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FOREWORD

Design for Social Studies, K - VI, a natural outgrowth of The Master Guide for Social Studies, K - XII, is a sequential, purposeful learning design for Primary/Elementary social studies classes. It was developed by the Department of Education's Social Studies Task Force III to meet the needs, interests, and capabilities of the province's children.

I am pleased to authorize the use of this publication in the schools of Newfoundland and Labrador. May it go far toward stimulating interest in the social studies and in providing teachers with information and helpful suggestions on the tasks which confront them daily in attempting to present social studies instruction effectively.

  
LYNN VERGE  
Minister of Education

## INTRODUCTION

The Social studies curriculum for Primary/Elementary schools concerns itself primarily with the dynamic relation of people to their social and physical world and, in that context, it makes an important contribution to the development of the person-citizen in society. The formation of the person-citizen is perceived by The Master Guide for Social Studies, K - XII to be the inclusive, overall goal of the social studies program for Newfoundland and Labrador schools. The Master Guide places emphasis on the two-fold nature of the goal, describing it as

1. Person-centered. The social studies should help the learner to find meaning in life and in human relationships as he or she develops in ways of knowing, thinking, feeling, valuing, and intelligent behaviour.
2. Citizen-centered. The social studies should help the learner understand the society in which he or she lives, develop the values and skills essential for effective citizenship, and apply this knowledge in daily living.

For The Master Guide then, the ultimate goal of the social studies program is the improvement of living, not merely in the classroom, but in the community, the province, the nation, and the world; it is designed to develop responsible, self-directing citizens. This statement of purpose in The Master Guide, followed by ideas to round out and detail a plan for social studies instruction at each grade level, served as a springboard for Design For Social Studies, K - VI and dictated the pedagogical

approach as a goal-referenced approach.

A goal-referenced approach to instructional planning defines learning in terms of identifiable expected outcomes for learners. For this reason it places great value on stating goals and objectives in terms of desirable pupil behaviours and attitudes. In Design For Social Studies K-VI, goals (areas of emphasis) and objectives

direct the selection of subject matter, teaching and learning activities, and instructional materials in such a way that they facilitate learning

direct the order and sequence of instruction because they indicate what skills are needed to complete each successive level of instruction and which content and skills precede them

provide the criteria for evaluating teaching and learning and help teachers judge the effectiveness of instruction

state the intent of instruction so that relevant learning can be identified and trivial learning avoided.

In Design for Social Studies, K - VI, major understandings or central ideas around which content learning in the social studies is to be organized and made meaningful provide a focus for areas of emphasis and for the knowledge objectives of the program. Helping children to grasp the major understandings is a basic responsibility of social studies teachings. Major understandings, however, are not to be taught directly; rather knowledge and understanding of them will result from the process whereby pupils build meaning gradually from many learning experiences. With teacher guidance, Primary and Elementary pupils will learn

to generalize, to state major understandings in their own words, as they work with facts and concepts in situations which involve language and thinking, information gathering, group work and play, and the tool skills of social studies. The social studies teacher knows the importance of the concepts embedded in the major understandings of Design For Social Studies, K - VI. Consequently, she or he is very careful that the key concepts of basic needs, interdependence, environment, human and natural resources, conservation, technology, change, society, culture, values, and behaviour are introduced and taught as the program recommends. This is not to suggest that Design For Social Studies, K - VI is a prescriptive program. It is not; it allows for, indeed, it encourages, flexibility and teacher-pupil creativity. Designed to give stability and continuity to the social studies curriculum from kindergarten through Grade Six, thus laying the foundation for the social studies in Junior High School, and arranged to give security to the classroom teacher, Design For Social Studies, K - VI still leaves room for a great deal of teacher-pupil planning and resourcefulness.

Childhood is the time to begin to develop wholesome attitudes and values and efficient social skills and abilities. Unless such learnings are started in childhood, they are not likely to be accomplished with the depth and breadth of understanding demanded by the emerging social scene. Design For Social Studies, K - VI, therefore, gives attention to values and skills objectives, as well as to knowledge objectives. It insists on the central importance of the role of values in the social studies

and puts emphasis on thinking skills. Our basic cultural values are important to us in Newfoundland and Labrador. Within society, the individual is extended both the opportunity and the responsibility for making many personal decisions about many things; for that very reason, children need to develop their thinking abilities and to establish a sound value system.

Design for Social Studies, K - VI has a pattern of sequence beginning with kindergarten and extending through Grade Six. Before pupils leave the Elementary school, they will have studied life in their immediate environment, neighbourhood, community, province and nation, and will have expanded the community concept to embrace world communities. As they move through the sequence, much attention is given to people, to self and others, and to the interrelationships that exist among social institutions, time and space, needs and resources. These relationships form the culture into which people are born and in which they function. The setting for all grades is the human community through which study the program aims to give children a broad understanding and appreciation of their place as participating members of society, as better citizens of their own community and of the world community.

Statements on children's growth and development are an important feature of Design For Social Studies, K - VI. From human biology, child psychology, and our own practical experience, we have much descriptive information about children. Teachers'

general expectations for their pupils are more realistic because of this information, but all teachers recognize that each child is somewhat different and unique. However, profiles of "seven-ness", "eight-ness", "ten-ness", and so on can assist teachers to anticipate what a group of Third Graders, for example, will be like, and for that reason Design For Social Studies, K - VI discusses age profiles of children in kindergarten through grade six, concluding each age profile with implications for instruction in the social studies.

The implications for instruction do not suggest a best method of teaching social studies. There is no one best method, rather, there is a method which, in a particular situation, for a definite purpose, at a specified grade level, with certain resources available, will be effective. Then again, it is not the purpose of a program design to discuss methodology in detail, nevertheless, the sample activities that tell how objectives can be achieved give favor to the thematic approach to instruction, to be used whenever possible and feasible. The thematic approach is an effective type of organization, and the close relationship of social studies to other areas - reading, language, art, music, science - can be utilized in developing needed concepts. The integrity of the theme experience, however, must be protected. It cannot be made the carrier of all learnings that are vital and important for children at school. Attempts to express one's thoughts and feelings concerning the theme, or to appreciate fully some aspects of it, will call for the utilization of other curriculum areas, and at times for the integra-

tion of some of these areas; however, all of this must take place within a sharply focussed theme and as direct means of making that particular learning venture more successful.

Design for Social Studies, K-VI takes care to point out that evaluation is a continuous and integral part of the social studies curriculum. When knowledge, values, and skills objectives have been stated, an effective program of evaluation can be developed that is comprehensive and cumulative, and open to many instruments and devices for assessing pupil growth. These devices can include observation, group discussion, interviews, paper and pencil tests, direct questioning, checklists, samples of work, questionnaires, anecdotal reports, and other subjective and objective techniques. The social studies is successful to the extent that children acquire the basic knowledge, values, and skills that are imperative for learning in an interdependent world. In particular, children must attain an understanding of their culture, the contributions of other cultures, the rights, privileges, and duties of citizens in the Canadian democracy, and a regard for the rights, privileges, beliefs and opinions of others.