What Does It Mean to Be Canadian?

Building National Identity for Secondary Students Through History

By

Linlin Wang

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Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

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Abstract

Canada is becoming more and more diverse due to welcoming immigrants from all over the world. Redefining the meaning of being Canadian and constructing a new national identity endorsed by citizens of different cultural backgrounds is becoming an unavoidable issue in schools. This qualitative study explored how secondary History teachers are working to foster students’ concepts of Canadian identity in Toronto-area multicultural schools. Two senior secondary History teachers were interviewed. Both believe that effectively fostering a Canadian national identity in students is essential to History/Civics education. They also agree that both the bright and dark sides of Canadian history should be introduced in schools and teachers should equip students with the skills to critically understand their country’s past. Findings suggest that teaching practices and taught content in relation to Canadian identity may be becoming more and more inclusive and diverse in terms of both format and substance. Schools should make more effort to involve diverse parents and families into the process of national identity building.

Keywords: Canadian national identity, History/Civics education, secondary schools
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Chapter One: Introduction

1.0 Introduction—Research Context

For an immigrant country such as Canada, how to properly and efficiently address the issue of national identity has always been a challenge. Education might be an effective way to promote the concept of what means to be a Canadian. A close examination of education relevant to national identity would be of significance in understanding how Canadians identify themselves. Canada has always been a country welcoming of immigrants ever since Confederation in 1867. However, it only encouraged immigrants with British or French heritage due to its colonial attachment to these European countries. Therefore, British cultural and historical influences have been predominantly powerful in Canada except in Quebec which claims its loyalty to France.

However, things have gradually changed over the past three decades. From the 1980s onwards, the Canadian government began to approve permanent residency applications at the average rate of around 200,000 persons each year, and by the end of 2015, this figure reached 271,845 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2015) although the Harper government tended to hold a conservative immigration policy. When digging deeper into the statistics, one can find that the citizenship of permanent residents has also significantly changed. In 1980 the immigrants from the United Kingdom and the British colonies were the largest group coming to Canada, reaching about 15.4% of approved applications (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2015). However, their percentage has dropped to 2% in 2015 and Philippines, India, China and Iran have become the four major countries where immigrants are coming from (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2015). Permanent residents with citizenship from these four countries
accounted for almost half of newly admitted persons in the first three quarters of 2015 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2015).

Such a demographic change in immigration groups unavoidably brought about corresponding influence on local communities. To take Markham in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) as an example, the 2011 census shows that Asian ethnic groups have reached over 75% of the population in four wards out of eight, and they have exceeded 50% of the population in another two wards (City of Markham, n.d.). Correspondingly, the percentage of English Language Learners (ELLs) in public schools in Markham also ranges from 20% to over 40% (Cowley & Easton, 2017). Major school boards in the GTA such as Toronto District School Board (TDSB) and York Region District School Board (YRDSB) have developed a series of placement tools, courses, and assessment to teach English to newcomers (TDSB, 2014; YRDSB, 2016). Although English is still the teaching language at school, students from immigrant families are exposed to their heritage languages and cultures at home and even in the local communities. The easy access to information and transportation also facilitates a substantial connection between immigrants and their home countries, which could hardly be imagined three decades ago. Nowadays, it is valid to assume that Canadians—or at least those who live in the GTA—are no long subject to a predominantly British cultural influence, but have the autonomy to enjoy and celebrate their own cultural identities in a multicultural environment. However, how do these changes impact on the formation of the Canadian national identity among students at school?

1.1 Research Problem

Granatstein (2007) has been an enthusiastic supporter of the leading role that History teaching should play in constructing Canadian national identity. He criticizes the current history
education in the public school system in most provinces for its impotence to establish national standards which define the meaning of being a Canadian. However, not all historians support such an argument. It is suggested that the narrative of what so called “Canadian history” was actually forged by the European settlers in favor of the manipulation of mainstream values (Francis, 1992, 1997; Stanley, 2006). These scholars argue that this grand narrative is highly distorted in the public arena and thus, is not suitable to be used to educate our future generations.

The responsibilities of history teaching could be an academic debate that receives endless discussion. My intention does not reside in adding new insights to this debate. As a future history teacher, I am more interested in understanding my future colleagues’ opinions on this issue and their efforts to foster students’ Canadian national identity in this changing multicultural environment.

As an immigrant country, Canada is expecting increasing population moving from countries all over the world. Toronto has become one of the top choices for newcomers to start their new lives in Canada. Nowadays more and more school-aged children and youth in Toronto area are newcomers or come from immigrant families, and are still under strong influence of their heritages and cultures. Meanwhile, the Ontario Curriculum (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013a) explicitly mandates that the issues of identity and active citizenship become the major components of History/Civics education (p. 10). Faced with such a diverse student population, how do History teachers do to mitigate the gap between respectfully addressing students’ home cultures and fostering a new Canadian identity? In Toronto in 2016, History teachers are coping with the most diverse student body in Canada. However, little existing literature has been done to illustrate the pedagogical practices that History teachers apply in their daily teaching or their
reflection of how students react to this topic in Canadian context. This project zooms in its focus on this issue.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

In view of this research problem, this research project explores how secondary History teachers in Toronto-area schools with diverse demographics are working to foster Canadian identity in their students. I interviewed two senior secondary History teachers about their understanding of whether the constructing a Canadian identity was necessary in history teaching, how they negotiated the issue of Canadian identity and fostered a multicultural perspective in their daily teaching practice, and how they understood the influences of a multicultural environment, especially of family and heritage culture, on building students’ Canadian identity.

Since the demographic proportions of Canadian population have been undergoing significant change these years, public education is almost inevitable to feel repercussions from it, and teachers would be among the first group who are in contact with and are experiencing this change. In light of that, this project also provides findings on how teachers are working with our future Canadian citizens, including how they understand the emergence, negotiation, and consolidation/conflict of the Canadian national/cultural identity in multicultural school settings. This is especially important for Canada as an immigrant country to provide a welcoming environment for its citizens, nurture the spirit of active citizenship among its young generations, and maintain a healthy democracy under the trend of globalization.

1.3 Research Questions

The primary question that guides this project was: how are secondary History teachers working to foster students’ concepts of Canadian identity in Toronto-area multicultural schools? Subsidiary questions that help to further this inquiry included:
• How do these teachers view the relationship between teaching history and fostering a national identity?
• What are these teachers’ strategies/practices to negotiate the issue of Canadian identity in their teaching?
• What strategies/practices do these teachers adopt to foster a multiculturalist perspective in their teaching?
• How do these teachers understand the impact of external environmental influences on their students’ Canadian identities?

1.4 Background of the Researcher

I chose to major in history at the university out of pure academic interest. After four years of study, I was quite confused about the goal of historical research and urgently searched for certain ontological motivation that could sustain my enthusiasm toward history. At the time I happened to attend a seminar by a famous historian of China, Luo Zhitian, who shared his reason for devoting himself to the field of history. Luo believed that one major responsibility of historians is to collect and construct public memory for the nation (not the government) with which ordinary people are able to identify. It was the first time that I consciously connected history to the construction of national identity.

After finishing my college education, I packed up and began my graduate studies, specialized in the modern history of East Asia, at the University of Texas at Austin. I spent ten years in the United States before coming to Canada in 2012. Both are major immigration countries composed of different ethnic groups from all over the world, celebrating their embrace of multiculturalism with either the melting-pot discourse that encourages assimilation (United States) or the cultural mosaic flag that highlights its level of tolerance (Canada). When I was in
both countries, I witnessed friends from different ethnic groups struggle with their national and cultural identities. I remembered a friend talking about his identity crisis in his adolescence. His father was an American and his mother came from South Korea while his physical appearance showed closeness to the paternal side. He shared the uncertainty of identifying with either his American or Korean friends. He complained that both groups indirectly isolated him as an outsider. Such an uncertainty was finally settled in his mind when he read more books about the history and culture of the two countries. He claimed that he then was confident to identify himself as a Korean since he recognized more commonalities with values and norms in Korean history, regardless of people’s opinions of him. That was a concrete example which demonstrated the power that history and culture could exert on an individual.

Nowadays, the connection between history and national identity is no longer an academic inquiry I casually dwell on out of interest. As a mother of two children with American and Canadian nationalities who are of Chinese ethnicity, I expect the potential identity crisis they might experience during their adolescence or even as adults and hope to be there for help when such a psychological crisis actually happens to them. Last, as a teacher of history, I also want to explore this issue to prepare my students for a deeper understanding of themselves, their cultures, communities, as well as a better academic and social performance.

1.5 Preview

To respond to the research questions, I conducted a qualitative study using purposeful sampling to interview two secondary History teachers about their efforts to foster students’ Canadian national identity in multicultural Toronto-area schools. In Chapter 2 I review the literature about the purposes of history teaching in Canada, how these purposes change under the influence of the intertwined discourses of globalization and localization, as well as the possible
challenges and accommodations of teaching immigrant students. Chapter 3 is devoted to the elaboration of the research design. In chapter 4 I report my research findings and discuss its significance in the context of the relevant existing scholarships. Chapter 5 identifies the implications of the research findings in relating to my personal experience and identity, as well as the educational research community. I also bring up several issues detected in the process of my research project, and potential directions for future exploration.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter I review the literature in the areas of the purpose of history teaching, Globalization in a multiculturalist context, and challenges and accommodations of teaching immigrant students. More specifically, I review the literature related to various arguments about why history should be taught in secondary school and the goals of history curriculum, and I especially pay attention to the aspects of citizenship and national identity building. Next, I review research on the trend of globalization and its influence on history and citizenship education in the current multicultural context. From the perspective of the education policy makers, I examine the theoretical tension between the idea of global citizen and the traditional concept of national/local identity. In addition, I focus on the research about concrete teaching practices and relevant topics emerged in the history/civics classroom. Last, I bring attention to the challenges and possible accommodations that teachers are faced with when teaching immigrant students in the reviewed literature.

2.1 The Purposes of Teaching History

Grade 10 History in Ontario is now taught in the form of national history in chronological order. The curriculum aims at “enabl[ing] students to become responsible, active citizens within the diverse communities to which they belong” (OME, 2013a, p. 6). The purpose of teaching history changes over time. In this section I elaborate how the history curriculum evolved in Canada, the gradually developed citizenship education, and the attempt of national identity building in a multicultural environment.

2.1.1 The changing History curriculum in Canada
The accurate date from which history began to be taught as a compulsory subject in secondary or high school in Canada is hard to trace. Nowadays, Canadian history is a mandatory course taught in Grade 10 in Ontario, and Grade 11 and 12 students choose from eight courses provided at the levels of university, college and open, ranging from the topics of American history, world history and history of Canadian ethnic groups, if they decide to pursue further study on this subject. Even if students show dissatisfaction towards high school history teaching and confusion regarding a meaningful or tangible purpose of studying history (Haydn & Harris, 2010), education professionals seem quite determined to keep history in the category of mandatory subjects in school. From the perspective of the Ontario Ministry of Education (2013a), history is a natural and suitable vehicle to convey “the development of identity, citizenship and heritage in Canada” (p. 108), and implant these ideas in students. Although the purpose of teaching history has remained relatively consistent over time, the content and the historical perspectives delivered in classroom have experienced dramatic change from the last century.

In the first half of the 20th century, the content of history courses showed a strong connection to the British Empire (except in Quebec) and Eurocentric culture due to its formal colonial history (von Heyking, 2006). History instruction usually began from Grade Seven and focused on important historical figures in Canadian and British history. In secondary school, students were required to study classic, medieval, British and Canadian history and the indoctrination of Canadian nationhood was realized largely through the emphasis of its British connection (von Heyking, 2006). Even if Canada achieved its full political autonomy as an independent country from the British Empire in 1931, the British legacy, as a cherished part of Canadian history, continued to demonstrate its resilient influence on history curriculum (von Heyking, 2006).
However, the trend of an emerging Canadian national identity had been observed in Canadian society and began to be transferred via history teaching from the 1950s. In 1942, George Brown, a historian from the University of Toronto, published a book called *Building the Canadian Nation*, and in the preface he wrote, “every province, every community has its own history, deserving of careful appreciative study. Nevertheless, the fact that Canada exists today is proof that there is a Canadian history which is greater than the sum of these particular histories” (p. v). This book was used as a textbook in Alberta for secondary school history teaching from the 1950s (Von Heyking, 2006).

The celebration of “Canadianness” became a major discourse lingering in the history curriculum across the country ever since and the importance of history as a subject in public school system reached its climax in the 1960s. Ontario secondary students then were required to take history course each year in order to get diploma (Davis, 1992). However, such a trend gradually changed when Canada became more and more culturally diversified with increasing immigrant population. Nowadays more content about social history is introduced into history curriculum that depicts historical development from immigrants’ perspective and emphasizes on their contributions to the Canadian society (Myers, 2006).

2.1.2 Citizenship

Regardless of the changing and debating content included in Canadian history curricula, teaching history to school-aged children and youth inevitably takes the responsibility of establishing their concept of “citizenship.” This section thus examines how the component of citizenship education is defined and implemented in curriculum in different countries.

When asked about the meaning of citizenship, British secondary students interviewed in Wrenn’s (1999) study instinctively related their passports to it and failed to produce more
understanding of depth. Their concept of “Citizenship” was confined to an identity as a member of a country and hence, did not show much difference from being a “subject.” Such a reaction from the students contrasts dramatically to what educators intend to convey in civic education. Education professionals generally agree that citizenship includes membership, identity, values, and the rights of participation, all of which are constructed on the common ground of certain political knowledge (Abowitz & Harnish, 2006). Some other scholars argue for two types of citizens that citizenship education should aim at: protective citizens and participatory/active citizens (Mahrouse, 2006; Myers, 2006; Tangelder, 2001). Protective citizenship education prioritizes students’ knowledge about various democratic institutions and values, and believes it to be the foundation of effectively practicing civil rights in future. Advocates of participatory/active citizenship place greater emphasis on involvement and participation in decision-making and public affairs in local communities. Both theories believe in the power of civic education in shaping and reforming the society by preparing its future citizens from school age, which is an established practice in most democratic countries. In places where democracy has only been recently established, such as Indonesia, civic education is still closely tied to the indoctrination of nationalism and patriotism (Nurdin, 2015). However, civic education of this type usually leads to a blurred boundary between the government and the country.

Although the active citizenship education that Canadian education systems embraces does not preclude dissent or protest as ways to express opposition as its Australian counterpart does (Tangelder, 2001), it permeates peace education into the teaching of activism in the civics course. As such, active citizenship education actually promotes an individualistic fashioned participatory citizenship that leans towards individual responsibility, which ultimately reinstates rather than confronts the existing power relations of the society (Mahrouse, 2006). Mahrouse
points out that such a self-indoctrination as peaceful citizens ironically further facilitates the emergence of hegemonic discourse in the worldwide arena.

### 2.1.3 National identity

Anderson (1993) suggested in his ethnographic study of Indonesia that the idea of nation in a modern sense did not form until the prevalence of print capitalism which enabled people to imagine sharing the same language, customs, values, cultures, and histories regardless of the fact that they were physically living in different communities. These imagined commonalities served as the root of nation state, the corresponding ideology of nationalism, and the concept of national identity from the nineteenth century onwards. Wrenn (1999) characterizes nine different identity shapers that can help a country to distinguish itself from the rest of the world and to consolidate its national identity. These arguments suggest the necessity for a country to go back to its history in search of the evidences of its unique commonalities and national pride. In this sense, History naturally carries on the responsibility of promoting national identity.

However, shall promoting national identity be the only meaningful end of secondary history teaching? Some historians and history educators have long been dissatisfied with the history education in the public school system and criticize its failure to convey informative knowledge or create rigorous intellectual challenges to students. Neither is it able to generate national standards on which a unified Canadian identity can be defined (Davis, 1995; Granatstein, 2007). Meanwhile, other scholars argue that the entire idea of a grand narrative of Canadian history begins with such a Eurocentric perspective and is built on the biases and distortion of other visible minorities, such as FNMI and Chinese people (Francis, 1992, 1997; Stanley, 2006). Therefore, history is no longer a solid foundation on which the Canadian identity could be established. Rather, the different cultural heritages of different ethnic groups and their
contributions to Canadian society encourage a redefinition of Canadian multicultural heritage, from which a new national identity is gradually emerging (Myers, 2006).

Nowadays we do observe a more and more open stance in History teaching, meaning that more voices of social and ethnic groups begin to be included. National identity, although still an organic concept in the curriculum, has been encompassed by the idea of “gender identity, social group identity, spiritual identity” (OME, 2013a, P.4) and no longer play the central role. Meanwhile, citizenship education focuses more on transforming society by being an active citizen. Such a shift in history education cannot be imagined without the trend of globalization and a more and more multicultural social environment. The next section deals with the challenges faced by history educators in the current society.

2.2 Globalization in a Multicultural Context

Global perspective and multiculturalism have played a big role in the education system. In this section, I examine how the concept of global citizenship is taught in different countries, the awaking local consciousness against globalization, and the embracement of multiculturalism as a tentative solution to the gap between the two forces in practice.

2.2.1 Global citizenship

Although globalization became a phenomenon drawing worldwide attention only from the last decade of the twentieth century, education professionals had started to envision education in a global context in the 1970s. Hanvey (1976) proposed five elements that would characterize education in a later interconnected environment: perspective consciousness, knowledge of world conditions, cross-cultural awareness, knowledge of global dynamics, and knowledge of alternatives. Researchers (Case, 1993; Ho, 2009) also suggest that empathy and an open mind to different “others” are also essential to a successful education of globalization. Keywords such as
interdependence, connectedness, and multicultural perspectives, have been repeated in the curricula in immigration countries, including the US and Canada (Ho, 2009). However, under the trend of globalization, study (Parker, 2008) shows that nationalism still maintains its significant status in civic/history education in countries where one ethnic group enjoys a demographic majority. Slightly swaying from its exclusive focus on a nation-centric paradigm, Civics/History education in Singapore now is still firmly tied to the ideology of the nation-state (Ho, 2009).

Globalization generates unprecedented challenges for the concepts of citizenship and Civic education. On the one hand, governments are forced to share authority downward with non-government organizations or upward with regional or even international institutions, such as NATO and the European Union. On the other hand, such transnational and supranational connections and communication create new social, economic and cultural dimensions that go beyond traditional scope of nation-state (Law, 2004). Based on his study Hong Kong’s Civic education, Chong (2015) further argues that citizenship education no longer merely stresses loyalty and responsibility towards a specific nation state, but includes the interdependency, appreciation and mutual respect among different communities and areas. For instance, a close examination of injustice and inequity of their own situation vis-à-vis the observation of other countries has become part of the secondary school Civics curriculum in Hong Kong (Chong, 2015).

2.2.2 Local/regional consciousness

Ironically, along with the trend of globalization that inspires people to appreciate their commonalities rather than divergences, a conscious awareness of the uniqueness of a certain community within a nation-state is also gaining popularity in curriculum writing (Law, 2004). Criticisms about stereotypes and essentialism which argue that minority ethnic groups such as
native Americans and East Asians do not receive enough representation or are oversimplified in the US history textbooks have aroused considerable attention both as an academic issue for reflection as well as a practical problem to be fixed by education professionals (Hong, 2009; Padget, 2015).

When the emphasis of localism is pushed to the extreme, the theory of separatism finds its space to emerge among education professionals. Separatists advocate for the formation of separate educational system that highlights the distinctive historical and cultural identity of their group (Feinberg, 1998). This separatist theory gains popularity mostly from marginalized groups whose cultures, customs, values and narratives of history are for a long time suppressed, or even silenced, in mainstream history textbooks. Afrocentric scholars have become major supporters in favor of separate education institutions to counteract the existing white dominant cultural indoctrination in the public school system in the United States (Hong, 2009).

### 2.2.3 Reconciliation: A multicultural solution

I have elaborated the theoretical tension between constructing a unified national identity, promoting global citizenship and maintaining local/regional identity at the same time. These are the discourses that all education professionals have to face nowadays. How should the tension be mediated at the curricular level? Different countries provide their various solutions.

On the continuum of advocacy for national identity, I put the theory of assimilation on the one end and multiculturalism on the other. Supporters of assimilation believe that the major purpose of history and civic education is to generate a unified national identity and standard concept of citizenship, and other cultural identities or heritages should either be eliminated or assimilated into the mainstream discourse (Feinberg, 1998; Osborne, 2000). Multiculturalism, on the other hand, enthusiastically promotes cultural diversity at the expense of national unity. It
encourages people to be loyal to their own cultural heritage and downplays the role of patriotism in current political situations (Ho, 2009). It is argued that people are entitled to have various layers of identities, as members of communities, nations, and regional or transregional institutions, and thus, identity as a concept is constantly changing and situational (Law, 2004). However, most countries do not align firmly with either end while trying to find a suitable spot on this continuum which meets their practical needs. The US, for example, takes a pluralist stance which partially agrees with the theory of assimilation that public school system should be accountable for creating a sense of membership at the national level while restraining itself from actively promoting cultural identities of individual groups (Feinberg, 1998). Most East and Southeast Asian countries choose to encourage, or even indoctrinate, national identity via their civic and history education (Ho, 2009; Law, 2004; Nurdin, 2015).

Canada’s stance falls nears the end of multiculturalism on this continuum. Rather than exclude multicultural heritages from the public education system, Canadian educators choose to employ different subjects to fulfill different tasks. Since the 1960s, the Ontario Ministry of Education began to use the subject of social science to promote a diversified cultural heritage and the multicultural dimensions of the Canadian society (Davis, 1992; Myer, 2006). Research suggests that such a trend can also be traced in other provinces (Pashby, 2014). When reading Ontario Curriculum (OME, 2013a; 2013b) closely, one can trace the authority’s implicit effort to keep the elements of a homogenous national identity and a multicultural perspective under one umbrella. How do teachers in the secondary school classroom transform such an effort into practice in Canada?

2.3 Teachers’ Practices in the Classroom
In addition to the transition to embracing multiculturalism, another salient renovation in history and social sciences curricula is the shift from a content-based to an inquiry-based learning (OME, 2013a; 2013b), which highlights the high-order thinking skills. This shift is not entirely new for some of the teachers who have already been understanding History/Civics teaching as a practice of solving various problems. In this section, I focus on the literature of teaching practice and the emerging topics that History/Civics teachers mostly tackle.

### 2.3.1 Critical citizenship

Sheehan (2013) defines critical citizenship as the “ability to think critically about the past” (p. 79) in his study about history teaching in New Zealand. He certainly is not the only one who embraces this idea. In a study about how to effectively teach American history, Ables (2011) found that the participating history teachers frequently mentioned generating thinkers, using primary sources, and seeing the other side of the story as the goals and/or strategies to teach their students. For most of them, teaching is also coaching, through which teachers do not just deliver content, but most importantly, teach skills relevant to all aspects of life (p. 86).

A practice adopted by many teachers in the reviewed literature is to guide student learning via making projects, such as starting a lesson by practical problem that exists in society. The project-orientated teaching often leads to positive results in student learning. Study shows that it provides a higher level of autonomy which leaves the choices of what and how to learn to students, and thus increases their engagement (Sheehan, 2013). Meanwhile, Civics teachers in Singapore also assign students to research on the success and failure of the political systems in the countries across the world and make comparison with the current situation in their own country (Ho, 2009). The intention is to enhance the advantages of Singapore’s political system and increase the sense of national identity. Whether the students effectively received the message
of nationalism is not revealed in the study. However, such a project-orientated comparison encouraged the students to figure out answers on their own and added an international perspective to their reflection upon the current situation (Ho, 2009). As Myers (2006) found in his study, students appear to be less engaged when the teacher intends to preach on the topic and are more inclined to find the answer on their own.

Study suggests that when the teacher advocates the idea of critical citizenship, the students begin to emulate the way in which historians integrate the validity of primary sources and critique different opinions (Sheehan, 2013). They gradually recognize the value of nurturing historical thinking. Coming back to the topic of embracing a Canadian national identity, they are more ready to critically accept the fact that “[some] aspects of Canadian history that are more shameful than praiseworthy” (Myers, 2006, p. 17).

2.3.2 Active citizenship

If critical citizenship remains on the level of thinking, another important concept in the History/Civics teaching—active citizenship is more relevant to action. It calls students to act upon issues they believe to be problematic in society. Most teachers recognize that calling students to take action is an effective way to make personal connection between the classroom teaching and students’ real lives, and thus leads to authentic learning (Albes, 2011; Myers, 2006). In the newly released social sciences curriculum, it is mandated that the culminating assessment of social justice/equity courses have to be conducted in the form of an action plan (OME, 2013b).

The forms of action plan range from a simple class assignment to a real-life proposal that needs to be presented in public. Mahrouse (2006) argues that some Civics lesson endeavors to produce a “peaceful Canadian citizenry” even when encouraging students to take action upon the issues that they strongly disagree (p. X). In this case, students are asked to assess the level of
acceptability of various action plans that range from writing a letting to the responsible person to bombing. The purpose of this activity is to teach them the proper way of expressing disagreement and protest (pp. 443-444). Some teachers go further. In a study (Hutchins, 2012) on the civic education of some public schools in Seattle, students were not only encouraged to conduct research and debate on their interested topics, but also invited to compose action plans to lobby the legislature. The graduates from those public schools were found to hold “a fiery sense of civic duty” (p. 70), which those graduates claim to have life-long impact on their future.

Although the reviewed literature generally shows positive results of such practices in the classroom, it also addresses challenges that teachers have to meet when faced with students. When reflecting up his own teaching experience, Myers (2006) recognizes that the most challenging task is to find proper resources of suitable reading level for the students whose first language is not English. He is certainly not the only one who finds it difficult. In the most ideal situation, the entire pedagogical approach should be redirected accordingly if there are ELLs in the classroom. The next section examines the challenges faced by History/Civics teachers and the possible accommodations that some teachers have adopted to help ELLs.

2.4 Supporting Newcomers in School

For immigrant countries like Canada and the US, newcomer students and ELLs are the growing population that can no longer be shadowed in regular classroom. This is especially true in the Toronto-area where the population comes from all over the world. Study (Hilburn, 2014) suggests that the issues associated with the education of those students fall far short of mastery of the English language. The History/Civics teachers in the study were struggling to find proper textbooks that integrate the experiences and backgrounds of the immigrant students. They rarely succeeded. Meanwhile the anti-immigration climate in some small towns in the US and the
uncertain legal status of some students also prevented them from concentrating on schoolwork. It is also observed that when the population of immigrant students does not show salient presence, they are easily neglected in the teaching process (Hilburn, 2014). In addition to be an advocator for immigrant students, Hilburn strongly encourages teachers to think out of the box, searching for renovating pedagogical approach to help those students.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1992) and Differentiated Instruction (Tomlinson, 2008) have been widely adopted to address the issues associated with visible minorities, including ELLs, in the classroom. Cummins and his colleagues (2015) advance a pedagogy of “identity texts” which brings the idea of identity affirmation and literacy engagement together to help multilingual and marginalized students improve academic achievement. They inspire immigrant and aboriginal students to create various form of texts, such as essays, visual arts, photos, voices, etc., to tell their growing experiences, through which their personal and cultural identities are reassured and connected to their new home, Canada (Cummins et.al., 2015). These practices meanwhile exemplify the ideas of active citizenship, inquiry-based learning, making connection to students, and high-order thinking skills mentioned above. Regardless of the various purposes that teachers are striving for, there always seems to be some commonalities existing in the successful practices.

2.5 Conclusion

In this literature review, I examined research related to the purpose of teaching history, the influence of globalization in the public school system in a multicultural context, effective teaching strategies advocated by History/Civics teachers, and the challenges and accommodation available to help immigrant students. This review pays particular attention to the tension between a unified yet imaged national identity and diversified cultural identities which acknowledge
students’ ethnic and/or other backgrounds. I endeavor to conjoin the administrative perspective that mainly comes from the scholars and educators who have impact on curriculum writing, and the voices of in-practice History/Civics teachers who are dealing with students on a daily basis in different countries. However, what is missing here is the point of view from local teachers in the Greater Toronto Area. Every locality adds differences on one issue. Toronto is one of the most demographically diverse areas in Canada, and as such certainly brings key elements to the discussion of building the national identity. Local History/Civics teachers, playing the role of translating abstract curricular language in the Ontario curriculum into concrete lesson plans and responding to students’ reactions on an everyday basis, serve as powerful agency between theory and practice. Nevertheless, their voices are largely missing in the existing research. This project intends to bring local teachers’ insights and practices back to the table and reveal their observations and opinions on this issue.
Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter I describe the research methodology. I begin with a discussion of the general approach and procedures, before describing the main instrument of data collection. I then elaborate more specifically on the participants of the study, the sampling criteria and recruitment procedures. I proceed to describe how I have analyzed the data, before recognizing relevant ethical issues that have been considered and addressed. Relatedly, I identify some of the methodological limitations of the study, while also highlighting and acknowledging the strengths. Finally, I conclude the chapter with a brief summary of key methodological decisions and my rationale for these decisions given the research purpose and questions.

3.1 Research Approach & Procedures

This research study was conducted using a qualitative research approach involving a literature review and semi-structured interviews with two experienced educators. The philosophical origins of qualitative research can be traced back to phenomenology which considers everyday human experience as the significant source of knowledge (Crotty, 1998). Phenomenologists even privilege the subjectivity of personal narratives since they believe that the perspective of insiders provides researchers with insights that could barely be perceived if objectivity and distance are maintained (Crotty, 1998). Therefore, qualitative research benefits researchers whose primary objective is to understand human beings’ experiences via an interpretative approach. This fits perfectly with my research topic: to explore secondary History teachers’ experiences in relevance to building the Canadian national identity.

Differing from quantitative researchers who conduct large-scaled surveys to collective data, qualitative researchers employ face-to-face interviews composed of in-depth questions that
reveal the interviewees’ experiences and their understanding of these experiences. The interviewees’ answers, on the other hand, would be analyzed in a humanistic and interpretive approach which also reflects the researcher’s personal experience and perspective towards the topic (Jackson II, Drummond, & Camara, 2007). However, it should be noticed that the qualitative approach serves as a vehicle to study the research objective from the perspective of participants, not researchers (Carr, 1994). The data on my topic could not be constructed without the subjective narratives of the participants as well as their understandings of their teaching practices. Therefore, as a researcher, I have been fully aware of the subjectivity that exists in the process of my research, and such awareness actually serves as a safeguard to prevent me from over-interpreting data based on my personal experience. This has been regarded as another advantage of employing qualitative research (Jackson II et al., 2007).

3.2 Instruments of Data Collection

The primary instrument for data collection used in this study is the semi-structured interview protocol. The semi-structured format, as the name suggests, stands in the middle ground between a completely structured interview protocol, in which “questions [are] all agreed in advance [and] interviewers must stick rigidly to a script”, and an unstructured one that allows the interviewer to “have a list of broad topics or themes to explore, or … even none” (Arksey & Knight, 1999, p. 7). It allows the interviewer to design and plan an interview that attends to their research focus and questions, while leaving room for participants to elaborate and even re-direct attention to areas previously unforeseen by the interviewer (Arksey & Knight, 1999). It is believed that semi-structured interview protocol is particularly suitable for researchers who have obtained some knowledge about the topic though preliminary research while lacking understanding from first-hand experiences (Leech, 2002). My research project falls exactly into
The major sections of my interview protocol focused on secondary History teachers’ teaching practice. As a teacher candidate, I am certainly less experienced than my participants in terms of teaching practice. Therefore, I might not be able to create a complete list that encompasses all the scenarios that could happen in classroom. In this case, a semi-structured format worked the best to balance my prior knowledge and participants’ contributions in the process of the interviews. It allowed me to demonstrate my understanding of the topic through the structured part of my protocol and thus, persuaded participants that I am the suitable person who is eligible to have a conversation with them at the same level. Meanwhile, the unstructured part saves room for those experienced teachers to share their perceptions, which could inspire me with some insights that I would not foresee or imagine (Leech, 2002). Furthermore, a semi-structured interview protocol helps to establish a trustful and friendly environment between researchers and participants, especially when an imbalanced power relation exists (Carr, 1994; Leech 2002). As a teacher candidate who interviewed senior colleagues about their teaching practice, this format functioned the best to obtain credible and valuable data for on my topic.

3.3 Participants

In this section I review the sampling criteria I established for participant recruitment, and explain a range of possible avenues for teacher recruitment. I have also included a section wherein I introduce each of the participants.

3.3.1 Sampling criteria

The following criteria were applied to recruit teacher participants:

1. Teachers will have History as their major teachable subject
2. Teachers will have been working in the field of education for at least five years.
3. Teachers will have experience teaching (preferably for at least one year) in secondary schools with at least 50% visible minority students.

4. At least one participant will have teaching experiences in countries other than Canada.

5. Teachers will be working in the Greater Toronto Area.

My research objective requires two key elements that my participants had to possess: experience in teaching and exposure in a multicultural environment. They had to be experienced secondary History teachers and be immersed in a multicultural school setting at the same time. History teachers usually are those who more frequently engage the issue of national identity, compared with teachers of other subjects. In both academic and applied streams of Grade 10 History Curriculum, building the national identity is one of the major expectations that students should fulfill after finishing the course. They are expected to “explain how various individuals, organizations, and specific social changes…contributed to the development of identity, citizenship and heritage in Canada” throughout the twentieth century (OME, 2013, p. 108). However, this expectation somehow conflicts with the reality of a multicultural school setting and students’ ethnical identities. This was the key tension as well as the most revealing part of this project. Therefore, I regarded the two criteria as the fundamental requirements to recruit participants.

It is also suggested that qualitative research is a vehicle to study the empirical world through the perspectives of participants (Carr, 1994). As such, the personal background and experiences of participants would considerably influence the result of the research. I believe that this project can shed light on the conflict between the Canadian national identity and students’ own ethnical identities in the areas where multiculturalism is strongly embraced, such as in the Great Toronto Area.
3.3.2 Sampling procedures

I employed two means of recruiting teacher participants for this project. First, I relied on professional association to broadcast my recruitment script. I contacted teacher associations and/or school boards, i.e. TDSB/YRDSB, and/or principals and provided them with an overview of this project. I provided the participant criteria and requested that these individuals/organizations distributed my information to teachers who they believed might fulfill the criteria. I provided my information to the individual/organizations rather than ask for the contact information of my potential participants. This helped to ensure voluntary participation of respondents. Meanwhile, I also relied on convenience sampling since I am currently enrolled in the OISE as a teacher candidate and have been gradually developing a professional network through the two practicums. Therefore, I also used existing contacts, such as teacher colleagues and mentor teachers, to recruit participants.

3.3.3 Participant bios

Sharon is a highly experienced secondary History teacher who has been teaching in Ontario for almost three decades. She grew up in southwest Ontario and had lived in several small towns in southern Ontario before coming to Toronto for undergraduate education. After completing her one-year teacher-training program, Sharon went to a Southeast Asian country and taught one year there. She has taught in different types of schools and is actively engaged in composing and compiling history textbooks. Sharon is currently the head of History Department at her Toronto school.

Similar to Sharon, Eric is now the department head at his school and has been teaching in Toronto for almost twenty years. Before becoming a teacher, he worked in the financial sector. Getting tired of dealing with numbers, Eric wanted to change his career and decided to test the
waters of teaching. He began his new career overseas. Besides being a regular secondary school teacher, Eric is also involved in teacher education programs in the GTA. He was teaching History, Economics and French when I interviewed him.

3.4 Data Analysis

Different from quantitative research which usually generates numerical data for further analysis, qualitative research is well-known for the rich and thick content of its data (Carr, 1994). Therefore, to examine the reliability and validity of the data collected from interviews becomes the first step of data analysis. This process could be realized by cross-examining the existing literature. It is a common practice that researchers identify some key words or phrases that occur most frequently in interview scripts and compare the contexts in which these words/phrases are used. Some common patterns might be generalized from such a comparison (Merriam, 2002).

Following the methodology outlined in Saldana’s manual (2009), I first read through the two scripts transcribed from the two interviews I conducted with my respondents. In this process, I preliminarily looked for “summative, salient, and essence-capturing” (p. 3) words and/or phrases to form my coding tree. After reading several times, I organized the codes into categories. When a category had too many codes, I further divided them into subcategories for a more clear structure. Meanwhile, I wrote analytic memos to record my thoughts and rationales of such categorization and/or recategorization. It was from this repeated process that I gradually formed my themes that will be elaborated in Chapter 4.

3.5 Ethical Review Procedures

To all kinds of research involving human beings, ethics followed by both researchers and participants is crucial for mutual respect and conflict prevention. This is especially true for controversial topics. Although this project does not deal with hotly debated issues, I strictly
followed the basic ethical rules of qualitative research that aim at the protecting human rights and safety of the participants (Carr, 1994). Among the numerous scholars who discuss the ethical issues of conducting qualitative research, I selected several basic rules that were relevant to this project.

DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree (2006) suggest that the exposure of participants’ identities could jeopardize their personal interests in the professional system and as a result, the anonymity of participants is fundamental for protection. Hence, both participants were assigned a pseudonym and I informed them of their right to withdraw from participation at any stage of this project. Furthermore, participants’ identities will remain confidential and any identifying markers related to their schools or students was excluded. It is also believed that trustworthiness is one of the key elements for a successful qualitative research (Jackson II et al., 2007). Lastly, it is of importance that informed consent should be arranged in qualitative research in order to prevent unexpected events (Munhall, 1988).

Before the interview, participants were asked to sign a consent letter (Appendix A) giving their consent to be interviewed as well as audio-recorded. This consent letter provides an overview of the study, addresses ethical implications, and specifies expectations of participation (one approximately 60 minute semi-structured interview).

3.6 Methodological Limitations and Strengths

The major criticism levied against qualitative research is the relatively small sample size of many studies and thus, it is not capable to produce comprehensive and objective results of studied phenomena (Carr, 1994; Jackson II et al., 2007). I realize that I as only able to interview two participants and therefore, am prevented from making generalizations solely based on my final results. Another potential danger of conducting qualitative research is that the researchers
spend too much time interviewing the participants and fail to maintain suitable distance. In such cases, they have difficulty in separating their own experiences from their participants’ (Carr, 1994). This was a limitation that I particularly needed to be aware of since my major teachable is also History and it is easy for me to share their opinions. However, this could easily be turned into a methodological strength if cautiously dealt with. When sharing similar experiences with the participants, I could deeply understand the responses they provided and hence, the credibility and validation were reaffirmed in the process of the interviews (Bryman, 1988). Furthermore, shared experiences and identity of my participants and me helped to create a trustful and friendly environment of the interview and encouraged genuine and frank responses from them (Leech, 2002).

3.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I explained the research methodology employed in this project. I began with elaborating the reasons for choosing qualitative research to explore the issue of building the Canadian identity in a multicultural school setting. I then demonstrated how employing a semi-structured interview protocol benefits this project. In the next section, I listed the criteria used to recruit participants, providing the reasons for doing so. I also described the sampling procedure which includes a large-scaled broadcast by the professional association and a convenient snowball sampling method due to the overall extent and scope of this project. I proceeded to show how the collected data were analyzed and detailed the key ethical concerns in this research project. Finally, I concluded by recognizing the methodological limitations of qualitative research, such as the potential confusion experienced by researchers for spending too long with participants, and reassuring its strengths. Next, in Chapter 4, I report on the research findings.
Chapter Four: Research Findings

4.0 Introduction

In the previous chapters, I elaborated the significance of the issue of building national identity in the growing diverse Canadian society. I also briefly introduced the theoretical background upon which the discussion of the necessities, challenges and content of national identity education plays out in Canada and other countries. Meanwhile, I reviewed the literature that explores the pedagogical strategies and accommodations adopted by teachers in order to engage students, especially immigrant students, in History/Civics class. After that I presented the methodological guidance of this project, in that, I interviewed two senior secondary History teachers who have been teaching in schools of multicultural setting in Toronto area for decades.

This chapter presents and discusses the research findings that emerged from the data analysis of interviews with two senior History teachers working in the GTA. Throughout the analysis, I was constantly aware of my research question—how are secondary History teachers working to foster students’ Canadian identity in Toronto-area secondary schools?—when scrutinizing the respondents’ perspectives on the Ontario curriculum and elaboration of their daily teaching practices. The findings are organized into three major themes:

1. The respondents’ understandings of and practices related to national identity building;

2. Daily pedagogical strategies for fostering Canadian identity;

3. Influences from a multicultural community/society.

Meanwhile, sites of convergence and divergence are mindfully drawn between the research findings based on the interviews and the literature reviewed in Chapter Two at the end of the discussion upon each theme. In the conclusion, I will summarize my findings and forecast the relevant issues that invite further research.
4.1 To understand the Curriculum

As reviewed in Chapter Two, the Ontario Ministry of Education (2013a) is very explicit about the responsibilities of History and Civics courses for fostering a well-developed concept of good citizenship, identity and a sense of shared heritage in Ontario secondary students. Although the curriculum makes suggestions about what content could be delivered in the classroom, there is no part of the history of Canada that is a mandatory component in the Grade 10 History course. Therefore, History teachers actually enjoy considerable autonomy in their classroom and how students understand these ideas largely depends on the teacher’s understanding on the topic. In this section, I first show the interpretation of both respondents on the current curricular documents. I then explore how their personal experiences influence the way in which the issue of national identity is presented in the classroom.

4.1.1 Identity issue: Not just about History

Both respondents were very aware of the significance of identity and citizenship education in their subject teaching but believe that it needs to be implicitly conveyed rather than explicitly taught to students. They insisted that a proper understanding of identity and citizenship was not only an integrated part of History or Civics education, but also an imperative element to other subjects. During the interview, Sharon enthusiastically opened the hardcopy of Ontario Curriculum of Canadian and World Studies and showed me the diagram of the citizenship education framework at the beginning while explaining her understanding of national identity: “I think History helps, and Civics, and Economic, all the Canadian and World Studies courses have this concept in these courses…it’s part of everything we did. There is a focus on identity in almost every section.” Similarly, Eric believed that identity was not a single topic and History
teachers should “infuse it rather than look at it as something mutually exclusive of History, of French, or [of] any subject.”

Furthermore, they both believed that proper identity and citizenship education taught students to function well as responsible and conscientious citizens capable of a mature and rational participation in the democratic modern society. Eric addressed his view of school’s critical role in the process of socializing students. According to him, school was the place where “you have to learn and work with other people” and he, as a History teacher, “[takes] more advantage to differentiated people’s identity that is formed with them in the household…[and] help them to form a self-informed mature identity as citizens in Canada.” Eric was very satisfied with the role that public schools played in integrating students and exposing them to different ethnicities and cultures.

Meanwhile, both Sharon and Eric have observed a strong emphasis on the concept of Canadian national identity in the History/Civics curricular document (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013a). Eric noted that the image of Canada used to be largely idealized and was defined by only the “good things”, such as the repatriation of the Constitution. Atrocities, injustices and systematic discrimination against indigenous people and visible minorities were hardly mentioned. However, nowadays the curriculum is more oriented to show both the “good and bad” things “exhibited by the Canadian government” and encouraged students to critically think about the meaning of being a Canadian. Sharon regarded it as a process to make kids understand an inclusive concept of new Canadians—“immigrants, refugees, whatever, also have a role to play in the democratic process.” Nevertheless, they both recognized that since the identity and citizenship education was relevant to a variety of topics, it had to be conveyed in an “implicit” way and History teachers needed to learn to “infuse” rather than “teach” it.
4.1.2 Personal influences on teaching practice

The research suggests that how the abstract concept of national identity is realized via pedagogical practice is highly contingent on the teacher’s personal experiences and background. Although there is a suggested list of History textbooks in Ontario, History teachers have the autonomy to make the ultimate decision of what to cover in their classroom under the big themes designated in the Ontario Curriculum. Therefore, the actual content delivered in the classroom is highly influenced by teachers’ personal choice.

Eric and Sharon have each been teaching in the Toronto District School Board for more than a decade. Before that they both had a one-year-or-so international teaching experience before settling down in Toronto. The places where they taught were all in developing countries in Southeast Asia and the Middle East. They were exposed to cultures, languages, and customs that were dissimilar from Euro-Canadian traditions and thus were more open to the idea of History being taught from different perspectives. Meanwhile, neither of them exclusively taught History in their career. They were also the heads of their respective History departments and had other administrative responsibilities other than teaching. All these experiences and knowledge contributed to an open-minded and inclusive interpretation of “Canada” in which bright and dark sides are both exhibited and students need to make their own decision about the kind of Canadian they want to be. As Eric stated in his response, “I think my background has been very good to encourage Canadian identity, and help students to understand how our unique history formed our cultural opinions.” He recognized that teaching French had reinforced his understanding that “our identity is not just one orientation, but many.” Sharon also confirmed that her overseas experiences had largely enriched her understanding of what means to be a Canadian.
Both my respondents acknowledged that there were plenty of teaching resources provided by the Canadian government or non-profit organizations, available for History teachers to plan their lessons about Canadian identity. However, they also regarded it as a challenge of “select[ing] the right resources” and how to use it in the classroom. They were constantly mindful of the danger of turning history teaching into propaganda. For Sharon, some resources provided by Historica or Veterans affairs were “explicitly Canadian Propaganda” and therefore, the teachers who used these materials showed their stance on this issue. Coincidentally, they both tried to limit the time spent on the battle of Vimy Ridge, which they believed was a manufactured message promoting Canadian nationalism. Next year, 2017, happened to be the 100th anniversary of Vimy Ridge, the 150th anniversary of the Confederation, as well as the 35th anniversary of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Sharon’s choice of the order of priority in her class was the Charter, the Confederation, and Vimy Ridge. Apparently that would be the message her students would receive.

4.1.3 Convergence and divergence

When education scholars are trying to explore the reasons for the imperativeness of History in K-12 education (e.g., Brown, 1942; Davis, 1992; Haydn & Harris, 2010), the History teachers I interviewed firmly believed that their subject showed relevance across the curriculum and was essential to maintain a well-functioned democratic society. Although historians (not History education scholars) argue about the importance of History education in forging a unified Canadian identity (Davis, 1995; Granatstein, 2007), my respondents did not seem to pay too much attention to the word “unified.” What they were more concerned about was whether their students were able to critically think about the issue of “national identity.” Furthermore, their understanding about the issue of identity was not confined to the national level, but included
different social and ethnic groups. In quotidian practice it is the teacher’s personal experiences and background that can play a significant role in deciding what students actually received.

4.2 Nurturing Thinking Habits: Themes and Strategies in the Classroom

My discussion of teachers’ understanding of curriculum has so far remained on the level of theory. How were such understandings reportedly realized in practice? This section focuses on the major themes and strategies the respondents chose to apply in the classroom. First, these teachers emphasized the skill of critical thinking to help students to understand the inclusiveness and complexity of what meant to be Canadian. Second, I discuss challenges that my two respondents reportedly faced when endeavoring to infuse the concept of national identity in their daily practices. The reported practices of both respondents showed that making personal connection to students’ life served as an overarching strategy when they designed lessons and assignments.

4.2.1 The importance of critical thinking

Both respondents repeated mentioned the phrase, “critical thinking”, which according to them encouraged students to become independent thinkers and be able to critically understand the past. This concept echoes with Sheeham’s elaboration about critical citizenship (2013). Once a teacher accepts the idea that a discussion of Canadian identity should include both the contributions and the atrocities or discriminations made in the past, the next step is to teach students how to reconcile the “good and bad things” that Canada has done as a nation. For these teachers, this reconciliation occurred on the levels of class community and individual cognition. Eric noted that the students’ understanding of Canadian identity varied. Students from affluent families usually held a stronger sense of Canadian identity while those from lower-income families showed indifference towards the issue. Eric did not think that the latter group was less
‘respectful’ of the country and rather argued, “it’s just that their identity has been formulated by a lot more challenges than … the white affluent kids.” That was the exact reason that he needed to help his students understand what leads to such a divergence in their classroom community. Both Eric and Sharon believe that at the cognitive level each student needed to deal with the conflict of being a proud Canadian while facing the atrocities the country collectively conducted or at least passively condoned. Being exposed to primary sources, Sharon’s students struggled with the question, “was Canada a just society in the 20th century?” For Sharon, to answer this question or to explain people’s different socioeconomic status in the society required the skill of critical thinking—the real-life skill that the respondents hoped to equip their students with.

As I have stated in Chapter Two, inquiry-based learning has become a predominant pedagogical trend in the History curriculum. In their recent practice both my respondents have been trying to inspire thinking by asking provocative questions, such as “was Canada a just society in the 20th century?” or “was the sacrifice in Vimy Ridge worthwhile?” Based on such discussions with the students, Eric provided an interesting observation:

[S]tudents at the age, 15 years old, are very good at making an opinion and defending it. But what they have difficulty doing is recognizing conflicting opinions, or different perspectives, or other people’s views, or even certain historical fact [that is] somewhat contradictory to their opinion…when they answer [the question] sometimes they may not mention conflicting opinions because they think they are contradicting themselves. That was the exact reason that Eric believed teaching critical thinking skill was extremely important: students needed to learn to cope with different, or even conflicting opinions, examine evidences, and confidently settle with informed opinion that recognizes both supportive and opposing elements. That is the very thinking skill that students need to cope with the complexity
of Canadian history—both the contributions as well as the atrocities that happened in Canada in the past—when engaged in the process of building their national identity as Canadians.

When asked about the students’ response to their explicit teaching of how to think critically, Eric and Sharon reported a positive impact on both the learning skill, i.e., the ability of reconcile supportive and oppositional evidences to form their own arguments, and the delivered curriculum content associated with Canadian identity. This type of training “challenges and reinforces the students to make questions more [about] what means to be Canadian…rather than taking things for granted.” As Sharon insightfully pointed out, critical thinking “teaches kids to make their own decisions/conclusions [about whether Canada is perfect], but still connect to who [they] are as a Canadian. The fact that we are not a perfect country is still who we are as a Canadian.” It helps students to form a multi-dimensional understanding of the past of their country and live up with a sustainable identity generated from this understanding. Furthermore, This was a transferable skill that could be applied to anywhere in their life later on.

4.2.2 Challenges in the classroom

Although they demonstrated sincere enthusiasm and strong confidence towards the fostering of Canadian identity in History education, both respondents recognized various challenges existing in the classroom that prevented the students from understand its significance. Eric felt that “apathy where students may not care about being an engaged citizen” was a major challenge to teachers. He further explained that students might have other priorities or simply “take for granted what they have and that everything is always going to be this way,” and therefore, “they really don’t need to participate.”

To counteract the apathy exhibited by some students, Eric and Sharon have reportedly both tried various strategies such as connecting the issues to students’ personal lives. One
method Eric usually adopted was to pose personal dilemmas on the students, such as someone does not stand up for the anthem, and have them decide what to do. By doing so he helped them to reconsider their indifference towards the topic and become more engaged later on. He also challenged them personally to “remind them of that…even the privilege to be in school wasn’t a privilege that students had in the past and that most of them would not go to high school one hundred years ago.” He let the students to make the choice of working in a factory or sitting in the classroom at the age of fifteen and list the reasons of their choice. Such a historical perspective often made the students more grateful for the rights they now enjoyed and willing to take action when necessary. The strategy Sharon tried was to improve the authenticity of assessment. For instance, her students were asked to write a letter to the Member of Parliament of their riding, or write a newspaper report or editorial, to address issues that needed action. The key philosophy of the aforementioned strategies was to make personal connection to the students and encourage them to take action.

4.2.3 Convergence and divergence

The respondents’ reported teaching practices on implicitly building national identity largely demonstrate convergence with their colleagues across the world as found in the scholarly literature. The idea of critical citizenship (Ables, 2011; Ho, 2009; Sheehan, 2013) that emphasizes the ability to think critically about the past is very similar to the emphasis of critical thinking skill manifested by the two respondents. In order to counteract to the students’ apathetic attitude towards the idea of what means to be a Canadian, the two respondents both paid considerable attention to encouraging students to bring real life to classroom and act on the issues they found problematic in or outside of school. Similar to practices of increasing student engagement adopted in other countries, these teachers reported using project-oriented teaching
(Sheehan, 2013), historical perspective (Ho, 2009), and making personal connection to students’ life (Hutchins, 2012) in their daily teaching.

### 4.3 Multicultural Influences: Community and Society

Our schools are located in communities and thus are never immune from the influences exerted by the community. The respondents both had rich experiences of teaching in schools where students came from families with a variety of socioeconomic statuses and cultural backgrounds. In this section, I will elaborate their insights on how the influences of family, community and society impact their attempts of fostering national identity in History education. First, I share their observations about how immigrant students understood the issue of Canadian identity. Second, I provide examples of how the concept of being Canadian was strengthened by bringing voices of different cultures into the process of national identity building. Finally, I explore the role that socioeconomic status can play in shaping the focus of students and their families in relevance to the concept of what it means to be Canadians.

#### 4.3.1 Positive impression of Canada on the part of new immigrants

Both Eric and Sharon had classes with new immigrant students and their observations of those students in relation to the formation of a Canadian identity were very similar. They reported that their students from immigrant families tended to have a very positive image of Canada, sometimes even more positive than the ones who were born here. Eric shared his own explanation for this phenomenon:

They chose to come to this country. Probably [they] have done a lot more research of what they could expect when they get there…they bring over their money and their savings, which means to say either they embrace Canada for its diversity or maybe for [its] safety and security.
Eric believed that immigrant students might be pre-disposed to a positive vision of Canada due to the influence of their families. This different perspective may enable them to be more cherishing of the positive sides of Canadian identity than their Canadian-born peers. Sharon had a similar observation. She told me that it was quite common for her to hear kids say they could not wait until tomorrow when they were to have their citizenship ceremony. However, was such a positive image of Canada the same, or at least similar to the national identity that Sharon and Eric hoped to convey via their teaching?

Eric revealed his concern when asked about immigrant students’ response to the attempt of Canadian identity building. In spite of their positive understanding of Canada, they tended to distance themselves from the concept of “Canadian.” In another word, they were not self-identifying as Canadian in most cases. Even if Sharon insisted that each kid in the class, except for indigenous ones, actually came from different countries and refused to see the difference among them, she still needed to qualify her statement—“whether it’s two years ago or fifty years ago.” The issue of time—the time length that students have spent in Canada and their age—may play a key role in shaping their identities as a Canadian. To be specific, for students from new immigrant families, even if they held positive impression of Canada and were enthusiastic to be naturalized, their experiences and understandings of being Canadian were not necessarily the same as those of their peers whose families had moved here for generations.

4.3.2 Bring your own characteristics to the process of identity building

Although some scholars have expressed concern about the danger of embracing multiculturalism and globalization in jeopardizing a united national identity (Feinberg, 1998; Hong, 2009), the respondents did not see the multicultural elements brought by the students from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds as a threat to Canadian identity in History education. On
the contrary, they encouraged the students to bring their own characteristics to the classroom and regarded it as a different layer of Canadian identity. Sharon mentioned the story of one student from Congo playing the role of Pierre Trudeau in her Grade 10 History class:

So there we had this big tall African kid [playing Trudeau]...while Trudeau was not big, nor black…but he speaks French, right? And he took the role, and he understood the idea…he was very believable for his role and did an amazing job, which helped the rest of us to understand… [The immigrant students] all very much participated in the Canadian national identity building. That’s part of their embracing of their new Canadian identity.

Sharon makes a good point that one did not need to have citizenship first in order to contribute to process of building Canadian identity. Actually, the uniqueness of each member of the society is part of the meaning of being Canadian. Our black Trudeau demonstrated via his acting that being a part of Canadian identity means much more than speaking the same language, but more importantly, a deep understanding of the ideal of democracy advocated by our national leaders. Sharon further explained that sometimes a personal characteristic could also be a spirit, like the strong work ethic that new Canadians often brought to the class, which absolutely defined Canadian identity.

According to my respondents, the inclusion and respect of different cultures as a part of Canadian identity were not confined to teaching practice, but extended to extracurricular activities also. It helped to enrich the meaning of being a Canadian and create a more inclusive environment. With multiculturalism being regarded as an imperative component of Canadian identity, students of various ethnical and cultural backgrounds became the resource to the school as a community for the identity and citizenship education. Relying on the different demographics
in the community, Eric’s school was able to organize student clubs of different cultures and held a multicultural assembly, which was a evening affair dealing with music, arts and fashion, each year. Sharing and celebrating difference became very common among in the school. The teachers sometimes organized special parties of a certain culture and the students were invited to bring a symbol or even a piece of clothing that might be unique to their cultures or countries. Such practices facilitated students, especially those from immigrant families, to navigate between their own cultural backgrounds and understanding of being Canadians.

When talking about student responses to such activities, Eric told me that teenagers like multiculturalism. One the one hand, they were forced to be immersed into this multicultural environment since they did not have a choice of not going to school, which Eric believed was a very important process of socialization. On the other hand, the multicultural environment helped the students to embrace diversity and difference, which easily became a daily routine to them. As a result, they tended to “mix and mingle within different cultures quite easily…and work with one another.” Both respondents agreed that when multiculturalism had become an integrated part of Canadian identity.

4.3.3 Influences from family and the society

Both respondents agreed that the cultural backgrounds of immigrant students did not pose a threat to the formation of a national identity. However, their life experiences, especially their overseas teaching experiences, did lead to a more tolerant, inclusive and empathetic attitude towards the identity issue. Eric reported that some immigrant students showed little sense of Canadian identity since they had not grown up here. “They might not understand certain things the way they are,” he explained, “[since] they don’t know about the history.” He furthered his observation by comparing different schools where he had worked:
Our school tends to [have] middle and up-middle class students… they have been privileged…their sense of pride seems to be more refined. Having worked in a school [with students] from low socioeconomic [families], they do not have a strong concept of Canada, or very superficial…maybe those families are systemically poor from generation to generation. Canada hasn’t been so good to them…I would say their interest [in] or respect [for Canada] appears to be less.

Eric stressed that he intentionally used the word “appear” since he got such an impression from individual conversations with the students while not having any evidence to support this argument. However, it does suggest a connection between students’ perceptions of their identity and their personal experiences, as well as the influence from their family. In most cases, students from lower socioeconomic families tend to have relatively weak sense of national identity.

Both respondents found that parents were more interested in their children’s marks than what was actually taught in the classroom, especially for the identity and citizenship education. Therefore, the teachers had a high level of autonomy of choosing the curriculum content that they believed to be important and relevant to the subject. As Sharon said, “I don’t think I would get much pushback from the parents if I said Vimy Ridge was not that historically significant.” However, such autonomy seemed to result more from parents’ indifferent attitude towards this topic than their support to the teachers’ pedagogical choice of building national identity. Eric observed that the parents who needed to worked 2-4 jobs to provide the family “were more preoccupied in [whether] their sons and daughters were passing and getting the credit so that they could move on from grade to grade”. As both respondent suggested, students from such families might not pay too much attention to the topics of national identity.

4.3.4 Convergence and divergence
Both Eric and Sharon demonstrated appreciation and respect for the various cultures that their students brought to the school. Different from the scholars who were worried about a unified national identity threatened by cultural influences of other ethnicities (Davis, 1995; Feinberg, 1998; Granatstein, 2007; Osborn, 2000), they did not show any concern in acknowledging different cultures in the History classroom. Instead, they believed that cultural diversity was an integrated part of Canadian identity, which was no longer defined by predominant Anglo-Saxon Protestant or French Catholic traditions. Such a perception helped to encourage the integration of new immigrant students and reinforce the embracement of multiculturalism in the school. One issue largely missing from the reviewed literature was the influence of socioeconomic factors exerted by the student’s family. The teachers’ observations showed that students’ understanding of identity and citizenship was to some extent shaped by their personal experience and family socioeconomic status in the community.

4.4 Conclusion

In analyzing my interviews with these two experienced secondary History teachers, three themes emerged. First, I argue that the way in which the abstract idea of national identity building was translated to the concrete curriculum content delivered in the classroom was highly contingent on the teacher’s personal experiences and background. What and how to teach largely reflected the teacher’s perception of the topic. Second, both of my respondents chose to emphasize critical thinking when delivering the meaning of being a Canadian. Such a choice is concordant with the citizenship education in other countries like Singapore and New Zealand. Finally, They also agreed that a multicultural community encourages an inclusive redefinition of the Canadian identity, which for a long time was considered to be dominantly white Anglo-
Saxon Protestant and French Catholic. Such a redefinition enriched the meaning of Canada and reinforced the national identity.

One topic that emerged in the interviews but was not fully addressed in the reviewed literature is the role that socioeconomic factors played in the identity and citizenship education. Going forward, more research could be done to detect and predict connections between certain socioeconomic factor and its possible consequences and how to mitigate the negative influences resulting from the lack of socioeconomic support. In Chapter Five, I will discuss the broad and narrow implications of the aforementioned findings and provide my insights and recommendations on potential areas of further research.
Chapter Five: Conclusion

5.0 Chapter Introduction

This chapter expands the discussion of the findings upon the major inquiry—How are secondary History teachers working to foster students’ concepts of Canadian identity in Toronto-area multicultural schools? I will first briefly review the findings in the context of the relevant literature. Second, I will discuss the implications of the findings for the broader education community as well as myself as an educator. Based on my study’s implications, I will provide recommendations in relation to how to help secondary students to build their understanding of Canadian identity. Finally, areas for further research are suggested.

5.1 Overview of Key Findings and Their Significance

Generally speaking, there are three major themes that emerged from my conversations with these two senior secondary History teachers and are of importance to the ongoing academic discussion. First, in terms of the function of History education in promoting a unified Canadian identity, the two History teachers hold quite different view from some historians. Although the latter believe that effective teaching of Canadian history helps to reinforce a unified national identity among students (Davis, 1995; Granatstein, 2007), this is only one of the responsibilities of History education in secondary schools to the History teachers I interviewed. They believe that the idea of national identity should be a more inclusive concept that expands to a variety of levels of social and ethnic groups. Since the curriculum provides considerable autonomy with teachers on the choice of concrete content that can be delivered in the classroom, I find that how the abstract idea of national identity building is ultimately translated is highly contingent on the teacher’s personal experiences and background.
Second, both my respondents agreed that the concept of national identity should be implicitly infused through daily teaching practice rather than explicitly taught in a specific lesson or unit since it was relevant to a variety of topics in K-12 education including History. They coincidentally emphasized on the importance of critical thinking skill in such an infusion. Their pedagogies of conveying the concept of national identity are not simply to promote the greatness of Canada as a nation or ignite fanatical patriotism among youngsters. They made an effort to exhibit a comprehensive picture of what Canada has done in the past and taught students to make their own judgment about which parts should be celebrated and which deeds should be considered as atrocities that needed to be prevented from reoccurring. Their teaching practices were intended to ensure their students to critically understand how Canada becomes what it is today but not to avoid the dark side in our history. Such practices, sometimes identified as “critical citizenship” or “historical perspective” in other countries, are also reported outside Canada in the existing literature (e.g., Albes, 2011; Ho, 2009; Sheehan, 2013).

Finally, the respondents both agreed that a multicultural environment in their schools largely enriched the meaning of Canadian identity and made personal connection to their students. They claimed to have observed a shift of Canadian identity from previously a dominant white Anglo-Saxon Protestant and French Catholic concept to an increasingly inclusive notion that celebrates multiculturalism and differences nowadays. They further reported that such a shift encouraged the integration of new immigrant students and reinforced the embracement of multiculturalism in their schools. In their classrooms, they also welcomed students to bring their personal experiences and characteristics into the process of national identity building, which enhanced the students’ consciousness of being Canadian citizens. This type of pedagogical practice is also reported in some relevant research (Hutchins, 2012). The experiences and
understandings of the respondents sharply contrast to some scholars who are worried about a unified national identity threatened by cultural influences of other ethnicities (Davis, 1995; Feinberg, 1998; Granatstein, 2007; Osborn, 2000).

5.2 Implications

On the basis of the aforementioned findings from interviews with two senior secondary History teachers in Toronto area, some implications about students – especially the ones who come from immigrant families or newly moved to the Greater Toronto Area – schools and parents will be provided in relation to the broader educational community. Meanwhile, I will also connect the findings to my personal professional and practice about how to rely on my own experiences to enrich the meaning of being Canadian.

5.2.1 Broad: The educational community

An increasingly broad definition of Canadian identity helps to engage students in the process of national identity building. As the schools in the Greater Toronto Area are facing more and more immigrant students and students of visible minorities, how to increase their identification to Canada and recognition as an active part of Canadian society is becoming an unavoidable challenge not only to History teachers but also for almost all educators. Nowadays, more and more in-service teachers in Toronto seem to have accepted a Canadian identity that celebrates multiculturalism and differences. It indicates that the teaching practice and taught content in relation to this topic may be becoming more and more inclusive and diverse in terms of both format and substance. More elements other than white Anglo-Saxon Protestant and French Catholic cultures have been and will be included when the idea of national identity is infused in the curriculum content. In such a context, students, especially the ones from immigrant families and/or ELLs may feel freer to express their cultural identities and be more
willing to regard themselves as a facet of Canadian national identity. Furthermore, this inclusive version of Canadian identity could facilitate teachers’ pedagogical attempts making connection to students’ personal life experiences and characteristics. Therefore, national identity may no longer be an abstract concept to students but concrete enough to be associated to various aspects of their life in schools. Meanwhile, both respondents’ schools many schools are providing possible financial and administrative supports to different activities, such as culture fairs/nights, to promote the image of Canada as a culture mosaic. This may be the trend that would be followed by more and more schools.

In contrast to the active involvement of school community, including teachers, students and administration, in the process of national identity building, families, especially parents, may not be fully aware of this issue. This research indicates that parents appear to be more interested in the academic performance of their children. Although they are willing to support the extracurricular activities concerning on displaying different cultures, parents may seldom relate those activities to the issue of national identity building.

5.2.2 Narrow: My teacher identity and practice

My respondents both expressed a progressive and inclusive understanding of Canadian national identity and their teaching practice manifests as such. Their understandings and practices can also be viewed as highly contingent to their personal experiences and they are conveying their tolerant and inclusive perspective to their students in comprehending the issue of what means to be Canadian. I have myriad experiences of studying, living and teaching in different countries, which contributed to my open-minded understandings of national identity issue. I will rely on such experiences as a resource to enrich the content of national identity
education and take the leadership in organizing extracurricular activities on this issue in my future teaching practice.

5.3 Recommendations

My research has shown that more and more History teachers have been designing lessons and assessments that make personal connection to students’ life, which serves as a pedagogical approach to infuse the idea of Canadian identity in their daily teaching. Their experiences as well as reviewed scholarships show that it is helpful to engage students to this relatively abstract topic (Ho, 2009; Hutchins, 2012; Sheehan, 2013). To push it further, I suggest that teachers should take the form of action plan rather than a standardized test for assessment in History and other relevant subjects, such as Civics. An action plan is actually more attuned to the idea of “implicitly infusing” national identity in the classroom.

Corresponding to the suggestion of action plan as a major method of evaluation, I further recommend that school should provide more opportunities with students in a variety of scenarios, such as culture fairs/nights, to showcase their projects and artifacts from class in the scale of school community, sharing their understandings of national identity and good citizens with peers. Students thus would be more motivated and engaged in exploring the meaning of being Canadian.

Lastly, I suggest that parents should be more involved in the process of national identity building of students. When holding various curricular and extracurricular activities relevant to the issue of national identity, teachers and the school should explain to parents about the significance of students’ being aware of what it means to be Canadian. If it is believed that national identity building is an integrated part of citizenship education, we, as educators, should take this opportunity to implicitly influence the community. Parents and families could be the first step of this mission.
5.4 Areas for Further Research

The two respondents both have been working in Toronto area for decades and had experiences of teaching in different schools with students coming from families of a variety of socioeconomic status. They reported that students’ understanding of what it means to be Canadian was to some extend shaped by their personal experiences and family socioeconomic status in the community. However, a discussion of students’ family backgrounds and its corresponding influence is largely missing in the literature that explores the issue of national identity building. I believe that is the water that is worth diving in. Also, since I was only able to interview educators for this project, all the findings, implications and recommendations are presented from their lens. However, to examine how well certain concepts or pedagogical approaches are received by students, we should include student perspectives in future studies.

5.5 Concluding Comments

The issue of national identity building is a contentious topic, especially for an immigration country like Canada. The change of demographics usually leads to a gradual redefinition of national identity and Canada is experiencing the very process. Conventionally, it is considered to be the responsibility of History education that teaches students and the public what it means to be Canadian (Brown, 1942; Davis, 1992, 1995; Granatstein, 1997). However, as both of my respondents implied, topics relevant to national identity would be better received if implicitly infused in various curriculum content than explicitly indoctrinated in a specific lesson or unit. I believe that national identity building at the individual level is a far more complex process that involves the impact of family, environment, languages, cultural practice, cognitive development, etc., and therefore, the subject of History alone is incapable of claiming full
accountability. In this sense, further relevant research can be done from the aforementioned lens to collectively form a more comprehensive picture on this issue.
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Appendix A: Letter of Consent for Interview

Date: ___________________

Dear ___________________,

I am a graduate student at OISE, University of Toronto, and am currently enrolled as a Master of Teaching candidate. As part of a major assignment for completion of this program, we are required to investigate a topic related to an education practice of our choice. I thus choose to study the conceptualization of national identity among secondary history teachers and how they foster a Canadian national identity in their daily teaching practices in a multicultural school surrounding. I believe that your years long experience of history/civics teaching combined with the working environment of such a multicultural school setting will provide valuable insights into this topic.

I am writing a report on this study as a requirement of the Master of Teaching Program. My course instructor who is providing support for the process this year is Dr. Lee Airton. The purpose of this requirement is to allow us to become familiar with a variety of ways to do research. My data collection consists of a 45-60 minute interview that will be audiorecorded. I would be grateful if you would allow me to interview you at a place and time convenient to you.

The contents of this interview will be used for my assignment, which will include a final paper, as well as informal presentations to my classmates and/or potentially at a conference or publication. I will not use your name or anything else that might identify you in my written work, oral presentations, or publications. This information remains confidential. The only people who will have access to my assignment work will be my research supervisor and my course instructor.

You are free to change your mind at any time, and to withdraw even after you have consented to participate. You may decline to answer any specific questions. I will destroy the audio recording after the paper has been presented and/or published which may take up to five years after the data has been collected. There are no known risks or benefits to you for assisting in the project, and I will share with you a copy of my notes to ensure accuracy.

Please sign the attached form, if you agree to be interviewed. The second copy is for your records. Thank you very much for your help.

Sincerely,

MT Program Contact:
Dr. Angela Macdonald-Vemic, Assistant Professor – Teaching Stream
Consent Form

I acknowledge that the topic of this interview has been explained to me and that any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw at any time without penalty.

I have read the letter provided to me by Linlin Wang and agree to participate in an interview for the purposes described. I agree to have the interview audio-recorded.

Signature: ______________________________________

Name (printed): ___________________________________

Date: _____________________
Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Thank you for participating in my research study. The aim of this research is to learn how Ontario secondary History teachers work to foster students’ Canadian identity in multicultural schools. This interview should take approximately 60 minutes, and is comprised of approximately 20 questions. The interview protocol has been divided into 4 sections, beginning with the participants’ background information and opinions about the role of history/civics plays in building the Canadian national role. The second section covers the information about the inquired school and the community in which it is located. Next, I make inquiries about teachers’ strategies/practices to negotiate the issue of Canadian identity in their classroom teaching. The questions in the last section focus on the participants’ perception of influences of multicultural communities (such as parent influence) in foster students’ Canadian identity. I want to remind you that you can choose not to answer any question, and can remove yourself from participation at any time. Do you have any questions before we begin?

TAPE ON

To begin can you state your name for the recording?

Section A – Background Information

1. How long have you been living in the GTA?
   a. (If born in Canada) Where did you grow up?
   b. (If not born Canada) Which country did you immigrate from? Where did you live for more than one year except for the GTA?
2. What did you major in for your undergraduate degree?
3. How many years have you been teaching History/Civics in your current school?
   a. Which grade(s) are you currently teaching?
   b. Have you ever taught any other subjects before?
4. In addition to your role as a teacher, do you fulfill any other responsibilities in the school (e.g. coach, advisor, resource teacher etc.)?
5. What is your opinion about the role that school should play in building students’ Canadian national identity?
   a. Do you think your family background has any influence on your opinion about this issue? If yes, how?

Section B – School climate/community

6. Can you describe the community in which your school is situated (i.e. ethnical/cultural diversity, socioeconomic status)?
   a. (if have taught in other schools see 3a above) Could you also describe the communities in which your previous school was located? How does this compare
with your current school?

7. Generally speaking, do you think parents’ opinions influence the operation, academically and/or administratively, of your school?
   a. (if yes) Please provide an example.
   b. (if no) Why do you think not?

8. What are some examples of how your school involves parents?

Section C – Strategies adopted in classroom to build the national identity

9. Could you walk me through what you did yesterday in your history/civics classroom?
   a. Was it typical in terms of regular routine of teaching this subject?
      i. (if no) what made it different from your regular class? Could you describe in details?

10. What historical events/figures in the course curriculum best symbolize or express Canadian identity?
    a. How do you teach about these events/figures?
       i. PROMPTS
    b. Does your teaching reflect the significance that you feel?

11. Can you tell me about the last time you taught about the battle of Vimy Ridge? (activity, materials, video, pictures, etc.)
    a. Why do you teach it this way?
    b. How would you describe your choices to a parent of an immigrant student?

12. Could you describe one way in which you intentionally seek to cultivate a Canadian identity in your students?
    a. Do you feel like it’s successful? Why/not?

13. What are some challenges for History/Civics teachers who seek to foster a Canadian identity in their students?
   --Curriculum
   --Resource
   --Students’ pre-existing perception
   --Student disengagement

Section D – Influences from a multicultural school environment

Now I’m going to ask you questions specifically about teaching History in a very multicultural school. I am particularly interested in speaking with you because you teach History in a school that has a large percentage of newcomer/immigrant students.

14. Could you walk me through some typical school-sponsored activities to enhance multiculturalism in your school?
    a. How do you think the students respond to them?
    b. Which one runs the best? What do you think account for its success?

15. How many students in your class come from immigrant families? How do they usually respond to the issue of the Canadian national identity? Do you think, generally speaking, their responses differ from students born in Canada?

16. What kind of resources does your school offer to promote multicultural or culturally
responsive classroom teaching?
   a. Do you think these resources are enough for you to address students’ different cultural backgrounds in your teaching practice?
      a. (if yes) What is the most helpful resource for your teaching practice?
      b. (if no) What do you think is the most urgent support that you want to receive?
17. What challenges do you think History/Civics teachers face in fostering students’ Canadian national identity and addressing their cultural background at the same time?

**Conclusion**

18. As a History teacher candidate, what advice do you have for me and other teachers in relation to the teaching practice relevant to the national identity or identity issue?
19. Do you have any final thoughts or questions?