



Strategies to Develop Positive Attitudes towards Diversity

- Initiate 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. Try to fully 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. (The importance of this point cannot be overstated.)
 - 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 related to diversity? How may this affect classroom dynamics?



- Are students from the cultural backgrounds that are included 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?

Overview

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?

GRADE 9 STUDENTS AND THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT



Student learning is central to teachers' work. By their personality and professional practices, and through their day-to-day interactions with students, "teachers directly affect what students learn, how they learn, and the ways they interact with one another and the world around them" (Stronge, 2002, vii).

Research on effective and caring teachers (Stronge, 2002: 15) indicates the following:

- Caring teachers who know their students create relationships that enhance the learning process.
- Effective teachers consistently emphasize their love for children as one key element in their success.
- Teachers who create a supportive and warm classroom climate tend to be more effective with all students.
- Caring teachers are intentionally aware of student cultures outside the school.
- Caring teachers appropriately respect confidentiality issues when dealing with students.
- Caring teachers regard the ethics of care and learning as important in educating students to their full potential.

Characteristics of Learners and Their Implications

If a symbolic line could be drawn between childhood and adulthood, it would be drawn for many students during the beginning of their senior schooling years. These students begin to assume many of the responsibilities associated with maturity.

Although many Grade 9 students handle their new responsibilities and the many demands on their time with ease, others experience difficulty. Grade 9 can be a turning point for at-risk students. External interests may seem more important than school. Because of their increased autonomy, students who previously had problems managing their behaviour at school may now express their difficulties through poor attendance, alcohol and drug use, or other behaviours that place them at risk. Students struggling to control their lives and circumstances may make choices that seem to teachers to be contrary to their best interests. Being aware of what their students are experiencing outside school is important for teachers at every level.

Overview

Although the huge developmental variance evident in Grade 6 through Grade 9 is narrowing, students in Grade 9 can still demonstrate a development range of up to three years. Adolescents also change a great deal in the course of one year or even one semester. Grade 9 teachers need to be sensitive to the dynamic classroom atmosphere and recognize when shifts in interests, capabilities, and needs are occurring, so that they can adjust learning activities for their students.

There are, however, some generalizations that can be made about Senior Years students. The following chart identifies some common characteristics observed in educational studies (Glatthorn, 1993; Maxwell and Meiser, 1997) and by Manitoba teachers, and discusses the implications of these characteristics for teachers.

Senior Years Learners: Implications for Teachers

Characteristics of Senior Years Learners	Accommodating Senior Years Learners
<i>Physical Characteristics</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some students, particularly males, are still in a stage of extremely rapid growth, and experience a changing body image and self-consciousness. • Students are able to sit still and concentrate on one activity for longer periods than previously, but still need interaction and variety. • Many students come to school tired, as a result of part-time jobs or activity overload. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be sensitive to the risk students may feel in public performances, and increase expectations gradually. Provide students with positive information about themselves. • Put physical energy to the service of active learning, instead of trying to contain it. Provide variety; change the pace frequently; use kinesthetic activities. • Work with students and families to set goals and plan activities realistically so that school work assumes a higher priority.
<i>Cognitive Characteristics</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners are increasingly capable of abstract thought, and are in the process of revising their former concrete thinking into a fuller understanding of principles. • Students are less absolute in their reasoning, more able to consider diverse points of view. They recognize that knowledge may be relative to context. • Many basic learning processes have become automatic, freeing students to concentrate on complex learning. • Many students have developed specialized interests and expertise, and need to connect what they are learning to the world outside school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach to the big picture. Help students forge links between what they already know and what they are learning. • Focus on developing problem-solving and critical-thinking skills. • Identify the skills and knowledge students already possess, and build the course around new challenges. Through assessment, identify students who have not mastered appropriate learning processes, and provide additional assistance and support. • Encourage students to develop social studies skills through exploring areas of interest. Cultivate classroom experts, and invite students with individual interests to enrich the learning experience of the class.

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Senior Years Learners: Implications for Teachers *(continued)*

Characteristics of Senior Years Learners

Accommodating Senior Years Learners

Moral and Ethical Characteristics

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are working at developing a personal ethic, rather than following an ascribed set of values and code of behaviour. • Students are sensitive to personal or systemic injustice. They are often idealistic and impatient with the realities that make social change slow or difficult. • Students are shifting from an egocentric view of the world to one centred in relationships and community. • Students have high standards for adult competence and consistency, and are resistant to arbitrary authority. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the ethical meaning of situations in life, in hypothetical situations, and situations presented in student learning resources. Provide opportunities for students to reflect on their thoughts in discussion, writing, or representation. • Explore ways in which social studies activities can effect social change. • Provide opportunities for students to make and follow through on commitments, and to refine their interactive skills. • Explain the purpose of every activity. Enlist student collaboration in developing classroom policies. Strive to be consistent. |
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Psychological and Emotional Characteristics

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important for students to see that their autonomy and emerging independence is respected. They need a measure of control over what happens to them in school. • Students need to understand the purpose and relevance of activities, policies, and processes. Some express a growing sense of autonomy through questioning authority. Others may be passive and difficult to engage. • Students at this stage may be more reserved, aloof, and guarded than previously, both with teachers and with each other. • Students with a history of difficulties in school may be sophisticated in their understanding of school procedures, and resistant to efforts to help. • Students have a clearer sense of identity than they had previously, and are capable of being more reflective and self-aware. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide choice wherever possible. Allow students to select many of the issues and texts they will explore and the forms they will use to demonstrate their learning. Teach students to be independent learners. Gradually release responsibility to students. • Use students' tendency to question authority to help them develop critical thinking. Negotiate policies, and demonstrate a willingness to make compromises. Use student curiosity to fuel classroom inquiry. Explore controversial issues to help students see varying points of view. • Concentrate on getting to know each student individually. Provide optional and gradual opportunities for self-disclosure. • Learn to understand each student's unique combination of abilities and learning approaches. Select topics, themes, issues, and learning opportunities that offer students both a challenge and an opportunity to succeed. Make expectations very clear. • Allow students to explore themselves through their work, and respect student differences. |
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Senior Years Learners: Implications for Teachers *(continued)*

Characteristics of Senior Years Learners

Accommodating Senior Years Learners

Social Characteristics

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students continue to be intensely concerned with how peers view their appearance and behaviour. Much of their sense of self is still drawn from peers, with whom they may adopt a “group consciousness” rather than making autonomous decisions. • Peer acceptance is often more important than adult approval. Adolescents frequently express peer identification through slang, musical choices, clothing, body decoration, and behaviour. • Crises of friendship and romance, and a preoccupation with sexual issues, can distract students from academics. • Although students may have an aloof demeanour, they still expect and welcome a personal connection with their teachers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the classroom has an accepting climate. Model respect for each student. Engage in activities that foster student self-understanding and self-reflection. Challenge students to make personal judgements about situations in life and in information sources. • Foster a classroom identity and culture. Ensure that every student is included and valued. Structure learning so that students can interact with peers, and teach strategies for effective interaction. • Open doors for students to learn about relationships through multiple resources, such as poetry, film, and fiction, and to explore their experiences and feelings in language. Respect confidentiality, except where a student’s safety is at risk. • Nurture a relationship with each student. Try to find areas of common interest with each one. Respond with openness, empathy, and warmth. |
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Grade 9 Social Studies Learning Environment

The classroom environment affects the student learning that occurs in it. “An effective teacher plans and prepares for the organization of the classroom with the same care and precision used to design a high-quality lesson” (Stronge, 2002: 25). Teachers develop a positive classroom climate by attending to both *physical* and *non-physical components*.

Physical components may include the following:



- seating arrangements that reflect a student-centred philosophy and that facilitate flexible student grouping
 - wall maps and globes reflecting various projections and perspectives of the world
 - a classroom library, including books, atlases, periodicals, magazines, newsletters, newspapers, software and CD-ROM titles, dictionaries, thesauri, encyclopedias, manuals, fiction focusing on geographic regions and issues, flat files of material on various topics, previous tests or exams collected in binders, exemplars or samples of student work such as essays, projects, reports, or posters
 - access to electronic media equipment, including overhead projector, television, videocassette player, video recorder, and GIS hardware and software
 - posters, displays, murals, banners, charts, diagrams, pictures, and collages reflecting and displaying student work and current learning focus
- posters, diagrams, and flow charts of learning processes and strategies such as inquiry process and reading/viewing/listening process to encourage students’ independent and small-group learning
 - storage places for student work that is completed or in progress to assist students in the assessment of their progress, in setting personal learning goals, and in developing action plans to accomplish these goals
 - student input in classroom design and displays

Non-physical components (Cotton, 1999; Marzano, 2003; Stronge, 2002) assist teachers in building a positive learning community and may include the following:

- belief that all students are equally important in the classroom and that each student has unique qualities that contribute to the classroom learning community
- communication of interest in and attention to student interests, problems, and accomplishments
- encouragement of student efforts and development of a sense of responsibility and self-reliance
- high standards for learning for all students and provision of time, instruction, and encouragement to help **all** learners

Overview

- maximization of time for classroom learning in individual, pair, small groups, and whole-group configurations
- development of a safe, risk-free learning environment where failure to meet expectations is not penalized but is an opportunity for improving performance
- student-centred, hands-on learning strategies where students pursue learning with the assistance of the teacher and including student collaboration and co-operation
- definition and recognition of excellence in terms of learning outcomes (criterion-referenced) rather than peer comparisons (norm-referenced)
- clear and focused instruction, including orientation of students to lessons and clusters by providing exposition and discussion of targeted learning outcomes, sequence of varied learning activities and experiences (Activating, Acquiring, and Applying), connections between specific lessons and larger concepts, and opportunities for guided and independent practice
- routine feedback both on in-class and assignment work in terms of lesson and cluster learning outcomes, and collaboration with students in development of action plans for success

In addition, refer to “Chapter 3: Classroom Climate and Culture,” *Success for All Learners: A Handbook on Differentiating Instruction* (Manitoba Education and Training, 1996).

Planning with Learning Outcomes



“Teaching is an extraordinarily complex undertaking.... It is the process of teaching complex disciplines and processes to complex pupils” (Stronge, 2002: 62). It is an individual and a creative process involving a number of considerations on a moment-by-moment, day-by-day, week-by-week basis. Numerous elements shape the teacher’s decision making. These include:

- determining student learning needs, their strengths and interests, and their learning styles and multiple intelligences
 - targeting learning outcomes to focus instruction, learning, and assessment
 - selecting, adapting, and developing learning and assessment strategies and learning resources
- maximizing personal teaching strengths, resources, and interests
 - adjusting planning to take advantage of community and public events that provide learning opportunities

Planning Considerations

“Teaching is a constant stream of professional decisions made before, during, and after interaction with students: decisions which, when implemented, increase the probability of learning.”

—Madeline Hunter

- Learning outcomes are not generally taught as separate or isolated; rather, they are taught in a variety of combinations. Because knowledge (K) outcomes, skills (S) outcomes, and values (V) outcomes are frequently interdependent, teachers develop lessons and units to assist students in seeing and understanding these relationships. Furthermore, teachers help students connect the knowledge, skills, and values (targeted learning outcomes) that they learn in one lesson with those targeted in other lessons and units. As students make connections between and among what sometimes appear to be discrete pieces of knowledge, they develop a broader understanding and appreciation of the big ideas or issues that form the basis of geographic issues of the 21st century.
- Learning is recursive. Often, learning outcomes need to be addressed many times during the school year and subsequent school years. For example, students need numerous opportunities to acquire skills (S) outcomes. As they practise, refine, and internalize these, students become more confident learners.
- Each group or classroom of learners is unique. The plans for instruction, learning, and assessment will, by necessity, differ for each unique group and classroom of learners. It will also vary during the school year as teachers identify and meet the needs of individuals and groups of learners.

Planning for Course Organization and Implementation



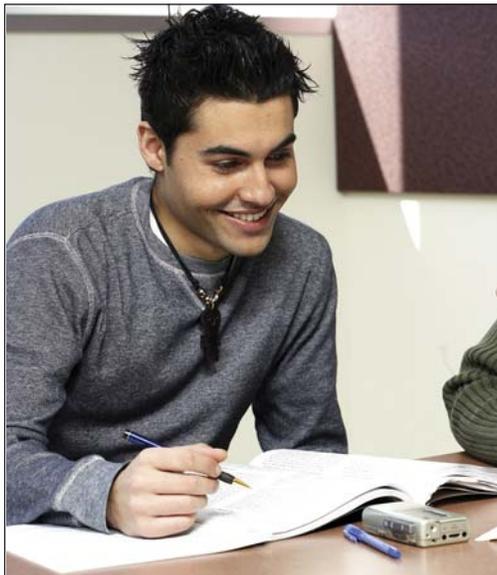
Teachers determine the organization, pace, methods, materials, and focus for learning. This document presents the Grade 9 social studies student learning outcomes in two organizational formats:

- general and specific student learning outcomes
- four clusters

While this document presents a cluster organization, teachers may organize the learning outcomes differently and develop other configurations more appropriate to both their own teaching approach and to their students' learning needs.

Whatever configuration they select or develop, teachers keep the focus on the knowledge, skills, and values identified by Grade 9 social studies learning outcomes. They maintain high expectations for all students. They differentiate instruction by providing multiple and varied, developmentally appropriate and authentic learning tasks, activities, and resources, and they assist each student in achieving the learning outcomes.

Overview



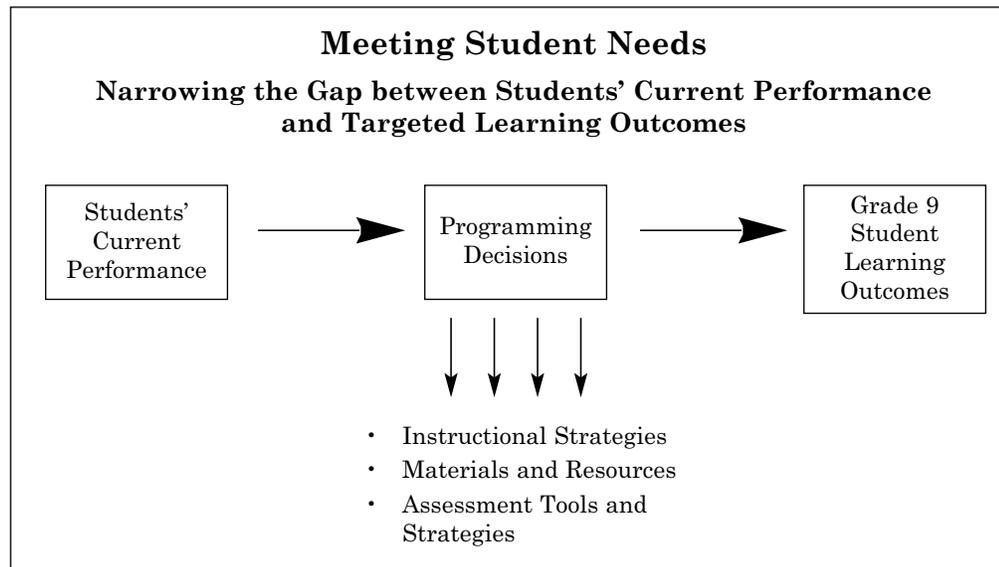
Planning a balanced Grade 9 social studies course needs to take into account the following:

- Learning outcomes are stated as end-of-year or end-of-course results. They focus on what students know and can do at the end of the year or course rather than on what material is “covered.” While students may demonstrate levels of performance described by learning outcomes at particular times during the course, the learning outcomes are end-of-year/-course expectations. In most cases, teachers will assess and evaluate students’ performance when the knowledge (K) and values (V) learning outcomes are learned and demonstrated at the end of a series of lessons or a cluster. Where students have additional opportunities to demonstrate these same learning outcomes (during end-of-year or -course tests, examinations, assignments, projects, et cetera), teachers need to include these later performances in the student’s final assessment. These later performances may, in fact, demonstrate greater student learning, and the teacher may

consider these end-of-year or -course performances to be more accurate evaluations of students’ learning and ignore previous assessments of the same learning outcomes.

Note that while particular knowledge (K) learning outcomes and values (V) learning outcomes are frequently taught as part of one lesson, cluster, or theme, skills (S) learning outcomes are recursive. Students develop and refine these skills throughout the course. Consequently, teachers assess these formatively during much of the course, leaving summative assessment of skills toward the end of the course.

- Planning is ongoing and informed by students’ learning needs, as these become evident through regular classroom-based assessment. Teachers plan for the needs of all students. For example, students who learn at different rates or with less ease than their classmates may benefit from teachers scaffolding learning experiences, pre-teaching, conducting regular reviews, making time for additional practice, and providing multiple opportunities and means to demonstrate learning. Other students may benefit from challenging extension activities. For a comprehensive discussion of the diversity of students in classrooms and strategies for meeting their needs, refer to *Success for All Learners: A Handbook on Differentiating Instruction* (Manitoba Education and Training, 1996).
- A variety of teaching/learning approaches, classroom management techniques, assessment practices, tools, and strategies are essential.
- A variety of groupings—individual, pairs, small groups, large groups, whole class, heterogeneous, homogeneous, student-directed, teacher-directed—are essential.
- A variety of student learning resources, including print, visual, and audio formats that students are able to access and that assist them in learning the knowledge (K) identified in specific learning outcomes, are helpful. “Students can best become literate in any given subject area if reading, talking, and viewing are an integral part of content learning and of the subject-area curriculum. Talking, reading, writing, and viewing in the subject areas are known as **talking-**, **reading-**, **writing-**, and **viewing-to-learn** activities, and are ways to maximize the learning of content” (Gordon et al., 1998: 3).
- All programming decisions are directed toward addressing student needs and closing the gap between students’ present level of performance and the performance identified in the learning outcomes.



Instructional Approaches

In planning learning experiences, teachers have a variety of instructional approaches and methods and they use these in various combinations. Instructional approaches may be categorized as

- direct instruction
- indirect instruction
- experiential instruction
- independent study
- interactive instruction

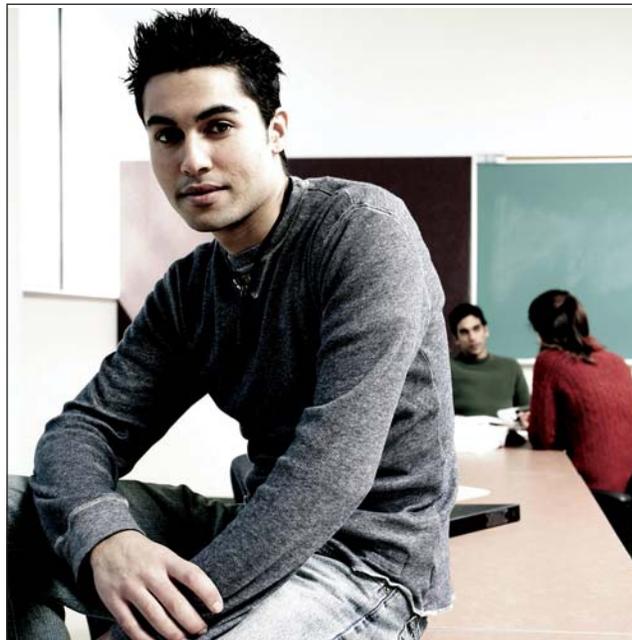
As they select and adapt instructional approaches and methods, teachers consider a number of factors:

- Will the approach meet the unique learning styles of students?
- Will it assist them in achieving the targeted learning outcomes?
- Will it engage students?
- Do students have prerequisite knowledge of the content and/or skills to enable them to learn with this approach?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of this approach?

Overview



Instructional Approaches: Figure adapted, with permission, from Saskatchewan Education. *Instructional Approaches: A Framework for Professional Practice.* Copyright © 1991 by Saskatchewan Education.



Instructional Approaches: Roles, Purposes, and Methods				
Instructional Approaches	Roles	Purposes/Uses	Methods	Advantages/ Limitations
Direct Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly teacher-directed Teacher ensures a degree of student involvement through didactic questioning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing information Developing step-by-step skills and strategies Introducing other approaches and methods Teaching active listening and note making 	<p>Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explicit teaching Lesson overviews Guest speakers Instruction of strategic processes Lecturing Didactic questioning Demonstrating and modelling prior to guided practice Mini-lessons Guides for reading, listening, and viewing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective in providing students with knowledge of steps of highly sequenced skills and strategies Limited use in developing abilities, processes, and attitudes for critical thinking and interpersonal or group learning Students may be passive rather than active learners
Indirect Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mainly student-centred Role of teacher shifts to facilitator, supporter, resource person Teacher monitors progress to determine when intervention or another approach is required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activating student interest and curiosity Developing creativity and interpersonal skills and strategies Exploring diverse possibilities Forming hypotheses and developing concepts Solving problems Drawing inferences 	<p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observing Investigating Inquiring and researching Jigsaw groups Problem solving Reading and viewing for meaning Reflective discussion Gallery Walks Concept mapping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students learn effectively from active involvement Allows for high degree of differentiation and pursuit of individual interests Teacher requires excellent facilitation and organizational skills Focused instruction of content and concepts may be difficult to integrate
Interactive Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student-centred Teacher forms groups, teaches and guides small-group skills and strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activating student interest and curiosity Developing creativity and interpersonal skills and strategies Exploring diverse possibilities Forming hypotheses and developing concepts Solving problems Drawing inferences 	<p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussing Sharing Generating alternative ways of thinking and feeling Debates Role-playing Panels Brainstorming Peer conferencing Collaborative learning groups Problem solving Talking circles Peer editing Interviewing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student motivation and learning increase through active involvement in groups Teacher's knowledge and skill in forming groups, instructing, and guiding group dynamics are important to the success of this approach Effective in assisting students' development of life skills in co-operation and collaboration

(continued)

Overview

Instructional Approaches: Roles, Purposes, and Methods (continued)				
Instructional Approaches	Roles	Purposes/Uses	Methods	Advantages/Limitations
Experiential Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student-centred • Teacher may wish to design the order and steps of the process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focusing on processes of learning rather than products • Developing students' knowledge and experience • Preparing students for direct instruction 	Students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participating in activities • Field trips • Simulations • Primary research • Games • Focused imaging • Role-playing • Surveys • Sharing observations and reflections • Reflecting critically on experiences • Developing hypotheses and generalizations • Testing hypotheses and generalizations in new situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student understanding and retention increase • Hands-on learning may require additional resources and time
Independent Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student-centred • Teacher guides or supervises students' independent study, teaches knowledge, skills, and strategies that students require for independent learning, and provides adequate practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessing and developing student initiative • Developing student responsibility • Developing self-reliance and independence 	Students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inquiry and research projects • Using a variety of approaches and methods • Computer-assisted instruction • Essays and reports • Study guides • Learning contracts • Homework • Learning centres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students grow as independent, lifelong learners • Student maturity, knowledge, skills, and strategies are important to success • Student access to resources is essential • Approach may be used flexibly (it may be used with individual students while other students use other approaches)

Phases of Learning

Teachers find the three phases of learning are helpful in planning learning experiences:

- Activating (preparing to learn)
- Acquiring (integrating and processing learning)
- Applying (consolidating learning)

In this document, suggested teaching/learning strategies, classroom assessment approaches, and tools for each of the learning experiences are organized by these learning phases. These phases are not entirely linear, but they are useful for thinking and planning. Note that a variety of Activating, Acquiring, and Applying teaching/learning strategies are discussed in *Success for All Learners: A Handbook on Differentiating Instruction* (Manitoba Education and Training, 1996).

Activating (Preparing for Learning)



One of the strongest indications of how well students comprehend new information is their prior knowledge of the subject. Some educators observe that more student learning occurs during the Activating phase than at any other time. In planning instruction and assessment, teachers develop activities and select strategies for activating their students' prior knowledge. These activities provide information about the extent of students' prior knowledge of the topic to be studied, their knowledge of and familiarity with the forms or genres of the texts to be used to communicate that information, and their knowledge of and proficiency in applying skills and strategies for learning, using these forms or genres.

Prior knowledge activities

- help students relate new information, skills, and strategies to what they already know and can do (e.g., if a text includes unfamiliar vocabulary, students may not recognize the connection between what they know and the new material being presented)
- allow teachers to correct misconceptions that might otherwise persist and make learning difficult for students
- allow teachers to augment and strengthen students' knowledge bases when students do not possess adequate prior knowledge and experience to engage with new information and ideas
- help students recognize gaps in their knowledge
- stimulate curiosity, and initiate the inquiry process that will direct learning

This document contains numerous strategies for activating prior knowledge, such as Gallery Walks, brainstorming, concept maps, and KWL guides.

Overview

Acquiring (Integrating and Processing Learning)



In the second phase of learning, students engage with new information and integrate it with what they already know, adding to and revising their previous knowledge. Part of the teacher's role in this phase is to present this new information, or to help students access it from other human resources or from oral, print, and other media texts.

However, since learning is an internal process, facilitating learning requires more of teachers than simply presenting information. In the Acquiring phase, teachers instruct students in strategies that help them make meaning of information, integrate it with what they already know, and express their new understanding. These include strategies for active listening, reading, and viewing, for exploring ideas, and for representing

emerging understanding orally, visually, and in writing. In addition, teachers monitor these processes to ensure that learning is taking place, using a variety of instruments, tools, and strategies such as observations, conferences, and examination of student work.

In practice, within an actual lesson or series of lessons, the Acquiring phase of learning may include a number of steps and strategies, such as

- setting the purpose (e.g., lesson overviews, learning logs, Admit Slips)
- presenting information (e.g., guest speakers, mini-lessons, active reading, viewing, and listening)
- processing information (e.g., note making, group discussions, journals, visual representations)
- modelling (e.g., role-playing, think-alouds, demonstrations)
- checking for understanding (e.g., Think-Pair-Share activities, quizzes, informal conferences)
- practising (e.g., guided practice, rehearsals)

Applying (Consolidating Learning)

New learning that is not reinforced is soon forgotten. The products and performances by which students demonstrate new learning are not simply required for assessment; they have an essential instructional purpose in providing students with opportunities to demonstrate and consolidate their new knowledge, skills and strategies, and attitudes. Students also need opportunities to reflect on what they have learned and to consider how new learning applies to a variety of situations. By restructuring information, expressing new ideas in another form, or integrating what they have learned with concepts from other subject areas, students strengthen and extend learning.

To ensure that students consolidate new learning, teachers plan various activities involving

- reflection (e.g., learning logs, Exit Slips)
- closure (e.g., sharing of products, debriefing on processes)
- application (e.g., performances, publications, new inquiry cycles)

Planning with a Template

Planning Lessons

Teachers plan individual lessons and series of lessons in a variety of ways to assist students in acquiring Grade 9 learning outcomes.

Each learning experience provides teachers with a number of options and

- provides suggestions for each of the three phases of learning (Activating, Acquiring, and Applying)
- identifies or targets specific student learning outcomes
- suggests a number of teaching and learning strategies to assist students in achieving these targeted knowledge, values, and skills outcomes

It is not intended that teachers will implement all of these suggestions in a particular class. Teachers may also draw upon their professional practice—their knowledge of theory, research, and best instructional and assessment practice—to develop their own strategies and approaches.

Targeted Learning Outcomes

Teachers select strategies that best facilitate student achievement of targeted learning outcomes. While many outcomes may be “in play” during a learning experience, teachers focus on particular outcomes during individual lessons. Targeted outcomes may be seen as being in the foreground—the focus of attention—while other outcomes are in the background for that particular lesson.

In addition to knowledge and values learning outcomes, students are expected to achieve a number of skills (S) learning outcomes. Students learn and practise these skills throughout each cluster. Assessment of skills will affect the choice of teaching and learning strategies as teachers and their students work through the learning experiences.

Reflecting on Planning

When reflecting on their long-term planning as well as planning for specific lessons and units, many teachers find the following questions to be of value.

Student learning outcomes:

- What will students need to be able to do?
- What knowledge do they need to acquire?
- What skills and strategies do they need to develop and to make part of their personal learning toolbox?
- What attitudes will assist them in becoming efficient learners?
- What values do they need to demonstrate?

Overview



Engagement:

- How will I hook them?
- What learning experiences will engage students in
 - exploring ideas
 - acquiring information
 - developing understanding
 - acquiring and developing skills and strategies and values?
- What resource materials (print, visual, auditory) will I use to engage them in thought-provoking experiences—ideas, problems, issues, challenges—that will help them to develop the knowledge, skills and strategies, and values we want them to possess?

Methodology:

- What methods will I use to engage them and to help them to acquire the knowledge, skills and strategies, and values that we want them to possess?
- How will I manage time to provide them with sufficient opportunities to use the knowledge, skills and strategies, and values of the Grade 9 social studies learning outcomes?

Assessment and evaluation:

- How will I assess and evaluate their progress and their achievements?
- How will I help students know where they are, where they are headed, and why?
- How will I use classroom-based assessment information to revise my planning (i.e., targeting of student learning outcomes, teaching/learning strategies, assessment tools and strategies, and selection of student learning resources)?

SOCIAL STUDIES AND CLASSROOM-BASED ASSESSMENT

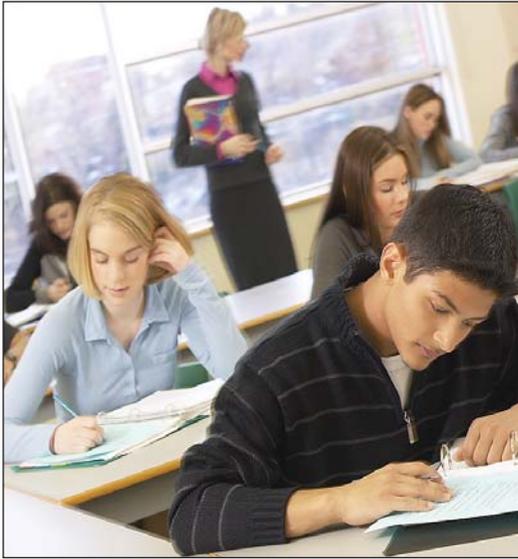
Outcomes-Based Learning and Assessment

“The purpose of summative assessment is to prove learning, while the purpose of formative assessment is to improve learning.”

—David Pratt

Outcomes-based learning is concerned with what students know and are able to do rather than with what material is “covered.” The general and specific learning outcomes identify the knowledge, skills, and values that Grade 9 students are expected to achieve. These learning outcomes are end-of-course expectations (i.e., students are expected to achieve and to demonstrate them by the end of the course).

Assessment is an integrated and essential component of sound instruction. Assessment is the systematic process of gathering information about what students know and are able to do. It includes collecting, interpreting, and communicating results related to students’ progress and achievement.



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.

Activating: How will students be prepared for learning?

Acquiring: What strategies facilitate learning for groups and individuals?

Applying: How will students demonstrate their understanding?

Assessment and the Stages of Learning

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.

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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	<p>Assessment in the activation stage helps students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “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 	<p>Assessment in the activation stage helps teachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<p>Assessment during the acquisition stage helps students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>Assessment during the acquisition stage helps teachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<p>Assessment during the application stage helps students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>Assessment during the application stage helps teachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

There are five characteristics of classroom assessment that support learning and increased student achievement (Davies, 2001):

1. Students are involved.
2. Students receive specific, descriptive feedback about learning during the learning.
3. Students communicate evidence of their learning to others.
4. Teachers adjust instruction in response to ongoing assessment information.
5. A safe learning environment invites further risk taking, mistake making, and learning.

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.

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- **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.

Tools and methods include asking questions, observing students engaged in learning experiences and processes, examining student work, conferencing with students about work in progress, engaging students in peer assessment and self-assessment.

Figure 3 identifies some assessment tools and methods appropriate for ongoing assessment. Formal tools such as rubrics may be more appropriate for assessment of learning that takes place at the end of a cluster or term.

Assessment Tools and Methods	
<p>Observation of Skills and Processes</p> <p>Teacher assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • checklists and rating scales • anecdotal records • conferences and interviews • review of work in progress <p>Student peer assessment and self-assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • checklists and rating scales • logs and journals 	<p>Tests, Products, and Performances</p> <p>Teacher assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rubrics and marking scales • conferences • portfolios <p>Student peer assessment and self-assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • checklists • reflective journals • portfolios

Figure 3: Assessment Tools and Methods

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.

Note that outcomes tracking charts and checklists have been included in Appendices C and D to help teachers in recording student achievement related to the learning outcomes.

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 and citizenship-related outcomes that continue to develop through the course or year—are often interconnected, practised, and reinforced throughout every cluster. Therefore, the level of growth that students demonstrate at various times during the course/year may not adequately reflect their progress at the end of the course/year. Student achievement may need to be reviewed at the course’s or 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 choose to provide students with additional opportunities to demonstrate their learning. End-of-course or 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.

Overview

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 4: *Student Empowerment in the Learning Process* illustrates this critical dialogue.

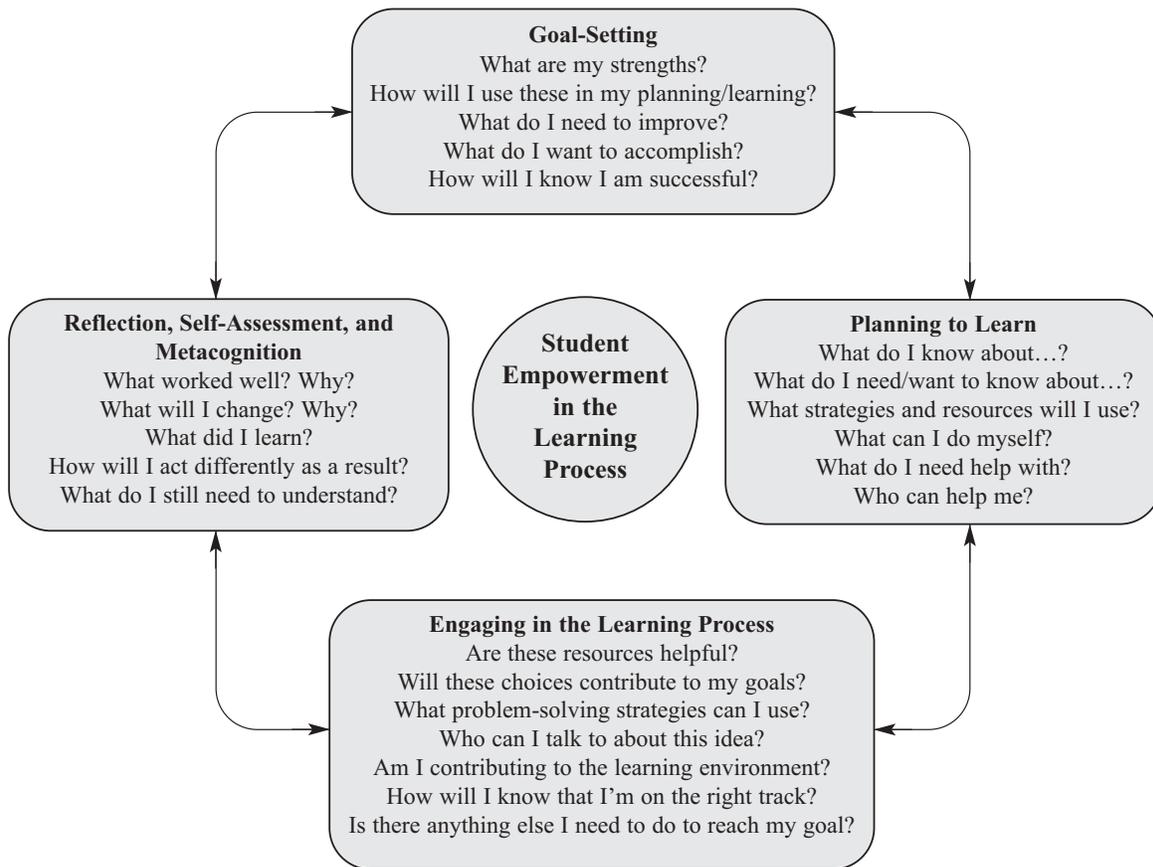


Figure 4: Student Empowerment in the Learning Process

Teacher Reflection

Teacher reflection is essential to effective pedagogy, and there is no teaching tool or strategy more important to a teacher 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.

Characteristics of Effective Social Studies Assessment

Effective assessment assists learning and

1. is congruent with instruction
2. is based on authentic tasks
3. uses a wide variety of tools and methods
4. is based on criteria that students know and understand
5. is a collaborative process involving students
6. focuses on what students have learned and can do
7. is ongoing and continuous

1. Effective assessment is congruent with instruction

Assessment requires teachers to be continually aware of the purpose of instruction: What do I want my students to learn? What can they do to show they have learned it?



How teachers assess depends on what they are assessing—whether they are assessing knowledge, skills, or values.

Ryan, Connell, and Deci (1985) found that assessment that is perceived as a tool for controlling student behaviours, as a way of meeting out rewards and punishments rather than providing feedback on student learning, reduces student motivation.

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 is intended to inform students of the programming emphasis and to help them to focus on important aspects of learning. If teachers assess only the elements that are easiest to measure, students may focus on only those things.

2. Effective assessment is based on authentic tasks

Assessment tasks should be authentic and meaningful—tasks worth doing for their own sake. Through assessment, teachers discover whether students can use the knowledge, skills, and resources to achieve worthwhile purposes. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to design tasks that replicate the context in which knowledge and skills will be applied beyond the classroom. As often as possible, students should be encouraged to communicate their knowledge and ideas for real audiences and real purposes, related to real social studies issues.

Authentic assessment tasks are not only tests of the information students possess, but also of the way their understanding of a topic has deepened, and of their ability to apply their learning.

3. Effective assessment uses a wide range of tools and methods

In order to create a comprehensive profile of student progress, teachers gather data by different means over numerous occasions. Student profiles may involve both students and teachers in data gathering and assessment.

4. Effective assessment is based on criteria that students know and understand

Assessment criteria must be clearly established and made explicit to students before an assignment or test so that students can focus their efforts appropriately. Each assessment should test only those learning outcomes that have been targeted and that have been identified to students. In addition, whenever possible, students need to be involved in developing assessment criteria.

Students need to understand what the successful accomplishment of each proposed task looks like. Models of student work from previous years and other exemplars help students in developing personal learning goals.

5. Effective assessment is a collaborative process involving students

The ultimate goal of assessment is to enable students to assess themselves. The gradual increase of student responsibility for assessment is part of developing students' autonomy as lifelong learners. Assessment should decrease, rather than foster, students' dependence on teachers' comments for direction in learning, and reduce student reliance on marks for validation of their accomplishments.

In addition, assessment enhances students' metacognitive abilities. It helps them make judgements about their own learning and provides them with information for goal setting and self-monitoring.

Teachers increase students' responsibility for assessment by

- requiring students to select products and performances to demonstrate their learning
- involving students in developing assessment criteria whenever possible
- involving students in peer assessment—informally through peer conferences and formally through using checklists

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- having students use tools for reflection and self-assessment (e.g., self-assessment checklists, learning logs, identification and selection of goals, and self-assessment of portfolio items)
- establishing a protocol for students who wish to challenge a teacher-assigned mark (Formal appeals provide opportunities for students to examine their performance in light of the assessment criteria.)

6. Effective assessment focuses on what students have learned and can do

Assessment must be equitable; it must offer opportunities for success to every student. Effective assessment demonstrates the knowledge, skills, and values of each student and the progress the student is making, rather than simply identifying deficits in learning.

To assess what students have learned and can do, teachers need to use a variety of strategies and approaches:

- Use a wide range of instruments to assess the various expressions of each student's learning (i.e., oral, written, et cetera).
- Provide students with opportunities to learn from feedback and to practise, recognizing that not every assignment will be successful, nor will it become part of end-of-cluster or end-of-term assessment.
- Examine several pieces of student work in assessing any particular learning outcome or group of outcomes to ensure that the data collected are valid bases for making generalizations about student learning.
- Develop complete student profiles by using information from *learning outcome-referenced assessment*, which compares a student's performance to predetermined criteria, and *self-referenced assessment*, which compares a student's performance to his or her prior performance.
- Avoid using assessment for purposes of discipline or classroom control.
- Allow students, when appropriate and possible, to choose how they will demonstrate their competence.
- Use assessment tools appropriate for assessing individual and unique products, skills, and performances.

7. Effective assessment is ongoing and continuous

Ongoing classroom-based assessment that is woven into daily instruction

- offers students frequent opportunities for feedback
- allows them to modify their learning approaches and methods
- helps them observe their progress. Teachers provide informal assessment by questioning students and offering comments. They also conduct formal assessments at various stages of learning.

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 Appendices C and D.

- **Skills, Knowledge, and Values Checklists:** 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 D)
- **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.