EDUCATION IN AND FOR NATIONAL INTERESTS: REVIEWING THE HISTORY OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN CANADIAN SCHOOL CURRICULA AND TEXTS

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Catherine Broom teaches and publishes in the areas of local and global citizenship, history of education, and social studies education at the University of British Columbia. She has published a book – *Youth Civic Engagement in a Globalized World* – several book chapters and numerous peer-reviewed journal articles and conference papers. She has researched many aspects of citizenship in various countries, and serves on the executive board of the Citizenship Education Research Network and as editor of the *Citizenship Education Research Journal*. She is currently carrying out a survey study of Canadians' perspectives on citizenship, identity and citizenship education and gratefully acknowledges the study's funding by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

INTRODUCTION

This paper describes the evolution of education about and for citizenship in Canada through a case-study discussion of the history of curriculum reforms in British Columbia from data collected in primary and secondary historical documents, such as textbooks (texts include Cranny, Jarvis, Moles & Seney, 1999; Cranny & Moles, 2001; Jeffers, 1884; Jenkins, 1918; McCaig, 1930; McArthur, 1927; Schapiro, Morris & Soward, 1935) and school curriculum documents (Department of Education, 1890–1968; Ministry of Education, 1985–2020).

Citizenship education has had a long and close association with public schools.[1] Some educational historians argue that citizenship education was one of the reasons for the development of public schools, citing 19th-century Prussia as the first nation-state

1 For a full discussion of the ideas presented here, please see: Broom, C. (2024). 'Changes in British Columbia's Social Studies Curricula since the Announcement of Multiculturalism in 1971,' *The Impact of Multiculturalism on Public Education, 50 years later. A Home for all?* Brill. Citizenship is a complex concept that can be differently conceptualized. For example, citizenship can be variously understood as political, social, civic or environmental citizenship, with each of these having varied educational programs. Political citizenship focuses on learning about government structures and functions and the political actions of citizens; civic citizenship explores rights and duties; social citizenship explores the bonds that connect people together, and environment citizenship explores human-nature relations (Broom, 2021; Marshall, 1950). This paper describes narratives on/about citizenship in relation to being a member of the nation state of Canada that were contained in public school texts and materials. This is not the same as naturalization, or citizenship granted by a state to an individual, although there can be overlap.

to establish schools as a means of building nationalism (Cordasco, 1976; Boyd & King, 1975). Within the context of developing national identities, public school curricula in nation-states, including Canada, has aimed to nurture a sense of allegiance to, and the dispositions needed to maintain (and further develop), the nation-state (Broom, 2024, 2011a, 2011b, 2008; Boyd & King, 1975; Cordasco, 1976; Dilworth, 2003: Heater & Gillespie, 1981).

Curricula has combined teaching factual knowledge of the government and Canada's nation-building myths into history lessons. Myths are understood to be narrative stories that have moral purposes (Kenny, 1999). In this case, nation-building myths involve the selection of particular historical events and their interpretation in ways that link to nationalism through narrative structures and symbols that can elicit emotions (Wertsch, 2002; Kenny, 1999).

Early Canadian Confederation governments aimed to teach nation-building stories (or narratives) in order to develop nationalism through history education (Tomkins, 1986). For example, in 1923, historians at the University of Toronto's History department wrote a report for the National Council of Education (Tomkins, 1986). The university professors argued against the use of history for moral/national purposes and stated that history should not be carefully shaped into nation-building narratives that aimed to teach patriotism.

Examples of Canadian myths in Canadian school texts include: the Royal Canadian police as staunch defenders of a lawless land, the romanticization of the "North," and the myths of the importance of the CPR, of Unity, of Heroism, and of the Wilderness (Francis, 1997). Textbooks used in schools also included the following nation-building narratives: the current form of democracy as a long and arduous process that we should be grateful for (Cranny & Moles, 2001; Jeffers, 1884; Jenkins, 1918; McCaig, 1930; McArthur, 1927; Schapiro et al., 1935); the development of the British parliament as a long, challenging but worthwhile process that was closely associated with the development of democracy (Jeffers, 1884; McArthur, 1927; Schapiro et al., 1935); and the development of Canada as a story of how first the French (but particularly) the English developed the nation through the establishment of government, laws, the economy, and social structures (Broom, 2011a, 2011b, 2008; Cranny et al., 1999; Jeffers, 1884). This narrative threads together the early settlements of the French and English in Canada, with the development of gradual self-government through responsible government and Confederation. These events are closely associated and woven together into a coherent and convincing narrative (Collective Myth) of the development of the Canadian state as a progressive democratic state worthy of its citizens' love and dedication (Cranny et. al, 1999; Cranny & Moles, 2001; Jeffers, 1884; Jenkins, 1918; McCaig, 1930; McArthur, 1927; Schapiro et al., 1935). This narrative has changed over the twentieth century.

STAGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CANADA'S NATION-BUILDING NARRATIVES

Since the establishment of public schools in Canada, nation-building narratives found in school textbooks and materials have changed over time.

Prior and up to the 20th Century: British colonial settlers

As a British colonial nation-state founded in 1867, officials considered what and how to nurture a Canadian identity in schools. Curricula and textbooks embedded a nation-building narrative within a British Empire outlook (Angus, 1926, Jeffers, 1884; McArthur, 1927). For example, one of the recommended Civics textbooks, *Citizenship in British Columbia* (Angus, 1926), describes Canada's role internationally and in the British Empire. It explains the duties of citizens, which include being tolerant, following majority rule, cooperating with others, and being patriotic to the point of "sacrificing" themselves to the nation during times of war (Angus, 1926, p. 217). Canadians should "subordinate our interests to the interests of Canada" (Angus, 1926, p. 218). Similarly, McCaig's (1930) text describes the virtues all citizens should have, including courage, unselfishness, loyalty ["Our great and young country has need of our loyal, devoted service" (McCaig, 1930, p. 4)], patience, and justice. The text also uses history to celebrate democracy, through narrating the many sacrifices "our ancestors" made in order to bring citizens the privileges of freedom and democracy they are portrayed as enjoying at the time. The text aims to build national pride and sentiment, and the British Empire is described as "the greatest and the freest that the world has even known" (McCaig, 1930, p. 152). Thus, textbooks aimed to create a feeling of identity and loyalty to the nation-state of Canada, as part of the British Empire.

Mid 20th Century: Settler Canadian Identity, with a Global Outlook

World War II and the development of Human Rights after the war, Canada's final act of "independence" from Britain, the new Canadian *Citizenship Act* (Troper, 2002) and rapid population growth all had an impact on ideas of what it meant to be Canadian in curricula and texts. Emphasis was placed on education for democracy, which meant valuing each citizen. In the course Social Studies 20, for example, students were to learn that democracy, "is not only a form of government, it is a way of life which seeks to express a great ideal, the ideal of the worth of each person" (Department of Education, 1960, p. 67). Courses aim to build national feeling towards Canada as an independent nation, to develop "a broad, healthy, enthusiastic Canadian patriotism" (Department of Education, 1960, p. 37), while maintaining connections to Europe. For example, students were to study "our British and French background" in the curriculum. Students' "Canadian nationality" was to be developed through historical narratives that taught the story of the development of the nation-state of Canada and European political and economic history. Students learned European history first, and then concluded their education with a Canadian history course. History continued to be conceptualized as playing a role in developing Canadian identity in students: "Man [sic] needs roots, something to provide him with a sense of belonging. History can provide this sense of group identity. The necessity of teaching the national story is implied" (Department of Education, 1968, p. 11).

End of the 20th Century: Inclusive Canadian Citizens

Curriculum documents and texts increased attention to equality, equity, Indigenous peoples, anti-racism education, and multiculturalism by the end of the century. These changes can be connected to the increase in attention to equality and human rights

that emerged after World War II (Troper, 2002; Russell, 2002), reports such as McDiarmid and Pratt's study (1971), and political policies and legislation, such as the federal policy of Multiculturalism and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Early 21st Century: Problematizing Grand Narratives

By the end of the 20th century and into the 21st century, education for inclusion and equity were emphasized, and Canadian nation-building narratives were increasingly problematized through the inclusion of the "history of wrongs" carried out by the Canadian government, such as restrictive immigration policies, the World War II internment of Canadians of Japanese descent, and Residential Schools (Ministry of Education, 1985–2020). Curricula also included more attention to Indigenous history and referred to the First People's Principles of Learning (FNESC, 2006) and multiculturalism. Curricula portrayed Canada as a diverse and inclusive society which still has work to do to address social challenges.

CONCLUSION

In the early days of Canada, the content of the history curriculum was used as a means of building Canadian identity (nationalism) in youth, through nation-building narratives. However, this has not been without controversy as some historians have, alternatively, argued for an inquiry/critical thinking approach to teaching history (Tomkins, 1986). The focus on teaching Canada's nation-building narratives changed by the end of the 21st century as curricular content increasingly problematized these stories. Further, over the century, curricula expanded who was included as a Canadian citizen, and separated itself from links to Great Britain (Department of Education, 1890–1968; Ministry of Education, 1985–2020). History has been a vehicle for promoting Canadian identity based on a conception rooted in European colonialism.

How will these narratives continue to change over the 21st century? Events in Canada, as illustrated in news such as the finding of unmarked graves of Indigenous children, the tearing down of statues, and the renaming of streets demonstrate a social conscience for change. Thinking about Truth and Reconciliation, we can consider curriculum to be addressing Truth. How can Canada move forward to Reconciliation? Can we consider our "shared fate" as a nation? Citizenship as shared fate (Williams, 2003; Vitikainen, 2021) argues that citizenship is not based upon a "shared identity" as people can hold multiple forms of such, but rather, citizenship is about recognizing how diverse people with varying identities share contemporary and interconnected conditions and contexts, which are historically-formed and future-oriented, as people can consider what to do about – and how to collaborate about – issues that inextricably connect us together. Data collected in a Canadian-wide study that has invited Canadians to share their ideas of Canadian identity and citizenship shows that Canadians value social and ecological citizenship.[2] Will future citizenship education curricula focus on the social bonds that connect us together, as we work towards a positive "shared fate" on lands now called "Canada"?

2 Information on this study can be found here: citizenshipeducation.ok.ubc.ca.

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