

Applied Skills: Business Education, Home Economics, and Technology Education

Curriculum Connections

Business Education

The business education curriculum for grades 8 to 10 connects to social justice through a focus on

- the significance of competition and co-operation in business
- methods used to facilitate and predict economic development
- methods of resource allocation in various economic systems
- techniques used to market products or services globally
- how trends in society affect employment in the marketing sector and in education.

Home Economics

The home economics curriculum for grades 8 to 10 provides opportunities to have students

- identify a range of resources that can be used to meet needs and wants of individuals and families
- give examples of ways in which needs and wants of individuals and families change over time
- propose responsible marketplace practices for families
- identify socioeconomic factors that affect individuals and families as consumers
- demonstrate awareness of the global implications of decisions that individuals and families make about their needs and wants.

At the grade 10 level, the Family Studies home economics curriculum includes expectations related to

- the relationship between societal change and the changing definition of the family
- various family structures
- customs and traditions of families in various cultures
- how family values relate to the distribution and use of resources

The achievement of social justice depends very much on students having an understanding of the extent to which all people have common physical and psychological needs (e.g., to be heard, to feel safe, to be treated with respect), regardless of the differences in their attributes, capacities, or backgrounds.

- economic and social challenges that face families (e.g., financial challenges, political factors, prejudice and racism, media influences, urbanization)
- strategies for taking action on challenges facing families
- legal and financial rights and responsibilities in families
- characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships
- housing trends, economic and environmental influences on housing
- government involvement in housing
- home conservation practices.

Diversity and Social Justice Extensions

Technology Education

Technology education activities that can be used to support students' understanding of social justice issues include having them

- describe how societal pressures influence technological advancements, and how technological changes influence society
- describe how technology can be used to promote equity and social justice (e.g., increased accessibility for people with physical disabilities).



Fine Arts: Dance, Drama, Music, and Visual Arts

Curriculum Connections

While each is a discrete subject area with its own prescribed learning outcomes, the four fine arts subject areas (dance, drama, music, and visual arts) share many common expectations. Specifically, the four fine arts curricula at grades 8 to 10 level include opportunities for students to learn about

- dance, drama, music, and visual arts from a variety of historical and cultural contexts
- purposes of the arts in various cultures
- roles portrayed in a variety of dances and dramas
- stereotypes portrayed in dances and dramas
- how the arts are affected by societal values
- how the arts are used to effect social change.

Diversity and Social Justice Extensions

As students grow in their abilities to interpret and create personally meaningful works of artistic expression, look for ways to have students

- identify and respond to examples of dance, drama, music, and visual arts works about a range of diversity and social justice topics (e.g., documentary films, performance art, public sculpture, protest songs, posters)
- develop co-operation and responsible group behaviour skills through the collaborative creative process (e.g., ensemble performance)
- use dance, drama, music, and visual arts as a means to explore resolutions to problems and conflicts (e.g., incidents of school racism or homophobia)
- create dance, drama, music, and visual arts works in response to a range of diversity and social justice topics (e.g., poverty, environmental destruction, genocide).

Using Existing Curriculum-Based Materials

- Drama, Grade 9: Family Grouping (p. D-15)—When conducting this activity, help students understand the shared purpose of all families regardless of structure (i.e., meeting needs and wants, providing nurture and support).
- Music, Grade 8: Thoughts, Images, and Feelings in Popular Music (p. D-16)—Use this unit to include examples of popular music that relate to social justice themes.



English Language Arts

The English language arts curriculum for grades 8 to 10 includes prescribed learning outcomes related to

- use of oral language in a variety of situations and forms to convey and derive meaning
- reading and viewing texts in varied media, forms, and genres to develop thinking and understanding
- writing and representing in a variety of ways for a variety of purposes.

Such expectations are readily compatible with a focus on social justice, since choice of content and text is largely up to the teacher. Indeed, selection of text (video or print, in any of the various genres) contributes significantly to the opportunities to discuss diversity and social justice issues. See Appendix A for a list of resources that can be used as a starting point for classroom discussions and activities.

Diversity and Social Justice Extensions

The following are examples of thematic approaches to texts that support a focus on diversity and social justice.

- Freedom, individuality, and The State—using texts such as
 - “The Elephant” (short story, by Slawomir Mrozek): What lies are sometimes told to people in today’s world? To what extent are people taken in by these lies? The last lines of the story (“The schoolchildren who had witnessed the scene in the zoo soon started neglecting their studies and turned into hooligans. It is reported they drink liquor and break windows. And they no longer believe in elephants.”) are told from the point of view of the state. Is such reported behaviour a bad thing or not? Are the children free or not?
 - “A Civil Servant” (poem, by Robert Graves): How do people end up losing their sense of self, their sense of rage, their sense of right and wrong? What role does work have in this loss? Is it up to the individual not to let this occur?
 - *1984* (novel, by George Orwell)
- Roles and expectations for women and men—using texts such as
 - “Sadie and Maud” (poem, by Gwendolyn Brooks): Pre-reading question: Which do you think is preferable for a woman—having two children out of wedlock or getting an education and a good job? Which does society

seem to value? After reading: Which lifestyle of the two sisters does the poet appear to validate and admire? Do you agree? In what ways is Sadie a foil to her parents and to her sister?

- “The Story of an Hour” (short story, by Kate Chopin): What does this story say about the dangers of living the life that society demands? Why is the woman at first pleased at the supposed death of her husband? What might be the reasons for her death at the end of the story?
- The present-day legacy of colonialism in North America, using novels such as *Keeper ‘n Me* (Richard Wagamese) or *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (Sherman Alexie).

When dealing with non-fiction material, selecting texts that deal with social justice concerns is an easy way to introduce this content into the classroom for consideration and discussion. For example, present students with essays dealing with social justice topics (e.g., from Teaching for Social Justice, <http://bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=6028>) and have them critique these with reference to purpose, rhetorical technique, effectiveness, and assumptions.

In addition to studying texts that deal fairly overtly with themes or situations relating to social justice concerns, it is possible to use virtually any text to teach a method of textual analysis (critical thinking) that will help further students’ awareness of social justice implications. For example, students can be encouraged to

- identify perspective and point of view in texts (including those brought to the text by the author and those brought by the reader)
- examine whose voice is included in the text, whose voices are left out, and the effect that these inclusions and omissions have on the message and authenticity
- look for ways in which the “silences” in texts—aspects of a story that are not developed—reflect assumptions or biases (including preoccupations or interests that are typical of a given author or period)
- examine characterization in particular for an indication of assumptions or bias (recognizing that a text may sometimes expose one form of oppression while accepting/perpetuating other forms)
- consider how the narrative (i.e., in novels, stories, films) might have been different if a given character were a boy/man instead of a girl/woman or vice versa, had a different sexual orientation, ethnic background, socioeconomic status, etc.

Homophobia manifests itself as prejudice, discrimination, harassment, and/or acts of violence. Homophobia can exist at personal, institutional, and societal levels.



- construct their own meanings from the material presented in or omitted from the text (recognizing that there is not always one “right” interpretation, but that interpretations must be supported by evidence and careful argument in order to be credible)
- study examples of how popular media (e.g., music, film, television, blogs, graphic novels) are used to promote social justice issues
- produce artefacts reflective of their own social justice interests or concerns (e.g., media messages, protest songs).



Sample Lesson Plan

Social Justice Vocabulary *Grades 9-10*

Assign one of the following sets of terms to each student, ensuring equal distribution of each set across the class:

- social justice, human rights
- equity, equality, fairness
- sexism/sexist, feminism/feminist, misogynist/misogyny
- racism/racist, cultural imperialism, genocide
- anti-Semitism, anti-Islam, anti-Christian, anti-faith
- stereotype, discrimination, oppression
- heterosexism/heterosexist, homophobia/homophobic.

Have students take a few moments to record their current understanding of their assigned terms. Then have them independently research definitions and usage of these terms in a variety of print and online sources. Students should try to identify several different usages in different media types and sources, including instances where they think the term is used incorrectly.

Have students form groups with others who have researched the same terms to share and discuss their findings. Encourage them to consider questions such as the following:

- How has your understanding of these terms changed as a result of your research?
- Are the terms used differently by different types of media stories? If so, how? Can you make connections between the author of the message and how they use the terms?

Provide an opportunity for each group to share their terms and definitions to the rest of the class. Summarize by discussing as a class:

- What other terminology related to social justice did you find during your research?
- Were there instances where you *didn't* find a term used where you thought it should be? Why might that be? (e.g., Is a racist, sexist, or homophobic rant likely to identify itself as racist, sexist, or homophobic?)
- How does our understanding of these terms evolve over time? Which terms would you expect to find or not find in articles and dictionaries from 20 years ago? 50 years ago?
- How does media usage of these terms affect the public understanding of social justice issues?

Health and Career Education (HCE 8-9 and Planning 10)

Curriculum Connections

The Health and Career Education curriculum in grades 8 to 10 provides multiple opportunities for teaching diversity and social justice.

Specific curriculum connections related to diversity and social justice at the 8-10 level include the following.

HCE Grade 8	HCE Grade 9	Planning 10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> transferable skills (e.g., teamwork and co-operation) importance of healthy relationships contributing to a safe and caring school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> importance of developing employability skills building healthy relationships avoiding unhealthy relationships responding to bullying, discrimination, harassment, and intimidation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understanding of employability skills (e.g., communication, problem solving, teamwork) legal rights and responsibilities of employers and employees healthy relationship skills factors contributing to safe and caring schools effects of decisions on self, family, and community

Diversity and Social Justice Extensions

In activities related to healthy eating, focus on how specific food choices affect others (e.g., locally grown and produced vs. imported or transported from a distance, fair trade, organics and sustainable practices, biomass, packaging). What factors affect choices related to the adoption of a healthy lifestyle? (e.g., socioeconomics, cultural/religious requirements). In addition, look at factors that influence the perceptions of what is a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle—fad diets, media images, pop culture, etc. Extend to discuss how media affect our perceptions of other aspects of society and culture.

Using Existing Curriculum-Based Materials

- Grade 8, Healthy Relationships 1 (p. 62) and Healthy Relationships 2 (p. 64)
- Grade 9, Healthy Relationships 1 (p. 88) and Healthy Relationships 2 (p. 90)
- Planning 10, Healthy Relationships 1 (p. 126) and Healthy Relationships 2 (p. 129)

Mathematics

Diversity and Social Justice Extensions

Teaching mathematics provides multiple opportunities to address social justice by expanding students' understanding of the world around them. In particular, mathematics activities can examine issues such as

- government spending (e.g., on health care, education, the military, the environment, foreign aid)
- corporate profits; wages and benefits
- natural resource distribution
- infant mortality rates, literacy rates, incarceration rates
- statistics related to family structures
- how media present statistical data on a range of issues.

For ideas on how to address social justice in a mathematics classroom, consider the following resource:

- *Math that Matters: A Teacher Resource Linking Math and Social Justice* by David Stocker

Information about this and other resources can be found in Appendix A.



Science

Diversity and Social Justice Extensions

Students at grades 8 to 10 are expected as part of their study of science to acquire a grasp of scientific processes. This includes being able to demonstrate ethical, responsible, co-operative behaviour. Discussions about ethics in science provide a natural opportunity to consider social justice issues. Such discussions typically involve considering not only “What is right?” but “Who is most affected by this situation?” and “Who decides?” In relation to grade 9 science, for example, students might consider the following:

- stem cell research (Who might benefit? What are the ethical implications and risks of pursuing such research? What rights do the ill or disabled have, those who might be helped by such research?)
- reproductive technologies (What do gene selection technologies allow? What equality considerations are part of this debate? What should be the limits of technological intervention in natural processes?)

In relation to Grade 10 science, a similar debate can be held in relation to the Life Science focus on ecology. The conflicts over different attitudes to resource management and the common good allow students to consider the appropriateness of various human activities and how they are carried out (Who benefits? Who might be harmed? What rights are at issue? What is fair?)

At grade 8, 9, or 10, encourage students to consider the issue of “scientific power,” and the implications of having or not having that power (i.e., science-rich countries and science-poor countries, and the issues that arise from such an imbalance).

Social Studies

Curriculum Connections

The Social Studies curriculum for grades 8 to 10 provides opportunities to have students focus on various topics of social justice in other times and places, and to connect those understandings to contemporary society.

At the grade 8-9 level, students can develop their understanding of social justice issues in relation to the following curriculum topics:

- varied positions on controversial issues
- daily life, family structures, and gender roles in a variety of civilizations
- how identity is shaped by a variety of factors, including family, gender, belief systems, ethnicity, and nationality
- how societies preserve identity, transmit culture, and adapt to change
- roots of present-day regional, cultural, and social issues in Canada
- tensions between individual rights and the responsibilities of citizens in a variety of civilizations
- the changing nature of law and its relation to social conditions of the times
- impact of contact, conflict, and conquest on civilizations
- various ways individuals and groups can influence legal systems and political structures.

At the grade 10 level, the curriculum provides opportunities for a study of social justice in relation to the following topics:

- Canadian society from 1815 to 1914 in terms of gender roles and ethnicity
- impact of interactions between Aboriginal peoples and European explorers and settlers in Canada
- influence of immigration on Canadian society
- factors that contributed to a changing national identity
- evolution of responsible government in Canada in terms of government structure and key contributing events.

It is important to remember that respecting students' needs and rights to self-expression and inclusion does not involve a validation of any or all opinions. Self-expression that is ignorant or hurtful or that can readily be construed as a perpetuation of oppression should not be a part of classroom discourse and will need to be addressed if it arises.

Diversity and Social Justice Extensions

Comparing daily life, family structures, and social roles in a variety of civilizations to our current Canadian society, what are the differences and similarities? What are the social justice implications of rights? How were inequities addressed historically? Which current inequities have their roots in history?

In looking at the “evolution of responsible government” in Canada, focus on the progression of rights. Whose rights were acknowledged first, and whose took longer? What methods were used to obtain those rights? Are there any groups that still don't have equal rights today?

As part of discussions of daily life—rights, responsibilities, and status—compare the situation in medieval Europe to the current situation in our society. Who held the power? Who was powerless? What factors determined this hierarchy of rights and privileges? Which skills and types of knowledge were valued, and how does that compare to what we value today?

As part of the discussion of family structures, focus on how various cultures defined family in different times and places. Challenge students to give their own definition of family. Who determines which definition of family is “correct” or “accepted”?

