

Introduction

SOCIAL STUDIES AND THE CREATION OF A DEMOCRATIC LEARNING COMMUNITY



Welcome to the world of social studies, where students have opportunities to interact with each other in democratic groups and communities, and to acquire the knowledge, values, and skills they need to become active, responsible citizens within our Canadian society. As they mature and practice the skills of citizenship, they not only contribute to their learning communities, but also contribute to the betterment of our society.

What do active, responsible citizens look like? They are aware of the world in which they live, and they care about people around them—the people with whom they share this planet, both near and far away. They know that their actions affect others. They have informed opinions, and think critically about issues that concern themselves and others. They have the confidence to make their voices heard, to take a stand on issues, and to engage in social action when necessary. They are concerned with the well-being of the environment, and live their lives in ways that reflect that concern.

Background

This document was produced by Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, in collaboration with Manitoba educators. It includes the core concept citizenship, and identifies general and specific learning outcomes. It integrates the four foundation skill areas of literacy and communication, problem solving, human relations, and technology, and provides ideas and strategies to support the implementation of social studies. It is mandated for use in all schools in Manitoba.



A Brief History of the Social Studies Curriculum

Just as knowing oneself means knowing one's history, fully understanding the new social studies curriculum requires knowing something of its history. The Manitoba curriculum was created through a culturally collaborative process; diverse voices guided the process, and the result is a social studies curriculum that better reflects the cultural reality of Canada.

The first stage of the process was the creation of the *Western Canadian Protocol (WCP) Common Curriculum Framework for Social Studies, Kindergarten to Grade 9 (2002)**. This was the first inter-provincial/territorial curriculum project to include both Aboriginal and francophone representatives as full and equal partners in the development process.

* In November 2003 the name was changed to the Western and Northern Canadian Protocol (WNCP) for Collaboration in Basic Education.

Manitoba Advisory Groups

- Social Studies Steering Committee
- K to 12 Framework Development Team
- Cultural Advisory Team



Manitoba's involvement in the Western and Northern Canadian Protocol project, and in the next stage of adapting the *WCP Framework* to produce *Kindergarten to Grade 8 Social Studies: Manitoba Curriculum Framework of Outcomes*, was guided by three advisory groups:

- The **Manitoba Social Studies Steering Committee**, including representatives from Manitoba educational stakeholders
- The **Manitoba Kindergarten to Grade 12 Framework Development Team**, comprising Early, Middle, and Senior Years teachers from English, français, and French Immersion Programs, as well as Aboriginal educators and consultants, and university advisors in history, geography, and education
- The **Manitoba Cultural Advisory Team**, with representatives from 15 ethnocultural organizations in Manitoba
(See the Acknowledgements section for a listing of team members and organizations.)

Manitoba also solicited feedback from educational stakeholders during the development of the WCP and Manitoba frameworks. Regional consultations took place, as did a province-wide mailout, resulting in feedback from hundreds of Manitoba educators and stakeholders, including the Manitoba First Nation Education Resource Centre and the Manitoba Métis Federation.

Both documents—the Kindergarten to Grade 9 WCP document, and the *Social Studies: Manitoba Curriculum Kindergarten to Grade 8 Framework of Outcomes*—shaped the Manitoba Grade 9 curriculum. All of the major components, as well as the philosophy and approach of the Grade 9 curriculum, are based on the earlier works.

Contents of the Document

This document contains the following sections:

- **Introduction:** The introduction describes the purpose, background, and contents of this document.
- **Social Studies in Manitoba—A Kindergarten to Grade 12 Overview:** This section presents an overview of the Kindergarten to Grade 12 social studies program in Manitoba.
- **Document Components and Structure:** This section presents the components of the Manitoba social studies curriculum and explains how the learning outcomes and strategies for teaching, learning, and assessment are organized within this document.
- **Grade 9: Canada in the Contemporary World:** This section contains the grade overview; cluster descriptions; skills, knowledge, and values learning outcomes; suggested strategies for assessment; and strategies to activate, acquire, and apply learning.
- **References**
- **Appendices:** This section contains the following appendices: A: Skills Assessment; B: Blackline Masters; C: Portfolio Tracking Charts; D: Skills, Knowledge and Values Checklists; E: Vocabulary Strategies; F: Grades 8 to 10 Cumulative Skills Chart; G: Recommended Learning Resources; and H: Teacher Notes.

**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

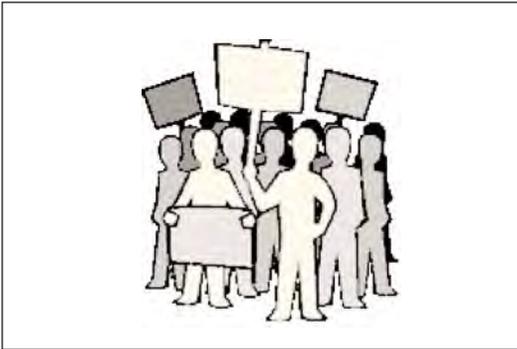
- acquire knowledge and understanding of world history and geography
 - respect the world's peoples and cultures through a commitment to human rights, equity, and the dignity of all persons
 - develop global awareness and a sense of global citizenship
 - understand and appreciate the role of international 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

Overview



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.

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

Overview



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.

Overview

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 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 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 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 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.

Overview**Power and Authority**

Students 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 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



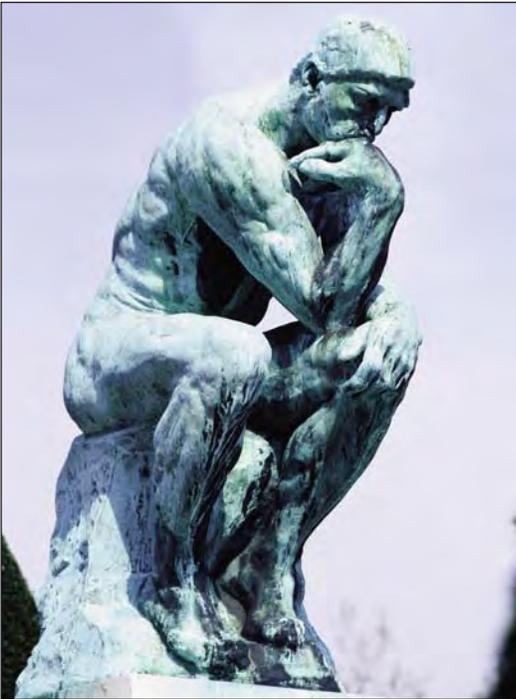
Skills for Active Democratic Citizenship

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.

Overview**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 judgements. These judgements 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.

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

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.



Overview

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

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.

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

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 G 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 also needs the skills to locate, access, and evaluate pertinent information.

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

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-centered 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 but particularly in the Senior Years—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 the fact that there may not be a single “right answer” to a question or issue
- respect every student’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 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 together we 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 students, 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 students 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. 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, town hall meetings, 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 students 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.

Overview

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 take a stand and 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 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.

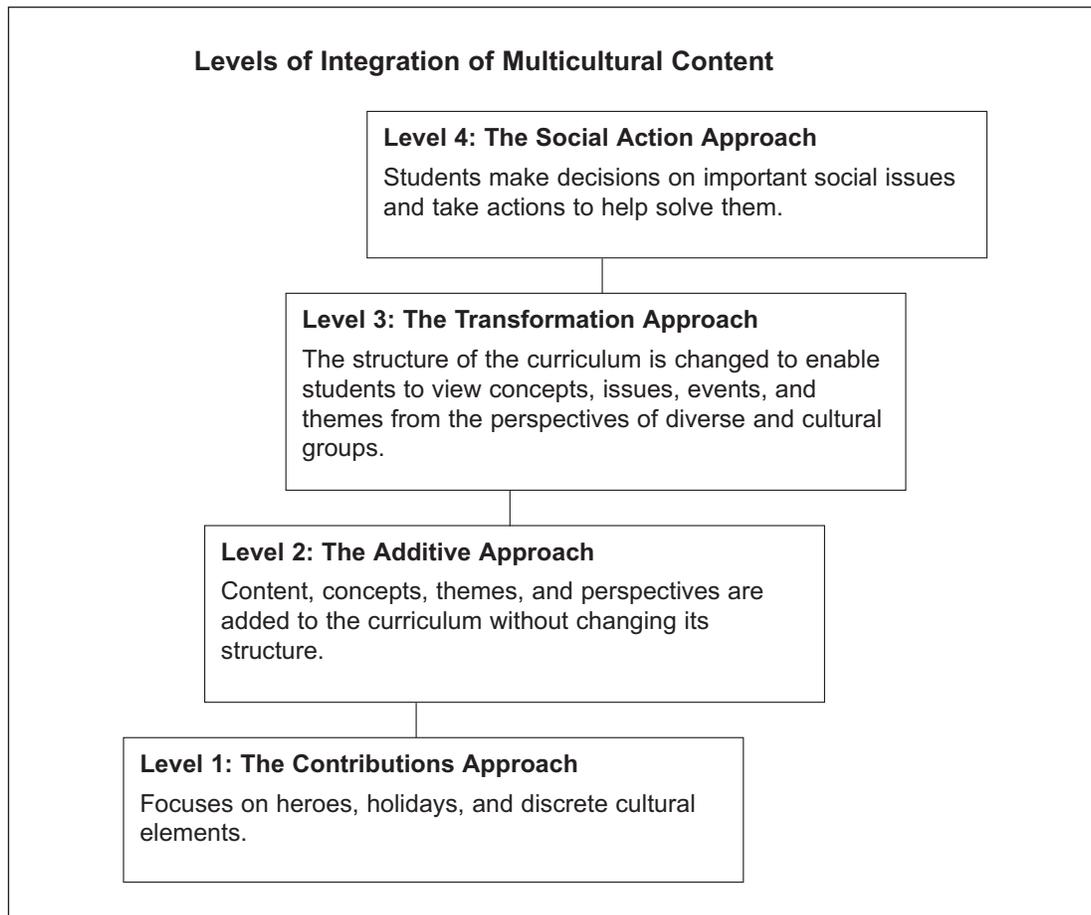


Figure 1: From “Approaches to Multicultural Curriculum Reform” by James A. Banks. In *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives*, J. Banks and C. Banks (Eds.).

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.

Overview

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 useful tools 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.

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, 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.

Overview

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 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 will not likely 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.