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## Citizenship Education for Adult Immigrants: Changes Over the Last Ten Years

*During the past few years Citizenship and Immigration Canada has significantly changed the citizenship process by modifying the application procedure, eliminating many citizenship judge positions, introducing a multiple-choice test, and restructuring the citizenship ceremony itself. In order to assess the impact of these changes on citizenship education, we located and contacted citizenship programs across the country. For comparison purposes we followed much the same procedure used in a study conducted for the Secretary of State 10 years ago. The current study identified far fewer programs available to adult immigrants than in the past. Furthermore, since the last study the scope of the content in citizenship education programs has remained essentially unchanged in some instances or has been reduced in others. Recommendations are made for policy-makers.*

*Depuis quelques années, Citoyenneté et Immigration Canada a modifié considérablement le processus d'obtention de la citoyenneté en apportant des changements à la procédure de demande, en éliminant plusieurs postes de juges de la citoyenneté, en y ajoutant une évaluation à choix multiples et en restructurant la cérémonie de remise des certificats de citoyenneté. Dans le but d'évaluer l'impact de ces changements sur l'éducation civique, nous avons identifié des programmes de la citoyenneté de par le pays et en avons contacté les responsables. Pour faciliter la comparaison, nous avons suivi de près la même procédure qui a été employée lors d'une étude entreprise pour le Secrétaire d'État il y a 10 ans. Notre étude a noté que le nombre de programmes mis à la disposition des immigrants adultes a beaucoup diminué. De plus, depuis la dernière étude à ce sujet, l'envergure du contenu des programmes d'éducation civique a demeuré essentiellement inchangée dans certains cas, et a diminué dans d'autres. Nous offrons des recommandations aux initiateurs de programme.*

Although the federal government and several provinces have funded citizenship programs for newcomers for a long time, there has been little research on the efficacy of these programs; furthermore, most research into citizenship education is focused on school-aged children (e.g., Sears & Hughes, 1996). Although clearly citizenship education for Canadian-born children is of vital importance, it is also of real consequence for adult immigrants who have

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grown up with a different set of assumptions, a different history, and a different cultural reality than Canadian-born individuals. Citizenship education should provide a window on the combination of political, economic, and social factors that have shaped Canada and its people, particularly as these factors have a critical impact on immigrants' lives.

In a comprehensive review of the federal government's role in citizenship education, Joshee (1996) points out that citizenship education for newcomers, although defined as a means of helping immigrants to participate fully in Canadian society, is instead "increasingly associated with the acquisition of some English or French and meeting the legal requirements of naturalization" (p. 108). This was evident in strategies underlying the now-defunct federal government Citizenship Instruction and Language Training (CILT) grants: for many years the Department of the Secretary of State provided funding to English as a second language (ESL) programs on the understanding that both language and citizenship concepts would be developed.

However, in a census of ESL and English-language citizenship programs in Canada, Derwing and Munro (1987) found that a small minority of ESL programs placed any significant emphasis on Canadian content, much less on citizenship issues. Programs designed specifically to impart citizenship concepts were for the most part geared to helping students through the court hearing. In fact 86% of coordinators surveyed at that time stated that preparing newcomers for the hearing was the main objective of their programs, 26% of respondents mentioned improving the students' knowledge of Canada, and only 12% reported encouraging students to participate in Canadian society.

Thus Joshee's (1996) claim is upheld, at least to the point when the federal government introduced LINC programs (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) in 1992. It is the explicit policy of LINC that adult immigrant students not only receive language instruction, but that the content of such instruction be Canadian-based, and that LINC curricula encourage active participation in the Canadian way of life. Nonetheless, as Courchène (1996) and Sauvé (1996a) have pointed out, there has been little in the way of support for instructors in ESL programs to adapt their teaching to the dictum of LINC, especially given the complexities of teaching across cultures. Most ESL programs, however, have made some changes to their offerings in order to comply with the new funding requirements.

In response to a perceived increase in interest in Canadian content in ESL, materials developers have produced a number of new textbooks in recent years (Bates, 1990; Berish & Thibaudeau, 1993; Brod & Frankel, 1993; Cameron & Derwing, 1996; Sauvé, 1996b). In addition, a number of initiatives have been undertaken in the last decade to improve the state of citizenship-specific education with the goal of broadening its earlier aims, which were limited to meeting the requirements of the court hearing.

The Derwing and Munro (1987) census was part of an initiative of the Citizenship Instruction Review Project (CIRP) under the auspices of the Corporate Policy Branch of the Secretary of State. CIRP entailed not only a detailed survey of existing citizenship instruction programs and an accompanying directory, but also the development of a handbook entitled *More of a Welcome Than a Test* (Pratt, 1988). As a part of the project, Secretary of State also funded

three citizenship instructor conferences and provided support for the establishment of the provincial newsletters *Citizenship Alberta* and *Citizenship BC*. The Ontario Ministry of Citizenship was also active in the late 1980s. One of its accomplishments was to produce a special issue of *TESL Talk* on citizenship education (vol. 19, 1989). While this activity was occurring in adult citizenship education, emphasis in adult ESL programs was moving into a phase of participatory learning, and a number of programs arose in which students' engagement in Canadian society was a principal goal of the programming (e.g., Hernandez, 1989; Mohamid, 1989). Citizenship education for adult immigrants seemed to be coming into its own.

For its part, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) developed a new version of *A Look at Canada* (Government of Canada, 1995), the document provided by the federal government to every applicant for Canadian citizenship. The booklet contains short descriptions of the regions, each consisting of a few paragraphs (written in basic language) on people, the economy, geography, and climate. There is also a section on Aboriginal peoples from a historical perspective. Canadian government, lawmaking, electoral procedures, and rights and responsibilities of citizenship are the topics of the remaining sections (the full text can be found on the CIC website). In the document CIC defines Canadian citizenship as "being a part of Canada."

Given the changes outlined above, and in particular the outcome of CIRP, we might have expected to see important changes in citizenship education. The purpose of the present study, then, was to assess the current state of adult citizenship programs and some large ESL programs from across the country to determine whether the developments noted above have indeed resulted in significant changes. Comparisons are made with the 1987 survey; the relative quality of the programs is discussed in the light of the nature of their content and whether they address CIC's stated goal: to help newcomers become "a part of Canada."

### *Methodology*

#### *Locating Programs*

We telephoned the agencies that provided citizenship programs in 1987 to inquire whether they still offered citizenship courses and whether they were aware of any other citizenship programs in their area. We also contacted organizations that offer aid to immigrants from a list provided by the Department of Canadian Heritage. Finally, we interviewed coordinators from large ESL programs in Ontario, British Columbia, and Alberta to inquire about citizenship classes in their area and Canadian content offerings in their own programs. A few organizations offering citizenship classes may have been missed, but we made every attempt to identify all the programs in English-speaking Canada in order to make direct comparisons with the 1987 survey.

Data were collected in a three-step process: first, telephone contact was made; second, a six-page questionnaire was mailed; and third, a follow-up telephone interview was conducted. This method was found to be most efficient in that program coordinators were given an opportunity to think about the questions and collect some of the information in advance of the interview. The interview provided them with an opportunity to express their opinions

and to give elaborated responses that they might not have been willing to formulate in writing because of time constraints.

### *Questionnaires*

We used the questionnaire to elicit course scheduling information, student profiles, an outline of course content, lists of materials and equipment, and staff profiles. In addition, we included some open-ended questions to elicit the coordinators' assessment of the changes to the citizenship process. A slightly different questionnaire administered to the ESL programs focused on the use of Canadian content, citizenship-specific content, and reactions to changes in the citizenship process.

### *Telephone Interviews*

Each telephone interview took approximately 30 to 45 minutes. A small minority of respondents chose to complete the questionnaire and mail it back. Whenever possible these individuals were contacted later to clarify and expand on their original answers. There was an 86% response rate overall.

## *Results*

The data collected from the questionnaires and interviews were tabulated, analyzed, and compared with the findings of the 1987 study.

### *Program Profiles*

*Types of programs.* We identified 41 separate organizations that offer citizenship courses. Of the programs contacted 95% provide classes specifically for preparation for the citizenship test, and 5% offer ESL courses with a heavy emphasis on citizenship issues. In the original survey more than double the number of citizenship-specific programs were located (89) and an additional 15 ESL programs with a heavy emphasis on citizenship issues were also identified. We believe that this disparity reflects a genuine decline in the number of classes available. For example, we were unable to locate any citizenship programs in the Maritimes (whereas 4 were identified in 1987). Several agencies reported that they offered citizenship classes in the past but no longer do so for a variety of reasons, including funding cuts and changes to the court requirements. Many organizations that used to hold citizenship classes now give individuals a copy of *A Look at Canada* and counsel them to study it on their own. Several agencies have compiled lists of multiple-choice questions and answers based on the content of *A Look at Canada*, which they give to applicants in lieu of a citizenship preparation course.

*Hours of instruction.* The number of hours of instruction per week varies from 1 to 14, with an average of 3 hours. Course length also varies considerably, from 1 to 41 weeks, with a national average of 12 weeks. The figures for the longer courses may be somewhat misleading in that they tend to be courses with continuous intake. Because students are accepted over the duration of the course, the number of total class hours may not reflect the amount of time an individual spends studying citizenship. If the continuous courses are excluded, the weeks of instruction range from 1 to 12, with an average of 6 weeks. This is probably a more accurate reflection of the amount of citizenship training individuals receive. The 1987 survey found a great deal of variation in instruction

time as well. At that time classes ranged from 2 to 90 hours of instruction, with an average of 24.5 hours, including the courses with continuous intake.

*Publicity.* Organizations have continued to rely on similar methods of publicity over the past 10 years. Like the 1987 census, the current study found word-of-mouth, flyers, posters displayed at citizenship courts, and networking with other agencies to be the most common practices.

Fifty-six percent of respondents stated that the citizenship courts distributed information about their programs. However, some coordinators complained that it is now difficult for individuals to get information from the citizenship offices because there are no direct phone numbers. In many cases there is no government citizenship office in the city where the program is offered.

When respondents were asked to list the reasons why students attend their programs, quality, cost, bilingual classes, convenient times, and locations were common responses. Forty-nine percent of respondents stated that theirs was the only class available or that there were limited choices. This is especially true in smaller centers.

*Bilingual programs.* Of the 46% of programs that offer bilingual classes (classes in English and the students' native language), a subset of 79% target a specific cultural or linguistic group. In addition, one program offers bilingual Mandarin and Vietnamese classes designed specifically for students who have already failed the citizenship test. Of the bilingual classes 61% are offered in Chinese, 13% in Punjabi, and 9% in Vietnamese. Classes are also offered in Hindi, Bengali, Portuguese, and Korean. All these programs have bilingual instructors rather than interpreters. In 29% of bilingual programs over three quarters of the instruction time is in the students' first language. Sixty-five percent of the programs report that more than half the class time is conducted in the students' first language. This finding is similar to that reported in the 1987 survey. The heavy emphasis on the students' first language suggests that they have extremely limited English proficiency.

*Funding.* Sources of funding vary across the provinces, but there is a definite downward trend in overall funding. In BC 50% of the programs charge tuition, 20% receive no funding, 20% are funded through private sources, and 10% receive funding through the Ministry of Multiculturalism. In Alberta 40% of the programs receive no funding, 60% charge tuition, and 20% have some government funding (i.e., one third of the programs both charge tuition and receive some government funding). The single program located in Saskatchewan is supported by funding to other programs from Canadian Heritage. In Manitoba 50% of the programs receive funding through tuition and 50% are funded by Canadian Heritage. Most programs surveyed are located in Ontario, of which 14% report that there is no funding, 9% collect tuition, 19% receive federal government funding, and 41% are supported by the provincial school boards. Another 36% receive other provincial funding. Thirty-four percent of the programs surveyed reported losing a significant portion of their funding in the last two years. At the time of the survey, tuition ranged from \$5.00 to \$60.00; most programs charged less than \$30.00 to cover photocopying and other miscellaneous costs. During the telephone interviews it was apparent that there was a great deal of upheaval and distress for pro-

grams in Ontario and that significant changes in the sources of funding and the programs were expected in the near future.

### *Student Profiles*

*Demographic information.* Coordinators indicated that programs collect less information about their students than 10 years ago. Respondents often reported that they have a "feel" for their students and that relevant information is obtained informally in class. Of the programs that collect information 28% use it for class planning and 21% for student placement. Other uses include providing statistics for a governing board, providing instructors with background information, and providing funders with required information.

*Length of time in Canada.* Eighty-one percent of the respondents reported that most of their students had lived in Canada between 2 and 5 years. From the telephone interviews it appears that most students apply for citizenship and take the test as soon as they are eligible (i.e., as soon as they have completed their three years' residency in Canada).

*English proficiency/literacy/formal education.* Respondents were asked to estimate the English proficiency of their students. The average percentages are 11% for advanced, 30% for intermediate, 23% for high beginner, and 36% for low beginner. The estimated number of students who have difficulty reading and writing in English is 48%, with a range from 5% to 100%. The levels of English proficiency in citizenship classes appear to have remained relatively stable. In the 1987 survey it was estimated that at least 60% of students were at the beginner level.

Over half the programs were unable to estimate their students' level of education. The estimates put forward by the remaining programs are as follows: 0-6 years, 38%; 7-9 years, 24%; 10-13 years, 28%; postsecondary, 10%.

Eighty-five percent of respondents reported that their classes consist of mixed proficiency levels, 12% reported some mixed classes, and 2% reported that low beginners are separated from the rest.

### *Course Content*

*Course objectives.* Eighty percent of respondents stated that the main objective of their citizenship preparation course was to help students pass the citizenship test, 23% cited the development of knowledge about Canada as a primary objective, 18% listed integration and participation as a goal, and 5% reported that English language improvement is a primary objective.

When asked about secondary objectives, 22% stated that they had none, that they were focused solely on helping students pass the exam. Participation in Canadian society was listed by 20% of the respondents, as was helping the students acquire knowledge about Canada. Both language improvement and passing the test were cited by 10% of the programs. These findings suggest that the objectives of the programs have not changed significantly over the past 10 years.

*Course topics.* Representatives from all the programs surveyed reported teaching the topics covered in *A Look at Canada*, namely, geography, history, the electoral process, levels of government, and rights and responsibilities of Canadian citizens. A few also stated that they attempt to supplement the information in *A Look at Canada* with localized and current information. These

individuals often felt that this supplemental information was essential to help their students to become participating, integrated Canadian citizens, even though local information cannot be tested in the nationally-oriented citizenship test.

*Class activities.* We asked coordinators how citizenship information is presented in the classroom. Formal presentation of information by the teacher remains, by far, the most common: 93% of respondents reported that this takes place frequently or every class. Class discussion and practice for the test are also common activities, with over 70% of coordinators stating that they take place frequently or every class. Reading takes place at least sometimes in 70% of the classes. From Table 1 it is evident that few other activities are employed in the citizenship classroom. When asked whether guest speakers are invited to the courses, 59% of coordinators stated that they seldom, if ever, have visitors. Of the programs that reported guest speakers, citizenship officers and politicians are generally invited to talk with the students. During the telephone interviews it became clear that although several respondents would like to incorporate other activities, they feel that a lack of both time and resources prevents them from doing so.

*Course evaluation.* Respondents were asked to list the methods used to evaluate the success of their course. As with the first survey, the majority (51%) stated that they consider their course a success if the students obtain citizenship. In a related form of evaluation, 12% of programs administer a mock exam at the end of their course and appraise the success of the course by those results. Twenty-seven percent of programs use informal feedback as their only method of evaluation. Attendance is taken into consideration in 20% of the programs, and 15% have their students fill out evaluation forms. Two coordinators in small centers stated that they consider students' involvement in the community when evaluating the success of their course.

*Materials and equipment.* By far the most commonly used resource material is *A Look at Canada*, with 71% of programs making use of it either several times per course or every class. Printed handouts developed in-house (largely question-and-answer) are also used frequently, with 68% of respondents stating

Table 1  
Frequency of Selected Class Activities (Percentages)

Activity	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Every class
Lecture	0	2	5	13	80
Games	37	10	35	8	10
Field trips	65	10	23	2	0
Film/slide pres.	43	18	21	18	0
Small group work	33	13	18	23	13
Readings	28	2	30	20	20
Role plays	59	15	15	8	3
Class discussions	10	2	18	25	45
Writing activities	67	18	13	0	2
Practice for test	8	2	15	25	50

that they use them either several times per course or every class. Several respondents also mentioned using pictures or magazine photos, newspapers, and provincial publications.

In terms of equipment use, the results are similar to those of the survey 10 years ago. Every program reported using photocopiers extensively. Most programs never use video or audiotapes, nor were these mentioned in the discussion of classroom activities. All in all, it would appear that media presentations of any kind are rare. Although the use of computers was reported by 31% of the program respondents, most use them solely for word processing (e.g., creating handouts) rather than in the classroom.

Although respondents praised the new version of *A Look at Canada* as an improvement over the previous publications of Citizenship and Immigration, several individuals expressed disappointment that publications such as the *Ontario Times* are no longer available because of funding cuts. Also, several suggested that visual aids designed for the citizenship classroom, such as short videotapes, would be useful.

*Federal government initiatives.* Canadian Heritage has created a series of materials under the Canadian Participation Initiative (CPI). These resources are essentially citizenship instruction materials that deal with issues such as family life in Canada, the social welfare system, employment issues, human rights, rights and responsibilities of citizens, and the political system. Although the intent is to impart information, the pedagogical approach of the CPI is participatory in nature, and the complexities of the political and social fabric of Canadian life are not ignored. To assess the impact of the CPI resources, we asked coordinators if they were aware of any federal government initiatives on citizenship education in the past two years. Of the programs contacted 80% reported being unaware of any government initiatives, 5% had used the CPI binders and found them useful, 10% believed their programs owned a copy or that their ESL programs might use it, and 5% were aware that the materials existed but had not seen any of the binders. (It was not possible for us to determine whether distribution problems lie with the producers of the material or in the agencies themselves. One coordinator mentioned that the distribution of materials in her own organization is not systematic, and that often teachers are unaware of some of the available resources that have been sent directly to the agency.)

#### *Staff Training and Evaluation*

*Staff requirements.* The monetary resources of individual programs dictate the extent to which agencies are able to require certain qualifications of their staff. Of the programs that we surveyed 32% require professional background in teaching English as a second language (TESL), and 29% prefer it. Thirty-eight percent require ESL teaching experience and 44% prefer it; 24% do not take either into consideration. In the programs that existed 10 years ago 40% required TESL training and 40% preferred it; and 39% required ESL teaching experience and 17% preferred it. In the programs that receive little or no external funding the requirements are often based on the personal attributes of the teacher. Examples of the preferred characteristics are an open mind, a



willingness to teach in the evenings, an interest in the area, and personal experience with the citizenship process.

The amount of training that is provided to the staff also fluctuates depending on the resources available to the individual programs. Forty-one percent of programs provide either no additional training or only informal on-the-job training. Thirty-one percent of respondents mentioned sending their staff to workshops, seminars, or conferences sponsored by others. This figure is considerably lower than the 58% reported in 1987. As was the case in 1987 21% of programs sponsor sessions for their staff; in some cases this consists solely of a general volunteer orientation. Five percent of agencies indicated that there is no need to provide additional training because they are able to hire highly qualified staff; an additional 5% stated that they send their teachers for a one-on-one orientation with an officer of the citizenship court.

*Staff evaluation.* The most common form of teacher evaluation is in-class observations by coordinators; 54% percent of programs conduct this form of evaluation compared with 73% 10 years ago. The remaining methods of evaluation are similar to those reported in the previous study. Thirty-nine percent have the students fill out an evaluation form, 12% have the teachers complete a self-evaluation, and 12% of programs have in-class observations by other instructors. Finally, 22% of respondents stated that no teacher evaluations occur or that only informal evaluation is carried out.

#### *Testing and Application Procedure*

*Contact with citizenship officials.* Respondents were asked how often they come into contact with judges, citizenship officers, and provincial government representatives. It would seem that there is little contact on the whole. In 1987 over 70% of program coordinators reported that they were in touch with judges or citizenship officers at least occasionally; now those percentages are 30% for judges and 58% for citizenship officers (many judges' contracts had expired at the time of the survey).

A concern voiced by many coordinators has to do with the lack of personal contact in the citizenship process. Several individuals stated that the citizenship application forms are difficult to understand (not only for the immigrants, but also for people working in immigrant-serving agencies). Previously court officers assisted applicants, but in many locations this no longer occurs because applications are handled by mail. One coordinator noted that if there were a short interview to check the application form, the literacy level of the applicant could be assessed. She suggested that if it was clear that the applicant had literacy problems, he or she could be excused from the written test and an oral interview could be held instead. Such a procedure would be preferable to the current practice of having all applicants write the exam, literate or not, and subsequently granting interviews to those who fail.

*Multiple-choice versus short-answer.* Respondents were also asked to estimate the percentage of their students who would have difficulty with multiple-choice tests versus fill-in-the-blank or short-answer tests. Coordinators estimated that 45% of the students would have difficulty writing a multiple-choice exam because of the confusing format. Although several people expressed concerns over the low literacy levels of their students and the

ambiguity of multiple-choice questions, the general feeling was that fill-in-the-blank or short-answer tests would be more difficult for students than multiple-choice.

*Written test versus oral interview.* Participants were also asked to give their opinions regarding the process of becoming a citizen, particularly the change from the oral interview to a written multiple-choice test. Most program coordinators expressed concern with the current process, citing the inflexibility and superficial nature of the test. In contrast with respondents from unilingual programs, however, most bilingual program respondents preferred the multiple-choice test over the oral interview, stating that it is more objective, cost-efficient, and quicker. One of the coordinators reported that the written test was easier for her students because they had received an education in English (in Hong Kong) and could therefore read and write in English, but had difficulty speaking. The bilingual classes tend to focus on rote memorization of the answers to the 200 possible questions at the back of the *A Look at Canada* booklet. One bilingual program does not use *A Look at Canada* or any other material; instead a bilingual list of the 200 questions and answers is used exclusively. The respondent from this program felt that this practice enhanced the students' likelihood of recognizing key words in the written test.

A majority of the coordinators expressed concern that the test is unfair to individuals who have limited English literacy; even many of those who prefer the test to the interview agree with this sentiment. Although individuals who fail the written test are subsequently interviewed, many respondents felt that having to write and fail the test first is a degrading experience. Doubt over the relevance of the test material was also expressed. Respondents questioned how learning the information on the test would aid new Canadians to become integrated, participating citizens. Several felt that people born in Canada would not know the information that is tested (this intuition was verified in a national Angus Reid poll in the fall of 1997). According to one coordinator, her students feel the test is the government's way of "making" them fail. Another coordinator stated that the introduction of the test had diminished the quality of his class. Previously he was able to explore issues in-depth, discussing why his students wanted to become Canadians and what it meant to be a Canadian citizen. Now he finds that his students are extremely anxious about the test and want only the answers to the questions. Many other respondents reported similar experiences and stated that their students want to ensure that they are not wasting the \$200 application fee to go through the citizenship process.

Most respondents felt that all stages of the current procedure are highly depersonalized, from the mail-in application to the actual testing. Several individuals also expressed dismay over the fact that many judges' contracts are not being renewed and that they are no longer officiating at many citizenship ceremonies.

#### *ESL Provider Responses*

Half the ESL program coordinators surveyed reported that they place a stronger emphasis on Canadian content that they did prior to LINC; a quarter of the programs were not in existence before LINC, and the remainder said that their focus has not changed. Four fifths of coordinators stated that they prefer

to use Canadian materials whenever possible; however, they were more likely to use commercially available texts than government-produced publications. Only one program coordinator was confident that the CPI material was being used in classrooms. Most respondents had heard about the changes to the citizenship process; most were not in favor of replacing the oral interview with a written test. Several coordinators mentioned that students need a personal touch: as one individual put it, "The procedure was better when they had judges; there is nothing to compare. The judge had that personal human contact ... They may be saving money, but they are short-changing a lot of newcomers." A third of the LINC providers suggested that the written test might cause less anxiety than an oral interview.

#### *Discussion*

It is clear that a general decline in the quantity and quality of adult citizenship education programs has taken place over the past decade. Not only are fewer programs in existence, but several of those remaining have downsized in terms of length. There is less emphasis on staff training and evaluation and far less contact with the Court of Canadian Citizenship. The content of courses is now driven almost exclusively by the multiple-choice test introduced by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, all the questions of which were derived from *A Look at Canada*.

It might be argued that ESL LINC programs are able to provide newcomers with the knowledge and skills required for Canadian citizenship, and indeed there appears to be a greater reliance on Canadian materials than in the period prior to LINC. There are reasons to believe, however, that LINC programs do not have a strong citizenship concentration:

- most students in LINC are within their first year of arrival, when their concerns are principally settlement and employment issues;
- ESL providers in this survey indicated that their primary focus is communicative competence—although they tend to use Canadian materials, the content is secondary because communicative skill-building is the ultimate goal; and
- the content of the citizenship test is viewed as somewhat arcane by ESL program providers (and apparently by the Canadian public) and therefore less useful in day-to-day life than basic English survival skills.

Some would argue that the changes to the citizenship process, including the implementation of the test and the mail-in application forms, are an improvement over the old procedures. For example, Appelt (1998) claims: "The Department of Citizenship and Immigration continues to find ways of *enhancing* Canadian citizenship.... Today new procedures are in place in order to shorten the time required for processing routine citizenship applications" (p. 18, italics added). Expediency and reduction in costs may be served by the changes, but should these factors be prime considerations in granting citizenship to newcomers?

The ultimate question Citizenship and Immigration policy-makers should be asking is not "How can we make the naturalization process more cost-effective?" but rather "What should our expectations of Canadian citizens be in general, and how can we best help immigrants meet those expectations?"

Coordinators of bilingual programs that cater to individuals with a limited grasp of English are by and large in favor of the multiple-choice exam because they can help their students to memorize sight words. Such exams, however, promote a superficial level of understanding of what it means to be a Canadian.

In some respects it seems as if two departments of the federal government are working at odds: Canadian Heritage has spent considerable money developing the CPI and has recently funded a series of seminars and think tanks related to citizenship education. At the same time, Citizenship and Immigration has put into place an extremely narrow notion of citizenship by eliminating many of the judge positions, by cutting funding to some programs, and by introducing a test that by its nature allows for no individualization of questions (e.g., Who represents you on city council?). One coordinator stated that "if it was their [the federal government's] intention to put me out of business, they're doing a great job." Apparently Citizenship and Immigration policy-makers view citizenship as little more than naturalization on committing to memory the small body of facts outlined in *A Look at Canada*. Rather than working at cross-purposes, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration should provide financial support to citizenship programs to ensure that the CPI materials produced by Canadian Heritage could be used.

Several respondents to this survey felt that becoming a citizen is a momentous and tremendously exciting event for new Canadians and that the changes, especially the lack of personal contact, have devalued the meaning of citizenship. The elimination of the hearings with a citizenship judge in particular was cited as a major loss. A human interviewer can adjust questions to the language proficiency level of the applicant such that every individual can respond to the best of his or her ability. The current procedure, where speed of processing paper is the only obvious goal, suggests that the government does not consider citizenship to be significant. This sends a disturbing message to immigrants: if the federal government doesn't value the importance of becoming a Canadian, why should they?

Perhaps we should be looking much further back than 10 years to get some insights on what citizenship education should entail. Saul (1997), commenting on a picture of immigrants in a 1913 citizenship class, noted the following on the blackboard behind the students.

#### Duties of a Citizen

1. Understand our Government
2. Take active part in politics
3. Assist all good causes
4. Lessen intemperance
5. Work for others.

... the general assumption attached to immigration was the expectation that an immigrant would quickly join in the social process, which was democratic and cooperative. The primary duty was participation not patriotism. (p. 130)

Things are more complicated now than they were in 1913; Canada receives many more immigrants from non-European countries than previously. As a result, cultural differences between new immigrants and Canadian-born people are sometimes greater, and our fast-changing society can make adjust-

ment difficult. In order for immigrants to “join in the social process,” both Canadian-born and newcomers should have a sense of what it means to be a citizen. The type of citizenship education offered to adult immigrants today does not begin to address participatory citizenship; without guidance and a will on the part of the federal government’s Citizenship and Immigration department, the situation is likely to get worse.

Immigrants are not the only individuals who need some guidance in developing citizenship. For instance, there is evidence to suggest that the Canadian public is easily swayed by media accounts that lead them to view newcomers as an economic threat (Esses, Jackson, & Nolan, 1996), although immigrants other than British and Americans do not hold economic positions of strength compared with Canadian-born individuals (Mata, 1998).

Canada is a country of diverse regions, ethnicities, religions, and cultures; as such it has been held up as a model of peaceful integration. We can be proud of what we have, but we must also stand on guard to ensure that we do not lose what makes us most unique. Immigration and immigrants are at the heart of the Canadian reality; people come here because they want to be Canadians. We have a responsibility, therefore, to provide a means for people to learn about Canada—not just dates and names, but full-fledged discussions about the complexities and contradictions in this society.

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