**Equity and Social Justice: From Theory to Practice**

**Course Description**
This course enables students to develop an understanding of the theoretical, social, and historical underpinnings of various equity and social justice issues and to analyse strategies for bringing about positive social change. Students will learn about historical and contemporary equity and social justice issues in Canada and globally. They will explore power relations and the impact of a variety of factors on equity and social justice. Students will develop and apply research skills and will design and implement a social action initiative relating to an equity or social justice issue.

While it is important that a variety of resources are available to support students' learning, teachers must preview materials (e.g., print, web-accessed, photographs, song lyrics, videos, articles) in advance to ascertain their credibility and suitability for use with their classes and to align with Board policies and guidelines.

**Background**
Equity and Social Justice: From Theory to Practice is one of four Equity Studies courses included in *The Ontario Curriculum, Social Sciences and Humanities, Grades 9 to 12, (Revised) 2013*. This course is intended to prepare students to engage in their communities and explore opportunities that can effect positive change in their world.

Students are challenged to critically examine their own beliefs about social justice and are given frequent opportunities to consider that the ways in which they see their world help them to become conscientious citizens who work to create a positive change in their own community and, by extension, in the global community.

Students examine important examples of the efforts of individuals and organizations in addressing social justice and equity issues at local, national, and international levels. By exploring topics from multiple perspectives, they make connections and critically think about a course of action to pursue in their culminating task and possibly in life.

Students work with sensitive issues in this course. Their willingness to engage with course materials individually, in small groups, or as a class depends largely on the rapport developed by the teacher. Teachers should spend some time early in the course getting to know their students and establishing an environment of inclusion and safety. Open, honest dialogue and trust-building activities which assure students that they are in a safe space are valuable in supporting students' learning.

Some topics, issues, and materials could elicit considerable emotional response from some students. Being sensitive to these potential reactions, teachers need to craft a meaningful entry point to help students begin to understand these issues. It is equally important to provide safe exit points from the material that allow students to be heard and valued as they share their perspectives either openly with the class or privately with the teacher.
Cultural responsiveness is equally important. Teachers should reference and introduce a wide variety of material from different perspectives, so that students can explore many voices in all matters related to the human condition in order to develop informed opinions. The resources listed in this resource provide a starting point for teachers to create this experience.

The driving force behind the structure for this resource is student engagement. By engaging in a social action initiative, students deepen their learning and acquire the skills they need to be lifelong contributing members of their communities.

In planning this course, teachers should consider local agencies that can be introduced to students, through guest speakers or field trips, to enhance students’ experience.

Plan for the Course

Essential to the action-based outcome of affecting a better world, students must understand social justice and equity from both an intellectual and active stance. Therefore, it is important that students reflect on their learning as they move to action. The big ideas and units in this resource are structured within a framework of **Think, Talk, Act and Reflect** (Courtesy: The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives), which requires that students take a disciplined approach to studying the material before acting on the world around them.

In the **Think** part of the framework, the ideas of individuals, groups, and/or movements are introduced. Exploring the ideas of others is a fundamental process in developing both critical thinking and literacy. In critical thinking, one considers their own frameworks and lenses in light of questioning prior thought; while literacy insists upon going beyond the literal meaning of text to uncover what is both included and not included in the narrative. Together, these skills help students hone their ability to ask questions of others and of themselves and to begin the process of developing their own worldview from a position of organized inquiry.

The **Talk** part of the framework is designed to cluster three major areas of the course that lend themselves to considerable discussion: power and privilege; media and its representations; and the role of the individual as each impact, and are impacted, by social justice and equity matters. Given the learning and perspective-building achieved in the Think section, students are ready to apply that knowledge to more specific issues and case studies and to ‘talk’ about them from a position of intellectual context.

Prior to students engaging in actions with regard to social justice and equity issues, they should endeavor to understand who is presently addressing these matters, and assess how effective these efforts are. This reinforces prior learning, broadens their understanding of social justice and equity issues in general, and further develops their knowledge of avenues for social change. Students should also **Reflect** upon what they are doing now (or what else they could be doing) in the area of social justice.
The Act part of the framework formulates a meaningful action around a social justice and/or equity issue. Preparing the student for the action plan (Culminating Task) should be an ongoing endeavor throughout the course that can be Reflect upon at the end.

The units present a plan for addressing the concepts and skills expressed in the big ideas and curriculum expectations. The curriculum expectations for research and inquiry skills are spiralled through all of the units to give students multiple opportunities for practice and to support them with content for the culminating task.

The course culminating task is a social action project to be completed in the school and/or wider community. Teachers should introduce this task near the beginning of the course and, when planning the instruction and learning, should weave elements of the culminating task throughout so that students invest in building their inquiry skills throughout the study to prepare for this final project.

After completing their social action plan, students Reflect on the results of their actions and think about how they could be more successful in having an impact.

In Unit 1, students consider the thinking of others in the field to provide an intellectual foundation upon which to reconcile the ideas of others with their own.

In Units 2, 3 and 4, using a critical lens, students talk through issues and case studies encompassing power and privilege, media representations and the role of the individual in matters of social justice and equity. They reflect on what is currently being done as well as what could be done in the future.

In Unit 5, students act by developing a plan of action to address a pressing matter of social justice and/or equity in their community. Once completed, they reflect on the impact of their efforts.

The table illustrates how a teacher might plan the course using this framework:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNIT</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>RESEARCH/INQUIRY CONNECTIONS</th>
<th>ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Think</td>
<td>Foundations</td>
<td>Think about social justice and equity and its impact from a personal perspective</td>
<td>Exploring</td>
<td>Identify potential issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Talk</td>
<td>Power and Privilege</td>
<td>Examine various issues related to power and privilege. Determine how personal relationships are affected by power and privilege</td>
<td>Investigating</td>
<td>Make connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Talk</td>
<td>Media and Social Justice and Equity</td>
<td>Examine the role of the media in affecting change in matters of social justice and equity issues</td>
<td>Investigating</td>
<td>Provide evidence of impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Talk</td>
<td>What Is My Role?</td>
<td>Determine how everyday actions impact those around them and how they can help</td>
<td>Processing Information</td>
<td>Analyse and report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Act</td>
<td>Making a Difference</td>
<td>Decide on a plan to address an equity and social justice issue</td>
<td>Communicating and Reflecting</td>
<td>Take action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflect</td>
<td>Reflecting on the Results</td>
<td>Reflect on the success of the social action</td>
<td>Communicating and Reflecting</td>
<td>Assess</td>
</tr>
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**Sources for Information**


**The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.** 2013. Web. <http://www.policyalternatives.ca/> This organization is an independent, non-partisan research institute based out of Ottawa, concerned with issues of social, economic, and environmental justice. This ‘think tank’ publishes Canadian-focused articles about numerous social justice and equity issues, providing a starting place for research into subject matter from the liberal side of the political spectrum.

**CBC Digital Archives.** 2013. Web. <http://www.cbc.ca/archives/> This site has a bank of clips on a number of issues covered in this course. Material is organized by category and topics (e.g., Racism in the Society category; Trade Unions in the Economy and Business category). Clips can be used to introduce topics or send students in a particular direction. Teacher kits are also available online.

**Centre for Social Justice: Fighting against inequalities in income, wealth and power.** n.d. Web. <http://www.socialjustice.org/> This Canadian organization brings together secular and religious communities, as well as universities and unions, to work towards solving matters of social injustice and inequity. Information on topics, such as gender, race, and wealth gaps, can provide an important starting point for teacher and student research.

**Challenging McWorld, 2nd ed.** Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2005. Print. Today’s youth live, communicate, and act in a wired world of corporate logos, symbols and branding. “McWorld” is the symbolic term used to capture the realities of corporate-driven globalization. This book provides one- to two-page synopses of issues from a range of social justice and equity perspectives. It includes lesson plans and interactive supplements.

**Doc Zone with Ann-Marie MacDonald.** n.d. Web. <http://www.cbc.ca/doczone/> This site has many Canadian documentaries for use as general topics. Streaming episodes are frequently updated. Teacher kits are also available.


**Facing History and Ourselves.** 2013. Web. <http://www.facing.org/> The organization helps educators teach topics in social justice and anti-oppression pedagogy and provides grade-appropriate resources. It uses the Holocaust as a narrative from which to examine many human rights/injustice issues.

**The Fraser Institute.** 2010. Web. <http://www.fraserinstitute.org/> The Fraser Institute is an independent, non-partisan research and educational organization based in Vancouver. This ‘think tank’ provides articles and items that are starting places for the conservative views of the political spectrum to be voiced.
Sources for Information

Lewis, Stephen. *Race Against Time.* Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 2005. Print. This work, by the former UN Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, outlines what needs to be done for the UN Millennium Goals to be realized by 2015. Mr. Lewis outlines a plan that asks all nations to strip away their power and privilege and create an action plan for positive change. This book helps students raise their sense of activism and craft their own action plans.

Nutt, Samantha. *Damned Nations: Greed, guns, armies, and aid.* Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2011. Print. This author, activist, and founder of War Child Canada outlines the role of NGOs and governments in the war-torn regions of the world. Chapter 4, on the hubris of NGOs that seek to “help” in a complex region gripped by crisis, may hold interest for students considering what organization to support for their action plan.

*Photosensitive.* n.d. Web. <http://www.photosensitive.com/> This site is the work of a collection of Canadian photographers who believe photography has the potential to affect change in the world. The issues represented on the site show teachers and students the world of photo-activism from a Canadian perspective.


*TED: Ideas worth Spreading.* Web. n.d. <http://www.ted.com/> This site has short talks on many subjects, including social justice and equity. Teachers and students can use these talks to begin discussion or to include in presentations.

*Teen Talk.* n.d. Web. <http://teentalk.ca/> This website reaches out to teenagers on a number of issues. The Issues choices on the site provide short introductions and links to teen-appropriate material that introduces subjects, such as body image, discrimination, and power and privilege.
Students develop a deeper understanding of what this course is about through an introduction to thinkers in the field and the issues they undertake. They learn the lexicon surrounding social justice and equity matters, as well as perspectives and approaches from which to consider issues. Students learn to develop informed opinions on topics and issues presented to them and how to invoke both authorship and insight in their articulation of their position.

As students explore issues and ideas, they form the basis for their social action plan (the culminating task). Teachers can direct their initial search to a range of issues in these categories: Canadian and Global Historical and Contemporary Issues, Globalization and Economics, and the Environment.

**Big Ideas**

- What is social justice and equity and how do they impact me?
- How have diverse perspectives on social justice and equity evolved over time?
- What are the contributions of some people, groups, and movements in the field?

**Overall Expectations**

A1. Exploring: explore topics related to equity and social justice, and formulate questions to guide their research;

B1. Approaches and Perspectives: demonstrate an understanding of a range of perspectives on and approaches to equity and social justice issues, and of factors that affect inequity and social injustice;

C2. Leadership: evaluate the contributions of individuals and groups and/or movements identified with specific aspects of the struggle for equity and social justice;

C3. Policies, Strategies, and Initiatives: compare policies, strategies, and initiatives used by various groups, including indigenous peoples and women, to address equity and social justice issues in a variety of jurisdictions.

**Questions to Guide Student Learning**

Teachers could use these questions to set a context in which the students can begin to identify and think about social justice and equity issues:

What are some issues of fairness or inequity that bother you at school? In our city/town? In our province? In our country? In the world?

- Why do these issues bother you?
- Who is in a position to make changes about these issues?
- What part do you play in the issue(s)? What part do you/could you play in resolving the issues?

**Note:** This may be an opportunity to discuss the concept ‘power and privilege’ to help students realize that these elements can both intentionally and unintentionally exacerbate a problem.
Teachers could use questions such as the following to guide students as they explore how others have identified and addressed issues related to social justice and equity:

- What is social justice? What is equity?
- What have others said about solving the issues we are discussing?
- How can theories, such as post-colonialism, critical race theory, and anti-oppression theory, help us understand complex issues?
- Who are some of the major thinkers/writers in this area?
- How do your views align with, or challenge, the perspectives held by others in the field?
- How did the historical context of these thinkers affect their views? How does your context affect your views?
- How do people’s social and cultural beliefs shape how they approach an issue?

Teachers could consider the following questions to guide student learning about the perspectives of institutions and movements and the way they deal with and act on these issues:

- How do systems and groups cause inequity and injustice?
- How do public and private systems and groups address issues of social justice and equity?
- What benefits and challenges are different for systems and groups than for individuals doing the same?
- In what ways have religious and secular perspectives been successful or unsuccessful in addressing these issues?
- What are the benefits and challenges of organizing to achieve goals? (e.g., Project Ploughshares and The Canadian Labour Movement)
- How are government and non-government organizations similar and different in their approaches to solving issues of social injustice and inequity?
In this unit, students are exposed to a number of new ideas and issues. Case studies and writing in role or role-playing can provide a non-threatening way for students to ‘argue’ a perspective or to take a contrary view without feeling vulnerable or singled-out.

Given that many individuals, perspectives, and institutions have been examined, students could adopt one of these stances to address a problem of social justice and/or inequity in a café-style setting. Tabling an issue and discussing it in the atmosphere of an ‘historical roundtable’ or ‘solutions café’ gives students the relaxed atmosphere in which they can weigh their knowledge of others’ perspectives against their own.

Using appropriate terminology and by referencing a variety of positions, students could explore many perspectives freely. Students can display their knowledge with a written component (e.g., an opinion piece, letter to future generations) or other form of communication (e.g., media presentation) that places their own views in context of their learning in direct dialogue with the teacher.

Guiding Questions
Teachers could consider the following perspectives as they plan their assessment:

- How well do students understand the concepts of social justice and equity and the diverse perspectives from which to approach this field of study?
- How well can students understand the ways individuals and systems create and perpetuate social injustice and inequity, and the historical contexts in which these ideas were formed?
- What evidence shows that students can predict the next stage of evolution in this thinking based on their learning to date?
- How well can students articulate their own perspectives and invoke the perspectives of those studied in this unit to support their views?
- What evidence is there that students can employ critical thinking/literacy lenses to their own ideas and the ideas of others?
- How well are students able to distinguish points of view in written, visual, and oral communication?
- What perspectives/ideas are students likely to struggle with and how can I help?
### Assessment of Learning

#### Guiding Questions

Teachers could consider the following when choosing a format for their assessment:

- If students feel uncomfortable sharing their ideas in discussion, how can they make their perspectives known?
- What evidence is there that students can communicate their learning in a way that is interesting to their peers and has choice built into the delivery?
- How does the product enable the students to convey effectively their perspectives to authentic audiences?
While it is important that a variety of resources are available to support students’ learning, teachers must preview materials (e.g., print, web-accessed, photographs, song lyrics, videos, articles) in advance to ascertain their credibility and suitability for use with their classes and to align with Board policies and guidelines.

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This resource connects students with some of the most prolific thinkers and activists in the area of social justice and equity. The companion website provides more connections.


The site offers a number of resources and lesson plans for peace education; song lyrics to speeches and videos provide ways to begin conversations about social justice and equity.


These articles provide starting points for discussing the history of social justice from a Canadian perspective.

**Dancing with the Octopus.** n.d. Web. <http://dancingwiththeoctopus.com/about/> This movement, film, and resource are dedicated to improving the participation of women in Canadian politics (and abroad). Many action-based items are available for classroom use.


This site offers educators a number of ideas regarding RAFT exercises and ways to implement them.


This article gives teachers an overview of the historical contexts for understanding social justice and the movements and people who drove them.


This site examines the growing wealth gap among Canadians. It has many interactive components and fact-sheets that make a complex topic accessible to students.


This site provides a range of multimedia resources to inform students and community leaders about the history, current status, and future complexity of human rights in Ontario and Canada.


This book looks at many social justice issues in Canadian History as told by the activists and resisters who challenged the injustices. It provides insight into Canada’s social history and introduces major players in this field.


This site organizes seven speakers into a group discussing major issues of today and what they are doing about them. These conversations begin discussions about the topics impinging on us today and ‘who’ is doing ‘what’ about them.


War Child’s mission is to work with war-affected communities to help children reclaim their childhood through access to education, opportunity, and justice. It takes an active role in raising public awareness around the impact of war on communities and the shared responsibility to act. This area of the site offers many ideas to begin teaching for social justice and places international events in the context of the complex questions surrounding social justice and equity. It includes plans and templates to begin actionable work in planning for the culminating activity.
This unit explores the relationships of power and privilege. Students begin to understand how ‘just being themselves’ places them in positions of power or powerlessness. This unit is grounded in an historical understanding of ways both power and privilege has been wielded in the past and how that history has bearing on us today.

The unit is divided into understanding the dynamics between those with more and less power and privilege, and self-reflection in light of that learning. Teachers must be conscious of the class dynamics in order that the discussions do not lead students to feel maligned (e.g., issues of race, gender and economics).

In preparation for their social action, students extend what they learned from exploring issues, organizations, and people/thinkers by investigating a chosen issue further. Teachers can help students solidify the direction of their action project by giving them opportunities to share their investigation of the issue, its needs, the people/institutions/organizations, and challenges facing the work, and then suggest an action plan to address it.

**Big Ideas**
- In looking at power and privilege; who gets what, and why do they get it?
- How do the things I do and say affect relationships between individuals and others?
- How does who I am influence the powers and privileges I enjoy?
- How do my beliefs and practices influence the way I am treated?

**Overall Expectations**

A2. **Investigating:** Create research plans and locate and select information relevant to their chosen topics, using appropriate social science and inquiry methods;

B2. **Power Relations:** analyse, in historical and contemporary contexts, the dynamics of power relations and privilege as well as various factors that contribute to power or marginalization;

C1. **Historical and Contemporary Issues:** analyse a range of historical and contemporary equity and social justice issues and the impact of economic and environmental factors on these issues.

**Questions to Guide Student Learning**

Teachers could use questions such as the following to help students understand that the extent to which they are privileged and have power is a key element to internalizing not only the issue itself but also how they approach others.

- What is power? What is privilege? Can you have one and not the other?
- Who is in charge of students’ lives at school? At home? In society?
- What criteria do you use to make conclusions about things?
- What elements give people an ‘advantage’ in life?
- In your thinking, which people ‘call the shots’ in Canada?
- How does language impact positively and/or negatively on the ‘statuses’ of people?

**Note:** Discussion of these questions could alienate and marginalize groups or individuals in the classroom. It may be prudent to have an anonymous form of data/perspective collecting (e.g., clickers, web-quiz, question box) to get the students’ views. Unpacking the answers together allows students to enter into discussion without having ‘labelled’ themselves at the start.
<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers could use questions such as the following to guide students as they examine who gets what and why they get it:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Why is Canada a democracy?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What encourages/discourages people to engage in political life?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What does history teach us about the ‘abuse of power’ and ‘othering’?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• How has Canada dealt with past injustices with respect to abuse of power? Have these past injustices been sufficiently redressed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What is androcentric language and how is it overtly and subtly used in our lives? What impact does this have on notions of both power and privilege?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Does our desire for material things and access to resources place us in a privileged relationship as compared to the rest of the world? Explain your thinking.</td>
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<td>Teachers could use questions such as the following to guide students as they think about and respond to: How do the things I do and say affect relationships between people?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Should ‘chivalry’ continue as a practice? How do perceived polite actions have their basis in power and privilege?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is using a phrase such as “It was just a joke!” enough to allay feelings of oppression? Give reasons.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• How do simple things, such as where and beside whom we sit in a room, invite questions about power and privilege?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What elements of language define groups? Why is this so? Are forms of language meant to include or exclude – or both?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How do the clothes I wear, the place in which I live, the things I have, the school I go to, align me with some groups and set me apart from others? Why?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers could use questions such as the following to guide students as they think about and respond to: Does who I am determine my power and privilege?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• In what ways does my gender or race influence how I am treated?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What have been the reasons for this treatment historically?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How have institutions that have oppressed genders and races been challenged? Were those challenges successful?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What are the challenges to redressing issues of power and privilege with respect to gender and race?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Describe a person of power that one sees in the media, e.g., CEO, Director of a large corporation, a politician. What more needs to be done?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Describe the ‘average’ politicians one sees in the media. Is this person representative of the population? Why or why not?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questions to Guide Student Learning

Teachers could use questions such as the following to guide students as they think about and respond to:

- Do my cultural and religious beliefs and practices influence the way I am treated?
- How have events from the past shaped our view of cultural and religious groups in Canada?
- What is the ‘dominant’ culture/belief system in Canada? How could this dominance create the conditions for oppression?
- What barriers could be present to people not of the dominant culture/belief system in Canada? How can this be addressed?
- What have governments done to address issues of power and privilege with respect to marginalized cultures and belief systems?
- Is the Charter of Rights and Freedoms sufficient to address these issues? Why or why not?
- Can one unlearn their power and privilege?

Assessment of Learning

Planning Notes

An important step for students in the inquiry-based learning model is ‘investigation.’ Students have learned about the ways history, community, economics, and environment all contribute to the power and privilege of individuals. As a means of pulling together information from a variety of areas covered in this section, they complete a ‘school audit.’ As an investigative task, they could make a template for an audit to aid in understanding the ways their school promotes notions of power and privilege. Students then reflect on the ways the information uncovered can be addressed.

Guiding Questions

Teachers could consider the following perspectives when planning their assessment:

- How do students distinguish between the concepts of power and privilege and articulate how they interrelate?
- In what ways can students explain how individuals and groups are marginalized from social institutions in Canada and share ideas for addressing this problem?
- What evidence is there that students are able to make a connection between their own lives and the power and privilege they offer?
- What impact has there been on redressing past injustices and inequities in Canada and have they been sufficient to the issue?
- What evidence is there that students can identify language (spoken and unspoken) and actions that perpetuate notions of power and privilege?
- What opportunities are there for students to identify and explain the ways Canadian society exacts environmental and economic tolls from the rest of the planet?
### Assessment of Learning

#### Guiding Questions

Teachers could consider the following formats when planning their assessment:

- Given the vast number of historical examples, what strategy (e.g., jigsaw) helps students to manage the information?
- What self-assessment tools are available to assess power and privilege and what commentary do they offer on the matter?
- Can students use critical literacy and thinking skills to discover implicit methods of perpetuating both power and privilege in a text?
- What creative means (e.g., a public forum) can students use for sharing ideas around this issue?
While it is important that a variety of resources are available to support students' learning, teachers must preview materials (e.g., print, web-accessed, photographs, song lyrics, videos, articles) in advance to ascertain their credibility and suitability for use with their classes and to align with Board policies and guidelines.

Sources for Information

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**A Class Divided**, William Peters (dir.) 1985. Film. 
<http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/a-class-divided/>

This documentary explores the famous experiment by grade 3 teacher Jane Elliott, who divided her class by eye colour, and follows up with both that teacher and her students many years later to learn how the experience changed their lives. Considerable footage of the original documentary, *Eye of the Storm* from 1970 is woven through the presentation.

**Indecently Exposed**, Trevor Grant (dir.) 55 mins. 2004. Film. 
<http://www.westwindpictures.com/site/our-work/documentary/indecently-exposed/>

This documentary re-introduces teacher Jane Elliott to students – this time in a Canadian setting tackling the issue of perceptions about Aboriginals in Canada. There are opportunities for teachers and students alike to challenge their perceptions re: Aboriginal perspectives, through the debrief of this documentary.


This resource provides an accessible introduction to the concepts of gender, sexuality, and social justice with appropriate articles, graphics, and other resources for advocates of social justice.


This book deconstructs gender, gender expression, issues, and social justice advocacy.


This documentary uncovers the way an economy is governed from afar by the needs of other nations impinging upon it. It provides a means to discuss economic privilege of the Western World on the Developing World.


This article explores an introspective woman's list of ways her skin colour affords her certain privileges in society that others might not enjoy. This “knapsack of special provisions” can be discussed, and added to, by all members of the class.


This resource makes the connection between systemic discrimination against First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples in Canada and current social issues affecting members of these communities.

**Quist-Adade, Charles, PhD. Teaching and [Un]Learning “Race” to “Non-Black” Students by a “Black” Professor.** Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Surrey, BC. 2007. Web. 
<http://www.kwantlen.ca/TD/past_issues/issue1-2/teaching_and_unlearning_race.html>

This site outlines the experiences of a sociology professor as he taught students to (un)learn race and cultural oppression. It includes class suggestions and reflections on the process.


This story of a girl in a Residential School provides a context through which students can develop an understanding of the ways in which a young girl comes to terms with systemic racism.


Shopping habits are a byproduct of mediation by ad companies and the byproducts of shopping are ripe for discussion about responsibility and awareness in privileged society.

<http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/whitewashed-unmasking-world-whiteness/>

A series of interviews with people, on their perspectives regarding the privilege associated with being ‘white,’ can be used as a discussion-starter on the matter of power and privilege.
Understanding how the media both reflects and shapes our worldview is an extension of many topics and issues students studied to date. This reflection provides a perspective from which to consider the media and its effect on social justice and equity issues.

As students continue to investigate issues concerning social justice and equity, they discern that ‘nothing is done by accident’ in the media – all remarks and depictions are carefully planned to elicit a response. In this unit, students explore the types of response and how those actions and responses – both positive and negative – connect to matters of equity and social justice.

As the next step of the inquiry-based learning model – processing information – students examine how information is both created and consumed. In this unit, students are well positioned to examine the literature surrounding their topic of choice for action and consider the methods through which they will convey their action plan with both care and impact.

- How does pop culture affect social justice and equity matters?
- What is the impact of stereotypes that are created, maintained, and perpetuated by the media?
- How can the media be used to affect change in matters of social justice and equity issues?

A2. Investigating: Create research plans and locate and select information relevant to their chosen topics, using appropriate social science and inquiry methods;

B3. Media and Popular Culture: assess the impact of media and popular culture on equity and social justice issues;

C1. Historical and Contemporary Issues: analyse a range of historical and contemporary equity and social justice issues and the impact of economic and environmental factors on these issues;

C2. Leadership: evaluate the contributions of individuals and groups and/or movements identified with specific aspects of the struggle for equity and social justice;

C3. Policies, Strategies, and Initiatives: compare policies, strategies, and initiatives used by various groups, including indigenous peoples and women, to address equity and social justice issues in a variety of jurisdictions.
Teachers could use questions such as the following to guide students as they think about and respond to: How does pop culture affect social justice and equity matters?

- How does one define ‘popular culture’?
- How prevalent is popular culture in my day-to-day life?
- What makes these particular cultural items popular?
- Is what is popular here also popular in other parts of the world? Why or why not?
- In what ways are race, gender, sexuality and socio-economic standing represented in various forms of popular media (e.g., print, movies, games, TV, online)?
- How is the concept of ‘othering’ achieved in popular media and what is the power of that act?
- Describe ideals that are created and maintained by the media. What purpose(s) do they serve?
- Why is this ideal popular in Western Culture?
- Historically, the ‘ideal’ has changed. Why? Who creates the ideal?
- How do major corporations affect, manipulate, and market the messages in popular culture?
- How do celebrities impact issues of social justice? (e.g., Bono, Angelina Jolie, Oprah)
- How do social media promote or detract from issues in social justice and equity (e.g., young women being bullied on-line)?

Teachers could use questions such as the following to guide students as they think about and respond to: What is the impact of stereotypes that are both created and maintained by the media?

- What is stereotyping?
- What is its impact on different groups (e.g., Aboriginal peoples, LGTBQ communities, women and men, religious and ethnic groups)?
- Who determines the way we view others? How?
- To what degree are the media congregated into fewer and fewer owner hands? Why is media congregation relevant to social justice and equity issues?
- How do the ‘victors’ control the message in their own culture? What effect does this have on our perceptions of events?
- Should the media have a responsibility to society in its portrayal of society at large? Give reasons.
### Questions to Guide Student Learning

Teachers could use questions such as the following to guide students as they think about and respond to: Can the media be used to affect change in matters of social justice and equity issues?

- A working definition of *manipulation* could be, “exerting shrewd or devious influence especially for one’s own advantage.” Is this definition adequate to understand media manipulation? How could one change it to make a better working definition?
- What specifically has been manipulated (e.g., their view of others, themselves, language)?
- When considering social media ‘most viewed’ lists – what patterns emerge regarding what captures your attention?
- Is the news unbiased? Give reasons for your opinion.
- When critically viewing different news media (e.g., Internet, newspapers, magazines), what patterns and conclusions emerge regarding perspective and bias in reporting?
- Do ‘Western’ media report differently from ‘Eastern’ or ‘middle Eastern’ media?
- How can you use the media for positive change?
- How has/can the media raised/raise awareness of social justice and equity issues in such a way as to effect change?
- What are examples of effective media campaigns for good?
- What role have modern digital media tools played in affecting social change? Give examples (e.g., Arab Spring, police-brutality exposés).
- How can modern digital media empower ‘every person’ so that social change can result?
- Do you think the media self-examines their role and responsibility in society? Give reasons to support your thinking.
Assessment of Learning

Planning Notes
Teachers are encouraged to pick a large issue happening in the world at the time this part of the course is taught or pick a significant issue from the past (e.g., 9-11) as the context for the assessment. Students could demonstrate their learning by producing a piece of investigative journalism that includes how the story is/was being told and what is/was missing in the story.

After students investigate various media sources related to the topic, they formulate ideas around the way things are portrayed in some media but not in others and ask questions as to why this is so. Many outlets for sharing and tapping into media are readily available as are individuals in the community who have expertise in the area (e.g., local paper editors, news anchors). Students read national and local reports on the issue from a variety of sources, such as newspapers, magazines, broadcasts, to analyse any biases (e.g., stereotypes, tokenism, and language use).

Guiding Questions
Teachers could consider the following questions as they plan their assessment:

- What resources do students access to get a broad perspective of how various media sources report on equity and social justice issues?
- How effectively are students able to research and to communicate the results of their inquiries within a social justice and equity context?
- What evidence is there that students can employ critical thinking/literacy lenses to their investigation?
- How well are students able to distinguish points of view in media sources?
- What do students use to successfully demonstrate their ability to assess the efficacy of the reports from various media sources?
- How does the product enable students to convey their perspective(s) on how media addresses social justice and equity issues?
While it is important that a variety of resources are available to support students’ learning, teachers must preview materials (e.g., print, web-accessed, photographs, song lyrics, videos, articles) in advance to ascertain their credibility and suitability for use with their classes and to align with Board policies and guidelines.

**Sources for Information**

While it is important that a variety of resources are available to support students’ learning, teachers must preview materials (e.g., print, web-accessed, photographs, song lyrics, videos, articles) in advance to ascertain their credibility and suitability for use with their classes and to align with Board policies and guidelines.


This area of the CBC Digital Archives is devoted to media company convergence and has clips that explore the topics: 'who controls the message' and 'journalistic freedom.'


This documentary explores Hip Hop’s relationship between the medium of the generation and the message its lyrics and image convey. It provides an in-depth look at the sexism, violence and homophobia in rap music and hip-hop culture through the lens of a former college star athlete. Students can connect quickly with the identifiable artists in the film and ask serious questions about themselves and their own interest in mediated messages through this documentary.


Clay Shirky, an American writer, consultant, and teacher explains how social media can be the vehicle for social change. Using examples, he shows how powerful the average person with a cell phone can be at telling “the truth.”


Klein is a Canadian who looks at the world of globalization and branding as a danger to society. The section on “cool making” is important as she discusses how simple objects, such as shoes, are hyped for sale. This perspective has particular resonance with teens given the profile of the learner as a self-conscious individual and susceptible to suggestion.


The Media Justice Project is an ongoing initiative supporting a network of media researchers, educators, journalists, activists, students, and citizens that are committed to improving our media system and society. Articles, videos, and links connect viewers to mainstream media so that they can weigh the presentation of information in media from a variety of sources.


MediaSmarts is a Canadian not-for-profit charitable organization for digital and media literacy. Their vision is that children and youth have the critical thinking skills to engage with media as active and informed digital citizens. It explores topics relevant to students, from stereotyping to body image.


This site publishes multi-media presentations devoted to issues of social justice and equity that can be viewed in the classroom. The group trains people in digital storytelling and this component holds possibility for the culminating activity.


PROOF uses visual storytelling for genocide prevention and peace building. This organization of photographers uses their skills to educate people in post-conflict societies about their heritage and bring that story to the mainstream media to enact change. Many photo essays are on this site dealing with numerous current issues for students and teachers to explore together.
Sources for Information


This documentary explores one journalist’s experience struggling with the blurred line between journalism and propaganda with respects to the Iraq war. The perspective is approachable by students as it blends footage and narrative that juxtaposes how information shapes opinion.


This pinboard provides many links to other sites dedicated to the discussion of social media and the media in general as a catalyst for social activism. It provides a strong base for beginning research on the power of media in this area.


This inspiring documentary is about a group of citizen journalists reshaping their world through social media. It chronicles the effect on ‘first social media Olympics’ in Vancouver by those using the various mediums to engage in the conversation about poverty and other social ills in their city while it was being watched by the world. It presents a Canadian look at the way social media can be used to affect change.
Throughout the units, students had opportunities to think about the origins of social justice and equity philosophy. They were introduced to some of the main thinkers in this area and discussed numerous issues in their historical and social justice and equity contexts.

As catalysts for either positive or negative effects on equity and social justice issues, students become more self-reflective and critical about their own actions. They develop a critical eye as they research organizations that deal with issues about which they care deeply and determine the lenses they use to assess an organization's efficacy and merits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Big Ideas</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• How do my everyday actions impact those around me?</td>
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<td>• Who inspires me?</td>
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<td>• How do I learn who to support?</td>
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<td>• What is being done and how can I help?</td>
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<th>Overall Expectations</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A1. Exploring:</strong> explore topics related to equity and social justice, and formulate questions to guide their research;</td>
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<td><strong>A3. Processing Information:</strong> assess, record, analyse and synthesize information gathered through research and inquiry;</td>
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<td><strong>A4. Communicating and Reflecting:</strong> communicate the results of their research, inquiry clearly and effectively and reflect on and evaluate their research, inquiry and communication skills;</td>
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<td><strong>B1. Approaches and Perspectives:</strong> demonstrate an understanding of a range of perspectives on and approaches to equity and social justice issues and of factors that affect equity and social justice;</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>D2. Opportunities for Participation:</strong> describe a variety of careers and volunteer opportunities in fields related to equity and social justice, and demonstrate an understanding of the skills and knowledge they require.</td>
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Questions to Guide Student Learning

Teachers could use questions such as the following to guide students as they think about and evaluate the efficacy of various efforts of individuals, organizations and governments:

- What organizations claim to address equity and social justice issues?
- What methods do these organizations employ to accomplish their stated aims?
- How are these organizations staffed?
- How are these organizations funded? How much of the revenue that they collect is directed toward their stated goals?
- What is an effective method to research various individuals, organizations and/or governments and their efficacy?
- What is an effective way to communicate the results of these inquiries and research?
- What can inspire me? How do I learn who to support? How can students get involved?

Assessment of Learning

Planning Notes

Students could prepare a ‘Social Justice and Equity Audit’ in which they assess social justice organizations and their efficacy. The audit of a specific social justice organization should examine impact, geographical reach of the organization, money collection and usage, and cost of operation.

Students should have varied opportunities to communicate the results of their inquiries (e.g., a policy briefing paper, an informative pamphlet, a journalistic review, an informational video, an in-class presentation). This could also manifest in a ‘town hall’ activity and, if possible, the greater school community could be invited to participate.

Students should be encouraged to reflect on what impact their own choices make; how ‘green’ these choices are (e.g., choices with regard to purchasing (fair trade), and degree of activism).

Guiding Questions

Teachers could consider the following questions as they plan their assessment:

- What resources do students access with regard to individuals and organizations involved in equity and social justice initiatives?
- How effectively are students able to research and to communicate the results of their inquiries about a social justice initiative?
- What do students use to successfully demonstrate their ability to assess the efficacy of various individuals and organizations, with regard to equity and social justice initiatives?
- What evidence can the students provide to demonstrate an appropriate level of reflection with regard to their inquiry of equity and social justice efforts?
While it is important that a variety of resources are available to support students’ learning, teachers must preview materials (e.g., print, web-accessed, photographs, song lyrics, videos, articles) in advance to ascertain their credibility and suitability for use with their classes and to align with Board policies and guidelines.

Sources for Information


This book takes a critical look at Canadian development NGOs and their impact on other countries, covering topics ranging from African poverty to the problems of Haiti.


This site addresses social justice issues through the lens of organized labour; there is also a social justice fund that has been established to assist with social justice issues internationally (Haiti, Pakistan, and Mozambique are examples). This organization also has a resource devoted to Aboriginal workers and workers of colour.


CRRF is devoted to eliminating racism. The site has a library, a bibliographic search tool for related resources, details of relevant legislation, and articles pertinent to interracial relations.


This site offers a comprehensive list of Canadian organizations dedicated to poverty and social justice. It also includes current nonprofit news, information, and updates.


Egale Canada Human Rights Trust is Canada’s only national charity promoting lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans (LGBTQ) human rights through research, education and community engagement. Topics include Youth and Safer Schools, Trans Rights, Discrimination and Hate Crimes, and Equal Families.

**Facing History and Ourselves.** 2013. Web. <www.facinghistory.org>

This site works to combat racism, anti-Semitism, and prejudice. It contains video clips and publications, as well as a lending library and audio/podcasts.


This site works to eliminate bullying, homophobia, transphobia, and other forms of discrimination in schools and youth communities. It provides resources, such as guides, posters, videos, and stories. It also offers programs for youth to get involved, which may inspire students’ ideas as to how to proceed with the course culminating task.


This site provides resources and education to encourage diversity and to combat homophobia in all its forms.


Prevnet is a site devoted to ending violence and bullying. Assessment tools are offered to determine if bullying is present, if relationships are healthy, and so on. There is also a research bank that includes bullying statistics, fact sheets, and reports.


This site contains resources on social justice and equity including Aboriginal rights, cyber-bullying and the status of women. It also contains articles and position papers.
In the previous unit, students focused on the actionable part of their learning and now they apply their knowledge to create a plan to address an equity and social justice issue. The purpose of this unit is to allow students to demonstrate their learning and to put their knowledge to work in a practical way.

**Big Ideas**

- What needs to be done to address the chosen social justice and/or equity issue?
- What kind of plan can be implemented to address this equity and social justice issue?
- What will determine if it is successful?

**Overall Expectations**

**A1. Exploring:** Explore topics related to equity and social justice, and formulate plans to guide their research;

**A2. Investigating:** Create research plans and locate and select information relevant to their chosen topics, using appropriate social science and inquiry methods;

**A4. Communicating and Reflecting:** Communicate the results of their research and inquiry clearly and effectively, and reflect on and evaluate their research, inquiry and communication skills;

**B1. Approaches and Perspectives:** Demonstrate an understanding of a range of perspectives on and approaches to equity and social justice issues, and of factors that affect inequity and social justice;

**D1. Promoting Equity and Social Justice:** Demonstrate an understanding of how personal values, knowledge, and actions can contribute to equity and social justice, and assess strategies that people use to address equity and social justice concerns;

**D3. Social Action and Personal Engagement:** Design, implement, and evaluate an initiative to address an equity or social justice issue.
Questions to Guide Student Learning

Teachers could use questions such as the following to guide students as they create their action plan:

- What needs to be done?
- What is the best method to use in researching this equity and social justice issue?
- What is the best method for reporting both the sources that you used and the results of your inquiries?
- What kind of plan can be implemented to address this equity and social justice issue?
- What do you need to do in order to implement this plan?
- How can you act in a way that will address the pertinent equity and social justice issue?
- How will you know if it is working?
- How will you know if your action plan is effective?
- What are your next steps to effectively enact your plan?
- Did you make the difference that you wanted to?

Questions to Guide Student Learning

Teachers could use the following questions to guide students’ reflection on their efforts:

- Now that the project is complete, how effectively did you plan?
- How can you measure any effects resulting from your efforts regarding equity and social justice?
- Did you communicate the results of your efforts clearly and effectively?
- What improvements could you make for future efforts?
- What other methods that you might have overlooked could you use as vehicles for equity and social justice messaging?
- In what ways could you conduct more effective and comprehensive research?
- How well was the message received by the target audience with regard to the equity and social justice issue?
- How effective was your plan overall?
### Assessment of Learning

**Planning Notes**

As a natural conclusion of the culminating task, students spend time reflecting on their social action. Using a variety of strategies, students reflect on their work and share their reflections either privately or publicly. They review their work and consider next steps to improve should they have the opportunity to continue with their plan.

**Guiding Questions**

Teachers could consider the following questions as they plan their assessment:

- How well are students able to identify a relevant, pertinent equity and social justice issue?
- Did students identify viable resources with which to conduct a study of an equity and social justice issue?
- How can students communicate the results of their inquiry clearly and effectively?
- What evidence is there that students are able to apply relevant social science and inquiry skills?
- What evidence is there that students formulated and implemented an effective plan to address the equity and social justice issue in question?
- What evidence is there that students reflected on the efficacy of their plan?
Sources for Information

While it is important that a variety of resources are available to support students’ learning, teachers must preview materials (e.g., print, web-accessed, photographs, song lyrics, videos, articles) in advance to ascertain their credibility and suitability for use with their classes and to align with Board policies and guidelines.

This site includes topics on equity and inclusion, housing and homelessness, and poverty reduction. Numerous reports that pertain to these issues could aid student research. Social Justice and Equity Organizations in Ontario to assist in the completion of the Course Culminating Activity:

This organization, dedicated to ending world hunger, has an extensive FAQ section that answers question regarding participation in this initiative (with active participation as a focus) that would better inform students as they complete their course culminating activities.

This organization works to promote global responsibility and accountability with a specific goal: the end to children being touched by war. The site contains recommended web sites, publications and a bibliography, as well as a Do Your Part section that details what students can do to have a direct impact on the pertinent issues addressed by this organization.