Curriculum exploration and year plan (35%) – Unpacking the Curriculum – Grade 5

The nature of Canadian pieces of a story are usually positive, to celebrate the nation, but there is an underlying intention of sharing only white’s perspective, so the stories are negative. Within the curriculum there are signs of patriotism, teaching of nationwide values and a false sense of multiculturalism that contribute to a certain story. These contributors of Canadian attitudes make for a positive narrative on the surface. The [Grade 5 Social Studies](https://www.edonline.sk.ca/bbcswebdav/library/curricula/English/Social_Studies/Social_Studies_Education_5_2010.pdf) curriculum gives the impression of a positive Canadian story that Canadians latch onto.

The Grade 5 Social Studies front matter gives the impression that Canada is a multicultural with a patriot attitude, however the outcomes do not strongly illustrate multiculturalism. The only outcome, IN5.2, relating to multiculturalism states, “Analyze the evolution of Canada as a multicultural nation” ([Saskatchewan Curriculum, 2010, pg. 19](https://www.curriculum.gov.sk.ca/webapps/moe-curriculum-BBLEARN/indicators?lang=en&subj=social&level=5&outcome=1.2)). This outcome appears to be positive because it illustrates the progress that Canada has made to become more accepting and multicultural, yet Canada fails to accept Indigenous Peoples who have lived in Canada longer than white settlers, which is not included in Grade 5 Social Studies curriculum. By paying little attention to the diverse people of Canada it gives the appearance that other nations and those who are not of the norm are an after-thought, and, therefore, insignificant in comparison.The curriculum is also from a white perspective, as DR5.3 states, “Identify the European influence on pre-confederation Canadian society” ([Saskatchewan Curriculum, 2010, pg. 21](https://www.curriculum.gov.sk.ca/webapps/moe-curriculum-BBLEARN/indicators?lang=en&subj=social&level=5&outcome=2.3)). This is an important part of Canada’s story to all Canadians because the First Nations lost their land and rights to the federal government. There is one indicator for this outcome that focuses on the European influence on Indigenous peoples, “Determine how the British Empire affected the lives of British settlers, French-Canadians, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis in pre-confederation Canadian society” ([Saskatchewan Curriculum, 2010, pg. 21](https://www.curriculum.gov.sk.ca/webapps/moe-curriculum-BBLEARN/indicators?lang=en&subj=social&level=5&outcome=2.3)). The curriculum twists the outcome’s indicators to show the positivity for Canada as a nation by gaining land, except it was stolen. To showcase Canada’s true multiculturalism, the curriculum should include more outcomes and indicators regarding the perspectives of Canada’s Indigenous Peoples and the positive influence Indigenous peoples have had on Canadian society. The perspectives of Indigenous peoples in Canada differs in comparison to white privileged Canadians so that side of the story is often unheard of within schools. Overall, there is an impression of multiculturalism in Canada through the Grade 5 Social Studies curriculum, that reinforces Canadian patriotism in the ways that it subtly mentions Indigenous peoples and other nations.

The curriculum is through a white perspective, which includes the “correct” values within Grade 5 Social Studies. Students are encouraged to accept various beliefs and/or values, but “there is some basic consensus on fundamental moral and ethical values in Canadian society [which] are taught in a meaningful way” ([Saskatchewan Curriculum, 2010, p.11](https://www.curriculum.gov.sk.ca/webapps/moe-curriculum-BBLEARN/teaching?view=teaching&lang=en&subj=social&level=5)). This guides the justification around the entire Grade 5 Social Studies Curriculum in that the curriculum takes on the perspective of white, privileged people instead of Indigenous Peoples or other minorities. The curriculum reinforces that the “correct” values to be taught are those of white Canadians.

The impression of a positive Canadian narrative is illustrated within the Grade 5 Social Studies curriculum through patriotism, multiculturalism appearance and Canadian values.This narrative supports a white Canadian’s perspective. A variety of perspectives may change Canada’s narrative to include the stories of more than just white Canadians.

References

Ministry of Education, *Saskatchewan Grade 5 Social Studies Curriculum*, 2010. Retrieved from <https://www.edonline.sk.ca/bbcswebdav/library/curricula/English/Social_Studies/Social_> Studies\_Education\_5\_2010.pdf