Safer Saner Schools,<sup>9</sup> or from current and former “trainers” for IIRP. Second, the reports and the websites show a decided preference for reporting only good news (note, for example, Porter’s language: he describes a “*dramatic* decrease in detentions,” etc.), a practice I also found to be typical of the RJC volunteers and some of the school staff involved in this project.

A major concern for me, then, became the uncontested, implicit, and, at times, explicit support for Circles. As will be elaborated upon below, the RJC volunteers seemed to be sure that Circles were *the* answer to community building and conflict resolution, and so assumed that if things did not go as they should, the problems lay elsewhere. For instance, in the third year, teachers were observed and given feedback with regard to their fidelity to “the process.” There was no discussion of what the teachers’ concerns might be; they were merely instructed in how to do Circles more “correctly.” Of particular relevance here, children’s voices, including their critiques, were not “heard” in the first year and were minimally attended to in the second year; it was not until the third year of data collection that students’ responses were copied for teachers (at their request). Still, there was very little discussion in our planning sessions of how the team might respond to children’s thoughts and concerns. This is problematic for the author, as “including children in the identification and exploration of issues important to them promotes a positive sense of inclusivity and...such approaches...constitute a practical enacting of ‘voice’ ” (Nutbrown & Clough, 2009, p. 191).

To ensure children’s authentic inclusion in their education, researchers can ask children what they think, and take their responses seriously (Nutbrown & Clough, 2009). If we had done so, in this case we might have learned that Circles are not always perceived positively by participants. Certainly, teaching children to resolve conflict in restorative rather than punitive ways is beneficial, and in a time of “zero-tolerance” and other shocking<sup>10</sup> methods of student discipline, it is important that approaches such as Peace Circles be implemented and assessed. Ideally, then, a study such as this one would demonstrate the



possibilities and drawbacks of an “alternative” approach to school discipline that appears to hold much promise for building community and peaceably resolving conflict. Unfortunately, however, the project team showed little interest in fully exploring both the advantages and the disadvantages of Peace Circles.

### **Methods of inquiry & Data sources**

The project team used quantitative and qualitative data to try to answer this overarching question: *Does the use of Peace Circles affect children’s ability to resolve conflicts and build community?* Several types of data were collected during the first school year (2007-2008). RJC staff conducted interviews with students and teachers in the three (third and fourth grade) classrooms using Circles, as well as with the playground and lunchroom monitors who had contact with them. Additionally, teachers were asked to keep logs on each Circle implemented,<sup>11</sup> data on disciplinary referrals to the school office for *all* 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders were recorded and copied, and nine mid-year focus groups of students in the classes using Circles were conducted to elicit student thoughts about and reactions to the use of Circles.<sup>12</sup>

These ambitious plans provided a huge amount of data which proved difficult both to collect and to analyze. Thus, the second year’s data collection was more limited in scope, although it covered a greater number of classrooms. Complicating matters, half of the students from the first-year’s cohort moved on to middle school, so the second-year data were mostly collected from a new group of children and teachers as only the third-grade classes remained from the original data set and new classes were added.

During the second and third years (2008 to 2009 and 2009 to 2010), our data sources were identical but involved different teachers, staff, and students. The qualitative data included anonymous Fall and Spring online surveys of teachers, staff, and children; focus groups with students; and teacher logs. The surveys went out to all primary teachers (~30) and 18 were returned. The children completed their surveys as a class, providing a 100% completion rate.<sup>13</sup> Mid-year focus groups were conducted with “representative” groups of students in each of the classrooms doing Circles.<sup>14</sup> The data used for this paper are from the student focus groups, and from the teacher and student surveys from the last two years of the project.

I analyzed the data inductively (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998) through repeated considerations of the data with input from student assistants and a “critical friend” (Rallis & Rossman, 2000).<sup>15</sup> During open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), we triangulated data across the sources and identified tentative themes. We then re-examined the initial categories looking for connections as we began to assemble the “big picture” of what was happening at Avalon vis-à-vis the implementation of Peace Circles.

### **Findings and Discussion**

On the whole, children and teachers appeared to perceive Circles positively. Children’s responses, however, often differed from those of their teachers’ in terms of why they liked or disliked Circles. Typical positive responses included “it’s fun [to do Circles],” “it’s a quiet, peaceful time,” and many said they enjoyed sharing thoughts and feelings, hearing what others had to say/learning about others, and getting to talk. However, the children also said that Circles sometimes took too long and people talked too much, there was a lack of respect for others, “some people share gross things,” and there could be too much personal

talk or “boring stuff.” Others did not like “waiting for my turn” or their peers acting silly, showing off, making things up, or not staying on topic; “some people are not honest,” noted one. A few said there was not enough time for Circles, that Circles made them nervous, and that there was too much passing (of the talking piece). One child said, “I like them because we don’t have to do math,” perhaps damning Circles with faint praise. Teachers, on the other hand, rarely critiqued Circles, at least in their written feedback, and said, for example, “I really like the way the children listen to each other in the Circles. They are very polite...and the information shared is amazing!”

Teachers and children also differed in terms of their responses to the frequency of Circles although both said weekend follow-ups and end-of-week summaries were common, and both groups indicated that they did conflict-resolution Circles as needed. While teachers generally gave a specific day and time for when they did Circles, for example “Every Monday after lunch,” there was no consistent response from the children across focus groups or classes, and several said, “not as often as we used to.” Further, although the majority of teachers (85%) surveyed rated Circles with children as *effective* or *very effective*, and many children noted changes for the better since they had begun doing Circles (e.g., “because you know that you’ve hurt someone, you can say sorry”), about one third of the children reported that little had changed in their classroom or school.<sup>16</sup> As one child responded to the question, *has anything in your class changed since you started doing Peace Circles?*, “maybe [there has been] a slight dent.”

Particularly interesting were responses from children whose voices were not heard by the team (e.g., one said, “I’ll pass [the talking piece] when I don’t want to lie”). Had we taken children’s responses more seriously, perhaps beneficial changes could have been made to the process to allow children a greater exercise of power and self-determination. In addition, although many teachers and staff members expressed concern about lacking the time to do Circles as often as they felt they should and some discomfort regarding speaking out, it seemed to me that most of those who used Circles either felt they “should” be positive about or they did not question the purported benefits of them.<sup>17</sup> For instance, the return rate for the teacher surveys was fairly low and teachers declined to answer many questions. Although we tried to address this concern the second year by using online surveys and having the responses sent directly to me (instead of to the school principal), I still wonder if the teachers may have feared repercussions. Without follow-up interviews, however, I have no way of knowing if my hypothesis is correct.

Whereas I found the children’s responses fascinating and telling, the team initially showed little interest in discussing these or asking why they might differ from the adults’ responses. When I raised questions in our team meetings about the differing responses, I felt as if they were laughed off or dismissed; at any rate, we did not follow up on them. I would have liked to have seen a more general and critical interrogation of the process, the data, and even Circles themselves. However, it soon became clear we had different foci and goals, and so our reactions to the findings were, not surprisingly, different.

It appeared to me that the focus of the RJC volunteers was to promulgate the use of Circles as widely as possible and to “show how wonderful Circles are,” as one of the volunteers said during our initial meeting when I asked about their goals for the project. In addition, writing grants and getting/keeping external funding were crucial for the RJC as they are dependent on others’ largess to keep programs running; thus, showing progress was essential. On the other hand, despite my designation by the volunteers as an “outside evaluator,” I, no doubt naively, saw my role as a researcher tasked with uncovering what was actually happening in the setting (and why). The role of the outside evaluator who needed to

show the effectiveness of using Circles at Avalon therefore often conflicted with my researcher's not-always-positive findings and interpretations.<sup>18</sup>

### Concluding Thoughts

I was also disappointed that our discussions regarding the possibilities of Circles stayed at what I considered a functional, rather than transformative, level. That is, our data collection and discussions were focused on classroom management, discipline, and governance, and, to a lesser extent, restorative justice; we never addressed the possibility of enhancing democracy and the development of democratic citizens via Circles. However, given the focus on *Peace-making* Circles at Avalon, perhaps my critique was unfair. As I learned recently (Bickmore, Parker & Larsen, 2011; Bickmore & Scheepstra, 2011), there are three "levels" of Circles moving vertically from *peace-keeping* (focused on discipline, classroom management, and restorative justice) through *peace-making* (attentive primarily to governance), to the most positive, and presumably most challenging level, *peace-building*, which is about democratization and examining multiple perspectives. Since my interests tend to focus on the final and highest level, in retrospect, I was bound to be disappointed by the others' foci.

Schools are often adaptive and tend toward equilibrium and so typically do not challenge existing social patterns which are generative of conflict. As Davies writes, "Top-down, imposed packages, even of peace education, will generate adaptability, but this is not guaranteed to shift a complex system to new forms of working and thinking unless most or all are somehow involved in finding a 'fitness of purpose'" (2003, p. 174).<sup>19</sup> There are many challenges to moving toward the kind of "interruptive" democratization that Davies is calling for. First, it requires a tolerance for uncertainty, conflict, and change, for which there are disincentives in many schools given their tendency to maintain the status quo.<sup>20</sup> Also, long-standing inequalities, in this case between adults and children, would have to be addressed. Further, we must consider the power differentials at play and the relative lack of agency many teachers and children experience (see, e.g., Foucault, 1995) that make it difficult for them to identify pressures and voice concerns.

Perhaps because of these challenges, the active promotion of the rights of children as citizens with voice and power did not appear to be a top priority for the project team. Although Circles call for a levelling of power and symmetrical dialogues where all have the right and opportunity to speak until they feel "heard" and understood, it is often difficult to get past the rhetoric to a true redistribution of power, with many adults resisting the opportunity to allow children to "name their world" and shape their dialogue with it (Freire, 1986). Similarly, children may be using the power *they* have by refusing to participate in – or minimizing their involvement in – what they may see as an "adults' activity."

If promotion of children's rights and voices *was* a priority, if citizenship education was a priority, schools would look for ways to involve children's opinions and perspectives in the development and evaluation of practice. Even the youngest children would be viewed as subjects in, not objects of, the research process (Pascal & Bertram, 2009). Schools would acknowledge children as actors and stakeholders in their own lives, as powerful, competent individuals who are able to express preferences and make informed decisions (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2006). In this view, children *must* be taken seriously; we are "answerable," as Bakhtin puts it (1981), for the ways their voices are documented and represented in our research outputs.

To get to this place, we may want to consider “transversal politics” (e.g., Yuval-Davis, 1999). Transversal politics is based on standpoint epistemology which recognizes that the world is seen differently from varying positions. Thus, the only way to approach “the truth” is by dialogue between people of differential positionings. This assumes respect for others’ positionings but also acknowledges that people with similar positionings and/or identities can have different social and political values. In the vernacular, it might be summarized in the following exhortation: “Hear me. I have a voice.” Perhaps this is what the boy who is quoted in the title was saying.

However, according to Pascal and Bertram (2009), in much early childhood research and practice, children’s lack of voice and power persists. Our task as researchers and educators, then, is to become expert listeners and to recognize the substance of and the many ways in which children communicate their realities (Lloyd-Smith & Tarr, 2000; Malaguzzi, 1998): we must value *all* voices and adults must learn to “pass the talking piece.” Children who learn to participate in their early years – who are socialized for the roles, rights, and responsibilities of active citizenship – are more likely to become capable and involved citizens in terms of the principles and practices of democratic life (Miller, 1997), thus ultimately contributing to social cohesion and the public good. Given that the aim of Circles is to give students a voice and a means of solving conflicts, it was ironic that the project team at Avalon failed to take into account, in any substantive way, children’s questions about or critiques of the use of Circles. In my view, we neglected to fully listen and attend to their voices, thereby denying them the power to affect their school lives in meaningful ways. By doing so, I believe we missed an opportunity to socialize these children for active, democratic citizenship.

## References

- Ayers, W. (2001). *To teach: The journey of a teacher* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Bakhtin, M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays*. M. Holquist, Ed. C. Emerson & M. Holquist, Trans. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Bickmore, K., Parker, C., Larsen, S. (2011, May). *Preparation for conflict talk in intercultural contexts: Teacher development and curriculum infusion*. Paper presented at The Canadian Society for the Study of Education (CSSE) Annual Conference, Fredericton, NB, Canada.
- Bickmore, K. & Scheepstra, T. (2011, May). *Peacebuilding dialogue in schools: Circle processes for restorative problem-solving and democratic education about social conflict*. Paper presented at The Canadian Society for the Study of Education (CSSE) Annual Conference, Fredericton, NB, Canada.
- Bogdan, R.C., & Biklen, S.K. (1998). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods*. Needham Heights, MA: Ally & Bacon.
- Brooker, L. (2001). Interviewing children. In G. McNaughton, A. Shane, & S.B. Iram (Eds.), *Doing early childhood research: International perspectives on theory and practice* (pp. 162-179). Buckingham, England: Open University Press.
- Costa, A., & Kallick, B. (1993). Through the lens of a critical friend. *Educational Leadership*, 51(2), 49-51.
- Dahlberg, G., Moss, P., & Pence, A. (2006). *Beyond quality in early childhood education and care: Languages of evaluation*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.

- Davies, L. (2003). *Education and conflict: Complexity and chaos*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Freire, P. (1986). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York, NY: The Continuum Publishing Co.
- Isaac, C. W. (2011). *Restorative justice in schools: An examination of peace circles within Monroe High School*. (Unpublished master's thesis). Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY, USA.
- Karp, D. R., & Breslin, B. (2001). Restorative justice in school communities. *Youth Society*, 33, 249-272.
- Lloyd-Smith, M., & Tarr, J. (2000). Researching children's perspectives: A sociological perspective. In A. Lewis and G. Lindsay (Eds.), *Researching children's perspectives* (pp. 59-69). Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.
- Malaguzzi, L. (1998). *The hundred languages of children*. Stanford, CT: Ablex Publishing.
- Meier, D. (2003). *In schools we trust: Creating communities of learning in an era of testing and standardization*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Miller, J. (1997). *Never too young*. London, UK: National Early Years Network.
- Nutbrown, C., & Clough, P. (2009). Citizenship and inclusion in the early years: Understanding and responding to children's perspectives on 'belonging.' *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 17 (3), 191-206.
- Pascal, C., & Bertram, T. (2009). Listening to young citizens: The struggle to make real a participatory paradigm in research with young children. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 17, 249-262.
- Porter, A.J. (2007). *Restorative practices in schools: Research reveals power of restorative approach, Part II*. Retrieved from [www.iirp.org](http://www.iirp.org).
- Rallis, S.F., & Rossman, G.B. (2000). Dialogue for learning: Evaluator as critical friend. *New Directions for Evaluation*, 86, 81-92.
- Riestenberg, N. (2002, August). *Restorative measures in schools: Evaluation results*. Paper presented at the Third International Conference on Conferencing, Circles, and other Restorative Practices. Minneapolis, MN, USA.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Tobin, J. (2000). *Good guys don't wear hats: Children's talk about the media*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Vaandering, D. (2006). *Between wholeness and restoration*. A paper presented at The Next Step: Developing Restorative Communities Conference. Bethlehem, PA, USA.
- Vaandering, D. (2009). *Restorative justice: Moving from rule-based to relationship-based school cultures*. Paper presented at the 2009 Edge Conference, St. John's, NL, Canada.
- Willig, C. (2001). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology: Adventures in theory and method*. Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.
- Yuval-Davis, N. (1999, summer). What is 'transversal politics'? *Soundings*, 12, 94-98.
- 

### End Notes for "Holding the Talking Piece."

<sup>1</sup> I was asked to be involved in order to gather data about program effectiveness for external funders; I believe the school's impetus for involvement was to build on a character-development program (Second Step) already in place but I am not sure since they had already committed to the project before I was contacted.

<sup>2</sup> The names have been changed.

<sup>3</sup> Although the RJC volunteers used these terms interchangeably, as will be addressed later, they are not the same thing.

<sup>4</sup> The two volunteers, both retired public school administrators, were also Circles trainers across the region.

<sup>5</sup> Prior to beginning work on the project, I gained Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from my institution for my participation as a researcher; each year of the project, approval was re-secured. In addition, all children who participated had parental permission to do so (via a “blanket” permission form completed at the beginning of the school year) and all teachers who were involved gave permission for data to be used and shared.

<sup>6</sup> [www.iirp.org/](http://www.iirp.org/); Canada and the U.S. have been leaders in the restorative justice field, but this is a world-wide movement.

<sup>7</sup> The italicized terms are not explained.

<sup>8</sup> There are a few exceptions; e.g., Bickmore et al. (2011); Isaac, 2011; Karp & Breslin (2001); Vaandering (2006, 2009).

<sup>9</sup> [www.saferanschools.org/](http://www.saferanschools.org/)

<sup>10</sup> Literally; see “School of Shock,” *Mother Jones*, August 2007

<sup>11</sup> Logs asked for: name of teacher; date, time, & kind of Circle; what went well and what could have been improved; impressions and comments.

<sup>12</sup> Focus groups with children are an effective way to elicit responses of greater depth and breadth, and to diffuse the power relationship (Brooker, 2001; Tobin, 2000).

<sup>13</sup> We used Survey Monkey [[www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)] to collect and analyze the data; both teachers and students were asked about Circle frequency, effectiveness, and likes/dislikes.

<sup>14</sup> One group of boys, one group of girls, and one mixed-gender group from each classroom was arbitrarily selected based on availability during the interview time period. Focus-group questions were: (1) *How many times a week do you get in a Circle?* (2) *What do you talk about in Circles?* (3) *How do you feel about being in a Peace Circle?* (4) *What do you like about them? What don't you like?* (5) *When do you choose to hold the talking stick and talk? Why?* (6) *When do you choose to pass the talking stick and not talk? Why?* (7) *Has anything in your class changed since you started doing Peace Circles?* (8) *Has anything outside of class changed (for example, on the playground, on the bus, in the lunchroom)?* (9) *Is there anything else about Peace Circles you would like to tell me?*

<sup>15</sup> A critical friend is a trusted person who asks provocative questions, provides data to be examined through another lens, and offers critiques of a person's work as a friend. She or he takes the time to fully understand the context of the work presented and the outcomes that the person or group is working toward; the friend is an advocate for the success of that work (Costa & Kallick, 1993).

<sup>16</sup> Several noted, in what seemed to me a rather mature understanding of the situation, that change was unlikely unless the entire school was using Circles.

<sup>17</sup> Although not discussed here in any depth, teachers' concerns and external pressures (e.g., to “buy into” Circles because the principal was an advocate) were also rarely addressed by the team.

<sup>18</sup> This is an example of personal reflexivity. ‘Personal reflexivity’ involves reflecting upon the ways in which our own values, experiences, interests, beliefs, political commitments, wider aims in life, and social identities have shaped the research. It also involves thinking about how the research may have affected and possibly changed us, as people and as researchers (Willig, 2001). Clearly my personal and researcher selves intersect here.

<sup>19</sup> The Avalon school district, for example, added information about the use of restorative practices to its Code of Conduct, but also kept in place the more punitive practices that are typical of U.S. public schools such as suspensions and expulsions.

<sup>20</sup> Note, however, the root of the word *community* is “commonality” and the word *conflict* is derived from “striking together”; perhaps these are more closely related than we tend to think.