

**Overview of the Common Curriculum Framework for Social
Studies K-9
Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic
Education
By
Sheila D. Rose, CM, PhD
August 1, 2002**

Introduction

The first five sections of this paper are excerpted verbatim from the Common Curriculum Framework for Social Studies K-9. The last two sections are personal reflections on the process and outcome of the collaboration.

1. A brief overview of the development and components of the project.

The Common Curriculum Framework for Social Studies, Kindergarten to Grade 9 is the result of the Western Canadian protocol for collaboration in Basic Education, an agreement signed December 10, 1993 by the Ministers of Education of Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories, and the Yukon Territory. On March 10, 2000 this agreement was amended to include Nunavut.

The development of the Framework began with an analysis of current social studies literature and research, including Aboriginal, anglophone, and francophone sources. Based upon these literature reviews and subsequent consultations with educational stakeholders, participating jurisdictions collaborated in developing a Foundation Document for the Development of the Common Curriculum Framework for Social Studies Kindergarten to Grade 12.

The Framework is Primarily intended as a guide for curriculum developers and ministries of education in western and northern Canada. It provides a common foundation for the development of programs of study and learning resources for social studies. As intended by the western protocol agreement, each jurisdiction will decide how and when to use the Framework to accommodate provincial and territorial needs.

The Framework has been developed through a collaborative process intended to reflect the diversity of voices in Canada. This collaboration is unprecedented in the inclusion of Aboriginal and francophone representatives as full and equal partners throughout the process.

Throughout the development of the Framework, participating jurisdictions have collaborated with teacher advisory teams, cultural representatives, and other educational partners. The Framework has been developed in English and French. Consultations on the document have taken place in English, French, and Aboriginal languages.

2. Definition of Social Studies (developed for the purposes of the Framework)

Social studies is the study of people in relation to each other and to their world. It is an interdisciplinary subject that draws upon history, geography, economics, law, political science and other disciplines. Social studies focuses on people's relationships with their social, physical, spiritual, cultural, economic, political and technological environments. Social Studies helps students become active and responsible citizens within their communities, locally, nationally, and globally, in a complex and changing world.

3. General Learning Outcomes Kindergarten to Grade 9

Culture and Community—Students will explore the influences of culture and community on individual needs.

The Land: Places and People—Students will explore the dynamic relationships of people with the land, places and environments.

Time, Continuity, and Change--Students will explore how people, relationships, events, and ideas of the past shape the present and influence the future.

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

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

Economics and Resources—Students will explore the use and distribution of resources and wealth in relation to individuals, communities, nations, and the natural environment.

4. Content Themes Kindergarten to Grade 9

Kindergarten-Being Together.

Grade 1-Connecting and Belonging

Grade 2-Communities in Canada

Grade 3-Connecting with the World

Grade 4-Provinces and Territories; Our Places, Stories and Traditions

Grade 5-Canada: The Peoples and Stories of this Land

Grade 6-People and Places in the World

Grade 7-Canada, a Country of the North

Grade 8-Exploring Worldviews of the Past

Grade 9-Canada: Opportunities and Challenges

5. Citizenship, Identity, and Diverse Perspectives

Citizenship and identity are core concepts that provide the learning orientation for social studies.

6. Some Thoughts around the Social Studies Collaboration

The collaboration began with high hopes tempered by the realization that of all the western Canadian Protocol projects this would be the most difficult and time consuming. This proved to be true.

I was peripherally involved in the beginning. Subsequently the First Nation consultant managed the Yukon portion of the project and my role became one of reviewing the drafts. Many of the people originally involved in the project I knew personally and professionally from the days of the CRB Foundation. We had forged friendships that allowed us to speak freely to each other regarding history and social studies issues. We knew how each other felt as individuals with an intense interest in the field. We also knew the political realities of our home jurisdictions that would direct our work

The expense of the project with several meetings a year being held in different western provinces and territories, the amount of time involved in the meetings as well as preparing for meetings and writing, put a strain on the resources of the participants, as this was additional to other duties they held in their home jurisdictions. The list of participants was added to and some participants changed during the duration of the project. Governments changed and with this the interest and the commitment to the collaboration changed as well.

Francophone and English consultants from Manitoba's Department of Education, Training and Youth recently took on the role of co-leads. Up to this point the chairing of the meetings had alternated among the jurisdictions.

Over the duration of the project British Columbia went from being a participant to an observer. Alberta stepped back from the project in 2001.

The project was in two phases K-9 and 10-12. The K-9 was completed and now awaits a go ahead for resource selection. The 10-12 was not developed for a variety of reasons including Alberta and Manitoba having different jurisdictional mandates regarding the teaching of social studies and history.

7. Status of the Common Curriculum Framework for Social Studies K-9

The Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and the Yukon signed off the framework by January 2002.

A call for resources is being considered. The Northwest Territories is in the process of developing a program of studies based on the Framework document.

The information contained in this document is as of August 1, 2002.