



Foundation Document

for the Development of

The Common Curriculum Framework
for Social Studies
Kindergarten to Grade 12

February 15, 2000

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1. Introduction

The Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education (1993) states that the Ministers of Education in the four western provinces and two territories agree to collaborate in basic education because of the importance they place on four major goals:

- ◆ high standards of education;
- ◆ common educational goals;
- ◆ removing obstacles to the access of educational opportunities for students, including improving the ease of transfer from jurisdiction to jurisdiction;
- ◆ optimum use of educational resources.

A number of common curriculum frameworks have been developed as a result of this protocol. A recent protocol initiative is The Common Curriculum Framework for Social Studies Kindergarten to Grade 12 (hereafter referred to as the Framework). Early in the development process of the Framework, an extensive review of social studies literature and research was completed. A draft Foundation Document, intended to inform the development of the Framework, was the focus of jurisdictional consultations undertaken from May to October 1999. Revisions based on these consultations have been incorporated into this Foundation Document.

The purpose of this Foundation Document is to provide direction to the developers of the Framework, which will become the basis of social studies curriculum in each jurisdiction. The Foundation Document provides this direction by:

- ◆ articulating a vision for social studies;
- ◆ specifying the role of social studies;
- ◆ providing guiding principles;
- ◆ supplying background information necessary to inform the developers of the Common Curriculum Framework.

The process for the creation of the Foundation Document and the Framework is unprecedented in Canadian curriculum development. For the first time in western and northern Canadian history, Aboriginal and Francophone representatives have been included as full and equal partners in the development of a common curriculum framework for social studies. This collaboration is a unique opportunity for the Framework to reflect the complex and diverse nature of Canada and to contribute to a balanced and inclusive vision of our country.

Canada is a country of strong regional loyalties, committed to diversity and social justice, and one that is politically organized as a parliamentary democracy. It is subject to economic and cultural influences and the effects of globalization. Cultural interaction has helped define who we are as Canadians at this point in our history. The Framework will reflect the historical context and importance of Canada's First Peoples and founding nations, as well as the geographic and demographic realities of western and northern Canada. The Framework will promote intercultural understanding and be inclusive of Aboriginal and Francophone perspectives. It will support multiculturalism, pluralism, and bilingualism, all of which contribute to a Canadian spirit.

The focus of the Framework will be a common core of general and specific learning outcomes for all students. The Framework will include distinctive outcomes¹ throughout the document, as needed, for Aboriginal (First Nations, Inuit and Métis) and Francophone students in particular settings², due to the particular mandates and responsibilities that exist in Canada related to Aboriginal and Francophone populations. The Framework will be available in both English and French. Subsequent to the development of the Framework, an adaptation of the Framework will be prepared for French Immersion³.

¹ Distinctive outcomes for Aboriginal and Francophone students further enhance the development of identity, culture and community, and for Francophone students, language.

² Distinctive Aboriginal outcomes are for students in educational settings that include, but are not limited to, the following:

- ◆ locally-controlled First Nations schools;
- ◆ Aboriginal-controlled schools in off-reserve or urban settings;
- ◆ provincial and territorial schools where the majority population is Aboriginal, and where the school or school district, and concerned parents or their representatives have requested that the distinctive outcomes be taught;
- ◆ where a minority of students are Aboriginal, and the school or school district and parents or their representatives have requested that the distinctive outcomes be taught.

Distinctive Francophone outcomes are for students enrolled in Francophone schools or programs within the context of Section 23 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. These outcomes, to be found throughout the Framework, will support the development of language, identity, culture, and community.

³ See page 18.

2. Vision

The Common Curriculum Framework for Social Studies K-12 will meet the needs and reflect the nature of the 21st century learner and will have the concepts of Canadian citizenship and identity at its heart. It will be reflective of the diverse cultural perspectives, including Aboriginal and Francophone, that contribute to Canada's evolving realities. The Framework will ultimately contribute to a Canadian spirit – a spirit that will be fundamental in creating a sense of belonging for each one of our students as he or she engages in active and responsible citizenship locally, nationally, and globally.

3. Definition of Social Studies

For the purpose of developing the Foundation Document and the Framework, the following definition of social studies has been adopted.

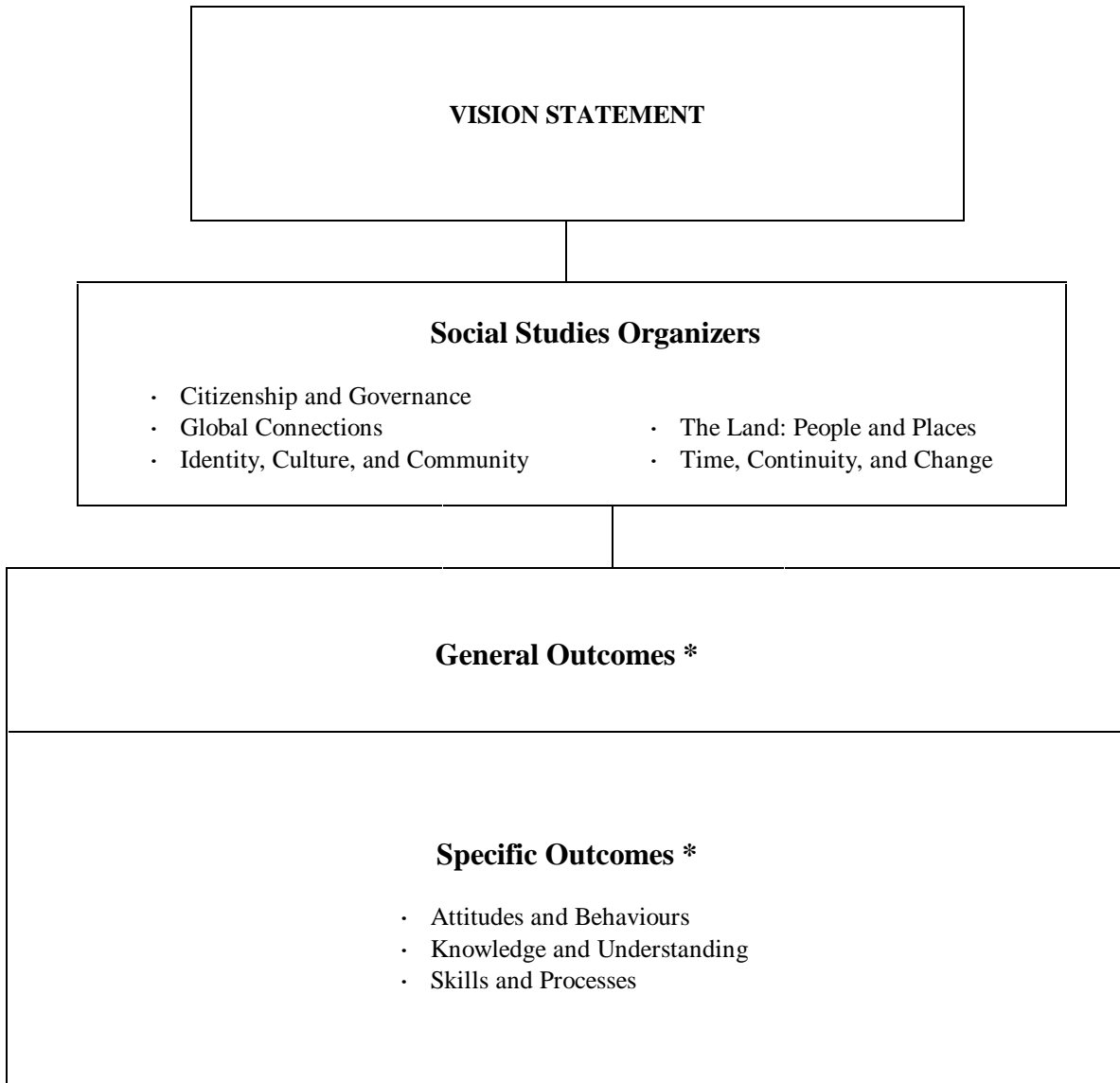
Social studies is the study of people in relation to each other and to their world. It is an interdisciplinary subject that draws upon history, geography, economics, law, political science, and other disciplines. Social studies focuses on people's relationships with their social, physical, spiritual, 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.

4. Role of Social Studies

Social studies enables students to:

- ◆ develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to become active and responsible citizens, engaged in the practice of democratic ideals, and aware of their capacity to effect change;
- ◆ understand their rights and responsibilities in order to participate fully in society;
- ◆ demonstrate a critical understanding of the role of social, political, economic, and legal institutions as they relate to individual and collective well-being;
- ◆ understand and appreciate the unique nature of Canada, its land, history, complexities, and current issues;
- ◆ understand and honour the traditions, concepts, and symbols that are the expression of Canadian identity;
- ◆ thrive in their evolving cultural and Canadian identities with a legitimate sense of belonging to their communities, Canada, and the world;
- ◆ appreciate and respect diverse Canadian cultural perspectives, including Aboriginal and Francophone, and understand how these perspectives have shaped Canada's political and cultural realities;
- ◆ value the diversity, respect the dignity, and support the equality of all human beings;
- ◆ develop a sense of social compassion, fairness, and justice;
- ◆ recognize, speak out, and take action against injustice as it occurs in their schools, communities, Canada, and the world;
- ◆ understand Canadian and world history, so as to better comprehend the present and to influence the future wisely for the well-being of all;
- ◆ critically consider and understand historic and contemporary issues, including controversial issues and values, from diverse perspectives;
- ◆ develop a global consciousness with respect to the human condition and world issues;
- ◆ understand how political and economic distributions of power affect individuals, communities, and nations;
- ◆ understand geographic concepts and skills and that humans exist in a dynamic relationship with the natural environment;
- ◆ develop a consciousness for the limits of nature and a sense of stewardship for the land, as well as an understanding of the principles of sustainability;
- ◆ engage in problem-solving and conflict resolution with an awareness of the ethical consequences of decision-making;
- ◆ engage in active inquiry and critical and creative thinking;
- ◆ conduct research ethically using diverse methods and sources, and organize, interpret, present their findings, and defend their opinions;
- ◆ use and manage information and communication technologies critically;
- ◆ develop effective communication skills;
- ◆ develop collaborative and cooperative skills.

5. A Model for The Common Curriculum Framework for Social Studies K-12



* Including distinctive general and specific outcomes, as needed, for Aboriginal and Francophone students.

A Model for The Common Curriculum Framework for Social Studies K-12 (continued)

Vision

The vision (p. 5) provides the basis for the Social Studies organizers and the development of general outcomes and specific outcomes.

Social Studies Organizers

The Social Studies organizers are intended to provide a broad basis for the development of general and specific outcomes and will continue to evolve as work on the Framework begins. Skills and processes will become part of every organizer or become a separate organizer. The organizers do not represent themes or discrete units of study.

1. Citizenship and Governance

Fundamental to social studies is the concept of active and responsible citizenship within local communities, Canada, and the world. This includes ideas such as informed participation in the political process, contributing to the common good, the balance between rights and responsibilities, ethical decision-making, critical and creative thinking, respect for the dignity and value of all human beings, conflict resolution, cooperation, and an understanding of governance. Commitment to democratic ideals such as equality, freedom, rights, and responsibilities is also critical to citizenship. Important concepts related to governance include power, authority, justice, and institutions, as well as people and their political, legal, technological, economic, and physical environments.

2. Global Connections

Global connections are becoming increasingly important among world societies. Important ideas include globalization, environmental issues, international aid, emerging technologies, and world economic systems, interdependence, politics, human rights, and the dynamic relationship between domestic and global concerns.

3. Identity, Culture, and Community

Identity stems in part from language, culture, and community. Integral to identity is the feeling of acceptance and belonging. This includes an understanding of concepts such as personal identity and cultural heritage, belief systems, multiple cultural perspectives, regionalism, pluralism, Canadian identity, world views, and world cultures. Humans exist in the context of communities; this relationship requires an understanding of

how to live together with respect to similarities and differences, perspectives, equality and diversity, interaction and cooperation, and appreciation of others.

4. The Land: People and Places

Humans exist in a dynamic relationship with the land. Related geographic concepts include location, place, human-environment interaction, movement, and region. Skills include organizing information into a spatial context and making informed and critical decisions about the relationship between human beings and their environment, within the contexts of stewardship and sustainability.

5. Time, Continuity, and Change

History provides an understanding of the present and helps shape and influence the future. Related skills and attitudes include inquiry, the construction of historical knowledge and understanding, informed decision-making, interpretation, research, and acceptance of the diversity of historical perspectives. Concepts and ideas include oral histories, personal stories, chronology, continuity and change, events, people and places, and people and their technological environments.

General Outcomes and Specific Outcomes

The Framework will include general outcomes and grade by grade specific outcomes that will reflect the knowledge and understanding, skills and processes, and attitudes and behaviours that students are expected to achieve through social studies. General outcomes tend to be long term and broader in scope, while specific outcomes are detailed grade by grade. General and specific outcomes might address more than one of the organizers.

Each outcome will be:

- ◆ consistent with the vision and organizers;
- ◆ appropriate to a series of grades (general outcome) or to the grade for which it is intended (specific outcome);
- ◆ understandable by educators, students, parents, and community members;
- ◆ stated in such a way that it will be apparent when the student has met the expectation;
- ◆ stated in terms of knowledge and understanding, skills and processes, or attitudes and behaviours (outcomes may address one or more of the three areas);
- ◆ supportive of the use of a range of instructional and assessment strategies, as well as the use of a variety of learning resources;
- ◆ written using a verb or verb combination and precise, consistent language.

6. Guiding Principles

The guiding principles provide direction to the developers of the Framework for the writing of the outcomes.

The Framework should reflect the following principles:

- ◆ In order to become active and responsible citizens, students need to understand, develop, practise, and value citizenship skills. When students are provided with authentic opportunities to participate as citizens within the classroom, the school, and the community, they will develop life-long citizenship skills and attitudes.
- ◆ Students need opportunities to explore their personal and Canadian heritage in order to develop a positive self-concept and to construct and affirm their identity and sense of citizenship.
- ◆ Students learn to understand and value the views of others when they are given opportunities to become aware of diverse perspectives, to interact with people who hold diverse views, and to reflect critically on a variety of world views and perspectives. These opportunities help raise cultural consciousness and combat stereotyping and discrimination.
- ◆ Students need opportunities for active inquiry into social issues in order to become ethical, creative, and critical decision-makers. This includes a consideration of their own and others' values and an examination of controversial issues.
- ◆ Students need a balance between breadth and depth of knowledge in social studies, as well as a balance between local, Canadian, and global issues.
- ◆ Students need to be engaged in the investigation and interpretation of the chronological, socio-cultural, economic, environmental, and political dimensions of history, as the construction of historical knowledge and understanding is fundamental to social studies learning.
- ◆ Students need opportunities to understand important concepts related to the various disciplines upon which social studies draws.
- ◆ Students need opportunities to use and manage information and communication technologies critically, and to understand the historical and ongoing impact of media and technology on society.
- ◆ Students need opportunities for social interactions and communication with others in a variety of flexible, adaptive, and diverse instructional settings, including:
 - on-the-land and fieldwork experiences;
 - technology-assisted experiences;
 - home and community involvement;
 - cultural and cross-cultural experiences;
 - experiential learning.

The Framework should reflect that each student is a unique individual who brings to the classroom her or his own cultural and linguistic characteristics, and learns best when these are valued.

The Framework should promote an understanding of the influence of socio-cultural variables (e.g., gender, age, language, religion, spirituality) on attitudes, values, and behaviours.

The Framework should reflect Canadian diversity, focusing on the roles, perspectives, and contributions of the many cultures of Canada, including Aboriginal and Francophone cultures. It should also reflect the idea that there are differences among members of a cultural group, just as there are differences among cultural communities.

Distinctive outcomes for Aboriginal and Francophone students should be guided by sections 7 and 8 of this document and informed by the literature reviews.

The Framework should accommodate different ways of teaching and learning, and provide opportunities for personal stories and cultural perspectives through the integration of oral and written stories, legends, and narratives. It should also, where appropriate, integrate language arts, dramatic arts, visual arts, movement, and music.

The Framework should use the social studies organizers as a broad basis for the development of the general and specific outcomes (attitudes and behaviours, knowledge and understanding, skills and processes).

The Framework should consider articulation with existing WCP and Pan Canadian curriculum frameworks.

The development of the Framework should give strong consideration to the literature reviews commissioned to support the development of the Foundation Document.⁴

⁴ Titles of the literature reviews: *Aboriginal Perspective on Education: A Vision of Cultural Context within the Framework of Social Studies: Literature/Research Review*; *Aperçu de recherches en vue de l'élaboration du Cadre commun de résultats d'apprentissage en sciences humaines (M-12) du Protocole de l'Ouest canadien pour l'éducation francophone*; *Overview of Related Research to inform the development of the Western Canadian Protocol, Social studies (K-12), Common Curriculum Framework for Francophone education*; *Reshaping the Future of Social Studies: Literature/Research Review*.

7. Aboriginal Perspectives

This section provides information on Aboriginal perspectives in order to assist the developers of the Framework.

Aboriginal peoples comprise First Nations, Métis, and Inuit of Canada. Even though each of these groups has different languages, traditions, and histories and there is diversity within each group, similar perspectives exist among all Aboriginal peoples – perspectives that describe their place, knowledge, and skills in their world. It is vital that teachers, including the Elders of Aboriginal peoples, transmit these perspectives.

Aboriginal peoples have unique relationships with the land and their environment, and their relationships are strong and spiritual. Aboriginal peoples are raised with values and beliefs about the land and, therefore, believe themselves to be caretakers of the land.

Aboriginal peoples have ancient legends, songs, and dances that have survived over time. Each nation, clan or group has these traditional arts that reflect its identity and spirituality.⁵ Family, group, and nation histories are related through the arts, and Aboriginal peoples strive to become skilled in them and take responsibility to pass them on.

The knowledge of each group has been passed on through oral tradition. The oral tradition is best related in the distinct languages, and is deemed to be the most important way of passing on knowledge. Aboriginal peoples have high regard for those who teach through oral tradition, and believe it is an essential part of Aboriginal students' education.

Aboriginal histories predate Canadian history by thousands of years. Over this span of time, Aboriginal peoples developed diverse cultures and self-governing nations, controlled vast territories, and had self-sustaining economies. Their ways of life and governance were changed forever upon contact with early explorers.

The basis of Aboriginal people's relationship with Canada is found in the spirit and intent of responsible co-existence, envisaged by the Royal Proclamation of 1763. That relationship continues to be interpreted and negotiated through the treaty-making process, and through the entrenchment of Aboriginal and treaty rights in the Canadian constitution. Aboriginal rights have been further affirmed through the legal concept of Aboriginal title.

⁵ A difficulty arises when the Aboriginal concepts of *spiritual* and *spirituality* are expressed in a non-Aboriginal language. Other languages cannot communicate accurately some concepts that are articulated in Aboriginal languages; translation does not convey the same meaning as it does in the original Aboriginal language. To an Aboriginal language speaker, the terms *spirit* or *spirituality* do not refer to worship or religion. Aboriginal people have a spiritual world view or perspective. They see a world generated by a creative principle that is ever-present and always active. This perspective recognizes the total way of life of Aboriginal nations and people, while affirming balance and harmony within the whole environment. The practices associated with this way of life create, support, and maintain one's sense of identity as an Aboriginal person, and as a member of one's family, community, and nation/people. These practices honour the traditions, customs, and symbols Aboriginal people have inherited from their ancestors.

Citizenship issues are complex for Aboriginal peoples. For example, the original *Indian Act* defined and legislated the term persons as “anyone other than an Indian.” Although this language has unofficially been dropped from usage, the legislation has never been repealed. In addition, First Nations peoples were not enfranchised to vote in federal elections until 1962. This right to vote was conditional on being enfranchised by the province or territory of residence.

The Aboriginal group known as the Métis combined their First Nations and European cultures to form their own unique cultures. They do not have First Nations or Inuit status with the federal government. The cultures of the Métis people today are varied, with individuals who are highly acculturated, those who are very traditional, and others who are in-between.

In the recent past, certain events such as isolating Aboriginal children from their communities led to their loss of traditional skills, values, language, and culture. This created a people who could no longer identify their place in Canadian society. What had been important to Aboriginal peoples in the past no longer had validity or importance, either within their communities or within Canada. Education has contributed to this erosion.

Guided by the voice of Aboriginal peoples, education can now play a role in strengthening and revitalizing Aboriginal cultures and languages. Social studies curricula based on the Framework will enable Aboriginal students to see their culture and identity presented and supported in a respectful way. Social studies will provide opportunities for Aboriginal students to become hopeful and appreciative in lifelong learning, and connected to their culture. The Framework can support this by having distinctive outcomes for Aboriginal students in educational settings that include, but are not limited to, the following:

- ◆ locally controlled First Nations schools;
- ◆ Aboriginal-controlled schools in off-reserve or urban settings;
- ◆ provincial and territorial schools where the majority population is Aboriginal, and where the school or school district and concerned parents or their representatives have requested that the distinctive outcomes be taught;
- ◆ where the minority of students are Aboriginal, and the school or school district and parents or their representatives have requested that the distinctive outcomes be taught.

Examples of distinctive outcomes, as needed in these settings, would support Aboriginal students to:

- ◆ become grounded in and proud of their identity and to participate in living and renewing their culture;
- ◆ understand and be connected to their spirituality and to learn about the spiritual dimensions of Aboriginal culture;
- ◆ preserve and regenerate the teachings and oral traditions of their Elders;
- ◆ understand the history of their local Aboriginal communities;

8. Social Studies and Francophone Education

This section provides information on the Francophone context in order to assist the developers of the Framework.

The Francophone Community

Francophones are important contributors to Canadian history, identity, and culture. Francophone communities in western and northern Canada seek to participate fully in Canadian society and believe their continuity affects the course of Canadian history and is of positive value to Canadian society. The Francophone community seeks to be firmly grounded in history, to be modern and dynamic, open to the world, and accessible to all; it is multicultural and multi-ethnic.

The increasing rate of assimilation of Francophone communities in western and northern Canada leads to a sense of cultural ambiguity in Francophones, and represents a loss for Canada generally. Francophone educational programming will help counteract cultural and linguistic assimilation.

Education is the cornerstone of community vitality in Francophone milieux. The vision of the Francophone community is to build an excellent Francophone educational program which emphasizes the integration of language, identity, culture, and community and promotes the development of leaders and builders who are capable of ensuring the continued vitality of the community.

A dynamic partnership of school, family, and community is integral to Francophone education; Francophone communities must be communities of learners to continue to thrive. Educational programs must, therefore, support learning within the home and the community, as well as within the school.

Francophone Students

The cultural identity of Francophone students living in a minority setting is ambiguous on two levels: within society and within the home. Francophone students are immersed in a predominantly English language environment leading to assimilation and, at the same time, in a Francophone minority that keenly desires to retain its identity and culture. They are also influenced by other cultural groups and by mass culture. At home, where two or more cultures might coexist, children may experience a degree of linguistic or cultural confusion. The degree of *francité*⁶, the degree of linguistic and cultural assimilation, and the level of language development in both French and English vary greatly from one student to another.

The self-esteem of Francophone students often needs to be strengthened in order that they may develop a positive cultural identity. This will enable them to feel proud of being Francophone, personally, in their communities, their country, and the world, while at the same time harmonizing the diverse elements of their identity.

⁶ *Cultural and linguistic identity, sense of belonging to a Francophone community.*

Francophone students require support from school, family, and community in order to become active players in an authentic Francophone community. They will come to understand that the community is dependent on them and on their strengths, and that their action or inaction has an effect on it.

Social Studies

Social studies plays an important role in Francophone education. Along with other school subjects, social studies can help counteract linguistic and cultural erosion, support the continuity and vitality of the Francophone community, and help students reach high levels of academic, personal, social, and cultural achievement. Social studies can help realize the full potential of Francophone students by helping them develop and maintain a positive self-image rooted in the beliefs, values, and history that constitute the Francophone heritage and vitality.

Through social studies, students will learn about Francophone history and heritage and learn how to participate within this culture locally, nationally, and globally. They will become aware of the role, contribution, and place of Francophones in society in all areas, including politics, science, economics, and the arts.

Social studies, along with other school subjects, will help Francophone students learn *le savoir être* (how to be), *le savoir vivre ensemble* (how to live together), *le savoir faire* (how to do), and *le savoir agir* (how to act) on the personal, cultural, community, and societal levels.

Perhaps more than any other subject, social studies can bring to the forefront cultural identity and the choice to belong to the Francophone community. It can do this by ensuring that learning takes place in the context of French as a first language and of an enhanced participation in Francophone culture and community.

Guiding Principles

In order to support the development of language, culture, identity, and community, the Framework should reflect the following principles throughout.

- ◆ French language development (including thinking, conceptualizing, accessing information, and communicating effectively) and the promotion of additive bilingualism⁷ are an integral part of learning in social studies for Francophone students.
- ◆ Historical understanding, including awareness of the heritage and contributions of Francophones to society, is essential for the construction of identity and citizenship for Francophone students.
- ◆ Construction of cultural identity and integration into the Francophone community are achieved through an interdependent school/home/community partnership and meaningful cultural experiences related to the student's life.

⁷ A level of bilingualism where the acquisition of one language does not occur at the expense of proficiency in the other.

The following statements are examples of possible distinctive learning outcomes which might further enhance the development of language, identity, culture, and community for Francophone students.

It is expected that Francophone students will:

- ◆ critically examine historic events, issues, and changes that have shaped the Francophone community locally;
- ◆ describe the impact on their personal lives of changes occurring in the Francophone community;
- ◆ demonstrate their sense of belonging to a Canadian as well as a global Francophone cultural space, using information and communication technologies;
- ◆ create a community project which promotes local Francophone heritage.

* * *

In summary, social studies can help Francophone students acquire the confidence, knowledge, and skills required to act effectively, live freely, and flourish as fully participating French-speaking citizens of 21st century Canada.

9. Adaptation for French Immersion

French Immersion is a program of intensive second-language learning. French Immersion students generally come from non-French speaking homes and learn French as a second or third language.

The goals of the French Immersion program are to help students attain functional proficiency in French and to develop an appreciation and an understanding of Francophone culture. French is used as the language of instruction in a number of subjects, including social studies. The proportion of instructional time spent in French varies from grade to grade and from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.

French Immersion students are expected to achieve the same social studies outcomes as those in an English language program by the end of their elementary schooling. At the same time, through French language arts, social studies, and other subjects, they are expected to develop a better understanding and appreciation of Francophone culture in Canada and the world.

The adaptation of the Framework for French Immersion, which will occur subsequent to Framework development, will support the acquisition of French as a second language within the context of social studies content learning. Some adaptation of the social studies content will be required at the primary level to provide the time necessary for students to acquire the French language. The Framework will include content that pertains to Canada's French-speaking regions, Francophone culture, and Francophone contributions to society.