

First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) Curriculum Infusion

Jurisdiction: Alberta

Contact: Jane Martin

Level: K-12

Theme: Curriculum/materials

Description of Practice:

First Nations, Métis and Inuit governance, history, treaty and Aboriginal rights, lands, cultures and language perspectives are being infused into the revised Social Studies Program and into other programs of study. This new Social Studies curriculum is being phased in over the next three years, with K – 3 being piloted this year. Student basic resources to support the K-3 curriculum have been published and resources for grades 4 – 7 are currently in development.

Background:

The *Social Studies Program of Studies, Kindergarten to Grade 3 (2005)*, was implemented in Alberta schools beginning in September, 2005.

- Included in the Program Vision is the following statement: “The program reflects multiple perspectives, including Aboriginal and Francophone, that contributes to Canada’s evolving realities. It fosters the building of a society that is pluralistic, bilingual, multicultural, inclusive and democratic.” This Program Vision recognizes Aboriginal perspectives and experiences as foundational components of Canada’s identity.

First Nations, Métis and Inuit Elders, community members and educators have been involved in the development of the programs of study, and continue to work closely with Alberta Education in the development of resources that support the program of studies.

To support implementation of the K-3 Social Studies, a Summer Institute was held in August 2004 which featured an Aboriginal Perspectives Day. Teachers had the opportunity to learn and experience from First Nations and Métis Elders and presenters of First Nations and Métis cultural traditions, histories, identities and languages.

At the August 2005 Summer Institute, another Aboriginal Perspectives Day was held for grades 4 and 7 teachers, again, involving First Nations and Métis Elders and cultural presenters. A similar event is planned for August 2006 for grades 5, 8 and 10 teachers.

Alberta Education is continuing the infusion of Aboriginal perspectives into other programs of study, such as, science and mathematics.

Development:

Development of the Social Studies curriculum involved external review teams of social studies teachers, subject area specialists, francophone teachers and FNMI teachers. The internal Alberta Education review teams also represented multiple perspectives.

Since January 2005, Curriculum, Learning and Teaching Resources, Learning Technologies, and Aboriginal Services staff have been meeting with an advisory focus group to address implementation support for teacher development and awareness of infused perspectives.

Consultation and collaborative meetings are planned to directly involve elders and community advisors for the review of programs of study, development of a *Draft Curriculum Handbook for*

Aboriginal and Indigenous Perspectives, review of Aboriginal Content Guidelines (ACG) and validation of Aboriginal Studies digital resources to support implementation of revised programs of study.

Aboriginal teachers are involved in reviewing outcomes in core subjects that are in the review section of the development cycle. These include Biology, Chemistry, Physics (20, 30), Knowledge and Employability, and Mathematics Kindergarten to Grade 9.

In developing a draft template for the *Draft Curriculum Handbook for Aboriginal and Indigenous Perspectives*, Alberta Education selected an advisor committee of First Nations and Métis peoples to support the writing. Also, in this collaborative effort, three committee members were selected from the Cree, Kainai and Métis Nations as writers. The committee identified these guiding principles to support Aboriginal perspectives in the classroom by:

- Increasing teacher's awareness and understanding of multiple perspectives within (FNMI) histories, identity, culture and languages
- building and working in collaboration with FNMI stakeholders for the sharing and acknowledgement of cultural knowledge and values
- recognizing the teacher as catalyst for the awareness of ACG for resources and direction that lead to the understanding of Aboriginal and Indigenous perspectives

Evidence:

To ensure an accurate reflection of Aboriginal perspectives in the province, the consultation process continues to build networks for the purpose of understanding the community dynamics and honoring the customs and traditions to further develop the *Draft Curriculum Handbook for Aboriginal and Indigenous Perspectives*.

Currently, ongoing meetings with Alberta Elders and First Nations and Métis communities are being held to develop illustrative examples containing quotations, songs and biographies to reflect traditional value systems, community protocols, histories, cultures, languages, lands, treaty, governance, well-being and scientific knowledge to create appreciation and understanding in revised programs of study, resources and digital learning technologies.

Adaptability:

- As the focus of this program was on collaboration with local communities and educational stakeholders in order to identify and meet curriculum needs, it is easily adaptable to other jurisdictions.

Further Information:

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