SOCIAL STUDIES IN MANITOBA—A KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 12 OVERVIEW

Definition

Social studies is the study of people in relation to each other and to the world in which they live. In Manitoba, social studies comprises the disciplines of history and geography, draws upon the social sciences, and integrates relevant content from the humanities. As a study of human beings in their physical, social, and cultural environments, social studies examines the past and present and looks toward the future. Social studies helps students acquire the skills, knowledge, and values necessary to become active democratic citizens and contributing members of their communities, locally, nationally, and globally.

Vision

Social studies has at its foundation the concepts of citizenship and identity in the Canadian and global contexts. Intended to reflect the many voices and stories that comprise the Canadian experience, past and present, the social studies curriculum is inclusive of Aboriginal, francophone, and diverse cultural perspectives.

Social studies engages students in the continuing debate concerning citizenship and identity in Canada and the world. Through social studies, students are encouraged to participate actively as citizens and members of communities, and to make informed and ethical choices when faced with the challenges of living in a pluralistic democratic society.

Goals of Social Studies

Social studies enables students to acquire the skills, knowledge, and values necessary to understand the world in which they live, to engage in active democratic citizenship, and to contribute to the betterment of society.

The goals of social studies learning span Kindergarten to Grade 12, and are divided into five categories:

- Canada
- The World
- The Environment
- Democracy
- General Skills and Competencies

With respect to **Canada**, social studies enables students to

- acquire knowledge and understanding of Canadian history and geography

- appreciate the achievements of previous generations whose efforts contributed to the building of Canada

- critically understand Canadian political structures and processes and the institutions of Canadian society

- fulfill their responsibilities and understand their rights as Canadian citizens

- understand and respect the principles of Canadian democracy, including social justice, federalism, bilingualism, and pluralism

- analyze Canadian public issues and take rationally and morally defensible positions

- develop a sense of belonging to their communities and to Canadian society

- respect Aboriginal perspectives, francophone perspectives, and the perspectives of the many cultural groups that have shaped Canada, past and present

With respect to the **world**, social studies enables students to

- acquire knowledge and understanding of world history and geography

- respect the world's peoples and cultures through a commitment to human rights, equity, and the dignity of all persons

- develop global awareness and a sense of global citizenship

- understand and appreciate the role of international organizations

- analyze global issues and take rationally and morally defensible positions

- develop a commitment to social justice and quality of life for all the world's peoples

- assess questions of national self-interest and the interests of other countries and the world as a whole

With respect to the **environment**, social studies enables students to

- acquire and apply geographic skills, knowledge, and understanding

- recognize that a sustainable natural environment is essential to human life

- assess the impact of human interaction with the environment

- propose possible solutions to environmental problems

- live in ways that respect principles of environmental stewardship and sustainability
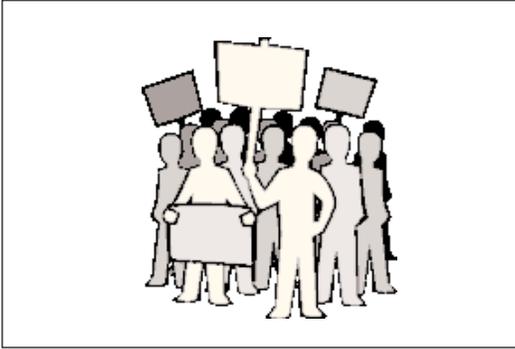
With respect to **democracy**, social studies enables students to

- critically understand the history, nature, and implications of democracy

- assess alternatives to democracy, past and present

- understand the history and foundations of parliamentary democracy in Canada

- demonstrate a commitment to democratic ideals and principles, including respect for human rights, principles of social justice, equity, freedom, dissent and differences, and willingness to take action for the public good

- participate in public affairs in accordance with democratic principles

- critically understand the role of various institutions in civil society

- recognize that democracy involves negotiation and that political and social problems do not always have simple solutions

- identify ways in which Canadian democracy could be improved, and work to improve it

- participate as informed citizens in the ongoing debates that characterize democracy in Canada and the world

- take a stand on matters of fundamental principle or individual conscience

With respect to **general skills and competencies**, social studies enables students to

- engage in disciplined inquiry, applying research skills, critical thinking, and decision making

- think historically and geographically

- critically analyze and research social issues, including controversial issues

- work collaboratively and effectively with others

- solve problems and address conflicts in creative, ethical, and non-violent ways

- develop openness to new ideas and think beyond the limits of conventional wisdom

- apply effective communication skills and enhance media literacy

- use and manage information and communication technologies

CITIZENSHIP AS A CORE CONCEPT IN SOCIAL STUDIES
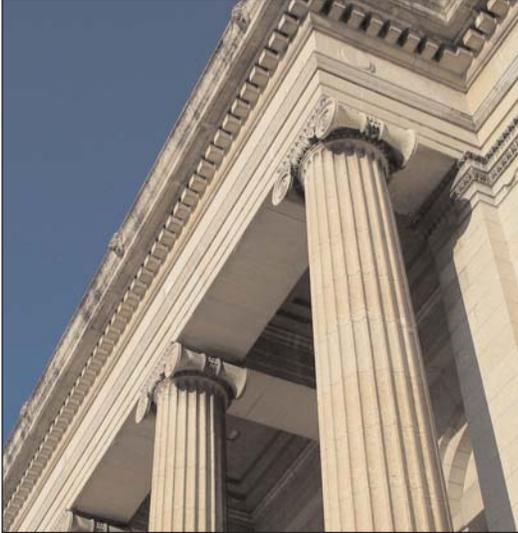
Citizenship is the core concept that provides the learning focus for social studies at all grades. To identify the knowledge, values, and skills that students will need as active democratic citizens, social studies must take into account the society in which students live and anticipate the challenges they will face in the future. Citizenship is a fluid concept that changes over time: its meaning is often contested, and it is subject to interpretation and continuing debate.

Achievement of learning outcomes related to citizenship will prepare students to participate in the public dialogue that characterizes any democracy and that plays an important role in Canadian society. As students engage in this dialogue, they will enhance their understanding of citizenship in Canada and the world, and will be better prepared to become active participants in their communities, locally, nationally, and globally.

Rationale for Citizenship Education

Citizenship education is fundamental to living in a democratic society. The concept of citizenship takes on meaning in specific contexts and is determined by time and place. Diverse notions of citizenship have been used in the past and are being used in the present, for both good and ill. Throughout much of history, citizenship has been exclusionary, class-based, racist, and sexist. In Canada, for instance, First Nations parents were forced to send their children to residential schools in the interests of citizenship.

The concept of citizenship must be considered within the context of democracy, human rights, and public debate. Social studies provides opportunities for students to explore the complexities of citizenship in four areas:

- Active Democratic Citizenship in Canada
- Canadian Citizenship for the Future
- Citizenship in the Global Context
- Environmental Citizenship

Active Democratic Citizenship in Canada

Since citizenship issues are rooted in the past, Canadian history occupies an important place in the social studies curriculum. Canada is regionally diverse and geographically expansive. It is organized as a federal parliamentary monarchy, with a mixed, albeit largely capitalist, economy. It is a bilingual and multicultural country committed to pluralism, human rights, and democracy. Globally, Canada is regarded as a prosperous, peaceful, and democratic country, although it still has its share of economic and social injustices and inequities.

Canada is a complex country that requires special qualities in its citizens. These citizenship qualities include

- knowledge of Canadian history and geography
- understanding of the distinctive nature of Canadian society, the Canadian state, and its institutions
- the ability to approach public issues critically, rationally, and democratically
- informed involvement in public affairs
- respect for human rights and democratic ideals and principles
- a commitment to freedom, equality, and social justice
- the ability to work through conflicts and contradictions that can arise among citizens
- a willingness to live with ambiguity and uncertainty
- civility and tolerance for dissension and disagreement
- a willingness to balance the pursuit of private interests with concern for the public good
- the ability to balance personal claims of conscience and principle against the similar claims of others
- a sense of shared identity as Canadians, combined with a realization that Canadian identity is multi-faceted, open to debate, and not exclusive of other identities

Canadian Citizenship for the Future

For the foreseeable future, Canadian citizens will likely continue to face issues such as

- balancing the jurisdictional claims of the provinces, territories, and the federal government
- redressing past and present injustices inflicted on Aboriginal peoples and other groups in Canada
- coming to terms with the complexities of Québec's place in Canada
- balancing regional and cultural diversity with national unity
- protecting Canadian identity and sovereignty
- assuring access to social services and quality of life for all
- eliminating inequalities related to race, gender, sexual orientation, age, class, and ethnicity
- protecting the environment
- ensuring the successful functioning of the economy

Citizenship in the Global Context

Canada is part of a global community that is becoming increasingly interconnected and interdependent. Many of the most serious problems facing our world must be dealt with on a global basis. The nation-state—including Canada—is under increasing challenge, externally from the forces of globalization, and internally from demands for more local or regional autonomy. The world also continues to be characterized by severe disparities between rich and poor countries. This disparity violates the basic principles of social justice and human dignity, and, at the same time, gives rise to dangerous tensions and rivalries. War, terrorism, and violence continue to be a means of addressing internal and international disputes, and, because of developments in weapons technology, are becoming ever more destructive. In these circumstances, Canadian citizens need to think and act globally as well as nationally.

Environmental Citizenship

Underlying both national and global realities, and the responsibilities they impose on citizens, is the increasing fragility of our natural environment. Quality of life depends upon the sustainability of our environment. This places a particularly important responsibility on citizens, who must ultimately balance the demands of economic growth and high living standards against respect for the environment and the needs of future generations.

General Learning Outcomes

The following six general learning outcomes provide the conceptual structure for social studies from Kindergarten through Grade 12. They are the basis for the specific learning outcomes for each grade.

> **Identity, Culture, and Community**
>
> Students will explore concepts of identity, culture, and community in relation to individuals, societies, and nations.

Many factors influence identity and life in communities, including culture, language, history, and shared beliefs and values. Identity is subject to time and place, and is shaped by a multiplicity of personal, social, and economic factors. A critical consideration of identity, culture, and community provides students with opportunities to explore the symbols and expressions of their own and others' cultural and social groups. Through a study of the ways in which people live together and express themselves in communities, societies, and nations, students enhance their understanding of diverse perspectives and develop their competencies as social beings. This process enables them to reflect upon their roles as individuals and citizens so as to become contributing members of their groups and communities.

The specific learning outcomes within Identity, Culture, and Community include concepts such as human interaction and interdependence, cultural diversity, national identities, and pluralism.
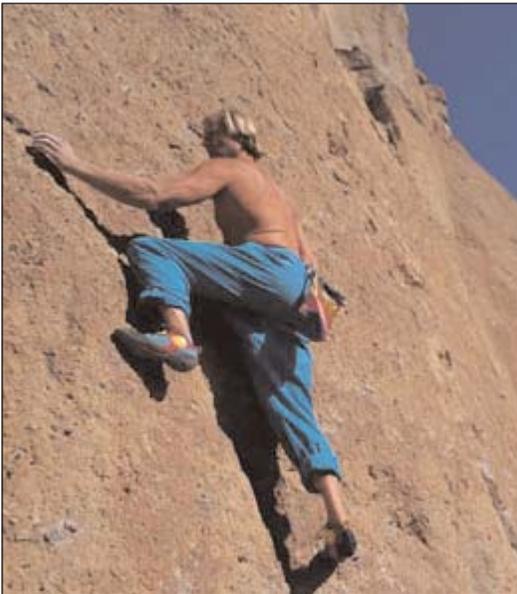
> **The Land: Places and People**
>
> Students will explore the dynamic relationships of people with the land, places, and environments.

People exist in dynamic relationships with the land. The exploration of people's relationships with places and environments creates an understanding of human dependence and impact upon the natural environment. Students explore how spatial and physical characteristics of the environment affect human life, cultures, and societies. They consider how connections to the land influence their identities and define their roles and responsibilities as citizens, locally, nationally, and globally.

The specific learning outcomes within The Land: Places and People focus on geographic understanding and skills, and concepts such as sustainability, stewardship, and the relationship between people and the land.

Historical Connections

Students will explore how people, events, and ideas of the past shape the present and influence the future.

The past shapes who we are. An exploration of Canadian and world history enables students to acquire knowledge and appreciation of the past, to understand the present, and to live with regard for the future. An important aspect of this process is the disciplined investigation and interpretation of history. Students learn to think historically as they explore people, events, ideas, and evidence of the past. As they reflect upon diverse perspectives, personal narratives, parallel accounts, and oral and social histories, students develop the historical understanding that provides a foundation for active democratic citizenship.

The specific learning outcomes within Historical Connections enable students to develop an interest in the past, and focus on chronological thinking, historical understanding, and concepts such as progress, decline, continuity, and change.

Global Interdependence

Students will explore the global interdependence of people, communities, societies, nations, and environments.

People, communities, societies, nations, and environments are interdependent. An exploration of this interdependence enhances students' global consciousness and helps them develop empathy with respect to the human condition. Students critically consider diverse perspectives as they examine the connections that link local, national, and global communities. Consideration of global connections enables students to expand their knowledge of the world in which they live and to engage in active democratic citizenship.

The specific learning outcomes within Global Interdependence focus on human rights and responsibilities, diversity and commonality, quality of life and equity, globalization, international cooperation and conflict, and global environmental concerns.

Power and Authority

Students will explore the processes and structures of power and authority, and their implications for individuals, relationships, communities, and nations.

Power and authority influence all human relationships. Students critically examine the distribution, exercise, and implications of power and authority in everyday life and in formal settings. They consider diverse forms of governance and leadership, and inquire into issues of fairness and equity. This exploration helps students develop a sense of personal empowerment as active democratic citizens.

The specific learning outcomes within Power and Authority include concepts such as political structures and decision making, governance, justice, rules and laws, conflict and conflict resolution, and war and peace.

Economics and Resources

Students will explore the distribution of resources and wealth in relation to individuals, communities, and nations.

The management and distribution of resources and wealth have a direct impact on human societies and quality of life. Students explore the effects of economic interdependence on individuals, communities, and nations in the global context. They examine economic factors that affect decision making, the use of resources, and the development of technologies. As students explore diverse perspectives regarding human needs, wants, and quality of life, they critically consider the social and environmental implications of the distribution of resources and technologies, locally, nationally, and globally.

The specific learning outcomes within Economics and Resources include concepts such as trade, commerce, and industry, access to resources, economic disparities, economic systems, and globalization.

Social Studies Skills

Social studies skills are grouped into four categories:

- Skills for Active Democratic Citizenship
- Skills for Managing Ideas and Information
- Critical and Creative Thinking Skills
- Communication Skills

Skills for Active Democratic Citizenship

Citizenship skills enable students to develop good relations with others, to work in cooperative ways toward achieving common goals, and to collaborate with others for the well-being of their communities. These interpersonal skills focus on cooperation, conflict resolution, taking responsibility, accepting differences, building consensus, negotiation, collaborative decision making, and learning to deal with dissent and disagreement.

Skills for Managing Information and Ideas

Information-management skills enable students to access, select, organize, and record information and ideas, using a variety of sources, tools, and technologies. These skills include inquiry and research skills that enhance historical and geographical thinking.
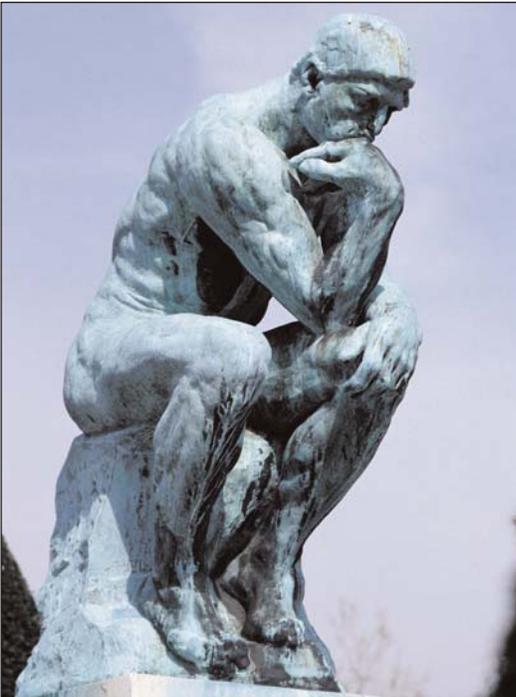
Critical and Creative Thinking Skills

Critical and creative thinking skills enable students to make observations and decisions, to solve problems, and to devise forward-thinking strategies. These skills involve making connections among concepts and using a variety of tools. Critical thinking involves the use of criteria and evidence to make reasoned judgments. These judgments include distinguishing fact from opinion and interpretation, evaluating information and ideas, identifying perspectives and bias, and considering the consequences of decisions and actions. Creative thinking emphasizes divergent thinking, the generation of ideas and possibilities, and the exploration of diverse approaches to questions.

Communication Skills

Communication skills enable students to interpret and express ideas clearly and purposefully using a variety of media. These skills include the development of oral, visual, print, and media literacy, and the use of information and communication technologies for the exchange of information and ideas.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR SOCIAL STUDIES LEARNING, TEACHING, AND ASSESSMENT

Social Studies and the Learning Process

Learning in social studies is an active process. Active learning involves the construction of meaning through the interaction of prior knowledge, motivation and purpose, and new experiences. The process of learning varies from one individual to another, and is shaped by a multitude of factors, including personal, social, and cultural influences. Social studies learning is more meaningful when students are

- encouraged to broaden their perspectives through informed and focused interaction with others

- provided with opportunities to reflect critically on their own ideas and attitudes

- valued, respected, and acknowledged as individuals, whatever their situation or background

Social studies *knowledge*, *values*, and *skills* are interdependent aspects of learning, and need to be integrated in the learning process. Meaningful learning in social studies requires both depth and breadth of understanding. This includes the incorporation of basic general knowledge, as well as opportunities for more intensive study of selected topics.

Instructional Strategies for Active Learning

Social studies learning can be enhanced by using a variety of settings both in and outside of school, flexible student groupings, and numerous other strategies. A well-balanced social studies program includes individual, collaborative, and teacher-directed learning experiences, and provides students with a variety of conceptual tools and advance organizers.

Effective social studies instruction includes the use of strategies that promote student inquiry and interaction. These strategies include cooperative and peer learning, interviews, project-based learning, structured controversy or debate, teacher- and student-initiated inquiry and research, role-play, and sharing circles. These types of strategies make learning meaningful by encouraging critical reflection, questioning, and the consideration of diverse points of view.

It is through guided inquiry and interaction—within the school and in the community—that students construct meaning from their individual experiences. Students require opportunities to engage in authentic and relevant community issues and events. It is important that these experiences be integral to social studies learning, and not be contrived.

Strategies to support student inquiry and interaction:
- cooperative and peer learning
- interviews
- project-based learning
- structured controversy or debate
- teacher- and student-initiated inquiry and research
- role-play
- sharing circles

Active learning includes
• resource-based and experiential learning • on-the-land experiences • field studies • guided tours • participation in diverse cultural activities • integrating literature and the arts • using information and communication technologies

Activities that engage students in democratic processes:
• consensus building • collective decision making • student government • class meetings • student-generated topics of study • classroom/school event planning

Resource-based learning
• primary sources • magazines and journals • books • television, radio • DVDs and CDs • audio/video tapes • the Internet • computer software and databases • art and artifacts • simulations and games • maps • neighbourhood walks • museums • art galleries • cultural centres • community sites • guest speakers • Elders • live performances

Active learning is encouraged through resource-based and experiential learning. These include on-the-land experiences, field studies, guided tours, and participation in diverse cultural activities. Social studies teaching offers the ideal opportunity to integrate literature and the arts, and to use information and communication technologies.

Effective practices in social studies actively engage students in democratic processes such as consensus building, collective decision making, student government, class meetings, student-generated topics of study, and school event planning. As well, social studies provides authentic opportunities for home and community involvement.

Resource-Based Learning

Social studies addresses a wide range of issues and topics at every grade. It is a subject that is particularly well suited to resource-based learning, which moves beyond the single textbook approach and provides students with a variety of information sources. (See Appendix F for a list of recommended learning resources.)

There is a rich abundance of social studies resources available to teachers and students. These include primary information sources, print media, electronic media, art and artifacts, simulations and games, maps, and field trips, as well as knowledgeable individuals from the local community.

Resource-based learning is a student-centred approach that adapts to student needs, interests, abilities, learning styles, and prior knowledge. An environment that is rich in resources allows students to explore and discover as they learn, and to make personal learning choices that are relevant and meaningful.

As our society continues to evolve, so do the roles of teachers and learners. The "sage on the stage" model is giving way to a more flexible model—one in which teachers facilitate the learning process, and students make decisions and assume responsibility for their learning. A resource-based learning approach ultimately helps students manage the information overload that typifies today's society, and teaches them how to continue their learning outside of the school setting. While the development of fundamental knowledge is still essential in social studies, the student of the 21st century needs the skills to locate, access, and evaluate pertinent information.

Role of the Social Studies Teacher

Social studies accommodates a variety of teaching styles. Given the political nature of social studies issues and topics, a teacher's personal beliefs and convictions may influence the presentation of content, as well as the selection of teaching strategies and learning resources. Complete neutrality is not always possible, nor necessarily desirable; however, teachers need to be aware of the implications of presenting their own beliefs and perspectives as fact rather than opinion.

Social studies is rich in opportunities to detect and analyze bias through the critical exploration of diverse points of view. When a classroom climate is open and fair, teachers and students together will establish a learning culture that integrates democratic principles and encourages active citizenship. It is important to note that student-centred classrooms are not necessarily democratic classrooms. Even activities that are democratic in nature, such as cooperative learning, can be undemocratic in practice, depending upon how they are used.

Finally, it is critical that teachers be well informed about social studies content and issues, and that they be prepared to provide students with guidance in selecting reliable information sources.

Dealing with Controversial Issues

A fundamental aspect of social studies learning and teaching—at all grade levels—is the consideration of controversial issues—issues that involve ethics, principles, beliefs, and values. Teachers should not avoid controversial issues. Diversity of perspectives, beliefs and values, disagreement, and dissension are all part of living in a democratic society. Furthermore, discussion and debate concerning ethical or existential questions serve to motivate students and make learning more personally meaningful.

The following guidelines will assist teachers in dealing with controversial issues in the classroom:
- approach all issues with sensitivity
- clearly define the issues
- establish a clear purpose for discussions
- establish parameters for discussions
- ensure that the issues do not become personalized or directed at individual students
- protect the interests of individual students by finding out in advance whether any student would be personally affected by the discussion
- exercise flexibility by permitting students to choose alternative assignments
- accept that there may not be a single "right answer" to a question or issue
- respect everyone's right to voice opinions or perspectives
- help students clarify the distinction between informed opinion and bias
- help students seek sufficient and reliable information to support the various perspectives
- allow time to present all relevant perspectives fairly and to reflect upon their validity

SOCIAL STUDIES AS A CURRICULUM OF AND FOR DIVERSITY AND EQUITY

Inclusive Social Studies Classrooms

The social studies classroom plays an important role in helping students become engaged and caring citizens, locally, nationally, and globally. To do so requires teachers to use social studies classrooms as living laboratories for a more equal and just society than the one in which we now live. Schools in general, and the social studies classroom specifically, support the continued development of the multicultural, multiracial, and pluralist democracy that is Canada—a democracy that is capable of addressing the serious social and ecological challenges that face us now, and which threaten our collective future.

The events that take place in our classrooms both shape, and are shaped by larger social currents that define who we are and where we are headed as a society. To be successful, schools, and social studies classrooms in particular, must be guided by democratic social goals and values that celebrate our human diversity and demonstrate a quest for greater equity in our institutions and in society as a whole.

Social studies curriculum and instruction must be both *visionary* and *practical*: *visionary* because we need to go beyond narrow educational goals and look toward our collective future with hope; *practical* because the work of reshaping educational practice and countering negative social forces and conditions requires daily effort.

Teaching practices, educational activism, and dedication and creativity on the part of teachers and other educational partners are all part of this process. Efforts to transform the social studies classroom need to grow from a common social and pedagogical vision that strives for an inclusive classroom focused on social justice. Curriculum and practice must reflect certain essential characteristics, which are described below.

Inclusive classrooms focused on social justice are

- multicultural, equity-focused, anti-biased in nature
- grounded in the lives of students
- culturally sensitive
- critical
- participatory and experimental
- hopeful, joyful, caring, visionary
- academically rigorous
- supportive of students as social activists and engaged citizens

1. **Multicultural, equity-focused, and anti-bias in nature**

   A curriculum grounded in social justice and awareness of social diversity must be inclusive of every student in every classroom. With our increasingly diverse student population and nation, the social studies classroom needs to directly address issues related to race, class, gender, and other aspects of educational equity. We need to do more than simply celebrate diversity. We need to take on the "hard stuff" of exploring why some differences translate into wealth and power, while others become the basis for discrimination and injustice. Social studies classrooms exist in a multicultural and multiracial society, and need to honestly face the truth about our past and present. The often exclusionary, traditional stories of history need to be revised to include the experiences and voices of Aboriginal peoples and people of colour, women, working peoples, and other diverse groups in our society.

2. Grounded in the lives of students

Good teaching begins with respect and concern for children, their innate curiosity, and their capacity to learn. Curriculum needs to be rooted in the real lives and contexts of the students in the classroom. Creating effective learning environments requires that the lives of the students, as well as the topics they are exploring, provide the content of the classroom experience. Students need opportunities to consider and inquire how their lives connect to the broader society.

3. Culturally sensitive

Classrooms that are places for critical teaching and learning are built on the premise that teachers "don't know it all." Each new class presents opportunities for teachers to learn from students, and requires teachers to be good researchers and listeners. Teachers will often work with children of diverse cultural origins and ethnicities, and may need to call upon parents and others in order to understand the needs of their students. Teachers must also draw on the cultural diversity of their colleagues and community resources for insights into the communities they seek to serve.

4. Critical

The social studies curriculum should help equip students to engage in dialogue and to challenge the world. From Early Years onward, students need to develop skills and insights that allow them to pose essential questions. Who holds power and makes decisions in society? Who is left out? Who benefits and who suffers? What is fair practice? What is discriminatory or unfair practice? How is change created? Students should have opportunities to examine and question social reality through critiques of media, public policy decisions, foreign policy choices, newspapers, historical accounts, and school life itself. Wherever possible, student learning should encompass issues and problems in the world outside the classroom walls.

5. Participatory and experiential

Student involvement and initiative need to be emphasized; students should not be passive learners. Exploratory and experiential learning approaches, in which students are involved in planning and decision making, allow students to take responsibility for, and to manage, their own learning. Projects, role-plays, mock trials, and other learning activities involve students physically and cognitively. These are all essential to provoke students to develop democratic capacities: to question, to challenge, to make real decisions, and to solve problems collectively.

6. Hopeful, joyful, caring, and visionary

Classrooms in which children feel significant and cared for are at the heart of an inclusive school. Unless students feel safe—emotionally and physically—they will not reveal their true selves or their real thoughts and feelings, and discussions will be artificial and dishonest. Teachers need to design learning experiences that help students learn to trust and care for each other.

7. **Academically rigorous**

An inclusive classroom focused on social justice provides students with the skills they need to navigate the world, and to take action to change the world. When students create products for real audiences about significant issues, and discuss big ideas with compassion and intensity, academics come to life.

8. **Supportive of students as social activists and engaged citizens**

If we want students to see themselves as voices for justice and agents of change, it is important to encourage them to critique the world, and to be willing to act in ways that are meaningful. Part of the role of the social studies teacher is to reinforce the fact that ideas have real consequences and need to be acted upon. Students can draw inspiration from historical and contemporary individuals who struggled for social justice, peace, and human rights. A critical curriculum and classroom should reflect the diversity of people from all cultures and both genders who acted to make a difference, many of whom did so at great sacrifice. Students should feel connected to this legacy of resistance and social justice.

Creating inclusive and critical classrooms is not easy. It is complex and demanding work that requires vision, support, and resources. Sharing experiences with other educators, establishing support networks, and amassing diverse resources are critical components of inclusive classrooms.

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Towards a Pedagogy for Social Justice

A social studies curriculum that advocates social justice is built upon the integration and exploration of issues related to inclusion, diversity and racism. This approach requires a clear and well developed understanding of multicultural/anti-racist teaching approaches. It should not be assumed that simply providing students with learning resources that are "multicultural" or that deal with issues of inequality or diversity is sufficient to create an inclusive social studies classroom. To have a positive effect, as well as an anti-racist/anti-bias impact on the classroom, multicultural materials need to be part of meaningful learning experiences that encourage students to critically explore and analyze the significance of the issues discussed or information presented, personally and collectively.

The quotation that follows illustrates the importance of anti-racism pedagogy in the use of multicultural resources in the classroom, and in the planning and implementation of learning activities. It is critical that educators be clear how a specific learning resource and related activities fit into their plan for the year and the anti-racism objectives that have been established.

It should be remembered that multicultural curriculum can be taught in a traditional and racist way. The way out of this dilemma is through the intervention of anti-racist teaching. Anti-racist teaching would incorporate 'education' which is multicultural while the 'teaching' would be anti-racist. In this context, anti-racist teaching is seen as coming about through a teacher with the 'right' attitude, the appropriate knowledge, and the necessary skills to bring about learning that that will challenge racism and change the bias of the traditional ethnocentric and biased education to which we are accustomed in Canada. (Black Learners Advisory Committee [BLAC] Report on Education, December 1994, Nova Scotia)

The Transformative Curriculum: Education for Social Justice

An anti-racist pedagogy may be conceptualized as being education for change, social justice, or action. James Banks provides a conceptual model for analyzing the level of integration of multicultural content into the curriculum, which highlights the importance of a social action approach. In his perspective, a Transformation or Social Action Approach is essential if we wish to meaningfully address issues of diversity and inequality in the social studies classroom and in our schools.
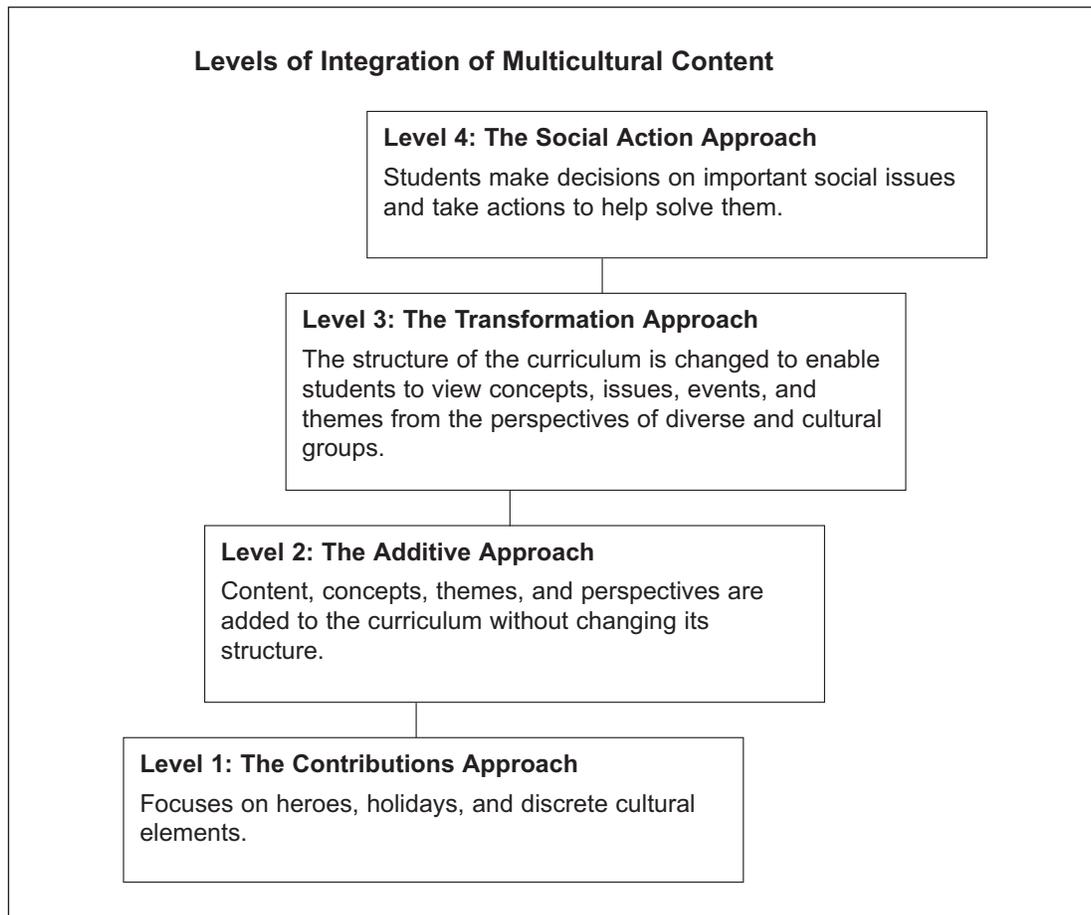
Levels of Integration of Multicultural Content

Level 4: The Social Action Approach
Students make decisions on important social issues and take actions to help solve them.

Level 3: The Transformation Approach
The structure of the curriculum is changed to enable students to view concepts, issues, events, and themes from the perspectives of diverse and cultural groups.

Level 2: The Additive Approach
Content, concepts, themes, and perspectives are added to the curriculum without changing its structure.

Level 1: The Contributions Approach
Focuses on heroes, holidays, and discrete cultural elements.

Figure 1: From "Approaches to Multicultural Curriculum Reform" by James A. Banks. In *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives*, J. Banks and C. Banks (Eds.).

Diversity and Inequity: The Historical Context

It is important that educators develop an informed understanding of the historical development of Canadian society and the history of diversity and inequality. Traditional approaches to Canadian history have often excluded or marginalized the experiences and perspectives of many diverse groups. Therefore, it is critical that educators broaden their understanding of history in a Canadian and international context.

The experiences of marginalized groups in Canada share many similarities with marginalized groups in other places. It is important to explore and critically consider these parallels. Furthermore, it is important to connect historical experiences to contemporary social conditions, such as continued inequities in employment, evidence of bias in medical research, attitudes towards interracial or same-sex marriages, the prevalence of negative stereotypes in media, and so on.

Identity, Culture, and Race

Educators also need to consider the social dynamics and patterns of intercultural interaction in the classroom in developing inclusive, multicultural, and pro-social justice learning experiences. The ethnocultural identity and self-concept of students play an important role in determining their response and willingness to engage in meaningful learning experiences related to diversity. Social and ethnocultural identity is characterized by a number of factors, including the following:

- An individual's identity is complex and composed of various dimensions.

- Every individual has multiple identities, with ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, language, religion, racial origins, political beliefs, and other factors defining who we are.

- Not all factors have the same impact on our identity, and their relevance may change according to personal and social conditions and social context.

- Race, while it is a socially constructed concept, forms part of our sense of identity.

- Racial identity development is the result of the racialization of society, and is a complex and dynamic phenomenon.

Theories regarding the process of achieving an anti-racist group identity are a useful tool to guide exploration of the impact of race and racism in our classrooms. These theories also serve to guide educators in defining the objectives of anti-racism education. Ideally, schools should facilitate the movement of students to the highest level of anti-racist group identity. (See below.)

Towards an Inclusive and Anti-Bias Identity

The process of undoing the profound impact of racism and other forms of discrimination and marginalization is a complex journey—a journey towards an inclusive and anti-bias identity. Psychologists researching race and identity issues have theorized that this journey may take different paths or stages of development for different groups, as members of these groups have been affected in differing ways by racism and discrimination.

Research suggests that people undergo a series of life transformations or stages of identity formation in terms of their self-concept and group identity. These stages of social identity formation are not inevitable or static, nor are they achieved for life. Life circumstances and experiences precipitate and support change either *towards* or *away* from anti-racism consciousness and behaviour. Alternatively, individuals may remain fixated at a particular stage of ethnic and group consciousness. (Derman-Sparks *et al.*, 1997)

Towards an Anti-Bias/Anti-Racist Identity

William Cross's (1991) model for the stages of Black identity development reflects the African-American experience, but is relevant in a Canadian context. His model of the *resocialization experience* has five distinct stages of identity development: Pre-encounter, Encounter, Immersion/Emersion, Internalization, and Internalization-Commitment.

In Cross's conceptual framework, individuals move from a state of unawareness of racism and discrimination to one of total awareness and social activism, known as the *Internalization-Commitment* stage. This final stage parallels Banks' idea of the *global* ethnic identity, and is a fully developed anti-racist group identity. An individual at this stage is a social activist who recognizes the need for continuous efforts to challenge inequality in society on several fronts, and seeks to collaborate with others in meaningful social action.

Helms (1990) has taken a similar and comprehensive examination of the stages of white/dominant group identity development. Helms identifies the tendency of dominant group members in society to deny that their racial identity has any significance, preferring to view themselves as individuals and, consequently, not responsible for the perpetuation of a racist system.

Helms' model of identity development is based on six distinct stages: Contact, Disintegration, Immersion/Emersion, Reintegration, Pseudo-Independent, Immersion/Emersion, and Autonomy. Individuals in this framework, like Cross's, move from a stage of total ignorance to one of total awareness and engagement in social activism. In the final stage of identity, Autonomy, individuals are self-directed and self-actualized activists who join with exploited groups to change the racist system.

Both researchers see the highest form of identity formation to be one where individuals are aware of the realities of inequities in society and the reality of racism, coupled with the desire to work with others for change and meaningful social action.

Applying Racial Identity Development Concepts in the Classroom

There is a great deal of significance to identity formation for educators involved in anti-bias/anti-racism education within the social studies classroom. First, the two models detailed above present a framework for conceptualizing learning outcomes or objectives for anti-bias/anti-racist education in a school setting. Ideally, school experiences and learning activities will stimulate sustained exploration and development of students' sense of identity, and encourage movement towards an anti-racist racial identity for all students. To achieve this, there needs to be a good understanding of both racism and of anti-racist educational practices.

Secondly, the two models provide tools to assist teachers in planning educational experiences for students. The stages students are at in their racial identity development affect how they interact with other students, and how they respond to learning experiences dealing with diversity or racism. Teachers may wish to reflect on the cultural composition of their classrooms and individual student sense of identity when planning learning activities. This reflection will provide insight as to how students may respond to multicultural learning resources, or educational activities related to diversity issues. It may also identify potential problems that may arise as a result of students being at different stages of identity development.

Finally, the models provide a tool for self-reflection and analysis, encouraging teachers to reflect on issues of race and power. For example, teachers may ask themselves:

- What stage am I at in my personal identity formation?

- How will my stage of identity formation affect my teaching of anti-bias/anti-racist content and issues?

- What is my pattern of interaction and relationships with people of diverse origins and disadvantaged groups, and how does this relate to my current stage of identity development?

Isolation and Identity

The exploration of Canadian and world history, and issues related to discrimination may be particularly challenging for students of marginalized or minority groups. A student may find herself or himself as the only one, or one of a small group, in an otherwise relatively homogeneous classroom setting. Such students may be at different stages of social or ethnic identity, and the overall classroom attitude and awareness of racism will greatly affect the dynamics in the classroom. It is important for teachers to recognize that

- racism and other forms of discrimination adversely affect student involvement in the classroom.

- experiences with racism and other forms of discrimination affect students' lives and the lives of their family members.

- dealing with issues of race and racism and other issues of bias and discrimination is a deeply personal and emotional experience that may stimulate recall of repressed memories or emotions.

- for many students of visible minority origins, and other students of diverse origins, a sense of isolation or alienation is not uncommon.

- in such situations, even if the intent is anti-bias in nature, raising issues of racism and inequality in a classroom presents a challenge for most students. Very often students will feel as if "all eyes" are on them when racial incidents occur, racist language is expressed, or other issues related to prejudice and discrimination are discussed.

- being of visible minority origins may be an experience in diversity itself. Students are often of interracial and intercultural backgrounds. Teachers need to be sensitive to students' personal definitions of their "identity" and group membership.

- students may not be comfortable with the role of representing or "speaking for" their particular cultural group. Depending on personal circumstances and social conditions, students may just be beginning, or have yet to begin, to explore their cultural origins.

This discussion of issues related to identity illustrates the complexity of intercultural and interracial dynamics in the classroom and society. It points to the need to carefully consider these dynamics when introducing challenging learning experiences. Most importantly, it highlights the need to have a clear and well-defined anti-bias/anti-racist teaching approach. It is about education for empowerment; it is about turning dreams into reality.

Strategies to Develop Positive Attitudes towards Diversity

- Initiate educational activities and discussions to build a positive racial and/or cultural self-identity.

- Initiate activities and discussions to develop positive attitudes toward diverse racial/cultural groups—encourage the exploration of groups different from students' own reference groups.

- Always answer student questions about race, ethnicity, and cultures when questions are asked.

- Listen carefully and in a relaxed manner to student questions and comments. Be sure to understand what a student means and wants to know.

- Pay attention to feelings.

- Provide truthful information appropriate to students' level of understanding.

- Help students recognize racial, cultural, social, and other stereotypes.

- Encourage students to challenge racism and other forms of discrimination by being a positive role model and displaying inclusive attitudes and behaviours.

- Cultivate understanding that racism and other forms of discrimination do not have to be a permanent condition—that people are working together for positive change.

- Remember that learning about racial and cultural identities is a lifelong process.

(Council for Interracial Books for Children, 1980)

Points to Consider When Using Multicultural Resources in the Classroom

1. **Remember that context is important when using literature or media that deal with issues of diversity and of inequality.**

   - How does the resource fit into the yearly plan or the curriculum?

   - Is the school environment positive and open to diversity?

   - What is the classroom composition in terms of diversity? How may this affect classroom dynamics?

   - Are students from the cultural backgrounds that are featured in the resource represented in the classroom? Is there a history of positive interaction between students of diverse cultural and racial origins?

   - What is the relationship and pattern of interaction between the teacher and minority students in the classroom? How may this affect the use of the resource in a classroom setting?

   - Is multicultural literature frequently used in the school and throughout various subject areas?

2. **What was the rationale for choosing the resources to be used?**

- Were parents or community group members involved in the selection of the resources?

- Has the impact of the resource on readers of different experiences and perspectives been considered?

- Have questions of voice and authenticity been considered?

- Have supplementary or complementary materials been considered?

3. **Has the stage been set for the introduction of the resource, including its content and major themes?**

- Is the teacher sufficiently knowledgeable about the content and the historical context of the resource?

- Are students sufficiently knowledgeable of the historical and social context addressed in the resource?

- Have students explored issues related to the use of problematic terms and references made in the resource?

- Have minority students and parents been consulted with respect to planned learning activities? Have they been given an opportunity to participate or to suggest strategies for the effective use of the resource?

4. **Does the classroom experience lend itself to anti-bias/ anti-racist learning?**

- Are students encouraged to critically analyze the resource and its significance in a contemporary setting?

- Have arrangements been made to monitor the impact of the resource on students in the classroom, and to deal with issues as they arise?

- Do the classroom activities allow students to voice their experiences, feelings, and ideas? Are minority students' experiences, feelings, and ideas validated, or are they ignored and silenced?

- Are students encouraged to explore the significance of the resource in terms of their own lives and social action?

- Do classroom experiences provide an opportunity for students to interact and connect with the people or groups featured in the resource? Do students have a voice in the classroom?

- Are connections made to other groups and their experiences in a way that encourages students to understand similarities and differences?

- Has the use of additional resources that give a more complete picture been considered?

5. **How does the resource or issue studied relate to other aspects of the curriculum and school experience?**

    •   Have provisions been made to connect the issues and experiences explored to curricular learning outcomes?

    •   Is the impact of the resource on students, and on their interactions in the classroom, being monitored?

    •   Have students been given opportunities to reflect on learning experiences, and to share their thoughts and feelings?

    •   Have plans been made to provide students with opportunities to celebrate their diversity and unity with each other, their parents, and their community?

SOCIAL STUDIES AND CLASSROOM-BASED ASSESSMENT

Purpose of Assessment

The purpose of classroom-based assessment is to enhance student learning. Research continues to demonstrate that ongoing classroom-based assessment contributes more significantly to learning than the more traditional focus on summative assessment, which is often referred to as assessment *of* learning. Formative assessment, also described as assessment *for* learning and/or assessment *as* learning, is most effective when it involves both the student and the teacher, and takes place throughout the learning process.

Each type of assessment serves a purpose and contributes to student success in social studies. Classroom-based assessment *for* or *as* learning allows students and teachers to determine what students have learned, and what they need to learn next. Students need frequent opportunities for meaningful and relevant feedback. Descriptive or narrative feedback—that which includes analytical questions and constructive comments—provides information to students that they may use to adjust their learning processes, and is more helpful to them than a numerical or alphabetical grade. Assessment that is ongoing and meaningful provides opportunities for students to become reflective learners—to synthesize their learning, to solve problems, to apply their learning in authentic situations, and to better understand their learning processes—as well as opportunities for teachers to become reflective practitioners. Assessment *of* learning that takes place at the end of a cluster, or at the end of a year, provides important information about student progress and achievement, as well as instructional effectiveness. This information is usually shared with parents via report cards.

It is important that the purpose of assessment (*of, as,* or *for*), as well as how assessment information will be used, is clear to both teachers and students. With a clearly understood purpose, students are encouraged to take more responsibility for their learning, and are better able to focus their efforts, while teachers can better select the instruction and assessment strategies and student learning resources that will improve student achievement.

Assessment and the Stages of Learning

Activating: How will students be prepared for learning?

Acquiring: What strategies facilitate learning for groups and individuals?

Applying: How will students demonstrate their understanding?

Much of what goes on in classrooms can be described as assessment, and assessment takes place in each of the three stages of learning: activating, acquiring, and applying. Assessment at each stage benefits students and teachers.

Assessment during the **activating** stage prepares both teachers and students for the learning process, identifying gaps and strengths in student prior knowledge, and informing future instruction.

Assessment during the **acquiring** stage provides feedback as learning takes place, and allows teachers and students to make adjustments to strategies and activities. Well-timed, meaningful feedback as they are learning helps students improve the quality of their work and reach their learning goals. Assessment at this stage also allows for the gathering of evidence of student learning.

Assessment during the **applying** stage focuses on students using new understandings in meaningful and authentic ways. Authentic tasks are those that have worthwhile purposes and replicate as closely as possible the context in which knowledge, values, or skills will be applied beyond the classroom. Ideally, students should demonstrate their learning, and the relevance and importance of their learning, for real audiences and real purposes.

Information gathered at each of the three stages of learning is useful for teacher and student reflection regarding changes and adaptations to learning strategies, and in the selection of student learning resources. (See Figure 2: *Assessment at Different Stages of Learning*.)

Assessment at Different Stages of Learning		
	Students	**Teachers**
Activating Stage	Assessment in the activation stage helps **students** • "set the stage" and to mentally plan and prepare for new learning • identify the focus of new learning • identify what they already know about a topic • gain interest in a new topic	Assessment in the activation stage helps **teachers** • identify gaps, strengths, misconceptions, and faulty information in student prior knowledge • identify student interests • provide a focus for planning instructional strategies and the selection of student learning resources • determine which instructional approaches or resources need to be implemented or adapted
Acquiring Stage	Assessment during the acquiring stage helps **students** • become aware of the progress and the degree of understanding they are achieving • experience and adapt different approaches and strategies that facilitate their learning • identify what further learning they need to undertake • improve as they practise	Assessment during the acquiring stage helps **teachers** • revise learning strategies to meet evolving student needs • monitor student growth and progress, and determine whether students are achieving specific learning outcomes (SLOs) • determine if individual students need additional support or further learning opportunities to achieve SLOs • identify which learning outcomes need to be the focus of subsequent instruction and assessment • gather evidence of student growth, which may be used for reporting
Applying Stage	Assessment during the applying stage helps **students** • become aware of their growth and achievement, and celebrate their successes • identify their strengths, as well as areas needing further growth • deepen their understandings as they make connections and reflect on their learning, and apply new ideas in meaningful and authentic ways	Assessment during the applying stage helps **teachers** • be fully aware of student understanding and achievement of learning outcomes • identify student strengths and areas needing further learning • provide evidence of student growth and achievement for reporting to parents and administrators • reflect on their teaching practices in order to identify changes and revisions to learning strategies

Figure 2: Assessment at Different Stages of Learning

Collecting Assessment Information

Assessment of student learning is a complex and interactive process. At various times it involves teacher and/or student decision making, student self- and peer assessment, teacher observation of students, student-teacher dialogue, student reflection, and teacher reflection. Each stage of learning and assessment generates information about student needs, growth, and achievement, as well as information related to teaching and learning strategies and the appropriateness of student learning resources.

Collecting information about student learning helps build a positive learning environment and contributes to positive classroom relationships. Teachers use information they gather about their students to scaffold instruction, and to make decisions about the strategies and learning resources that will contribute to successful student learning. When assessment information is shared with students, they are better able to manage and take responsibility for their own learning—setting goals and identifying how they will achieve those goals.

Teachers learn about student progress through day-by-day observation of students in action, as well as through more formal activities, including projects, performances, tests, and examinations. Teachers cannot possibly assess all students, all the time, and should consider a number of factors when determining how to focus their assessment observations. These factors include, among others, the nature of the learning outcomes; the structure of the learning activity (e.g., individual, small group, whole class); the time of year; and the stage of student development. Teachers may choose to focus assessment observation on one or two students or on a small group at any one time to monitor their growth and progress at different stages of their learning.

No matter what the type, every assessment activity should be based on criteria that are shared with students *before* they engage in learning. As well, having students participate in constructing assessment criteria further contributes to their success. When students know in advance what is to be assessed, and when their performances are compared to predetermined criteria (and to their prior performances), students are better able to concentrate their efforts and focus their learning.

Additionally, students need to be aware of what success looks like. Providing students with exemplars allows them to visualize a model to strive toward, and assists them in reaching their learning goals.

Assessment Tools and Strategies

Just as diverse instructional strategies are important, so too are a variety of assessment tools and strategies. There are three types of learning outcomes in social studies—knowledge, values, and skills—and assessment needs to be congruent with each type of learning.

- *Assessing Knowledge:* Social studies places significant emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge. True understanding and appreciation of social studies issues does not occur if students simply memorize and recall information. Rather, students are encouraged to use the knowledge they acquire to synthesize and apply new understandings, and to demonstrate evidence of their learning.

- *Assessing Skills:* The assessment of social studies skills and processes requires different strategies than the assessment of knowledge. Since skill development is ongoing, students continue to practise skills from cluster to cluster and throughout the year. Skills are best assessed by observing students in action, by discussing their learning strategies during conferences and interviews, and by gathering data from student reflections and self-assessments.

- *Assessing Values:* Values are implicit in what students say and do, and are not always measurable in the same way that knowledge outcomes are measurable. Similar to skills, values are best assessed by observing students in action, looking for behavioural indicators as expressions of student values, and engaging students in critical dialogue.

A significant aspect of social studies is the development of values related to active democratic citizenship. The values related to citizenship do not apply solely within the confines of the classroom; a number of social studies learning outcomes refer to student attitudes and behaviours in groups and communities beyond the school. In those cases, assessment will include not only student self-assessment, but self-reporting.

In general, there are three main sources for teachers to gather student assessment evidence:

- observations of student learning (including students' interactions with peers)

- observation and evaluation of student products and performances

- one-to-one conversations with students about their learning, including information gathered from self- and peer assessment

Assessment tools and strategies:
- student portfolios
- interviews
- individual and group inquiry and research
- journals
- role-play
- oral presentations
- tests
- hands-on projects
- teacher observation checklists
- peer assessment
- self-assessment

A broad range of tools and strategies are available to teachers to assess social studies learning. These include student portfolios, interviews, individual and group inquiry and research, journals, role-play and oral presentations, tests, hands-on projects, teacher observation checklists, peer assessment, and self-assessment. The most important aspect of each of these strategies is regular dialogue with students about their learning: asking them questions about their observations and conclusions *as they learn*, and stimulating and prompting them to higher levels of thinking and learning.

When teachers use a variety of assessment tools and strategies over a period of time, student learning patterns begin to emerge. Observation and knowledge of these patterns is necessary for planning effective instruction and for successful learning.

Student portfolios are a particularly useful approach in the assessment of social studies learning. Portfolios help teachers determine the degree to which students have mastered learning. The contents of student portfolios represent student growth and progress, and, when they are accompanied by interviews with students about their learning, provide valuable assessment information for communication to students, parents, and administrators.

Assessment *of* learning is also important. However, it must be noted that assessment information that is gathered at the end of a cluster will not always be completely summative in nature. Social studies learning outcomes—particularly skills outcomes that continue to develop through the year—are often interconnected, practised, and reinforced throughout every cluster. Therefore, the level of growth that students demonstrate at various times during the year may not adequately reflect their progress at the end of the year. Student achievement may need to be reviewed at year's end, and "summative" assessments that were made earlier may need to be revised.

Teachers may wish to consider end-of-cluster assessments as *progress reports* rather than final assessments, and decide to provide students with additional opportunities to demonstrate their learning. End-of-year assessment, similar to assessment that takes place at the end of every cluster, should allow students to make connections in their learnings and to reflect on the applications of this new knowledge and understanding in their lives.

Self-Assessment and Reflection

Classroom-based assessment provides opportunities for both students and teachers to reflect on, and to enhance, the learning process.

When students are empowered to engage in self-assessment and reflection, they make better choices and assume more responsibility for their learning. Self-assessment significantly increases learning by promoting critical thinking and by allowing students to take ownership of their learning. They are better able to observe and analyze patterns in their thinking, to appraise their strengths, and to set realistic goals for themselves.

Student autonomy and responsibility is enhanced when students

- identify their learning goals
- help create assessment criteria
- select products and performances for their portfolios to demonstrate their learning
- engage in peer assessment
- are provided with self-assessment tools (e.g., checklists, learning logs, reflection journals, portfolios)

Language to encourage self-assessment
Students

- I think I need to…
- I also want to…
- I was thinking that…
- I wonder…
- Next time I would…

Teachers

- Why did you choose to…?
- What options did you consider…?
- What changed in your thinking?

As teachers engage in regular conversations with students about their learning, teachers gain essential information to plan for the needs of individual learners.

Assessment, including student self-assessment, is facilitated when students are made to feel safe, secure, involved, and that their individual learning needs are being met. When assessment is equitable (i.e., focused on student growth and progress instead of student deficits, and **not** used for discipline or classroom control), student autonomy, responsibility, and motivation greatly increase. Students need to be encouraged to do their best as they learn, but also to take risks and not to be afraid of making mistakes. Self-assessment depends on student empowerment. Empowerment needs to begin before any actual learning takes place, and continue through to the final stages of assessment.

Students who are empowered and autonomous learners are involved in the initial decision making about learning, expressing ideas about what and how they will learn. They plan their personal learning goals, decide how they will demonstrate their learning, and select products and performances for their portfolios, all in collaboration with their peers and/or teachers. Throughout the process, teachers engage students in critical dialogue about their decisions and their progress. Figure 3: *Student Empowerment in the Learning Process* illustrates this critical dialogue.
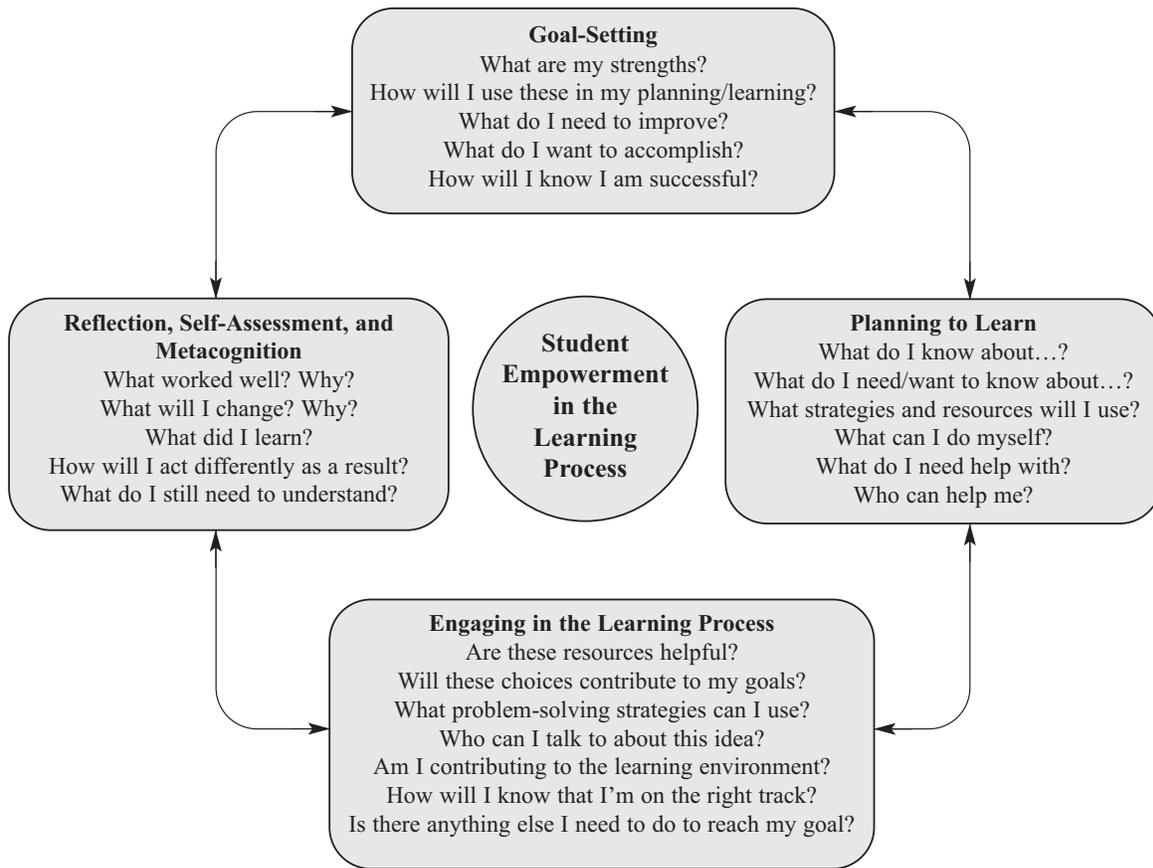
Goal-Setting
What are my strengths?
How will I use these in my planning/learning?
What do I need to improve?
What do I want to accomplish?
How will I know I am successful?

Reflection, Self-Assessment, and Metacognition
What worked well? Why?
What will I change? Why?
What did I learn?
How will I act differently as a result?
What do I still need to understand?

Student Empowerment in the Learning Process

Planning to Learn
What do I know about…?
What do I need/want to know about…?
What strategies and resources will I use?
What can I do myself?
What do I need help with?
Who can help me?

Engaging in the Learning Process
Are these resources helpful?
Will these choices contribute to my goals?
What problem-solving strategies can I use?
Who can I talk to about this idea?
Am I contributing to the learning environment?
How will I know that I'm on the right track?
Is there anything else I need to do to reach my goal?

Figure 3: Student Empowerment in the Learning Process

Teacher Reflection

Teacher reflection is also essential to effective pedagogy, and there is no teaching tool or strategy more important than critical consciousness. As teachers assess and reflect on their instructional practices, and as they engage students in dialogue about learning, they become aware of student needs and are better able to adjust planning and teaching—*before*, *during*, and *after* learning.

Before learning begins, teachers engage students in strategies to activate learning. This provides opportunities for teachers to observe students, to assess their prior knowledge, and to make initial adjustments to the learning process that is about to begin.

Once learning is underway, teachers continuously observe students and engage them in dialogue about their learning. They are aware of changing student needs, and adapt and adjust learning strategies as needed.

Teacher as reflective practitioner
- Which strategies best met the needs of the group? Of individuals?
- How did the students respond?
- What will I change? add? delete?

Finally*, when all of the learning and assessing activities have been completed*, teachers critically reflect on the whole learning process, evaluating their strategies and approaches, and deciding what changes need to be made for next time.

A Social Studies Model for Classroom-Based Assessment

The assessment model presented in this document provides a series of processes and tools to facilitate classroom-based assessment.

In each grade, the knowledge, values, and skills learning outcomes have been organized into thematic groups referred to as **clusters**; there are three to five clusters in each grade. Each cluster is further divided into **learning experiences**, where a small number of related learning outcomes are grouped together. Each learning experience provides a series of activating, acquiring, and applying strategies.

In this model, assessment tools and strategies have been created for use

* at the **beginning** of each cluster
* **within** each learning experience
* at the **end** of each cluster

The following assessment strategies and tools are referenced at the **beginning of each cluster**. The reproducible charts are found in Appendix C.

* **Skills Progress Chart:** This teacher tool lists every skills learning outcome for a particular grade. It is intended to monitor individual student progress related to skills in each cluster and throughout the grade. (Appendix C)

* **Student Portfolio Tracking Chart:** This chart is intended for student use, and lists the titles of each learning experience within a cluster. Students use the chart to track the portfolio selections from each learning experience they will use to demonstrate their learning at the end of the cluster. (Appendix C)

* **Engaging Students in the Cluster:** This section provides suggestions to teachers to activate a cluster, prior to engaging students in learning experiences. These activities are intended to stimulate student interest, and to provide opportunities for teachers to assess student prior knowledge.

The following assessment tools are included **within every learning experience:**

* **Skills Set:** This icon is attached to every strategy in a learning experience, and includes an appendix reference. Appendix A lists the skills learning outcomes that may be targeted for assessment, and provides assessment suggestions.

* **Suggested Portfolio Selections:** Selected strategies in each learning experience are identified with this icon, indicating that the strategy may result in the creation of products, processes, or performances for inclusion in student portfolios. (See the description of **Student Portfolio Tracking Chart** above.)

A portfolio is a purposeful collection of work over time that shows the evidence of a student's knowledge and understanding. Selection is made with regard to student learning goals and/or criteria, and involves self-assessment and reflection. Portfolios show growth and the achievement of learning outcomes.

The following assessment tool appears at the **end of every cluster:**

* **Connecting and Reflecting:** Every cluster ends with an assessment activity entitled *Connecting and Reflecting*. During this activity, students review their cluster portfolio selections to synthesize their learnings throughout the cluster, and reflect on the implications of those learnings in their daily lives as citizens of their school, their local community, of Canada, or the world. This end-of-cluster activity is an important culminating step. It provides information to both teachers and students about student achievement regarding the essential ideas and understandings of the cluster.