

SOCIAL SCIENCES CONSULTATION SUMMARY

**Phase Two Meetings
(November 2008)**

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SOCIAL SCIENCES CONSULTATION SUMMARY

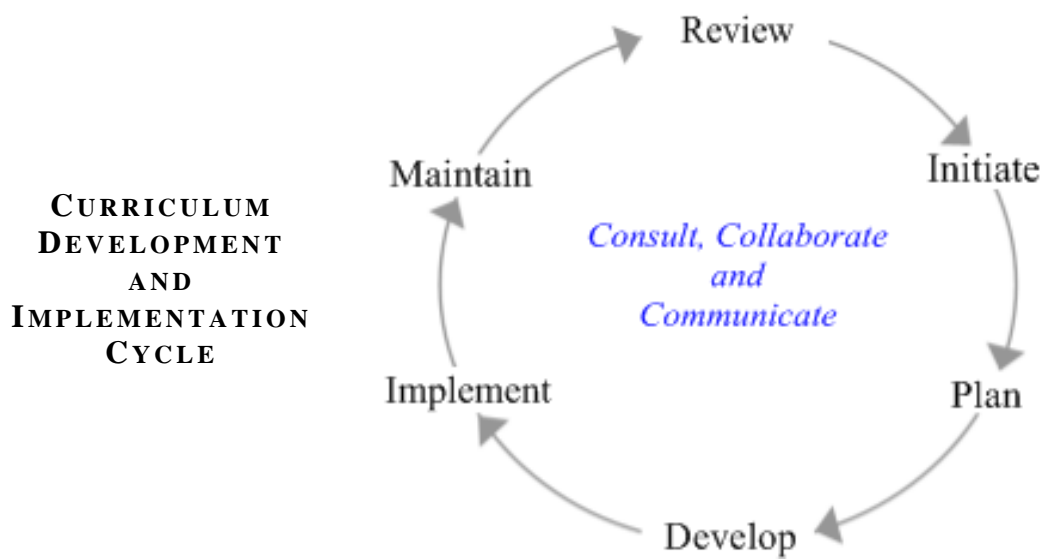
Phase Two Meetings (November 2008)

BACKGROUND

Alberta Education periodically reviews and evaluates curriculum to access currency and relevancy for students. The social sciences programs of study were recently included in the curriculum review and implementation cycle. To begin the curriculum review and gain an understanding of the current view of social sciences and their relevance in contemporary society, Alberta Education hosted consultations throughout Alberta, reviewed programs of study from other provinces, conducted a literature review and compiled survey data from curriculum coordinators in school authorities.

The various consultation meetings focused on the analysis of the social sciences program offerings, on identification of student and teacher needs and on opportunities for improving the programming and delivery of social sciences courses. The resulting data and feedback strongly indicated the continued desire and need for social sciences courses in Alberta.

What follows is an overview of the information presented at the second phase of consultation meetings and the summarized feedback from participants. Feedback received from consultations is an important component of the review process that informs curriculum development.



INTRODUCTION

Through the work completed in 2007/2008, as captured in documents and shared through conversations with stakeholders involved in the developmental process, two alternative social sciences program options were proposed. At each of the November 2008 consultation meetings the program options were presented as were the results from the literature review and a summary of the previous consultations. Educators were then asked to participate in collaborative brainstorming sessions regarding the benefits and limitations of each option. They were also asked to complete a social sciences survey. Of interest, 38 per cent of survey participants indicated their schools offered locally developed courses (LDCs) in the social sciences. Two LDCs in particular were included as part of one of the program options presented to participants. These LDCs were selected for inclusion as they had broad appeal to many school authorities in Alberta. Regardless of the option chosen, Curriculum Branch may be provided the opportunity to review social science LDCs and integrate outcomes from specific courses into provincially approved social science programs of study.

A copy of the meeting agenda can be found in Appendix 1, a complete listing of the 24 social sciences courses in the nine discipline areas can be found in Appendix 2 and the results of the participant survey are located in Appendix 3.

PROGRAM OPTION A: OCCUPATIONAL INTEREST CLUSTERS

Program Option A consists of social sciences courses developed as 1-credit modules similar to the career pathways model successfully used in Career and Technology Studies (CTS). The focus, therefore, is to help students choose a cluster of courses that link to future occupational objectives. The samples that follow relate to careers in the area of the Community Health Strand (CMH) in CTS. Charts have been provided to demonstrate possible course clusters. Sample I has been developed independent of existing CTS courses. Sample II has combined social sciences courses with CTS courses.

Courses in Program Option A are categorized in introductory, intermediate and advanced levels. Each row provides a recommended, but not mandated, grouping or cluster as various course combinations may form effective groupings or clusters. Students, however, may take courses from any level as there are no prerequisites for any of the courses.

Note: The courses in **bold** are proposed social sciences courses and the courses in *italics* are proposed CTS courses. A course with a code (e.g., CMH 1080) in front of the name is a course currently approved by Alberta Education. If no code is associated with a course, the suggested course has not been developed.

SAMPLE I – PSYCHOLOGY CLUSTER

Introductory	Intermediate	Advanced
Introduction to Psychology	Team Dynamics	Focusing and Distraction Control
Learning and Cognitive Processing in Psychology	Goal Setting for Performance	Motivating for Performance
Study of Behaviour	Thinking Success	Defining Success
Mastering Your Life	Creating Emotional States	The Sports Culture
Introductory Neuro-linguistic Programming	Mentorship	Childhood Disorders
Overview of Abnormal Psychology	Causal Factors in Abnormal Behaviours	

SAMPLE II – PSYCHOLOGY AND COMMUNITY HEALTH CLUSTER

Introductory	Intermediate	Advanced
<i>Nutrition and Wellness</i>	<i>Musculoskeletal System 1</i>	<i>Injury Assessment</i>
<i>CMH 1080: Fundamentals of Health</i>	<i>Athletic Training</i>	<i>CMH 2090: Cardiovascular System</i>
<i>CMH 2120: First Aid/CPR</i>	Team Dynamics	Thinking Success
Sports First Aid 1	Goal Setting for Performance	Focusing and Distraction Control
Athletic Taping and Wrapping	<i>Integrated Therapies</i>	Motivating for Performance
Introduction to Psychology	Group Dynamics	<i>Sports Leadership</i>

RATIONALE – PROGRAM OPTION A

Listed below are the main features of Program Option A paired with their corresponding rationales.

Program Feature	Rationale
Each course will be a 1-credit course.	One-credit courses provide timetabling flexibility. The courses may be bundled together to provide a more personalized program for individual students.
The framework will be based on a career-oriented foundation.	Students are generally interested in, and become highly engaged in, studies that are not only appealing but also build on their interest in possible occupational pathways.
Prerequisites will not be required.	Each course is an independent course with no former knowledge required.
Many courses will be offered in each social sciences discipline area.	Choice and flexibility provide students with the opportunity to explore areas of personal interest as well as occupational interest.
Programs of study for the social sciences courses will not overlap with existing programs of study of other courses.	All students are required to take social studies. Avoiding duplication of content would heighten student engagement. Social sciences courses are to enrich the educational experiences of students and are not intended to compete with other Alberta Education programs of study.

PROGRAM OPTION B: THEMED INTEREST CLUSTERS

The existing Social Sciences Program is an effective program for introducing students to various social science disciplines. Program Option B, therefore, is a refinement of the existing program. The number of disciplines included has been reduced, however, from nine to five and the number of courses reduced from 24 to 12. Each course remains a 3-credit course offered in four areas: psychology, sociology, Canadian studies and global studies.

There are six courses at the 20 level and six courses at the 30 level. While psychology and sociology both have 20- and 30-level courses, Canadian studies has only 20-level courses, and global studies has only 30-level courses. The rationale for this categorization relates to reducing overlap with other curricula, the sophistication of knowledge required in specific disciplines and providing options to students at both the 20 and 30 levels with an appropriate scope and rigour.

SAMPLE I – PSYCHOLOGY CLUSTER

Theme	20-level Courses	30-level Courses
Psychology	Personal Psychology	Experimental Psychology
	General Psychology	*Clinical Psychology

*Clinical Psychology is an alternate name for Abnormal Psychology. Abnormal Psychology 35 is currently a LDC.

SAMPLE II – SOCIOLOGY CLUSTER

Theme	20-level Course	30-level Course
Sociology	General Sociology	Applied Sociology

SAMPLE III – CANADIAN STUDIES CLUSTER

Theme	20-level Courses
Canadian Studies	*Canadian Studies for Newcomers
	Canadian Military History
	Canadian History

*Canadian Studies for Newcomers is an alternate name for a pre-existing LDC.

SAMPLE IV – GLOBAL STUDIES CLUSTER

Theme	30-level Courses
Global Studies	World Geography
	World Religions
	World History

RATIONALE – PROGRAM OPTION B

Listed below are the main features of Program Option B along with their corresponding rationales.

Program Feature	Rationale
Each course will be a 3-credit course.	Each social sciences discipline has a unique history and methodology. Because of this, the content and disciplinary understanding of these courses is best achieved when sufficient depth and scope have been explored.
Each course will be based on a single discipline.	Each social sciences discipline is unique and boasts a history and methodology specific to the discipline.
The framework would consist of 12 courses within five discipline areas.	With the creation of the new social studies program of studies several social sciences programs of study now overlap with that of social studies. As a result, course offerings will be reduced to ensure student opportunities are diverse and unique.
Prerequisites will not be required.	Each social sciences course is an independent course with no former knowledge required.
Courses will be offered at the 20 and 30 levels.	Stakeholders advised that students in Grade 10 currently are offered a full compliment of courses and do not require additional course offerings in their first year of senior high school.
Revised programs of study for the 12 courses will not overlap with existing programs of study of other courses.	All students are required to take the social studies program of studies as part of their graduation requirements. Avoiding duplication of content would heighten student engagement. Social sciences courses are to enrich the educational experiences of students and are not intended to compete with core or career and technology studies programs.

BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS OF OPTIONS A AND B

After each program option was presented, meeting participants were asked to brainstorm possible benefits and limitations of the options. Specifically, they were asked to think about benefits and limitations as they relate to students, teachers and school authorities. While many pages of comments were received from the brainstorming sessions, the summary below lists the most frequent comments, issues and concerns of participants.

	Option A	Option B
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases choice of topics • Encourages flexibility in design of course offerings • Promotes individualized pacing if distributed learning resources are created • Eases timetabling • Increases relevance of study to careers • Possibility of increasing completion rates • More credit enrollment unit (CEU) funding to schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eases timetabling • Three-credit courses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – allow for more comprehensive study of subject matter – help to maintain integrity of subject matter – allow for increased depth and coherence of content
Limitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CTS courses are used as fillers and we do not need more fillers • No more courses for the sake of credits • Do not turn social sciences into CTS courses as students do not take CTS seriously • We have too many career-focused courses already – we do not need more • It would be too hard to name 100 new social sciences courses to make them interesting to students • There is a risk to the integrity of the program with 1-credit courses • Teacher preparation could be problematic • Possible timetabling issues may result • Students may not take these 1-credit courses if the courses are not eligible for scholarship consideration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible timetabling issues • If students do not like the topic, they have to work through 3 credits worth of content instead of 1 • Less flexibility with programming

In addition to specific comments regarding the benefits and limitations of each option, participants had general questions and comments that arose from the discussion and presentation. What follows is a brief sample of the most common comments and questions.

COMMENTS

- For either option to work, teachers must have adequate resources.
- Three-credit courses are taken more seriously than CTS courses.
- Courses with a textbook, as opposed to 1-credit module booklets, make students think the course is serious; i.e., a “real” course.
- Online offerings should be developed.

QUESTIONS

- Can we add social sciences courses to the diploma requirements as an alternative to CTS, fine arts and second languages?
- Can each social sciences discipline have blocks of two complementary subjects? This would make timetabling easier.
- Can the courses have a “dash two” stream?
- The sample CTS courses in Option A are interesting; e.g., Athletic Taping and Wrapping. Will they be developed?

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Students may use social sciences credits toward the 100-credit requirement for graduation. Some students, however, complete biology, chemistry, physics and mathematics at the 30 level as well as the mathematics and science prerequisites that easily bring their credit totals near 100 without completing any social sciences courses. Some of these students then select social sciences courses instead of second languages, fine arts or CTS courses believing that these courses would fulfill the “10 credits in any combination” requirement. Social sciences courses do not fulfill that specific graduation requirement. As a result, some students earn over 100 credits but do not meet the *10 credits in any combination* requirement and are therefore not eligible to graduate.

Participants strongly recommend expanding the “10 credits in any combination” requirement to include social sciences courses. Many participants stated that social sciences courses enrich the educational experience of students and form part of a complete liberal education. For more information regarding the current Alberta Education graduation requirements, refer to Appendix 4.

CONCLUSION

Program Option A and Program Option B are distinctly different from each other. Both program options have benefits and limitations. When deciding which format is better fitted to the social sciences, the opportunities and challenges associated with each (e.g., resourcing, depth of learning, benefit to students) need to be considered keeping in mind that no one program can meet the diverse needs of all students all of the time. Also, the realities of implementation (development time, financial implications and acceptance by teachers/students/schools) need to be considered when undertaking the decision-making process as the new social sciences programs of study are developed.

Regardless of the option chosen for implementation, it is clear from the consultations that comprehensive and relevant programs of study need to be developed for each approved social sciences course. Appropriate and up-to-date resources are also an important component of the successful implementation of either social sciences program option.

The scheduling or timetabling of courses in senior high schools is a challenge for school administration. Lack of resources, classroom space and/or teacher expertise are also challenges that schools face when developing timetables and it may not always be possible to offer a selection of social sciences courses. Because of this, participants communicated a desire for distributed learning materials (including online materials) so that students, not only in alternative or distributed education settings, may have access to high-quality program options. Over 90 per cent of participants indicated they would use up-to-date distributed learning resources in their classrooms if they were available.

In summary, the results of the consultations indicated a continued need and desire for social sciences programs of study. Teachers who are engaged and who provide instruction based on relevant and current programs of study facilitate student learning. By revising the programs of study and by providing high quality learning resources, Alberta Education may better enhance student engagement and meet the needs of both students and teachers. The revised programs of study will focus on the key questions that each social sciences brings to the study of human behaviour and culture and will cast those questions in terms of the levels of interest and understanding of senior high school students.

APPENDIX 1: Meeting Agenda

Social Sciences 20–30 November 2008 Meetings

Agenda

9:15 AM – 9:30 AM	Coffee and Registration
9:30 AM – 9:45 AM	Welcome and Introductions Review of Agenda
9:45 AM – 10:30 AM	Social Sciences Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purpose of consultation• The current social sciences programs of study• Enrollment data 2007–2008• Literature review results• Consultation results
10:30 AM – 10:45 AM	Wellness Break
10:45 AM – 12:00 PM	Social Sciences Program Option A <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation• Benefits and limitations brainstorming session
12:00 PM – 1:00 PM	Lunch
1:00 PM – 2:15 PM	Social Sciences Program Option B <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation• Benefits and limitations brainstorming session
2:15 PM – 2:45 PM	Participant Survey
2:45 PM – 3:00 PM	Break
3:00 PM – 3:15 PM	Questions and Comments Evaluation Forms
3:15 PM – 3:30 PM	Expense Claims Adjournment



APPENDIX 2: List of Current Social Sciences Course Offerings

Economics	Economics for Consumers 20 Microeconomics 30 Macroeconomics 30
Geography	Local and Canadian Geography 20 World Geography 30
History	Western Canadian History 20 Canadian History 20 Western World History 30
Philosophy	Origins of Western Philosophy 20 Contemporary Western Philosophy 20 Philosophies of Man 30
Political Studies	Political Thinking 20 Comparative Government 20 International Politics 30
Religious Studies	Religious Ethics 20 Religious Meaning 20 World Religions 30
Psychology	Personal Psychology 20 General Psychology 20 Experimental Psychology 30
Sociology	General Sociology 20 Sociological Institutions 20 Applied Sociology 30
Anthropology	Cultural and Physical Anthropology 30

Note: School authorities may also offer locally developed courses in each social science area.

APPENDIX 3: SURVEY RESULTS

Q1: Which of the following social science courses are offered in your school? Please select (x) all that apply.

Name of Course	Number of Schools Surveyed that Offer the Course
General Psychology 20	16
Personal Psychology 20	16
Experimental Psychology 30	10
Economics for Consumers 20	0
Microeconomics 30	0
Macroeconomics 30	0
Local and Canadian Geography 20	0
World Geography 30	3
Western Canadian History 20	0
Canadian History 20	0
Western World History 30	1
Origins of Western Philosophy 20	0
Contemporary Western Philosophy 20	0
Philosophies of Man 30	1
Political Thinking 20	2
Comparative Government 20	0
International Politics 30	2
Religious Ethics 20	1
Religious Meaning 20	2
World Religions 30	7
Cultural and Physical Anthropology 30	0
General Sociology 20	8
Sociological Institutions 20	0
Applied Sociology 30	5
Social Sciences Locally Developed Courses:	
Abnormal Psychology 35	4
Philosophy 35 IB	1
Theory of Knowledge IB	1
Religious Studies 15	2
Religious Studies 25	2
Religious Studies 35	2
World History AP	1
Military History 25	1
Military History 35	1

Note: Two of the schools surveyed did not offer any social science courses.

Q2: What factors determine the social sciences course offerings in your school?

Participant responses can be categorized in five main areas:

1. Student demand/interest
2. Timetabling
3. Teacher interest/commitment/skill
4. Availability of resources
5. Administration desire and/or precedent/school tradition

Q3: Future demand for (interest in) social science courses in your school will likely...

Increase – 48% Remain Constant – 30%
Decrease – 0% Unsure – 22%

Q4: Does your school use social science distributed learning resources (distance education materials)?

Yes – 38% No – 19%
Unsure – 43% Other – 0%

Q5: Does your school use distributed learning resources for non-social science courses?

Yes – 59% No – 14%
Unsure – 22% Other – 5%

As a rule, we do not. In certain situations we may order materials for students if their timetable will not allow for certain courses.

Q6: Schools have many reasons for using distributed learning resources. Please select (x) all that apply to your school.

Timetabling Issues - 67% Student Interest – 52%
Mark Upgrading - 38% Fulfilling Credit Requirements - 67%
Other - 33%

- To keep students fully timetabled.
- To provide increased option for students.
- Individual/differentiated learning.
- Flexibility with pacing. To start and finish courses at any time without being constrained by a traditional schedule (i.e., elite athletes)

Q7: If revised social science distributed learning resources were made available, do you think your school would use them?

Yes – 90.5%

Unsure – 9.5%

No – 0%

Other – 0%

Q8: Please identify and explain the most important elements required for successful implementation of a social sciences program.

Participant responses can be categorized in five main areas:

1. Resources
2. Complete programs of study for each social science course
3. Teacher interest/commitment/skill
4. Relevance to students
5. Credibility and rigour of courses

Note: Resourcing was, by far, the most frequently cited element

Q9: Social science courses should be developed ...

Mostly at the 20 level – 0%

Mostly at the 30 level – 0%

Balanced – 95.5%

Unsure – 4.5%

Q10: How should courses in social science be named?

Specifically (i.e., Personal Psychology 20, Experimental Psychology 30) – 91%

Generally (i.e., Psychology 2010, Psychology 3010) – 4.5%

(New) Both (i.e., Psychology 2010 – Personal Psychology) – 4.5%

Q11: What Social Science 20-30 Program Option do you prefer?

Social Science Program Option A (based on CTS model) – 15%

Social Science Program Option B (based on current social sciences model) – 85%

Note: Two participants indicated they had no preference between options noting that both options have benefits and limitations.

Q12: What are the main reasons for your selection in Question 11? – Option A

Note: Because Option B was the most frequently chosen option, responses for Option A have been excluded from the summary.

Q12: What are the main reasons for your selection in Question 11? – Option B

Participant responses can be categorized in four main areas:

1. Integrity (depth and substance), is maintained with 3-credit courses
2. Students take 3- and 5-credit courses more seriously than 1-credit courses
3. Less fragmentation of content
4. Timetabling, teacher preparation, and marking are easier with 3-credit courses

Note: Maintaining the integrity of each discipline was, by far, the most frequently cited reason for choosing Option B.

Q13: If Program Option A was selected by Alberta Education, what four discipline areas would you select and what courses would you recommend be developed? Discipline areas include anthropology, economics, political studies, sociology, history, religious studies, psychology, philosophy and geography. Please list up to four courses per discipline.

Note: Because Option B was the most frequently chosen option, responses for Option A have been excluded from the summary.

Q14: If Program Option B was selected by Alberta Education, what specific courses would you recommend be developed in each of the four themes? You can use the course from the sample or you can suggest new courses. Please list no more than four courses in each area.

The most cited themes in each subject area are listed below.

Sociology

- Applied/General/Introductory Sociology
- Sociology of the Family/Relationships
- Crime/Deviant Behaviour/Criminology

Canadian Studies

- Canadian Military History
- Canadian History for Newcomers

World Studies

- World Geography/Environmental Geography/Human Geography
- World Religion/Comparative Religion/Culture and Belief Systems
- World History (Western/Eastern)
- Global Issues

Psychology

- Personal Psychology 20
- General Psychology 20
- Abnormal Psychology 30
- Experimental Psychology 30

APPENDIX 4: Alberta Education Graduation Requirements

ALBERTA HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS (ENGLISH)
The requirements indicated in this chart are the <u>minimum</u> requirements for a student to attain an Alberta High School Diploma. The requirements for entry into post-secondary institutions and workplaces may require additional and/or specific courses.
100 CREDITS including the following:
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS – 30 LEVEL (English Language Arts 30-1, 30-2)
SOCIAL STUDIES – 30 LEVEL (Social Studies 30 or 33)
MATHEMATICS – 20 LEVEL (Pure Mathematics 20, Applied Mathematics 20 or Mathematics 24)
SCIENCE – 20 LEVEL (Science 20, Science 24, Biology 20, Chemistry 20 or Physics 20)
PHYSICAL EDUCATION 10 (3 CREDITS)
CAREER AND LIFE MANAGEMENT (3 CREDITS)
10 CREDITS IN ANY COMBINATION FROM: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Career and Technology Studies (CTS)• Fine Arts• Second Languages• Physical Education 20 and/or 30• Locally developed/acquired and locally authorized courses in CTS, fine arts, second languages, Knowledge and Employability or IOP occupational courses• Knowledge and Employability or IOP occupational courses• Registered Apprenticeship Program
10 CREDITS IN ANY 30-LEVEL COURSE (<u>IN ADDITION TO A 30-LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND A 30-LEVEL SOCIAL STUDIES COURSE AS SPECIFIED ABOVE</u>)
These courses may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 35-level locally developed/acquired and locally authorized courses• 3000 Series; Advanced Level in Career and Technology Studies courses• 35-level Work Experience• 30-4 level Knowledge and Employability course or 36-level IOP course• 35-level Registered Apprenticeship Program• 30-level Green Certificate Specialization