

Part 1: Social Studies, History and Geography – Curriculum Review Process

The focus of this session is on the revised Social Studies, Grades 1 to 6; History and Geography, Grades 7 and 8 curriculum policy document.

This session will involve some information that some people have seen before if they have attended presentations throughout the social studies, history and geography review process, or if they have participated in implementation training for the release of curriculum policies in other subject areas.

There are three parts to this recorded session. First, we will go over the curriculum review process. Second, we will delve into the findings of the review process, highlighting specific strengths and recommendations, and in the end, we will focus on specific changes to the Social Studies, Grades 1 – 6; History and Geography Grades 7 and 8 curriculum.

This slide highlights the stages of the review process, which we will look at in more detail in a moment. This is the same review process for all curriculum areas. The two Ministry branches responsible for curriculum are the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Branch, known as CAPB and the French-Language Education Policy and Programs Branch, known as FLEPPB. These two branches work closely together in parallel processes.

This is the first stage of the review process – Analysis and Synthesis.

During this stage research is collected from across Canada and around the world. Information is gathered about new concepts and the latest approaches to teaching. Benchmarking is done through the comparison of our curriculum to other jurisdictions. During this stage there is a technical analysis which includes a line by line review of the existing curriculum. This is a comprehensive process, which includes classroom teachers and curriculum experts. This process identifies what might need to change in the current curriculum.

Regional focus groups were held across Ontario which included teachers, administrators and other stakeholders. In these focus groups information is collected about strengths of the existing curriculum, suggestions about areas that needed to change and suggestions around the future direction of the curriculum.

Consultations were also conducted with different branches and Ministries in the government, a variety of different stakeholder groups and parent groups

All information was considered when developing a final recommendation report that was written to guide the changes made in summer writing.

In the summer of 2010 a diverse team of educators from across the province were brought in to begin the writing of the revised curriculum document. Writers were classroom teachers and subject specialists.

Writers brought a broad a range of skills and backgrounds including teachers who work with our English Language Learners, and with Students with Special Needs. Some had experience teaching First Nations, Métis or Inuit students, others had experience integrating learning about, through and in the environment, while others brought with them their experience with equity and diversity issues.

These teams also worked in partnership with writers from the French-Language Education Policy and Programs Branch.

During fall 2010 and winter 2011 we were into the feedback consultation process. This was a chance to show a draft of the revised curriculum and receive feedback on the document.

Feedback was received via face to face sessions or through an online survey. The feedback was considered and revisions were made.

From spring 2011 to winter 1012 we were involved in the editing process This is a detailed process that looks at language, balance of perspectives, consistency with other subject areas and ministry initiatives and readability.

Once we have a completed draft document we begin the fact checking and lens process. Included in the fact checking is an overall fact check for subject accuracy, a lens check by First Nations, Métis and Inuit, for environmental education, and for equity and bias.

Now we are into the last stage – the implementation training. In the spring of 2013 we held seven regional training sessions for all school boards, stakeholders and faculties of education.

These sessions looked at some of the key foundational pieces for the revised document, primarily the citizenship education framework, the concepts of disciplinary thinking and the inquiry process.

Material from these sessions plus some other implementation information will be posted online on the Curriculum page of EduGAINS.

In the fall of 2013 there will be another set of regional sessions that will focus on the incorporation of the First Nations, Métis and Inuit perspective, cross-curricular integration, use of spatial technology and strategies for combined grades.