CONNECTING YPI TO THE ALBERTA SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM

In Alberta, YPI is often framed within the Grade 9 Social Studies curriculum[1]. YPI fits well within the province's Social Studies program, directly aligning with the rationale, definition, and role of the discipline:

> *Overall rationale of social studies: Social studies provides opportunities for students to develop the attitudes, skills and knowledge that will enable them to become engaged, active, informed and responsible citizens. Recognition and respect for individual and collective identity is essential in a pluralistic and democratic society. Social studies helps students develop their sense of self and community, encouraging them to affirm their place as citizens in an inclusive, democratic society.*

> *Definition of social studies: Social studies is the study of people in relation to each other and to their world. … Social studies fosters students' understanding of and involvement in practical and ethical issues that face their communities and humankind. Social studies is integral to the process of enabling students to develop an understanding of who they are, what they want to become and the society in which they want to live.*

> *Role of Social Studies: Social studies develops the key values and attitudes, knowledge and understanding, and skills and processes necessary for students to become active and responsible citizens, engaged in the democratic process and aware of their capacity to effect change in their communities, society and world.*

Table 1 below outlines connections between relevant elements of the K-12 Social Studies curriculum (concepts, approaches, stands) and YPI.

Table 2 below outlines connections between relevant elements of the Grade 9 Social Studies course, "Canada: Opportunities and Challenges" (general/specific curricular expectations, skills/processes) and YPI.

Content contained in the left column of these tables is taken verbatim from the Alberta Social Studies Program of Study.[2]

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[1] Note: In many YPI schools in Alberta, a Humanities course is offered in Grade 9, which combines the English and Social Studies curriculum. Teachers running YPI in Humanities can also refer to "Connecting YPI to the Alberta English Curriculum".
[2] https://education.alberta.ca/media/160209/program-of-study-grade-10.pdf

For further guidance on activating the Alberta Social Studies curriculum, and using YPI to meet your curricular objectives, contact Robyn Carr, YPI Alberta Curriculum Advisor (2017/2018): rkcarr@cbe.ab.ca.

Table 1: K-12 Social Studies	
CURRICULUM ELEMENT AND DESCRIPTION	CONNECTION TO YPI
Core Concepts of Citizenship and Identity The dynamic relationship between citizenship and identity forms the basis for skills and learning outcomes in the program of studies. The goal of social studies is to provide learning opportunities for students to: • demonstrate a critical understanding of individual and collective rights • understand the commitment required to ensure the vitality and sustainability of their changing communities at the local, provincial, national and global levels respect the dignity and support the equality of all human beings.	Through YPI, students engage in an exploration of social issues in their local community, vulnerable populations who experience those issues at a greater rate than the average population, and social services available to people experiencing need. This learning can happen within the framework of individual and collective social/economic rights, and violations thereof, and the concepts of dignity and equality. By researching local, social service organizations in their community through YPI, students gain understanding of the social safety net that ensures the vitality and sustainability of their local community.
Social Studies: Learners & Learning Social studies recognizes the interconnections and interactions among school, community, provincial, national and global institutions. The Alberta program of studies for social studies provides learning opportunities for students to develop skills of active and responsible citizenship and the capacity to inquire, make reasoned and informed judgments, and arrive at decisions for the public good.	YPI provides a framework for schools to connect with community organizations in meaningful, mutually beneficial ways. Every student in the participating grade is required to make contact with an organization and create a pitch for a YPI grant for that organization. YPI often opens doors to deeper connections between schools and organizations as well, particularly when school-aged youth are stakeholders of the organization's work. Through YPI, students engage in inquiry-based learning in groups of 3-5 by seeking solutions to prevalent social issues in

Students become engaged and involved in their communities by: • asking questions • making connections with their local community • sharing ideas and understandings • listening to and collaborating and working with others to design the future	their community through the work of local, social service organizations. Students collaborate with one another on the project, and ultimately deliver a pitch presentation for these organizations, educating their peers about social issues and community services during their YPI presentations
Issues-Focused Approach to Teaching Social Studies Investigating current affairs from multiple perspectives motivates students to engage in meaningful dialogue on relevant historical and contemporary issues, helping them to make informed and reasoned decisions on local, provincial, national and global issues.	YPI does not specify which social issues students should choose for their projects; students choose the issues based on their personal interests, and often on the current affairs of the community. This focus begins in part two of the program, and we recommend that students use resources like Vital Signs, published by their local community foundation, to analyze which issues are currently facing their city/town.
Strand: Power, Authority and Decision Making Examining the concepts of power, authority and decision making from multiple perspectives helps students consider how these concepts impact individuals, relationships, communities and nations. It also broadens students' understanding of related issues, perspectives and their effect on citizenship and identity. A critical examination of the distribution, exercise and implications of power and authority is the focus of this strand. Students will examine governmental and political structures, justice and laws, fairness and equity, conflict and cooperation, decision-making processes, leadership and governance. This examination develops a student's understanding of the individual's capacity in decision-making processes and promotes active and responsible citizenship.	In part two of the YPI curriculum, students are introduced to the concept of a social safety net that is comprised of services provided by the public, private, and charitable sector. Discussion of the influence of current government and structures of decision-making align well here.
Strand: Economics and Resources	In part two of the YPI curriculum, students are introduced to the concept of a social safety net that is comprised of services

Exploring multiple perspectives on the use, distribution and management of resources and wealth contributes to students' understanding of the effects that economics and resources have on the quality of life around the world. Students will explore basic economic systems, trade and the effects of economic interdependence on individuals, communities, nations and the natural environment. Students will also critically consider the social and environmental implications of resource use and technological change.	provided by the public, private, and charitable sector. Discussions of resource distribution and management align well here.
Strand: Culture and Community Exploring culture and community allows students to examine shared values and their own sense of belonging, beliefs, traditions and languages. This promotes students' development of citizenship and identity and understanding of multiple perspectives, issues and change. Students will examine the various expressions of their own and others' cultural, linguistic and social communities.	YPI begins with students looking inward to identify their personal values, and when students form groups, they create a shared value statement based on their beliefs and goals for their YPI project.
Strand: Social Participation as a Democratic Practice Social participation skills enable students to develop effective relationships with others, to work in cooperative ways toward common goals and to collaborate with others for the well-being of their communities. Students will develop interpersonal skills that focus on cooperation, conflict resolution, consensus building, collaborative decision making, the importance of responsibility and the acceptance of differences. Development of these skills will enhance active participation in their communities. Activities in this regard could include social action and community projects, e.g., church groups, Amnesty International, Médecins sans frontières (Doctors Without Borders).	Team work and collaboration are key to the success of a YPI project at any school. Activities in the YPI Student Guide encourage consensus-building, collaborative decision-making, shared responsibility, and working towards a common goal.

Strand: Research for Deliberative Inquiry Purposeful deliberation and critical reflection are essential skills and processes for democratic citizenship and problem solving. In social studies, the research process develops learners who are independent, self-motivated problem solvers and co-creators of knowledge. Developing research skills prepares students for the world of work, post-secondary studies, lifelong learning and citizenship in a complex world. These skills also enhance and enrich the process of identity formation as students critically reflect on their sense of self and relationship to others. The foundations of the research process are the application of acquired skills, the selection of appropriate resources and the use of suitable technology.	The majority of student time spent on the YPI project is time spent researching – both online and through interviews at charities. The learning that students engage in through this process is demonstrated and assessed through the culminating task of YPI, the presentation.
Strand: Communication Communication skills enable students to comprehend, interpret and express information and ideas clearly and purposefully. These skills include the language arts of listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and representing, as well as the use of communication technologies for acquiring and exchanging information and ideas.	YPI provides opportunities for students to develop communication skills throughout the program, and to demonstrate their oral communication skills through their presentation at the end of the project.

GRADE 9: CANADA: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Overview: Grade 9 students will analyze the relationship between Canada's political and legislative processes and their impact on issues pertaining to governance, rights, citizenship and identity. Students will also explore issues of economics and their impact on quality of life, citizenship and identity in Canada and the United States.

Rationale: Grade 9 students will broaden their understanding and appreciation of the relationships among governance, economics, quality of life, citizenship and identity.

Table 2: Grade 9 Social Studies – Canada: Opportunities and Challenges	
SKILLS/OUTCOMES	CONNECTION TO YPI
Benchmark Skills and Processes **Social Participation as a Democratic Practice** *Students will:* **9.S.5 demonstrate skills of cooperation, conflict resolution and consensus building:** • demonstrate leadership in groups, where appropriate, to achieve consensus and resolve conflicts peacefully and equitably • demonstrate a positive attitude regarding the needs and perspectives of others • access, retrieve and share information from electronic sources, such as common files • use networks to brainstorm, plan and share ideas with group members	Students have the opportunity to develop leadership in groups throughout their YPI projects. Activities in the YPI Student Guide encourage consensus-building, collaborative decision-making, shared responsibility, and working towards a common goal.
9.S.6 develop age-appropriate behaviour for social involvement as responsible citizens contributing to their community, such as: • develop leadership skills by assuming specific roles and responsibilities in organizations, projects and events within their community	Beyond YPI, teachers can encourage students to remain involved with their chosen organizations through volunteer opportunities, speaking engagements, fundraising events, online engagement, etc.
Research For Deliberative Inquiry *Students will:* **9.S.7 apply the research process:** • reflect on changes of perspective or opinion based on information gathered and research conducted	YPI's annual program evaluations have revealed that the theme of shifting perspectives among students: when we ask students about their experience visiting a charity for YPI, they often tell us that it was an "eye-opening experience" and that their perspective on their community and the social issue had changed.

• integrate and synthesize concepts to provide an informed point of view on a research question or an issue • develop a position supported by information gathered during research • draw conclusions based upon research and evidence • organize and synthesize researched information • formulate new questions as research progresses • practise responsible and ethical use of information and technology • include and organize references as part of research • create a plan for an inquiry that includes consideration of time management • demonstrate the advanced search skills necessary to limit the number of hits desired for online and offline databases; for example, the use of "and" or "or" between search topics and the choice of appropriate search engines for the topic • develop a process to manage volumes of information that can be made available through electronic sources • evaluate the relevance of electronically accessed information to a particular topic • make connections among related, organized data, and assemble various pieces into a unified message • refine searches to limit sources to a manageable number • analyze and synthesize information to create a product **Communication** *Students will:*	The majority of student time spent on the YPI project is time spent researching – both online and through interviews at charities. The learning that students engage in through this process is synthesized, demonstrated and assessed through the culminating task of YPI, the presentation.

9.S.8 demonstrate skills of oral, written and visual literacy: • communicate in a persuasive and engaging manner through speeches, multimedia presentations and written and oral reports, taking particular audiences and purposes into consideration • elicit, clarify and respond appropriately to questions, ideas and diverse points of view presented in discussions • make reasoned comments relating to the topic of discussion • listen to others to understand their perspectives **9.S.9 develop skills of media literacy:** examine techniques used to enhance the authority and authenticity of media messages	Each group YPI project culminates, and in assessed by, a persuasive oral presentation, and in most schools, students choose to include a multimedia element (i.e. video, PowerPoint, etc.). YPI provides judging criteria for the presentations, but the medium guidelines are left to the schools to set based on their curricular needs. YPI provides opportunities for students to develop communication skills throughout the program when they interact with their group members, their other classmates, representatives from charities, etc. Teachers have the opportunity to assess these skills during student presentations at the end of the project.
General Outcome 9.2 Issues for Canadians: Economic Systems in Canada and the United States Students will demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of how economic decision making in Canada and the United States impacts quality of life, citizenship and identity. **Specific Outcomes** **Knowledge and Understanding** **9.2.5 assess, critically, the relationship between consumerism and quality of life in Canada and the United States by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues:** • What are the indicators of quality of life?	Beginning in part two of the YPI curriculum, students explore social issues in their local community. Poverty and equal access to opportunities is at the root of, or can be linked to, many of these issues. This issue can be discussed in tandem with curricular content on consumerism and quality of life.

• How does consumerism provide opportunities for and limitations on impacting quality of life? • What societal values underlie social programs in Canada and the United States?	