EDUCATING FOR CITIZENSHIP IN THE ENGLISH SECONDARY CLASSROOM: A CASE STUDY OF TEACHER PERSPECTIVES AND PRACTICE IN PUBLIC AND ISLAMIC SCHOOLS IN ONTARIO

by

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Abstract

This thesis explores the extent to which English curriculum, teachers’ literary choices, and a high demographic of Muslim students, influence the way English teachers educate for citizenship, in public and Islamic schools in Ontario. The three aspects this thesis examines are the following: how English teachers conceptualize citizenship education using informed, purposeful, and active citizenship learning expectations; in what ways their practice and literary choices enhance dimensions of citizenship education; and to what extent the English citizenship educator provides an inclusive space for Muslim perspectives. While the study shows that English teachers were successful at infusing purposeful citizenship, the study suggests that a more explicit link is needed in curriculum and in teacher practice, to inculcate informed and active citizenship outcomes in English. This study also implies, that teachers’ specific literary choices coupled with a citizenship education pedagogy, provides a more inclusive space for Muslim hybrid identities in English.
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Contents

Abstract.................................................................................................................................................. ii

Acknowledgements ................................................................................................................................. iii

Chapter 1: Introduction ........................................................................................................................... 1
  Focus of the Thesis ................................................................................................................................. 1
  Background to the Study ......................................................................................................................... 1
  Emergence of the Research Question ...................................................................................................... 6
  Questions of the thesis ............................................................................................................................. 8
  Research Questions ................................................................................................................................. 9
  Central Question ................................................................................................................................. 9
  Question 2 ........................................................................................................................................ 10
  Question 3 ........................................................................................................................................ 10
  Scope of the Thesis ............................................................................................................................... 10

Chapter 2: A Review of Literature ........................................................................................................ 11
  Literature on Citizenship Education ..................................................................................................... 11
  The Role of the Citizenship Educator ................................................................................................... 13
  Review of the Ontario English Curriculum for Citizenship Education ........................................... 16
  The Ontario English Curriculum 2007 ............................................................................................... 16
  Method of Inquiry and Framework of Analysis ................................................................................... 17
  Engaging Teachers in Citizenship Education with Terminology and Phrases ................................... 17
  Democratic Citizenship in the English Curriculum ............................................................................ 18
  Applying Ontario Civic Strands to English ......................................................................................... 22
  Informed Citizenship in the English Curriculum ................................................................................ 23
  Purposeful Citizenship in the English Curriculum ............................................................................ 23
  Active Citizenship in the English Curriculum ..................................................................................... 24
  Citizenship Education and Muslim Students in Public and Islamic Schools ..................................... 26
  Philosophical Similarities between Islamic Education and Citizenship Education ......................... 26
  English Teacher and the Muslim Student ............................................................................................. 28
  Muslim Perspective in the English Classroom ..................................................................................... 30
  Public and Islamic School Contexts ................................................................................................... 32
  Muslim Parents Criticism of the Public System .................................................................................... 33

Chapter 3: Methodology .......................................................................................................................... 35
  Methodological Approach .................................................................................................................... 35
  Positioning Myself in the Research ....................................................................................................... 35
  Methodology ....................................................................................................................................... 36
  Data Collection ..................................................................................................................................... 37
  Methods ............................................................................................................................................. 38
  One-on-one Interviews ......................................................................................................................... 38
  Focus Group Interviews ......................................................................................................................... 38
  Observations ....................................................................................................................................... 39
  Artifact Analysis ................................................................................................................................. 39
List of Tables

Table 1: Overview of the Proposed Sample Size and Data Collection Techniques . 37
Table 2: Overview of the Final Sample Size and Data Collection Techniques ....... 38
Table 3: Participant Profiles ...................................................................................... 44
Table 4: Overview of Text Choices Participants Offered to Students ...................... 64
List of Appendices

Appendix A: Semi-structured Interview Guide ........................................ 104
Appendix B: Semi-structured Interview Guide For Student Focus Group ....... 106
Appendix C: Semi-Structured Observation Guide ................................... 107
Appendix D: Email to English School Board Consultants ......................... 111
Appendix E: Email Letter of Introduction to the Public School Principal .......... 112
Appendix F: Email Letter of Introduction to the Islamic School Principal ....... 114
Appendix G: Letter of Introduction and Consent to Public School Teachers .... 117
Appendix H: Letter of Introduction and Consent to Islamic School Teachers ... 121
Appendix I: Letter of Introduction and Consent to Students and Parents ....... 125
Chapter 1: Introduction

**Focus of the Thesis**

Today’s world is complex particularly about issues surrounding religion, politics, and human rights violations to name only a few. English literature can expose, elicit discussion, and develop critical thinking on many local, national, and global issues. English teachers are able to selectively choose material and develop a program that encourages students to explore informed, purposeful, and/or active citizenship outcomes. The Ontario English Curriculum 2007 reveals explicit and implicit references guiding teachers toward the practice of citizenship education pedagogy. Nevertheless, few studies have investigated how English teachers conceptualize and define educating for active and responsible citizenship. This thesis examines how a group of English teachers conceptualize informed, purposeful, and active citizenship learning expectations; in what ways their practice and literary choices enhance dimensions of citizenship education; and to what extent the English citizenship educator, provides an inclusive space for Muslim identities and perspectives in public and Islamic school contexts.

**Background to the Study**

The inclusion of democratic citizenship as a part of school curriculum policy is acknowledged across Canada (Evans, 2007; Mundy 2007; Sears & Hughes 2006). Its importance in schools, and in curriculum, has not been contested, however, its definition, and the way it should be taught and learned, has been problematic (Osborne, 2000). For the most part, citizenship education has primarily been viewed as a responsibility of the Social Studies, or in Ontario, the Canadian and World Studies curriculum (Kerr, 2005; Hebert & Sears, 2001; Osborne, 2000). Nonetheless, the Ontario English Curriculum 2007 reveals numerous explicit and implicit references to citizenship education concepts and goals for teachers to consider. For example, it states, “in implementing this curriculum, teachers will help students to see that language skills are lifelong learning skills that will enable them to better understand themselves and others, unlock their potential as human beings, find fulfilling careers, and become responsible world citizens” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007, p.5).
Teachers are instructed by the English curriculum to meet overall knowledge and skill expectations required for effective listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, and representing in four strands- Oral Communication, Reading and Literature Studies, Writing, and Media Studies. The English curriculum in Ontario also guides teachers to create a program of studies that includes multiple perspectives, controversial issues, the immigrant experience, anti-racist education, and discriminatory portrayals of individuals and groups in the media. Teachers determine the subject material with the literary texts and activities they choose to expose their students to. Literary texts can offer a wide range of topics, themes, social issues and perspectives for teachers to consider at the local, national, and global level. Therefore, in today’s world of complex issues such as race, religion, politics, war, human rights violations, global warming, poverty and disease, English literature can help to open up discussions, stretch ideas, expose, challenge, and develop critical thinking. Similar to the Ontario Civics Curriculum citizenship strands, English teachers can readily incorporate informed, purposeful, and/or active citizenship learning expectations in the classroom. English teachers are thus able to selectively choose materials that expose students to civil, political, social/economic, cultural, and global dimensions of citizenship education (Marshall, 1963). Classics for example, can relate to our civic life, while fiction and nonfiction can “provide opportunities for students to explore how to choose and become reliable, effective leaders. Like the history teacher, [English teachers] have the means to cultivate thoughtful responsible citizens” (McCain, 1991, p. 61). The emphasis teachers place on particular dimensions, and citizenship outcomes, may indicate their own definition of what citizenship is, and why they make the literary choices they do. For example, a teacher including a text like The Kite Runner, a novel that discusses the human rights violations of Afghani people under the Taliban, may do so to elicit discussion around rights and citizenship. This may extend further to include Canada’s role in Afghanistan in order to discuss Canadian government, their foreign policy, and Canadian identity. Furthermore, as a culminating activity, teachers may ask students to write a letter to the government exercising their views on matters such as these, interview a Canadian Afghani refugee, and so forth. Collectively, the text, the discussion, the activities, promote and readily connect to informed, purposeful, and active citizenship learning
outcomes. Few studies however, have investigated how citizenship education outcomes transpire in the English classroom, or how English teachers conceptualize and define educating for active and responsible citizenship, within this particular subject.

For centuries, Muslim people have managed to successfully blend into the mosaic of immigrants that reside in Canada. Previous research on multicultural, anti-racist, and citizenship education tended to amalgamate teacher attitudes toward Muslim students, and Muslim student experiences, with those of all minority students. In recent years however, negative attention specifically directed toward Muslim people, has risen as a result of terrorism, media misrepresentation, Muslim profiling at borders, American foreign policy, and wars in Muslim countries. Perhaps most memorable were the actions and events that directly seemed to impact North America, the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center, terrorist charges brought against 17 young Muslim men educated in Canadian schools, hijab and sharia law controversies, Canadian troops in Afghanistan, the Mayer Arar case, Aqsa Parvez’s murder, and more recently, Toronto public schools accommodating Muslim students to pray during school hours with an Imam. Coupled with this, previous attempts of education in multiculturalism, celebrating diversity, and fighting racism, needed to now more specifically address Muslim students, as studies reported more harassment in local schools, racism and Islamophobia (Zine, 2003).

The need for knowledge of Muslim people, religion, and culture to understand these events, reduce fear and attitudes of “us and them,” as well as dispel myths and stereotypes, became suddenly more imperative. Teachers in public schools have consequently become more responsible for creating safe and inclusive spaces that also provide students with opportunities to negotiate their identities, discover similar goals, perspectives and values to move beyond misunderstandings of one another. The task of balancing between cultural, national, and global identifications given teachers’ own perspectives, outside influences, and experiences, can be somewhat challenging for teachers attempting to define what educating their students for citizenship entails. The spectrum is of course extremely varied and dependent on the individual, however citizenship education pedagogy, does offer some opportunity to tackle some of these topics. For example, for some teachers, this may be a matter of indirectly dealing with the perception of Muslim people by including more literary texts that introduce human rights
issues against a variety of cultural groups. For some teachers, it may be a more direct approach by introducing texts by Muslim writers, or about Muslim countries and culture, and/or discussions that explore the representation of Muslim people in the media. Finally for some teachers, the choice may be avoidance all together, because of its controversial nature, feeling uncomfortable with the sensitive nature of the topic, and/or a lack of knowledge and resources to foster understanding.

There is little known about how English teachers in Canada introduce, if at all, some of these sensitive issues into their practice, nor how they deal with controversial issues surrounding Muslim identity and representation. Though it should be acknowledged that teachers may not necessarily plan their lessons or instruction around one specific group, their choices often consider their student body, and their own views of what should and should not be included.

English teachers in the public and Islamic school system in Ontario are expected to employ the same English curriculum. Teachers in both contexts may share similar goals such as preparing young people for a more global and interdependent world, however their citizenship goals, motivations, and their level of engagement in the different dimensions with a predominantly Muslim student body, has not been explored in the research. In regard to education, both school contexts have been criticized for not focusing on specific aspects of learning deemed important by the other.

Islamic schools for example, have been “accused of ghettoizing students and not providing socialization within the society at large” (Zine, 2004). These schools, as well as other Islamic institutions, have also been criticized for not providing an education that fosters Canadian identity, civic responsibility, shared values, or multicultural education. According to Haw (1994), faith schools have been criticized for promoting their own belief system as superior, they endorse racial and cultural segregation, and female Muslim students are often treated as inferior. Within this context as well, as students develop their identities, they are unable to critically evaluate cultural and religious values for they are viewed as sacred or divine.

Islamic schools however consider themselves to be better at developing a moral base for students in an environment congruent to an Islamic way of life. These denominational schools tend to favor a citizenship approach to education because “in
their view, citizenship development and religious development are closely linked (Veugelers, 2007, p. 106), however it is unclear how this translates in the Canadian Islamic school context. Given the fact that “citizenship education should help students develop thoughtful and clarified identifications with their cultural communities and their nation-states” (Banks, 2001, p. 8), the extent to which these teachers bring in content through a lens that parallels values in both citizenship and Islamic religious education is unknown. For example, Muslim values of peace, social responsibility to the community, or in some cases the globe, are similar to Westheimer’s and Kahne’s (2004), “good citizen - personally responsible, participatory, and justice oriented” (p.237).

Many Muslim parents prefer Islamic or even Catholic schools because of their contention that public schools do not offer a moral education congruent to their religious values (Zine 2004). Citizenship education may address some of these issues, however many critiques of citizenship education suggest that it promotes only certain values that often exclude race, ethnicity, and religious identifications (Banks, 2001; Abu-El-Haj, 2002; Davies, 2006). Zine’s (2004) study on Muslim students’ experiences in the Canadian secular school context revealed that Muslim students are continually negotiating multiple identities based on race, class, gender and ethnicity. Osler & Starkey (2003) suggest that a re-conceptualization of education for citizenship is needed because migration requires individuals and groups to develop multiple loyalties and identities. Nonetheless, Muslim students struggle within both school contexts negotiating their identities, hence a reconsideration of how we teach and what we teach, is essential for this increasingly marginalized cultural group.

Despite the fact that Muslim immigration to Canada continues to rise, and Muslim educational institutions continue to multiply, little is known about the way teachers accommodate social identities of these large numbers of Muslim students in their classrooms. This research attempts to explore some of the ways teachers in both school contexts characterize citizenship education pedagogy in the English classroom, and to what extent a high demographic of Muslim students, have an impact citizenship goals. This becomes especially interesting in the English classroom because of the obvious freedom and choice it provides for teachers to investigate particular themes and issues in the classroom.
Emergence of the Research Question

The point I wish to make is that the governments, civil societies, and peoples of this world will be unable to build strong, pluralist societies with the personal level of global cultural ignorance. Even the most developed countries will need a massive effort to educate the world’s youth in a more thoughtful, competent and complete manner to prepare them for the global responsibilities they will be expected to fulfill. This education is particularly critical in the increasing number of functioning democracies where an informed public plays such a central role (Aga Khan, 2008, p. 10).

It is quotations like the one above by His Highness the Aga Khan, that have not only made me proud to be a part of the Ismaili community, but have also guided me to value pluralism. This also transcended into my cultural identity, growing up with an Ismaili Muslim father and a Jain Hindu mother, where I spent most of my life negotiating my own social identity. Though, religiously I practiced as an Ismaili, I identified my cultural identity as Muslim and Hindu. For me, rectifying my cultural identity with two faiths often in opposition to one another, proved to be more challenging early in my life, more so than the natural loyalty I acknowledged for Canada. This may have been a result of my schooling experiences, which helped to engage my Canadian identity, however, exploration of my cultural identity as a South Asian, never factored into my learning experiences. I found it challenging in high school to draw connections to the literature I was offered, and never developed a love for literature until I began reading about cultures I personally identified with. I only recall “white” protagonists in classic literature in the English classroom, and being reprimanded in a Social Studies class for writing about the unfair treatment of Palestinians by the United Nations. It was not until after high school that I began reconciling my cultural identity with literature I selected on South Asian culture, and with the religious education courses I chose in University. Both of these became an attempt to draw on the commonalities and universal values that the two conflicting religious groups I belonged too shared. Consequently, through my own life experiences, the themes of this research intersect closely with my interest in hybrid identities and the literary choices we offer to students in the English classroom, particularly in order to aid in negotiating identities.

The other prevalent theme in this thesis, that of Muslim students and their perspective, was inspired by my experiences as a secondary English teacher in the
classroom, during the events, and aftermath of, September 11th, 2001. On the day of this event, and in the following days and months, I noticed an automatic response by administrators to direct teachers to avoid controversy, so that sensitive topics around race and religion were dismissed entirely. I observed during this time, that the classroom for many teachers no longer became a place for critical thought and questioning, but rather a space where argument or controversy were shut down. As a result, the relevant and pertinent discussions involving the event itself, or the portrayal of Muslims in the media, were largely ignored. Students were therefore exposed daily to the media’s shift in narrative to one which represented Islam as violent, and “Muslim” synonymous with fundamentalism and terrorism, despite the fact that the majority of Muslims “distance themselves from the political and epistemic violence of the extremes” (Zine, 2004). I found myself in light of this response feeling offended not only as an educator, but also as a Muslim. Instead of following the status quo, or expectations of the administration, I dialogued with my students their thoughts on 9/11, their thoughts on the response by Americans and their government, and lastly, the perception of Muslims in light of the event. In addition, to provide a more balanced perspective, I designed a program for my students that began my own quest to educate for citizenship and social justice. I started to include texts that offered more diverse perspectives, one inclusive of all of the major religions in the world and their experiences with human rights violations. For example, in my grade twelve class, we studied Elie Wiesel’s Night, Rohinton Mistry’s A Fine Balance, Shakespeare’s The Tempest, film studies of Deepa Mehta’s Earth, and Michael Winterbottom’s Welcome to Sarajevo. Though I recognize now areas of improvement, particularly with the lack of Muslim texts available at the time to teach, it was the beginning of my own reconsideration of my practice as an English teacher. I have since advocated for the inclusion of Khaled Hosseini’s, The Kite Runner or A Thousand Splendid Suns, as well as several short stories, essays, and media texts on Muslims. This has continued through the span of my teaching career, campaigning in five different schools, to include texts that were not only more culturally diverse for students, but ones that included the Muslim perspective as well. The lack of understanding of the benefits of cultural literacy, or the resistance at times I have experienced to change existing texts, has been disheartening. This study therefore, was also an opportunity to explore other
likeminded English teachers, in hopes of enhancing the legitimacy of the Muslim perspective in the English classroom.

Questions of the thesis

The formulation of the research questions for this thesis was influenced by two factors. Firstly, a joint research proposal and study in Dr. Bonnie Burstow’s AECP 1406 class called Classroom Climate in a Post-9/11 World began my first research project on the lack of inclusiveness of the Muslim perspective. Secondly, learning about citizenship education in Dr. Mark Evan’s Citizenship, Pedagogy and School Communities course, I began connecting my own practice as an English teacher to citizenship education.

In the research study mentioned above, my colleague Marsha Malbari and I collected data for the purpose of exploring perspectives of former secondary school students on classroom climate, during the first few hours, days and months following 9/11. Together, we recruited and interviewed four participants to investigate the impact of the actions and events that occurred on September 11th, 2001 on classroom discourse, curriculum, and student behaviour. We were primarily interested in how teachers addressed controversial questions surrounding 9/11, and Muslim culture. We explored whether or not students were exposed to lessons that addressed the complexity of understanding the event itself, and if teachers dispelled myths and stereotypes of Muslims escalated by these events at the time.

A summary of the findings for this study indicated that on the day of 9/11 and onward, participants expressed that teachers neither engaged in critical discourse around this event, nor made any attempt to modify the existing curriculum to include global issues that arose as a result of this event. All participants expressed that teachers were more concerned with students’ experiencing emotional trauma on the day itself, not the sociological implications of the event itself. Lastly, all participants expressed a desire to have engaged in more critical classroom discourse on this historic event, and a desire for learning that was more relevant to the outside world.

After completing the previously explained research project, taking into account my own response in the English classroom post 9/11, and drawing connections between citizenship education and the English curriculum, new themes and questions emerged.
For example, the methodology of this study only explored student perspectives, and therefore, teachers’ perspectives were missing. Moreover, I wanted to understand the types of challenges teachers face in dealing with these kinds of sensitive topics. New questions emerged such as do teachers understand or have knowledge about Muslim culture? Do they know where to access resources and information about Muslim related topics? Do teachers feel in some cases it is better to ignore or dismiss areas they feel uncomfortable handling? Do they fear negative ramifications from administrators, parents or students when raising these topics in the classroom? Does citizenship education seem more pertinent to teachers in light of these kinds of world issues? Does school context initiate or impact the inclusion or exclusion of certain topics? It became imperative to investigate how teachers at the very least attempt to address some of these issues, and if citizenship education pedagogy in the English classroom, could help teachers create a more inclusive space for these concerns.

Research Questions

This thesis thus addresses and analyzes three areas of focus related to my own experiences as a Muslim, as an English teacher, and from linking these two themes to citizenship education. The first and central research question, that regarding citizenship education in the English classroom drove the study, while the other two subsidiary questions evolved during the data analysis stage of the research. In order to address what teachers say and what teachers do, it was pertinent to take into account all three themes of the questions; the citizenship educator and the Civics’ course citizenship strands in English; teacher practice, text choice and the dimensions of citizenship; and the inclusivity of Muslim students.

Central Question

How do English teachers conceptualize citizenship education using informed, purposeful, and active citizenship learning expectations in public and Islamic school contexts in Toronto?
**Question 2**

In what ways do participants’ teaching practice and their literary choices influence dimensions of citizenship education?

**Question 3**

To what extent does the English citizenship educator provide an inclusive space for Muslim identities and perspectives in public and Islamic school contexts?

**Scope of the Thesis**

This thesis contains eight chapters. Chapter 1 begins with positioning citizenship education in the English classroom, a brief overview of citizenship pedagogy as it relates to Muslim students, and a discussion of Muslim students in the Islamic and public school context, as it applies to this study. Chapter 2 primarily comprises a review of literature in order to connect analysis of the main research question and sub-questions. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology and methods used for this study. In Chapter 4, I provide a description of the four participant profiles, and their corresponding school setting. Chapter 5 analyzes how teachers conceptualized citizenship in the English classroom. Chapter 6 expands on section one by examining teachers’ literary and curricular choices to address the dimensions of citizenship. Chapter 7 explores the English citizenship educator and the inclusiveness of Muslim student identities and perspectives, in both school contexts. The final chapter outlines the implications of this study on English curriculum, the English teacher, Muslim students, and future research.
Chapter 2: A Review of Literature

Introduction

The purpose of the literature review is to examine the different dynamics of the research questions. The first section of the literature review provides an overview of citizenship education as a means to identify what teachers say and do as citizenship educators. The second section seeks to examine the potential for citizenship outcomes in the Ontario English 2007 curriculum. The third section explores citizenship education pedagogy with Muslim students, and reviews the Muslim student experience in public and Islamic school contexts.

Literature on Citizenship Education

It has been ten years since 9/11, and in this period, new curriculum has been introduced, citizenship educational initiatives have increased, and some of the critical issues that were ignored immediately after this event, have been raised. In Canada, the subject-matter of citizenship education is infused and integrated into the regular curriculum at all grades, in all subject areas, and involves aspects of the past, present, and future (Evans, 2007). The dimensions of citizenship education whether civic, political, social, cultural and global, have evolved according to the present local, national, or global contexts. At times, citizenship education has been viewed as promoting only national or civic identity, however, in response to globalization and human rights issues around the world, schools are transcending the traditional model of curriculum that only promotes national values, to further incorporate global values.

In the classroom, citizenship education curriculum is often delivered as an evolving process, where students move through various stages of recognizing the interdependence between personal and global relationships. Giroux (1992) defines ‘border pedagogy’ as “challenging, remapping, and renegotiating those boundaries of knowledge that claim the status of master narratives, fixed identities, and an objective representation of reality” (p.26). The student cannot engage in citizenship educational concepts before they have grasped an understanding of their own identity, their identity in relation to their family and community, their relationship with nature, and finally their position globally. It is after they have defined their own position that they can
freely engage in discourse and subject matter that involves a deeper and more mature analysis of the connectedness of all of their identities into a single global identity, or what global educators term as ‘world-mindedness’ (Heater, 2002). In order to have a thorough curriculum, William Kniep (1989) stresses the study of five concepts in the curriculum; interdependence, change, conflict, scarcity, and culture, and four essential areas; systems, human values, problems, and global history. For those teachers that tend to focus on global citizenship, a model developed by Robert Hanvey (1982) suggests organizing global curriculum into five dimensions: perspective consciousness, state-of-the-planet awareness, cross-cultural awareness, knowledge of global dynamics, and awareness of human choice. It is meant to be a curriculum that encourages the use of diverse texts, provides multiple language instruction, and produces cross-curricular projects. It should therefore prevent curriculum that promotes the perspectives and values of mainstream powerful groups (Banks 1998). This can be somewhat contentious given that in English, the curriculum is open ended, and because teachers of English have considerable power choosing the texts they prefer. Their curriculum therefore tends to be a reflection of their own standpoint, even though they may feel incorporating some cultural texts, identifies them as multicultural, or as citizenship educators. Consequently, emphasis on some mainstream groups will occur as teacher knowledge, choice, and politics surrounding certain cultural groups surpass others. Nevertheless, teachers using a citizenship education pedagogy, can offer a better awareness, and help students to “develop thoughtful and clarified identifications with their cultural communities and their nation-states” (Banks, 2001, p. 8).

Curriculum has probably most been criticized for being Eurocentric and hegemonic (Dei & Zine, 2002) because it has the potential to marginalize minority students in ways that they cannot safely ‘border cross’ (Giroux, 1992) between religious, gender, and school identity. Although, curriculum in the last decade has tried to foster minority students’ learning with multicultural education and anti-racist education, both have been widely criticized for teaching about diversity and equity at a very superficial level. For example, in Osler & Hussein’s (1995) interviews with mothers of Muslim students, parents felt that a good Islamic education that explored human rights and responsibilities was likely to be a far better preparation for life in a
pluralistic society than some of the more narrow approaches to multicultural education, which they had observed in state schools. They were generally referring to a ‘sari, samosa and steel bands’ (Donald & Rattansi, 1992, p. 2) approach, which dealt with cultural diversity in a superficial way, without exploring human relationships and personal attitudes. Despite the continual scrutiny of these two paradigms, the synthesis of the two, multicultural and anti-racism education, have brought about a greater awareness of racial injustice, and schools have made serious attempts to challenge and combat racism within their schools (Parker-Jenkins, 1995). Citizenship education in addition to these two paradigms could potentially provide a curriculum that solves some of these issues more successfully. It allows for the type of discourse in classrooms that examines all sides, and all issues, from all perspectives, so that schools are able to “address the power and politics of race and religion in contemporary social and political contexts, rather than focus primarily on multicultural education about Islamic and Arab culture” (Abu El-Haj, 2002, p. 308).

It is with the infusion of citizenship education into curriculum that students can potentially achieve this as they dialogue about oppressive frameworks, and are given some curricular choices. In the English classroom, one strategy to achieve this could be by providing choice for students. For example, teachers might present literary choices that address the standpoint of most cultural groups that a student chooses from what he or she would like to read, and/or providing a variety of diverse research topics for the student to determine is of interest to him or her.

The Role of the Citizenship Educator

Although teachers may have their hearts in the right place, it is often a lack of adequate training in pre-service, or authentic experiences in culturally diverse schools and communities that hinder teachers’ development of a ‘cultural consciousness’ (Bennett, 1995). With ‘cultural consciousness, teachers apply standards equitably, or act as cultural and instructional mediators (Banks & Banks, 1995; Bennett, 1995; Easterly, 1994). Bennett (1995) defines cultural consciousness as “an awareness of one’s own worldview and how it has developed, and an understanding that one’s personal view of the world is profoundly different from the views of people of different cultures” (p.
A teacher can develop his or her ‘cultural consciousness’ in several ways; increasing the knowledge base of global issues by listening or watching the news, traveling to other nations or immersing himself long-term in another culture, widening her personal contacts by getting to know parents of her students or getting involved in some of the students’ outside community involvements (Easterly, 1994; Merryfield, 2000; Osnes-Taylor 1994). In these situations, teachers are able to experience being the ‘other’ to develop the cultural lens needed to figure out their own fears and ethnocentricities, while learning what it feels like being a minority instead of the majority, especially through experiences in other countries. These experiences have the potential to help teachers rethink one’s identity and the status quo, gain knowledge of multiple realities, inequities and contradictions that exist globally and nationally (Merryfield, 2000).

Some teachers may not have gained this learning in pre-service, but when a teacher combines empathy and a citizenship approach to teaching and learning, he or she is more readily able to develop ‘intercultural competence’ (Bennett, 1995). This is the ability to interpret intentional communications (language, signs, gestures), some unconscious cues (such as body language), and customs and cultural styles different from one’s own, since emphasis is on informed empathy and communication (Bennett, 1995). The ‘intercultural person’ has achieved an advanced level in the process of becoming intercultural and whose cognitive, affective, and behavioral characteristics are not limited, but are open to growth beyond the psychological parameters of one culture. The ‘intercultural person’ possesses an intellectual and emotional commitment to the fundamental unity of all humans, and at the same time, accepts and appreciates the differences that lie between people of different cultures (Gudykunst & Kim, 1994). Ideally, this type of teacher is someone that is well traveled, has had some international teaching experiences, and models volunteerism both within the school community, and outside the school community. This type of teacher is a global thinker and actor. Pike and Selby (2000) describes the global teacher profile. His global teacher is: global centric rather than ethnocentric or nation centric; concerned about culture and perspective; future-oriented; a facilitator; has a profound belief in human potential; is concerned with the development of the whole person; employs a range of
teaching/learning styles in the classroom; sees learning as a process that is lifelong; tries to be congruent; rights-respectful and seeks to shift the focus and locus of power and decision-making in the classroom; seeks functional interdependence across the curriculum and is a community teacher (p. 272). Teachers therefore have a responsibility to learn about the world. As Davies (2006) states, “one needs not just knowledge of contemporary events, crises, economics and cultural patterns, but also the confidence to tackle issues, which could be problematic in a fragile multicultural classroom” (p. 20). Subsequently, the teacher’s primary role is to develop students’ perspective, one that has both a ‘substantive and perceptual dimension.’ Case and Clark (1997), define the substantive dimension as knowledge of people and places beyond the students’ own community and country, and knowledge of events and issues beyond the local and immediate. They define the perceptual dimension as a capacity to see the “whole picture,” whether focusing on a local, or an international matter. Teachers are therefore the means to move students beyond the superficial things about cultures that is often taught, and into a deeper level which explores universal commonalities, external forces that interplay with the state of societies, and a view of others that is not influenced by ethnocentrism or stereotypes. Teachers approach the pedagogy of learning these concepts in a way that makes sense to students, when they have achieved a certain level of maturity. It is taking what students connect to, and moving it to a deeper level, in a way that makes sense to them.

When teachers bring citizenship education to their classroom, they are expected to practice democratic principles at all times in the classroom. This allows students to engage in open inquiry, ask questions, make decisions about curricular choices, as well as feel comfortable discussing controversial topics. Students as a result, continually engage in discourse that requires the consideration of how the interaction of economics, politics, ecology, social, and technological systems operating worldwide are peripheral to understand peoples’ struggles past and present (Case and Clark, 1997; Hanvey, 1982). In a world since 9/11, where awareness of world events is heightened by fear, mistrust, confusion and insecurity, students gain by promoting the togetherness of those that they portray to be foreigners (Kristeva, 1991), instead of clinging to a narrow and distorted outlook.
Review of the Ontario English Curriculum for Citizenship Education

As a creative representation of life and experience, literature raises important questions about the human condition, now and in the past. As students increase their knowledge of accomplished writers and literary works, and vicariously experience times, events, cultures, and values different from their own, they deepen their understanding of the many dimensions of human thought and human experience (Ontario English Curriculum 2007, p. 16).

Introduction

As discussed in chapter one, the Ontario English curriculum states, “in implementing this curriculum, teachers will help students to see that language skills are lifelong learning skills that will enable them to better understand themselves and others, unlock their potential as human beings, find fulfilling careers, and become responsible world citizens” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007, p.5). This section combines the review of literature above on citizenship education, with an examination of the potential for citizenship outcomes in the Ontario English Curriculum 2007. This analysis is provided to grant insight into the central research question: How do English teachers conceptualize citizenship education using informed, purposeful, and active citizenship learning expectations in public and Islamic school contexts in Toronto?

The Ontario English Curriculum 2007

The majority of curriculum documents across the various subject areas so explicitly prescribe knowledge, skills and standards, that teachers have little, if any, choice over subject material in their classrooms. The English curriculum alternatively, provides some flexibility between its expectations and teachers’ curricular choices. The Ontario English curriculum provides mandated overall expectations and specific expectations within the four strands of Oral Communication, Reading and Literature Studies, Writing, and Media Studies for teachers to address. The overall expectations are then addressed with specific expectations. Within these specific expectations, teachers are given expectations tags, “subheadings that identify the particular aspect of the overall expectations that the specific expectation addresses” (Ontario English Curriculum 2007, p. 13). As well, examples and teacher prompts are provided with each of the expectation
tags, however the curriculum clarifies that “they are illustrations only, not requirements” (p. 13). This allows ample opportunity for teacher autonomy, to handle the specific expectations with texts and learning outcomes they deem appropriate and meaningful. It is because of this particular framework of knowledge construction that exploration of citizenship education becomes worthy of examination within the English curriculum.

The following sections therefore investigate the following question: To what extent is citizenship education infused into the Ontario English Curriculum for grades 9 and 10?

Method of Inquiry and Framework of Analysis

In order to answer the first question, document analysis of the English curriculum was accomplished in three parts. The first involved a key word search and phrase review using terminology found in current citizenship education literature (Banks, 1997; Clark & Case, 1997; Davies, 1999; Evans & Reynolds, 2004; Kerr 2006; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004), and secondly, by using Osborne’s twelve C’s of criteria to educate for democratic citizenship (Osborne, 2001 as cited in Evans, 2004). Lastly, the four strands of the English curriculum are explored for opportunities to apply informed, purposeful, and active citizenship expectations, as defined in the Ontario Civics Course Curriculum 2005 strands of citizenship.

Engaging Teachers in Citizenship Education with Terminology and Phrases

Though developing students’ literacy skills tends to be the main objective of the English curriculum, a key word search and phrase review, revealed frequent references to developing this by producing students that are “responsible world citizens,” are involved in “active participation,” consider “multiple perspectives,” and are encouraged to become “critical thinkers.” Throughout the document, it is explicitly implied to teachers, that in their approach to teaching, in assessing students, and in choosing texts within the four strands, they are to consider “what good citizenship is and what good citizens do” (Westheimer & Kahn, 2004, p. 237). For example, the English curriculum states that, “effective teaching approaches involve students in the use of higher-level thinking skills and encourages them to look beyond the literal meaning of texts, and to think about
fairness, social justice and citizenship in a global society” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007 as cited in Ontario English Curriculum, 2007, p. 28). Similarly, in the strand of media literacy, teachers are expected to attune students to “discriminatory portrayals of individuals and groups, such as religious or sexual minorities, people with disabilities, or seniors; and question the depictions of violence and crime” (Ontario English Curriculum, 2007, p. 18). With the assessment of students, teachers are influenced to consider various contexts, local, national, and global, while planning instruction for learning. This is in part due to the fourth category of the student achievement chart, where students are expected to apply their knowledge by “making connections between various contexts, for example, between the text and personal knowledge and experience, other texts, and the world outside school” (Ontario English Curriculum, 2007, p. 25). The references to global, various contexts and discriminatory portrayals of individuals and groups compel teachers in their practice to include texts that consider various levels and perspectives.

Democratic Citizenship in the English Curriculum

Although the word democracy is not used throughout the entire document, teaching and learning expectations are addressed in a way that encourage democratic principles. This is perhaps most apparent in the section on program considerations for English language learners, and the implementation of anti-discrimination education. Strong-Boag’s (1996) conviction that citizenship education is not inclusive of minority groups such as Aboriginals, feminists and non-dominant groups, are addressed in these particular sections of the English curriculum. In reference to considerations for English language learners, teachers are expected to view these students as “cultural assets in the classroom community” (Ontario English Curriculum, 2007, p. 31), and to provide opportunities for these students to bring their language, experiences, and communities into the classroom. Teachers are encouraged to offer an inclusive program. Hence, as part of implementing anti-discrimination principles, teachers are expected to include texts that relate to the “immigrant experience” and that reflect a broad range of students’ interests, background, cultures and experiences” (Ontario English Curriculum, 2001, p. 33). As well, teachers are asked to develop critical literacy in all of the strands, where they
involve students in, “asking questions and challenging the status quo, and lead students to look at issues of power and justice in society... and to speak out about issues that strongly affect them” (Ontario English Curriculum, 200, p. 34). As teachers educate diverse groups with sensitivity to various cultures and their ways of communicating, this fosters students’ ability to analyze critically, and “make intelligent decisions about real-life problems and issues, through a democratic process of communication” (Suleiman, 1998, p. 7).

In order to further evaluate democratic citizenship in the English Curriculum, Osborne’s “twelve C’s” provide a framework for analyzing how teachers might engage students with citizenship expectations. The following describes each of the twelve C’s in detail (Osborne, 2001, as cited in Evans, 2004):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Osborne’s 12 C’s</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The first C is <strong>Canadian</strong> and it proposes that schools should teach students enough about Canada, its history and geography, its institutional structures, its artistic and cultural achievements, its current problems, and so on, to enable them to understand and participate in the continuing debate about what kind of society Canada is and should become.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The second C is <strong>cosmopolitan</strong>, in the strict sense of the word, and proposes that students also learn enough about the world as a whole, past and present, to see themselves not only as Canadian, but global citizens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The third C is <strong>communication</strong> and proposes that all students should learn how to communicate effectively through speech, writing, graphics, and all other media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The fourth C is <strong>content</strong> and proposes that all students must gain a thorough all-round grounding of general knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The fifth C is <strong>curiosity</strong> and proposes that schools must teach students to be intellectually curious, to want to keep learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sixth C is <strong>critical</strong>, and proposes that students must learn to think critically, to question the status quo, and to see learning as continual enquiry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The seventh C is <strong>creativity</strong> and proposes that schooling develops the creative spirit which is present, but too often stifled, in all human beings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The eighth C is <strong>civilizations</strong> (in the plural) and proposes that schooling must give students an adequate knowledge and appreciation of human civilizations (again in the plural) of which we are both the heirs and the trustees for the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ninth C is <strong>community</strong> and proposes that students must learn to see themselves as informed and involved members of their communities, locally, nationally, and globally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The tenth C is <strong>concern</strong> or <strong>caring</strong> and proposes that education teach care for other people and for the environment that makes life possible in the first place.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
The eleventh C stands for character, the development of which years ago was seen as one of the key purposes of education, standing for the willingness to shoulder responsibilities, to follow one’s conscience, and to act morally.

The twelfth C stands for competence, meaning that education must equip students to play their part as competent and effective citizens in the world in which they live.

The first “C” Canadian is repeatedly evident in the teacher prompts and examples provided in various specific expectations outlined in each of the four strands. For example, in the Reading and Literature Studies strand, the expectation tag, Develop Interconnected Skills provides teachers with the following example, “report to class on how discussion with a partner helped clarify, or extend their understanding of a news article about a local issue” (Ontario English Curriculum, 2007, p. 47). Similarly, the specific expectation Developing and Organizing Content, has the expectation tag “identifying topic, purpose and audience,” and lists one example that directs teachers to ask students to provide, “an account of an important event in Aboriginal history for the school newspaper” (Ontario English Curriculum, 2007, p. 48). Also, for the research expectation tag for this section, one example provided, asks students to engage by, “conducting interviews with community members, experts on a topic, or witnesses to an event” (Ontario English Curriculum, 2007, p. 48). Likewise, in the Media Studies strand, to develop critical literacy, the example provided, asks students to, “identify the characteristics that signal Canadian content and interests in a Canadian television program” (Ontario English Curriculum 2007, p. 53). A similar example is also provided in the grade nine applied course, where students can “identify diverse views on identity revealed by the panelists in a television town hall meeting” (Ontario English Curriculum, 2007, p. 57). Comparable examples could be found in the grade ten curriculum, though sometimes in different strands or specific expectations.

The second “C”, cosmopolitan, or teaching students to see themselves as global citizens, and the sixth and ninth “C”, critical and community, are most evident in the critical literacy expectation, located in at least one specific expectation of each of the four strands and in both grades. For example, in the specific expectation, Reading for Meaning, the expectation tag “critical literacy,” teachers are required to help students identify, “the perspectives and/or biases evident in both simple and complex texts and
comment on any questions they may raise about beliefs, values, and identity (Ontario English Curriculum, 2007, p. 46). Case and Clark (1997), and Hanvey (1982), argue that students need to develop a “global perspective,” in order to become global citizens. As these students gain a more global perspective, they become “better equipped to compete in the world today, promote cross-cultural understanding, and will be more likely to fight for social justice” (Bender-Slack, 2002, p. 20). Developing a “global perspective” is implied when students Reading for Meaning are asked to compare the “portrayal of adolescent issues in two short stories from different cultures” (Ontario English Curriculum, 2007, p. 45). This is further reinforced in the Reading and Literature Studies Strand, where the specific expectation requires students to explore “a variety of student and teacher selected texts from diverse cultures and historical periods” (Ontario English Curriculum, 2007, p. 73). The example provided suggests students’ use, “an electronic database to locate information from various sources about religious or cultural practices of an ethnic group different from their own” (Ontario English Curriculum, 2007, p. 73). Consequently, global citizenship in the English curriculum could be viewed as implicit infusion, since the variety of texts available to students is dependent on the individual teacher’s choices of global texts and assignments that reflect global issues.

The third, fourth, fifth, seventh “C’s”, communication, content, curiosity and creativity respectively, are developed through the types of assignments students are asked to complete, the areas of content focus in the strands, in the frequency of opportunities students have to make choices about the texts they read, research topics they choose, and issues they debate. Students learning Bennett’s (1995) ‘intercultural competence’ could be viewed as demonstrated in the Communication strand, where the overall expectation Speaking to Communicate has the expectation tag, Develop Interpersonal Speaking Strategies, where students are expected to “demonstrate an understanding of a few different interpersonal speaking strategies and adapt them to suit the purpose, situation, and audience, exhibiting sensitivity to cultural differences” (Ontario English Curriculum, 2007, p. 57). Also, throughout the strands, examples of students communicating their ideas by preparing speeches for debates in the class, writing letters to the principal, school council, an editor, or an article for a newspaper, developing graphing organizers and mind maps, producing media texts for several different purposes and audiences,
reinforce all these “C’s.” For example, in the strand of Media Studies, the specific expectation, *Producing Media Texts*, provides the example of students creating or locating a, “TV public service announcement to inform teens about a social issue or health topic” (Ontario English Curriculum, 2007, p. 53). In most of the prompts and examples in all four strands, emphasis on student autonomy and choice, inclusion of regular small group discussions, providing a wide range of topics, various modes of texts, and meta-cognition of skills, provide students ample opportunity to actively engage in creative ways, and constantly reflect on their own intellectual learning.

The eighth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth “C’s,” *civilizations, concern or caring, character* and *competence* become a little more difficult to measure using only the document. The curriculum’s focus on exposing students to multiple perspectives, both with texts, and with the sharing of ideas, could likely instill these “C’s.” Measuring it however, is difficult, unless the teacher evaluated the classroom climate, level of safety students felt in sharing ideas, students’ involvement in activities that helped others in their school, community, or in international organizations, and by evaluating students’ demonstration of their connections and understandings in their required assignment portfolios.

**Applying Ontario Civic Strands to English**

The above document analysis certainly demonstrates ways in which Osborne’s twelve “C’s” are represented in the specific expectations, prompts, and examples provided to teachers in the English curriculum. Since teachers “blend expectations from all four strands in order to provide students with the kinds of experiences that promote meaningful learning” (Ontario English Curriculum, 2007, p. 14), locating parallels of knowledge and skills students develop in these strands with those in the Ontario Civics course citizenship strands, provides another framework to explore citizenship education in the English curriculum. Though citizenship education is not a required expectation of English teachers as it is in the Ontario Civics course, English teachers can interpret the curriculum in a way that incorporate some, if not all of the expectations described in each of the Civic strands. A description of the strands in the Ontario Civics course curriculum (Ontario Civics Curriculum, 2005, p. 63), is provided on page 23:
Informed Citizenship
An understanding of key civics questions, concepts, structures, and processes is fundamental to informed citizenship. In a diverse and rapidly changing society that invites political participation, the informed citizen should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the reasons for and dimensions of democracy. In the Civics course, students will gain an understanding of contrasting views of citizenship within personal, community, national, and global contexts. As well, they will learn the principles and practices of decision-making.

Purposeful Citizenship
It is important that students understand the role of the citizen, and the personal values and perspectives that guide citizen thinking and actions. Students need to reflect upon their personal sense of civic identity, moral purpose, and legal responsibility – and to compare their views with those of others. They should examine important civic questions and consider the challenges of governing communities in which contrasting values, multiple perspectives, and differing purposes coexist.

Active Citizenship
Students need to learn basic civic literacy skills and have opportunities to apply those skills meaningfully by participating actively in the civic affairs of their community. Civic literacy skills include skills in the areas of research and inquiry, critical and creative thinking, decision-making, conflict resolution, and collaboration. Full participatory citizenship requires an understanding of practices used in civic affairs to influence public decision-making.

Informed Citizenship in the English Curriculum
Of the three civic strands, informed citizenship tends to be the strand that is least alluded to in the English curriculum expectations. Since the Civics curriculum is primarily understood by many teachers to extensively teach informed citizenship, areas for example such as the structure of government, or the dimensions of democracy, tend to not be addressed directly in the English classroom, or in its curriculum. The inclusion of informed citizenship tends to be dependent on individual teacher interpretation of the expectations to include this strand, or while addressing some of these issues as they arise in texts. For example, teaching a text like Lord of the Flies, teachers may explore themes around democracy with an assignment requiring students to create their own government, to explore decision-making and so forth.

Purposeful Citizenship in the English Curriculum
The Ontario English curriculum draws parallels most often to the Civic strand of purposeful citizenship in its expectation tags, teacher prompts and examples. This is primarily because all strands of the English curriculum promote developing students’ knowledge and skills by exposure to contrasting values, multiple perspectives, and issues
of identity. This is nurtured through the sharing of ideas in small and large group discussions, a student expectation in almost every section and in every strand. Students are expected to interact and engage in regular dialogue with other students, as well as compare and contrast various perspectives. Students are then directed to reflect on their own perspectives, and how they might have changed or enhanced their ideas after discussions with others.

Learning in the Reading and Literature Strand for example, encourages teachers to expose students to, “literary works drawn from a range of genres, historical periods, and cultures, both male and female writers, that represent a wide range of perspectives and reflect the diversity of Canada and the world” (Ontario English Curriculum, 2007, p.16). Purposeful citizenship is therefore examined through real life issues and events explored through a variety of literature teachers are encouraged to provide, and then complimented by specific expectations in the curriculum asking students to debate social issues, some even controversial, researching other cultures and events both historical and contemporary, or reading the newspaper or listening to the radio for current events.

The strand of Media Studies also encourages teachers to engage in purposeful citizenship through the exploration of a variety of media texts:

Students must be able to differentiate between fact and opinion; evaluate the credibility of source; recognize bias; be attuned to discriminatory portrayals of individuals and groups, such as religious or sexual minorities, people with disabilities, or seniors; and question the depictions of violence and crime” (Ontario English Curriculum, 2007, p.18).

Student exposure to media texts provides students opportunities to address their own role as citizens, and their responsibility as citizens, as they learn about unfairness, bias, and injustice of certain individuals.

**Active Citizenship in the English Curriculum**

In the English curriculum strands of Oral Communication and Writing Skills, students development of skills and knowledge necessary to become full participatory citizens is perhaps most prevalent, in these two strands. For example, in developing Oral Communication skills, the curriculum directs English teachers to provide students with, “numerous opportunities to listen and talk about a range of subjects, include personal
interests, cultural knowledge, school work, and current affairs (Ontario English Curriculum, 2007, p. 15). Similarly, in the Writing strand, the curriculum states that, “students benefit from opportunities to produce writing that is interesting and original and that reflects their capacity for independent critical thought” (Ontario English Curriculum, 2007, p. 17). These writing activities should also be such that students find them meaningful and challenging, “to think creatively about topics and concerns that interest them” (Ontario English Curriculum, 2007, p. 17). Though opportunities in listening and writing present engagement in “areas of research and inquiry, critical and creative thinking, decision-making, conflict resolution, and collaboration” (Ontario Civics Curriculum, 2005, pg. 63) as stated in the Civics Course curriculum strands, essentially the way topics are explored in texts, define the infusion of active citizenship. Students may write letters about issues important to them regarding their government, however they may not be made available to government specifically to influence decision-making.

**Conclusion**

Overall, the English curriculum does have ample opportunities to infuse citizenship education, though the focus tends to be on concepts of empathy and cultural understanding. Teachers are required to create a program of studies for students that encourage the exploration of multiple perspectives, controversial issues, the immigrant experience, anti-racist education, and discriminatory portrayals of individuals and groups in the media. Hence, the expectations of purposeful citizenship in the Civics Curriculum most closely parallel specific expectations in the English Curriculum strands. Nonetheless, informed and active citizenship outcomes may be addressed through individual teacher’s orientation toward a citizenship education pedagogy. In the end however, it is the selection of texts teachers choose, and what they do with them, which ultimately determines whether or not the Civic strands can be applied.
Citizenship Education and Muslim Students in Public and Islamic Schools

Introduction

This literature in this section is provided as an overview of current research on Muslim students, to be used to analyze the third research question: To what extent does the English citizenship educator provide an inclusive space for Muslim identities and perspectives, in public and Islamic school contexts?

Philosophical Similarities between Islamic Education and Citizenship Education

The desire to specifically include religious values and education by Muslim parents may never be addressed in public schools, however the practice of citizenship education pedagogy in English, may achieve some of the goals of Islamic education. Under the philosophy and practice of citizenship education, schools have a specific role, one much in line with what parents feel Islamic schools achieve. With a citizenship education approach, the school is primarily meant to be a model of democratic ideals, where knowledge and awareness of the community is established. At all levels, in the classroom, in the school, in relation to the school community, and with connections to global organizations, it asks teachers, administrators, and students, to communicate with one another. It is a place where the school philosophy embraces learning that fosters an understanding of shared values at school, at home, and in the community. This is not assimilating to a dominant culture many Muslim parents feel is threatening, but rather developing an attitude and awareness of shared cultural values, and implementing them in school.

The secular model of education according to Halstead (1986), focuses on personal values such as acquiring material well-being, personal happiness, individual fulfillment, and becoming a self-sufficient being. A citizenship approach to education instead moves away from the individual’s needs to examine the collective good for schools, communities, and the world. This emphasis on the collective instead of the individual could be appealing to Muslim parents, as their own values coincide with the collective as well.
Citizenship education involves participation of the individual in developing a consciousness of historical events, current events, knowledge of the interconnectivity of cultures and people, reading diverse literature, becoming multilingual, and being integrated into situations where open discourse of sensitive issues occurs. Citizenship education is not about assimilating or ‘de-Islamizing’ students, but rather it is centrally concerned with helping students develop a more holistic perspective. Case and Clark (1997) describe developing this in students in the following way:

Open-mindedness is a willingness to entertain new ideas and alternative ways of looking at people, places and events. This encourages two traits, recognizing differences in point of view, and entertaining contrary positions…Full-mindedness is defined as the inclination to make up one’s mind on the basis of adequate understanding of the whole story. It requires developing traits in students where they anticipate complexity, recognize stereotyping, and suspend judgment when warranted… Fair-mindedness refers to the inclination to give a fair hearing to alternative points of view.” It includes the aptitude to encourage the ability to empathize with others, and overcome bias (p.78-80).

Applying this to Muslim students, they are able to maintain their religious identity, be understood by others, and relate to others. Also, it allows for non-Muslim and Muslim students to engage in learning that helps them understand one another, without losing sense of ones’ own values or preferences. In light of the events of September 11th, Muslim parents anxiety about increased racism and Islamophobia may be put at ease, as all students come to a better understanding of one another.

According to Parker-Jenkins (1995), the Islamic Trust summarizes the key features of Islamic education as being: the acquisition of knowledge; imparting of knowledge; inculcating moral values; consideration of public good; and development of personality and emphasis on actions and responsibilities (p. 44). Citizenship education also encourages individuals to observe that intolerance, injustice, and inequality, exist in the world at all levels, and then encourages students to take positive action for the public good. This is not just education for the sake of international awareness, but rather it requires students to feel outraged by injustice and look for ways to be well rounded, and concerned with social justice (Davies, 2006; Richardson, 1979). A true citizenship education occurs when the student is stimulated to understand the global situation, and his or her role and responsibility, not only nationally, but also globally. This way,
students gain a true sense of a ‘global perspective’ (Case & Clark, 1997; Hanvey, 1982), a lens where they look at people, places, and things, around the world from every standpoint, historically, economically, environmentally, politically, culturally, and socially, and decide to act on their feelings and emotions for the betterment of humankind. This approach certainly embodies the collective good, moral values, social action, and responsibility, consistent with Islam.

Education has often been viewed as preparing students for life and work, for the global market, and as a way to teach people how to participate in society. Citizenship education requires students to examine the social, economic, political, religious, and cultural implications on their way of life, and to take action to make the world a better place for all citizens. For some, this may happen at different levels, but it does enforce an education that looks beyond the individual. Ideally, this approach to education would want to eliminate the pressures of religious and cultural boundaries or borders, but at the same time it would not want students to abandon their cultural affiliations either. For Muslim students, this may mean taking action to support the needs of their own community but in doing so, they develop the moral education that Muslims feel Islamic schools provide, and at the same time are not doing this segregated from the rest of society. In Islamic schools, it is extremely difficult to be exposed to different viewpoints and authentic dialogue when all students are taught to think about things in similar ways, in homogenous environments. In both school systems with a global approach, Muslim and non-Muslim students can experience diversity, and develop the critical thinking skills needed to understand the pluralistic society in which they live in.

**English Teacher and the Muslim Student**

Teachers play a very important role in developing a safe, equitable, and accommodating atmosphere for students. The teacher’s role is not to impose certain ideas, or form certain habits, but rather is there to provide appropriate influences, and create proper responses to these influences (Dewey, 1897). Often however, this depends on how well the teacher reflects and deals with his or her own personal views and knowledge of cultures. For example, the non-Muslim secular school teacher’s understanding of addressing the needs of Muslim students, can be quite complex,
especially when teachers do not have any prior knowledge of Muslim culture. From daily and Friday prayers, taboo subjects, fasting during Ramadan, misunderstanding of the hijab, the role of women in Muslim society, and language needs, the list for these teachers is elaborate. For the most part, teachers have the capacity to develop the aptitude to understand other cultures, precisely because of the nature of their day-to-day realities. Teachers instinctively attempt to adapt and reflect on their practice in order to meet the needs of their students, and therefore develop some awareness of student needs based on gender, race, or religion.

An analysis of teacher’s range of views of South Asian students in schools in Birmingham for example, revealed that many teachers were positive advocates of the different faiths. The more fervent teachers’ views generally suggested that all religions carried importance for those individuals practicing it, and as such, both religion and pupils ought to be given the respect they deserved. Nonetheless, the association of religion with culture had distorted the image of Islam for teachers (Abbas, 2002). Although teachers were quite willing to respect Muslim culture, most responses to questions about the particular culture were uncertain. Yet, in this study, it was apparent that teachers made it known that they truly empathized with the realities of pupils, and the cultural, and social ‘baggage’ that they took with them to school (Abbas, 2002).

Zine (2001) presents the relationship of teachers with Muslim students as rather problematic in Canada. She suggests that Muslim students feel some teachers have patronizing attitudes and assumptions because they misunderstand Islam, and as a result, make assumptions that reinforce stereotypes. Also, misunderstanding of the hijab by teachers is problematic when they view it as a symbol of submissiveness, or Muslim girls coming from families that do not value the education of females. Within these relationships with teachers, the identification of difference as foreignness is an attitude that often frames the relationships between Muslim students and teachers (Zine, 2001). Accordingly, this often leads to low teacher expectations because of ethnicity, and leads to negative evaluation and bias in assessment (Zine, 2001).

On a pedagogical level, citizenship education pedagogy could help counter many of these issues Zine addresses. This is because it allows Muslim students and teachers to connect in more meaningful ways, as teachers become more aware of the
issues and the communication between the two improves. Teachers are expected with this approach to question their own assumptions and stereotypes about all people. Also, when Muslim students feel that their viewpoint is equally considered in classroom discourse, that they are not being silenced, communication between teachers and students is more open and authentic. Learning becomes more meaningful, and assessment reflects more relevant deeper understandings. Students begin to feel less marginalized as they develop stronger relationships with their teachers.

In public schools in Canada, students most often complained that they felt isolated and excluded by peers, based on others’ misunderstanding of their culture (Zine, 2004). As the connection between teachers and students, as well as Muslim and non-Muslim students deepens, so does their sense of belonging. The hijab for example would become a topic to be discussed openly in the classroom that could then lessen the mystery and misconceptions that many students and teachers may previously have thought. In preparation of discussion and location of teaching tools, teachers engage in further research and learning which when translated to their students, clarifies the issue simultaneously. A Muslim girl wearing a hijab in class brings a richness of experience and understanding to the dialogue when the material is presented. As students learn about each other’s stories through “narratives that illuminate how difference and resistance are concretely expressed within communities of struggle,” students from different cultures and positions come together in meaningful ways (Giroux, 1992, p.124).

**Muslim Perspective in the English Classroom**

It is because of the multiple perspectives that citizenship education takes, that Islam could be incorporated into the classroom successfully. As Muslims settling in Western countries continues to grow, and more and more people associate behaviour of certain Muslim people with the religion of Islam, increased knowledge of Islam, and Muslim culture requires more attention. For this reason, many scholars feel knowledge of Muslim peoples’ history, values, beliefs, and religion should be considered as part of curricular consideration (Moore, 2006; Wheeler, 2003). Moore (2006) suggests teaching about the contributions Muslim people have made to human civilization as a possibility.
For example, Muslims developed algebra, made advances in the science of optics, developed the *Cannon of Medicine*, a volume of medical knowledge and were highly skilled in engineering and architecture (p. 283). Sewall (2003), on the other hand, suggests presenting Islam and Muslim people not only in light of their accomplishments, but also providing the negative as well. He feels students should be exposed to more than one interpretation of ‘Jihad’ for example. At present he says, it is presented in American World History textbooks as, “struggle or ‘exertion’ and refers to any spiritual, moral or physical struggle…It is transformed into an esoteric form of Muslim self-improvement” (p. 9). This he says ignores some of the violent associations this word has to religious warfare past and present.

The inclusion of Islam into the curriculum presents various levels and approaches to consider, which can be both useful and problematic. Is it useful because at any level, the common stereotypes, prejudice, misconceptions, and intolerance that exist before learning about Islam could at the very least be reduced, however, presenting only one religious group and not others, becomes highly debatable and inequitable for students. Teachers therefore, have a responsibility to learn about the various world religions, and draw on commonalities, and universal values, to propagate enriched discussions around religion and culture. As Davies (2006) states, “one needs not just knowledge of contemporary events, crises, economics and cultural patterns, but also the confidence to tackle issues, which could be problematic in a fragile multicultural classroom” (p. 20).

Inclusion of Islam in the curriculum has most commonly been infused into the Social Studies or World Religions curriculum. It can however also be an integral part of any curriculum. In the music curriculum for example, students learn about diverse music styles all over the world, the regions in which these people live, and the people who produce it. In some cases students are even invited to bring in songs that express their ancestral or cultural heritage (Shehan, 1988). The English classroom on the other hand, provides a particular context where texts on Muslim or Arab countries, or by Arab and Muslim writers, can be infused into the curriculum. In some cases, this could very easily mean incorporating Muslim literature as part of the English curriculum, or classroom discourse. Hassan (2003) provides the example of, the novel *Midaq Alley*,...
which explores a neighborhood in Cairo impacted by British colonialism during World War II and *Returning to Haifa*, a short story that describes Palestinian settlement in the State of Israel. The bestseller *The Kite Runner* explores the violence experienced by people in Afghanistan under the Taliban, as well as the difficulties Muslim refugees experience in the West having to adjust to a new culture. All of these texts and many more present the perspective of Muslim writers, and the experiences of Muslim people in countries that are rarely studied, and for the most part are approved by school boards.

With inclusion of texts such as these, there are also cross-curricular opportunities for students to connect to topics studied in History, Social Studies, and Civics classes. It is also a space where teachers are able to move students beyond only facts, to discuss emotional, and social issues to increase empathy and understanding.

**Public and Islamic School Contexts**

It would be difficult in the Western world to find a parent that did not see the value in education, however, where and what knowledge children should acquire, is complex for some Muslim parents. It is important to point out that Muslims are not one homogenous group, but rather they represent a variety of political, cultural and religious standpoints (Osler & Hussein, 1995; Parker-Jenkins, 1995). For this reason, defining the purpose of education will never be unilateral or satisfactory for all Muslims, however some common beliefs about the purpose of education can be drawn.

For Muslim parents, educating their children is not just about achieving academic knowledge, but is also about learning and living according to the values held in their holy book, the Quran. According to Halstead (2004), there are three words in Arabic that translate into education; one emphasizing knowledge, one growth to maturity, and one the development of good manners. There is a significant area of overlap between these three words, however at the heart of the Muslim concept of education, is the aim of producing good Muslims with an understanding of Islamic rules of behaviour, and a strong knowledge of and commitment to the faith (p. 519). For Muslims then, Islam is not just a religion, but also a way of daily life (Kysilka, 1997), and is therefore a strong factor in decision making for parents. Muslim parents make choices about schools for their children based on how important acquiring Islamic
knowledge is. Muslim parents are most worried about the impact of assimilation practiced in public schools that threaten to ‘de-Islamize’ their children (Parker-Jenkins, 1995; Zine, 2007). Muslim parents that can afford private Islamic schools will often choose this form of schooling because of its emphasis on Islamic education, but also because of its ability to provide an environment that correlates with an Islamic way of life. Muslim parents that cannot send their children to private Islamic schools will likely choose Catholic religious schools that they feel are more in line with their religious values, instead of a secular school. To ensure then that their children are still learning Islamic values, they enroll their children in non-formal Quranic arrangements of moral training held after school, or on weekends (Daun & Arjmand, 2005). For Muslim parents, this knowledge is critical for their children to balance secular lifestyle pressures and retain their Islamic religious values.

**Muslim Parents Criticism of the Public System**

For many Muslim parents in Canada, the United States and Europe, their main criticism of the public education system is its lack of emphasizing religious values that develop students’ morality, accountability, values and responsibility (Daun & Arjmand, 2005; Osler & Hussein, 1995; Parker-Jenkins, 1995; Shaikh & Kelly, 1989; Zine, 2004). Many Muslim parents feel that what is taught at secular schools does not correlate with the values taught at home (Osler & Hussein, 1995). For these parents, a Muslim school does a better job of reinforcing home values at school, and provides a healthy atmosphere for a generation in the West without prejudice, misinformation about Islam, and negative social pressures (Kysilka, 1997). According to Zine (2001), Muslim students in public schools in Canada are continually negotiating multiple identities based on race, class, gender and ethnicity. They are regularly negotiating these identities within three conflicting cultural frameworks: the dominant culture, their ethnic culture, and Islam. Their schooling experiences can be challenging because their religious values and lifestyles can be difficult to maintain in a society based on often contradictory secular norms. They are often torn between their religious identity and the social pressure of conforming to the dominant culture. As a result, they develop a double persona, one at school, and one at home and in the community. Muslim parents
also feel that without a religious framework in schools, their children encounter social pressures such as dating, premarital sex, and alcohol use, all of which are contradictory to their faith (Haw, 1994; Parker-Jenkins, 1995; Zine, 2001, 2004). Girls feel pressure to conform to less modest forms of dress, often having to abandon the *hijab* or headscarf, and are often in situations of physical contact between males and females, that compromise Islamic boundaries of interaction. Many public schools have been able to make some provisions to address these needs of Muslim students. For example, clothing alternatives especially for physical education and swimming, halal food in cafeterias, music, art, exemption from sex education classes, facilities and time to pray, are accommodations that have been made by public schools (Haw, 1994; Osler & Hussein 1995). At present in Canada, public schools do not incorporate any religious education into their regular curriculum, however some schools do offer an option course, World Religions. Although this course is meant to provide an overview of all religions, it is often criticized for presenting a Christian slant to other religions, or a distorted and oversimplified version of Islam (Sewall, 2003).

Based on this, greater inquiry into the common practices that exist between public and Islamic schools could help bridge some of these concerns Muslim parents and students feel are not being addressed. Cross-examining the positive things English teachers do in each context to address Muslim social, emotional, and religious needs, has thus far not been explored, with this one particular subject area.
Chapter 3: Methodology

When a feminist interviews women: (1) use of prescribed interviewing practice is morally indefensible; (2) general and irreconcilable contradictions at the heart of the textbook paradigm are exposed; and (3) it becomes clear that, in most cases, the goal of finding out about people through interviewing is best achieved when the relationship of interviewer and interviewee is non-hierarchical and when the interviewer is prepared to invest his or her own personal identity in the relationship. (Oakley, 1980, p. 41 as cited in Roberts, 1981)

**Methodological Approach**

Ann Oakley (1980) stresses in the above quote, the importance of an interactive relationship between the researcher and the participant, in order to learn about peoples’ true perceptions and experiences. A qualitative approach to the study therefore enabled a direct role as researcher in the research process. This research project therefore is a qualitative study that combines life history, case study, and narrative inquiry. Unlike the traditional role of researcher Hales (2004) suggests, “where the qualitative researcher is seen as ‘objective’ and ‘detached’ from both the research and the research participants, the qualitative researcher plays an integral role within the research process itself” (p.47), when participants asked, I did not omit informing participants of my teaching and cultural background. Nevertheless, careful considerations of my own biases as a Muslim, and as an English teacher, were taken throughout the interviewing process and data analysis, by re-evaluating questions and revisiting ideas. Therefore, with a qualitative approach, careful analysis and documentation of the information provided using this methodology contributed to discerning how teachers conceptualize citizenship education and translate this to their students, and at the same time allowed analysis and consideration of my own position and potential personal bias in the research.

**Positioning Myself in the Research**

In order to position myself in the research, it is important to explain the reasons for choosing to undertake this study. Firstly, being of South Asian Muslim background, and an English Secondary teacher both in Alberta and in Ontario, this study was an opportunity to explore, as well as learn from the participants of the study. My own personal interest in the study emerged from my own natural gravitation toward South
Asian literature, as well as my concern for the portrayal of Muslims in the media. In my professional experiences teaching English, the lack of resources available in the schools I taught in around these personal areas of interest, I found to be severely deficient. Lastly, given the diverse nature of the student population within the Ontario schools, coupled with the highest number of Muslim immigrants settling in Ontario, I felt the application of this research could inform practice for teachers and strengthen pedagogical relationships with students, especially for those who feel marginalized by their cultural and religious identities.

My position therefore as a South Asian Muslim, and as an experienced English teacher, implored me to pay careful attention to my own ethnocentricities, my own teaching methods, so as not to influence the questions I asked my participants, my analysis of the data, or my subsequent findings. This required continual self-reflection, revisiting and re-reading of the data for further explanations and emerging themes. Also, the subsidiary questions of the thesis changed somewhat throughout the process in order to incorporate the participants’ experiences and perceptions as they directed the study. Also, as the themes and analysis emerged from their discourse, this furthermore enhanced the study questions.

**Methodology**

The methodology for this study went through a series of adjustments and changes due to external factors that could not be avoided. The original methodology proposed incorporated a vision similar to Denzin and Lincoln (1994) et al Creswell (1998), where “Qualitative Research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (p. 2). The original methodology proposed a sample size of four participants, two from each school context, using the methods of classroom observations, pre and post interviews of these observations, student focus groups, student assignments, and government documents for collecting data. The following table on page 37 illustrates the original proposed methodology:
Table 1: Overview of the Proposed Sample Size and Data Collection Techniques

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Context</th>
<th>Number of English Teachers</th>
<th>Interviews (per teacher)</th>
<th>Classroom Observations (per teacher)</th>
<th>Student Focus Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public School (1-2)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic School (1-2)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12-20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Collection

As demonstrated in the proceeding table, data collection was initially planned to be collected from two school contexts, public and Islamic, with two participants from each context. Ethical approval was sought from three Toronto school boards, however only one school board granted permission to conduct research, with notable differences to the proposed methods. Permission to observe classrooms and to conduct student focus groups was rejected by all school boards. The one school board allowing the recruitment of teachers permitted only one half-hour interview with teacher participants, upon approval by school principals to recruit in their schools. Twelve principals in this board were emailed (see Appendix E) for permission to recruit teachers in their schools, however none responded. Thus, the method of recruitment for public school teachers evolved to snowballing for participants through school colleagues, and friends of friends. As a result, after some time, three public school participants were recruited, of which one was granted permission by her school principal, to observe her teach once in her school.

The Islamic schools did not require board approval and instead required permission to recruit from the principal only (see Appendix F). Two principals agreed, however, only one teacher participant from one school agreed to be part of the study. The following table on page 38 illustrates the final methodology used in the study:
Table 2: Overview of the Final Sample Size and Data Collection Techniques

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Context</th>
<th>Number of English Teachers</th>
<th>Interviews with Each Teacher Participant</th>
<th>Classroom Observations</th>
<th>Student Focus Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public School</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 per teacher</td>
<td>1 with one teacher</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Methods

To ensure the triangulation of data, the original methodology proposed multiple methods, classroom observation, interviews and focus groups of students, document analysis and artifacts. However, only one participant from each context used more than one method, interviews and classroom observation. Data on the others were based entirely on interviews.

One-on-one Interviews

All of the teacher participants were interviewed on two separate occasions for approximately sixty minutes each, using a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix A). Where classroom observations were allowed, the first interview took place before classroom observations began, and the second interview after all observations were completed. The interviews were recorded on a digital audio recorder and transcribed. Field notes were also taken after each interview, and were crosschecked with the audiotape. The information gathered from the first set of interviews, and the observations where applicable helped to shape the interview guide for the second interview.

Focus Group Interviews

Student participants from the Islamic school teacher’s classes were interviewed in two separate focus groups. A group of six male participants participated in one focus group, and a group of six female participants in another. The two sexes were separated to
insure that both sexes had equal voice and opportunity to express their opinions. A semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix B) was used, and most questions were the same in both groups. Each focus group interview lasted approximately sixty minutes and were recorded on a digital audio recorder, and transcribed. All students consented and parental consent was required before students were permitted to participate (see Appendix I).

**Observations**

Where permission was granted, classroom observations of the teacher participants were conducted to gain a better understanding of the teacher’s pedagogical strategies, and to gain insight into their interactions with their students. Permission was granted in the Islamic school, and one public school participant allowed me to come in and observe her teach once. The principal in this particular case was aware of my presence, though I learned after this observation that she assumed I had received board permission. The observations were semi-structured, recorded in a fieldwork journal and utilized as a means to observe the classroom situation, the relationship between teacher and students, and the educational environment created (see Appendix C). During each observation, field notes were recorded. These observations informed the second interviews, in order to cross-validate previous findings, and discover new ideas and themes that were not discussed in preceding interviews.

**Artifact Analysis**

Student assignments were to be considered as artifacts to understand how students apply citizenship learning outcomes in the classroom to their learning. Assignments were to be selected by the teacher and provided to the researcher, however none were provided. Instead, during observations, lesson plans and student assignment handouts were given to demonstrate potential student outcomes.

**Document Analysis**

Relevant literature, curriculum materials and policy documents that have been designed specifically for the English literature classroom were also included in the study. The gathering of documents took place throughout the duration of this study.
Data Analysis

Data analysis commenced during and after data collection. Data analysis was inductive, as emerging themes, categories, sub-themes and patterns were identified on an ongoing basis. To guide the initial data analysis process, a set of tentative themes and categories based on the literature were used to provide a focus for the ideas and concepts generated from the data. In addition to these initial themes, additional themes and categories emerged from the two contexts. The two contexts were compared simultaneously, and over time to each other, to identify their differences and similarities.

Data was also analyzed to match the responses given in interviews with observed classroom behaviour. Transcribing of all interviews was done myself to look for any ambiguities, or to develop more questions for the next interview. This was to ensure that the research questions were addressed, and that participants could clarify any questions they may have had. Post-observation questions were asked to probe into classroom practice specifically, as I had observed. The findings were then connected to the broader literature to establish linkages to the wider field.

Selection of Participants

For teachers, the sampling was stratified purposefully with maximum variation, in the sense that the study targeted two specific school contexts, the teacher participants were all teachers currently teaching English literature, had taught at least three years, worked in schools with ethnically diverse students, and incorporated a citizenship education pedagogy into their practice. The study included three teacher participants from the public school context, and one from the Islamic school context. One public school teacher with a substantial number of Muslim students in their classroom was required and selected for comparative purposes to the Islamic school, however all teachers in the study ended up having this demographic of students. Initially English consultants with the public school boards and citizenship experts at the Ontario Institute of Education were to be consulted for recommendations of teachers that were considered exemplary citizenship educators (see Appendix D). Though these emails were sent, no responses were received. As a result, snowballing for teachers through colleagues and friends became the only method of recruiting participants. These participants were contacted either over the
phone, or by email and were provided with a letter of information about the study (see Appendix G, H). In the information and consent letter, participants were invited to contact the researcher to set up a meeting to further discuss the research and to answer any questions the prospective participants may have about the research study.

At the first meeting, teachers that responded to participating in the study were asked a few general questions to ensure that participants fit the general criteria of the study. All participants confirmed they had taught English for at least three years, they were familiar with the concept of citizenship education, and that they had a high demographic of Muslim students in their classrooms. The consent portion of the letter that was previously given was collected to acknowledge a willingness to participate in the study (see Appendices G, H). The letters and consent highlighted that the participation in the research was voluntary and that non-participation did not carry any negative consequences. Initially, selection for participants would be based on identifying teachers that include citizenship education in their practice, however due to the challenge of finding participants in the recruitment phase of data collection, teachers instead were asked specific questions through the interview process, to demonstrate whether or not they incorporated a citizenship education pedagogy.

Where student focus groups were allowed in the Islamic schools, once the teacher participant was recruited, consent forms were given to the students of the Islamic school teacher. Students were provided with one letter asking for their written consent, and their parents consent, to be observed, and/or participate in the focus group, and/or to analyze their work (see Appendix I). Parents and students were given the chance to choose which ones they would like to participate in, if any. I explained to students that I would not be sharing information about who volunteered, or who did not volunteer. This was to ensure everyone’s privacy and prevent anyone from feeling pressured to participate in the research. It was also reiterated that only eight to twelve student participants would be chosen to participate in the focus group, and if more students applied, participants would be chosen based on equal representation of gender, and representation of various countries of origin. Students were reassured that their participation or non-participation would not have any negative consequences on their academics, nor should they feel
pressured to participate. They were also repeatedly reminded they could drop out of the study at any time.

All but two students out of twenty-seven students returned consent forms. As a result, more than the required number of students volunteered to participate in the focus groups. The final twelve were thus selected based on the teacher’s recommendation and knowledge of varied years of being in the school, and country of origin.

**Time frame**

The time frame fluctuated based on lengthy ethical approval rates, participant recruitment, and availability. In January 2008, the thesis proposal was submitted for ethics review to the University of Toronto. After approval was granted in February of 2008, the public school board ethical approval to various boards commenced, and principals of Islamic schools were contacted for permission to recruit teachers in their school. During the months of March 2008 and June 2008, data collection was collected from one Islamic school with one teacher participant. The notices of rejection by two public school boards were received in April 2008. Permission from one board was granted in May 2008 where recruitment began immediately, however with no participants by June of 2008, snowballing became the new method of recruiting. Teacher participants with this method were recruited from the months of June 2008 to April of 2009. The recruitment phase and data collection time frame initially predicted to require four months, extended to over fourteen months. Transcribing of interviews was ongoing as data was collected. Student focus groups in the Islamic school were conducted the month of May 2008.

**Limitations**

The initial methodology proposed for this study would have provided a more effective comparative study between teacher perspective, and the similarities and differences of citizenship education in the Islamic and public school contexts. The inability to recruit a larger participant pool from Islamic schools, and having a larger participant group of teachers from the public system, provided an unequal balance of data. As well, the sole Islamic school teacher’s data provided some risk to anonymity
given that the principal of her school, was aware of her participation. This indeed impacted her comfort level to disclose sensitive material, and influenced my decision to omit anything that may have caused any controversy for this participant. Secondly, the rejection by school boards to recruit teachers, made it impossible to observe public school teachers and compare what teachers say, with what teachers do. Consequently, without classroom observations and access to student assignments, data was almost entirely dependent on only what teachers shared in their interviews. For many of the participants, though they were forthright in their responses to questions, the challenge to recall their practice or provide examples of assignments were untapped, without immediate access to their materials in their classrooms.

**Ethical Considerations**

Some ethical issues needed to be considered throughout the study. Firstly, due to the sensitive nature of the topic, talking about the perception of Muslim people had the potential to trigger uncomfortable discussions for teachers. Also, as the interviewer with an English teaching background, and a Muslim background, ethical considerations as far as how participants might respond to questions, or how I might interpret responses, needed to be considered throughout the study. Also, during coding and reflecting on the findings, I found it challenging at times not to allow my own experience as a secondary teacher in English, or my familiarity with using English curriculum, formulate opinions around the participants teaching methods when they presented data either similar to, or different from my own methods.

**Dissemination of Results**

Though it is some time since the data was collected, I intend on providing a summary of the findings to the participants in this study, and if they wish, a copy of the thesis for them to read. Also, it is my hope that as an English teacher now teaching in the Toronto area, I will be able to inform my colleagues of the findings, and help them to develop citizenship education outcomes in their own practice. This thesis will also be available for anyone who wishes to read it. Lastly, I intend on taking the knowledge gained from this thesis, and apply it to my own practice as an English teacher.
Chapter 4: Introduction to the Research Participants

Introduction

Chapter two described how the Ontario English Curriculum 2007, could be interpreted for implicit and explicit opportunities for English teachers to infuse citizenship education into their teaching practice. Since this curriculum does not instruct English teachers directly to be citizenship educators, sampling of the participants for this study was not based on their expertise in citizenship education, or on recommendations for experts in this field. Despite this, each of the participants offered through their interviews, and in classroom observations where allowed, a sense of how they conceptualized and infused citizenship education pedagogy into their practice. In this chapter I will present a brief description of the four participants, their school contexts as it relates to the sampling criteria, and as discussed in chapter 2, the characteristics that exemplify each of the participants as citizenship educators For the purpose of anonymity, all of the participants have been given pseudonyms. In the case of participant Alia, as she was the only teacher from the Islamic school context to participate, less personal details have been provided to protect her anonymity. The following table outlines the sample criteria. To reiterate, all teachers in the sample taught for at least three years secondary English, had a high demographic of Muslim students in their classrooms, and represented multiple perspectives with varied race, sex and ages of the participants.

Table 3: Participant Profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Number of Years Teaching</th>
<th>School Context</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Classroom Dominant Cultural Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Igor</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>English Spanish</td>
<td>10, 12</td>
<td>Columbian</td>
<td>Persian, Chinese Korean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carly</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>11, 12</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Pakistani, Indian Sri Lankan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rakesh</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>English Media Studies</td>
<td>9, 10, 11, 12</td>
<td>South Asian</td>
<td>South Asian, Sikh, Asian, Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alia</td>
<td>3 (in current school)</td>
<td>Islamic</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>9,10</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>All Muslim (Pakistani, Arab, Somali)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Classroom dominant cultural groups are based on the participants’ comments and not on school statistics.
Participant Personal Profiles and Classroom Context

Igor

Igor was youngest and least experienced teacher in terms of the number of years he had taught, however, he was the only teacher in the study with a History teachable, and familiarity with the Civics curriculum. Igor graduated with a Bachelor of Honors in Art, and a Bachelor of Education from a University in Toronto. His only teaching experience was in his current public school, for the past three years. Early in his career he taught Civics for one year, but with a teachable also in English, he was at the time I met him, teaching grade ten and twelve English, including Post-colonial English, and Spanish classes. He described his public school to be in an affluent area with largely Persian, Chinese, Korean, and Caucasian students. Though he was aware many of his students identified as Muslim, Igor described them as “progressive Muslims.” His extra-curricular involvements at the school were as a soccer coach, as the teacher in charge of the school Literacy Club, coordinator for the Holland student exchange trip, Gamers Club, and school fundraiser for the Canadian Cancer Society.

Igor was born in Chile and migrated to Canada in the 1980’s. Often in our discussions, though he felt a deep connection to his roots, his pride for Canada was apparent as he often expressed having a very positive experience growing up in Canada. Igor describes his classroom as a relaxed environment, where humor and a laid-back personality help him establish positive relationships with his students. Igor gave me two reasons why he became a teacher. Firstly, he credits a History teacher that helped turn him onto the study of History and develop a passion for the subject. He particularly enjoyed the critical questioning in classes with this teacher, as well as the relevance of the subject to his own life. This led to his second reason, the desire to make learning more relevant for Hispanic students who as a community, he felt were experiencing limited success in Math and English. Though Igor’s current aspiration remains a desire to work with Hispanic youth, he has not yet had this opportunity thus far.
Carly

Carly was the oldest participant in the study, both in age, and in years of experience teaching. She was born in a small town in Ontario, one she described to be “homogenous,” yet she gained some of her knowledge of other cultures, living with South Asian roommates, traveling to India with them, and being engaged to a Pakistani Muslim at one time in her life. Through our interviews, she often referred to the “white middle-aged” woman, quite aware of the racist attitudes and stereotypes that existed from this standpoint.

Carly has been teaching English to grades ten and twelve for twelve years. Carly completed her Bachelor of Education at the age of forty, however, before becoming a teacher, she had a rich tapestry of work experience that complimented a study on citizenship education. Carly initially graduated with a Masters in Adult Education, where she became involved in anti-racism work through theatre and affiliated government organizations, as well as working extensively with women’s groups. When asked why Carly became a teacher, she explained it was largely out of necessity. In 1995, major cutback to the Arts left jobs in theatre and anti-racism work scarce. As a single mother she felt she needed to rethink how to make a living and still include her passion for social justice work.

Carly had also recently completed her doctoral thesis. In brief discussions of her own work, it was clear that she was also concerned about minority students particularly South Asian and Muslim students, as well as social justice in the classroom. While working on her doctorate, Carly worked with the Transformative Learning Centre at the University of Toronto, and was a graduate assistant to a professor highly involved in citizenship education research.

Carly described her current public school to be in a high needs area with a large group of South Asian, Pakistani, and Sri Lanka students. She was noticeably aware of the number of Muslim students in her classroom, and commented on them being a growing demographic in her school. Carly was the only public school participant I observed. She sought permission from the principal who agreed to allow me in the classroom. While observing Carly teach, I noticed immediately how at ease her students felt in her presence. They spoke openly and respectfully on controversial issues and current events
appeared to be a normal part of their daily discourse in her class. Her walls were full of student work, and she had newspapers and relevant magazines all over the place for students to read. At the time when I observed her, students were reading independent novels. The text titles were culturally diverse, and often representative of the student’s personal cultural background. I asked students to share their selection process with me of which many said, it was based on their teacher’s recommendation. This commitment to cultural awareness also transcended into Carly’s commitment to getting school-wide initiatives going, such as a play on the Naam King Massacre, and a trip to the science centre to see the Sultan’s of Science Exhibition.

**Rakesh**

Rakesh has taught English for eight years. He has taught grades nine, eleven, and twelve English in both streams, Media Studies, and has taught World Issues at one time. Rakesh graduated with a Bachelor of Honors degree in Arts, and a Bachelor of Education. He had also completed his English Honour’s Specialist, and was in the midst of putting together a few chapters for a set of new English anthologies and teacher resources. These texts have since been published and are being used by some Ontario high schools. His current public school is a secondary school combined with middle school. He describes the school student population as mixed, with students of all backgrounds trying to make some sort of cultural identification. Nevertheless, he described the school as predominantly Asian and South Asian, and the dominant religious groups as Muslim and Sikh. Due to the large number of students who identify as Muslim, Rakesh mentioned the school having an Imam Club, a designated space where Muslim students could gather to pray.

Rakesh identifies as South Asian. He was born in England and came to Canada at a young age. Rakesh returned to England after he graduated where he worked odd jobs, supply taught, lived on the streets, or in hostels. His first teaching job was in England as a music director in an elementary school for two years. He returned back to Canada and has been teaching in the same school the last six years. He became the English Curriculum Leader at this school recently. Rakesh has a long history of being committed to social service work. In high school, he recalled being President of the Student Council and
involved in the Amnesty club. He continues to be involved in numerous extra-curricular involvements at his current school such as teacher advisor to the Student Council, soccer coach, and the literacy committee. He was successful at bringing citizenship educational opportunities to his school through student council. The first was taking a number of students, both leaders of the school and more at risk students, to hear Stephen Lewis speak about global perspectives, and the changing climate of global citizenship. Others Rakesh mentioned were bringing in Arshad Manji to talk about what it means to be a woman in the developing world, and the author Lawrence Hill to speak on mixed races and his novel, *The Book of Negroes*. As well, student council holds an International Bazaar every year at the school where students set up booths of countries and their cultures from all over the world. Students are encouraged to join booths that are not their own cultural background as a way to gain exposure to various cultures.

_Alia_

Alia is my only participant from the Islamic school context. She has been teaching English in her school for three years, though she has a lot more experience teaching elsewhere in other countries. Previously she has taught in private schools in the Middle East. She has teaching qualifications, but she is not a certified Ontario teacher. She was hired to teach English in her school in large part because of her teaching experiences in Islamic school contexts. Alia confirmed that every student attending the school was a practicing Muslim, but diverse in terms of where they came from. This meant students came from Somalia, Pakistan, and various Arab countries, with a few students having a Caucasian mother.

Observing Alia teach, she had a natural positive rapport with her students. She allowed her students to sit where they liked, however I noticed that males and females tended to sit together in large clusters. The students seemed very at ease to share their ideas and opinions during class discussion, though her female students were a lot more enthusiastic to raise their hands and share. I observed the male and female students bantering back and forth during discussion, a composition of the classroom discussion that Alia credited for creating in her classroom. Though contact between male and female students was obviously less overt than in a public school, I did not observe complete
segregation. Though Alia mentioned many teachers in the school were quite rigid when it came to male and female students interacting, she felt it was a necessary part of preparing her students to interact in the workplace living in the Western world.

**Conclusion**

This chapter provided a brief description of the participants and highlighted how they complimented the sampling criteria. The sample is purposeful in terms of being a varied group based on age, race, and gender of the participants, they all have more than three years of experience teaching English, all participants taught in ethnically diverse populations with exposure to a large population of Muslim students, and all participants though varied in their exposure, had some knowledge of citizenship education. Though none of the participants were recommended as citizenship education exemplars, nor did any of the participants verbally identify themselves as “citizenship educators,” all of the participants had experiences that have developed their “intercultural competence” (Bennett, 1995). All participants were well traveled, had a diverse group of friends, read or watched the news regularly, and were committed both in the past, and currently to volunteer work and social justice related initiatives, professionally, in their personal lives, and/or in school life.
Chapter 5: Conceptualizing Citizenship Education in the English Classroom

Introduction

This chapter presents the four teacher participants’ conceptualization of citizenship education in their practice. It simultaneously explores the central question and second question of this thesis: How do English teachers conceptualize citizenship education using informed, purposeful, and active citizenship learning expectations in public and Islamic school contexts in Toronto? In what ways do participants’ teaching practice and their text choices influence dimensions of citizenship education?

Though citizenship educational outcomes are not as prescriptive for English teachers as they are in the Civics curriculum, it was evident through the participants’ discussions on their learning aims as English teachers, the themes they wanted students to connect to in class discussion, that the infusion of citizenship education into their practice, were all seemingly natural for these participants. Through their rich discourse and in some cases classroom observations, what they say and do as English teachers helped to conceptualize and reflect on the potential for citizenship education in the English classroom. This chapter has been divided into three sections: the participants’ knowledge and understanding of citizenship education; the infusion of citizenship education into their practice with English curriculum expectations in mind; and evidence in their practice of active citizenship outcomes.

Each section is divided based on themes that emerged as the teachers presented their views in the interview process. Though I focus my research findings on the commonalities that were revealed between the participants, wherever relevant, I highlight some of their differences with specific examples of comments individual participants made. In drawing attention to the similarities, I was able to see how English teachers conceptualize citizenship education with a curriculum that does not directly inform their practice this way. Similarly, by accentuating their differences, I was able to demonstrate the way in which teachers infuse citizenship education into their practice in a way that is informed, purposeful, and/or active. It is in the differences that participants revealed their role as citizenship educator, the degree to which a citizenship approach can be infused, as well as the potential for addressing citizenship learning outcomes that are informed, purposeful, and active.
One of the most notable queries of how teachers conceptualize, and understand citizenship education in the English classroom, was the disconnection and disassociation to the term “citizenship education,” despite the participants’ noticeable application of a citizenship education pedagogy to their practice. Though all of the participants expressed knowing what “citizenship education” is, or hearing the term before, none of the participants identified themselves as citizenship educators.

Many of the participants suggested that the term carried negative connotations, was too broad to define, and had a civic focus. In principle however, the participants felt aspects such as social justice, creating critical thinkers, being democratic in the classroom, and teaching students to be good citizens, were relevant, if not an important element of their learning aims. For example, Carly directly stated that she did not identify herself as a “citizenship educator.” Carly was the participant probably most aware of citizenship education theory from her learning experiences in her doctoral studies, however, she spoke about the complexity of defining a concept so broad, and assigned a “range of meanings.” She chose not to describe herself this way, due to the political nature of the term. She felt it was “masking a rather racist term for nationalism or xenophobia.” Despite not identifying as a citizenship educator, Carly considered herself advocating for citizenship educator aims, such as “trying to retain a social justice focus in my teaching,” as well as racism, gender and homophobia discussions in her classroom, and as part of the school citizenship initiatives.

Similarly, Rakesh’s response also viewed citizenship education as loaded in a sense, political in nature, and part of the Civics course. Though, he felt that since this is where the act of citizenship is in terms of teaching students to vote, and the government system in Canada, he did not identify as a citizenship educator. Upon further discussion however of whether or not Rakesh identified as a citizenship educator, Rakesh spoke about English having a role in citizenship education different from the Civics course:

I don’t phrase it that way because I don’t think that I teach specifically to the idea that this is what it means to be a citizen…The other part of citizenship is specifically involvement in very technical elements of citizenship, like being politically active. That part gets covered quite a bit in the Social Science courses. My goal is more as citizen to be socially active. I’m not asking you to go vote or be part of a political party, but you have to go out there to change peoples’ minds
first. People vote based on what they know or think they know. You educate people and they’ll make the right decision.

Igor also had some difficulty defining the term on its own, despite the fact that he taught the Civics course for one year and had some degree of knowledge of citizenship. When asked to define citizenship education, he described it as:

Such a broad topic…I would assume it has to do with what Canada is about or the responsibilities of Canadian citizens and what they require of you…but no I have never actually heard the term. I would define it as producing critical thinkers who can think for themselves and don’t accept everything at face value, who question and who none-the-less after they question in one way or another, get involved with whatever it is they are questioning or thinking, be it just through discussion with other people, emailing, petitions, writing letters, even if it’s protesting as long as it’s not hurting anybody.

With further prompting, Igor admitted that his school board’s mandate included a mission statement with the words democratic citizens somewhere in its mission statement. Though Igor’s thoughts on defining the word democracy seemed somewhat conflicted, as the discussion moved toward creating democratic citizens, his ideas became more inline with the research surrounding citizenship educators:

For me, producing democratic citizens entails two things, one being conscious and critical thinkers because I think one of the great things about democracy is the liberty if offers people. You have to be able to think for yourself…so critical thinking is huge for me in the classroom in terms of producing democratic citizens…you can be as critical as you want but you always have to be accepting of other peoples’ values and beliefs, even if you disagree with them. That’s very important regardless of religion, race, culture, and gender. You have to be willing to accept that there are different points of view, and that to me is the democratic part of the curriculum. Where it says, producing democratic citizens, that to me is critical thinkers that will think on their own and be accepting, even if they disagree.

For Alia, the term citizenship education was more readily accepted as a part of her understanding and practice because she felt it was very closely linked to being a good Muslim. In order to compare her thoughts on what a “good Muslim” is and a “good citizen,” she said the following, “Qualities of a good Muslim would be honesty, caring about others, following whatever the Qu’ran says as a Muslim, whatever we have to follow, and knowing your responsibilities, your roles, and being fair and just.” As discussed in chapter 1, Alia’s definition of citizenship education was similar to
Westheimer’s and Kahne’s (2004), “good citizen -personally responsible, participatory, and justice oriented” (p. 237). This was also evident in my observations of students in the Islamic school. They were exposed daily to lessons on what it means to be a “good” Muslim, both in Alia’s class, and in daily lecture sessions that all students attended with an Imam. Alia spoke about how similar these moral lessons were to doing and being good citizens. In defining citizenship education, she explained that:

You can’t be a good Muslim if you are not a good citizen. If you know Islam in the true sense, citizenship is very much a part of being a Muslim, being a good member of the society, being a productive member of society. If you truly know about Islam, if you are a good Muslim, you are a good citizen, and if you are a good citizen, you automatically become a good Muslim.

Questions that directed the participants to define citizenship education on its own proved to be challenging, however, as participants talked more about their practice, and I prompted them with questions that alluded to citizenship theory, or curriculum expectations that used the word citizenship, all of the participants were able to draw more connections to citizenship education aims. When participants were asked to explain what they think the English curriculum is suggesting regarding expectations that ask teachers to educate for responsible and active citizenship, all of the participants were able to provide a clearer understanding of what this might mean. For example, when I asked Igor what the learning aim in the English Curriculum that asks teachers to educate for active and responsible citizenship means to him, he explained:

I think that goes back to addressing issues of tolerance, issues of participation in the community perhaps. I think participation is the toughest one to teach because you can’t get someone to participate if they don’t want to. That one is tough, but I think in an ideal world, you’d want not only critical thinking and tolerance, but also participation, however the participation is very difficult. Addressing issues of tolerance and issues of difference, and addressing a variety of issues that deal with citizenship, whether they are global, or local, they are gay rights, they are environment I think as an educator, that’s your job.

Alia’s interpretation of responsible and active citizenship in the English classroom was comparable to Igor’s response. She also spoke about community involvement, and addressing issues of tolerance. In addition, Alia commented on using texts to help with this, “If you have a story or a text where you can help them to become good citizens, you could relate it to that.” Alia also gave the following example:
Even if you read something in the text like in *Julius Caesar*, you discuss politics and discuss leaders to create an awareness of what is a good leader and what is not a good leader. So when you create that awareness they are able to judge leaders. It’s just creating an awareness really...so somewhat relate the text to what is happening in a city, or in a country I guess. That would somewhat help. It’s not like they would become excellent or perfect citizens, it’s a gradual sinking in with every text that you do. You give them a little of the community, and how to live in a community and how to do things for people, without expecting anything in return. In that sense you can help them to become better citizens.

Both Rakesh and Carly connected educating for responsible and active citizenship as a way of guiding students to be more culturally aware, to be inclusive of others, and to accept and understand difference as a part of the Canadian mosaic. In Rakesh’s words:

I would define that as to understand whom the people are who make up the citizens of Canada and more significantly, what does it mean to live with other people. Good citizenry means that you understand where you’re from, who you are, and what cultural things are important to you, but then also the diversity that you have. How do you live with other people? I mean it’s good all and all to know about the differences, but it means very little unless you can live with those differences.

Carly in addition, discussed it as a way of assisting students in understanding their diasporic identities in the formation of citizenship. In her words:

Inclusive education is that part of citizenship education that I think is so vital not to lose, and in our effort to try and forge some sort of Canadian identity, it isn’t at the cost of ignoring that kids are bringing in complex dual identities, hybrid identities to our schools.

For all of the participants, though words like democratic, developing good citizens, cultural awareness and inclusiveness, multiple perspectives, critical thinking, consistently directed the discussion toward citizenship educational aims, none of the participants felt a citizenship focus drove or defined their practice. Despite this, Rakesh and Carly did feel it was a definite factor in designing their approach to teaching. The following quote from Carly illustrates a similar theme that emerged with all of the participants:

Well I would say yes, but it’s not what I’d explicitly itemize. It’s fine of you to do that with the Social Sciences and yet I think if you compared my curriculum with some of the more traditional English teachers, you could definitely see what I’m going for is driven by a desire to assist kids in figuring out their social identities and that is key to citizenship.
With all of the participants, teasing out whether their citizenship expectations were deliberate, or fulfilling parallel aims in the English curriculum expectations, proved to be somewhat challenging, and certainly not conclusive. The connection was indeed apparent, and English teachers certainly could relate to citizenship education at the very least as a component of their practice, and learning aims.

**Teacher Perspectives on Infusing Citizenship Education in the English Classroom**

In order to understand how English teachers educate for active and responsible citizenship, as well as infuse citizenship expectations into their practice, the citizenship strands as defined in chapter two of the Ontario Civics Curriculum, have been used as a framework to identify these two components.

**English Democratic Classrooms**

For all of the participants, creating a democratic environment in their classrooms was very important in order to create a space of inclusivity, acceptance, and respect. This they felt was particularly important in English because of the numerous class discussions that occurred in class. For Rakesh, modeling democracy both as a teacher, and as a way to establish classroom management, was important to him for not only creating a democratic classroom environment, but also as a way to teach students to become better citizens. Rakesh spoke about his role as a citizenship educator in the following way:

> Your students will always be a reflection of how you are and any of the things that I expect from them, I would have modeled first. This is how I think it means to be fair, this is how I think it means to be inclusive, and this is what I think it means to be courteous. They will mimic whatever it is and whatever environment you create. We talk about good citizenry, so how do I be the citizen in the classroom? Am I demonic, or am I someone who is going to facilitate them, someone they are not afraid of.

Rakesh also demonstrated how a citizenship approach could be infused into classroom routines and class decision-making. For example, he asked students to choose their own deadlines, a way to empower them, and as a way to come to decisions more democratically:

> I really think the most important thing for me, the best parts of citizenry is the idea of a liberal democratic society that is open and where voices are heard.
That’s so important and that’s how a classroom runs as well…the one thing that is common that works for them is when kids feel empowered, when they get to pick their own deadlines. There are no zeroes and there are no late penalties, just stick to the deadlines you have. If I can empower students to feel like they can control things, to think for themselves as opposed to being prescriptive all the time, then it’s going to lend itself to people leaving a class, and leaving school, and seeing that this is how I should live my life as well. I shouldn’t be a sort of non-thinker that does what I’m told to, but thinks about it. I think that’s so important in terms to mean being a citizen of Canada.

When Igor was asked how he establishes a democratic environment in his classroom, Igor felt strongly that his laid back personality, a relaxed classroom environment, and using humor, helped him establish these boundaries and the rapport needed for classroom management. In terms of classroom expectations, Igor explained that he would tell his students, “You’re part of a community here and the only way a community can succeed is if you respect each other. You don’t have to necessarily like each other, but you have to respect each other, and I try to distinguish the difference for them.”

Igor was essentially implying tolerance, and not acceptance, which is contrary to citizenship education ideals. Though Igor believed that mutual respect would guarantee behavior, he seemed somewhat unaware of specific strategies to build this respect. For many teachers, classroom management is often one of the most crucial and critical pieces of teaching, and with more knowledge of citizenship education, it could be a way to build not only a democratic classroom, but also classroom management beneficial to both students and teachers.

All of the participants described teaching English as a way to examine self, the world, and identity. Based on the individual learning goals the English teachers expressed, all of them seemed to be cognizant and inclusive of hybrid identities, particularly for minorities, an area of citizenship education often criticized for ignoring the complexities of minorities and citizenship. Carly for example felt that inclusivity of students’ hybrid identities and citizenship were so closely related, she described examples in her teaching that enhanced this learning. Carly spoke of an assignment where she presented various articles to students with issues she felt they faced in their daily reality. This she described was a way to help students work through their own citizenship in
terms of a sense of belonging in their families, their cultural communities, and within the
Canadian framework. She described the three articles as follows; one that explored
frictions in the family based on generational conflict; another was on Brampton gangs,
and lastly an article on racism. Carly felt that helping her students to understand and work
through where they felt they belong, essentially connected to students’ questioning what
kind of citizens they saw themselves becoming. Carly reinforces this in the following
description of her role as an English teacher:

> What it is that I as a teacher think I am doing in addition to improving their
> English language skills? I think that connects to your question about what are
> some of your learning aims as an English teacher? Obviously it is to make
> meaning in the world and to come to self-understanding, and understanding of
> community, and understanding of roles within the world. I think through literature
> we imagine stories, and we come to understand people…I think texts should help
> them analyse the world and become critical thinkers.

Rakesh on the other hand, felt that asking students to be self-reflective and ask
essential questions was a way he felt he brought in a citizenship component to his
classroom. For example, when students examined texts, the essential questions he
described students should consider, always revolved around, “What am I doing? How am
I relating to the world around me? How do I impact the world? Does anything I do
impact anywhere else?” Similarly, in describing how he uses debate in his classroom, he
described it in the following:

> I don’t like the model of debate, but I like the model of perspectives. We’ll have
> small groups and we’ll come up with all of the positions to debate. The
> “position,” suggests that there’s one more position more right than the others. So
> here are all of the positions, how do we synthesize it? Then we have to rationalize
> why does that position even exist. I love the small group model of looking at
> issues and coming up with perspectives. That’s the model I think that’s most
> important of citizenship education, identifying and exploring reasons for those
> values, and where the commonalities are, and where we can compromise.

Rakesh also explained that he felt the focus in the curriculum tended to be on the
four strands of communication, though connecting his core philosophy of teaching
students to critically think and question, became a natural part of infusing citizenship into
the English classroom. Rakesh felt the revised curriculum had improved, because it was
less prescriptive, more open-ended, and allowed for a variety of text forms. Rakesh also
felt diversifying the text form was being more inclusive of forms that use technology, and adding more cultural diversity to his program.

Alia infused citizenship into her program in much the same way as she defined it, “being a good citizen, is being a good Muslim.” Alia spoke of not only making real-world connections, or cultural awareness, but also relating texts to Muslim identity and values:

Whenever I do a text I always relate it to something that is happening in the world, or something that would happen in his or her own peer group, or something that could happen within the community. I could draw a comparison between who they are, and who that person living in a different environment or culture, just relate the two, and it seems to make the students open up. Even bringing in the Muslim perspective. What would you have done as a Muslim person?

While observing Alia, it was evident that text discussion was mostly focused on discussing Muslim values as individuals, and as a community. She did discuss the importance of open-mindedness and multiple perspectives however, in some cases, even if she disagreed, she felt bound by school values and expectations to enforce these values in class discussions.

For all of the participants, teaching critical thinking skills, encouraging students to question, compare viewpoints, and learn about others’ responses, consistently came up in their views on teaching citizenship education in English. Nevertheless, the emphasis in the English classroom tended to be focused less on informed citizenship, and more naturally connected to purposeful citizenship. This was in large part due to the participants’ focus on the role of the individual, and understanding their own identity and perspectives as it relates to others.

**Active Citizenship in the English Classroom**

Though full participatory citizenship was not a prevalent component of the English classroom specifically, all of the participants spoke about their own commitments, initiatives, and involvements in school-wide citizenship activities. They also all spoke about encouraging their students to get involved in school-wide activities, however their reasons for this were not specifically citizenship driven. Rakesh was the only participant that provided a concrete example of where he connected the study of a
specific text, to students engaging in active citizenship. Rakesh commented that he didn’t feel he did anything specific in terms of active involvement, but he did encourage this when students showed an interest in certain issues. For example, Rakesh discussed how while students were reading *Lord of the Rings*, he encouraged them to get involved in a community project rebuilding of natural space, a prevalent theme in the text he described as showing the “encroachment of the industrial verses bringing back green spaces.” For Rakesh, he felt that the school is a “model for building good citizens,” however, social activism or active citizenship were in the daily activities, the expectations of the classroom, that helped motivate students to be socially responsible:

> Sometimes it’s very simple things where I think the best social activism things happen, where kids don’t think it’s cool to bully someone because they have an accent, or you’re being rude to someone during a presentation. Those are things I am actually most impressed about. That’s a huge difference when they are legitimately responsive to other people…The kids who because of this idea that looking at the life they are going to live and something as simple as they use the recycling bin now, or they learn the names of the people in class because they are no longer afraid. That’s the type of social activism that spreads much further because it doesn’t ask them to do a lot, but it asks them to do something mentally. That it’s so important to reach out, to build connections with other people.

For Carly, her commitment to cultural consciousness, inclusivity of all students, and anti-racism initiatives were not only a part of her teaching philosophy, but also extended to implementing school-wide initiatives she said of “social relevance and citizenship relevance.” In her words:

> So there tend to be cultural offerings out there in Toronto appropriate for students that will address different backgrounds, and you know we talk in terms of race and representation, so I’m always trying to look at what's out there and what will be good for students to see. I’ve been able through the documentary film festival in general to find something. It might be a documentary on child soldiers in Africa that was one year...so it’s my commitment to looking at what’s outside the school that would be of curricular, well of social relevance, of citizenship relevance, since that’s a focus, and promote discussion and broaden their knowledge.”

In her current school and in previous schools, Carly made a conscious effort to consider the needs of dominant cultural groups in her classroom by approaching administration with opportunities to explore experiential learning on field trips. For example in her previous school, the majority of students were Chinese Canadian kids.
Carly took her students to see a play about the Naam King Massacre and in her current school of largely South Asian students, Carly brought to the school’s attention a University of Toronto initiative, and subsidized trip, for students to the Science Centre to see the Sultans of Science Exhibition. She explained this trip in the following way:

The Sultans of Science exhibition which is on Islamic civilization and the period between 7th Century and 16th Century which was a very rich period of invention in Baghdad and other areas of the broader middle East and the Arabic world. There were many notable inventions coming out of that period and in edition at the Science Centre there was the film called Journey to Mecca, and it retold the travels of Ibn Battuta.

Igor and Alia did not have examples of connecting English learning aims to school-wide citizenship activities. Igor expressed an overall feeling of students being apathetic and uninterested in being actively engaged citizens, however he did feel it important to keep his students informed of how to change this, and be participatory:

This word active has to do with participatory and this is very difficult to encourage…Today’s generation is very much glued to the Internet. This is my own prejudice. I find they are very stationary in terms of the home. This doesn’t mean that they are not good citizens, that they are not tolerant, or good citizens, they are just not active outside of the home…I advocate never the government letter but I always advocate your generation is inheriting a lot of problems that we have no easy answers to, and it’s going to be up to you to change it, and how are you going to do that? There’s agencies and societies out there that help you with issues of equality, poverty, issues of environmental destruction, depletion of the Ozone layer, anything like that. I always mention it, but I don’t reinforce it.

Ironically, Igor was the teacher sponsor for a Holland exchange trip for students in his school, an extra-curricular involvement that embodied elements of informed, purposeful, and active citizenship outcomes. When I probed Igor’s reasons for participating in this activity, the principal of this initiative turned out to be the instigator for getting him involved. Though Igor recognized the value and positive connections to citizenship education this trip had, it was not the motivating factor for his decision to participate. Igor spoke about the Holland exchange showing students the following:

The Canadian government, what they did was they made Dutch territory sovereign, so from that moment Holland has been thankful to us. If you want to talk about citizens, they realize that Canada, it has this connection to the world, and long lasting traditions, and its good to know because you’re Canadian, and because we sort of helped out people in need.
Similar to Igor, Alia encouraged her students to get involved in school-wide citizenship activities, however religious expectations and participatory citizenship were closely linked. In Alia’s school, during the holy month of Ramadan, the religious month of sacrifice and being generous, the school increases students’ active involvement in community initiatives to help others. This included collecting food for United Way, or donating blood to the Red Cross. Alia explained that she encouraged students to be involved in initiatives that not only supported the Muslim community, but included giving to people outside of the Muslim community as well. For example, as a way to infuse citizenship into her teaching, Alia explained that she used texts to connect students on how to be good citizens in their daily life. An example she gave was on giving charity:

Recently they were talking about giving charity. We were discussing in the class that when you give charity why narrow it to Muslim children. Why not give charity to all children that are orphans? I was having this discussion and so this one student says, “If there’s two people in dire need of something, you need to help the Muslim guy more.” I said, “No, you know what, if you help the other guy more, you will create such an impression of Islam that he would be so impressed”… It would make a big difference on us to let people know what a Muslim is, and to change the stereotype that Muslim people just stick together within their community and they don’t mix with anyone else. This kind of discussion we were having, this will help them live in this society and try to help others as much as their own people.

Unlike the public school context where teachers are often involved in ways to help students be more actively involved in their school communities, in Alia’s school, there was some added emphasis on redefining community, above and beyond the needs of the Muslim community.

Summary

Citizenship education proved to be an ambiguous term for English teachers, particularly because it wasn’t an explicit expectation in teaching English. Despite this, the infusion of citizenship education outcomes in the English classroom could be analyzed and explored in all of the participants’ practice. Purposeful citizenship, “role of the citizen, and the personal values and perspectives that guide citizen thinking and actions” (Ontario Civics Curriculum 2005, p 63), tended to be most apparent, as teachers discussed the importance of students understanding their role as individuals, and their
identity and perspectives as it relates to others. Though, English teachers did encourage students to be participatory citizens, as a part of active citizenship, the significance and infusion of this in the English classroom specifically, was not addressed by these participants. Consequently, there was no distinct indication that purposeful and active citizenship expectations were directly connected to the English curriculum learning goals for these teachers. For the most part, the connections were spontaneous, and not a deliberate component of teaching English to students. Similarly, for the participants, active involvement in citizenship initiatives in the school were closely related to aspects they stressed as important in their practice. This included school initiatives that explored identity, cultural inclusiveness, being a contributing member of society, and anti-racism initiatives to name a few.
Chapter 6: Literary Choices and The English Citizenship Educator

Introduction

With a plethora of texts to choose from, old and new, the way in which English teachers negotiate text choice for students became a critical piece for informing their citizenship practice. The English curriculum recommends a range of culturally diverse authors English teachers should choose from to incorporate into their program so that students develop the ability to critically examine multiple perspectives, and to read and learn about other cultures. Thus, English teachers have the potential to develop students ‘cultural and intercultural competence’ and their ‘substantive and perceptual dimensions’ (Case and Clark, 1997), with the texts they choose and the themes they discuss. Since the process of text selection for teachers and how this intertwines with practicing a citizenship education pedagogy, this section explores the second question of the thesis in more depth: In what ways do participants’ teaching practice and their text choices influence dimensions of citizenship education?

Cultural and Intercultural Competence Through Literary Choices

Several variables impacted the choices participants made while selecting texts for their students. Most participants discussed the lack in scope of texts available to them, and for the sake of consistency, certain texts were mandatory, or designated to particular grades and course streams, as two major factors that hindered their choices. Despite these factors for consideration, choice and autonomy for all of the participants did exist. All of the participants expressed a desire to teach more post-colonial contemporary texts, and all of the participants mentioned recommending these types of texts to students to read on their own. The degree of restriction on text choice varied for each teacher, but often correlated with their position in the department, the degree of like-minded colleagues wanting to make changes to existing text titles, and their individual comfort and willingness to suggest changes within their department, and with the school administration.

Selection of texts according to participants involved several factors. All of the participants spoke about texts being the appropriate level of reading for students, or
selecting texts that engaged students, nevertheless, their reasoning for using particular texts differed from participant to participant.

The following table illustrates the texts that the participants mentioned teaching through the course of their interviews:

**Table 4: Overview of Text Choices Participants Offered to Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Igor</th>
<th>Carly</th>
<th>Rakesh</th>
<th>Alia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Not Wanted on the Voyage</em></td>
<td><em>The Kite Runner with A Complicated Kindness</em></td>
<td><em>Road</em></td>
<td><em>To Kill a Mockingbird</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>To Kill a Mockingbird</em></td>
<td><em>Catcher in the Rye with The Namesake</em></td>
<td><em>Bel Canto</em></td>
<td><em>Merchant of Venice</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>One Hundred Years of Solitude</em></td>
<td><em>Tamarind Mem</em></td>
<td><em>Catcher in the Rye</em></td>
<td><em>The Kite Runner</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Chrysalides</em></td>
<td><em>No New Land</em></td>
<td><em>Jack Maggs</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Heart of Darkness</em></td>
<td><em>Cinnamon Gardens</em></td>
<td><em>Short History of Progress</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Things Fall Apart</em></td>
<td><em>The Reluctant</em></td>
<td><em>The Lorax</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Such a Long Journey</em></td>
<td><em>Fundamentalist</em></td>
<td><em>Confessions of a Shopaholic</em></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Rosencrantz and Guildenstern</em></td>
<td><em>DeNiro’s Games</em></td>
<td><em>The Good Life</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Behind the Scenes of a Museum</em></td>
<td><em>Skin of a Lion</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Night</em></td>
<td><em>Brave New World</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Orynx and Crake</em></td>
<td><em>Oryx and Crate</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>The Motorcycle Diaries</em></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Participant Alia planned to provide a list of texts, but did not do so.

Though all of the participants expressed a desire to teach texts that students could make real world connections to, each participant’s understanding of race and culture, often impacted their text choices and its relevance to students. Hence, participants that identified more readily with citizenship aims, tended to include a variety of cultural texts, discuss global issues, as well as include texts that engaged the dominant cultural demographics of their classrooms. Chapter two introduced Bennett’s (1995) definition of ‘cultural consciousness, and ‘intercultural competence.’ It was evident that all of the teachers were teaching ‘cultural consciousness,’ however the more the individual participant was concerned with ‘intercultural competence,’ the more passionate and
selective they were about the texts they chose. As a result, these participants often took a stance against teaching texts they were opposed to, or found solutions to change existing text offerings.

For example, two participants, Carly and Igor, were expected by their departments to teach the novel, *Not Wanted on the Voyage*, by Timothy Findley. Carly expressed deep concern for this text given the student demographics in her school. Timothy Findley is one of the many authors suggested in the Ontario grade eleven and twelve curriculum for consideration, however, Carly spoke of various aspects of it being problematic for her students in particular:

*The issues that I have are that the level of sophistication of that book in terms of its irony and its satire of religion really move to a place that I don’t think seventeen year olds are able to go. Particularly they don’t have a certain type of background to it and there are so many other texts, particularly post-colonial texts that would resonate with the experience of kids who are living a diasporic identity. Therefore, the choice of a post-modern tongue and cheek irreverent approach to Noah’s Ark doesn’t make sense to me. It’s also at a level of writing that’s problematic. Many of the kids struggle to make meaning because I have kids who are only recently coming through ESL and ELL… I did not believe the selection was accessible to students, nor was it culturally relevant, because in fact it is a twisted post-modern text, and perverted sexually. I thought that kids actually would get a very wrong impression of what it is that this Judeo-Christian story of Noah’s Ark is really about.*

Even with Carly’s negative feelings toward this text, it took until the following school year for Carly to get this book off of the novel list for her students. Though Carly provided English curriculum documents which supported her argument that, “we are supposed to have a diverse selection of literature, we are supposed to be sensitive to English Language Learners,” she was directed by both the Curriculum Leader, and the school principal to teach the text for one more year. Carly in fact escalated her fight for its removal as far as the Ontario Ministry of Education. This challenging experience to get texts changed revealed how despite gaining more expertise and knowledge through her doctoral education, and in light of teachers feeling very strongly about cultural, political, and the social relevance of texts for their students, change is often slow, and frustrating for teachers wanting to bring in a citizenship approach to their practice.

Igor on the other hand taught the same text to his students, even though recognized it was controversial and inappropriate for his students, particularly for
students he felt were religious. When asked about its relevance to his students in terms of their religious backgrounds and their ability to connect to it, Igor did agree that his students did not respond well to it. Nonetheless, the connections he felt he drew them to, were enough of a reason to keep it as part of his curriculum. His solution to using the novel effectively was by connecting students to issues of gay rights, women’s rights, history, and to “frame it in a post-modern perspective.” The following reveals his thoughts on this book:

I try to get them to see what’s going on here, what’s happening, what’s Findley using this as a larger societal metaphor for, connection to history like what the Nazi’s did, with the women in Afghanistan today suffering. I always frame it in a post-modern perspective so I say post-modernism and the world we live in today has asked us to question many things. There’s supposed given truths. Capital H, history, that’s why we’re approaching this novel. Up until now it has worked and I know I have some students who are deeply religious and have read the novel, and who hated it.

Igor also had students consider their own freedoms as Canadian citizens by connecting students to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom to explore the violation of character’s rights in the novel. Igor also agreed that the text was Eurocentric and spoke of some students both Catholic and Muslim having some concerns about the novel, because it conflicted with their religious views. He did not consider this however reason enough to not teach it. He felt he could cover cultural texts related more to his students’ backgrounds in other units, or with smaller texts such as poetry. Igor’s example demonstrates his obvious desire to teach ‘cultural competence’ to his students, but without texts that also relate to his students’ cultural backgrounds, he was unable to teach empathy, a component necessary to developing his students’ ‘intercultural competence.’

One variable however was consistent for all of the participants. All of them felt that budgetary restrictions slowed change, as well as prevented the availability of more contemporary texts, particularly when the individual teacher suggested a new title they hoped to teach. All of the participants expressed a desire to teach more culturally diverse texts, and when unable to do so with larger texts such as novels and plays, all participants mentioned using the anthologies of smaller texts, short story, poetry, and essay, to create a more inclusive and diverse curriculum. Rakesh’s solution to the lack of funds in his department was to teach using literature circles. This way, he could purchase fewer texts
instead of class sets, yet still combine old and new texts. This also gave students a chance to choose the texts they preferred to read, and consequently, become more inclusive of students learning and cultural needs. Rakesh also offered his students plenty of choice while selecting texts to read. He developed their ‘cultural and intercultural competence’ in the following way:

The cultural texts that we use, I ask the kids, they have a reading list, especially the seniors, to select them. There’s a large volume of literature that I want them to go and hunt down for themselves. For the senior dissertation they write, those are the texts I am encouraging them to get so then they pair them with other types of text forms as well, something not culturally specific to their own. The ideas are important. Where do we look for similarities not just the differences? Can we understand where these perspectives come from? What is common to all of them? Even in the classroom themselves, the best place where we’ve integrated cultural specific things is in the short form texts, small reading pieces and short stories, and also short non-fiction texts.

Rakesh reiterated this point using the word empathy as the discussion moved to the themes he raises in class. In his words, “Themes of what it means to be good, how to be good? Being good is coming to the point of empathy.” Whether Rakesh chose texts for his students, or gave them an assortment of texts they selected from, the dominant question for these choices was in his words, “How does this inform your reality?” Rakesh felt the literary choices in his class asked students to consider differences, how to find commonalities in dire circumstances, how to encourage students to question power and responsibility, explore the way in which societies progress and the consequences of these decisions, environmental destruction by the corporate world, and sustainability of the earth, to name a few.

Alia stressed multiple times that engaging students so that they connect to texts was her main objective as an English teacher, however she had to make do with the texts that were approved by the school. This connection also involved relating ideas in the literature to the Muslim perspective, but also choosing texts aligned with Muslim values. For example, Alia chose to teach *The Merchant of Venice* instead of *Romeo and Juliet* for her grade nine Shakespeare unit. Alia felt that teenage love and romance were not appropriate, nor aligned with Muslim rules of dating and sex before marriage. She also felt that Muslim students needed to shed Jewish stereotypes. Alia spoke about this in the following:
I did *The Merchant of Venice* because I didn’t want to expose them to such young lovers … so instead of that, I did *The Merchant of Venice*, even though that isn’t approved in public schools. I felt that this was a chance to not look down upon Jews but to help them understand, that just like we have stereotypes, they have stereotypes, we have good people, they have good people. So that’s how we discussed it not as anti-Semitic. Everybody was into it. We talked about Jews in general, how we should react to Jews, how we’re judgmental about them. A lot came up and we talked about how anyone can have faults and it can be a Muslim or a Jew. I didn’t have to get it approved. I guess I could have even taught *Romeo and Juliet* but I guess I decided against it. It’s hard to discuss love and romance here because it’s not part of who we are, or what we are.

Though Alia expressed a liking for both *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, she raised some important points regarding the portrayal of Muslims in both books. In *The Kite Runner*, she felt that the father being a “good” man, but a Muslim who drinks alcohol, would be problematic for the school to approve, since drinking is forbidden in Islam. With *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Alia felt it portrayed Afghani men to beat their wives, and though in her words, “I’m sure most of the time it is like that,” she felt because the novel did not provide a balanced perspective for students, she would recommend it, but not teach it. Alia instead found the classic texts more applicable to her students, particularly with looking at the role of women in classic texts:

> The thing is when you read a book that belongs to a certain era because we have many things that are similar in the Eastern culture, because that hasn’t changed as much as the Eastern culture so it’s easy for them to relate to that culture. For example, when you do a book like *Pride and Prejudice* for example, what was happening with the girls at that time is happening with the girls from the Arab or Pakistani community.

Even though all of the participants taught similar classes and had similar text choices on their shelves to choose from, the autonomy English teachers have as individuals to choose, was quite apparent. The way in which participants offered choice, addressed diversity, and raised particular themes, indicated their own cultural and/or intercultural competence they offered to their students to learn. Carly and Rakesh both emphasized that choice for students was a critical component of selecting texts in their classes. This not only helped to develop cultural consciousness and intercultural competence, but also provided opportunities for students to empathize, draw on their own connections, and compare this with others of differing cultures. Though Igor and Alia
demonstrated an awareness of the importance of diverse texts, cultural consciousness seemed to be the primary focus developed in their students.

**Dimensions of Citizenship for the English Teacher**

In determining the dimensions English teachers concentrated on in the English classroom, several factors influenced their focus. As discussed in chapter one, literary choice and text use, played a significant role in determining whether or not the participants focused on civic, political, social, cultural, or global dimensions of citizenship. Though all of the participants mentioned the importance of global issues, the desire to expose students to more Canadian texts, and the participants’ evident passion for Canadian interests and Canadian texts, shifted the dimensions to a more local and/or national context of citizenship. For example, Igor mentioned discussing with students citizenship areas that were global or environmental, however he felt that Canadian citizenship had to be developed first, before the other dimensions:

I don’t see how you can be a global citizen without being a Canadian citizen first, or be a Torontonian citizen first. So I think it starts locally. The expression, think locally, act globally, so that’s where we’ve tried I think if anything. The issues face the human race as a whole. Let’s say the environment, famine, global disasters, we’re part of a community that’s interconnected partly because of the technology, internet, satellite, newspapers. Earthquake happens in China, I know it instantly, so we’re very connected that way, but I don’t think I do it consciously. I try to get them to be proud of who they are and where they are at that moment, and that for me is Toronto, and that for me is Canada…so in my classroom I’d have to say yes, I’m guilty of more of a Canadian centric of citizenship.

Similarly, Rakesh also expressed an appreciation for being Canadian and as such, he said, “being Canadian is being the ultimate global citizens.” When Rakesh was probed as to whether he chooses Canadian or global texts, he responded with global texts. However, upon further discussion, it became apparent that his preference was for Canadian texts, because they were more global in scope, particularly when compared to American texts. Rakesh felt Canadian writers offered texts that were about other places in the world, while American texts on the other hand were more “insular and tended to be about America.” Canadian texts offered in his words:

I think from a philosophical point of view, Canadian authors, and what is Canadian content, is that which seeks to maximize and to understand and develop
empathy and different perspectives of the world surrounding us. That’s what we should also seek to do for the kids as well. Living in Canada you should know about different cultures. You should know why people think the way they do in different parts of the world.”

Likewise, Carly preferred to focus more on Canadian texts and Canadian writers, however wherever possible in her class, she integrated world issues. For example in student seminar discussions, Carly described the following:

In my senior English class, I’ve tried to build an early unit into the course that takes up issues that are in the press, and that also would tap into the kind of diverse school composition that we have. It’s involved this year, as it looks at Afghanistan, which I think all of us need to pay more attention to. After all, that’s the one country we have troops in. Pakistan, which is a real hotbed now caught as it is between those two, and with the Taliban presence etc, and again it reflects part of the student body. This particular period of civilization which I think is quite tenuous, with the potential for us to be seeing very hard times ahead, we need to be looking at how politics are playing, how conflict is playing, how the environment is playing, how the economy is playing, and converge kids to look at the current realities in the world.

Carly went on to describe positive responses from students to activities that asked students to consider American politics at the time when President Obama had just taken over office, coupled with Sarah Palen’s portrayal in the media. It was evident that Carly felt that students in her class needed to be aware of many dimensions of citizenship. Though the seminar discussions fulfilled the Oral Communication and Media Strands of the English Curriculum, she demonstrated how the civic, political, social, cultural, and global dimensions were all included in her seminar discussions alone.

Alia’s school context played a crucial role in determining the dimension she chose to focus on. Given that students were in a segregated homogenous environment of all Muslims, not in the Muslim world but in a Canadian context, Alia felt that she needed to stress the importance of assimilation in Canada. This often included a discussion of mixing with non-Muslim people, and not finding this threatening and not feeling that one loses their Muslim identity with this interaction. As a result, Alia felt she focused more on the civic and social dimensions in her class, however, she did bring in global issues whenever possible. For example, observing a lesson Alia taught, she discussed American politics and Obama as the new African American president in relation to the novel To Kill a Mockingbird. She also had students role-play racism. Interestingly, the students
demonstrated common stereotypes in their role-plays that Alia said she had to discuss and dissect in the next class. Alia stressed that she felt her students needed to, “be part of this society, yet keep their identity.” Alia described the connections she makes to text in the following:

Some classes that are very outspoken, they will express their opinion especially being a Muslim living here in a Western society. I mean within the text also and out of the text we discuss things like you know, do you have white friends? Do you think it’s wrong to have white friends? We discuss all the time these kinds of things, because it’s important. Some may feel we have to be totally cut off from society and though they are living in this society, some have that opinion and they are rigid in that way because they’ve been brought up that way. There are others that do have friends but feel that they have to keep a certain distance or they’ll lose their identity, their Muslim identity. So in that context you know I may tell them, it’s okay, it’s better to mix with them. That would be my opinion, mix with them and prove to them who you are and what you are, and that you can be a good member of society. I think indirectly this does lead to you know, being a citizen or living in this environment.

A common thread among all of the participants was a Canadian focus, Canadian issues, and Canadian identity. This largely stemmed from choosing texts that were Canadian, though the participants did appreciate Canadian texts that spoke about the immigrant experience. The social and global dimensions were the most focused on by all of the English teachers, though civic and political often arose in their discussions from ideas presented in texts and themes that emerged in class discussion.

**Literary Choices and Citizenship Education Pedagogy**

The previous sections demonstrated the importance of literary choice for teachers however, the participants raised relevant concerns regarding hindrances in their ability to be more inclusive, and diverse in their text choices. Budget restrictions were indeed a collective standpoint, however, participants mentioned several other factors. Participants talked about expectations for results on the literacy test, resistance for change often by senior teachers, or by teachers not wanting to re-invent the wheel. As well, teachers mentioned a provincial status quo of keeping a traditional approach to teaching in the same way, with the same books and also a lack of understanding, or acceptance of changes with more recent curriculum.
Carly’s experience as a new Curriculum Leader encountered all of these hardships. She discussed the resistance she met removing a classic and widely taught text, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, which she found to be highly problematic for black students. She expressed how, “the teachers who were very attached to those book selections, reacted extremely defensively and aggressively, and I’ll never forget one of them shouting, “They are banning books!” The consensus among participants was that curriculum leaders often received resistance to change texts, largely because of teacher workload concerns, and because they felt no pressure to do so. Carly did give one example of a positive change of text with a student teacher:

Somehow if one is taught it, one has a tendency to reproduce it as a teacher. So it’s happening and I recently had a very positive experience with a teacher candidate who introduced *Persepolis* as a text at our school, and it’s such an excellent work. It’s a graphic novel as well as the content being really fabulous in terms of global education and furthering understanding. So this was very exciting for me as a text. I knew about it, I wanted to include it, but because the teacher candidate brought it in, it actually flew in the department faster than if I had.

Igor discussed feeling the need to focus on literacy in his classroom, especially grammar and syntax, because of the importance placed on the EQAO literacy test, mandatory for all grade 10 students. This pressure to raise test scores existed, even though he felt he worked in, “a pretty affluent school, where all the kids do well, and a high percentage pass, but yes literacy is huge.” For all of the teachers participating in the study, their interpretation of provincial standards centered almost entirely on success on the literacy test, even if this meant using irrelevant texts, or having to have less of a focus on students’ connections to identity, or global citizenship. This was further reiterated by Igor’s comments that while running the after school literacy program, “I just gave lessons on what they were expecting…it was very nitty-gritty. It was find the semi-colon properly, and in life, I don’t think it’s going to hinder you too much…the emphasis on literacy in Ontario is phenomenal.”

With so much to consider in the English curriculum, the participants demonstrated the difficulty for teachers to give an expanded citizenship education on all of the dimensions, particularly when they lacked resources or autonomy to teach what they felt was attuned to citizenship outcomes.
Summary

All of the participants expressed a desire to teach post-colonial texts because they offered a chance for students to explore their cultural identities, current events, global issues, social responsibility, and their roles as citizens. The connection between the use of post-colonial texts and citizenship education expectations was consistent with all of the participants. In some cases, when availability of these texts hindered this, participants attempted to explore classic texts in much the same way. Also, most of the texts chosen by participants offered a way for teachers to explore various dimensions of citizenship, yet the “social” dimension tended to be more prevalent in their practice. Overall, a movement to more post-colonial texts as a way to provide a more citizenship education approach to learning was evident, even though change tended to be slow, resources were minimal, and resistance by many teachers to change their existing texts continued to dampen this progress.
Chapter 7: The English Citizenship Educator and the Muslim Perspective

Introduction

With the English classroom as a space to include the Muslim perspective with texts and within the media unit, this chapter seeks to respond to the third question of this study: To what extent does the English citizenship educator offer a more inclusive space for Muslim identities and perspectives, in public and Islamic school contexts?

Participants’ Awareness of Muslim Identity

Providing a program in English that is culturally inclusive was an integral part of all of the participants’ citizenship practice. Indeed, the challenge to be inclusive of all classroom cultures is challenging in Toronto, given the multitude of student backgrounds, however, with a large demographic of Muslim students in all of the participants’ classrooms, their response to this varied significantly.

The awareness of Muslim students in their classrooms was acknowledged by all of the participants, however the knowledge of Muslim identity, or the importance of bringing in Muslim culture into the classroom, ranged significantly from participant to participant. Igor for example, was aware of Muslim students in the classroom, but not their religious practices. He did not see the relevance of acknowledging their religious beliefs as a part of their identity, because his students appeared to be “progressive” Muslims. Igor also admitted to having little knowledge of Islam, despite having friends that were Muslim. He acknowledged having one student in the class that wears a headscarf, and though the school did not make accommodations for Muslims during the celebration of Eid, and other Muslim religious festivals, Igor did make individual accommodations for those students that asked for them, during these times.

Carly on the other hand, considered herself very aware of Muslim students in the classroom. While observing Carly at her school, a student approached her during the lunch hour about some educational concerns, and through the course of the conversation she referred to being mixed Sunni and Shia Muslim, and from Pakistan. Observing Carly’s class it was also evident that students often referred to their cultural identities in the course of class discussions. Carly demonstrated an acute awareness not only of
Muslims in her classroom, but also the Muslim sect and countries these students identified themselves with. For example, some students she explained were from Pakistan, the Middle East, or Somalia, and therefore acknowledgment of the variations of Islamic culture among these groups required consideration, particularly because they often chose assignments that reflected their concerns for their birth country. Carly also explained that she achieved this connection and understanding with her Muslim students by sharing with them her own personal experience with a Muslim man. The following describes this in Carly’s words after meeting with the student described above:

Well when you say, that you know of, we just spoke to one together. She was clarifying for me her origins in that she has a Sunni father and a Shia mother and she’s from an area of Pakistan. One of the reasons why she would be that clear with me is because when I had her as a student last semester, she was involved with making a presentation about Pakistan and talking about the volatile political situation there. I believe in that class, not that I believe, I am very aware that with that particular class, I told them about my own engagement to a Muslim man. So, I perhaps will tell you that when I was in my late 20’s, I was engaged to a Muslim man who had been part of the expulsion of Muslims from Uganda. He was an Asian Ugandan Pakistani by background to add the other piece to it. I did not go through with the marriage but we had been friends for 10 years, and had known each other from the beginning of my university until that point. It was a complicated situation. Obviously if a teacher tells that kind of a story, I think everybody who is Muslim is more comfortable identifying as a Muslim.

Carly’s knowledge of Muslim dual identity, and the problems Muslims have faced since 9/11, was a chapter she wrote about in her own doctoral dissertation. She expressed concern for the growing number of Muslims angry and resentful in their home countries. Britain was the primary example she referred to, but felt this was also important for consideration in Canadian classrooms. In her words:

Britain experienced the bombings in the subway and I think what stunned Britain, is that these were boys that grew up in Britain. So that calls into question, what are we doing in schools and what kind of a society is it that can be part of raising people and yet people feel so disaffected, so angry, so resentful, that they then will take such action. I also noted that within Britain they set up a citizenship review, what is it to be British…The Brixton Riots, they’ve had a lot of ghettoizing of groups, so I think Britain is very different, but I think it’s the kind of thing that we have to think about. If within our schools we don’t acknowledge and include the identities that are not what Canada used to be, that there are different identities and create not only a comfort level, but a space where those students can work it through, and feel part of Canada, and have a sense that
Canada is inclusive. Then I think we’re creating conditions for rigidity in the definition of citizenship that may well alienate kids coming with a dual identity.

Rakesh alluded to inclusivity for Muslim students more as a school-wide initiative, than specifically in his classroom. He felt the International Bazaar, cultural assemblies at the school, and the Imam Club, provided opportunities for Muslim students to feel accommodated, and inclusive in the school. The Imam Club after all provided a space for Muslim students to gather socially, and to pray.

All of the public school participants certainly demonstrated an awareness of Muslim students, however their understanding of the complexities of their religious identities was only clearly represented through Carly and her adherence to practicing a citizenship education pedagogy.

**The English Classroom as a Space for Muslim Inclusivity**

When it came to literary choices that included the Muslim perspective, all of the participants were familiar with texts that did so, however, incorporating them into the classroom differed for the participants.

Igor admitted his literary choices, particularly novel selections in his class, did not include the Muslim perspective, or Islamic culture. He mentioned how in his department there was some discussion of including the text *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, however it was felt that the same issues could be dealt with in existing texts like *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Though he admitted *Reading Lolita in Tehran* was “a great story about oppression, subversion, freedom and the power of imagination, it could be what we do with the texts we have.” This seemed to be the consensus with his department as well, since the discussion was tabled due to budget restraints.

Textbooks for all of the participants seemed to be a more seamless way to incorporate texts with Muslim culture. All of the participants were familiar with the text *My Body is my Own Business*, though not all of the participants used it. When I asked Igor if he used the Trillium approved texts *Sightlines* and *Echoes*, Igor expressed an excited liking for these books, however he did not use this particular essay. He did mention however a few titles that did have Muslim content:

- Off the top of my head, I use Kalil Jibran’s *The Poet*. Whether they are Muslim or not, I don’t know, but I try to pick anywhere they are set in the Indian
subcontinent. The Middle East would be great. I can’t speak for English, but I can speak for ESL, and there’s a particular novel that’s set in I think, Palestine, *Road to Chlifa*.

Though Igor seemed to have knowledge of these texts, some he admitted to not using, though he did mention that they were used more often in ESL classes. When probed about whether or not he explores the image of Muslims in the media, Igor said, “It’s always great to do. The construction of Islamic terrorism or the terrorist, and I just show them all kinds of Hollywood clips, and I’m like what is this getting at?” Igor felt this discussion was particularly relevant to his classroom of largely Persian students, and admitted that more Islamic novels were definitely needed.

Carly provided an example of a participant that clearly connected to Muslim students’ hybrid identities, and provided multiple examples of learning opportunities that were inclusive of the Muslim perspective. Though Carly’s approach to text choice was inclusive of many cultures from Tamil, Sri Lankan, South Asian, and Asian, unlike the other participants that chose one or two texts at most, Carly used several texts that included the Muslim perspective. Carly described the Muslim texts she chose in the following way:

There’s a Vassanji book, *No New Land*, which is set in Don Mills which is a family that I believe is Ismaili, that has come from Africa, Pakistan, Africa or India and Africa… *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, it’s been quite critically acclaimed as a post 9/11 book. It’s written by an American Pakistani man who post 9/11 really struggled with how he was seen differently in the culture…So he’s written a book that is considered quite a masterpiece of psychological investigation, of what happens to a person who has to rethink who they are because the world sees them differently. It’s a sustained monologue from the position of a Pakistani American, who has returned to Pakistan and is sitting at a table with an American, and he challenges the American, and you aren’t quite sure whether he’s threatening the American, or exactly what’s going on… *DeNiro’s Games* set in Lebanon, two boys a Christian and a Muslim, working through their childhood within the Middle Eastern war situation.

As mentioned in Chapter 6, Carly often used Desi Magazine in her class to not only look for upcoming exhibits that she would suggest to the principal to recognize cultural groups, but also to connect students to issues they culturally identified with. Carly in our discussions demonstrated an awareness and concern for Islamophobia:
I think that Islamophobia since 9/11 has been a very important concern for all of us to have. How much did that feed prejudice? How are students able to process that? The veil becomes a major point of discussion. It’s been a hot button issue in Toronto.

Carly’s awareness and commitment to these issues were also complimented with her literary choices. Carly drew attention without prompting to the essay My Body is My Own Business. This essay explores wearing the veil from the perspective of a Muslim girl. The essay discusses her opinion that she is less oppressed as a woman that wears the hijab, than the Western woman who is exploited for her physical body in the media, and walking down the street. Carly discussed the relevance and the availability of this essay in various Ontario texts, and as part of curriculum expectations. Carly’s thoughts on the essay are described in the following:

So that article tends to really open up a positive discussion, because it challenges those of us that think this is an imposition or whatever right, that these are choices and in that particular article, she does a great job in the beginning of pointing out that there’s a tendency to make assumptions when seeing a woman in a veil.

Carly went on to explain that after teaching the text My Body is my Own Business, she had a student present on the veil, with reference to a British Member of Parliament Jack Straw, and his controversial comments on this topic. She explained that the students who presented on this topic were Muslim, one who wore a hijab, and the other a niqqab. She reiterated how comments in the class discussion as a result of this presentation ranged from all “good” Muslims wear veils, to all Muslims wear veils, to Carly herself contributing by saying, “I have a Muslim friend that doesn’t wear a veil,” and a student saying, “I am a good Muslim and I don’t wear a veil.” With this example, Carly demonstrated how she engaged students in topics that could be uncomfortable for many teachers and students, but because of their relevance for her students, it proved to be successful. By engaging students in multiple perspectives on the hijab during classroom discussion, to viewpoints in the media, she disengaged the controversy of the veil to a discourse inclusive of various perspectives.

Alia also referred to the text My Body is my Own Business. She discussed how it was highly controversial and became a heated discussion in her class. When asked how
she balanced the perspectives, she was aware of the fact that this wasn’t always possible, given school expectations for all female students to wear the *hijab*.

We want to stick to wearing *hijab* as a Muslim school even though you may not do it yourself, but that’s the thing to do so we want to tell the students. That is because we are in a school where we want to see everything from an Islamic perspective...We deal with all perspectives and when it comes to the *hijab* issue, yes people don’t understand from the Western perspective and I say yes it is your job to convince them. It’s what your religion expects of you, and if they don’t understand, you can try and convince them.

Alia expressed that outside of the school she felt that students should see this as a choice, so she was open to students in her classroom discussing *hijab* as a woman’s religious choice. However, ultimately, this choice did not exist in the context of the school, and often she would have to reinforce *hijab* as a school expectation.

Rakesh did not separate or associate teaching to Muslims, or any specific culture for that matter. He felt his role as a teacher, was to include as many diverse texts as possible, offer choice for students to choose materials they culturally connected to so that connections could be made for any individual with hybrid identities. Rakesh preferred students to choose one example of a text that met the individual student’s cultural background, and compare it to a culture not their own. For Rakesh, the onus was on the student to identify what is meaningful for them, and not to be prescribed material from the teacher.

Overall, access to texts that are inclusive of the Muslim perspective were available to all participants, but only those participants aware of Muslim hybrid identities, and more citizenship oriented, stressed the importance of including them. Also, the participants that demonstrated inklings more indicative of a citizenship education pedagogy, the more likely these participants chose texts relevant to their students’ cultural backgrounds, and discussed issues more pertinent to these groups.

**Comparing the Islamic and Public School Contexts**

Chapter 2 discussed the concern Muslim parents have that public schools do not offer a moral education, nor do they accommodate for cultural norms in line with Islamic values. The most notable difference that existed between the Islamic school and public school in this regard was the decision-making around text choice. In the Islamic school,
text consideration was based on approval by the principal, so that texts were often rejected if the content was considered anti-Islamic. For example, texts dealing with homosexuality, sexually explicit material, Muslims drinking alcohol, and anti-religious material, were likely taken off the reading list. From a citizenship education perspective, leaving certain issues out that consider the rights of others, posed a rather problematic scenario for Islamic school teachers. In public schools on the other hand, participants did not express a need to dismiss texts based on any of these subjects as part of the reading. The debate of course remains, and though including or not including these texts is arguable from both sides, through the participants’ stories, the lack of understanding of the moral dilemmas that Muslim students might face reading about these subjects, was apparent. Carly reflected on this in her discussion that teachers can certainly expose students to all sorts of books, but it is how they are unpacked, that can help students’ awareness of issues of injustice, and to understand the historic framework around world issues they see in the media today. Public school teachers often feel very strongly about exposing students to all issues, regardless of the sensitivity of these texts, however, understanding the Muslim students’ religious context in unpacking these books was not evident for most of the participants. Carly however did demonstrate an understanding of these sensitivities or moral conflicts for Muslim students, and used them as teachable moments. The following point by Carly illustrates the need to understand the Muslim perspective more clearly, so that teachers are aware of how Muslim students respond to certain content in texts. In Carly’s words:

But let’s also remember that the text alone does not determine alone whether it’s an anti-racist experience. It’s also how you unpack the text and then make meaning of it, and what kind of interactions you have with students etc. It’s not exclusively from the text. It’s what we do with it.

A point of commonality between the Islamic school, and public school classrooms with large demographics of Muslim students was the need for building respect, acceptance, and finding commonalities between Jewish and Muslim people. Carly and Alia both recognized the racism between the two groups, but felt it was highly sensitive to approach. Alia mentioned feeling that parents might be opposed to her raising these issues in her class, and confronting them head on with her students. In Carly’s school, she
extended this bias to include Jewish teachers and Muslim students. The trip to the Science Centre she explains as follows:

The celebration of Islamic history in the fall wasn’t without controversy… There’s a white teacher here who is converting and he makes the announcements so as of 18 months ago he was as Christian as I, so when he made the announcements, it was a bit of a problem when he was telling us what Islam thinks of women… There is quite a vocal handful of Jewish teachers here, so I think issues of whose culture is represented or presented by a school, can be a problem. One of the things I’d like to let the principal know is that I think that we should organize a Holocaust museum trip very soon partly out of an awareness that we need to be presenting the various stories of civilizations. I myself witnessed an anti-Semitic remark in the class.

Carly’s point reiterates the need to consider the prejudices specific groups of students might have in order to build greater acceptance and citizenship. It raises the question of whether teachers are still focusing too much on the previous tensions between the colonizers and particular groups, rather than the current reality of tension that exist between certain groups, because of more recent world events. Also, in Carly’s example of the field trip to the Science Centre, though important and meaningful for students at her school, an exploration of various civilizations simultaneously, instead of highlighting one culture, could lead to less conflict and controversy. When more cultures are explored simultaneously, the pressure is off of one particular group to be mocked or countered against.

The public and Islamic school contexts also revealed that controversial issues surrounding Muslim people were dealt with in different ways. In the Islamic school, students had more opportunity to discuss issues that were relevant and meaningful to them as a community. For example, the portrayal of Muslims in the media, though tackled in classes by all of the participants, was handled differently in the Islamic school. In public schools, teachers referred to it, but little was discussed regarding how to change this perception. In the Islamic school context, Alia explained how awareness of the injustices against Muslims, particularly with stereotyping against Muslims, was dealt with in a more pro-active way by focusing on growing closer as a community, and by taking steps to educate non-Muslims. The discussion around rights of Muslims was a focus, and also what their responsibilities were as Muslims to each other. She felt teaching students to be good citizens, respecting others, but also building a community
voice to rise against their own injustices, was important as well. Alia spoke of awareness of these injustices in the following way:

I tell them to go into the field of law, to get through the legal system because there are so many legalities to things that happen to Muslims and we are not even aware that people have taken advantage of us or done anything. Or someone has stereotyped us in such a way that it’s not who we are. Last semester we had a couple of lawyers come from British Columbia and they talked about an issue with stereotyping. They talked about stereotyping and they had this case with the human rights commission and they talked to the students about it. There was this case in Queens about stereotyping all Muslim. We have these kinds of talks to know about your rights, but also to know your responsibilities. In that way they grow together.

During one of the observations, the school had a youth forum, where non-Muslims from surrounding area schools came in to learn about Muslim culture. Topics discussed included exploring some of the following questions: What is Muslim? What is sex in Islam? Is Piracy haram? How do you know Islam is the right religion? As well, non-Muslim students from surrounding schools were invited to attend this event, to explore cultural issues and rituals form the perspective of the Muslim community at this school.

Carly described awareness of Muslim political and religious views in a different way. She felt that individual teacher’s political and religious views sometimes quashed Muslim students’ initiatives for causes they felt were important. She describes this with the following case example:

In World Issues, the students wanted to raise money for the Gazza and objections were raised by some Jewish teachers about the students doing that…It’s terrible that there was a clear humanitarian crisis that wasn’t acknowledged. The impulse of young people to help people in crisis shouldn’t be blocked based on oh this is political, we don’t want support going.

In both contexts, the Muslim perspective was raised, however they were handled differently between the Islamic and public schools. Islamic schools not only created an awareness of these issues but a space to be more pro-active about concerns and injustices against Muslims.
**The Need for Professional Development and Resources**

The lack of professional development on teaching Muslim students, and learning how to be more inclusive of their identities was lacking among the participants. Carly brought her own initiatives to the school to help with this, but none were at the board or system level. Igor spoke of one professional development session where he was exposed to a novel called *The Breadwinner*, by Deborah Ellis about women in Afghanistan. He also mentioned another book by her about the terrorist attacks on Canada. Though exposed to these titles, there was no follow through after the session to include any of these titles in his school.

Carly mentioned the need for teachers to learn more on how to discuss veiling in Islam. She spoke of a teacher who was reprimanded for not dealing with this discussion suitably. In her words she described an incident where the essay *My Body is my Own Business* was used inappropriately:

> I’ve heard it wrongly used and it caused a huge kerfuffle at a school eight years ago where a teacher for some reason had the students read that and then wanted them to write an article on why the veil should not be allowed. She happened to have a couple of gifted kids in the class, one of whom challenged it at the administrative level, and also brought parents to bare. The child who challenged it was not a Muslim child, which is just as interesting. It’s the only time I’ve heard that a teacher was removed from teaching a course. They switched around who was teaching what. So you know curriculum can backfire, it can be taken up wrongly by teachers and I think in a way you heard a little bit of concern with that with the principal today, that not every teacher is able to process the politics.

Carly’s example demonstrates how myths about the veil, and Western perceptions of the veil, can sometimes cause teachers to hesitate using these texts, or use them inappropriately without the consideration of multiple perspectives. More professional development and workshops are needed on understanding the complexities both politically and socially of wearing the veil, in order to present multiple perspectives to students on this topic.

**Summary**

The participants demonstrated that the less understanding of Muslim students’ hybrid identities participants’ showed, the less likely they were to choose cultural texts that complimented their specific learning experiences. Consequently, cultural
understanding of Muslims, contributed to more relevant and important English literary choices. Also, when participants’ personal experiences with Muslim culture existed, their commitment to inclusiveness increased as a result. Also, though large numbers of Muslim students existed in all of the participants’ classrooms, knowledge of numbers was unclear, and raised concern for whether Muslim students were expected to assimilate. Without this knowledge, teachers were unable to understand that Muslim students may be struggling with hybrid identities, especially regarding moral education. Consequently, the desire for Muslim parents to choose Islamic schools over public schools may continue. Lastly, the two contexts, Islamic and public, showed that complexities of what Muslim students might feel are important, were not often dealt with proactively in public schools.
Chapter 8: Conclusion

We should realize that all education encourages certain values and in doing so works on the development of citizenship…From our pedagogical perspective, stimulating humanitarian, social and democratic values and autonomy should be given more attention in education: to educate young people to have a critical, enquiring attitude, to have the courage and the creativity to tread new paths, to question all knowledge – including their own knowledge – for the values and underlying power structures it contains to educate youngsters who balance autonomy and social awareness (Veugelers, 2007, p. 117).

Introduction

The keystone of themes this study examines began shortly after the events of 9/11 unfolded, where my role as a teacher, and my responsibility as a Muslim, suddenly felt amalgamated. As Veugelers suggests in the quotation above, it was the beginning of a movement in my own practice to connect students to human rights issues, social justice, and citizenship. It is also what has naturally directed my desire to explore similar themes in this thesis, and hence this study unfolded.

I began this examination with two intentions. Firstly, I hoped to discover ways English teachers connected their practice to citizenship education outcomes, and secondly, I hoped to link this to a more inclusive space for Muslim students. My initial aim for this thesis was to locate teacher participants who identified as citizenship educators and who were particularly cognizant of the learning needs of their Muslim students. Though, this did not manifest in the final methodology, the participants in this study certainly revealed real possibilities for both of my objectives. This process has certainly revealed that the English curriculum, and the English teacher, can craft a space for a citizenship education pedagogy, and in doing so provide a learning environment more inclusive of the Muslim perspective.

To conclude this discussion, I will revisit, the three themes of this study; the citizenship educator in English; teacher practice, literary choices and the dimensions of citizenship in English; and the inclusivity of Muslim perspectives in English. Though, I somewhat analyze the three themes separately, this final discussion at times blends the three areas. In the final analysis, I revisit the potential English Curriculum has for citizenship education outcomes, and implications this has on future curriculum in this
subject. Also, I re-examine text choice and the citizenship English educator, as well as the relationship this has to the inclusiveness of Muslim students in the English classroom. Finally I will propose recommendations for future research in this area.

**Implications for English Curriculum**

The current Ontario English Curriculum 2007, demonstrated many opportunities for teachers to infuse citizenship education expectations, both through document analysis, and with the participants’ use in of this curriculum in their practice. Though, I should reiterate that English curriculum does not explicitly inform teachers to consider a citizenship educational approach to teaching and learning, opportunities do exist for teachers to interpret it this way. This is in large part due to the abundance of choice teachers have to select texts relevant to citizenship goals, but also because instructional approaches in the English curriculum, advise teachers to design a program that is anti-racist, addresses student diversity including the immigrant experience, and is also inclusive of discriminatory portrayals of individuals and groups in the media. Coupled with this, the curriculum provides specific expectations in its four strands directing teachers to encourage students to explore, and reflect, on multiple perspectives, developing empathy and cultural awareness, and increasing critical thinking skills.

The participants revealed that with the current curriculum, their program planning tended to focus more on purposeful citizenship, and less on informed and active citizenship. At present, the specific expectations related to the four strands of developing students skills in Oral Communication, Reading and Literature Studies, Writing, and Media Studies remain imperative in teaching English, opportunities for purposeful citizenship were often embedded in the expectations tags, examples, and teacher prompts in all four of these strands of the curriculum. The participants reinforced this while describing their learning aims for English, as all of them emphasized a program that invited students to explore, “personal values and perspectives,” to “consider their views with those of others” and to examine “contrasting values” and “multiple perspectives” (Ontario Civics Curriculum, 2005, p. 63). Though, the participants did not articulate connecting to civic identity or civic questions as a specific intent, the study revealed that this was indeed a natural process of teaching and learning in English. A strong focus on
identity was at the forefront for teaching English for all of the participants, and as Carly articulated, in teaching English we “assist kids in figuring out their social identities, and that is key to citizenship.”

At present, opportunities for informed or active citizenship are vague, if not missing in the curriculum however, some participants showed aspects of this in their practice. The Ontario Civics Curriculum addresses informed citizenship as developing skills that enable students to “demonstrate an understanding of the reasons for and dimensions of democracy” as well as consider “contrasting views of citizenship within personal, community, national, and global contexts” (p. 63). The participants in this study revealed that though this is not an intended expectation of the curriculum, students did gain an understanding of these elements of informed citizenship from the ideas in texts they studied, and from the discussions that arose in class. Although, the majority of the participants focused on Canadian citizenship, some texts did invite an exploration of citizenship in other contexts. Igor mentioned this in his example of having students examine women’s rights in Afghanistan, and the Nazi’s during World War II while exploring themes in the novel, *Not Wanted on the Voyage*. Igor expressed it this way, “I try to get them to see what’s going on here, what’s happening, what’s Findley using this as a larger societal metaphor for, connection to history like what the Nazi’s did, with the women in Afghanistan today suffering.” Consequently, though all of the participants in this study provided concrete examples of informed citizenship in their practice, specific references in the curriculum tags, teacher prompts, and examples, could enhance this strand of citizenship learning in the English classroom.

In the Ontario Civics Curriculum, active citizenship is described as students learning “basic civic literacy skills and applying “those skills meaningfully by participating actively in the civic affairs of their community” (p. 63). Although students in English engage regularly in developing literacy through writing letters or speeches, none of the participants revealed examples where students applied this to participatory citizenship. Chapter 2, revealed that a key word search and phrase review of the Ontario English Curriculum 2007 revealed frequent references to developing students that are “responsible world citizens,” are involved in “active participation,” consider “multiple perspectives,” and are encouraged to become “critical thinkers.” The curriculum also
showed numerous expectations addressing the development of students’ research and collaborative skills. Though all of this is similar to the intended objectives of active citizenship in the Civics course, the participants in this study did not regard this as part of their own practice, or program development. The participants tended to reflect on active citizenship as a part of school initiatives, or students’ involvement in extra-curricular activities, and not intended as a part of the English classroom. Nonetheless, Carly and Rakesh specifically demonstrated that they were able to link their own citizenship objectives and goals in the English classroom to school initiatives, or encourage students to connect what they were learning in English to school-wide projects.

Overall, it is challenging for English teachers to address citizenship education in all strands, using the current English curriculum document. Nevertheless, evidence of informed, purposeful, and active citizenship, did present itself in this study. Even though, English will continue to focus extensively on developing literacy, as it should, additional focus in the specific expectations on civic and cultural literacy may provide a more inclusive education for marginalized students, as well as student engagement to issues relevant for today’s context.

In Ontario, a new English curriculum is being developed for the year 2012, and this thesis has implications for developing a curriculum document that links connections to citizenship education more explicitly. This connection is beneficial, particularly because it more readily provides cross-curricular opportunities with the Civics Course, World Religions, World Issues, and many History courses. The current English curriculum states that students should learn to “use language to interact and connect with individuals and communities, for personal growth, and for active participation as world citizens.” Hence, a reconsideration to include informed and active citizenship objectives in the expectation tags, teacher prompts and examples in the English curriculum, could allow for teachers to design a program that incorporates more of the underlying principles of the existing curriculum.

**Practical Implications for the English Teacher**

The second theme of this study explored teacher practice and the significance of literary choices for the citizenship educator. Chapter 1 discussed the importance of
examining the subject of English as a space to incorporate citizenship dimensions, precisely because English texts have the potential to explore citizenship locally, nationally, globally, culturally, socially, and politically. In chapter 1, Banks (2001) suggests that, “citizenship education should help students develop thoughtful and clarified identifications with their cultural communities and their nation-states” (p. 8). The study revealed that participants chose texts with the intention of including many cultural perspectives, and ones that they felt students could make meaningful connections to. Although, this is important, and a necessary consideration in program planning for English, the study showed that the Muslim perspective was relatively underrepresented. Despite the fact that English teachers felt they provided exposure to various cultural communities, they were often unaware that students may not identify with certain texts, especially when opportunities to explore their own culture were missing. This was particularly amplified when considering the perspective of Muslim students, and their social identities. All of the participants had a high demographic of Muslims in their classes, and despite the fact that a specific expectation in the curriculum advises teachers to help students in, “making connections between various contexts, for example, between the text and personal knowledge and experience, other texts, and the world outside school” (Ontario English Curriculum, p. 25), many of the participants did not offer texts that included the “Muslim” perspective. As a result, they often ignored, or were unaware, that these students were unable to negotiate their own social identities, nor reflect on their own perspectives as it related to others. Crowe (1998) articulates the importance of choosing multicultural texts for young adults with the following example:

If a young adult character is Japanese American, is she more Japanese than American? Or is she both? Or can she be both? Teenage alienation is painful enough, but it can be even more painful for a boy who is the only African American in his senior class. Teenagers often feel marginalized by adult society, but a Native American teenager residing in a predominantly white neighborhood is likely to feel even more marginalized (p. 126).

The study also revealed that certain mainstream groups tended to be recognized more often, both in the curriculum, and in teacher text choices. Chapter 2 discusses how citizenship education prevents a curriculum that incorporates the perspectives of mostly mainstream powerful groups (Banks 1998). Indeed the participants attempted to infuse
citizenship education goals into their practice, however without specific direction in the curriculum to include specific groups, some cultural groups were missed. The Ontario English Curriculum 2007, at present only recommends that teachers use “a variety of student and teacher selected texts from diverse cultures and historical periods” (p. 73). As well, the teacher expectations tags and specific examples related to First Nations people are present, nonetheless no other cultural groups are considered in these examples. Consequently, some of the participants demonstrated a tendency to include more texts considered to be mainstream, with a sprinkle of texts from certain more marginalized minority groups.

Igor raised the importance of the natural connection one makes to texts that reflect their own backgrounds, even though he was the one participant that did not stress the importance of texts that are inclusive of the Muslim perspective. His own desire to teach South American texts, texts that reflected his own background, raised some important implications for teacher staffing. The participants all showed that the texts they tended to choose reflected their own interests, and often their own comfort levels. At present, many school boards recognize the importance of a diverse teaching staff, however additional consideration of the inclusion of a few teachers in certain schools with similar cultural backgrounds to those of the student body, could help in the sharing of knowledge for a more relevant and meaningful citizenship educational experience for students. Where this is not possible, encouraging teachers to move out of their comfort zone, and opening themselves to students’ authentic connections as a way to educate his or herself, could help to alleviate the underrepresentation of certain cultural groups. In turn, this would lead to a less teacher-centered approach to teaching and learning already encouraged by curriculum and Ministry guidelines in Ontario. Rakesh’s suggestion to have students locate texts that reflect their own cultural backgrounds and interests, and then compare it to others of a different background, provides one solution to providing a more citizenship multicultural inclusive space in the English classroom.

The dimensions of citizenship that the English classroom offers became a critical piece in analyzing citizenship education in English. According to Lindbolm (2003),

English teachers do not just prepare students for the world; we help students construct the world, to understand it in particular ways. In the choices we make of the literature we teach, and the questions we ask about it, the preparation we
provide for students to participate effectively in local, national, and global politics, and the other ways we refer to cultures other than our own, we help students develop values, respect for themselves and others, and personal goals (p. 96).

The importance of offering the global dimension of citizenship is critical to citizenship education principles, however this study showed that English teachers tended to focus more on Canadian content, and therefore often selected Canadian texts. Traditionally Canadian literature focused on Canadian landscape or the Canadian experience, however as more post-colonial literature with diverse writers materialize, students can be exposed to more global contexts, even with a focus on Canadian texts. Participants in the study certainly advocated for global texts, however the study showed that they felt it was not easy to get the texts they wanted to build a more global and diverse curriculum. Consequently building in social justice, multiple contexts, and cultural literacy were at times problematic. There was a consistent belief among all of the participants that the relevance of what students learn is paramount, however the English texts they used, were not always consistent with this belief.

The global dimension tended to be infused with only a few of the participants by providing texts on current events, in media studies, or with independent novel studies. Though the desire to teach more global texts existed with all of the participants, the study revealed that the focus on Canadian content was impacted by a few different factors. As mentioned above, all of the participants expressed a desire to teach Canadian content, an area of the English curriculum also emphasized in teacher prompts and examples. Secondly, the participants showed that text choice was based to some extent on the individual teacher, however availability of a variety of diverse texts in their schools was scarce. This was largely due to budget constraints, or the lack of willingness of the department to change the existing status quo of texts. In Carly’s experience for example, it took over a year, and not without a considerable fight to get a book she felt was controversial and inappropriate for her students, removed from her class list. This challenging experience to get texts changed, revealed how despite gaining more expertise and knowledge of “good” practice through her doctoral education, change is slow, and can be particularly frustrating for teachers desiring better practice. The study also revealed that the reality for English teachers wanting change is that they encounter way
too many barriers that require knowledgeable teachers such as Carly, to jump through many hoops. From department approval, to budget restrictions, to an acceptance by others of the knowledge that Carly had for better practice, the limitations to change proved to be complex. Despite the fact that there are multiple changes apparent to the new curriculum to include more diverse texts, Carly’s experience with her colleagues also revealed how some teachers did not recognize the value of these changes in order to amend their own texts. As the new curriculum in English is implemented next year, reconsideration of how effectively this is discussed and demonstrated to teachers when they are transitioned to this curriculum is certainly needed.

Banks (2001) postulates that, “an important aim of citizenship education should be to help students develop global identifications and a deep understanding of the need to take action as citizens of the global community, to help solve the world’s difficult problems” (p. 8). All of the participants in the study expressed a desire to connect students to global issues such as the environment, rights of people, poverty, issues of citizenship in other countries and so forth. At present, in the achievement chart for English, the category of Application is described as “the use of knowledge and skills to make connections within and between various contexts” (p. 25). This could be interpreted to mean local, national, global or cultural contexts. It is evident not only through this example, but also in other aspects of the English curriculum, that students making connections to other contexts, is an important part of learning and teaching in English. Teachers tend to choose either the texts already in schools that they are required to teach, or when provided with choice, texts that as individuals they have enjoyed, or are suggested by the English department. Banks (1997 as cited in Banks, 2001) suggests that multicultural citizenship, will enable students to acquire a delicate balance of cultural, national, and global identifications and to understand the ways in which knowledge is constructed” (p. 5). Hence, where choice of texts did exist for participants, they were often within teachers’ comfort zones of prior knowledge, and not necessarily determined by the cultural demographics of the student population. In Ontario, future consideration of emphasis on texts that are more global in nature may be a solution to offering a multicultural citizenship to our diverse classrooms in Ontario, not only as dialogue, but also in school purchases of books.
Accordingly, the reluctance by some teachers to move from classic texts to at least some post-colonial texts requires more consideration by school boards, departments, and the Ministry of Education. In order to provide a more effective method to help teachers introduce more contemporary texts to students, particularly in ethnically diverse populations, this becomes an imperative accommodation for these student populations. Though teacher autonomy to choose their own texts should remain a critical component of the English curriculum, more stringent parameters on the type of texts and variety of choices from classical to contemporary, to a variety of cultural perspectives, could alleviate some of this resistance. Also, more direction by the curriculum to consider international literature could help alleviate some of these tensions, particularly for teachers wanting to include multiple perspectives and cultural literacy.

There was a consensus among participants in this study, and in my own experiences working in various English departments, that Curriculum Leaders often experience resistance to change, largely because of teacher workload concerns. Therefore, more resources and teacher guides for teaching new texts are needed, and should be provided to schools with the introduction of contemporary texts. This also raises the issue of how texts are taught, and the questions teachers ask students to consider in sharing their opinions. For example, Igor raised the importance of teaching English teachers more about citizenship education pedagogy. In his current understanding of curriculum expectations, he implied that he is teaching acceptance in his classroom, however his discourse on this suggests merely tolerance of others. Igor illustrated this in the following words, as he explained what he tells his students:

You don’t have to necessarily like each other but you have to respect each other, and I try to distinguish that difference for them. You know how is it that you can respect someone but not like someone at the same time and we get all sorts of great discussions going. I said respect, and I think with respect comes acceptance. One of the big challenges at our school would be a lot of Chinese students, a lot of Taiwanese students and that’s a very conflicting issue. There for a lot of them, so they do have to respect each other in my classroom. It doesn’t matter if you think that Taiwan is a country or not. It doesn’t matter if you don’t think they are deserving of a sovereign state, whatever your beliefs are I will listen to them. I may not agree with them. I will respect you and you will respect each other and I think that’s where acceptance sort of fits into that part of the classroom.
The overriding tone of the English curriculum could be interpreted as not necessarily teaching acceptance of others, but in some ways as exposure to difference as a space for tolerance. Hence, a citizenship educational emphasis may be a way to resolve this difference coupled with teacher service, to alleviate some of these concerns.

The relevance of text choice proved to be an important aspect of citizenship in the English classroom. One type of text however is consistently taught by all English teachers, and at all grade levels. In my own experiences and in those of the participants, Shakespearean texts were almost always taught from grades nine through twelve. Carly’s knowledge of the Ministry suggested that consultants with the board may try to move away from the model of Shakespeare, a play, and a novel as the static texts taught to each grade every year, however the reality is schools, and teachers are not. This not only leaves little room for anything else to be taught instead, but also a reconsideration of how Shakespeare is taught to students. Alia provided examples of making a play like *The Merchant of Venice*, relevant to Muslim students, one of which was relating it to their prejudice toward Jewish people. More investigation and knowledge of taking classic texts such as Shakespeare, and connecting it in a way that is more relevant to diverse students, could not only be beneficial to students developing their ‘substantive and perceptual dimensions,’ but also as a way to use classic texts more effectively. Coupling this with a spiraling curriculum over four years of high school with thematic considerations for teachers to include with the texts they ultimately choose, may create a more defined space for citizenship outcomes and expectations.

**Implications for Muslim Students in Both School Contexts**

The English classroom is undoubtedly a space that ought be inclusive of multiple cultural identities, however this study examined the Muslim perspective as an archetype, for many marginalized cultural groups. The knowledge gained from this study regarding the recognition of Muslim inclusivity, provides a prototype for other cultural groups. Though, this study showed that participants recognize the importance of diversity, it also revealed that even with a high demographic of Muslim students present in all of the participants’ classes, for the most part it did not impact their program choices. In some ways, Alia was affected by it in terms of the literary choices she made and the topics she
discussed, but overall the teachers in the study did not factor this in, in any significant way. All of the participants instead discussed teaching multiple perspectives and multiple cultures, and for the most part, they went under the assumption that their Muslim students identify as Canadian citizens. This becomes highly problematic for Muslim students, as they are unable to explore their own social identities, nor develop empathy and understanding of other cultures different from their own.

Despite the fact that all of the participants were aware of novels with the Muslim perspective, none of the participants included them as part of their course novels. For example, all of the participants were familiar and expressed an appreciation for Khaled Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner*, however all participants mentioned it as a recommended text for students, outside of the classroom. The essay *My Body is my Own Business* was familiar and available to all of the participants, however, not all of the participants used it. Unpacking the perspectives surrounding *hijab* seemed somewhat problematic for the participants. The male participants especially showed some mixed feelings about addressing it in the classroom. Thus, the study suggests that more knowledge of the *hijab* is needed for teachers so that it is addressed more often and openly in the classroom.

Every participant had at least one student who wore a headscarf, yet the importance of addressing the meaning of *hijab* from a Muslim girl’s perspective was not undertaken in all of the participants’ classrooms. Carly’s example of students presenting on the various perspectives of wearing *hijab*, particularly as it related to current controversies in the media at the time, provided insight into the power of shared knowledge and perspectives, even if they feel uncomfortable or too sensitive for teachers to tackle at the time. Carly handled this by allowing the students to direct the discussion and offer their own thoughts and understanding to others, with little interference of her own.

Though religion is not a part of regular classroom practice in schools, in a technological world where students are exposed to misconceptions of religious groups, and conflict around the world deepens based on religious ideologies, the need to teach and understand religious viewpoints seems that much more pertinent today. This is a contentious debate especially in public schools, a space considered to be rich in moral and character education, but not a space for religious education. Some of the participants in this study also revealed a lack of religious knowledge, particularly as it related to
Muslim students and their hybrid identities. Texts that the participants revealed to study, showed that they lend themselves to rich discussions on one’s belief systems and their actions today, however few of the teachers engaged in topics that included religion. Igor’s misunderstanding of his Muslim students’ religious identities stood out most in the participants’ experiences. Though, Carly recognized the inappropriateness of Timothy Findley’s *Not Wanted on the Voyage*, and though Igor did on some level, it was not enough for him to remove it from his list. The following conversation we had illustrates this:

Reshma: Some would argue that this text is very Eurocentric and multicultural students don’t respond well to this text. That would be the argument for arguments sake. How would you respond to that, that it’s actually insulting to them? It’s maybe pushing Catholicism? Is it?

Igor: No because I always say if I ever read anything from a Holy text I’m not asking you to be religious again. I’m always trying to cover my basis with that. Just because we are reading a text that is Catholic, I’m not saying they should go read the bible. I quote from the bible because I need to reference the book. I’m not saying that they should go read the bible. I’m saying you be comfortable in your own skin, you’re phenomenal people. I love you just the way you are, don’t change…Ya okay I’ll definitely agree the novel is Eurocentric because it takes a position of a Eurocentric text which is the bible.

Reshma: So to add to that, don’t they feel that this book might not necessarily tie in with their beliefs, so we are actually doing the same thing to them, teaching them something that has nothing to do with their own beliefs?

Igor: That’s true, but you can’t address the beliefs of all students in one classroom.

The participants in this study showed varying degrees of knowledge of Muslim identities, however the more knowledge they had, the more willing they were to include their perspective in the classroom with texts, and with issues relevant to them. Chapter two discussed Case and Clark’s (1997) ‘substantive and perceptual dimensions.’ Most of the participants showed an understanding of the ‘substantive dimensions’ of cultural awareness but not the ‘perceptual dimension’. Carly’s rejection of the text *Not Wanted on the Voyage* demonstrated her capacity to see the whole picture, in large part because of her own knowledge of Muslim people and Islam, from her life experiences and her doctoral work. With this knowledge she was more sensitive to the Muslim perspective
and areas that they may have found problematic, or contrary to their own beliefs. Alia magnified this in her school context, where the Islamic school required her to relate most things students’ learned, to the Muslim way of life. Her understanding of citizenship education, her practice as a teacher, demonstrated Westheimer’s and Kahne’s (2004), “good citizen -personally responsible, participatory, and justice oriented” (p. 237). Though, this participant only reflected one opinion, in my observations of the school as a whole, Islamic schools, indeed connected learning to these citizenship goals.

The other participants revealed that in public school settings teachers tended to ignore students’ religious identity, consistent with Zine’s (2004) argument, that “mainstream public schools also impose a singular moral hegemonic viewpoint based on secularism and Eurocentrism” (p. 58). This was further illustrated in Carly’s example, where the school rejected a proposal by students to raise money for people in Palestine, in light of the fact that this particular school commends itself on addressing race and culture in a positive way. As Osler and Starkley (2003) suggest, Muslim students have multiple loyalties and identities that are not being addressed. This example raises important concerns regarding the majority of teachers’ standpoints, and their unawareness of Muslim student loyalties, or their willingness to consider their perspective if different from their own. This also raised important questions regarding contemporary current events and the influence this has on students’ perceptions of religious and cultural groups in opposition to their own around the world. Alia’s suggestion that Muslim’s unpack their own stereotypes of Jewish people, and Carly’s feelings that Jewish teachers ignored their Muslim students’ concerns for people in the Palestine, reveal that consideration of the interaction of these two particular groups, and exploration of the tension that may exist between them, is imperative in schools with a high demographic of Muslim students.

The Muslim perspective in the English classroom certainly revealed opportunity for inclusion, however, individual teacher’s literary choices, understanding of Muslim hybrid identities, comfort level with Muslim content, and their own knowledge and personal experiences with Muslim people, significantly altered the extent to which participants in this study provided this inclusiveness. The participants that gravitated toward a citizenship education pedagogy, tended to do this more naturally, and in turn created positive relationships with their Muslim students. Also, both the Islamic school,
and public school contexts, revealed a positive connection between citizenship education ideals and Islamic values, more consistent with what Muslim parents prefer. As teachers in English begin to consider this more frequently in their practice, the bridge between Muslim students home, community, and school identities, may be more effectively resolved.

**Suggestions for Future Research**

The tenth anniversary of 9/11 has recently passed, and despite the fact that in this time citizenship initiatives have amplified, and awareness for inclusion of the Muslim perspective have increased, I feel there is more that needs to be done. The participants in this study certainly reflected ways in which they incorporated citizenship education in the English classroom, however a more specialized participant group, teachers who regard the practice of citizenship education pedagogy an integral part of their practice and are more conscientious about Muslim inclusiveness, could enrich this study. Firstly, these teachers could provide additional teaching strategies, examples of active citizenship initiatives in the English classroom, and specific literary choices more inclusive of Muslim students, for all teachers to consider. Also for future recommendations, this study would benefit from a larger participant pool, as well as multiple methods, where all of the participants could be observed for a more vivid picture of what teachers say and what teachers do. This study also only focused on teachers’ perspectives, hence understanding Muslim students’ experiences with citizenship education in the classroom could also be advantageous as a way to understand how it may help students to negotiate their hybrid identities, as well as the potential it has for creating positive relationships between these students and their teachers. Lastly, this study investigated teachers’ responses specifically to Muslim students, however I feel this study is an archetype for further research on the potential for citizenship education to create a more inclusive space for any marginalized group, especially in the English classroom.
References


Banks, J.A. (2001). Citizenship Education and Diversity Implications for Teacher Education. *Journal of Teacher Education. 25*(1), 5-15


Appendices

Appendix A: Semi-structured Interview Guide

A. Background Information

1. Could you tell me about yourself?
2. Country of origin
3. Language and culture
4. Previous education
5. Teaching timetable
6. Teaching experience in Canada and outside of Canada
7. Travel experiences
8. Number of years of experience
9. Professional qualifications
10. Professional development experiences and qualifications
11. Extra-curricular/Voluntary commitments inside and outside of school

B. Citizenship Pedagogical Practice

1. Could you describe the subject area in which you teach?
2. Describe the curriculum expectations
3. The types of texts you teach
4. Articulate the rationale for choosing particular texts
5. Cultural perspectives you include
6. In the official Ministry curriculum guidelines for English courses, where do you see the infusion of citizenship education?
7. Could you describe the knowledge base and skill set you feel a teacher should have to use a citizenship pedagogical approach?
8. Materials you use to foster citizenship education
9. Specific issues you find too sensitive or controversial to raise in the classroom.
10. Could you describe some of the challenges you have in teaching English?
11. What challenges do you have in regards to teaching content?
12. What challenges do you have in regards to teaching toward citizenship?
13. What challenges do you have in regards to teaching literacy?
14. What resources and supports are available to you as a teacher?
15. What resources and supports do you utilize?
16. What resources and supports do you require?
17. What resources and supports would you like to have but do not?
18. Could you describe your role as a teacher in the English classroom?
19. What do you think are your main responsibilities as a teacher?
20. What activities have you engaged in to meet your students’ academic needs?
21. What activities have you engaged in to meet your students’ literacy needs?
22. What activities have you engaged in to meet your students’ social-emotional, cultural, religious needs?
23. What activities do you engage your students in at school, in their communities, local communities and/or global communities?
24. Could you describe your teaching?
25. What are some strategies you employ to teach English?
26. What are your teaching priorities?
27. What are some strategies you use to educate for citizenship?
28. Could you describe your relationship with your students?
29. How do you build a relationship with the students in your class?
30. How do you build a relationship with your students’ families?

C. Classroom Context

1. Could you describe your classroom situation?
2. How many students do you have?
3. How much time in a day do you spend with your students?
4. How is your classroom organized?
5. Could you describe your students?
6. Where are your students from?
7. What percentage of your students are from which cultural backgrounds?
8. What are some of your students’ educational needs?
9. What are some of your students’ cultural needs?
10. What are some of your student’s social-emotional needs?
11. How do your students impact your citizenship choices?
Appendix B: Semi-structured Interview Guide For Student Focus Group

A. Background Information:

1. Could you tell me about yourself?
2. Country of origin
3. Language and culture
4. Extra-curricular/Voluntary commitments inside and outside of school

B. Citizenship Learning

1. What are you learning in English?
2. Student expectations
3. The types of texts you’ve studied
4. Cultural perspectives you’ve seen included
5. Understanding of citizenship
6. Specific issues sensitive or controversial raised in the classroom.
7. Could you describe some of the challenges you have in learning English?
8. What challenges do you have in regards to learning content?
9. What challenges do you have with what you’re taught?
10. Do you feel you get to make your own choices or decisions in class?
11. What resources and supports are available to you as a student?
12. What resources and supports do you utilize at home, at school?
13. What resources and supports do you require?
14. What resources and supports would you like to have but do not?
15. Could you describe your role as a student in the English classroom, in the school, outside school?
16. What activities do you engage in at school, in your communities, local communities and/or global communities?
17. Were any of these connections made through school, your teacher?
18. Could you describe some of the assignments you’ve done?
Appendix C: Semi-Structured Observation Guide

Date: ________ Time Start: ________ Time End: ________

School: __________________ Division: __________________________

Teacher: _________________________

Teacher Gender: ___________

Grade Level: _______________ Course Title: ___________________

Class Period: __________________

Number of Students: __________________

Number of Male Students: ________ Number of Female Students: ________

Approximate Ages of Students: _______________________________________

____________________________________________________________________
Draw the room arrangement
Describe what is on the walls
Areas of Observation

**Academic**
- Content of the lesson
- Literary texts used
- Teaching Strategies
- References to students’ prior knowledge and prior experiences

**Citizenship education**
- Focus on particular citizenship dimensions
- Extending students’ knowledge of local, national, global perspectives
- Active citizenship opportunities
- Transmission, transformative, transactional engagement
- Controversial issues

**Affective/Social**
- Affirming students’ culture and languages
- Multiple perspectives
- Role of the teacher
- Interactions between students and teacher
- Interactions between students and students

**Notes:**
- The guide is not a rigid tool but a frame that will help in capturing the happenings of the classroom and the overall educational environment of the students.
- Observations will be followed by notes that capture the researcher’s reflections on her observations in the classroom/school (see field notes chart).
- Observations will be followed by interviews that probe teachers on their teaching strategies, classroom interactions, and ask teachers to elaborate on any situations or interactions which the researcher needs clarification.

**Field Notes Chart**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>What do I See?</th>
<th>What do I Hear?</th>
<th>Connections to the Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D: Email to English School Board Consultants

Date

Dear (name of person):

I am a Master of Arts student in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. The title of my research study is *Educating for Citizenship in the English Secondary Classroom*. Having already received permission from the University of Toronto, and the school board, I was hoping your could provide contact information on English teachers in your school board that are exemplary citizenship educators. My criteria for this study are teachers that have a deep commitment to exploring multiple perspectives, use a variety of texts, practice democracy in their classrooms, explore issues at the local, national, global and or cultural level, are committed to active citizenship participation, and possibly work in diverse school settings.

Since, English teachers are directed by the new revised Ontario English Curriculum 2007 to educate for “responsible and active citizenship,” few studies have investigated how citizenship education transpires in the English literature classroom. This research study seeks to fill this gap by exploring the extent to which expectations from the curriculum, individual experiences, personal perspectives and classroom contexts, collectively shape, challenge and motivate the issues, themes and citizenship dimensions that English teachers advance to their students. Furthermore, given the uniqueness and complexity of diverse student populations, research conducted in your school could contribute to understanding how teachers attempt to address cultural, national and global identifications.

Upon your recommendations, in order to protect the anonymity of the participants, I will not disclose who did or did not participate in the study.

I would appreciate any assistance you can provide me. I am willing to discuss this study with you in more detail and answer any questions that you might have in order to locate participants that best meet my participant criteria. I will contact you in a few days to further discuss this study. If you would like to receive more information about the study, please contact me in person, by telephone, or through e-mail. You may also contact my thesis supervisor, Dr. Linda Cameron at lcameron@oise.utoronto.ca.

Sincerely,

Reshma Somani
MA Candidate
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto
Appendix E: Email Letter of Introduction to the Public School Principal

Date

(name and address of the school)

Dear (name of principal):

I am a Master of Arts student in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto and a former secondary English teacher. The title of my research study is *Educating for Citizenship in the English Secondary Classroom*. I am writing to inform you about my interest to conduct research in your school. Also, your school (is an ideal site for my study due to its ethnically diverse student body) and/or (your school has a teacher on staff that comes highly recommended to me by an English consultant with your school board).

Having already received permission from the University of Toronto, and the school board, I am now contacting you to inquire whether you would be willing to allow me to conduct my research in your school. As part of my thesis research and my own interests as an English teacher, I would like to learn more about how English teachers educate for citizenship in your specific school context. English teachers are directed by the new revised Ontario English Curriculum 2007 to educate for “responsible and active citizenship,” however few studies have investigated how citizenship education transpires in the English literature classroom. This research study seeks to fill this gap by exploring the extent to which expectations from the curriculum, individual experiences, personal perspectives and classroom contexts, collectively shape, challenge and motivate the issues, themes and citizenship dimensions that English teachers advance to their students. Furthermore, given the uniqueness and complexity of diverse student populations, research conducted in your school could contribute to understanding how teachers attempt to address cultural, national and global identifications.

Hence, I am interested in interviewing one to two teachers and one focus group with students from the classes of the participating teachers. My research would involve the following:

- Interviewing and observing one or two teachers in your school who teach English literature. There will be 3 interviews. Each interview will be approximately 60 minutes long, and will be recorded on a digital audio recorder and transcribed. There will be 3-5 classroom observation sessions. Observations will take place over one week, unless the teacher participant requests otherwise. Each observation session will be the length of the class period. Information from the observations will be recorded in a fieldwork journal.
- One focus group interview with students from classes where observations will take place. Each focus group interview will be approximately 60 minutes long and
will take place after school. Each focus group interview will be recorded on a
digital audio recorder and transcribed.

- Maintaining a research journal in which I will document my observations and
  experiences of attending your teacher’s class, as well as the school environment.
- Collecting and analyzing curriculum materials and resources that your teachers
  use to instruct English students.

Throughout my research, I will do my best to not interfere in the everyday school and
classroom environment. If you agree to allow me to conduct this study in your school,
you may rest assured that your privacy, as well as that of your school staff, your students,
and their families will be protected at all times. The raw data gathered through this study
will be kept confidential, known only to me and the members of my thesis committee. In
addition, a summary of the thesis will also be made available upon request. Be also
assured that the identity of the board, the school, the teacher, the students, and their
parents/legal guardians will be kept confidential in the thesis and in any subsequent
presentations or publications. Each participant’s name will be replaced by a pseudonym.
Moreover, I will take great care to assure that the identities of all participants will not be
revealed in any other fashion, such as through background information. All data and
audio recordings will be kept in locked files accessible only to me and will be destroyed
ten years after the end of the study.

All participants in this study have the option of withdrawing at any time, without
suffering any adverse affects or having to explain their reasons for withdrawal.

With any participant that agrees to participate in this study, I will seek permission and
consent before any data collection begins. Parent/guardians of students will be sent a
letter outlining the study and will ask permission to observe their child during classroom
observations.

I would like to discuss this study with you in more detail and answer any questions that
you might have, and will contact you in a few days to further discuss this study. If you
would like to receive more information about the study, please contact me in person, by
telephone, or through e-mail. You may also contact my thesis supervisor, Dr. Linda
Cameron at lcameron@oise.utoronto.ca.

Sincerely,

Reshma Somani
MA Candidate
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto
Appendix F: Email Letter of Introduction to the Islamic School Principal

Date

(name and address of the school)

Dear (name of principal):

I am a Master of Arts student in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto and a former secondary English teacher. The title of my research study is *Educating for Citizenship in the English Secondary Classroom*. I am writing to inform you about my interest to conduct research in your school.

Having already received permission from the University of Toronto, I am now contacting you to inquire whether your school would be interested in participating in my research study. As part of my thesis research and my own interests as an English teacher, I would like to learn more about how English teachers educate for citizenship in your specific school context. English teachers are directed by the new revised Ontario English Curriculum 2007 to educate for “responsible and active citizenship,” however few studies have investigated how citizenship education transpires in the English literature classroom. This research study seeks to fill this gap by exploring the extent to which expectations from the curriculum, individual experiences, personal perspectives and classroom contexts, collectively shape, challenge and motivate the issues, themes and citizenship dimensions that English teachers advance to their students. Furthermore, the extent to which these teachers bring in content through a lens that parallels values in both citizenship and Islamic religious education is unknown. For example, Muslim values of peace, social responsibility to the community or in some cases the globe are similar to Westheimer’s (2004) “good citizen - personally responsible, participatory, and justice oriented.” Research conducted in your school could contribute to understanding how teachers attempt to address cultural, national, religious and global identifications.

Hence, I am interested in interviewing one to two teachers and facilitating one focus group with students from the classes of the participating teachers. My research would involve the following:

- Interviewing and observing one or two teachers in your school who teach English literature. There will be 3 interviews. Each interview will be approximately 60 minutes long, and will be recorded on a digital audio recorder and transcribed. There will be 3-5 classroom observation sessions. Observations will take place over one week, unless the teacher participant requests otherwise. Each observation session will be the length of the class period. Information from the observations will be recorded in a fieldwork journal.
- One focus group interview with students in the classroom in which observations will take place. Each focus group interview will be approximately 60 minutes
long and will take place after school. Each focus group interview will be recorded on a digital audio recorder and transcribed.

- Maintaining a research journal in which I will document my observations and experiences of attending your teacher’s class, as well as the school environment.
- Collecting and analyzing curriculum materials, student work and resources that your teachers use to instruct English students.

Throughout my research, I will do my best to not interfere in the everyday school and classroom environment. If you agree to allow me to conduct this study in your school, you may rest assured that your privacy, as well as that of your school staff, your students, and their families will be protected at all times. The raw data gathered through this study will be kept confidential, known only to me, and the members of my thesis committee. In addition, a summary of the thesis will also be made available upon request. Be also assured that the identity of the board, the school, the teacher, the students, and their parents/legal guardians will be kept confidential in the thesis and in any subsequent presentations or publications. Each participant’s name will be replaced by a pseudonym. Moreover, I will take great care to assure that the identities of all participants will not be revealed in any other fashion, such as through background information. All data and audio recordings will be kept in locked files accessible only to me and will be destroyed ten years after the end of the study.

All participants in this study have the option of withdrawing at any time, without suffering any adverse affects or having to explain their reasons for withdrawal.

With any participant that agrees to participate in this study, I will seek permission and consent before any data collection begins. Parent/guardians of students will be sent a letter outlining the study and asks for consent to observe their child during classroom observations.

I would like to discuss this study with you in more detail and answer any questions that you might have, and will contact you in a few days to further discuss this study. If you would like to receive more information about the study, please contact me in person, by telephone, or through e-mail. You may also contact my thesis supervisor, Dr. Linda Cameron at lcameron@oise.utoronto.ca.

Sincerely,

Reshma Somani
MA Candidate
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto
Consent Form for Principals

(to be signed by School Principal)

Title of the Research: Educating for Citizenship in the English Secondary Classroom

Name of the Researcher: Reshma Somani

Institutional Affiliation: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

Please complete, sign, and return to the researcher.

Please check the box.

☐ I, _________________________________, have read and understood the terms and conditions of this study and I agree to my school participating in this study.

Name (please print): _________________________________

Date: _______________________________
Appendix G: Letter of Introduction and Consent to Public School Teachers

Date

(name and address of the school)

Dear (name of principal):

I am a Master of Arts student in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto and a former secondary English teacher. The title of my research study is Educating for Citizenship in the English Secondary Classroom. I am writing to inform you about my interest to conduct research in your classroom. (To be inserted if applies: You come highly recommended from__________, as an exemplary citizenship educator.

Having already received permission from the University of Toronto, the school board, and your principal, I am now contacting you to inquire whether you would be interested in participating in my research study. As part of my thesis research and my own interests as an English teacher, I would like to learn more about how English teachers educate for citizenship in your specific school context. English teachers are directed by the new revised Ontario English Curriculum 2007 to educate for “responsible and active citizenship” however, few studies have investigated how this transpires in the English literature classroom. This research study seeks to fill this gap by exploring the extent to which expectations from the curriculum, individual experiences, personal perspectives and classroom contexts, collectively shape, challenge and motivate the issues, themes and citizenship dimensions that English teachers advance to their students. Furthermore, given the uniqueness and complexity of diverse student populations, research conducted in your school could contribute to understanding how teachers attempt to address cultural, national and global identifications.

Hence, I am interested in interviewing you and conducting one focus group with students from your classes. Your participation will require the following:

- Interviewing you. There will be 3 interviews. Each interview will be approximately 60 minutes long, and will be recorded on a digital audio recorder and transcribed. Each interview will take place after school, or at a time that is most convenient for you.
- Observing your classroom. There will be 3-5 classroom observation sessions of only one of the classes you teach. Observations will take place over one week, unless you request otherwise. Each observation session will be the length of the class period. Information from the observations will be recorded in a fieldwork journal.
- The first interview will take place before the first observation session, the second interview will take place after the third observation session, and the final interview will take place once all observation sessions are complete.
The focus group interview with your students will be voluntary and only with parental consent. Each focus group interview will be approximately 60 minutes long and will occur after school hours. Each focus group interview will be recorded on a digital audio recorder and transcribed.

Maintaining a research journal in which I will document my observations and experiences in attending your class, as well as the school environment.

Collecting and analyzing curriculum materials, student work and resources that you use to instruct English students.

In the interview you will be asked questions about:
- Your educational background and professional experience
- Your current professional position
- Your classroom
- Your students, and your relationship with your students and their families
- Your experience in teaching English literature with diverse student groups
- Your conceptualization of citizenship education
- The support and resources available to you and your students
- Your role as a citizenship educator

In the observation sessions, areas of observation will include:
- Academic areas and factors
- Local, national and global connections
- Affective/social areas and factors

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you do decide to participate in this study, you may refuse to answer any questions, stop the interview, and withdraw from this study without suffering any adverse affect and without having to give a reason. The researcher will not be communicating any evaluative comments to your principal, the parents of your students or any other person of authority.

After agreeing to participate in this study, I will seek permission from your students and their parents before any data collection begins. I will need your permission to meet with the students in your classroom to discuss this study with them, and to distribute information letters to the students and their parents. This meeting will only take ten minutes, and can take place at a time that is convenient for you and your students. During this meeting, I will explain to your students that their involvement in this study is voluntary and their involvement in the study will in no way affect their academic achievement or status in your classroom.

Throughout my research, I will do my best to not interfere in the everyday school and classroom environment. If you agree to allow me to conduct this study in your classroom, you may rest assured that your privacy, as well as your students, and their families will be protected at all times. The raw data gathered through this study will be kept confidential, known only to me, and the members of my thesis committee. Be also assured that the identity of the board, the school, the teacher and the students will be kept confidential in the thesis and in any subsequent presentations or publications. Each participant’s name
will be replaced by a pseudonym. Moreover, I will take great care to assure that the identities of all participants will not be revealed in any other fashion, such as through background information. Although I will take every action to ensure your anonymity, those knowing you are involved in this research may still identify you from some of the quotations or descriptions used in the final text of the research paper. All transcripts, data and audio recordings will be kept in locked files accessible only to me and will be destroyed ten years after the end of the study.

If you agree to participate in this study, a summary of the thesis will be made available to you upon request. In addition, as a token of appreciation for your involvement and participation in this study you will receive an educational resource gift certificate.

In a few days, I will contact you in person, by telephone or through email, to inquire if you are interested in participating in this study. I would like to discuss this study with you in more detail and answer any questions that you might have. If you would like to receive more information about the study, please contact me in person, by telephone, or through email. You may also contact my thesis supervisor, Dr. Linda Cameron at lcameron@oise.utoronto.ca. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact the University of Toronto Ethics Review Office at 416-946-3273 or through email at ethics.review@utoronto.ca. If you agree to the conditions of this study, please complete the attached consent form and return it to me at our first meeting.

Sincerely,

Reshma Somani
MA Candidate
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education,
University of Toronto
Title of the Research: Educating for Citizenship in the English Secondary Classroom

Name of the Researcher: Reshma Somani

Institutional Affiliation: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

Please complete, sign, and return to the researcher.

Please check the box.

☐ I, ________________________________, have read and understood the terms and conditions of this study and I agree to participating in this study.

Name (please print): __________________________________________

Signature: __________________________________________
Date: __________________________________________
Appendix H: Letter of Introduction and Consent to Islamic School Teachers

Date

(name and address of the school)

Dear (name of principal):

I am a Master of Arts student in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto and a former secondary English teacher. The title of my research study is *Educating for Citizenship in the English Secondary Classroom*. I am writing to inform you about my interest to conduct research in your classroom.

Having already received permission from the University of Toronto and your principal, I am now contacting you to inquire whether you would be interested in participating in my research study. As part of my thesis research and my own interests as an English teacher, I would like to learn more about how English teachers educate for citizenship in your specific school context. English teachers are directed by the new revised Ontario English Curriculum 2007 to educate for “responsible and active citizenship” however, few studies have investigated how this transpires in the English literature classroom. This research study seeks to fill this gap by exploring the extent to which expectations from the curriculum, individual experiences, personal perspectives and classroom contexts, collectively shape, challenge and motivate the issues, themes and citizenship dimensions that English teachers advance to their students. Furthermore, the extent to which these teachers bring in content through a lens that parallels values in both citizenship and Islamic religious education is unknown. For example, Muslim values of peace, social responsibility to the community or in some cases the globe are similar to Westheimer’s (2004) “good citizen -personally responsible, participatory, and justice oriented.” Research conducted in your classroom could contribute to understanding how teachers attempt to address cultural, national, religious and global identifications.

Hence, I am interested in interviewing you and conducting one focus group with students from your classes. Your participation will require the following:

- **Interviewing you.** There will be 3 interviews. Each interview will be approximately 60 minutes long, and will be recorded on a digital audio recorder and transcribed. Each interview will take place after school, or at a time that is most convenient for you.
- **Observing your classroom.** There will be 3-5 classroom observation sessions of only one of your classes. Observations will take place over one week, unless you request otherwise. Each observation session will be the length of the class period. Information from the observations will be recorded in a fieldwork journal.
• The first interview will take place before the first observation session, the second interview will take place after the third observation session, and the final interview will take place once all observation sessions are complete.

• The focus group interview with your students will be voluntary and only with parental consent. Each focus group interview will be approximately 60 minutes long and will occur after school hours. Each focus group interview will be recorded on a digital audio recorder and transcribed.

• Maintaining a research journal in which I will document my observations and experiences in attending your class, as well as the school environment.

• Collecting and analyzing curriculum materials, student work and resources that you use to instruct English students.

In the interview you will be asked questions about:
  o Your educational background and professional experience
  o Your current professional position
  o Your classroom
  o Your students, and your relationship with your students and their families
  o Your experience in teaching English literature with diverse student groups
  o Your conceptualization of citizenship education
  o The support and resources available to you and your students
  o Your role as a citizenship educator

In the observation sessions, areas of observation will include:
  o Academic areas and factors
  o Local, national and global connections
  o Affective/social areas and factors

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you do decide to participate in this study, you may refuse to answer any questions, stop the interview, and withdraw from this study without suffering any adverse affect and without having to give a reason. The researcher will not be communicating any evaluative comments to your principal, the parents of your students or any other person of authority.

After agreeing to participate in this study, I will seek permission from your students and their parents before any data collection begins. I will need your permission to meet with the students in your classroom to discuss this study with them, and to distribute information letters to the students and their parents. This meeting will only take ten minutes, and can take place at a time that is convenient for you and your students. During this meeting, I will explain to your students that their involvement in this study is voluntary and their involvement in the study will in no way affect their academic achievement or status in your classroom.

Throughout my research, I will do my best to not interfere in the everyday school and classroom environment. If you agree to allow me to conduct this study in your classroom, you may rest assured that your privacy, as well as your students, and their families will be protected at all times. The raw data gathered through this study will be kept confidential,
known only to me, and the members of my thesis committee. Be also assured that the identity of the board, the school, the teacher and the students will be kept confidential in the thesis and in any subsequent presentations or publications. Each participant’s name will be replaced by a pseudonym. Moreover, I will take great care to assure that the identities of all participants will not be revealed in any other fashion, such as through background information. Although I will take every action to ensure your anonymity, those knowing you are involved in this research may still identify you from some of the quotations or descriptions used in the final text of the research paper. All transcripts, data and audio recordings will be kept in locked files accessible only to me and will be destroyed ten years after the end of the study.

If you agree to participate in this study, a summary of the thesis will be made available to you upon request. In addition, as a token of appreciation for your involvement and participation in this study you will receive an educational resource gift certificate.

In a few days, I will contact you in person, by telephone or through email, to inquire if you are interested in participating in this study. I would like to discuss this study with you in more detail and answer any questions that you might have. If you would like to receive more information about the study, please contact me in person, by telephone, or through email. You may also contact my thesis supervisor, Dr. Linda Cameron at lcameron@oise.utoronto.ca. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact the University of Toronto Ethics Review Office at 416-946-3273 or through email at ethics.review@utoronto.ca. If you agree to the conditions of this study, please complete the attached consent form and return it to me at our first meeting.

Sincerely,

Reshma Somani
MA Candidate
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto
Consent Form
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Title of the Research: *Educating for Citizenship in the English Secondary Classroom*

Name of the Researcher: Reshma Somani

Institutional Affiliation: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

Please complete, sign, and return to the researcher.

Please check the box.

☐ I, ________________________________, have read and understood the terms and conditions of this study and I agree to participating in this study.

Name (please print): ________________________________

Signature: ________________________________

Date: ________________________________
Appendix I: Letter of Introduction and Consent to Students and Parents

Date

Dear Student/Parent/Guardian,

I am a MA student at the University of Toronto and a former English teacher and I would like to carry out research in Teacher’s name’s classroom. I am interested in learning about how English teachers educate for citizenship. In Canada, citizenship education is defined as “the preparation of individuals to participate as active and responsible citizens in a democracy”(Hebert & Sears, 2000). English teachers are directed by the new revised Ontario English Curriculum 2007 to educate for “responsible and active citizenship” however, few studies have investigated how this transpires in the English literature classroom. This research study seeks to fill this gap by exploring the extent to which expectations from the curriculum, individual experiences, personal perspectives and classroom contexts, collectively shape, challenge and motivate the issues, themes and citizenship dimensions that English teachers advance to their students. I have already been given permission from the school board, Teacher’s name, Principal’s name; however, before I begin my research study, I would like to get your permission to collect data in Teacher’s name’s classroom.

My data collection will include the following:

- I will be observing only your/your child’s class of Teacher’s name on 3-5 occasions. I will record the observation sessions in my research journal.
- I will be asking your child if they are willing to participate in a group interview. Each group interview will take approximately 60 minutes. If you agree that you/your child may participate in a group interview with students from their class or possibly from another English class. I will organize the interview to take place after school. Snacks will be provided during the interview. All interviews will be recorded on a digital audio recorder and transcribed. The maximum number of participants in each focus group is eight. If more that 8 students apply, students will be chosen based on equal gender representation and various cultural backgrounds. I will personally contact you to indicate that your child has been chosen to participate and provide the scheduled time and date.
- Students’ English assignments to observe connections to cultural, national and global identifications.

In the observation sessions, areas of observation will include:

- Academic areas and factors
- Local, national and global connections teachers and students make
- Affective/social areas and factors

In the group interview, students will be asked questions about:

- Learning expectations
- The types of texts they have studied
o Cultural perspectives they’ve seen included
o Their understanding of citizenship
o Extra-curricular involvements at the local, national and global level.

My presence in the classroom will not interfere or disrupt you/your child’s learning. The information I collect and the results that are obtained for this study will not have any impact on you/your child’s grades in any way whatsoever. All the information gathered in this study will remain private and confidential. You/your child’s given name will not be used in this study. My thesis supervisor and I will be the only people who can read the information I collect. All the information will be stored in a locked filing cabinet and I will be the only person who has access to these files. All the information from this study will be destroyed after 10 years. Teacher’s name, Principal’s name, or any other teacher who works at this school, will not have any access to the data. I will do my best to maintain you/your child’s privacy and confidentiality, however, those persons within your immediate school environment and others acquainted with this study may be able to identify you/your child from some of the quotations or descriptions used in the final text of the research paper.

Should you agree to/your child participating in this study, you/they will have the opportunity to withdraw at any time, and choose not to continue to participate in this study. I will not record any notes on you/your child until I have been granted permission from both you and your child.

I would be happy to discuss this study with you in more detail and answer any questions that you might have. If you would like to receive more information about the study, please contact me in person, by telephone, or through e-mail. You may also contact my thesis supervisor Linda Cameron at lcameron@oise.utoronto.ca.

Sincerely,

Reshma Somani
MA Candidate
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto
Consent Form

(To be signed by Student and Parent)

Title of the Research: Educating for Citizenship in the English Secondary Classroom

Name of the Researcher: Reshma Somani

Institutional Affiliation: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

Please complete, sign, and return to the researcher.

Parent/Guardian
Please check the boxes that you give permission to.

☐ I, ___________________________, have read and understood the terms and conditions of this study and I agree to allow Reshma Somani to observe my child in Teacher’s name’s classroom up to 5 times.

☐ I, ___________________________, have read and understood the terms and conditions of this study and I agree if my child so wishes, for him/her to participate in a group interview, which will take approximately 60 minutes and will be at a convenient time and location agreed upon.

☐ I, ___________________________, allow the researcher access to my child’s English assignments.

Name (please print):
_____________________________________________________________

Signature:_______________________________________

Date:________________________

I can be reached at the following phone numbers: ______________________ (home), ______________________ (other). I can be reached at the following email address (please print clearly): _______________________________________

Student Participant
Please check the boxes that you give permission to.

☐ I, ___________________________, have read and understood the terms and conditions of this study and I agree to allow Reshma Somani to observe me in Teacher’s name’s classroom up to 5 times.

☐ I, ___________________________, have read and understood the terms and conditions of this study and I wish to participate in a group interview
which will take approximately 60 minutes and will be at a convenient time and location agreed upon.

☐ I, ______________________________, allow the researcher access to my English assignments.

Name (please print):
_____________________________________________________________

Date:
_____________________________________________________________

I can be reached at the following phone numbers: ______________________ (home),
_________________________ (other).

I can be reached at the following email address (please print clearly):
________________________________________