Lauren Sieben – Social Studies Inquiry Center

**Topic:** Canadian Identity

**Grade:** 6

**Learning Center Objectives:**

1. To think critically and learn about goals, stories, experiences that form our collective identity in Canada.
2. To understand that the experiences of many have created a challenge in defining one overarching Canadian Identity, and to further question how we can define something that is ever-changing.
3. To connect to Unit 6 (6.6.1) of the Grade 6 New Brunswick Social Studies Curriculum in which students are required to, “illustrate an understanding of how cultures from around the world have contributed to the development of Canada’s Multicultural Mosaic.”

**Materials:**

1. Sticky Notes
2. Pictures representing “Canadian Identity”
3. Lined Paper
4. Pens

Procedure:

1. Students will begin by looking through an assortment of pictures that represent a stereotypical “Canadian Identity”
2. Teacher will then pose the overarching inquiry question “How do we define what it means to be a Canadian today?”
3. Students will have 1-2 minutes to write down their own key words that help them define Canadian identity on their individual sticky notes.
4. Following those two minutes, students will discuss with the groups at the table the words they came up with and why they came up with them, and create a group ‘master list’ that they believe is a well-rounded version of Canadian identity, using the lined paper at the table.
5. Teacher will then prompt them with the questions

* “How do these pictures match up with your definition of Canadian identity?”
* “How do your own individual experiences alter your definition of Canadian identity? What voices are missing from your definition”
* “Is it possible to have one overarching Canadian identity? Or does the combination of individual stories and experiences make it too dynamic and changing?”

Considerations:

1. Learning may be reinforced in future lessons by referring back to key words students came up with in their definitions, and analyzing them against stories shared in lessons throughout the year. Additionally, the question of Canadian Identity can be used to analyze different groups of marginalized/vulnerable populations such as Indigenous people, LGBTQ+, Immigrants, etc.
2. Assessment can come formatively from listening in to group discussions, as well as collecting the key words lists. It can be assessed against the curriculums objective of Culture and Diversity, specifically that of “describing how perspectives influence the ways in which experiences are interpreted.”
3. This activity could be redone towards the end of the year, using materials from lessons throughout the year and activating knowledge gained, to see how the key words and definitions have changed or stayed the same as they have learned throughout the year.
4. This activity could be easily adapted to older grade levels by adjusting the conversational questions to fit curricular outcomes. As students move up in grades, they could be further challenged to extend their thinking on the sense of Canadian Identity and the dynamic factors that make it up.
5. This activity could be adapted to accommodate different types of learners as well, as the symbols could be presented through tactile, visual, or auditory cues. The artifacts used could be ones that the students themselves have to identify and bring in, instead of analyzing a picture and then writing down their ideas.

Appendix:

* Images from book “Symbols of Canada” *Edited by Michael Dawson, Catherine Gidney & Donald Wright.*
  + *Page 2: Introduction* “Canadian Symbols Standing on Guard at Canada’s Airports”
  + *Page 6: Introduction* “… enticed by a set of familiar Canadian symbols”