

British Columbia

British Columbia's (BC) curriculum was recently redesigned with a staged implementation plan beginning in 2016 and continuing until 2019/20. All curriculum documents were revised through an Indigenous lens with strong land and environmental connections. The general tone of BC's new curriculum offers teachers in most subject areas multiple spaces to engage with critical Indigenous environmental topics. Curricula described in the following are all reflective of the recent redesign.

English

BC's English curriculum explores the impact of language through a lens of critical inquiry. The high school English program has a separate stream that is entirely focused on Indigenous knowledge and there is Indigenous content throughout the curriculum. Teachers also seem to be afforded much flexibility to teach English in response to local, individual, or community interests such as those raised in this inquiry.

The Kindergarten to Grade 9 English curricula are contained in a single document and not only explore Indigenous knowledge through texts, but also through consideration of oral traditions and protocols within Indigenous societies. There are strong identified connections between Indigenous people and the Land through outcomes such as:

- Identify how story in First Peoples cultures connects people to land (p. 13)

BC's high school English program divides into two streams, one that takes a more conventional English approach with the other being English for First Peoples which delves more deeply into Indigenous knowledges and texts. A consistent competency structure extends across the high school curriculum inclusive of ability levels with multiple specialty areas including Composition, Creative Writing, Literary Studies, Spoken Language, and New Media with consistent opportunities for teachers to link to the themes of this inquiry. In New Media, for example, students explore bias, manipulation, and journalism. Additionally, Grade 12 has a strong reconciliation focus. Deep consideration of the Land and Indigenous topics throughout BC's English curriculum leaves teachers with lots of space to engage in teaching and learning within the context of this inquiry.

Math

Notwithstanding our earlier ambivalence in this area, BC's Math curriculum is inquiry based with Indigenous competencies intended to assist teachers with providing a culturally responsive Math curriculum. The data strand in the Kindergarten to Grade 9 curricula offer similar opportunities as other provinces with respect to using sociological and/ or environmental data that could link to the themes of this inquiry. In addition, a Statistics theme in Grade 9 explores bias and misleading facts, which could also provide an opportunity to connect to critical Indigenous and environmental topics, perhaps in connection with critical media literacy. Similar to most other jurisdictions, BC's high school Math curriculum is divided into ability areas but remains inclusive of Indigenous worldviews. As such, within the mandated research projects in some courses, students could further consider Indigenous environmental topics.

Science

BC's Kindergarten to Grade 9 Science curriculum has a strong land and place-based focus which lends itself to flexibility for teachers to connect with the themes of this inquiry. General competencies are consistent throughout the grades with specific themes such as Processing and Analysing Data that could link well with Indigenous environmental topics.

Of particular note, Grade 3 considers ecosystems and British Columbia wetlands and Grade 5 introduces environmental stewardship. Grade 7 contains foci on the Earth and climate change and Grade 9 considers Indigenous knowledge of interconnectedness and sustainability.

BC's high school Science courses divide into specialty areas with more opportunities to link to this inquiry in certain courses in particular. For example, Grade 10 Science explores Indigenous perspectives on energy while. Environmental Science courses in both Grade 11 and 12 contain "Big Ideas" that tie well to this inquiry such as exploring Traditional Ecological Knowledge, Conservation of Ecosystems, Identity Bias, Land Use and Sustainability, Global Warming and Climate Change, and Global and Environmental Changes. Earth Science in Grade 11 also has Big Ideas that link to this inquiry including Atmosphere and Climate, Indigenous narratives within astronomy, and evidence of change based on Indigenous knowledge.

Other specialty courses such as Life Science 11 and Anatomy 12 do not offer as many explicit opportunities to connect to this inquiry, but opportunities might be created in courses such as Geology 12 which lists general curricular competencies outcomes such as:

- Economic, environmental, and First Peoples' considerations (p. 1)
- Apply First Peoples' perspectives and knowledge, other ways of knowing, and local knowledge as sources of information (p. 2)

Further connections to Indigenous environmental topics might be created through courses such as Outdoor Education 11 and 12 that also identify the consideration of Indigenous ecological knowledge and practices as key general competencies.

Social Studies

There are multiple connections to this inquiry throughout BC's Social Studies curriculum beginning in Grade 1 with Big Ideas such as Community and Environment and Events in Indigenous Communities. Grade 2 includes a research project based on changes in a local community; there is also consideration of consulting with an Elder. A Grade 3 Big Idea looks at the relationship between humans and the environment as well as how ways of life changed for Indigenous people. Grade 4 examines conflict and cooperation through a Big Idea that examines the interactions between Indigenous people and Europeans as well as contrasting worldviews; ethical judgments based on local events and the impacts of colonization are also considered. Grade 5 has two Big Ideas that connect well with this inquiry including consideration of policies that impact marginalized people and natural resources. Further, within this grade, students explore land claim disputes, how Indigenous people balance economic development with land use, and Indigenous land ownership and use. A Grade 6 Big Idea looks at how economic self-interest causes conflicts; further, within this scope students explore consequences of events, different perspectives on issues, global poverty and class structure, environmental issues, media

coverage of events being used as propaganda, and the impact of economic policies and resource management on Indigenous people.

Grade 7 has an ancient civilization focus and Grade 8 looks at exploration, expansion, and colonization including environmental effects. Grade 9's Big Ideas are disparity, identity, and environment; it also explores natural resources in Canada as well as the question, "whom did colonization benefit?" as well as discriminatory policies.

BC's high school Social Studies program begins with a single primary Social Studies course in Grade 10 which considers topics relevant to this inquiry such as climate change and land use, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the Meech Lake Accord, with further connections to Indigenous social and land-related movements and actions such Oka, Ipperwash, and Shannen's Dream.

Grade 11 also contains one base course, Explorations in Social Studies 11, that appears to have been drafted to allow teachers significant flexibility in delivery and local adaptation. Big Ideas and general expectations include Indigenous cultural reclamation, diversity, and resilience.

Grade 12 is divided into various subjects such as British Columbia First Peoples, Comparative Cultures, Human Geography, Political Studies, and 20th Century World History. Grade 12 courses include Indigenous studies, Genocide Studies, Geography, Social Justice, and Urban Studies. Each area contains significant existing, and further possible, connections to Indigenous topics, the environment and the Land, which would allow teachers extensive opportunities to connect to the themes of this inquiry.

References

British Columbia Ministry of Education (2018). *BC's new curriculum*. Retrieved from <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/>