CITIZENSHIP LEARNING OF ADULT IMMIGRANTS IN ESL PROGRAMS: IT WILL HELP YOU PASS THE CITIZENSHIP TEST, BUT IT WON’T MAKE YOU (M)ANY CANADIAN FRIENDS.

by

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This study explores which concept of citizenship is typically promoted in ESL programs available to adult immigrants in Canada: citizenship as status, citizenship as identity, citizenship as a set of civic virtues or citizenship as agency. Is there a difference between the stated purpose of ESL programs, the integration and active participation of immigrants in Canadian society through language development, and the actual citizenship learning that occurs in these programs? What influences this? The study traces the historical link between citizenship education and ESL in Canada, and draws on existing research to reveal how citizenship concepts are presented in ESL classrooms. These findings are then matched with data from my textbook analysis, classroom observations and student interviews obtained from two advanced ESL courses offered by COSTI, as an indication of the citizenship learning and the citizenship concepts most likely to be promoted in ESL programs for adult immigrants across Canada.
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INTRODUCTION

My interest in citizenship learning among adult immigrants in English as a second language (ESL) programs was sparked several years ago while I was teaching ESL in Belgrade to groups of refugees from former Yugoslavia bound to Canada, the United States and Australia. The classes were organized by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), an NGO funded by the Canadian, American and Australian governments. Our program involved three days of cultural orientation (now referred to as survival skills training), followed by three months of intensive language training. One of the topics covered in the ‘cultural orientation’ session dealt with finding employment in North America. In an effort to demonstrate to the students the need to learn English in order to get a job, our supervisor, an otherwise talented ESL teacher from Canada, designed a skit which involved asking a student to leave the classroom for a minute while the teacher drops a small piece of paper on the floor. When the student was called back into the classroom, the teacher was to ask him, in English, to pick up the piece of paper. It is important to note here that the majority of the students in these sessions had never learned English before, they had been out of school for many years, all had experienced the trauma of being displaced by a civil war, and none were living a worry free existence in Belgrade, which was itself on the brink of economic and political collapse. This lack of English, coupled with a plethora of anxiety, ensured that hardly any of the students who volunteered for the task understood the teachers’ instructions. Following the skit guidelines, the teacher would then pretend to become more and more agitated, repeating the request louder and louder, further confusing the student. Did the class learn the lesson
about the importance of learning English in order to get a job in North America? It was a harsh lesson, but it seemed to work, although one of the students did remark bitterly after class that he hoped they paid us well to scare them like that. Beyond being scared into learning English, I wondered what else the students were learning from this example; that it was alright for employers in North America to ask you to pick up their trash from the floor? That they could yell at you if you didn’t? I also wondered if the skit would not have worked just as well if we had asked the students to hand us a file from the table, please? They still wouldn’t have understood the request, but they wouldn’t have felt humiliated by it, either.

Some years later, I myself immigrated to Canada and, thanks to my ESL teaching experience at IOM, was able to find work as a teaching assistant in an ESL program in Toronto. The majority of the instructors were “old-stock” Canadian women nearing retirement. The students were a mix of races and professional backgrounds, spanning from Polish housewives to Sudanese judges. I was shocked to discover the school’s practice of playing the Canadian national anthem every morning before the start of classes, with students obliged to rise and sing along to the taped recording blasting through the speakers.

Watching grown men and women having to demonstrate their allegiance to their adopted country in this manner every morning had me wondering again what they were really learning from this. The teachers might have thought this practice developed students’ appreciation of Canada. The students, on the other hand, might have concluded that in addition to developing language skills required to facilitate their entry into
Canadian society, they might also be expected to (literally) sing their praises of Canada to Canadians each day.

A few years later still, I was sitting in a room full of fellow immigrants. Having successfully passed our citizenship test, we had been invited to the citizenship ceremony to receive our citizenship certificates and hear a speech by the citizenship judge. A proud Canadian daughter of immigrant parents, the judge chose to share with us the story of how her family had nothing before coming to Canada and gained everything after immigrating here. This was followed by an almost hysterical demand that we (new citizens of Canada) rise and sing the national anthem, and not try to avoid it, because she would be ‘watching us.’ I was, once again, intrigued by this repeat witnessing of immigrants expected (sometimes by other immigrants) to demonstrate their servitude, allegiance or gratitude to Canada, as if they were delinquent minors on probation, rather than worthy and contributing members of this society.

After all, it isn’t as if immigrants were invited to dinner by Canada with her doing all the cooking, while they sit around doing nothing. Staying in the realm of food analogies, I always saw it more as an invitation to a potluck of sorts with the explicit understanding that all guests would bring enough food to feed themselves and share some with others. In other words, did not Citizenship and Immigration Canada grant us permanent residence based on their estimation of our potential to contribute to Canada’s development and growth?

Memories of these experiences seemed to magically connect in the first course of my master’s studies: Citizenship Learning and Participatory Democracy, taught by Professor Schugurensky. Hearing for the first time about the many conceptualizations of
citizenship, the various, often opposing, streams of citizenship education, and the
different possibilities of citizenship learning gave shape and direction to my research
interest: Citizenship learning of adult immigrants in Canadian ESL programs. According
to Schugurensky (2005), understandings of citizenship typically include four dimensions:
citizenship as status, citizenship as identity, citizenship as a set of civic virtues, and
citizenship as agency. Using this framework as my conceptual model, I explore which of
these understandings of citizenship is generally promoted in ESL programs available to
adult immigrants in Canada. Is there a difference between the stated purpose of ESL
programs for adult immigrants, the integration and active participation of students in
Canadian society through language development, and the actual citizenship learning that
occurs in these programs? What influences this?

Existing research on citizenship education and ESL for adult immigrants indicates
that the primary purpose of citizenship education continues to be the preparation of adult
immigrants for their citizenship test, while the purpose of ESL, since the introduction of
Language Instruction for Newcomers (LINC) by the federal government in the early
1990s, has officially expanded to include teaching immigrants Canadian citizenship and
cultural values, thus indicating a shift from a focus on language acquisition for
employment to a focus on language for integration. However, while the role and
execution of citizenship education programs seems clear – students are prepared to
respond to citizenship test questions based on the study guide provided by Citizenship
and Immigration Canada, the role of ESL programs is more vague.

Despite being entrusted with teaching immigrants about the Canadian way of life
and cultural values, thus also affecting new immigrants’ citizenship education, they lack a
clear set of guidelines, adequate resources, training and support from the federal government. This indicates an apparent dichotomy which seems to exist between the federal government’s proclamations for immigrant integration and the support it provides for its realization, further indicating the primary focus of ESL, in the eyes of the federal government, may still be immigrant employability. Consequently, studies show (Thomson & Derwing, 2005) that abstract concepts, such as citizenship, democracy and cultural values are often approached ‘carefully’ by ESL practitioners who, among other reasons, list students’ lack of English skills and their focus on survival, in addition to a lack of course material with Canadian content, as major obstacles to a deeper analysis of these topics.

For these and practical reasons, my research is focused on two advanced ESL courses offered by COSTI, a settlement agency in Toronto. Research into the perspectives of the immigrants themselves is rare and there is a lack of information about their experiences and perceptions about the kinds of citizenship learning they receive in language training programs. Although my research is limited to one site and a small number of students (18), their varied backgrounds, education levels and ages can be indicative of immigrant experiences on a wider scale. Through the lens of critical multiculturalism, I reflect on the observed classroom discourse, student interviews and course material used in the classes at COSTI and, commonly, in other ESL programs in Canada, as indicators of the citizenship model most generally promoted in ESL programs across Canada, across language levels.

The thesis is divided into nine chapters. The first one discusses the multiple conceptualizations of citizenship. I briefly elaborate on how each dimension of
citizenship is understood and how each may be interpreted in citizenship education programs.

In chapter two, I offer a historical overview of the link between citizenship education and ESL programs for adult immigrants in Canada, suggesting that the onus of providing citizenship education (beyond preparing students for their naturalization tests, which remains the responsibility of citizenship education programs) has, for some time, been downloaded on ESL programs. However, there are recent indications, such as the publication of the new citizenship test guide book (Discover Canada), that the federal government is taking a renewed interest in citizenship education for adult immigrants.

In chapter three, I introduce my literature review, which connects the historical citizenship education practices of ‘classical immigrant nation-states’ with the current practice of teaching cultural values as citizenship values in Canadian ESL programs. Also included in this chapter are ESL pedagogues’ opinions and research findings on teaching culture for citizenship education in ESL classrooms.

Chapter four outlines my research methodology, a combination of classroom observations, student interviews and textbook analysis done through the lens of critical multiculturalism.

Chapter five contains the textbook analysis, chapter six covers classroom observations, and chapter seven refers to student interviews.

In chapter eight, I analyze and discuss my research data, matching my findings with the four dimensions of citizenship discussed earlier to reveal the citizenship model most represented in the observed ESL classes at COSTI, suggesting this also serves as an
indication of the citizenship models most likely promoted in other ESL programs across Canada.

I conclude, in chapter nine, by offering support and recommendations for the promotion of a more meaningful model of citizenship education not only for immigrants within ESL programs, but rather the Canadian population at large, which would contribute to a deeper understanding of the impact and value of immigration.
CHAPTER 1: CITIZENSHIP AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

The conceptualizations of citizenship are multiple and varied. While there is general agreement that citizenship refers to the relationship between the individual and the state, and among individuals within a state (Hebert & Sears, 2001), the interpretations of these relationships are contested and altered from one era to another, under the influence of dominant political ideologies and the accompanying socio-economic factors or, in lesser instances, as a result of opposition to them. The ancient Greeks, for example, viewed citizens (albeit, not women, slaves or the poor) as politically active beings, whereas the Romans subsequently conceived of them as legal beings (Magsino, 2002), with less emphasis on political participation and more emphasis on the enjoyment of social and economic rights. Although citizenship has been reinterpreted many times since then, these early conceptions seem to represent the two poles between which it developed, swaying more, in the recent age of global economy, towards the concept of citizenship as an expression of economic participation rather than citizenship as a form of active political participation.

Schugurensky (2005) argues that citizenship is a multidimensional concept and distinguishes between four different dimensions: status, identity, civic virtues and agency. Citizenship as status is the most common understanding of citizenship, according to Schugurensky. It distinguishes between citizens who are full members of a particular political entity, normally a nation-state, and as such enjoy certain rights and responsibilities, and non-citizens, who have limited or no rights at all.
While citizenship as status, in most instances, is about being a member of a particular nation state and formally enjoying the same rights as its other members (for example, owning a passport and voting in elections), citizenship as identity is about feeling like a member of that particular political entity. This is especially challenging in multicultural states, such as Canada, because identity is rooted in factors such as a common history, language, religion, values, traditions and culture, which rarely coincide with the artificial territory of a nation-state (Schugurensky, 2005).

Citizenship as civic virtues refers to values and dispositions expected of ‘ideal citizens’, the interpretations of which vary according to historical, ideological and political circumstances.

Finally, citizenship as agency refers to citizens as social actors. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) identify three conceptions of the good (active) citizen: responsible, participatory and justice-oriented. Using the example of citizen action against hunger, they describe the responsible citizen as one that contributes food to a food drive, the participatory citizen as one who organizes the food drive, and the justice-oriented citizen as one who questions why people go hungry in the first place.

According to Schugurensky (2005), citizenship education programs can incorporate all four dimensions of citizenship, but often emphasize one over the others. Citizenship education programs that focus on citizenship as status tend to be traditional programs, which concentrate on facts about history and geography, government institutions, and the law of the nation state. In the majority of cases, these programs promote the sanitized version of a nation’s history devoid of any compromising elements and told from the perspective of winners (Strong-Boag, 2002, p.38). It is interesting to
note, however, that the new citizenship guide book for immigrants preparing for their
naturalization test recently revised and published by Citizenship and Immigration
Canada, Discover Canada (2009), paints the most honest picture of Canadian history yet,
as far as citizenship guide books go. Although brimming with pictures of a smiling
Queen Elizabeth and assertions of conservative ideals, such as “ordered liberty”, working
hard and serving in the army, it also includes many passages about the controversial
aspects of Canadian history and some of the contested figures that helped shape it,
including: the mistreatment of Aboriginals in residential schools, broken land treaties, the
deporation of Acadians during the war between the French and the English, the Chinese
head tax, and so on. It would be interesting to see how this inclusion of a ‘flawed’ history
by the federal government will reflect on citizenship education programs for adult
immigrants which, so far, have used a controversy-free paintbrush to paint Canada’s
national development.

Citizenship education programs that focus on citizenship as identity have
traditionally emphasized nation-building through the assimilation of minority groups to
the dominant groups (Anderson, 1918 & Fitzpatrick, 1919). With the acknowledgement
of the multicultural reality of Canada, this approach to citizenship education has
expanded over the years to include multicultural education, generally focused on the
celebration of the superficial aspects of cultures, rather than a more critical, deeper
understanding of diversity.

Citizenship education programs that focus on civic virtues emphasize the
development of certain values over others. The choice of values and dispositions
promoted in these programs is influenced by different ideological, political and social circumstances.

Programs that emphasize citizenship as agency promote the development of politically informed, active, and engaged citizens, with a critical understanding of the issues at hand and the self-reliance to propose alternate solutions that can transform society, reminiscent of the ideal citizen of ancient Greece.

Sears and Hughes (1996) identify passive and active approaches to citizenship education. Conservative and passive approaches emphasize the development of loyalty to the nation state, through accumulation of static and narrow knowledge of national history and traditions, much like citizenship education programs that focus on status and identity. Activist approaches emphasize engagement with important issues and participation in the formation and reformation of society at local, national and even global levels, much like citizenship education programs that focus on citizenship as agency. According to Hebert and Sears (2001), the intended curriculum in public schools in Canada today tends towards an explicit, activist focus for the development of engaged and active citizens. What about the citizenship education curriculum for adult immigrants? To which end of the citizenship and citizenship education spectrum does it fall?
CHAPTER 2: CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION FOR IMMIGRANTS; A TIMELINE
LINKING CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION AND ESL

With the influx of non-English speaking immigrants to Canada in the early 1900s, the role of citizenship education was primarily seen as assimilating or ‘civilizing’ immigrants by giving them “a necessary knowledge of English, and an insight into Canadian affairs, which will tend to make them efficient, healthy, self-respecting citizens” (Anderson, 1918). However, this was seen as no easy task as suggested in the title of Anderson’s book: The Education of the New-Canadian. A Treatise on Canada’s Greatest Educational Problem, in which he commented that “many of these people will be very slow to understand and appreciate the higher ideals of our civilization, but we have every reason to hope that their offspring, born under the Union Jack, will grow up as valuable Canadian citizens” (Anderson, 1918, 54-55). Immigration abruptly declined with the start of the First World War and again during the Great Depression of the 1930s and during the Second World War.

After the Second World War, the government again began to promote immigration to support the economy (Derwing & Munro, 2007). The period after the Second World War was also marked by Canada’s quest to build a national identity independent of Great Britain. In 1945, the Citizenship Branch started working on a new naturalization legislation, the Citizenship Act, which took effect in 1947. While presenting the Citizenship Bill to the House of Commons, then Secretary of State, Paul Martin, said that one of the purposes of the bill was “to provide an underlying community of status for all our people in this country that will help to bind them together as
Canadians”, thus moving away from the “colonial spirit of inferiority” to a position of “pride in Canada” (National Identity Task Force, 1991, in Joshee, 1996). However, a document written by officials of the Citizenship Branch in 1947 noted that the purpose of immigrant education was “converting the immigrant into a Canadian through formal education, which includes language training and the elementary study of Canadian history, resources and government and citizenship education, which includes acclimatizing and acquainting the immigrant to the habits, customs and institutions of Canada” (Joshee, 1996).

Aside from further establishing the link between citizenship education and language training for the citizenship education of immigrants, this comment also points to an indicative dichotomy between the public initiatives put forth by the federal government for a more meaningful integration of immigrants and the recommendations and educational material actually provided to citizenship education programs to support them. This dichotomy seems to persist despite the federal government changing the language it uses to describe the purpose and intent of citizenship education for immigrants from converting to integrating to fully participating, as the continuation of this historical overview will show.

The tie between citizenship education and language training was further strengthened in 1953 when the Citizenship Branch negotiated a set of federal-provincial agreements known as the Citizenship Instruction Agreements, which defined citizenship education as instruction “bearing on the English and French languages, or elementary notions about Canadian institutions and ways of life, and intended to facilitate the
adjustment and integration of newcomers into the Canadian community, and to qualify them for Canadian citizenship” (in Joshee, 1996).

In 1966, the newly created Department of Manpower and Immigration was given responsibility for the economic integration of immigrants, while the Citizenship Branch took responsibility for their social and cultural integration. The federal government, however, increasingly focused on language training programs supported by Manpower and Immigration, seeing them as a gateway to the desired future economic participation of immigrants. Since then the government’s involvement in education for naturalization steadily decreased, while language instruction for labour market entry remained its primary focus.

With the patriation of the Canadian Constitution, which saw Canada’s constitution expand to include the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and made the Canadian Parliament and the Supreme Court of Canada the final authorities on constitutional matters, independent of the British Parliament, the federal government showed renewed interest in citizenship education for immigrants. In 1985, a task force within the Secretary of State redefined citizenship education to include the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes about “rights and freedoms, equality of access, full participation, ethnic and racial diversity, cultural and regional diversity, two official languages, constitutional monarchy, a federal system (of government) and national symbols” (Government of Canada, 1985, in Joshee and Derwing, 2005, p.19), however this expanded definition of citizenship never came to be.

In 1987, the Secretary of State initiated the Citizenship Instruction Review Project (CIRP). This resulted in the publishing of an instructor’s package called More of a
"Welcome Than a Test" kit (Government of Canada, 1990?), whose purpose was to provide teachers with background information and educational material to apply a more critical approach to citizenship instruction, and a census of all English language citizenship programs in Canada, designed to provide data on instructional practices. The recommendations provided by the citizenship program census required the financial aid and support of the federal government, which was not forthcoming.

Consequently, the census was never widely distributed. On the other hand, the cumbersome format of More of a Welcome Than a Test and a lack of funding for its testing and revision contributed to the project coming to an end. Preparing for Citizenship, put together in 1994, was intended to be a more user friendly teachers’ kit, but changes in the citizenship process defeated its purpose. These changes included ending the practice of citizenship court hearings and introducing standardized citizenship tests for immigrants.

Coinciding with these changes to the citizenship process, the federal government introduced Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) in 1992. This represented a change in the government’s focus on employment, as LINC classes were intended to incorporate ‘information on Canadian values’ (Government of Canada, 1991, in Joshee and Derwing, 2005, p.3). With that, the ‘division of labour’ between citizenship education and language training in the citizenship education for immigrants became more clearly defined. Citizenship education programs were to prepare students for their citizenship tests, a formulaic task with clearly defined guidelines (self-study guide books provided by Citizenship and Immigration) and desired outcomes (the passing of the citizenship test). Language training, on the other hand, would from now on be entrusted
with teaching immigrants the language and the Canadian way of life, with far fewer guidelines or resources available and subject to individual interpretation of program coordinators and teachers as to what that means and how it should be taught.

When LINC was first introduced, Employment and Immigration Canada contracted a company to develop a publication called *Canada: A Source Book for Orientation, Language and Settlement Workers* (1991), intended to provide teachers with information on Canadian culture and values to help them with their new assignment. However, the book was brimming with statements about what Canadians do and do not do and was widely criticized as patronizing and unrepresentative of Canadians. It was quickly withdrawn and since then a number of new textbooks were produced in response to the increased interest in Canadian content in ESL, some of which will be discussed as part of my research data.

In 1995, *A Look at Canada*, a self-study guide book for applicants for citizenship was released, after approximately 15 years of revisions and delays in publication, in part because senior officials insisted it be controversy-free. This it most certainly was, with only superficial references and no deep analysis of any controversial aspects of Canadian history. Thus, the land treaties between the British and Canadian governments and the Aboriginal people are described as friendly meetings during which each side mutually agreed to give and take a little: “The British and Canadian governments made many agreements, or treaties, with the Aboriginal peoples between 1701 and 1923. These treaties granted the Aboriginal peoples certain rights and benefits in exchange for giving up their title to the land” (*A Look at Canada*, 1995, p.15). The need for continued land negotiations is left unexplained and a patronizing tone is used to describe the Canadian
government’s continued efforts to help Aboriginals regain control over their own affairs and improve their standard of living, without any critical analysis as to why their living conditions may be substandard at all. Acadians are described as “French settlers who were, over time, joined by settlers of the British Isles and Germany” (A look at Canada, 1995, p.18), without any mention of the seven year war between the French and the British, during which thousands of Acadians were deported. In reference to the Canadian Pacific Railway, the book does make mention of the thousands of Chinese who came to British Columbia to help build the final section of the Canadian Pacific Railway, but goes no further than to assert that “many of their descendants still live in the province” (p.25), without any mention of the ill treatment they experienced during that time, including the imposition of the head tax to curb Chinese immigration.

At the same time, the Department of Canadian Heritage, through the Multiculturalism program, commissioned the publication of the ‘Citizenship Participation Initiative’, a series of facilitator manuals on various aspects of Canadian citizenship, which addressed some of the complexities of the political and social life in Canada, using a more participatory pedagogical approach. However, a study by Derwing, Jamieson and Munro (1998) revealed this material did not seem to reach citizenship classrooms, as only 5% of citizenship program coordinators reported using it. This again is an example of the apparent dichotomy which seems to exist between government proclamations for a more meaningful citizenship education and the support it provides for its realization.

In time, the citizenship pendulum swung back again to an economic agenda, in place of social citizenship. In 2004, the federal government introduced the Enhanced Language Training initiative, by which $20 million annually would go toward providing
higher levels of language training specifically geared to ensuring that adult immigrants enter and remain in the labour market at levels that will make full use of their skills and credentials (Citizenship and Immigration, 2004).

The recent introduction of Discover Canada (2009), Citizenship and Immigration’s new self study guide book intended for citizenship test preparation, marks a renewed interest by the government in citizenship education for immigrants. This book is well written and informative, with a heavy emphasis on history and even a chapter on arts (a topic omitted in previous guide books). More significantly, the book’s content marks a shift from a controversy-free portrayal of Canada’s national development to one that includes a more critical reflection of the country’s past (although not the present), beyond just words, in the shape of a concrete manual that can be used in classrooms, albeit only in those with advanced English speakers. While positive in that respect, the book also includes content which may impact readers differently, including the apparent adoration of the Queen and the emphasis on Canada’s military past and present.

Although the Queen is the formal head of state of Canada, it is probably safe to assume that most immigrants do not choose to live in Canada because of her or any other British sovereign who might take her place. Most immigrants choose to come to Canada because of its constitution, which grants them equal rights and responsibilities. Insisting on professing Canada’s loyalty to the British Crown, a symbol of colonial Britain, rather than Canada’s constitution, a symbol of equality within diversity, the authors seem to be sending a mixed message as to what Canada represents. On the other hand, promoting military service in a citizenship guide book as a means of contributing to the country may seem to carry the implication that immigrants owe it to Canada to serve in the army. It
would be of interest and value to research the effects of this manual on citizenship education and language programs for immigrants, especially in terms of what follow up is provided by the government to support it, including text adaptations (for lower level ESL speakers) and teacher training.
CHAPTER 3: CITIZENSHIP CONTENT IN ESL; LITERATURE REVIEW

Until the federal government introduced LINC in 1992, language instruction for immigrants in Canada was primarily focused on facilitating their entry into the labour force market. The purpose of LINC, on the other hand, was to provide language training with a focus of integrating immigrants into the Canadian society beyond solely participating in its economy. This was to be done by introducing immigrants to Canadian citizenship values (interpreted as cultural values) through language instruction.

Imparting cultural values of the host country to immigrants is a common approach to citizenship education for immigrants, shared by nation-states which have experienced a growth in racial, ethnic, religious and cultural diversity as a result of an increasingly diverse immigrant population. Multicultural societies, such as Canada, the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom are faced with the problem of constructing nation-states that reflect and incorporate the diversity of their citizens and yet have an overarching set of shared values, ideals, and goals to which all citizens are committed (Banks, 1997). Bullivant (1981, in May, 1999) describes this as “the problem of reconciling the diverse political claims of constituent groups and individuals in a pluralist society with the claims of the nation-state as whole” (p. 14).

Castle and Davidson (2000, in Castles, 2004) argue that international migration and ethnic minorities have always presented problems to nation-states, since they threaten ideologies of cultural homogeneity (p.22). Countries with a history of importing immigrants for labour have dealt with potential social and political consequences of such
national strategies in different ways, while sharing an underlying belief that they can prevent ethnic diversity from bringing about major changes in their society and culture through various policy approaches.

Castle (2004) labels the main approaches used up to the 1960s as assimilation or differential exclusion. The purpose of assimilation is to encourage immigrants to learn the national language and to take on the social and cultural practices of the host country, in the belief that the immigrants’ descendents will become undistinguishable from the rest of the population. Hence, Canada’s inspector of schools and director of education for new Canadians in 1918 could claim that immigrants “will be very slow to understand and appreciate the higher ideals of our civilization, but we have every reason to hope that their offspring, born under the Union Jack, will grow up as valuable Canadian citizens” (Anderson, 1918, 54-55).

On the other hand, differential exclusion means accepting immigrants only within strict limits, which welcome them as workers, but not as settlers or long-term residents. In the classical immigration countries, such as Canada, the Unites States and Australia, assimilation was the dominant model until the 1960s or 1970s. In Western Europe, the assimilation model predominated in some countries, for example the United Kingdom, whereas countries such as Germany and Switzerland embraced the differential exclusion model.

Challenged by increasing immigrant diversity and assertiveness, most Western immigration countries replaced the models of assimilation and differential exclusion with some form of multiculturalism by the 1970s. While the United States refers to multiculturalism as a statement about its identity, Canada, Australia, and several
European countries have institutionalized multiculturalism as a public policy. Castles (2004) identifies two key dimensions of multiculturalism as a public policy: recognition of cultural diversity and social equality for members of minorities. Recognition of cultural diversity requires that both the majority population and the various minorities acknowledge that society is not monocultural. The social equality dimension of multiculturalism requires that members of ethnic minorities have equal opportunities of participation in all arenas of society (Castle, 2004), in particular education and the labour market, which are perceived to determine social and cultural outcomes.

Consequently, most multicultural nation states focus on providing courses for immigrants to learn the main language of the country and vocational training and bridging courses to help them enter the labour market. Although multiculturalism implies the abandonment of the myth of monocultural nation-states, Castle (2004) still sees it as a way of controlling difference within the nation-state framework, because it maintains the idea of a primary belonging to one society and a loyalty to just one nation-state (p.27).

In the Canadian context, Joshee (2004) argues that the federal multiculturalism policy can only be understood as a product of three separate but related policy fields: citizenship, identity, and social justice. In terms of citizenship, multiculturalism has been concerned with instilling in newcomers a sense of what it means to be Canadian. In terms of identity, multiculturalism has been concerned both with the development of microcultural identities as well as a shared Canadian identity. In the area of social justice, the major concerns have been intergroup relations and, more recently, systemic and institutional racism (Joshee, 2004, p.134).
With the spread of neoliberalism in the 1990s came a general shift away from multicultural policies in most Western democracies. In Australia, this resulted in the dismantling of many multicultural agencies and services. In Canada, there was a steady decrease of federal spending on multiculturalism and other programs supporting diversity. In the late 1990s, Canada experienced a resurgence of interest in citizenship education linked to multicultural education, however this was not accompanied by a restoration of funding or a reinstatement of any dismantled equity programs. Joshee (2004) argues the recent attention to citizenship and diversity can be linked to a newfound interest on the part of the public and policy developers in the idea of social cohesion, as a response to the consequences of neoliberal policies and programs. Social cohesion is invoked as a corrective measure that can help to increase social solidarity and restore faith in the institutions of government (Joshee, 2004, p.147).

The United States and the United Kingdom, both equally affected by neoliberalism and diverse populations, are also moving towards a model of social cohesion. Following riots in ethnically mixed northern English towns in 2001, the UK Home Secretary established a Review Team to “identify key policy issues in community cohesion” (Figueroa, 2004, p.221). Two key aims were articulated: “community cohesion, based upon a greater knowledge of, contact between, and respect for, the various cultures” and “a greater sense of citizenship, based on common principles shared by all, with a higher value on cultural differences” (Cantle, 2001, in Figueroa, 2004).

The principal reviewer, Cantle, also called for a national debate “to develop some shared principles of citizenship”, suggesting those should include an emphasis on the English language; a recognition of “the contribution of all cultures to this Nations’
development throughout its history;” but “a clear primary loyalty to this Nation,” to be “formalized into a statement of allegiance” (Cantle, 2001, in Figueroa, 2004). This was followed by the passing of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act of 2002, which introduces a citizenship oath and pledge for new citizens and allows for regulations which might require testing of new citizens on life in Britain and on knowledge of English, Welsh, or Scottish Gaelic (Figueroa, 2004, p.222).

Interestingly enough, while citizenship education in immigrant countries is primarily geared towards developing immigrants’ loyalty to the nation-state through the emphasis of shared values, there is an emerging trend to educate non-immigrants to become global citizens of the world or transnationals. While transnationalism can lead to the development of cosmopolitan attitudes which transcend nation-states, Kymlicka (2004) points out that the goal of this education is primarily to enhance the cultural capital and economic opportunities of individuals, not to remedy the historic injustices and exclusions that disadvantage or stigmatize particular groups within a nation-state.

Whether guided by ideologies of assimilation, multiculturalism or social cohesion, citizenship education for immigrants has historically consisted of learning the nation-state’s official language and its cultural values. Not surprisingly then, the task of imparting knowledge about Canadian cultural values to newcomers was passed on to ESL programs. While few disagree that culture and language are inextricably entwined, there is some confusion over how best to present language and culture in the classroom. Byram and Risager (1999) argue that because natural language develops through social interactions, it must necessarily be organized to express cultural values.
Sauve (1996) sees several problems with teaching culture in the Canadian ESL classroom, including naming a “Canadian culture,” which varies according to region, age, gender, ethnicity, class, race, etc. Additionally, she cautions about the learners’ ability to access teachers’ contexts and make use of the information they have presented. Secondly, Sauve (1996) argues that teacher education programs have not prepared teachers well to teach cultural aspects of Canadian life. Thirdly, there is a conceptual problem to be found in defining the work ESL teachers do as ESL rather than something broader, such as settlement education.

The result of this is that the most important work ESL teachers do with learners is done either as an aside or even apologetically (p.20). The fourth problem is the decline in the valuing of the ESL professional, demonstrated through budget cuts and longer work hours. As problem number five, Sauve lists the need to consider ways of teaching that involve both immigrant and nonimmigrant educators working together to examine Canadian culture critically and openly. Problem number six is that “we live in a society that sees itself as multicultural while continuing to be biased in favour of white, Anglo-Saxon, Christian, middle-class traditions and values” (p.21).

In the classroom context, this can result in teaching rules that apply for the dominant majority, which in many cases are different from the unwritten rules laid on those who do not belong to this majority. Sauve concludes that, in light of budget restraints and tight timelines, students cannot be ‘taught’ culture from a static viewpoint. Rather, they need to be engaged in a process of discovering how Canadians see the world, how they themselves are seen by Canadians, and how they can increase the amount of power they have over their own lives in this new country.
Taylor (1997) writes about the tension between two distinct approaches to the questions of culture: the “cultural diversity” approach and the “cultural difference” approach. She cautions against the cultural diversity approach as its pedagogical approach of encyclopedic listmaking reinforces power relations of exclusion and normalization, and attempts to fix and totalize something that is dynamic and disrespectful of boundaries (p.72). On the other hand, implicit in the notion of cultural difference is that culture is always about belonging, identification, and legitimacy. Consequently, Taylor sees as the most important goal of ESL pedagogues in relation to their students’ cultural learning to contribute to their sense of legitimacy and membership in the society.

Courchene’s (1996) vision for a successful incorporation of culture learning in language classes asks for a reflection of Canada’s past, a vision of common rights and freedoms, a recognition of all Canadian voices, and inclusion of some common traditions and symbols. To this list, Taylor (1997) adds one more element: a vision of what we (Canada, as a nation) are becoming. Courchene (1997) additionally emphasizes the importance of learning through experience, encouraging teachers “to create situations inside and outside class to place students in situations that will allow them to gain some insight into what makes Canadians tick” (p.78).

Ilieva (2001) argues for a culture exploration, which consists of employing techniques of ethnographic participant observation in an outside the classroom and holding reflective, interpretative, and critical classroom discussions on students’ ethnographies (Ilieva, 2001, p.1). Ilieva supports her argument by invoking Kramsch’s
(1993) view of culture as conflict; a “struggle between the learners’ meanings and those of the native speakers” (p.24).

Fleming (2003) asks how ESL teachers should help newcomers in their classes conceive of themselves as “Canadians”. He argues that most curricula and teaching guidelines conceive of their students as “passive objects to be molded into a monolithic version of Canadian national identity” (p.66), despite the fact that cultural identities change over time and are continually contested. This is especially true of multicultural states, such as Canada, whose policy of multiculturalism itself is being critiqued by critical multiculturalists as being dominated by Anglo-American discourses.

May (1999) highlights the potential of multiculturalism in nation states to unhelpfully essentialize and reify ethnic and cultural differences (p.13), by which a group identified as culturally different is assumed to be internally homogeneous. This can lead to imposing stereotypic notions of common cultural need upon heterogeneous groups with diverse social aspirations and interests (Brah, 1992, in May, 1999). May calls instead for a multicultural/antiracist education which incorporates both a critical and a non-essentialist approach to cultural difference.

A census of ESL and English language citizenship programs in Canada conducted by Derwing and Munro in 1987 revealed that prior to LINC, only a small number of ESL programs incorporated any Canadian content, let alone citizenship concepts. Consequently, one of the immediate needs associated with this new direction in language training was the development of syllabuses and texts that reflect Canadian citizenship values.
Soon after LINC was introduced, the federal government distributed a manual entitled Canada: A Source Book for Orientation, Language and Settlement workers (Government of Canada, 1991), which was widely criticized for its patronizing tone and condescending attitude toward immigrants, including suggestions “not to urinate anywhere else but in private or public washrooms” (p.107). The book was quickly withdrawn, which further underscored the need for good instructional material. After the fiasco with the Source Book, the federal government seemed to withdraw its efforts in this area, leaving it up to the language training programs to determine what constitutes Canadian citizenship values. In the next few years a number of ESL textbooks by Canadian authors were released, however many still lacked substantive Canadian content.

Thomson and Derwing (2004) conducted a survey to determine the degree to which texts used in LINC programs in Canada actually reflect the kind of focus on Canadian values envisioned by the federal government’s new language training policy. They found that out of 67 texts analyzed, 37% were Canadian commercial texts, 17% were government publications and 46% were United States textbooks (Thomson and Derwing, 2004). A significant number of texts that claimed to be Canadian actually had little substantial Canadian content, despite having “Canadian” in the title. Most texts focused on factual information, rather than any abstract concepts, and culture was portrayed superficially, as static. Of the top 10 most popular texts half were determined to contain at least some content related to developing implicit cultural values, while the other half contained none.

The most common complaints expressed by the teachers included in this survey had to do with the lack of material to cover themes implied by LINC and the complex
language of the available material. A number of teachers listed their own uncertainty about the meaning of culture. Generally, respondents incorporated cultural diversity into the curriculum by encouraging their students to compare their cultures with Canadian culture and with those of other learners. An indicative 22% of teachers reported that they did not teach Canadian values at all. Some suggested the students’ low levels of proficiency made teaching cultural content difficult. Thus, abstract concepts such as democracy tended to be dealt with only when students brought up the topics themselves. Several participants suggested cultural issues must be dealt with carefully, as “some students are not ready to listen” (Derwing and Thomson, 2005) and yet, ninety-three percent of the respondents reported that their students found citizenship concepts interesting. In the end, with few guidelines, little resources, and no training available, the majority of LINC teachers seemed to have interpreted their mandate to incorporate Canadian citizenship values in their classes to mean teaching survival English and imparting information they deemed most satisfactory to the students’ needs, which did not always coincide with the students’ views.

Hart and Cumming (1997) did a follow up study of students who graduated from a LINC program in Ontario, which revealed that while most students felt they had benefited from LINC, they would have preferred more instruction on “aspects of Canadian society and its political systems” (p.91). The fact that the interviewed students had graduated from a low intermediate level 3 LINC class, attests to the fact that student competencies and interests are not always in sync with the perceptions of students held by the program coordinators and teachers.
My research explores this theme further, using a case study of two ESL classes (one intermediate and one advanced) for adult immigrants offered through a settlement agency in Toronto. Through textbook analysis, classroom observations, and student interviews, I examine the Canadian content and implicit citizenship values contained in these classes and draw conclusions about the citizenship model for immigrants they consequently promote.
CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

Having decided on the focus of my research, citizenship learning of adult immigrants in ESL programs, I needed to determine the methodology by which I would conduct my research. I started with a literature review that included essays and studies on citizenship education and language training in Canada, and the connection between the two. One of the first things that struck me was the scarcity of immigrant voices. Apart from a short poll asking students for their opinion about the changes in the citizenship process (Joshee and Derwing, 2005) and a follow up study of graduates from a LINC program (Hart and Cumming, 1997), I could find few other records of immigrant experiences.

Consequently, I decided to interview a number of students attending ESL programs to get their perspective on their citizenship learning in class. Existing research into citizenship learning in LINC programs (Derwing & Munro, 1989, Derwing, Munro & Jamieson, 1998, Derwing & Thomson, 2005) has indicated that teachers often list students’ low proficiency levels as the reason for not including more meaningful discussions of citizenship concepts in the classroom. I, therefore, decided to focus on intermediate to advanced ESL classes, to see if citizenship concepts would be approached any differently. I chose to apply to COSTI, a settlement agency in Toronto, for permission to observe classes, as they offered ESL training at higher levels than those offered by LINC programs. My plan was to observe a couple of classes over a two week period, at the end of which I would interview students willing to talk to me about their citizenship learning.
My research would also include textbook analysis through a critical multiculturalism lens of the last three books in the Canadian Concepts series (Berish & Thibadeau, 1997). I chose Canadian Concepts because it was listed as the most popular choice of a textbook in a survey of LINC employees done by Thomson and Derwing in 2004. I chose to analyze the last three books in the series, because they are intended for more advanced learners of English, such as the ones I would observe and interview. I wanted to examine if this meant more Canadian content and richer offerings of citizenship concepts for class discussion. My choice of Canadian Concepts was further solidified after confirming it was used in one of the classes I observed.

The first step was to approach COSTI with my research proposal. COSTI is a settlement agency in Toronto, that’s been serving immigrants for over 50 years. Originally founded by the Italian Canadian community in 1962, it would later open its doors to serve all immigrants in 1969. It is funded by all three levels of government: federal, provincial and municipal and provides social, education and employment services. Education services include language training, either through LINC or ESL programs. Its motto is “integration through education.”

After contacting and getting permission (a signed administrative consent letter) from the site manager to observe two ESL classes in COSTI, it was agreed that I would sit in on the following two classes: Developing Intermediate Fluency, Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) 4-5 (intermediate level) and Oral Communication Skills, CLB 5-8 (advanced level). The focus of the first class was on comprehensive reading and writing, while the other one focused more on developing conversational competence,
with “understanding the culture of everyday Canadian life” listed as one of the desired outcomes.

I spent the first week (3 days) observing the CLB 4-5 class. I was introduced to the class on the first day by the teacher, who then let me explain the purpose of my visit, including my intent to interview willing students about their citizenship learning. During class time, I took notes of the observed class discourse and material used by the teacher. During break times, I chatted informally with teachers, students and administrators alike, getting a feeling for the school. On the last day of my visit, I interviewed the students who agreed to speak with me. Although many more nodded their heads in agreement when I mentioned the interview on the first day of my visit, only seven agreed to be interviewed now.

We found an empty room on the floor and started the proceedings by first reading the informed consent form together out loud and making sure everyone understands the purpose of my research and its intended use. After they signed the consent forms, I asked the students to fill out a short questionnaire with basic background information I later used to compile their profiles. I then conducted a semi-structured group interview with the seven students, reading open ended questions from a list. At first I had students answering the questions in a circle (to ensure everyone was contributing an answer), but later let them respond in any order they preferred, making sure that they each had an opportunity to say something if they wanted. The interview was audio recorded and lasted approximately one hour and a half. The students were not compensated for their time.
The following week, I observed the CLB 5-8 class. As in the first class I observed, I explained the reason for my presence and the purpose of my research, expressing hope that some of them would agree to be interviewed by me about their citizenship learning in class.

All 11 students present on the last day of my visit stayed back after class to be interviewed. I repeated the same procedure I followed with the first class. First, we read the informed consent form together out loud, checking frequently that everyone has a clear understanding of the purpose of my research and its intended use. After signing the consent forms, the students filled out short questionnaires with basic background information I later used to compile their profiles. I then conducted a semi-structured group interview with the eleven students, reading open ended questions from the same list I used with the first groups. This interview, too, was audio recorded and lasted approximately one hour and a half. The students were not compensated for their time.

Of the 18 students interviewed:

- 4 were from Colombia, 3 from Ukraine, 2 from Russia, 2 from China, and the rest from Burundi, Iran, Iraq, Korea, El Salvador, Taiwan and Mexico;
- They ranged in age from 23 to 52 years;
- 9 were male and 8 female;
- They had been living in Canada between 1 month and ten years;
- 13 were landed immigrants, 4 refugee claimants and 1 citizen;
- They had been studying ESL at COSTI between 1 week and 1 year;
- Before coming to Canada, they were occupied as active students (3), graduated students (1), engineers (3), associated professors (1), it specialists (1), teachers
(1), pharmacists (1), airline staff (1), early childhood educators (1), mechanics (1),
government office employees (1), businessmen (1), unspecified occupations (2);

- At the time of the interviews, they were all studying ESL with 1 volunteering, 1
  working, 3 looking after the family, 1 working and looking after the family, and 1
  looking for work, in addition to studying ESL.

Once the interviews were transcribed, I looked for common themes in the student
responses about their citizenship learning in class. I used these as indicators of the
citizenship model most prevalent in their programs. My study was small in size and
limited to one location and, therefore, cannot make claims to represent the citizenship
learning experiences of all immigrants in ESL. However, the wide variety of the
interviewed students’ backgrounds, ages and occupations, along with a balanced
male/female ratio, can serve as an indicator of immigrant perceptions on a wider scale,
not to mention add to the few immigrant voices represented in research.

Adding my textbook analysis and combining both with existing research about the
representation of citizenship concepts in Canadian ESL programs, I draw a conclusion
about the prevalent citizenship model(s) in ESL.
CHAPTER 5: CANADIAN CONCEPTS 4 – 6 ANALYSIS

For the purposes of my research, I chose to look at the Canadian Concepts series (Berish & Thibadeau, 1997), chosen as the most popular textbook by LINC employees surveyed by Thomson and Derwing in 2004. The series consists of 6 books, progressively more complex in content and language, to support the different levels of language learners. I wanted to focus on the last three of the series, as they would be the ones used in intermediate to advanced levels of ESL classes, such as the ones I observed and interviewed for my research.

The series is self-described as containing Canadian content that gives practical information about life in Canada, and community contact tasks to link students to their community. I was interested in examining the Canadian content and any implicit citizenship values contained within. Of the three books, Canadian Concepts 4 (Berish & Thibadeau, 1997) contains the most Canadian content in that each theme is set within a Canadian context describing activities and practices commonly associated with each. The themes in this book include culture shock, earth preservation, food, sports, the four seasons, health, leisure time, family, banking and employment.

We learn that Canadians consume a lot, but also recycle a lot. They enjoy their coffee and sports. Over winter, they hibernate and in the spring, they enjoy meeting friends and neighbours. They call 911 in an emergency, spend 7 and a half hours sleeping on average, divorce in high numbers, save money in a bank and apply to jobs with resumes. While useful for a general orientation about Canadians and life in Canada, the units contain no substantive cultural content.
Other cultures are portrayed with even less depth, with fixed attributes and some patronizing. Thus, Canadian Concepts 4 (Berish & Thibadeau, 1997) opens with a unit on culture shock in which we can read an excerpt from a fictional diary of a Chinese girl who writes that: “The biggest problem was changing from my Oriental ways to new western ways. At home in Shanghai we always slept together in the same bed. Here my sister in law said I should get used to my own room. I felt very lonely and confused” (p.4). And, in the unit about food, readers are reminded that “coffee is not a drink for children” (p.31).

Canadian Concepts 5 (Berish & Thibadeau, 1997) covers the same theme with an international food quiz, which asks which people believe you should accept food only after it is offered three times? The correct answer is the Koreans. Interestingly, the discussion questions at the end of each unit offer a very different approach to discussing the unit themes. Students are asked what they would do in particular situations and social contexts, thus creating a basis for cultural comparisons and introductions of Canadian perspectives, beyond the prescriptive dos and don’ts lists.

Ironically, the higher the level of the book, the less Canadian content it contains. Canadian Concepts 5 opens with a chapter called “Canada: Who are the people?” The answer goes no further than to provide us with statistics concerning the height and weight of the average Canadian, the percentage of singles, age at marriage; number of kids; hours at sleep or behind the wheel, etc. We also learn that many Canadians feel a sense of civic responsibility which extends to the majority participating in recycling programs, holding the government accountable for pollution control and voting. The remaining units, covering themes such as food, fashion, animals, crime, superstitious beliefs,
medical practice, advertising and working contain very little or no Canadian content at all.

Similarly, Canadian Concepts 6 (Berish & Thibadeau, 1997) contains only one unit that refers to Canadian identity, indicating it is shaped by the geography and climate. A group discussion is suggested to define Canadian culture, however the questions navigating the discussion primarily revolve around the perceived differences between Canadians and Americans. The rest of the book’s 10 units contain interesting topics for discussion, however only two other contain some Canadian content, while the rest use primarily American texts to discuss (North) American issues.

The only other references to Canadians or Canada are included in short “Canadian Capsules” dispersed throughout the units in all three books, including information such as: “The three top expenditures by an average Canadian family are personal taxes, shelter, and food” (Canadian Concepts 4, Berish & Thibadeau, 1997, p.113), “Canadians buy a lot of soup in packages, cans, and cups with instant noodles (Canadian Concepts 5, Berish & Thibadeau, 1997, p.128), and a few, in Canadian Concepts 6, that speak to the superior national character of Canadians in comparison to the Americans, including: “In a recent poll, nearly three quarters of Canadians said they believe Canadian culture is different from the culture of the US. They said that Canadian history, geography, political systems, and treatment of minorities contribute to those differences” (Canadian Concepts 6, Berish & Thibadeau, 1997, p.15) and, additionally “Many Canadians think of themselves as tolerant, peace-loving, and less violent than their American neighbours” (p.20).
All three books display a Eurocentric focus, even when they claim to be discussing international practices. Thus, the unit on sports and fitness in Canadian Concepts 4 quotes the karate teacher as saying: “At the YMCA we have six belts before black – white, yellow, orange, green, blue, and brown. Originally there were just white and black belts, but people – especially in North America and Europe – want to feel progression, so the lower belts were introduced as stepping stones toward the black” (p.49).

Canadian Concepts 5 introduces a unit as a discussion of different medical practices in the world, but the text focuses just on Western Europe; France, Germany, England and the US. The text quotes the science writer who compared the medical practices: “In Payer’s belief, the aggressiveness of American medicine may mirror a history of heroic action, frontier mentality, and can-do attitude” (p.94).

At the same time, Canadian Concepts 4 mentions the Iroquois with one sentence in the unit about sports, to say they made skates out of animal bones and leather. Canadian Concepts 6 gives more space to the Inuit, listing words they use to describe snow. Canadian Concepts 5 makes no mention of the Canada’s First Nations at all. The community tasks proposed in Canadian Concepts 4 and 5 are not really community oriented at all, as few demand any contact with ‘the community’ and others are simply awkward. Examples of suggested community tasks include solitary activities such as looking up information in the library and observing what brands consumers are buying in grocery shops.

In conclusion, there is very little substantive Canadian content in the Canadian Concepts series, and less of it the higher the level of the books. The citizenship content
that is included does not go beyond presenting very general information about Canada and Canadians and blanket statements about other cultures. While good for language practice and acquiring general knowledge about Canada, the themes included in the series do not contribute to the development of a substantive understanding of Canadian citizenship values.
CHAPTER 6: CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

In March of 2009, I spent two weeks at COSTI, a settlement agency in Toronto, observing two separate ESL classes for refugees and newcomers. The first week, I observed a class called: Developing Intermediate Fluency, Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) 4-5 (intermediate level), with a focus on developing reading comprehension and writing skills. The following week, I observed a class called Oral Communication Skills, CLB 5-8 (advanced level), with a focus on developing conversational competence and understanding of the culture of everyday Canadian life.

The theme covered in the first class I visited was housing. The material used to cover the theme included a reading about “Sick Building Syndrome” or indoor pollution referring to one such case in California, and another reading called the Urban Crises about Americans and Canadians increasingly moving out of busy urban areas to avoid the noise, pollution and crowds. I was not able to determine whether the readings came from a Canadian or American textbook. Additionally, the students listened to a tape recording of two ‘friends’ discussing the pros and cons of living in the suburbs versus living in the city. This was accompanied by many grammar exercises.

The class I visited next covered the topic of employment. The material used included a chapter on job interviewing from a Canadian textbook, including tips on how to leave a good first impression and recognize and respond to illegal questions. Students also listened to a tape and filled out many handouts with work related vocabulary. Teachers from both classes mentioned they commonly covered the following themes in their classes: housing, banking, shopping, family, law (rules and regulations), employment, socializing with friends, etc.
A teaching assistant showed me her lesson plan for a class about fitting in with the average Canadian. She showed me the handouts she uses in that class and I recognized them from Canadian Concepts 5.

The students in both classes seemed acutely aware of the importance of learning English and many approached grammar and vocabulary exercises with determination, if not enthusiasm. In one of the classes observed, the students were practicing the use of English adverbs. To reinforce the lesson, the teacher asked them to write a paragraph comparing or contrasting life in Toronto with life back home, for example: “In Toronto, I always go to sleep at 11:00 pm. In Kiev, I never went to bed before 12:00pm.” Everyone was so focused on using the correct parts of speech and grammar, they paid little attention to the potential for critical discussion posed by the question.

In the second class I observed, the students were learning vocabulary for employment by listening to a tape, which talked about layoffs and difficulties finding a job. At one point, the teacher asked the class if this didn’t remind them of 2009? She was referring to the recession, but students didn’t seem interested in discussing it further. They seemed eager to go back to the listening exercise. As in the first class I visited, students gave preference to language exercises over critical discussions when these interfered with their language learning, which they explained as critical for their survival in the interview with me later that week.

Nevertheless, they were very eager to learn about Canadian culture and society (beyond factual information about the history, geography, banking and shopping) and responded best to topics borrowed from ‘real life’, visibly perking up any time the teachers made any comments about anything ‘real’. For example, after listening sedately
to a tape in which two friends discussed the pros and cons of life in the suburbs vs. life in the cities, the whole class perked up when the teacher asked them why it was important to them to live in the city, answering in chorus: ‘For work’. They laughed heartily at their teacher’s comment about people driving jeeps in the city: ‘There are no mountains in Ontario. Why do you need a jeep?’ and seemed to really enjoy listening to his stories about traffic jams in the summer, with people escaping the city for cottage country.

Beyond enjoying their teachers’ anecdotes about daily life in Canada, the students seemed intent on learning more about all other aspects of life in Canada. In one of the classes, the teacher brought in the newspaper (Toronto Star) and asked the students to form groups and choose an article to present and further discuss with the rest of the class. One group chose an article that dealt with the tenth anniversary of the creation of Nunavut and how little progress was made since then.

Another group chose an article calling on Ontario’s Primer Minister McGuinty to exert some control over the high earnings of groups such as TTC employees and jail guards at a time when so many people with university degrees were getting laid off. A third group chose to discuss an article about a Toronto musician teaching school children to stand up to racism using arts and music, and the fourth group chose the business section to talk about environmentally friendly initiatives in the industry. There was not much time to discuss any of the articles in depth, as the time allotted to the exercise did not extend past lunch hour, which was fast approaching, as students took a while to read the articles and look up words they didn’t understand.

Additionally, each group took their time presenting their article, as this was also seen as a valuable exercise in public speaking. With only a few minutes left for
discussion, the class asked lots of questions about Nunavut, which many have never heard of before, condemned racism, and engaged in a short, but lively debate around whether jobs should be paid according to the responsibilities or education required to perform them. The article concerning green initiatives in business got the least response, likely in part because it was time for lunch.

The teachers in both classes were not unresponsive to discussing controversial topics. When asked about whether they covered topics such as racism or the underemployment of immigrants, the teacher who used the newspaper exercise said she wandered into more abstract topics such as religion, politics or morality when the class came across them in newspapers, which she brought in once a week for them. However, she liked to balance heavy with light topics, so she also covered literature with her class, including short stories, adapted stories and mysterious stories; material that would teach her students the nuances of the language and the humour.

The other teacher replied that he talked to his students about the history of immigration and discrimination against certain groups, but that he also wanted to look at things with a more positive attitude. He said he talked about discrimination when renting, but didn’t talk about employment any more, ‘because it got too depressing’. He mentioned students had other resources for that, a counselor, etc. His primary goal was the language, teaching them the grammar to speak, listen and write, because he felt that without those skills students wouldn’t be able to find work. He said he tried to keep a continuation of focus.

However, when asked about what he thought was the most important thing for his students to learn, the same teacher said it was to feel comfortable, that it wasn’t even
about the language. He spoke of students being lonely at first and said they would learn
the language anyway, but being in a place with peers in the same situation was important.
He talked about having to respect students. The other teacher said the most important
thing for the students to learn was to develop confidence, not be shy and not be afraid to
make mistakes.

In conclusion, both teachers seemed genuinely concerned for their students’ well
being and sympathetic to their needs (one of the teachers was an immigrant himself,
while the other was the daughter of immigrant parents). Their teaching practices and
choices of themes reflected their beliefs about what was most necessary and useful for the
students. Although not averse to discussing more controversial aspects of Canadian
citizenship with their classes, their primary focus was on providing them with a solid
language training (through various means, including newspapers), general and practical
information about Canada, and emotional encouragement that will set them on their path
to finding work.

On their part, the students were keen on learning the language and equally eager
to know more about all aspects of Canadian citizenship, which they demonstrated with
their choices of themes for discussion, as well as by an increased interest and classroom
participation any time any real life comments were made by their teachers, whom they
clearly liked.
CHAPTER 7: STUDENT INTERVIEWS

I interviewed 18 students from the two classes observed (7 from one, and 11 from the other). Of the 18 students interviewed, 15 (83, 3%) had been living in Canada less than or up to three years. Most had been in classes for an even shorter period of time, spanning from 2 days in the case of one student to one year in the case of three students. 66.6% had been in class less than or up to 6 months. Some had been in LINC programs before coming to COSTI.

All students interviewed were keenly aware of the importance of learning English in order to ‘survive’. They felt that learning English would improve their chances of finding work, continuing their education or reaching the professional status they held back home. Learning English was also seen as a way to learn about the society, although some were also aware that learning the language alone wouldn’t necessarily change their lives over night. As one student observed:

*I just came to Canada and I want to improve my English to a fluent level and I will study English every time to get a fluent level. Well, after that, I will get everything!* (laughs) (Joel, 21, from Russia)

When asked about the topics covered in class, the students listed themes that combined general information about Canada’s history, geography and politics, and practical information about daily life. Students learned about the creation of Canada, the Confederation, the Aboriginal people ‘who came first’, the French and the English, the war, rebels, ‘even the conflict between Quebec and Ontario.’
Geography was covered in detail and included presentations on different provinces and regions. Students learned about parks and ‘where to go on vacation when you have big money’. They spoke of multiculturalism and different communities, and learned about Canadian law and human rights. Here, a student recalls what she learned about history:

*I know that many people from Ukraine came to Canada in the beginning of last century. And many of them live in Saskatchewan and Manitoba because there are many fields. I know that Canada, especially Toronto is multicultural city and this country is very friendly for people who suffer from drought, from war. This country invited many people and help them to live.* (Anna, 52, from Ukraine)

Looking for employment was covered in detail and included advice on how to search for labour market information, make lists of prospective employers, write cover letters and resumes, and perform well at job interviews. This was seen as very useful by students who spoke of big differences in looking for work between their countries and Canada. Students learned about housing, banking, Canada’s educational system, community centres and social services for immigrants. This, too, was seen by the students as useful and practical information, which they could use in their daily lives.

*I sign my contract with my landlord and all these questions will be much easier for me if I studied that before.* (Russ, 48, from Ukraine)

Sometimes, they talked about Canadian lifestyle and daily news from the newspapers brought in by their teacher(s) or in response to questions they posed to the
teachers. The majority of students found the topics covered in class very useful. They helped them with practical issues such as renting an apartment, doing banking, and looking for work. Learning about the climate was useful, too. Having this information, coupled with an increased vocabulary and mastery of grammar, also had a positive impact on their confidence in being able to communicate and perform well at work, be more engaged in their children’s lives and schools, or continue their education.

_**I feel more comfortable, more confident to speak in front of group of persons, I learn more vocabulary for my life, for find a job, for my social life, for everything.**_ (Juan Carlos, 43, from Mexico)

_It helps because when I get a job, I need to write a letters, I need to read and understand the topic sentence. It help because when I go to school, my children school, I need to understand the homework...When I read with my children I need to know what is the topic sentence._ (Marta, 38, from Colombia)

Some felt the classes were useful because they felt less lonely and isolated.

_**I know I’m not only immigrant here, but I feel always alone, beside my family, so now I don’t feel that much lonely feeling.**_ (Cindy, 31, from Taiwan)

_**Here I live alone, so, finish school and go home, I always alone, I don’t speak English, ... sometimes I speak Korean, just Korean, I don’t speak_
When asked about topics they would have liked to learn about, which haven’t been covered in class, the majority of the students said they would have liked to learn more about Canadian culture; the commonly accepted etiquette; the unwritten rules, “correct” way of saying things. They wanted to know Canadians’ perspectives on things and ways of communicating. Some suggested a “school of culture” be added to the language courses.

Sometimes, I feel, I just came, alright? And I don’t’ know a lot of rules in Canada, because it’s absolutely different culture for me… So, I wish to know about culture, about how to, about how will Canadians think about it, how to say to somebody about something. (Joel, 21, from Russia)

I wish that I will receive that information (about culture), because that is most maybe important for have a good communication with people in this country. Because grammar is understandable that they should tell us, because is a school of English, but this is a different school of culture, so we hope that this will be in the future, like addition to that language course. (Russ, 48, from Ukraine)

I want to know more about Native Canadian, their point of view, the idea they think about Canada, this way I can learn more the concept or the position (of
Canada) in the world economy or politically, yeah, the whole idea about this.

(Cindy, 31, from Taiwan)

Students talked about the difficulties of getting to know Canadians, of breaking into their circle. They wanted to learn how to interact with them.

I want to know more about all the culture, about the all the issues, like culture, laws, but one important issues is how the people maintain their relationships between the citizens... (Ronal, 38, from Colombia)

My opinion is for the immigrants is too difficult to involve in the Canadian community or Canadian circle and is good to know how to, we can involve with the Canadian people. (Juan Carlos, 43, from Mexico)

In addition to culture, students wanted to learn more about all aspects of life in Canada: politics, society, economy, geography, history, elections, which they felt would facilitate their ‘merging’ with the society.

I want to learn a little bit more about Canada in all aspects, political, social, economical and geography. (Juan Carlos, 43, from Mexico)

Uh, I want to know about political, like, election, how to elect and how to system, because the vocabulary it’s harder to learn and the structure is maybe different from our own country. (Cindy, 31, from Taiwan)
Well, for me as a newcomer here ...to merge myself with society... I need to know many things about Canadian society and about the Canadian heritage itself, so it can work with me and my procedure working for job and establishing a new life here... so it will be easier for me, like, to get all these things from the school while I’m studying English, so that it can make the time shorter for me. (Morattel, 38, from Iraq)

The students’ eagerness to know more about all aspects of Canadian citizenship was no more evident than during the classroom exercise which asked students to present articles from the daily newspaper for classroom discussion. The students chose politically and socially engaged articles that dealt with the stagnation of Nunavut, racism in public schools, controversial wage distributions in Ontario and green businesses.

Additionally, students wanted to know more about safety, police, childcare subsidies, affordable legal aid, and the medical system. Some wanted more information about the educational system, to find out what degrees would lead to what career opportunities. They wanted more information about finding jobs, starting a business, internships, and volunteering possibilities, although they also pointed out that they didn’t think that was the responsibility of the school. In terms of language training, many felt ESL programs couldn’t be any better. However, they weren’t as enthusiastic about the immigration system and programs put in place to facilitate their entry into the job market.

Everything that concerns English program for immigrants is great. So, about this program, I can only tell good things. But,...I’m looking forward to changing immigration system of Canada, because it is very challenging when you came and
you don’t have any information about how things work and when your
expectation that you can find job easily and Canada needs you…and then...
people have a stress, and depressed and it’s a huge frustration… I need Canadian
experience, ok. I want to unpaid placement in this country that I can gain this
Canadian experience and, for example, know the new equipment and the
laboratory, I agree do this, but no program that can provide me. I went through
three or four programs about job searching, about internship. I’m in program, in
Career Bridge program and it’s been five months it’s still nothing in chemistry.
Nothing. They can do nothing. Why this program is exist for immigrants? (Larisa,
38, from Russia)

Students were asked if they felt better prepared for life from attending classes at
COSTI. The majority responded that attending the program increased their confidence
levels.

Well, I think … I wouldn’t say (I felt) equal, but I would say partly active, because
before this I am afraid to speak, I can speak to a Canadian, we can have
conversation for five minutes, but if longer that, I will feel short of words to
express, but now I wouldn’t say I can have longer conversations, but I would have
more confidence and more willingness to express my feelings. So, I would say it’s
partly. (Cindy, 31, from Taiwan)

It brings confidence. And you can understand and not with perfect grammar, but
you can speak, you can explain what you want and talk to people. It is, yes, now I
am feeling better about even my job searching or something else. Yes, it’s an essential thing. (Larisa, 38, from Russia)

After 5 months in this school, I’m not ready for life yet, but I feel myself more confident than before, because I know what I didn’t know before. It’s very useful. (Helen, 45, from Ukraine)

A student felt language schools helped to make you a productive member of the society by giving you the language skills to get into college or get a job, but that the rest was up to you. Immigrants, according to her, couldn’t expect to get everything on a silver platter.

These schools...help with talking and writing, so that when you go to school...so that we can become useful for this society, that’s what they’re looking for...But if you pretend they are going to teach you everything, you need to get out and source yourself. They don’t want to just give you everything. You come here, you are an immigrant, you study well, so keep doing this, so that as a professional you will find a good job, you will be useful, you know? (Brenda, 29, from Colombia).

Another student felt it helped that the school organized events, such as the education fair that happened during the week of my visit to the school, saving them the time from doing the research themselves. Also, on site counselors were a source of
encouragement. The school program, it seems, was primarily helpful in developing the skills and confidence to look for work.

They have different events, like today, and one time come to us the counselor, she teach us a little bit how to prepare resume, how to do that, how many resumes you should have and they push us a little bit: Don’t sit down! You should be active! You can do it! Everyone! Who are you, engineer? You will be good! I don’t know is it very good or how it help me, but that stimulate me...I think, okay, there is a possibility, there is another possibility. (Russ, 48, from Ukraine)

Students were asked about what they had learned about their place, as an immigrant, in Canadian society. Those among the interviewed students who have been in Canada over a year felt some disillusionment, primarily associated with the difficulties of integrating into the society, and ‘the system’ for not recognizing their work experiences and diplomas.

We have learned it’s very difficult and maybe is some people think this is a new Canadian dream, but it’s totally wrong. This is the real life Canadian. It’s very, very hard to survive and live here with or without experience, with or without degrees or diplomas. For newcomers, the start is very, very hard. (Juan Carlos, 43, from Mexico)
When you came the first things you should be explained according to your qualification and your capacity, what can you do in this country and your first steps, because you are as a kitten who just came to this world... You are nothing in this country without Canadian education. So, I don’t know, in Canada, chemistry is another subject than in other countries? Why they think that I know nothing about chemistry in Canada? (Larisa, 38, from Russia)

Most of experience put immigrants in the position, for example, kind of like children. Like, we, as learning language is a process for enter a new society, along learning language we are learning how to live. So, in some way psychology, we feel like we are like children again. We are learning in every direction. So, that’s why the frustration coming from, cause we are not children anymore. And so, it gives us a pressure and frustration, yeah. So, I would say, feel like children when outsider to see immigrants. We are children of society, new immigrants. But I also, I want to know the Canadian how they view us. Are they feel the same way or they, you know... (Cindy, 31, from Taiwan)

And today is difficult, too, because my degree not is accepted in Canada and I know I need, I must learn English very well. (Celia, 38, from El Salvador)

Nevertheless, they also expressed optimism about their future, basing their faith more on their positive impression of Canadians as people than on the system in place to support them. The ones who had been in Canada the shortest were most optimistic.
I’m very optimistic about my place in this society, because it’s country of immigrants and the Canadian, they are very friendly in their majority. (Larisa, 38, from Russia)

Every time in COSTI I feel I have possibility to do something in Canada and I can participate to Canadian situation. I don’t know how to explain it, but it feels very friendly people and very open minded people and society in Canada is very open and I can to participate and I can go to university if I want to go to university, I can choose whatever I want in Canada, I can choose any lifestyle and nobody can say ‘Hey, you’re doing something wrong, I don’t like it. We have rules, these rules never change.’ Yeah, because I came to this country to get freedom, freedom in my mind, freedom of my lifestyle. (Joel, 21, from Russia)

Student responses indicate they are both satisfied and grateful for their ESL program in terms of providing them with tools for survival (language and practical knowledge) and general information about Canada. However, they do not seem to view this information as providing much insight into Canadian culture, as many suggest they would like to learn much more about all aspects of Canadian society, in particular the ways in which Canadians think and interact. In addition to disputing views among some ESL workers about the immigrants’ readiness to ‘listen’ at this stage of their integration, these sentiments also imply a desire for more substantive ESL content.
Additionally, students voice their frustration with an immigration system that awards them points for their education and skills, but provides no infrastructural support for their employment once they arrive. The accent, it seems, is for immigrants to survive, not thrive.
CHAPTER 8: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

My textbook analysis, classroom observations and interviews with students indicate that the focus of the ESL program at COSTI is on teaching immigrants survival skills, a set of language skills and general information about Canada to help them function and work in the society. Although the mandate of ESL programs in Canada has formally expanded, since the introduction of LINC in the early 1990s, to include the introduction of cultural values to immigrants as a means of enhancing their integration into society, I saw little evidence of this kind of citizenship education taking place at COSTI. In addition to developing language skills, the classes focused on teaching the students practical information and facts about history and geography, government institutions, and the law, in effect, promoting citizenship as status.

Students also learned about multiculturalism as a part of Canadian identity, but more as a testament to the image of Canada as a historically welcoming nation, rather than a starting point for a meaningful discussion about diversity. Learning about civic virtues may have happened indirectly, from superficial references to Canadian citizenship values from available textbooks and from looking to their teachers for models of citizenship. Students were least prepared for citizenship as agency, with the accent being, to borrow from Westheimer and Kahne (2004), on acting responsibly (recycling or getting a job, in this case), not questioningly (or asking why that was so hard).

The students were not unhappy with their survival skills training. They were keenly aware of the need to learn English in order to ‘survive’ in Canada, found practical use for the information they got in classes about issues such as renting, banking, and
looking for work, and enjoyed learning about general facts about their new country with their peers in a caring and supportive environment. Their length of stay in Canada, which for more than 80% of the students interviewed was less or up to three years, would have indicated, according to some research (Derwing & Thomson, 2005), that their needs and interests would not exceed beyond the training they were getting in these classes. This belief would have been based on the assumption that immigrants are oriented on survival and don’t have the time or language capacity to focus on deeper citizenship concepts. However, the students interviewed expressed a deep interest in learning more about Canadian citizenship values, which they felt would further help their integration into Canadian society.

The teachers, as we have seen, were not averse to including more meaningful conversations about citizenship. Both teachers frequently commented on life beyond the classroom and one of them indirectly encouraged students to raise such questions by bringing in the newspaper to class. These particular two teachers, then, did not avoid critical discussions of citizenship in Canada, however there were structural and personal limitations in place that prevented more frequent or deeper analysis of the topics students raised.

Structural challenges referred to curricula, resource and time restraints. Both LINC and ESL classes follow Canadian Language Benchmarks (1996), which prescribe the language goals that need to be met at any particular level of language training. These are then incorporated within curricula containing themes to be covered in class. The curricula are normally provided by the school boards, which provide the language training. Although it didn’t seem the Catholic District School Board (which delivered the
ESL program at COSTI) was too rigid or controlling in regard to the teachers’ use of the CLB and its curriculum (The Adult ESL Curriculum Guidelines, 1999), both teachers seemed to be following a thematic approach to lesson planning based on CLB and the curriculum. Interestingly, although citizenship is listed as a suggested topic for all levels of language learners, it is the only topic without a suggested lesson plan or list of material. Although, as Auerbach (1995) points out, any theme can ‘problematized’ for a more meaningful discussion and learning, it did not seem that either of the teachers were doing that.

Thomson and Derwing’s study (2005) revealed the majority of textbooks used in LINC programs contained very little Canadian content, much less Canadian citizenship values. This was verified by the material used to cover the housing topic in the first class I observed, containing useful vocabulary and grammar exercises, but little Canadian content or references to Canadian cultural values. My analysis of the Canadian Concepts series, named as the most popular textbook by LINC employees surveyed in Thomson and Derwing’s study (2005) and also confirmed to be used in the COSTI ESL program attests to this further.

Consequently, even if the teachers wanted to cover more substantial Canadian content in their classes, and the two I spoke to were not against it, the need to look for and adapt such material (for lack of many textbooks or kits they could refer to) would likely deter them from doing it, primarily due to a lack of time. With each course lasting only two months and a list of prescribed topics to cover and language goals to achieve, there really was very little time to venture much ‘outside of the box’.
Personal reasons for not engaging more in critical citizenship teaching had to do with issues of responsibility and teachers’ own perceptions of what role ESL programs play in the lives of the students. When asked about whether they covered topics such as racism, underemployment of immigrants, etc, one of the teachers mentioned wandering into more abstract topics such as religion, politics or morality when coming across them in newspapers, but also mentioned using other resources for developing students’ language skills. In other words, using newspaper articles was seen primarily as a language exercise, not one of developing an understanding for Canadian cultural values.

The other teacher replied that he talked to his students about the history of immigration and discrimination against certain groups, but that he also wanted to look at things with a more positive attitude, mentioning students had other resources for that (counselors) and his own focus on language training. In other words, discussion of ‘controversial topics’ was seen as a distraction from language learning. Certainly, language learning was also the primary goal of the students, despite or in addition to their interest in citizenship topics, so in truth, both teachers were doing what was expected of them with the resources and time they had available.

However, there is evidence in the field to show that one needn’t lose focus or take away from the desired language learning outcomes by introducing a more critical approach to teaching and, conversely, a more meaningful experience of learning. Auerbach (1995) gives an excellent example of a group of students offered the choice between writing a response to a quote from an immigrant worker like themselves or to a simplified idealized story about a day at work. The students overwhelmingly chose to respond to the first quote, because it was “real and true” (p.23).
Furthermore, Auerbach (1995) states that the quality of the language in the students’ written responses were significantly more sophisticated than those done in response to textbook exercises. Grabe and Stoller (in Thomson and Derwing, 2005), confirm that a content-based approach to language teaching not only facilitates language acquisition, but it simultaneously results in content learning. Moreover, Byram and Risager (1999) and Genesee (1998, cited in Thomson and Derwing, 2005) write that authentic content can contribute to the development of socially and culturally appropriate language forms as decontextualized language input cannot. The students in the classes I observed sought out and participated more eloquently in discussions about topics that were meaningful and relevant to them, and responded with increased interest to any references to real life.

If there is evidence to show that critical language learning won’t be lost with a more meaningful approach to teaching citizenship concepts, what then stands in the way of doing it? We have seen that there is an obvious lack of structural support, in the sense of time and adequate curricula and textbooks to support such a citizenship education. Personal views relating to the role and responsibility of ESL programs in view of citizenship education also play an important part in keeping citizenship learning at a superficial level. However, there may be deeper, ideological reasons for this.

One of the obstacles in developing adequate material and teaching practices for teaching citizenship concepts or cultural values has been attributed to the difficulty of defining culture in general and Canadian culture in particular. Ilieva (2000) distinguishes between traditional views of culture, which tend to view culture as a national trait, a stable core set of values, beliefs, customs and behaviours (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952,
in Ilieva, 2000) and more contemporary views of culture (Rosaldo, 1993, McCarthy, 1998, in Ilieva, 2000), which are critical of conceptualizing culture in ethnic terms, pointing to the fact that aside from “boundaries of officially recognized cultural units, there are also less formal intersections, such as those of gender, age, status, and distinctive life experiences” (Rosaldo, 1993, in Ilieva, 2000, p.29).

Based on existing research, the general trend in ESL programs with a citizenship education mandate, also observed in the COSTI ESL program, has been to impart facts about national culture and fixed sets of behaviour, in line with the traditionalist approach of teaching culture. In 1918, Anderson called on teachers to “get acquainted with these people of diverse nationalities and interpret to them what our Canadian citizenship means” (Anderson, 1918, p.135). In 1992, the federal government called on LINC teachers to teach immigrants Canadian cultural values. While Anderson hoped for the assimilation of immigrants, the stated goal of LINC was their social integration. Both, however, used similar ‘teaching’ strategies, and many ESL programs still do.

There may be several explanations for this ‘history repeating,’ ranging from a lack of leadership or coordination between the government and the language training providers (Burnaby, 1992b) to more worrying interpretations, which recognize ideological motivations for the perpetuation of this situation. Freire (1985) argues that all educational practice implies an ideological stance, serving either to perpetuate existing social relations or to challenge them.

Auerbach (1995) echoes this statement, claiming that pedagogical choice about curriculum development, content, material, classroom processes, and language use, although appearing to be informed by apolitical professional considerations, are, in fact,
inherently ideological in nature, with significant implications for learners’ socioeconomic roles (p.9). Bullivant (1995) suggests that educators too often focus on debates over “culture” that ignore socioeconomic inequality and class issues. It is in this context that the notion of multiculturalism is contested for perceiving culture in oversimplified terms, reducing cross cultural interactions to tolerance (of different food, dress or music, interpreted as representative of a culture), instead of promoting meaningful understanding and addressing structural inequalities, such as racism. This view of multiculturalism is attributed to critical multiculturalism, which is often tied (and occasionally at odds) with anti-racist pedagogy.

Multiculturalism has been a state policy in Canada since 1971, introduced by Prime Minister Trudeau’s government in response to increased immigration, the need to develop a distinct national identity, and the disconnect expressed by immigrant groups about the designation of French and English as official languages (Esses & Gardner, 1996, in Fleming, 2003). Promoting cultural pluralism, in other words, was seen as a means of building national harmony and unity.

Stephen May (1999), however, writes about the ‘depressing disjuncture between the high minded ambitions of multicultural education and the reality of school life for minority (and majority) students’ (p.1). May writes that “multicultural education has had a largely negligible impact to date on the life chances of minority students, the racialized attitudes of majority students, the inherent monoculturalism of school practice, and the wider processes of power relations and inequality which underpin all these” (p.1). Although May is referring to school children, if we were to relate these findings to the impact of ESL programs in this study (and others) on the lives of adult immigrant
students we would find some differences and many similarities. The life chances of adult
immigrant students, especially in terms of finding employment, seem to be much
improved with the acquisition of language skills and a general orientation to life in
Canada obtained in the ESL programs with a citizenship education mandate. However,
what is also evident from research in the field is that the inherent ESL school practice
does not have much impact on the wider processes of power relations and inequality, in
the sense of promoting full social and political integration of immigrants, much less on
the racialized attitudes of the rest of the nation.

This leads us to the question of what more can ESL programs do, but more
importantly, what more can the federal government do? ESL programs need to teach
immigrants the language and they are doing this very successfully, according to the
students themselves. They are also doing a good job at presenting students with practical
information relevant to their immediate needs. They can continue to do this successfully
by incorporating more meaningful Canadian content in their teaching material, which
would further enhance their students’ learning of both language and citizenship concepts,
thus further helping their integration into Canadian society.

Although not many, there have been recent additions to the Canadian ESL
textbook collection which not only contain substantive Canadian content, but also present
it in a creative manner, so as to induce a more engaged and critical learning of Canadian
citizenship concepts and values. One such book is Being Canadian (2004), by Judy
Cameron and Tracey Derwing, which uses a content based approach to learning ESL and
focuses on ‘contemporary Canadian issues as well as geography, history, government,
rights and responsibilities, showing a relationship among each of these areas and the
students’ own lives’. Although not a textbook, Brian D. Morgan’s book, The ESL Classroom (1998), provides good ideas for teaching, critical practice, and community development. Morgan’s central principle is that ‘ESL theories, material, and approaches should be relevant to the social, political, and cultural conditions of each group of students’.

However, incorporating this material and teaching practices into ESL programs cannot be left only to the good will or creativity of the ESL administrators and teachers, as important as they are. The government, which itself has initiated the policy of incorporating citizenship values in ESL programs, needs to provide infrastructural support for its realization, if it sincerely hopes to assist immigrant integration by it. This would mean providing the financial and logistical support for the publishing and distribution of teaching material that includes meaningful Canadian content, which it has historically avoided.

More importantly, this would include the training of ESL employees, which would incorporate a reconceived notion of the immigrants and their needs and capacities to integrate into Canadian society beyond requiring just training in survival skills to get a job. Beyond ESL, an introduction of critical multiculturalism in the citizenship education of the rest of the society would make a significant contribution to an improved understanding of immigration, more meaningful intercultural communication and, as a consequence, smoother immigrant integration.

Critics argue that erroneous assumptions about immigrants’ needs mask a hidden agenda, one of preparing learners for subordination (whether or not this is intentional) (Auerbach, 1995). While I wouldn’t go as far as claiming that the federal government’s
grand plan is the subordination of immigrants, it’s lack of involvement in ESL programs, beyond giving vague guidelines for the incorporation of cultural values in classes to assist the integration of immigrants, indicates their tacit agreement with the spontaneously developed focus of ESL programs on developing language skills and practical knowledge necessary to enter the workforce, leaving the integration part for the immigrants to figure out for themselves. In so doing, it is supporting a model of citizenship for immigrants which does not promote their active engagement and participation in society (citizenship as agency), but rather their legal entitlement to participate in its economy (citizenship as status).
CHAPTER 9: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the early days of ancient Greece to the present days, citizenship and citizenship education have been interpreted and reinterpreted to fit the dominant ideologies of nation states and, in the recent times, transnational political and economic powers. Historically, these interpretations have moved between the conservative and progressive extremes, promoting either passive or active citizenship. The four conceptions of citizenship identified at the beginning of this study: citizenship as status, identity, civic virtues and agency can also be interpreted from either side of these extremes.

Citizenship education for immigrants has changed its focus from assimilation in 1918, to integration after World War II, to participation in the 1980s – on paper. In reality, any initiatives for a more meaningful citizenship education, primarily in the shape of more critical and engaging teaching material, could not be implemented due to a lack of support from the government, which remained primarily concerned with language training for immigrant employability. With the introduction of LINC in the 1990s, the government announced a shift in focus from employment to cultural integration through language acquisition.

Teaching cultural values as part of citizenship education is not an uncommon approach in classical immigrant nation-states. Parallel to reflecting citizen diversity, immigrant nation states are concerned with establishing national unity. Countries such as Canada, Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom have dealt with this challenge in similar fashion, by first adopting a model of assimilation, replacing it with
multiculturalism by the 1970s, and giving way to a model of social cohesion in the 1990s. All of these models, however, invoke loyalty to nation states through acquisition of the official language(s) and adoption of shared cultural values.

While few deny the link between culture and language, many ESL workers see challenges associated with it. Vague guidelines and limited resources account for a lack of confidence, combined with some prejudice, as to what and how much immigrants should and could learn. Those ESL teachers who do employ more critical, engaging methods of citizenship education in their classrooms, do so on their own initiative, fuelled by their own enthusiasm and beliefs. There is no structural support in place.

My textbook analysis confirms previous findings about a lack of substantive Canadian content or citizenship concepts in course material available to ESL programs. Classroom observations show students respond best to topics of interest and relevance to them. Teachers are skillful and caring, but do not engage in purposeful critical analysis of society’s anomalies. Instead, they cover a prescribed list of grammar points, vocabulary and topics of conversation, which include many general facts about life in Canada. The student interviews reveal students are eager to learn the language, but equally interested in acquiring in depth knowledge about all aspects of Canadian society.

How do these findings reflect on the citizenship learning of adult immigrants in ESL programs? Which concept of citizenship prevails in the classrooms? Evidence from this study indicates that citizenship education in ESL classrooms typically seems to gravitate toward the conservative, passive extreme, as students are presented with facts about life in Canada without engaging in deeper discussions or challenging any aspects of it.
In terms of the four concepts of citizenship, it seems all four are present to some degree, however the emphasis is on citizenship as status. This is evident from the list of topics students mentioned covered in class, including facts about national history and geography, government institutions and the law (with compromising parts excluded). The focus is on developing knowledge reflected in the citizenship tests immigrants must take in order to become formal members of Canada. Consequently, the students are learning the “official story” of the nation’s development promoted by governments through citizenship guide books.

The concept of citizenship as identity has been present in the ESL classroom in many forms, either with a focus on assimilation or, recently, a focus on multiculturalism as a statement of the nation’s identity. However, this multicultural education consists primarily of learning about other groups that coexist in Canada and focusing on the superficial aspects of their cultures, the 3fs of folklore, food and festivities and the 3ds of dance, dress and diet, as Schugurensky (2005) refers to them. The ideal of multiculturalism is not used to encourage deeper analyses or interactions, challenge discrimination or advance social justice issues.

As with the first two concepts of citizenship, civic virtues promoted in ESL depend in large measure on the current political climate, but even more so on the instructors’ personal values. Examples from ESL classes provided in the introduction of this thesis show an emphasis placed on developing virtues such as patriotism and obedience. My classroom observations for this study reveal an emphasis on compassion, respect and tolerance. A number of ESL pedagogues quoted in this study emphasize the development of civic virtues such as political engagement, community participation and
critical thinking, however the most recent teacher surveys indicate this approach is more of an exception than the rule. Furthermore, the current political climate of social cohesion encourages diligence and patriotism over political engagement and critical thinking.

The concept of citizenship as agency, the fostering of the idea that citizens can influence changes, both on a personal and collective level, by naming and confronting power structures is least evident in ESL classrooms. Although there is evidence of much excellent work being done in this area, it is, like the development of civic virtues, dependent on the personal beliefs and initiatives of the instructors, not part of a structured plan devised by the principle funders of ESL programs (governments on all levels) to immerse immigrants in the political and social life of the country on an equal footing. In conclusion, the stated goals of the government for the integration and participation of immigrants in society through ESL are generally not being fulfilled in ESL classrooms.

For this to be reversed, I suggest there may be two areas that require rethinking: The first one is the field of ESL and relates to the content of the course material available and teacher training. The second one encompasses the first one and relates to a citizenship education for all Canadians, including a reconceived notion of multiculturalism.

As evident in this study and many before it, ESL programs are very successful in imparting language skills to immigrants requiring language training. Also evident from this study and others is that interesting and relevant content makes language acquisition even more successful and learning about the society more powerful. In other words, one does not exclude the other and yet “teachers reject considerations of social power” (Morgan, 1998, p.6), reflecting a belief that schools are neutral in that regard.
However, if one considers that schools are tools for the development of a nation, “teaching remains about, within, and for the nation, tacitly about the protection and production of its Culture and committed to the production of its sovereign subjects” (Luke, 2004, p.24). Therefore, the content or absence of meaningful content from ESL material and methods are political choices, too. As Parker (2004) observes, schooling everywhere has been not as often a way out of inequality as its seal. Domestication, not emancipation, is the norm in curriculum work (Parker, 2004, p. 434). This, however, may be difficult for some teachers, many of whom belong to the dominant culture, to recognize or challenge.

The challenges of accepting the political reality of (ESL) education (and doing something about it) range from ideological to practical. Some of the practical challenges faced by ESL teachers have been discussed in previous chapters and additionally include job insecurity and lack of funding for critical initiatives, all of which prevent deeper attachments to the students or the cause of helping them unpack social reality in order to integrate more seamlessly. The overarching ideological challenge refers to what Joshee (2004) calls one of Canada’s foundational myths, namely the acceptance of cultural diversity. Moodley (1999) describes “the tolerant majority and its State wallowing in a self-congratulatory confirmation of its open-mindedness” (p. 149).

This is contrasted by research (Kalin & Barry, 1994, in Joshee, 2004) indicating support for the principle of multiculturalism exists alongside assimilationist and racist attitudes. When present, these attitudes are expressed through actions and views which expect exaggerated manifestations of loyalty and gratefulness from the “graciously accepted ‘others’ for having been let into the country by those who own it” (Moodley,
The ‘others’ are not seen to truly belong and are viewed as eternal trespassers, both in the view of the dominant group but also sometimes in the eyes of the ‘trespassers’ who internalize majority attitudes towards them.

A review by Cumming (1989, in Burnaby, 1992a) of Canada’s immigration policy in terms of its demographic, social, humanitarian and economic objectives revealed significant numbers of Canadians do not understand or embrace all of the objectives of the federal immigration policy. While it appears government policies on immigration are driven by expected economic benefits of immigration, many citizens persist in the belief that immigrants are a drain on the economy. The humanitarian value of immigration appeals to some Canadians, but not to others; the demographic value of immigration is understood by very few; and the social value of immigration seems largely ignored or perceived to be negative (Burnaby, 1992a, p.127-128).

The effect of this has been the creation of a parallel universe, where citizenship education programs and curricula are trying to teach students democratic ideals and values within social, economic, political, and educational contexts that contradict democratic ideals such as justice, equality, and human rights (Banks, 2004, p.10). In other words, there are significant gaps between the professed ideals of democratic nation-states and their institutional structures and practices, a point Schugurensky (2005) refers to as the distinction between ideal and real citizenship and the difference between formal and substantive democracy.

What is needed then seem to be institutional and attitudinal changes of the society as a whole, which could in turn lead to transformations of the educational system and the enrichment of ESL curricula specifically. Critical multiculturalism seems to provide the
best tools for this transformation, as it represents a direct response to the apparent weaknesses of the prevailing conception of multiculturalism, which “underemphasizes, and at times disavows, the impact of structural racism on students’ (in this case, immigrants’) lives” (May, 1999, p.2).

Thus, attitudinal transformation could take the form of a citizenship education (for the society at large) that would include the development of an understanding of the multiplicity of racisms, which do not all employ explicitly the idea of ‘race’ and, as such, may not be recognized as being discriminatory. Moodley (1999, p.151) identifies seven different manifestations of racism, of which I only mention those applicable to the Canadian context of immigrant integration: social racism, experienced subliminally through a cultural hierarchy of arrogance, which may even be more debilitating in its effects than legalized collective discrimination; cultural racism, which neglects non-European sources in the selection of what constitutes valuable and worthwhile knowledge; economic racism, which serves to reinforce unequal life chances; and religious racism. Additionally, psychological implications of denigration and exclusion on members of denigrated groups who internalize the dominant view of themselves are explored.

The insights gained from these broader understandings of iniquity could help problematize philosophies such as meritocracy, which asserts that all individuals regardless of their background can socially and economically succeed as long as they work hard without recognizing social and economic inequalities present in schools and society. Politically literate citizens would focus beyond struggling for the recognition of diversity within existing social structures to linking the struggle for recognition to a broader struggle for social justice (Sleeter and Montecinos, 1999, p.114).
In the context of ESL, Ashworth (1992, p.46) suggests practical steps in addressing issues which continue to plague a successful vision of ESL. These include issues of funding and accountability, teacher training and employment, conferences and networking, research and planning and attitude changing and leadership. Ashworth (1992) draws on Narang’s (1983, in Ashworth, 1992) list of still relevant competencies he felt teachers needed to develop, including knowledge of the contribution of minority groups, cultural sensitivity, and skills in intercultural communication.

Auerbach (1998, p.217) proposes a participatory curriculum development process, which includes assessing needs based on the lived experience of participants and relating shared experiences to an analysis of the broader social context. Earlier chapters make mention of many more ESL pedagogues who are making a real difference in their students’ lives with their committed teaching. However, for these practices to have full effect they must be matched in society at large. According to Freire (1985), any radical and profound transformation of an educational system can only take place (and even then, not automatically or mechanically) when society is also radically transformed (p.170). However, this does not mean that critical pedagogues should discontinue their work, but rather that social policies and programs to tackle poverty, exclusion, inequality, discrimination, and racism must also be constantly worked at (Figueroa, 2004, p. 240). Critical multiculturalism can play an important role in this.

If critical multiculturalism exposes discrimination and encourages social transformation, one might wonder why governments would support such an education. Freire (1985) states only the “innocent” could possibly think that the power elite would encourage a type of education that denounces them even more clearly than do all the
contradictions of their power structures (p.125). Additionally, Freire claims it would be naïve to expect the ruling classes to put into practice or even stimulate a form of action that would help the dominated classes see themselves as such (p.160).

Perhaps the hope lies in engaging the power elite’s support by presenting the problem (of immigrant integration through genuine recognition by the society at large) as something that would benefit *them*, if solved. May (1999) points out the irony of the fact that both conservative and liberal commentators fail to recognize that ethnic conflict and fragmentation arise most often not when compromises are made between ethnic groups or when formal ethnic, linguistic and/or religious rights are accorded some degree of recognition, but when these have been historically avoided, suppressed or ignored. If this contra-indicated position is actually the case, then far from ensuring national unity, the denial of ethnicity may well be a principle catalyst of disunity (p.21).

Banks (2004) writes that individuals can develop a clarified commitment to and identification with their nation-state and the national culture only when they believe that they are a meaningful part of the nation-state and that it acknowledges, reflects, and values their group and them as individuals (p.9). If, as research indicates, social cohesion (and economic prosperity) are the principle goals of this government, it would make sense then that they should cease to ignore the integration process of immigrants and help facilitate it by investing more (as opposed to no) time and energy in educating the public about the value of immigration and offering structural frameworks to support it.

Immigration is a federal responsibility, which means the government has a leadership position in this area. However, Burnaby’s (1992a) ingenious idea to address settlement and multicultural issues regarding immigration by mobilizing a similarly broad
spectrum of public awareness, support, and commitments as with social issues of national concern (she refers to the movement for environment protection) leaves much room for others to get involved. Social issues attract attention and get resources and action to the extent that people think that they have a stake in the outcomes (Burnaby, 1992a, p.129). As there are no indications that the government or the general public see themselves as being affected directly by the outcomes of immigrant settlement, it may be the role of immigrant supporters (ESL teachers, settlement agencies, school boards, citizenship educators, independent media, political parties, immigrant associations) to point out the ways in which they are.

“Immigrant integration as a social transformation movement” could thus start as the grassroots level to entice top down institutional change. This would be an exercise in citizenship as agency well worth exploring.
REFERENCES:


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Massachusetts: Bergin & Garvey Publishers, Inc.


APPENDIX A: STUDENT PROFILE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Where are you from?
2. How old are you?
3. How long have you been in Canada?
4. What is your status in Canada: landed immigrant, citizen or refugee?
5. How long have you been studying ESL at COSTI?
6. What did you do in your country: worked, studied, looked after the family?
7. What are you doing in Canada: working, studying, looking after the family?
APPENDIX B: STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why did you decide to take English classes at COSTI?

2. What have you been studying/learning in your classes? Name some topics.

3. Did you find these lessons useful and relevant to your everyday life?

4. Are there any topics that you haven’t studied/learned in class that you wish you had?

5. Did you learn anything about Canadian culture, politics, history or society? What?

6. Was this learning part of a lesson or something that came up accidentally in class?

7. Would you have liked to learn more about Canada? What?

8. What have you learned in class about Canada and your place in Canadian society?

9. After taking these classes, do you feel better prepared to actively participate in Canadian life/society? Why or why not?

10. If you were asked to put together material for an advanced ESL class such as yours, what kind of information would you include?
APPENDIX C: STUDENT STATISTICS

Course name: Developing Intermediate Fluency, CLB 4-5 course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Length of stay in Canada</th>
<th>Status in Canada</th>
<th>Length of ESL studies at COSTI</th>
<th>Occupation before coming to Canada</th>
<th>Occupation in Canada</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>landed immigrant</td>
<td>1 week and 3 days</td>
<td>student</td>
<td>studying ESL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>landed immigrant</td>
<td>3 weeks</td>
<td>engineer</td>
<td>studying ESL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2 months</td>
<td>landed immigrant</td>
<td>3 weeks</td>
<td>university graduate</td>
<td>studying ESL/volunteering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>landed immigrant</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>student</td>
<td>studying ESL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>landed immigrant</td>
<td>5 months</td>
<td>worked</td>
<td>studying ESL</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>8 months</td>
<td>refugee claimant</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>worked</td>
<td>studying ESL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>citizen</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>studied and worked</td>
<td>studying ESL</td>
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</table>
Course name: Oral Communication Skills, ESL CLB 5-8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Length of stay in Canada</th>
<th>Status in Canada</th>
<th>Length of ESL studies at COSTI</th>
<th>Occupation before coming to Canada</th>
<th>Occupation in Canada</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1 and a half years</td>
<td>Landed immigrant</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>Studying ESL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Landed immigrant</td>
<td>1 month (1 year in LINC)</td>
<td>Associate Professor in Chemistry department</td>
<td>Studying ESL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>Landed immigrant</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>Wireless communication Teacher</td>
<td>Studying ESL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>Landed immigrant</td>
<td>5 months</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Studying ESL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Landed immigrant</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>Studying ESL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>1 year and 2 months</td>
<td>Refugee claimant</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>Pharmacist</td>
<td>Studying ESL</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1 and a half years</td>
<td>Landed immigrant</td>
<td>8 months</td>
<td>Employed in a big company</td>
<td>Studying ESL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>Landed immigrant</td>
<td>2 days</td>
<td>Worked in Air China</td>
<td>Studying ESL</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Landed immigrant</td>
<td>1 week</td>
<td>Kindergarten teacher/ECE</td>
<td>Studying ESL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>Refugee claimant</td>
<td>4 months</td>
<td>Mechanic</td>
<td>Studying ESL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>5 and a half years</td>
<td>Refugee claimant</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>Worked in government office</td>
<td>Studying ESL</td>
</tr>
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