COMPLEMENTARY SOCIAL SCIENCES COURSES IN THE ALBERTA HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM: A CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

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PART 1:
PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW

In keeping with Alberta Education's goals and responsibilities to develop and evaluate curriculum and to set standards and assess outcomes, the Ministry is reviewing the status and purpose of social sciences courses as part of the high school curriculum. The present social sciences curriculum was revised in 1985. As part of the social sciences review, a study was authorized to research and explore the current status of courses in Alberta and throughout Canada.

The following sections of the report are organized as follows.

1. A historical review of the Social Sciences Program of Studies in Alberta illustrating, in part, a need for further assessment and potential fundamental revisions to these programs if retained.
2. An overview of existing high school social sciences programs in other provinces that provides a basis for comparison and supports some of the recommendations in this report.
3. A selective annotated bibliography focusing on research literature that provides support for thinking about issues such as student engagement, high school retention and the relationships with curricular experiences and pedagogic approaches offered by high schools.
4. A proposed re-conceptualization of the social sciences courses in relation to the new Alberta social studies program, contemporary views of learning and curriculum, and the aims and purposes of social sciences/humanities courses in the curriculum.
5. An account of recommendations that may inform further research, deliberation and decision making.

A Historical Overview of Social Sciences and Social Studies in the High School Program of Studies

The section that follows provides an overview and a historical perspective of the social sciences beginning in 1939 to the present. Complete sections of the program objectives and content are stated, often verbatim, to give the reader an insight into how programs have developed over time. It is through thorough examination of the language and content that reviewers may better understand how social sciences studies have evolved in Alberta and how meaningful changes can be made in the future.

PROGRAM OF STUDIES: 1939

Social sciences courses were imbedded within the social studies curriculum in the *Programme of Studies for the High School* (1939). The prescribed courses in social studies included Social Studies 1, 2 and 3; sociology and psychology; economics; vocations and guidance. Social Studies at the 1 and 2 levels included the seven study themes of history, trade and industry, growth of human knowledge, expression and aesthetics, religions, society and peace and war. "The social, economic and political changes through which we are passing offer a challenge to education, and especially social studies" (p. 3). A key objective for Social Studies 3 was "to create a due appreciation of the duties and responsibilities of citizenship in a democratic state" (p. 33). The four unit themes included "International Relationships," "Outstanding Developments in Different Countries," "Commonwealth Problems" and "Canadian Problems." All unit themes were to include a strong focus on current events.

Traditionally, the subjects of sociology and psychology were studied at university. As many students did not have the opportunity to attend university to study these subjects, sociology and psychology were included in the program of studies. The rationale for this inclusion was to provide students with the knowledge to assist them when they were called upon to perform the duties of citizenship in a democracy. "For this purpose, enlightenment must take the place of naïve thinking" (p. 41). A discussion and problem-solving model was used for teaching the subjects while the overall purpose of the course was to introduce students to scientific modes of thought regarding social phenomena and problems. The course was concerned mainly with the "structure of society," the "nature of social behaviour" and the "adjustment of the individual" to his social environment. A correlation between sociology and the social and economic problems raised in Social Studies 2 was to be made. Both subjects were not to be studied in one year; sociology was to be taken first followed by the problems in psychology that are related to personal efficiency and mental hygiene.

The aim of economics was to give students a knowledge and understanding of Canadian economic life to prepare them to be future voting citizens. Economics was not to be a study of economic theory but was a look at practical issues such as unemployment, debt, the marketing of wheat and other agricultural products, taxation and transportation. The course was to be realistic rather than academic.

Vocations and guidance was "based on the assumption that the high school students "have the right" to be furnished by the school with information regarding vocations and vocational prospects, and the right also to have 'counsel and guidance' from the school in adjusting themselves and their school program to their vocational interests" (p. 54). The course was intended to deal, in a general way, with the main factors in guidance and the development of personality and character. The chief purpose of education is the build moral stature, and a problem-solving method of instruction was used to help students develop the right habits and high ideals.

PROGRAM OF STUDIES: 1961

In the *Program of Studies for Senior High Schools of Alberta 1961*, Social Studies 10, 20 and 30 were listed in a separate category from electives Geography 20, Economics 30, Sociology 20 and Psychology 20. Law 20 was incorporated into business education studies. The social studies general objective stated, "The general objectives of social education is to develop citizens who (1) understand our changing society; (2) possess a sound framework of values and ideals, which indicate what ought to be, set goals for the individual and give direction to his actions; and (3) have the necessary competence—skills and abilities— to participate in group living in such ways as to make changes in the direction of the desired values and ideals" (Quillen & Hanna).

The purpose of Geography 20 was to strengthen the teaching of the physical and social sciences. In Psychology 20 "the objective was not the mastery of a given body of subject matter. Rather, its purpose is to bring to the student's attention a scientific approach to the study of human behaviour so that he may appreciate more fully the reasons that underlie his own acts and those of his fellows" (p. 70). Sociology 20 and Economics 30 did not have stated objectives but provided a list of outcomes. Content for Economics 30 was "per text *Understanding the Canadian Economy*" (p. 68). Content for sociology was taken from the text *Social Living* and included such topics as "The Democratic State," "Our Changing Society," "Poverty," "The Mob Mind" and "Barbaric Survivals."

PROGRAM OF STUDIES: 1975

The *1975 Program of Studies* for senior high schools stated, "The social sciences program is intended to complement the Alberta social studies [program] by encouraging increased understanding of 'man and his world.' Courses in this program are distinct from the social studies curriculum in that they focus on the structure, concepts and methodologies of specific social sciences disciplines rather than social issues within a values-oriented interdisciplinary context" (p. 201). The courses were offered as a wide variety of modular units to increase the program flexibility available to high schools and students enrolled in the courses. "The electives are **not** intended to provide an alternative to the existing social studies curriculum. Rather, they have been developed to meet diversified student interests and to add enrichment and in-depth understanding to the scope of the curriculum" (p. 201).

Each 3-credit modular unit developed several themes appropriate to one of the following disciplines: anthropology, comparative world religions, economics, geography, history, philosophy, political science, psychology and sociology. The sequence for study of these disciplines was optional. Students were limited to a maximum of two modular units per grade level.

The 1975 objectives for the social sciences program were to:

- develop an insight into the basic concepts of the discipline
- develop an insight into specific modes of inquiry and skills unique to a particular discipline
- develop an understanding of how knowledge is produced in a particular discipline
- provide opportunities to experience the emotive qualities inherent to an interest-motivated approach to the study of a discipline (p. 201).

The 1975 objective for Psychology 20 contained the same wording as the 1939 objective with a slight change in the introduction. "The objectives of the modules in psychology are designed to develop, within the student, the skills and understandings that make it possible for more effective living in our complex environment" (p. 204).

Sociology now specified the following objective: "Modules in sociology are designed to develop, within the student, a better understanding of group behaviour. This understanding should be based on fact rather than opinion. The sociological perspective focuses on 'what is' rather than 'what ought to be.' The student should be able to analyze occurrences around him objectively. He should feel himself to be a part of society, understand its influence on his life and visualize his role in societal change" (p. 208).

Religious studies was added as a new elective course. "The objective of this course was to provide an opportunity, if desired, to experience a number of cultural, historical and contemporary issues from a religious point of view, and through the study of religion, as a separate discipline, to 'develop a philosophy based upon values conducive to ethical and moral behaviour and reflected in an understanding of human worth' " (Government of Alberta. *Report of the Commission of Educational Planning*)"(p. 207.)

PROGRAM OF STUDIES: 1985 TO PRESENT

The present social sciences documents were revised in 1985. It is interesting to note that the rationale for including social sciences courses is almost the exact wording found in the 1975 document. The 1975 social sciences objectives, listed on page 5, remain the same for 2008. No change to the objectives was made to the revised 1985 document. The Social Sciences 20–30 program is comprised of the following 3-credit courses: anthropology, economics, geography, history, philosophy, political science, psychology, religious studies and sociology. Note that comparative world religions became religious studies.

PROGRAM OF STUDIES: PRESENT

Alberta Education Program of Studies

(Below are excerpts from the Alberta Education Program of Studies to guide the reviewer through the content, objectives and language of the current document.)

Please note that the following program of studies shows how social sciences course objectives and content have changed little in the last 33 years. Some of the objectives and content have been abbreviated; some are listed exactly as they read in the program, to highlight the language used. With the rapid changes in technology and society in general, it was felt that the reviewers of the program should see the contrast/information as it existed in 1939 and exists today.

SOCIAL SCIENCES

Rationale [for the teaching of social sciences courses]
The Social Sciences 20–30 program complements the Alberta social studies program by encouraging increased understanding of "man and his world." Courses in this program are distinct from the social studies curriculum in that they focus on the structure, concepts and methodologies of specific social sciences disciplines. The electives are not intended to provide an alternative to the existing social studies curriculum. Rather, they have been developed to meet diversified student interests and to add enrichment and in-depth understanding to the scope of the total curriculum.

Structure
The Social Sciences 20–30 program is comprised of a series of 3-credit courses. Each course develops several themes appropriate to one of the following disciplines—anthropology, economics, geography, history, philosophy, political science, psychology, religious studies and sociology. The sequence in which the courses in any particular discipline may be studied is optional. In structuring the social sciences program, a school is free to select those courses that best complement teacher and student interests.

Objectives
The objectives of the social sciences courses are to:

- develop an insight into the basic concepts of the discipline
- develop an insight into specific modes of inquiry and skills unique to a particular discipline
- develop an understanding of how knowledge is produced in a particular discipline
- provide opportunities to experience the emotive qualities inherent to an interest-motivated approach to the study of a discipline.

SOCIAL SCIENCES COURSES

Anthropology

Cultural and Physical Anthropology 30

Objectives
Anthropology concerns itself with all aspects of human life. As students become more and more concerned with intercultural relationships and understandings, their need for an anthropological perspective increases. Students who have studied anthropology at the high school level should demonstrate an understanding of:

- anthropology as the study of the total way of life of human beings
- the value of anthropology as a means of improving social and cultural relations
- the methods, techniques and tools used by anthropologists.

Content
Theme 1: Introduction to Anthropology
Theme 2: The Examination of Paleolithic-like Lifestyles
Theme 3: The Examination of Mesolithic-like Lifestyles
Theme 4: The Examination of Traditional-state and Empire Societies
Theme 5: Culture Interrelationships and Culture Change

Religious Studies

Objectives
The objectives of the courses in religious studies are to provide an opportunity to experience a number of cultural, historical and contemporary issues from a religious point of view, and, through the study of religion as a separate discipline, to "develop a philosophy based upon values conducive to ethical and moral behaviour and reflected in an understanding of human worth." (Government of Alberta, *Report of the Commission on Education Planning*.)

Religious Ethics 20

Content
1. Concept of ethics
2. Meaning of religious ethics
3. Ways in which the adolescent attains self-realization
4. How the adolescent works out his or her identity in society
5. How certain specific contemporary issues affect the adolescent

Religious Meanings 20

Content
1. Humankind has basic needs
2. The need to search for meaning in life
3. Ways in which humankind searches for meaning in life
4. Faith adds a dimension to humankind's quest for meaning
5. Deity is an ultimate concern in whom many have faith
6. Because faith is a growth process, crisis will be encountered
7. Humankind tends to depend upon others in their growth in faith
8. Faith must manifest itself through action

World Religions 30

Content
1. Meaning of religion
2. Development of religion
3. Faith is the core element of religion
4. Major religions of the world
5. Basic beliefs and practices of the major religions of the world

Economics

Objectives
Students who have studied economics at the high school level should:

- know that economics is a discipline consisting of a body of knowledge and a method of inquiry
- understand basic economic concepts and generalizations
- be able to collect, arrange, process, read and use economic data
- be able to construct economic models
- be able to draw conclusions, inferences and generalizations from relevant economic data
- be able to function well within the economy.

Economics for Consumers 20

Content
1. Factors that may influence the level of a person's income
2. Factors that may influence the level of a person's expenditures
3. Advantages and disadvantages of credit
4. Influences of inflation as it affects both income and expenditures
5. Conditions that people face when making commitments or expenditures in the consumer or capital goods market

Microeconomics 30
People, Prices and Profits

Content
1. Economics in everyday living
2. How an economic system functions
3. The theory of demand and supply
4. The policies of individual firms
5. The individual and the economy
6. Credit
7. The function of organized labour and collective bargaining
8. Agriculture and economics
9. Pure competition, oligopoly and monopoly
10. Advertising

Macroeconomics 30
Markets, Money and Management

Content
1. Introduction to economics
2. Economics as a discipline
3. The functions of an economic system
4. The concepts of specialization and division of labour and the consequences of their application in economics
5. The nature, importance and function of money and banking
6. Inflation and its influences on the economy
7. The use of index numbers in measuring cost of living and other statistical measures
8. GNP and national income as ways of measuring the effectiveness of the economic system
9. The relationship of spending and employment
10. The classical roots of economic principles
11. The economics of government
12. Government controls of business cycles
13. Economics and specialization
14. Income distributions
15. Interdependence in an economy
16. Basic economic theories and systems
17. Economics and developing countries

Geography

Objectives
The objectives of the courses in geography are that the student should:

1. acquire an understanding of the following major organizing concepts in geography: areal association, density, human occupance, pattern, region, scale, spatial distribution and spatial interaction

2. acquire facility in the use of the geographer's mode of inquiry and skills such as:
   a. the reading and interpretation of aerial photographs, maps, pictures, tables and graphs, and other written source materials
   b. field work processes of observation and recording

3. have the opportunity to develop positive attitudes in relation to the following topics:
   a. interdependence among peoples
   b. respect for similarities and differences among peoples
   c. clarification of values in respect to other value systems
   d. respect for the scientific method of inquiry
   e. knowledge of multiple causation.

Content
Introductory Unit (to be taken as part of both Local and Canadian Geography 20 and World Geography 30, if necessary).

Local and Canadian Geography 20

Content
Theme 1: The Change in Settlement Patterns in the Local Area
Theme 2: Settlement Patterns in Western Canada
Theme 3: Settlement Patterns in Eastern Canada

World Geography 30

Content
Theme 1: World Patterns of Population and Settlement
Theme 2: World Patterns of Humankind's Use of the Earth
Theme 3: World Patterns of Physical Elements

History

Western Canadian History 20

Objectives
The objectives of Western Canadian History 20 are:

1. understanding how the West came to be what it is today: its social, economic, political and religious development

2. knowledge of specific "postholes" that illustrate the basic issues that have defined Western Canadian society in the past and continue to define it today

3. insights into human nature and how society operates. Francis Bacon said: "histories make men wise"

4. establishment for each student of a personal relationship with his or her own family's past

5. ability to tell succinctly what a book says

6. development of writing ability

7. a genuine appreciation of the contribution made by diverse ethnic and religious groups, and a feeling for what it means to be a citizen in the culturally rich melting pot of Western Canada

8. growth of interest in the practical and aesthetic qualities of the study of history.

Content
1. Overview
2. Indian pioneers
3. Fur trade and exploration
4. Impact of the United States on Western Canada
5. Culture contact
6. Settlement and immigration
7. The Canadian Pacific Railway
8. Responsible government and provincial autonomy
9. Western alienation
10. The social gospel
11. The Depression and western political response
12. The Western Canadian mystique.

Canadian History 20

Objectives
The objectives of Canadian History 20 are:

1. development of cognitive and social skills that enable the student to deal with historical and contemporary social problems
2. knowledge of facts, concepts and generalizations pertinent to an understanding of Canadian history.

Content
1. Early foundation to 1815
2. Emergence from colonialism 1815–1849
3. Creation of a nation 1849–1867
4. Nation building 1867–1896
5. A maturing nation 1896–1911
6. A nation in trial
7. The modern nation

Western World History 30

Objectives
The objectives of Western World History 30 are that the student will be able to:

1. identify the common characteristics that distinguish each of the following concepts:
   a. fact
   b. inference
   c. hypotheses
   d. frame of reference

    e.   analytical questions
    f.   relevance
    g.   data
    h.   inquiry
    i.   taxonomy
    j.   logical implications

2. identify and/or provide examples of each of the preceding concepts

3. apply each of the following principles to unique situations:
   a. historians initiate inquiry by recognizing a problem from data
   b. historians form hypotheses by formulating analytical questions stating hypotheses and remaining aware of the tentative nature of hypotheses
   c. the logical implications of hypotheses are recognized
   d. while data is being gathered, decisions are made on what data will be needed and the relevance of data to the hypotheses
   e. data is analyzed, evaluated and interpreted. Evaluation involves determining the frame of reference of the author of the source and determining the accuracy of statements of fact or inference
   f. the hypothesis is evaluated in light of the data. The hypothesis is modified, if necessary, by rejecting a logical implication unsupported by data, or restating the hypothesis. Generalizations are then stated.

4. exhibit the following skills:
   a. given a set of unique data, classify the data
   b. given a piece of data, formulate acceptable analytical questions
   c. from analytical questions, formulate hypotheses
   d. given hypotheses relative to familiar data, state the logical implications of the hypotheses
   e. judge the relevance of unique data to unique hypotheses
   f. identify the frame of reference of the author of a unique piece of data
   g. using internal and external criteria, determine the validity of facts and inferences
   h. given data contradictory to the hypothesis, indicate necessary changes in hypotheses.

Content
1. Geographic survey of the western world
2. The classical heritage
3. The medieval synthesis and the beginnings of national movements
4. Absolutism
5. Science, technology and progress
6. Equality and revolution
7. Nationalism and imperialism

Philosophy

"What philosophy is*" and "The need for philosophy*" appear as a common introduction to each of the 3-credit courses in philosophy. They may be omitted for students who have already taken one of the philosophy courses.

Origins of Western Philosophy 20

Objectives
The objectives of Origins of Western Philosophy 20 are to:

- understand the gradual unfolding of Western philosophical thought
- appreciate the new approaches and accomplishments of early Western philosophies
- analyze the philosophical concepts, and to be aware of their implications
- compare and evaluate various early Western philosophical thoughts and systems
- apply the presented concepts, and to use them in developing one's own philosophical thinking.

Content
1. What philosophy is*
2. The need for philosophy*
3. Transition from mythological understanding to philosophical reflection
4. Search for an ultimate element
5. Search for a principle of order and harmony
6. The problem of identity and change
7. Shift of interest from physical speculation toward human life
8. Plato's world of ideas
9. The Aristotelian universe

Contemporary Western Philosophy 20

Objectives
The objectives of Contemporary Western Philosophy 20 are to:

1. identify the basic problems of philosophy
2. appreciate the importance of reason and critical thinking in philosophical inquiry
3. analyze major contemporary philosophies to determine their position on basic philosophical questions
4. appreciate a systematic approach to the major philosophical questions
5. compare major contemporary Western philosophies.

Content
1. What philosophy is*
2. The need for philosophy*
3. The historical roots of contemporary philosophy
4. Systematic approaches to the traditional problems of philosophy
5. Expressions of a major philosophy

6. Analysis of a major philosophy
7. The value of a philosophy as a basis for an individual's philosophy

Philosophies of Man 30

Objectives
The objectives of Philosophies of Man 30 are to:

1. develop the process of critical examination
2. integrate or orient oneself toward the various phases of human experience
3. open up the wide range of problems and deal with vital questions of human interest
4. appreciate the attempts of great philosophers to provide coherent and consistent answers to fundamental questions
5. think about the basic foundations of one's outlook, knowledge and beliefs
6. understand that "Man has the ability to examine his life; without that he is nothing."

Content
1. What philosophy is★
2. The need for philosophy★
3. The nature of man
4. How free is man
5. Man and man (political philosophy)

Political Science

Political Thinking 20

Objectives
The objectives of Political Thinking 20 are to:

1. provide an understanding of the process of political decision making
2. further an understanding of the democratic process
3. establish an awareness, on the part of the student, of different political points of view and to create, in the student, an element of political sophistication
4. illustrate the relationship that exists in society between freedom on the one hand and responsibility on the other
5. emphasize the above objectives in terms of their relevance to the Canadian political system.

Content
1. Definition of political science
2. Historical forms of governance
3. The exercising of political power
4. Political/economic philosophies

Comparative Government 20

Objectives
The objective of Comparative Government 20 is to compare and contrast the Canadian political process to the system(s) adopted in the United Kingdom, the United States of America and/or the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Content
1. Definition of political science
2. The Canadian constitution, its origins, and applications
3. The government of the United Kingdom
4. The government of the United States of America
5. The government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic

International Politics 30

Objectives
The objective of International Politics 30 is to give the student an understanding of the development and importance of international relations. This understanding is brought about by examining such concepts as balance of power, dynastic marriages, territorial rivalry, ideological rivalry, international peace forums and international economic relations.

Content
1. Definition of political science
2. The nature and evolution of power in international relations
3. Historical forms of international relations
4. The effects of technology on international relations
5. International forums for peace

Psychology

Objectives
The objectives of the 3-credit courses in psychology are to develop, within the student, the skills and understandings that make it possible for living more effectively in our complex environment. The student's attention will focus on the scientific approach to understanding human behaviour so that he or she may appreciate more fully the reasons that underlie one's own acts and those of one's fellows.

Personal Psychology 20

Content
Theme 1: Introduction to Psychology
Theme 2: Personality
Theme 3: Behaviour
Theme 4: Intelligence

Theme 5: Heredity and Environment
Theme 6: Biological Influences on Behaviour
Theme 7: Understanding Perception

General Psychology 20

Content
Theme 1: History of Psychological Schools of Thought
Theme 2: Principles of Learning
Theme 3: How to Learn Efficiently
Theme 4: The Process of Thinking
Theme 5: Facing Frustration and Conflict
Theme 6: Emotional Problems of Adolescents
Theme 7: Behaviour Disorders and Their Treatment
Theme 8: Career Opportunities in Psychology

Experimental Psychology 30

Content
Theme 1: Experimental Psychology
Theme 2: Statistics
Theme 3: Research Methods
Theme 4: Research Projects

Sociology

Objectives
The objectives of the sociology courses are to develop, within the student, a better understanding of group behaviour. This understanding should be based on fact rather than opinion. The sociological perspective focuses on "what is" rather than "what ought to be." Students should be able to analyze occurrences around them objectively. They should feel that they are a part of society, understand its influence on their lives, and visualize their roles in societal change.

General Sociology 20
"The Discipline of Sociology★" – Since each 3-credit course is to be independent and non-sequential, the first theme is repeated. A student need not take it more than once.

Content
Theme 1: The Discipline of Sociology★
Theme 2: Culture
Theme 3: Society and Social Class

Sociological Institutions 20

Content
Theme 1: The Discipline of Sociology⋆
Theme 2: Institutions
Theme 3: Minorities
Theme 4: Influencing Behaviour
Theme 5: Role and Status

Applied Sociology 30

Content
Theme 1: The Discipline of Sociology⋆
Theme 2: Applied Sociology
Theme 3: Sociology and the Individual
Theme 4: Changes in Culture

PART 2:
CANADIAN PERSPECTIVE ON SOCIAL SCIENCES CURRICULUM

Many provinces in Canada have made changes to the social sciences curriculum in the last 10 years. In some provinces, the social sciences and/or humanities are stand-alone offerings. However, in several provinces, the social sciences curriculum comes under the social studies umbrella. The graduation requirements also vary from province to province and some provinces include specific social sciences courses in their graduation requirements while others do not. In this chapter, the reader will review a survey of provincial social sciences curricula and graduation requirements. The graduation component was included to illustrate the variety of expectations across Canada. The information below was taken directly from the various Canadian Education Ministry's Web sites.

British Columbia Secondary Level (Grades 9 to 12)

Source: http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca (Accessed April 10, 2008 and taken as presented).

British Columbia includes some of the social sciences courses under the social studies umbrella. Prescribed learning outcomes set the standards for the provincial education system and form the prescribed curriculum for British Columbia. However, board authority-authorized high school courses may be locally developed at the school district or school level. These courses must meet the standard Education Ministry requirements and be approved by the Board of Education or independent school authority. It is the philosophy of the Ministry to provide local autonomy to develop courses relevant to the needs of students and/or the schools and districts. Students are able to choose from an extensive list of locally developed courses that may or may not fit under the social sciences umbrella.

Graduation Transitions describes the process by which secondary students proceed to complete their secondary studies and is intended to prepare students for a successful transition to life after secondary school. Students are responsible for planning and preparing their education, career and life goals through Graduation Transitions. Graduation Transitions is an opportunity for students to reflect on their knowledge and abilities and plan for life after graduation by collecting evidence of their achievements in the following required areas of personal health by maintaining a personal health plan and completing Physical Education 10; community connections through at least 30 hours of work experience and/or community service and career and life by completing a transition plan and presenting significant accomplishments by the end of Grade 12. Students must complete Planning 10, a four-credit course, to satisfy provincial graduation requirements. Planning 10 is an extension of the curricula for Health and Career Education K to 7 and Health and Career Education 8 and 9.

During their graduation year, students must complete at least 52 credits of course work to satisfy the minimum requirements for graduation. These must include at least 28 credits chosen from Ministry-authorized foundation studies courses that meet the requirements of a common core of learning. Students may then select 24 or more credits chosen from Ministry-authorized or locally-developed selected studies courses based on their interests and career plans, as set out in their student learning plans.

The following four-credit courses totalling 52 credits must be completed for graduation: Language Arts 10; Language Arts 11; Language Arts 12; Social Studies 10; Social Studies 11, BC First Nations Studies 12 or Civic Studies 11; Science 10; Science 11 or 12; Mathematics 10; Mathematics 11 or 12; Physical Education 10; Planning 10; Fine Arts and/or Applied Skills 10, 11 or 12; completion of Graduation Transitions. Students must earn at least 28 elective credits. These credits can be from additional Grade 10, 11 or 12 Ministry-authorized courses. Of the 80 credits needed for graduation, at least 16 credits must be at the Grade 12 level, including a Grade 12 language arts course and 12 other credits. These may be from required courses or elective credits.

Saskatchewan Secondary Level (Grades 10 to 12)
Source: http://www.learning.gov.sk.ca (Accessed April 5, 2008).

The Saskatchewan social sciences program includes social studies under the social sciences umbrella. A combination of courses is required to complete high school requirements.

To meet the credit requirements for graduation, students are required to take three compulsory social sciences courses at the secondary level. These compulsory courses include one course at Grade 10 and one Canadian studies credit at the 30 level.

Students may take instruction in one of the following for Grade 10: Native Studies 10; Social Studies 10–Social Organizations; History 10–Social Organizations. The following are choices for Grade 12: History 30–Canadian Studies; Native Studies 30–Canadian Studies; Social Studies 30–Canadian Studies.

The one additional social sciences credit required at the Grade 11 or Grade 12 level may be taken from any of the following: Social Studies 20; History 20; Native Studies 20; Economics 20; Geography 20; Psychology 20; Social Studies 30–Canadian Studies, History 30–Canadian Studies; Native Studies 30–Canadian Studies; Economics 30–Geography 30; Psychology 30; Law 30.

At the secondary level, there are three categories in which students must obtain credits:
1. required courses of study, which are intended to be compulsory courses providing a general education;
2. specified areas of study, which are intended to allow students to continue to take courses of a general nature or to specialize in areas of individual interest;
3. electives, which allow for further choice and specialization based on individual needs and local priorities.

Saskatchewan Credit Policy and Electives

A minimum of 24 credits are required to complete secondary education in Saskatchewan of which at least 5 credits shall be 30-level credits. Students are required to take three social sciences courses that include Canadian studies. To meet the credit requirements for graduation, students are required to take nine elective courses at the secondary level. These courses will include at least six courses at Grade 11 or Grade 12. To fulfill elective credit requirements, students may choose courses from the required areas of study, the practical and applied arts, language courses and locally developed courses. In addition, students may acquire 1 credit for an out-of-school personal learning initiative. One credit is equal to 100 hours of classroom instruction and this requirement came into effect for students graduating in 2000.

Ontario Secondary Level (Grades 9 to 12)
Source: http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/ (Accessed April 5, 2008).

In 1999, Ontario reduced the secondary school program from five to four years so the program now includes grades 9 to 12. A literacy test and a compulsory community-service component were added to the graduation requirements.

In Grade 9 and Grade 10, courses strongly promote the acquisition of essential knowledge and skills by all students and at the same time, allow students to begin to focus on their areas of strength and interest and to explore various areas of study. In Grade 11 and Grade 12, the program is designed to allow all students to choose courses that are clearly and directly linked to their intended post-secondary destinations. The graduation requirements emphasize a challenging, high-quality curriculum and the achievement by students of measurable results. In keeping with the emphasis on high standards, students are required to successfully complete the provincial secondary school literacy test to graduate. To ensure that students develop awareness of civic responsibility, they must also fulfill a community involvement requirement of 40 hours to qualify for the secondary school diploma.

The secondary school program includes a guidance and career education program designed to encourage and help students to learn about career opportunities and to make informed decisions about the options they will encounter in the course of secondary school and those they will face as they prepare to leave school. Central features of this program are the development of an annual education plan by every student and the introduction of a teacher adviser program. Both features are designed to help students set appropriate goals and select courses that will help them achieve these goals. Principals are also required to conduct a survey to determine the effectiveness of their guidance and career education program.

To earn the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) a student must earn 18 compulsory credits, earn 12 optional credits, complete 40 hours of community involvement activities and successfully complete the provincial secondary school literacy test.

The following is a list of compulsory courses, totalling 18 credits, required to obtain the OSSD: 4 credits in English (1 credit per grade); 1 credit in French as a second language; 3 credits in mathematics (at least 1 credit in Grade 11 or Grade 12); 2 credits in science; 1 credit in Canadian history; 1 credit in Canadian geography; 1 credit in the arts; 1 credit in health and physical education. The 12 optional credits may be obtained through taking other Ministry-authorized courses.

The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 and 10: Social Sciences and the Humanities, 1999 was implemented in Ontario secondary schools in September 1999 for students in Grade 9 and in September 2000 for students in Grade 10. *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 11 and 12: Social Sciences and Humanities, 2000* was implemented in Ontario secondary schools in September 2001 for students in Grade 11 and in September 2002 for students in Grade 12.

Ontario Social Sciences Curriculum

The Grade 9 and Grade 10 courses in the social sciences and humanities, which are centred on family studies, introduce students to topics relating to individual development and family life such as food and nutrition, resource management and conflict resolution. They also provide students with a foundation in social sciences research skills. In the senior grades, in addition to more advanced courses in food and nutrition and individual and family living, courses are offered in specialized areas of family studies, from parenting and resource management to fashion design and living spaces and shelter. These advanced courses give students an opportunity to develop a range of hands-on, practical skills and to refine their research skills in a variety of areas. The general social sciences courses bring in perspectives from anthropology, psychology and sociology to help students explore and gain an understanding of current social issues. In the Grade 11 and Grade 12 philosophy and world religion courses, students are introduced to the history of thought on matters of human nature, existence and knowledge and are given the opportunity to further develop critical and logical thinking skills as well as skills associated with research in the humanities.

Social sciences and humanities courses give students essential knowledge and transferable skills that are applicable in various areas of their lives including in their personal and family lives, their post-secondary studies and the workplace. Individual courses provide students with a foundation for a variety of possible post-secondary destinations:

- positions in the retail and service industries
- community college programs in community services, including early childhood education, child and youth work and developmental services work; creative arts including fashion, fashion design, garment construction and chef training; or business including human resources
- university programs in such fields as anthropology, business studies, education, environmental studies, family studies, food and nutrition sciences, health sciences, human resources, psychology, philosophy, religious studies, social work and sociology.

The discipline of social sciences and humanities has connections with many other disciplines taught in secondary school on the level of both knowledge and skills. Their studies in social sciences and humanities courses will allow students to bring a broader perspective to their learning in subjects such as history, geography and English. Students will be able to build on previous learning, integrate related knowledge and apply learning skills across subject areas.

Subject matter from any course in the social sciences and humanities can be combined with subject matter from one or more courses in other disciplines to create an interdisciplinary course. The policies and procedures regarding the development of interdisciplinary courses are outlined in the interdisciplinary studies curriculum policy document.

Overview of the Ontario Program

All four of the subject areas encompassed by the secondary program in social sciences and humanities—family studies, general social sciences, philosophy and world religions—are concerned with how students view themselves, their families, their communities and society as they seek to find meaning in the world around them. Through practical experiences, discussions, debates, research, study and reflection and other vehicles for developing critical and creative thinking skills, social sciences and humanities courses help students become self-motivated problem-solvers equipped with the skills and knowledge that will allow them to face their changing world with confidence.

Five types of courses are offered in the social sciences and humanities program: university preparation, university/college preparation, college preparation, workplace preparation and open courses.

Courses in social sciences and humanities, grades 11 and 12, were also listed on the Web site.

Grade 11 Courses in Ontario
Grade 11 courses within family studies: "Living and Working with Children," "Managing Personal and Family Resources," "Managing Personal Workplace Resources," "Fashion and Creative Expression," "Living Spaces and Shelter" and "Parenting."

Other Grade 11 courses: "World Religions: Beliefs, Issues and Religious Traditions," "Living and Working with Children," "Managing Personal and Family Resources," "Living Spaces and Shelter," "Parenting," "World Religions: Beliefs and Daily Life," "Philosophy: The Big Questions," "Managing Personal Resources," "Fashion and Creative Expression" and "Individual and Family Living."

Grade 12 Courses in Ontario
Philosophy: "Questions and Theories," "Challenge and Change in Society," "Food and Nutrition Sciences," "Individuals and Families in a Diverse Society," "Issues in Human Growth and Development," "Parenting and Human Development," "The Fashion Industry" and "Introduction to Anthropology, Psychology, Sociology."

Community Involvement Activities in Ontario

As part of the diploma requirements, students must complete a minimum of 40 hours of community involvement activities. These activities may be completed at any time during their years in the secondary school program. The community involvement requirement encourages students to develop awareness and understanding of civic responsibility and the role they can play in supporting and strengthening their communities. The requirement will benefit communities, but its primary purpose is to contribute to students' development. It will provide opportunities for students to learn about the contributions they can make to the community.

Community involvement activities may take place in a variety of settings, for example, businesses, not-for-profit organizations and public sector institutions including hospitals and informal settings. The activities are to be completed outside the students' normal instructional hours (students' designated lunch hours, after school, on weekends or during school holidays). Students maintain and provide a record of their community involvement activities.

Manitoba Secondary Level (Grades 9 to 12)

Source: http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca (Accessed April 8, 2008).

In Manitoba, the social sciences curriculum and subjects are embedded within the social studies program. Some of the Ministry-authorized social sciences courses available are agriculture, world issues, world geography, American history and physical geography. School-initiated courses or student-initiated projects have been developed or approved to meet the local needs or the interests of students.

From grades 9 to 12, students earn course credits toward high school graduation. To obtain a Manitoba high school diploma, students must accumulate the required number of credits from a combination of compulsory and optional courses. A compulsory course is a course for which students must receive credit; e.g., English language arts, mathematics, social studies. An optional course, sometimes called an elective, is a course that students may choose based on their interests, abilities, values and career goals; e.g., arts, languages, information and communication technology [ICT]. Some courses are full credit while others are half credit. Students and parents are encouraged to discuss credit requirements with their school counsellors and teachers.

The graduation requirements for provincial Senior Years diplomas are increasing from 28 credits in the 2007–2008 school year to 30 credits in the 2009–2010 school year. This increase is the result of the recent addition of one compulsory physical education/health education credit at each of the Grade 11 and Grade 12 levels.

For example, the Senior Years English Program compulsory credit requirements for graduation in 2010 are: Language Arts (English)–4 credits; Mathematics–4 credits; Social Studies–3 credits; Science–2 credits; Physical Education/Health Education–4 credits. The total number of credits required in the compulsory subjects is 17.

Students must also earn 13 optional credits from grades 9 to 12. At least one optional credit must be at the Grade 11 level and at least two optional credits must be at the Grade 12 level. Students in the English program can take technology education courses to meet part of their optional credit requirements.

Students must also earn eight to 14 technology education credits from within an approved Senior Years Technology Education Program cluster; e.g., power mechanics. A cluster of technology education courses must be an approved group of departmentally developed and/or approved courses that support the transition from school to work, apprenticeship, college or university. Depending on the number of technology education courses taken, the additional optional credits will vary in number from zero to six. To graduate from the Senior Years Technology Education Program, students must earn compulsory credits in the subject areas listed above in the English program, with the exception that one less social studies credit is required, for a total of 16 credits.

School-initiated courses (SICs) are courses that have been developed and approved by schools and school districts to meet the local needs and interests of students. Some examples of subject areas in which SICs have been developed include journalism, human ecology, outdoor education, psychology and religion.

Student-initiated projects (SIPs) are curricular projects that students develop based on their interests. For example, students may earn 1 credit toward graduation with a Community Service Student-Initiated Project or a Cultural Exploration Student-Initiated Project.

Québec Secondary Level (Grades 7 to 11)
Source: http://www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/GR-PUB/m-english.html (Accessed April 11, 2008).

The grade level designation for secondary schools in Québec is grades 7 to 11 offering five years of general education divided into two cycles.

Cycle One, which lasts three years (grades 7 to 9), enables students to consolidate the learning acquired in elementary school and to begin to think about their career options. Starting in the third year, optional subjects are added to the general curriculum, giving students the opportunity to explore various subject areas; e.g., sciences, arts. At the end of the fifth year of secondary education, students are awarded a Secondary School Diploma (SSD) that provides access to college but does not lead directly to university. It is worth noting that the proportion of students graduating with a first secondary school diploma in Québec in 2003 was 82 percent (young people and adults combined), compared with an average of 78 percent in the member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Various vocational training programs leading to a trade are offered in Cycle Two. Some of these programs start in the third year of secondary school. After Secondary Three, students may also enrol in a program leading to an Attestation of Vocational Specialization to prepare for a semi-skilled occupation.

College education is a particular feature of Québec's education system. It constitutes an intermediary education and university education. All the college institutions offer two-year pre-university programs and three-year technical programs leading to a Diploma of College Studies, as well as shorter technical programs leading to an Attestation of College Studies. A Diploma of College Studies is required for admission to university. Pre-university programs lead directly to university, whereas technical programs generally lead to the labour market but may, under certain conditions, also lead to university.

The Social Sciences in Québec
The social sciences are concerned with all the phenomena associated with human societies and human representations of them. The complexity of the social world is increasing because these societies are in a process of constant accelerating change and because of the current global conjuncture, characterized by high population mobility, the multiplication of contacts between different cultures, the rapid circulation of information and the accelerating globalization of the economy. As a subject area for secondary school, the social sciences consider social phenomena and their complexity in terms of space and time or, more precisely, of geography, history and citizenship education. Each of these subjects approaches the social world from a specific viewpoint. Geography provides a spatial perspective, which enables students to see that societies occupy territories with many differences, including differences of scale, and that societies relate to these territories in a variety of ways. History and citizenship education provides a temporal perspective, which enables students to become aware of and understand the roots of the present and the process of social change.

The subject area contributes to the achievement of the educational aims of the Québec Education Program by enabling students to develop an understanding of social issues. The two subjects within the subject area foster the construction of their identities by providing guidelines that allow students to perceive their membership in a community based on shared values, particularly those associated with democracy. They help students to develop their worldview by furnishing opportunities to grasp the complexity of the phenomena pertaining to human societies. They also enable them to take into account their own opinions and values, to question them and to see them in perspective.

The subjects in the social sciences foster the development of students' ability to reason, enrich their culture and prepare them to play an active role in a democratic society. First, the subjects promote intellectual development by giving students methodological and conceptual tools. The acquisition of these tools, which students can call on and use in a multitude of situations, should help them to understand the present-day world and empower them in dealing with new situations in their lives. In addition, the very nature of their object of study makes the subjects in this subject area a particularly rich vehicle for cultural learning. Students' social literacy is promoted, helping them to acquire the body of knowledge shared by a community, without which citizens would be like foreigners in their own society. Students are introduced to the cultural heritage of communities that nourish the cultural diversity of their society. Finally, with regard to social integration, geography, history and citizenship education should help students to develop their own values and attitudes by relating them to the values and principles on which Québec society is based. These subjects prepare students to exercise their role as citizens, in their immediate school surroundings and within the broader community.

The Atlantic Canada Framework for Essential Graduation Learnings in Schools: New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island

Source: http://www.ednet.ns.ca (Accessed April 11, 2008).

The Atlantic provinces have produced a document that provides information on the issues and implications of implementing a common core curriculum in Atlantic Canada. A rationale for an outcomes framework that is being used to anchor curriculum development is discussed.

The framework provides a clear statement of what is expected of students at graduation and key stages of their education. It outlines the rationale and process for the development of an Atlantic common core curriculum. Regional curriculum development was a collaborative process designed with key consensus points to ensure decisions were made only with the agreement of each province. The process was flexible and accommodated the differences in program offerings in each of the provinces. The document explains some implications for student assessment. The development of student achievement standards is directly linked to the development of the common core curriculum in language arts, mathematics and science.

The subject of social studies and the humanities is the responsibility of each individual province. The relationship between student achievement standards and outcomes is explored.

It is interesting to note that regional topics in the social studies program in Nova Scotia include: African Canadian Studies 11, Atlantic Community Economic Development, Gaelic Studies 11, History 12, Mi'kmaq Studies 10 and Global Geography 12. All the Atlantic provinces provide opportunity for teachers to focus on regional issues for student study and exploration.

PART 3:
ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following is a selected bibliography from recent literature with brief annotations highlighting the key points in each document. The references do not provide a direct rationale for the inclusion or exclusion of complementary social sciences courses in the high school curriculum. Rather the literature may contribute to thinking about the purposes, pedagogy and curriculum orientation and content for social sciences courses in the Alberta curriculum, in the event that these courses are retained and indeed substantially revised.

As an overview and synopsis, the literature included in the bibliography may be interpreted to suggest four key foundational ideas for the curricular content and orientation of high school courses: promoting disciplinary thinking and citizenship, supporting learner engagement, the value of choice in the curriculum and integrating technology into learning.

First, there is an emphasis on understanding the disciplines in terms of developing capacities for inquiry and thinking related to the support of citizenship development, in both local and global contexts, and developing personal meaning and efficacy in learning. Second, there is a very strong emphasis in some of the literature on fostering engagement in learning, which correlates highly with retention in high schools. Related to the issue of engagement, there is strong research support for encouraging active, hands-on learning or problem-based learning, with possible connections to meaningful service and application beyond the classroom and to career options. Third, some of the literature focuses on the importance of providing choice for students at the high school level and offering a curriculum that more broadly appeals to diverse needs and interests. Fourth, there is some focus in the literature on the importance of connecting with and using educational technology. While this is not an issue for complementary courses in and of themselves, it does suggest that any revisions to such courses must be done in relation to employing online and other electronic forms of communication.

In Parts 4 and 5 of this report, these key foundational ideas from the literature are further developed in terms of providing a basis for decision making about whether to retain social sciences courses and the form they might take in a future revision. The following annotations address the four main ideas set out above.

Promoting Disciplinary Thinking and Citizenship

Boix Mansilla, V. & Gardner, H. (2008). Disciplining the mind. *Educational Leadership*, *65*(5), 14–19.

This article challenges readers to think about how and what students are learning in our fast-paced information world. The authors believe that students must develop the capacity to think like experts and be able to integrate disciplinary perspectives to better understand new phenomena in a variety of areas. Simply teaching subject matter will not provide young people with the skills needed to survive in today's world. The authors emphasize the importance of teaching disciplines and disciplinary thinking. As disciplines inform the contexts in which students live, it is critical that quality education ensures that students develop four key capacities. The steps to develop these capacities are provided. The authors' insights present possibilities for curriculum developers to consider.

Costa, A. L. (2008). The thought-filled curriculum. *Educational Leadership*, *65*(5), 20–24.

To nurture the skillful thinking of students, Costa develops themes that could be used to shape curriculum. The themes include: learning to think skillfully through practice, reflection and coaching; thinking to learn where knowledge is a constructive process; thinking together by helping students construct both their own and shared knowledge; thinking about our own thinking by listening to ourselves and reflecting on our own reactions ("mindful probing," p. 23); and thinking big by asking ourselves questions about how we can serve the world community. Learners are encouraged to create a model or metaphor derived from their personal experience to really help them understand and develop their own thinking habits.

Noddings, N. (2008). All our students thinking. *Educational Leadership*, *65*(5), 8–13.

It has become fashionable to say that to compete in a worldwide economy students must know more about mathematics and science. Noddings challenges this notion showing that our information age is not just about providing career opportunities in computing and technology. She argues that there have been an increasing number of people working in service industry; i.e., food preparation, retail sales, labour and clerical. No matter what happens in education, most high school graduates will be working in the service industry. Her belief is that all students should learn how to think critically and develop intellectually to be prepared for thoughtful democratic citizenship.

Noddings, N. (2005). *The challenge to care in schools: An alternative approach to education.* **(2nd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.**

Noddings invites us to question our way of thinking about education. She argues that we need a radical change in curriculum and teaching methods. She believes that all people have different strengths that should be cultivated in a caring environment. Her work addresses the practical as well as the theoretical aspects of organizing a caring school community based on curriculum that meets the needs of students and society.

Wesch, M. (2008). Anti-teaching: Confronting the crisis of significance. *Education Canada,* **Spring, 5–7.**

The author invited his students to tell the world what they thought about their education by helping him write a script for a video that was then posted on YouTube. As part of the exercise, they created a survey measuring student involvement and engagement in various learning activities. The video, "A Vision of Students Today," was viewed over one million times in its first month and was the most blogged video in the blogosphere for several weeks, eliciting thousands of comments. Educators around the world identified with the comments and message of the video and expressed sadness that, for many students, school is a narrow and/or inflexible place where meaningful work does not inspire them to be lifelong learners.

The author explains how he dedicated himself to finding a way to make a difference in teaching practices; something he called "anti-teaching." He believes it is critical to provide a place in which learners are free to pursue, with great passion, the questions that are meaningful and relevant to their own lives. He focused on the quality of learning rather than the quality of teaching. "It struck me that all learning begins with a good question, and if we are ultimately trying to create 'active lifelong learners' with 'critical thinking skills' and an ability to 'think outside the box' it might be best to start by getting students to ask better questions" (p. 5).

The article goes on to explain how Wesch engaged students in what he considers meaningful learning by helping students recognize their own importance in shaping the future of our increasingly global, interconnected society. "But simply telling them this narrative is not enough. The narrative must become pervasive in the learning environment" (p. 7). Wesch's article provides thought-provoking ideas for those engaged in making changes to programs and curriculum.

Viadero, D. (2007). Social-skills programs found to yield gains in academic subjects. *Education Week, 27*(16), 1–15.

The article discusses a study by the social education group, Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, which urges teachers to focus on students' social and emotional development. The study suggests that programs that taught social and emotional skills led to higher academic achievement. Social sciences courses that incorporate these skills may support high school students in their academic endeavours.

Supporting Learner Engagement

Bridgeland, J. M., DiIulio, J. J., Jr., & Burke Morison, K. (2006). The silent epidemic: Perspective of high school dropouts. (A report for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.) http://www.civicenterprises.net (Accessed March 1, 2008).

The authors conducted a survey of young people who left high school without graduating. They found that despite a student's career aspirations, the circumstances in students' lives and an inadequate response to those circumstances from the schools led to a student dropping out. Some of the reasons for leaving school were a lack of connection to the school, a perception that school is boring, not being motivated, academic challenges and the weight of real world events. Nearly half (47 percent) said a major reason for not completing their education was uninteresting classes. Though many dropouts blame themselves for not completing high school, students offered suggestions to make a change in dropout rates. Key suggestions to assist curriculum planners and writers were to make teaching and curricula more relevant and engaging, enhance the connection between school and the workplace and include more opportunities for real-world and experiential learning. Academic challenges were a common factor for many dropouts but most felt they could have succeeded in school. The reader is left with a sense of hope that barriers to graduation are not insurmountable.

Ferguson, B., Tilleczek, K., Boydell, K., & Rummens, J. A. (2005). *Early school leavers: Understanding the lived reality of student disengagement from secondary school.* **Toronto: Ontario Ministry of Education.**

This comprehensive Ontario Ministry of Education report was designed to understand the processes of student disengagement from school and of early school leaving or dropping out. The voices of youth from a variety of backgrounds are heard and the students' reasons for not remaining in school are explored. Passive or irrelevant curriculum, curriculum structure, pedagogy, policy and new practices are topics to inform the work of curriculum policy planners.

Harada, V., Kirio, C., Yamamoto, S. (2008). Project-based learning: Rigor and relevance in high schools. *Library Media Connection***, 26(6), 14–16, 18, 20.**

The authors discuss the main features of project-based learning and the relevance and significance of such learning in high school education. They state that project-based learning provides students with the opportunity to engage in deeper levels of comprehension about the purpose of learning. Students explore their own interests and build on their own individual strengths within a structured educational curriculum.

Henderson, A., Brown, S. D., Pancer, S. M., & Ellis-Hale, K. (2007). Mandated community service in high school and subsequent civic engagement: The case of the "double cohort" in Ontario, Canada, *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *36*(7), **849–860.**

This article reviews a study completed by the authors. In 1999, the Ontario government introduced a mandatory 40-hour volunteer community service into its high school curriculum as a requirement for high school completion. At the same time, the high school curriculum was shortened from five to four years. This resulted in the 2003 graduating class of Ontario high school students containing two cohorts—the first of the four-year program students required to complete the mandated volunteer community service, and the last of the five-year cohort that was not.

In the study, comparisons of the two high school groups were made. The researchers used a quasi-experimental design to survey 1768 first-year university students in terms of their perceptions and attitudes about the nature and amount of previous volunteering, attitudes toward community service, current service involvement and other measures of civic and political engagement.

Allowing for the differences between the two cohorts in terms of their community services, the authors found that there were no differences in the current attitudes and civic engagement that might conceivably be credited to involvement in the mandatory volunteer community service program. The results provide an interesting background for the current debate about the introduction and impact of mandatory volunteering policies.

Hyslop-Margison, E. J., McKerracher, A., Cromier, J. and Desroches, S. (2007). The depiction of workplace reality: Principles of democratic learning and New Brunswick's youth apprenticeship program. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, *62*.

In this article, the authors critique and analyze the New Brunswick Youth Apprenticeship Program based on research they completed. Educational programs, such as this one, fall under the purview of career education and provide the means to prepare learners for vocational, community and political participation and democratic citizenship. Based on their research, the authors believe that a careful review of how such programs are implemented must be conducted to provide students with authentic learning.

Klein, R. (2008). Engaging students around the globe. *Educational Leadership*, *65*(6), 8–13.

Klein provides examples of countries that are changing educational practices to engage young people in their studies and to make school relevant so that students do not drop out.

Finland, which ranks number one in the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) for 15-year-olds, has a negligible dropout rate. Free education is provided for children from nursery school to university. Teachers are highly trained and most have a master's degree. High-stakes testing is not part of the Finnish education policy.

In France, the Cycle d' insertion Professionnelle par Alternance project began in 1984 to equip school dropouts with marketable skills. "Sandwich courses" combine vocational education with booster classes in academic subjects to help students complete their high school program. The program brings such subjects as philosophy, journalism and literature to life by linking students with professionals who they interview and shadow in their workplace.

In South Carolina, high schools use service learning to draw most disengaged youth back to meaningful school experiences.

Klein states that her alternative to the 3R's are relevance, respect and reward—"relevance" to the community, "respect" for the student's abilities to create something worthwhile and the "reward" of being proud of their efforts. The challenge to educators and curriculum developers is to keep students engaged in school by building appropriate programs and courses.

Marshall, K. (2008). At your service. *Educational Leadership*, *65*(6).

Marshall searched for a way to give hope to children who struggled with academics, felt disconnected from school and were disappointed with life. High school students described their experience in school as a place where they were bored, classroom material was not interesting or relevant and teachers did not show interest in or concern for the students. Marshall found that, through service learning and a connection to others, she was able to re-engage disconnected students in a love of learning and hope for the future. Perhaps service learning offers an example of promise for those developing new curriculum.

McKeough, A., Schwean, V., Hindes, V., Thorne, K. (2008). *Rapport teen leadership breakthrough program: An evaluation report*. **Prepared at the University of Calgary for the Werklund Foundation and Rapport Leadership International. http://www.universitycalgar.ca and http://www.werklundfoundation.org. (Accessed April 15, 2008).**

The authors, from the University of Calgary Applied Psychology Department, completed this study to evaluate a teen leadership program developed by Rapport Leadership and sponsored by the Werklund Foundation. The program supports the development of life skills associated with leadership in youth. The study highlights improved performance levels in several areas, some of which are adapting to change, emotionally intelligent behaviour, social awareness and interpersonal understanding and attaining goals and growing in competence. The researchers at the University of Calgary and staff at the Werklund Foundation may offer suggestions for ways to support student learning in the social sciences.

Riedel, E. (2002). The impact of high school community service programs on students' feelings of civic obligation. *American Politics Research*, *30*(**5**), **499–527.**

Proponents of community service programs often claim success in educating youth for democratic citizenship where traditional citizenship instruction falls short. A question not dealt with is whether service programs take up the idea of citizenship and make a link to political engagement and participation. Riedel hypothesized that only service programs that frame service within a wide political context and offer opportunities for public action will increase political engagement as measured by feelings of civic obligation. The author states that a citizenship framework may be incorporated into traditional social studies classes with similar effects. Through data analysis of comparing the effects of different high school service programs and social studies courses, he is able to confirm his hypothesis. Riedel also shows that political socialization effects remain.

Sagor, R. (2008). Cultivating optimism in the classroom. *Educational Leadership*, *65*(**6**), **26–31.**

"Efficacy is a deep-seated belief in our own capabilities. It explains the phenomenon of success breeding success" (p. 28). Sagor states that every time people attack a problem and succeed they have authentic evidence of their capabilities. The more positive the input regarding a student's capabilities the more potential there is for success. The challenge for our curriculum developers and policy makers is to offer programming that will provide choice and opportunity to foster a child's capabilities.

Schuitema, J., Dam, G., & Veugulers, W., (2008). Teaching strategies for moral education: A review. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, *40*(1), 69–89.

The authors present the results of a literature review of studies on teaching strategies for moral education in secondary schools (1995–2003). Most of these studies recommend a problem-based approach to instruction. This approach gives room for dialogue and interaction between students who are working in small groups, which is considered to be crucial for their moral and pro-social development. Other studies discuss more specific teaching methods such as drama and service learning. The authors' considerations and research may guide curriculum developers when making decisions about curriculum changes.

Segedin, L. (2008). Curriculum casualties in the "at risk" quest to success. *Education Canada*, *48*(1), 59.

Segedin reflects on the educational system and policies of Ontario particularly involving the problem of student disengagement in secondary schools. Although there have been various changes in Ontario's educational system, the author suggests that the existing government mandates to tackle the problem remain insufficient and curriculum reform is needed to broaden the subject focus of secondary schools.

Smith, A. B. (2007). Children and young people's participation rights in education. *International Journal of Children's Rights*, *15*(1), 147–164.

The author uses theory and research to develop a framework for the principles of effective participation, and then gives an example and analysis at each level (early childhood, primary and secondary) as to how these principles have been put into practice in education. Smith believes that participation rights and being a citizen are part of an ongoing learning process and experience in educational settings gives meaning to children's understanding of what it means to be an active and involved citizen. The article may be useful to those who are developing new policy and curriculum.

The Alberta Teachers' Association (2003). Trying to teach, trying to learn: Listening to students.

This study was conducted as an exploratory investigation into what makes learning possible for students. An elaboration of learning conditions of Alberta junior and senior high school students are presented in this document. The report also attempts to convey what can be learned from listening to students discuss their classroom and school experiences. Experiencing pleasure in learning, learning as "hands-on," and experiencing a sense of agency as a learner are only a few of the ideas that could provide insight for curriculum writers about Alberta students and their experiences of learning.

Spooner, M. (2002). Creative teenage students: What are they telling us about their experiences in (and around) our high schools? *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, *48*(4), 314–326.

After completing a qualitative study interviewing high school students gifted in their understanding of creativity, Spooner highlights various approaches for accommodating and promoting creativity in our schools. As in The Alberta Teachers' Association study, *Trying to Teach, Trying to Learn*, students' voices provide readers with an appreciation for how curriculum and programs could and should be designed. Given the importance of creative skills to the future economic and emotional well-being of young adult students, this study is a thoughtful work that should be considered when designing new curriculum and programs.

Stovall, D. (2006). We can relate. Hip-hop culture, critical pedagogy, and the secondary classroom. *Urban Education*, *41*(6), 585–602.

This author argues for the use of hip-hop and other elements of popular culture to develop relevant curriculum. By using song lyrics in rap music, Stovall suggests a connection is made to the student's current world and experiences and a context for the humanities and social sciences in secondary curriculum is provided. Although the article highlights one aspect of hip-hop culture, it advocates for other creative techniques to be encouraged that would be relevant to high school youth.

Taylor, A. (2007). Pathways for youth to the labour market: An overview of high school initiatives. Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks.

Taylor's report is the third in a series of studies prepared by the Canadian Policy Research Networks that conducted a two-year project to examine how young people navigate from high school to the world of work. The goal of the project was to determine what supports or thwarts youth's ability to find pathways that lead to good employment opportunities and examine attitudes and underlying values about the different pathways. Taylor looked at British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, Newfoundland/Labrador and the State of Queensland in Australia. She found that all four provincial governments are interested in enhancing flexibility and mobility in the learning systems.

Through her study, Taylor also found "evidence of a lack of sustainability of initiatives and potential inequities and inconsistencies in opportunities and outcomes for students" (Foreword). With the possibility of bold new changes in the social sciences programs, curriculum designers may gain a better appreciation for initiatives tried in Alberta and elsewhere. This appreciation may guide designers in the development of new curriculum and programs that will support young adults in decisions for their future. A Canadian study of such depth, conducted over an extended period, could be a valuable resource for designers.

The Value of Choice in the Curriculum

Aronson, M. (2007). No child deprived of history: Are we treating history like a Starbucks menu? *School Library Journal*, *53*(6), 32.

Aronson discusses the importance of history being taught in school and the fact that no child should be deprived of this opportunity. History is our memory to the past and is something everyone should know. He supports his theory with relevant research and documentation.

Bellamy, G. T. & Goodlad, J. I. (2008). Continuity and change in the pursuit of a democratic public mission for our schools. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *89*(8), 565–571.

Bellamy and Goodlad state that a principle aspect of public schools in the United States is to educate students in the nature and practice of democracy. Fostering democracy, promoting stewardship of education and providing students with the necessary tools to be democratic citizens are key elements of their discussion. Although these ideas are considered part of a social studies curriculum, they may be included in humanities courses.

DeCesare, M. (2006). What determines whether sociology is taught in high school. *Michigan Sociological Review*, *20*, 211–229.

DeCesare states that there have been few empirical studies completed in the United States during the last 20 years to offer reasons why sociology may or may not be taught in high schools. There is also little data found about Canadian high schools and the teaching of sociology. The author conducted a study in Connecticut by interviewing sociology teachers and reviewing data from the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development. This American research presents some answers to the question of why sociology is taught and why it should be taught in high schools.

Four factors affect inclusion of sociology in high school curricula: student interest and enrolment, teacher changes and shortages, ongoing curriculum revision and prevalence of standardized testing.

Gardner, R. (2007). Choosing the right place for geography. *Times Educational Supplement*, **Issue 4736, 25.**

Gardner explains that, in 2007, Great Britain's schools were required to offer secondary students at least one general certificate course in the humanities. She stresses the importance of geography in a British student's education to help him or her live in a global economy. She questions why more students do not choose geography but is encouraged by the work being conducted by the Geographical Association and the Royal Geographical Society that is working with the government to increase interest in the subject.

Ludy, B., (2001). A brief history of the psychology course in American high schools.
   American Psychologist, *56*(11), 951–960.

In the United States, psychology has been a part of the high school curriculum for over 170 years in various forms with a variety of names such as mental hygiene, personal adjustment, child development, human relations and psychology. The author presents an abbreviated and selective account that traces the history and considerable role played by the American Psychological Association in supporting the course offerings. Psychology is perhaps the most popular elective course in American high schools today, an assertion supported by reports of an annual enrolment of between 800 000 and one million students. This article describes the evolution of the high school psychology class by describing some of the contextual factors that have shaped the course. Ludy concludes the article with a brief discussion of the value of psychology in high school classes today.

Morgan, J. (2008). Curriculum development in "new times." *Geography*, *93*(1) 17–24.

Morgan's article provides an historical analysis of curriculum change in geography in Britain. It is intended to encourage discussion about the type of geography curriculum appropriate to young people growing up in Britain in the 21st century. The author suggests there is a gap between the type of geography taught in schools and in universities and that we should begin to reflect upon what should be taught in schools.

Wrobel, D. (2008). A lesson from the past and some hope for the future: The history academy and the schools, 1880–2007. *History Teacher*, *41*(2), 152–162.

The article discusses the history of the collaboration between the academy and K–12 educators in the United States. As an academic discipline in the United States, history started in an atmosphere of professorial concern about the place of history in the schools. There were only 11 history professors in the country when the American Historical Association was formed in 1880. According to the article, the motivation of early American historians to nurture active, enlightened citizenship by making history an important part of K–12 education that fosters intellectual development and the mastery of a wide, deep body of knowledge is worth emulating.

Integrating Technology into Learning

Frontline, (2008). Growing up online: What we learned. http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/ pages/frontline/kidsonline/etc/notebook.html (Accessed February 20, 2008).

The researchers for this television documentary about youth and their online experiences offer an incredible view into the world of young people today. Before thinking about making changes to previous education programs, a curriculum developer or program planner should view this documentary and review the researchers' discussion. The insights and voices of young people will provide new perspectives. A researcher stated, "Despite the research we did, I don't think I was prepared when we started talking to kids for the extent to which the Internet and other electronic communication has permeated all aspects of being a teenager. Almost every kid expressed the utter importance of being connected with friends all the time and how unthinkable a life without that connection would be . . . . They don't think about Internet in their lives. It's just there, always, another tool for them to use or place for them to go." This is a new technological world; if curriculum is to be relevant to youth, curriculum designers and planners should understand this new world; this documentary and continuing research may help.

Hodges, N. (2008). Self-efficacy in the context of online learning environments: A review of the literature and directions for research. *Performance Improvement Quarterly*, *20*(3,4), 7–25.

The author's stated purpose was to examine the concept of self-efficacy in the context of online learning environments. Research related to academic self-efficacy and self-efficacy in online learning environments was reviewed. The development of self-efficacy beliefs in online environments is highlighted as well as self-efficacy assessment issues.

Luce-Kapler, R. (2007). Radical change and wikis: Teaching new literacies. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, *51*(3), 214–223.

Luce-Kapler begins by describing that by using online web-editing software, teachers can develop new practices that engage students in exploring new literacies to help them gain visual literacy skills. Luce-Kapler explains how "wiki" is the Hawaiian word meaning quick and describes how users can quickly create web pages. She asks some critical questions that may guide policy planners who begin to change curriculum and programs. Some of her questions are: "What is known about how people learn?"; "What technologies are emerging and demanding our understanding and what do we need to change as these technologies do change?"; and "Do we need to think less about content in subjects and more about engaging students in the learning process?"

Prensky, M., (2008). Turning on the lights. *Educational Leadership*, *65*(6), 40–45.

Prensky argues that, to "turn on the lights," education needs to be more relevant and truly prepare students for the future, and educators must bring after-school attractions into school programs. He suggests that this could happen in four ways. One way is to give students the opportunity to use a variety of technology tools in schools to find information, create products and share these products for teacher and peer critical evaluation. A second way is for educators to ask students what they want to be taught, listen to them and then help them set goals for learning. Students think seriously about their future as they complete goal setting. A third way is for educators to connect students to the world. By using tools such as YouTube, text messaging or e-mail, with which students are familiar, students can be connected with others directly in whatever they are presently studying (e.g., Spanish, Middle East communities). Finally, by understanding where young people are going in the future and helping them get there, school life will be more relevant. Covering basic facts and memorizing items for a test will not prepare students for the future.

Prensky includes the following quote from a student, "Whenever I go to school, I have to power down" (p. 42). This student was talking about her brain, not her cell phone. Before coming to class young people have been immersed in television, the Internet, cell phones, Google, Wikipedia, Facebook and whatever else is part of the ongoing list of new technologies. The task of educators is to use the design expertise of students and find a way to incorporate these technologies into high school programs so that school is more relevant today and tomorrow.

Sanford, K. & Madill, L. (2007). Understanding the power of new literacies through video game play and design. *Canadian Journal of Education*, *30*(2), 432–455.

The two University of Victoria authors provide the results of their study of the range of multiliteracy activities that engage boys' time and attention and the understandings they gain from their engagement with alternate texts. It is by using alternate technology, video games and alternate texts that boys are drawn into a variety of study areas. Curriculum writers and planners may use this research to support ongoing discussion in changing social sciences programs.

Williams, B. T. (2006/2007). Girl power in a digital world: Considering the complexity of gender, literacy and technology. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, *50*(4), 300–307.

"We should not regard questions of gender, socialization and literacy as a zero-sum game where if girls are doing well in school then boys must be doing poorly or vice versa. Instead, we need to understand the complexity and shifting nature of cultural assumptions and values that exist and offer possibilities and critiques for both boys and girls" (p. 306). The author provides insight into female and male adolescents learning. She asserts that when students understand their values, and assumptions are constructed by culture outside of themselves, they have the power to connect with those values or explore alternatives. Adolescents come to understand how the world around them, through popular culture, family, friends and various other influences, shapes their lives. How may curriculum writers use this information when developing new curriculum?

Young, E., (2008). Focus on global education: A report from the 2007 PDK Summit. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *89*(5), 349–353.

The 2007 Phi Delta Kappa International Summit on Global Education held in Vancouver, British Columbia brought together educators from across the country to share ideas on this topic. A summary of the summit discussions and presentations are provided by Young and include research on how geography is taught in other countries, how publishing a student international newspaper uses technology to help students connect across the world and the role of technology in linking students and teachers in different countries. Within this report, readers may find ideas for developing courses and programs to nurture creative and mindful learners.

PART 4:
RE-CONCEPTUALIZING THE PURPOSES OF SOCIAL SCIENCES COURSES IN THE HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The New Alberta Social Studies Program of Studies as an Impetus for Rethinking the Purposes of Complementary Social Sciences Courses

The re-conceptualization of the social studies curriculum initiated through the Western Canadian Protocol, which subsequently informed the development of the new Alberta Social Studies K–12 Program of Studies, has significantly altered the expectations for student learning. Of note, there is a refocusing on the topics and content for each grade, specifically around the requirement to include First Nations, Métis and Inuit and Francophone perspectives. As well, the revised content reflects both an interest on foregrounding Canadian history and content and the changed realities of nationalism and globalization in the current world.

From a public perspective, the content of social studies generally focuses on the content to which students will be exposed. From a pedagogic and learning perspective, the focus on outcomes that are not simply content-based is most significant. For example, the new program requires the development of complex dispositions required for inquiry-based learning, including historical, geographic, critical and creative thinking and the nurturing of meta-cognitive strategies. As well, the central purposes for learning social studies are held within the two key outcomes of citizenship and identity.

Stressing the centrality of the outcomes related to citizenship, identity and forms of thinking is not to denigrate the importance of content but to emphasize that content is in the service of active learning. Outcomes related to thinking, citizenship and identity might be said to be performative in nature; learning in this sense is enactive in that students are expected to apply both knowledge and processes of thinking in the development of their own self-understandings. An example is that of identity and the content outcome related to Aboriginal perspectives and knowledge; the aim of social studies learning is not that a student simply learns about aspects of Aboriginal culture but develops an understanding of how his or her own identity is shaped by culture and in relation to diverse others. Similarly, in the new 10-1 and 10-2 programs, students are asked to struggle with the question of their own relationships to historical and current trends in globalization. This involves an inquiry that is both shaped by knowledge and an understanding of values.

The performative nature of social studies outcomes in the new *Alberta Social Studies Program of Studies* is an important focus for thinking about curriculum and its purpose in learning in general. The new program expects that students will graduate from schools with the ability to think and act in ways that show good judgement and care for self and others. Constructivist learning theory and particularly those with the enactivist perspective stress that learning is, or should be, oriented to acting in the world in ways that demonstrate knowing.

Francesco Varela, a cognitive scientist, has written about ways that schools have fostered "knowing-what," which refers to what we would traditionally think of as content-based learning. He and others who work in the same areas of learning theory make the important point that "knowing-what," while of course valuable, does not translate well into knowing what to do or what Varela calls "knowing-how." Citizenship, historical thinking and developing an appreciation for diverse perspectives are good examples of what we might call "know-how," as it requires not simply the reiteration of fixed knowledge but the ability to use and apply knowledge and, perhaps most important, knowing how to live well with others in a complex and changing world.

Alberta Education and the developers of the new program of studies are to be congratulated for bringing forward a curriculum that encourages such forms of active learning and puts the learner's own identity as central to the task of becoming knowledgeable and educated. The foregoing discussion is intended to argue that curriculum, especially those in the humanities and social sciences, should take the lead from the new *Alberta Social Studies Program of Studies* in thinking about purposes and the performative outcomes that encourage thinking, self-understanding and the issues of diversity and one's relationship to others.

If Social Studies Serves Such Purposes as Outlined Above, Then Why Offer Additional or Complementary Social Sciences Courses?

Prior to offering complementary social sciences courses at the high school level, the question of their relationship to social studies must be carefully considered. There are at least four major considerations to be taken into account.

1. *The problem of redundancy with the social studies program.* An entirely defensible argument may well be that if social studies learning is as fully realized as the program mandates, then additional social sciences courses can be considered redundant. By definition, social studies as a curriculum is multidisciplinary, borrowing content, forms of inquiry and structures from diverse disciplines such as history, geography, political science, economics and anthropology, to name only the primary influences. The focus of social studies as a school subject was intended to foster an interdisciplinary understanding of the world, borrowing from, and hopefully integrating, diverse perspectives contributed by the various disciplines that underlie it.

   One argument against offering additional social sciences courses is that all students should have the opportunity to experience social studies learning, especially in terms of the outcomes mandated by the new program. From this perspective, the purposes of social sciences/humanities learning is not just to teach more content but to seriously address the fundamental issues of learning which promotes citizenship, appreciation for diverse perspectives and support for identity formation. In other words, our aim should be to develop strong, vibrant and meaningful social studies learning experiences for all students.

2. *The evolution to interdisciplinary approaches and studies.* A second argument for not promoting additional social sciences courses is that in the past few decades there has been a consistent critique of, and significant departure from, discrete disciplinary structures and practices. In other words, the borders between and among disciplines have become blurred and there is a great deal of overlap in terms of what and how social and cultural phenomena are understood and studied. While university social sciences and humanities faculties still tend to be identified departmentally in terms of specific disciplines such as history, sociology and philosophy, there is a growing interest in and practice of interdisciplinary studies.

   In addition, even within the boundaries of the disciplines themselves there is a great deal of borrowing from other perspectives. For example, there are multiple approaches to history, including ones that focus on social and cultural phenomena. The practices of research borrow freely from other disciplines, geography has become a discipline that focuses on culture and human constructions of spatiality and the study of ecology draws on many disciplinary perspectives in the understanding of the relationship between humans and the natural world.

   The evolution to cross- or inter-disciplinary research and learning can be attributed to a change in focus on what is studied, which requires broader forms of understanding than what traditionally could be held by any one discipline. In large part, this reflects the influence of post-colonial, feminist, post-modern and other important counter narratives that forced questioning of traditional disciplinary boundary lines. So, for example, to understand Aboriginal perspectives is not simply a question of history but requires complex forms of inquiry which include history (but not just formal written history), anthropological perspectives and arguably perspectives from psychology, religious and judicial studies. Perhaps the best example of interdisciplinary study in many universities today is that of cultural studies, which broadly incorporates many disciplinary strategies and forms of inquiry to understand contemporary forms of life and expression. In *Five Minds for the Future*, Howard Gardner (2006) emphasizes the importance of learning what he calls "multiperspectival" views on important issues and questions about the human experience.

3. *The aims of learning and the purposes of courses and curriculum.* To address specifically, then, the question of whether or not there ought to be distinct social sciences/humanities courses in addition to, or in some cases in place of, social studies is whether such options would serve to further fragment the experiences of learning for students. Based on the latter discussion, the argument would then be as follows: the question ought not to be what kinds of courses do students need but what kinds of learning experiences best offer students an engagement in learning that would encourage understandings of complex issues of self, others and the worlds around them. Philosopher Hannah Arendt once asked "What forms and experiences of thinking may best prepare students to take on the world in order to renew it?"

   In his recent book, *The Upside of Down*, Thomas Homer-Dixon (2006) asks the question about how we can learn to become "drivers rather than passengers." Homer-Dixon argues that our entrenched ways of thinking are no longer up to the task of understanding and dealing with what he cites as the major "tectonic stresses."

In the middle of the first decade of the 21st century, some of us have a feeling of dread. We see headlines about avian flu, impending oil shortages and terrorism in distant places. We realize that humankind is doing more things faster and across a greater space than ever before producing changes of a size and speed never before seen. Globalization erases our jobs, new technologies inundate our lives with information, waves of migrants push at our borders and pollution destabilizes our climate. Extensive changes are converging simultaneously on our societies, on our leaders and on each one of us, leading many people to feel that things are out of control and that we are going to crash.

We might wonder, "What kind of trouble is our civilization likely to encounter ahead? How can we cope, and how might we take advantage of opportunities that arise for civilization's renewal?" (p. 55).

As Homer-Dixon suggests, this is not simply to paint a doomsday scenario but to ask what kinds of thinking is required for citizens, both current and future, to deal with situations of great complexity. The education of the young is therefore central to deciding on the kind of world in which we would like to live.

What does this have to do with deciding about the inclusion or exclusion of complementary courses in the curriculum? One answer is that simply cluttering the school and students experiences with more courses or courses that have no clear aim or purpose does not provide students with meaningful educational experiences, especially ones as espoused in the *Alberta Social Studies Program of Studies*. Jerome Bruner made this point well:

> We might ask, as a criterion for any subject taught…in school, whether, when fully developed, it is worth an adult's knowing, and whether having known it as a child makes a person a better adult. If the answer to both questions is negative or ambiguous then the material is cluttering the curriculum. (cited in Noddings, 2003, p. 111)

Any decision to include courses (although this is a question for all courses and curricula) should be based on whether or not students will be engaged in meaningful learning and whether or not the course would include "truly important topics and concepts" (Gardner, 2006, p. 32). It is also worth emphasizing that such topics and concepts deserve critical scrutiny in terms of how they serve to help students to develop genuine understandings. In his book, *Radical Hope*, Jonathan Lear (2006) makes the arresting point that hope is engendered through rethinking our cultural concepts and knowledge in light of the changed realities in which we educate the young. Given that the current programs of study have not been revised for many years, there is the peril of simply re-presenting topics and concepts that are out-of-step with the experiences of students' contemporary lives.

4. *Striving for depth rather than breadth in learning*. The question of how learning should be oriented in terms of guiding deeper learning rather than "covering" topics is not necessarily an argument against offering additional social sciences courses. However, simply offering additional or complementary courses without inquiring into questions of quality of learning should be of concern. The depth/breadth issue will be explored further below.

Reasons Why School Divisions and Schools May Want to Offer Social Sciences/Humanities Courses in Addition to Social Studies

The preceding discussion was intended to emphasize that optional or complementary social sciences courses need to be considered carefully in light of a) the value of social studies for all students, especially in light of the important outcomes not mandated in the program, which offers students experiences of diverse disciplinary forms of inquiry; b) the risk of redundancy (if students are already enrolled in socials studies) and, if not, a narrowed disciplinary perspective; c) the evolution to interdisciplinary approaches in inquiry and content, which questions the value of single discipline courses such as history, sociology and economics; d) the question of the aims of learning and the purposes of courses, suggesting that purposes should not be construed narrowly in terms of disciplines, but rather what disciplinary perspectives offer to understand society, culture, students' own life worlds and identities; and e) from the high school perspective as a whole, the issue of what might lead to depth in learning rather than offering surface experiences in a "clutter" of courses.

In making the decision to offer courses complementary to that of social studies, similar issues and questions presented above need to be considered in defence of the inclusion of social sciences courses in the high school curriculum. These arguments will be briefly presented below.

1. *Possibilities for enrichment for diverse student interests and abilities*. Current International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement students take additional studies in disciplines such as history and theory of knowledge. These programs are predicated on the higher intellectual needs and abilities for students who are likely to be the best candidates for university studies. However, it can be argued that all students should be offered the opportunity to experience complementary courses in terms of appealing to diverse needs and interests. For example, students who are not as strongly oriented to the sciences and mathematics may benefit, and be encouraged by, studies which appeal to their aptitudes and interests. Those students, who on the other hand are less interested in social studies or who opt not to take the three years of high school studies, should still have experiences of inquiry and learning offered by social sciences courses.

   The overarching question should be "what purposes would social sciences courses serve within the overall aims of the high school curricula?" Here, the discussion has to involve the question as to whether complementary courses serve as opportunities for enrichment for students with interests and aptitudes that lie within the social sciences/humanities spectrum or as defensible alternatives to those students who are not interested in social studies but may, nonetheless, be interested in other courses such as philosophy, anthropology or history.

2. *The value of learning and practicing disciplinary thinking*. An argument for retaining and, indeed, strengthening the array of current social sciences programs is the recognition that these courses of study represent important cultural traditions of knowing and inquiry. Apart from rich bodies of knowledge that have accrued over generations of human scholarly activity; e.g., important historical studies, the work of philosophers, key anthropological texts, the study of the human mind and human behaviour, each of the social sciences disciplines embody unique forms of inquiry or disciplinary thinking. The disciplines

themselves represent unique and diverse ways in which humans have attempted to understand themselves, others and the worlds around them. A substantial argument is that a discipline may be studied for the value, interest and enjoyment that it may offer students.

Perhaps more pertinent to the issue is the place of disciplinary thinking in the school curriculum. Recent work by Howard Gardner and his associates stress the importance of learning disciplinary thinking, which is the ability to understand and more substantively practise the forms of inquiry that are offered within established disciplinary traditions. The argument here is that to become educated in a discipline means not simply learning content (e.g., learning about history), but understanding and practising the craft of doing history, or doing philosophy and applying such perspectives to events and phenomena that are objects of study. As Gardner suggests, students need enriched experiences of disciplinary thinking within a discipline to begin to be able to develop more interdisciplinary forms of inquiry.

3. *Encouraging in-depth learning experiences*. As much as an argument was previously made for the value of the interdisciplinary and multiple perspectives offered by the social studies curriculum, there have also been concerns that this does not necessarily encourage a depth of understanding. For instance, critics of social studies have made the case that the study of history is, at best, inadequate and that there are critical absences in historical content and thinking.

   The purpose of this report is neither to enter that debate nor to argue whether the inclusion of an additional Canadian history course is legitimate or not. The question rather, should be whether or not at least some students in high school are offered opportunities to engage in learning which encourages an in-depth understanding of meaningful content and inquiry. From this perspective, the option of complementary courses in the social sciences can be conceived as an opportunity to engage in in-depth learning rather than focusing on breadth. An example of in-depth learning might involve specific historical topics or the pursuit of interesting philosophical questions related to students' experiences and interests.

4. *Relationship to understanding varieties of careers and vocations*. Just as International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement curricula are intended for students who are intellectually gifted and university bound, social sciences courses may offer students understandings of forms of inquiry and conceptual knowledge that are, at least tangentially, related to various career options post high school or further post-secondary education. There are many occupations for which sociology, psychology and economics are foundational; e.g., in education, child care, the justice system, accounting and business. The purpose of such courses then becomes oriented not just to the disciplines in and of themselves but to experience how they relate to the diverse ways in which social sciences knowledge and inquiry inform practices in areas of social service and human relation occupations. While the purpose is not career training, such courses may open up possibilities for students to link learning with many forms of work in society and for post-secondary training and education.

5. *Focusing on the local, the particular and the timely—topics related to culture and society.* Although the social studies courses offer some possibility for focusing on topics and issues of local interest, by necessity and definition the issues and topics for study in the program are quite broad and general. An argument that could be made in favour of social sciences courses, and how they are conceptualized, might be to encourage local and particularly focused inquiries. For example, geography might encourage urban studies in students' cities; or in sociology or anthropology students may study issues of multiculturalism, anti-racist education and diverse cultural practices. Likewise, rurally based students might study agricultural-related topics in economics or sociology. History courses could offer specific histories, allowing students to study their own or others histories in terms of their own geographic situations. Another way to look at this is that courses such as philosophy can offer students with opportunities to explore questions of identity and ethics.

6. *Offering school districts and schools choices and flexibility in providing programming to meet diverse student needs and interests.* This is an extension of the argument presented above in No. 5. Because the social studies program alone cannot fully address all needs and interests, locally developed social sciences or humanities courses could focus on high-needs or high-interest areas. For example, schools with significant numbers of Aboriginal students could offer courses such as history and anthropology focusing on First Nations, Métis and Inuit issues; philosophy or religious studies courses might include a significant focus on Aboriginal perspectives.

PART 5:
RE-CONCEPTUALIZING SOCIAL SCIENCES COURSES AND THEIR PLACE IN THE HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT

1. *Reviewing content and structure of existing social sciences courses*. Within the past three decades, there has been very little revision of the existing programs of study in the courses outlined earlier in this report. As suggested in the discussion of the recent changes to the Alberta Social Studies Program of Studies there have been significant changes in approach and thinking in terms of curriculum development and approaches to learning and pedagogy. Therefore, any review of the current social sciences requires attention at a minimum to the following issues:

   a. *Reviewing for content and rethinking the place of content in terms of learning needs and approaches*. As suggested earlier, there have not been significant changes in each of the social sciences courses that are currently listed in the Alberta program. A first task would be to review the specific content of each of the courses and assess that content in light of contemporary issues, knowledge and disciplinary approaches in the social sciences. Of particular interest would be to focus on the key questions that each social sciences or humanities subject brings to the study of human behaviour and culture and to cast those in terms of the levels of interest and understanding of high school students.

   b. *Revising and restating the purposes and aims of complementary social sciences courses in the high school curriculum*. Any decision to continue to offer or not offer additional courses must be premised on articulating defensible purposes. First, there is the general question of why these courses should be offered, which courses and in what form. Some of those reasons are suggested in the discussion above on why such courses may be included in the high school curriculum. While outside the purview of this report, it does need to be emphasized that curricula decisions such as inclusion or not of additional courses have to be evaluated in the context of the high school curriculum as a whole and a defensible understanding of the purposes of high school education. Otherwise, as suggested earlier, decisions may be made which only encourage further clutter and less cohesion and coherence about student learning and achievement. Second, there is the question of the purpose and aim of each of the social sciences courses that may or may not be included as choices. Why would we offer history courses, for instance? What would be the topics included and for what purposes? Moreover, who decides? Such questions need to be posed for all social sciences and humanities courses.

   c. *Reviewing for process and performative skills required for meaningful and engaged learning*. The new Alberta Social Studies Program of Studies has paved the way for focusing on processes of student learning that are consistent with contemporary learning theory and approaches and methods to social sciences inquiry. Howard Gardner and his associates have been making the case that we need to move away from "teaching subject matter" to teaching thinking, not thinking in the abstract but thinking in terms of the approaches and methods offered by diverse disciplines. Gardner has written that for too

long education has focused more on the memorization of information and much less on being able to apply learning and skills to new situations (Boix Mansilla & Gardner, 2008). "In sharp contrast with teaching subject matter," Boix Mansilla and Gardner write,

> An alternative approach emphasizes teaching *disciplines* and *disciplinary thinking*. The goal of this approach is to instill in the young the disposition to interpret the world in the distinctive ways that characterize the thinking of experienced disciplinarians—historians, scientists, mathematicians, and artists. This view entrusts education institutions with the responsibility of disciplining the young mind. (p. 1)

Gardner's work emphasizes some of what has already been noted above; for example, that curricula decisions include a question of purpose, e.g., why would we have students study history, or sociology or philosophy?, to decisions about the knowledge base and content of each of the disciplines. For example, the current philosophy program of studies emphasizes "content" in terms of the knowledge outcomes focused on the history of western philosophy and making comparisons between philosophers. Apart from the fact that the content would now be considered too "Euro-centric," the argument being made here is that students should be engaged in "doing" philosophy; e.g., focusing on important life-based scenarios and experiencing that they are "somebodies-in-particular" (Kaye & Thomson, 2004).

It cannot be overemphasized that decisions about the knowledge base cannot be restricted to content alone; what is critical about a discipline is its method of inquiry, and what that method of inquiry can contribute to a student's understanding of particular events, situations or topics of interest. Social sciences/humanities courses must focus on methods of inquiry, as well as the multiple forms of communication that are both unique to and cross disciplinary boundaries.

2. *Deliberating on topics and questions of interest and relevance to students as part of deciding which courses to include*. Currently there are nine separate social sciences courses in the Alberta Education high school curriculum. As argued above, without a clear sense of purpose about what such courses serve, it becomes a somewhat difficult and haphazard problem to decide what or what not to include or offer. In part, of course, choices depend on the resources available in school districts and individual schools and the ability of teachers to work within the disciplines offered.

Gardner's emphasis on the importance of the disciplines and disciplinary thinking does not mean, however, that distinct social sciences courses have to be singular and stand-alone. One suggested approach may be to think about the social sciences disciplines as offering ways of inquiry and thinking about important questions and topics germane to students' lives and interests or as crossdisciplinary or interdisciplinary themes. A few examples may be offered here: ecological and environmental issues, which might incorporate history, sociology and economics; e.g., How did people in the past or in other cultures deal with environmental crises? What are the economic, political, philosophical, and social questions and structures involved? How might we live differently in the world?

Other possible and crossdisciplinary studies could include topics such as popular culture, multiculturalism, architecture and the construction of human spaces, the interrelationships between art and human life, understanding human health, the lives of families or relationships to other species.

The point is that the social sciences courses become less about themselves and more about real-life issues and experiences that students encounter. The social sciences courses and the forms of disciplinary thinking they offer become resources for rich inquiry into the multiple, complex and fascinating qualities of the human experience, but are organized around key themes that have ongoing relevance to students' lives and experiences.

3. *Providing opportunities to link learning with application.* One of the potential benefits that the social sciences courses may offer, which is perhaps less achievable in the regular curriculum, is that students have opportunities to link learning with practice and real actions in the community, and in general, to experience learning as becoming able to apply knowledge and inquiry to other situations. In The Alberta Teachers' Association study, *Trying to Teach, Trying to Learn: Listening to Students* (2003), several high school students who were interviewed for the study mentioned the importance of experiencing learning as connected to real issues and situations, and the sense of achievement when learning could be experienced as "hands-on." The notion of application here does not have to be narrowly construed as doing "service work", for example, although there are interesting possibilities to explore there. Rather, if constructed well, social sciences courses can provide experiences where students can be engaged deeply and meaningfully in exploring questions that are important in their lives, as some of the examples of topics above suggest.

4. *Enhancing experiences of communication and representations of learning.* A distinct advantage complementary courses offer is that they are not tied to large-scale or standardized testing. This is not to dismiss the importance of the diploma exams in high school or the importance of assessment in general but simply to say that complementary courses can provide alternative experiences of successful learning for students. Each of the social sciences offers unique and alternative forms of communication whether it is through reports, narratives, case studies and/or non-written forms of representation such as art, music and dance. Social sciences courses can provide experiences that broaden the range of expression and multiple modalities of representation. The uses of information technologies here is something that would be integral to learning approaches in the social sciences.

5. *From a surfeit of information to developing understanding and meditating on the self, others and the world.* Information technologies and the Internet have engulfed us as never before with all kinds of available information. Social sciences curricula may also suffer from too much content, too much information and not enough focus and opportunity for making sense of the world. As Andreas Huyssen has written, we have a surfeit of stories at our disposal but lack overarching narratives that can provide us with meaning and sense. In any thoughtful review of social sciences courses, the question of what may contribute to meaning and sense making, must be paramount.

6. *Re-enchanting the experience of learning*. Offering alternative programming in the social sciences and humanities, as outlined above, offers opportunities for students to experience learning in terms of interesting disciplines and ways of inquiring into issues and questions of great human interest. To state this in another way, alternate programming can "enchant" learning in terms of students' existential realities; e.g., the development of language, learning the narrative structure of different disciplines and understanding origins of their own and others' practices. This learning may also help young people appreciate the way that human knowledge relates to questions of living well and ethically. Arguing for the notion of enchantment in learning, Smits (2006), writes:

> Example of students' experiences [in school] serve as a reminder that where learning works for students is not in the abstract and not in some pre-figured moment of achievement of understanding, but very much in experience, in moments when forms of attachment and forms of imagination may come together with a sense of oneself as a person.

The option of well-designed and richly conceived disciplinary inquiry may indeed offer such moments of enchantment for students.

SUMMARY—FURTHER AND ONGOING TASKS AND DECISIONS

In summary, this report has provided a basis for further inquiry and decision making as to the viability, need and possible directions for programs of study in the complementary social sciences and humanities courses.

At a minimum, given that there have been no major revisions to or updating of existing programs, the report demonstrates the urgent requirement for such revision, if these courses are to be retained as credible options in the high school curriculum.

The report also demonstrates that there are existing social sciences programs in different educational jurisdictions across Canada and, therefore, the retention and offering of such courses is consistent with practices elsewhere.

The annotated bibliography offers an overview of the literature that may inform questions of why complementary social sciences courses may be offered at the high school level, focusing on issues such as student engagement, retention rates and the appeal to a broader range of interests and aptitudes.

The last part of the report asks the question of whether or not offering additional courses is redundant in relation to Alberta's new program of studies for social studies. In other words, an argument can be made that all students should experience this program as fully as possible, with its emphases on such outcomes as citizenship, identity, inquiry and understanding diverse perspectives.

To retain the social sciences courses in their current form, or in some revised configuration, deliberation on the following curricular and pedagogic issues would have to be considered.

1. Thinking about complementary courses as offering enrichment for students of diverse interests and abilities.
2. Strengthening disciplinary learning and thinking rather than simply learning about the disciplines; encouraging in-depth thinking about fewer key topics.
3. Providing possibilities for understanding the foundations of different careers and vocations.
4. Focusing on the local, particular and timely qualities of students' experiences.
5. Offering choices to schools and school districts to address particular needs and interests.

In general, this report argues that, if retained in some form or another, revisions should follow the ensuing principles and ideas.

1. Reviewing the courses for content and the relationship of that content in terms of encouraging forms of thinking and inquiry; focusing on topics and content of both enduring and contemporary relevance to students.

2. Revisioning and rewriting the aims and purposes of the courses as a whole and in terms of each discipline that might be offered.

3. Developing the programs to address questions about what engages students in learning.

4. Encouraging forms of learning that allow students to apply knowledge to new situations and problems in their own life worlds.

5. Focusing on enriched forms of communication informed by different disciplinary practices as well as encouraging the experience and practice of different forms of representation.

6. Learning how to use information to build more substantive understandings and to experience learning, in general, in more engaged ways.

7. Authentic forms of assessment should be encouraged and integrated from the beginning that would include considering the following, which are reinforced previously in the discussion of the purposes and pedagogic approaches for social sciences courses.
   a. Dealing with the question of "what is learning for?" This question implies that we need to avoid a focus that is only "learning about" and instead emphasize learning as the exercise of important disciplinary skills and unique forms of inquiry.
   b. Consider the question, "who is the learner?" Assessment should consider seriously the needs posed by differentiation and the diversity of learners and their capabilities and interests.
   c. Related to the question of the identity of learners, there is the question of how we think about learners and what each learner brings as potential, implying a move away from a "deficit" approach in curriculum to one that recognizes and encourages diverse strengths.
   d. Assessment must address the "performative" qualities of learning discussed in the report, namely, the practice of inquiry, disciplinary thinking, applying knowledge to new problems and situations and the kinds of aptitudes required for the development of a meaningful and engaged notion of citizenship.
   e. Assessment in the complementary courses offer students the opportunity to express understanding in different forms of representation, whether in forms of writing or other kinds of representational activities and modes of expression.

In general, the recommendations presented in this report are consistent with the Ministry of Education's business plan that is aligned and supports the goals and priorities of the *2008–2011 Government of Alberta Strategic Business Plan*.

The following environmental factors have been identified as having significant potential to influence the Ministry of Education's direction. The Ministry has considered these factors in the context of identifying strategic priorities and strategies that will ensure high-quality learning opportunities, excellent student outcomes and Ministry support for continuous improvement to the education system.

Learning in the 21st Century
The beginning of the 21st century has brought about significant changes to society. These changes—diversity of student population, new and emerging occupations and careers, shifts in family structures, what we now know about how students learn and increased use of technology—have all impacted teaching and learning. These shifts have been acknowledged by Alberta Education and its approach to program development with consideration for learning in the 21st century.

Advancing Alberta's place in a new knowledge-based society necessitates the development of essential skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, innovation, consensus-building, collaboration and self-direction, which continue to be important. As well, students and teachers in Alberta need to be equipped to access and convert information into understanding in a meaningful way. The ability to synthesize and develop core understandings is key to responding to changes in the future. Alberta's students need to be able to respond and adapt to change as well as develop, transfer and apply their knowledge and skills. They also need to have opportunities to develop self-reliance, to learn to support themselves and their families and to contribute to their communities. A range of choices in careers should be available to them so they feel fully engaged as active and responsible citizens, playing a role in Alberta's growth and future. *http://education.alberta.ca/department/businessplans.aspx*

Other important factors for Albertans are participation and completion rates, success for all students, First Nations, Métis and Inuit student success, strengthening the education sector workforce, enhancing relationships, access to early learning opportunities and intervention for at-risk children.

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