

PROGRAM OF STUDY

Subject Area: Social Sciences

Adult General Education



DBE

Diversified Basic Education

Québec 

PROGRAM OF STUDY

CONTEMPORARY WORLD

Subject Area: Social Sciences

Adult General Education



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Chapter 1



Introduction

In today's constantly changing world, societies are becoming increasingly interdependent and have more social, economic, political and cultural relationships. Similarly, the problems and issues that characterize the contemporary world are interconnected and multidimensional. As a result, the various actors—states, organizations, and citizens—are called upon to work together to find global solutions.

To study these problems and issues, one must see them from both geographic and historical perspectives, and consider the economic and political dimensions.

1.1 Contribution of the Program to the Education of Adult Learners

The Contemporary World program is part of the Social Sciences. It deals with problems and issues related to the *environment, population, wealth, power and tensions and conflicts*. Thus, adult learners become aware of the consequences of human actions on societies, develop critical judgment, and define their understanding of the world. As responsible citizens, adults learn to participate in social debates and contribute to society.

The Contemporary World program allows adult learners to develop the following subject-specific competencies: *Interprets a contemporary world problem* and *Takes a position on a contemporary world issue*, competencies that contribute to adult learners' general education, prepare them to take part in society and make up their minds regarding social debates.

1.2 Nature of the Program

The aim of the Contemporary World program is to help adult learners become interested in contemporary world problems and issues that all societies face, develop competencies and construct knowledge.

By studying these problems and issues, adults learn to understand the nature of the relationships that form between societies and the way in which these relationships shape the organization of the world today. They become aware of the different viewpoints regarding some of the world's great concerns. They compare their own point of view with that of others, thus increasing their critical judgment. They become aware of the role they must play in society and of their responsibilities as citizens.

The subjects involved in the study of the Contemporary World program—geography, history, economics and political science—help adult learners approach contemporary world problems and issues from a geographic and historical perspective while taking into account their economic and political dimensions:

- A geographic perspective helps adult learners consider phenomena in terms of territory, that is, in terms of the effects of human action on spatial organization.
- A historical perspective helps adult learners view the same phenomena in terms of duration by seeking the origins of the phenomena and elements of change and continuity related to them.
- Taking into account the economic dimension helps adult learners understand the choices societies make regarding the organization of trade, production, distribution and consumption as well as the organization of work.
- Considering the political dimension helps adult learners understand the organization of power within societies and the formation of power relations.

Each of these subjects makes a complementary contribution to the understanding of problems and issues facing the contemporary world.

1.3 Connections Between the Program and the Other Elements of the Diversified Basic Education Program

Connections between the Contemporary World program and other subjects are readily apparent. They facilitate the integration of various elements of the Diversified Basic Education Program, namely, the broad areas of learning, the cross-curricular competencies and other subject areas.

1.3.1 Connections With the Broad Areas of Learning

The broad areas of learning deal with major issues that adults confront, both individually and collectively, in different areas of their lives. They help motivate and support adults in their learning and guide them in their involvement as citizens. Each broad area of learning raises many questions that could become the basis for learning situations. Each one consists of an educational aim and focuses of development that help give meaning to learning.

To varying degrees, the Contemporary World program has connections with all five broad areas of learning.

Citizenship and Community Life

The Contemporary World program has strong ties to the broad area of learning *Citizenship and Community Life*. Its educational aim is to enable adult learners to take part in democratic life and develop an attitude of openness to the world and respect for diversity. This educational aim and its related focuses of development are consistent with one of the aims of the program—that of preparing adult learners to participate, as responsible citizens, in social debate.

By studying the prescribed themes, adult learners observe the diversity of societies and acquire knowledge about the principles that characterize a democratic society. By taking a position on contemporary world issues, adult learners discover opportunities for social participation. They consider the role of institutions in society and determine the role that individuals can play in them. They may also observe that, regardless of period or place, human beings form relationships of various sorts and try to find shared solutions to common problems by establishing rules for life in society.

Environmental Awareness and Consumer Rights and Responsibilities

The Contemporary World program is also closely related to the broad area of learning *Environmental Awareness and Consumer Rights and Responsibilities*, particularly its educational aim, which is to encourage adult learners to develop an active relationship with their environment while maintaining a critical attitude toward consumption and the exploitation of the environment.

Some elements of the focuses of development of this broad area of learning, particularly environmental management and the distribution of wealth in the world, overlap with the themes under study.

Media Literacy

There are also connections between the program and the educational aim of the broad area of learning Media Literacy, which is to enable adult learners to exercise critical, ethical and aesthetic judgment with respect to the media and to produce media documents that respect individual and collective rights.

In the course of their research on contemporary world problems and issues, adult learners gather data from various sources, which may present opposing viewpoints or biased information, and exercise critical judgment in constructing their own opinions on the topics.

Career Planning and Entrepreneurship

The Contemporary World program fosters the integration of adult learners into society and the labour market. It thus contributes to the educational aim of the broad area of learning *Career Planning and Entrepreneurship*, which is to enable adult learners to make and carry out plans designed to develop their potential and help them integrate into society.

The program also shares common ground with the focuses of development of this broad area in that it helps adult learners realize the importance of their participation and action in society. Adult learners are thus encouraged to become involved, pursue various projects and put their experience to good use in social, personal, academic and job-related tasks in order to continue learning throughout their lives.

Health and Well-Being

The educational aim of the broad area of learning *Health and Well-Being* is to encourage adult learners to develop a sense of responsibility for adopting good living habits. In this sense, the Contemporary World program gives adult learners the opportunity to consider the consequences of human actions and collective choices for individual well-being.

In addition, some elements of the focuses of development of this broad area concern individual and group choices.

1.3.2 Connections With the Cross-Curricular Competencies

The Contemporary World program enables adult learners to develop cross-curricular competencies. Like subject-specific competencies, cross-curricular competencies help adult learners act effectively by mobilizing a number of resources. However, these competencies provide a broader frame of reference in that they cut across subject boundaries and allow for a greater range of action.

Each of the subject-specific competencies in the program is, to some extent, dependent on the application of cross-curricular competencies, which in turn promote the development of subject-specific competencies. Appendix 1 provides a list of the cross-curricular competencies.

Intellectual competencies

Uses information

Given the central role played by documents, adult learners are required to mobilize the competency *Uses information* when they interpret a problem or take a position on a contemporary world issue. They must search for information systematically, acquire the information and use it, drawing judiciously on various sources.

Solves problems

When defining various social issues, adult learners must use problem-solving strategies in order to explore and test possible solutions, particularly when expressing opinions and looking for actions to support these opinions.

Exercises critical judgment

Adult learners develop the cross-curricular competency *Uses critical judgment* when they assess the relevance of documents they consult, taking into account their own frame of reference and that of authors of documents. They learn to construct and express their opinions and put them in perspective, taking into account what seems most fair and valid to them.

Uses creativity

Adult learners develop the cross-curricular competency *Uses creativity* by using the resources and materials available in an imaginative way. They must absorb the elements of a contemporary world problem or issue, explore the situation and adopt a flexible approach, remaining receptive to new ideas.

Methodological competencies*Adopts effective work methods*

To interpret problems or take a position on contemporary world issues, adult learners must use a rigorous research process. As they construct their arguments, they learn to use effective work methods. They consider all aspects of a task, regulate their approach and analyze their procedure.

Uses information and communications technologies

In the course of their research, particularly when processing information, adult learners develop the cross-curricular competency *Uses information and communications technologies*. By mastering information and communications technologies, using them in their learning, and evaluating the effectiveness of their use, adult learners employ these technologies to communicate the results of their research.

Personal and social competencies*Achieves his/her potential*

The Contemporary World program also helps adult learners develop the competency *Achieves his/her potential* by encouraging them to participate in social debate or take a position on world issues, while respecting the opinions of others. Examining the program's themes enables them to compare their perceptions and values, to take their place among others and, thus, to achieve a sense of belonging to society.

Cooperates with others

By developing the competency *Cooperates with others*, adults learn to contribute to team efforts, to interact with an open mind and to evaluate their participation in collaborative work. They learn to see that participation in social life and cooperation among individuals help make social change possible.

Communication-related competencies

Communicates appropriately

Adult learners develop the competency *Communicates appropriately* when they express their opinions or share their research findings and conclusions regarding a problem or issue in the contemporary world. They learn to manage the communication process, become familiar with various modes of communication and use the most appropriate method to communicate the conclusions of their investigations.

1.3.3 Connections With the Other Subject Areas

Each subject area contains several subjects. The learning acquired in one subject area can be used to acquire learning in other areas, and vice versa. This complementarity fosters connections among subjects in different subject areas, including Languages, Personal Development, and Mathematics, Science and Technology, and in turn provides resources on which adult learners can draw to develop the subject-specific competencies targeted in the Contemporary World program.

Languages

The Contemporary World program has connections with the Languages subject area, particularly with the English Language Arts program. In both oral and written communication, language is the principal vehicle used to discuss the problems and issues facing the contemporary world. Using language properly is a sign of well-structured thinking. Thus, to communicate clearly their interpretation of a problem and their position on an issue, adult learners use media sources, mobilize their language competencies, and use the reading and writing strategies they developed in their language of instruction classes. At the same time, the knowledge and concepts developed in the Contemporary World program can help adult learners understand and write texts and communicate orally in the English Language Arts program.

Personal Development

The Contemporary World program and the Personal Development subject area are linked in that both help attune adult learners to a set of values connected with community life. To exercise their role as citizens, adults learn to refer to ethical, cultural and democratic principles; to take positions on issues, they refer to principles and values of democratic life.

Mathematics, Science and Technology

The Contemporary World program is also linked to subjects in Mathematics, Science and Technology, particularly since arithmetic and statistical concepts and processes (such as number sense, graphs, diagrams, contingency tables and the location of numbers on a number line)

underpin the effective use of techniques proposed in the Contemporary World program. Adults rely on these techniques to access information and communicate their research results.

Seeing a scientific or technological issue or application in its social, environmental and historical context, as required by the competency *Makes the most of his/her knowledge of science and technology*, gives adult learners a new perspective on the study of the problems and contemporary world issues associated with the prescribed themes. Conversely, when they take a position on a contemporary world issue, adult learners sometimes have to draw on scientific and technological knowledge in order to analyze certain dimensions of the issue. This is the case with regard to the questions raised today by environmental management in the world, for example.



Chapter 2



Pedagogical Context

2.1 Learning Situations

Learning situations place adult learners at the heart of the action. The pedagogical context of each situation is based on a pedagogical aim that is related to different aspects of the Diversified Basic Education program.

In the Contemporary World program, learning situations enable adult learners to examine the world today beyond what they know, observe and perceive spontaneously. The situations comprise a scenario and a set of tasks associated with a contemporary world problem or an issue related to the themes under study. They also incorporate educational resources and periods of reflection and review.

The more these aspects are taken into account, the more learning situations will become meaningful, open-ended and complex.

A learning situation is **meaningful** when adult learners perceive the connections between the learning they have acquired in class and possible future applications, gaining a better understanding of the world today. A situation will be all the more meaningful if it refers to issues related to current events or the broad areas of learning.

A learning situation is **open-ended** if it enables adult learners to explore several solutions rather than just one, and if it involves various tasks, favours the use of different research and communications media, and results in different types of student work.

A learning and evaluation situation is **complex** insofar as it requires adult learners to use the prescribed elements of the subject-specific content. It should also enable adult learners to make connections with, and use, the broad areas of learning, the cross-curricular competencies and the knowledge targeted in other subjects.

Thus, learning situations help adult learners develop the subject-specific competencies and acquire and use knowledge. They can address a specific aspect of one the program's subject-specific competencies or involve both competencies at once. In the evaluation situations at the end of each course, however, adult learners must apply both subject-specific competencies.

2.2 Families of Learning Situations

Families of learning situations consist of situations of varying degrees of complexity that are related. They provide specific learning contexts that foster knowledge acquisition and competency development.

Learning situations that require similar resources and that involve similar tasks often belong to the same family, thus fostering the transfer of learning.

In the Contemporary World program, learning situations are divided into two families:

- *Interpreting a contemporary world problem*
- *Taking a position on a contemporary world issue*

The first family, which deals with the interpretation of a contemporary world problem, consists of learning situations in which the tasks proposed allow adult learners to define a problem, analyze it and consider it as a whole.

The second family, which deals with taking a position on a contemporary world issue, consists of learning situations in which the tasks proposed allow adult learners to take into account different points of view, consider the media treatment of an issue, debate it and consider opportunities for social action.

2.3 Educational Resources

The resources that can be used in learning situations are many and varied: they include source documents, maps, newspapers, magazines, audiovisual documents, firsthand accounts, etc. These resources may be part of the immediate surroundings (e.g. library, multimedia centre, community) or obtained through educational outings. In addition, resource persons may be asked to take part in pedagogical activities.

In order to use some of these resources, adult learners must have ready access to information and communications technologies (ICTs) that they can use as research and production tools to carry out different tasks.

The use of current events enables adult learners to observe the many ways in which societies deal with problems and issues of the contemporary world. To make better use of current events, adults may call on their own life experiences and use the various techniques presented in Appendix 2.



Chapter 3



Subject-Specific Competencies

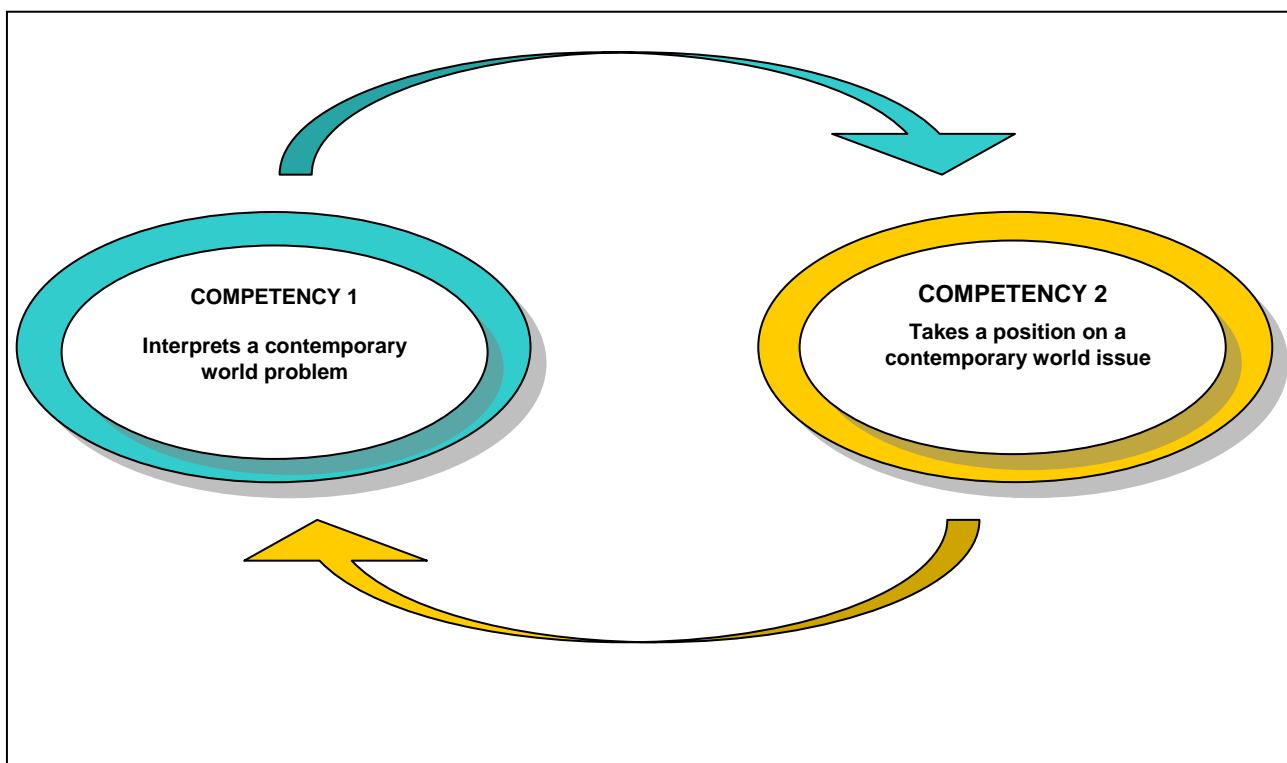
3.1 How the Subject-Specific Competencies Work Together

A subject-specific competency is defined as the ability to act effectively by mobilizing a range of resources developed through the subjects in a program of study. This ability to act is demonstrated in relatively complex contexts, and is developed throughout a lifetime. This definition refers to three specific aspects of the competency: mobilization in context, the availability of resources and reflection.

Competencies are mobilized in context when adult learners carry out tasks effectively in a given context. Adult learners must examine the characteristics of the context, take the related constraints into account and adjust their actions accordingly. Competency development also relies on the availability of a variety of resources, which adult learners must acquire and effectively reorganize. Lastly, adult learners must reflect on the process they used to effectively mobilize a set of resources, carry out tasks and solve problems in a given situation. This enables them to identify their strengths, weaknesses and challenges, and to improve their learning process

The Contemporary World program targets the development of two subject-specific competencies, as illustrated below.

How the Subject-Specific Competencies Work Together



As the diagram shows, the two competencies are developed in interaction, using the same subject-specific content, and are applied in the two families of learning situations.

When adult learners interpret a contemporary world problem, they identify the interests of the various actors involved and recognize international power relations. This helps them better grasp the nature of the issue on which they have to take a position.

When adult learners take a position on an issue of their choice, they draw on elements established during their interpretation of a problem. This helps them critically examine the values and interests that underlie certain points of view and recognize the choices that some media make in the treatment of the issue. Taking a position thus enables adult learners to cast their interpretation of the problem in a new light.

3.2 Competency 1

Interprets a contemporary world problem

3.2.1 Focus of the Competency

Interpreting a contemporary world problem involves explaining it and giving it a meaning while taking into account how the problem is integrated into the complexity of the contemporary world. A contemporary world problem reflects situations that cause concern. It affects the whole world, but may take different forms in different societies. To give a problem meaning, adult learners must use a research process (Appendix 3) that helps them define, analyze and consider the problem as a whole.

When adult learners define a given problem, they recognize the different forms the problem takes in the world. They identify the actors involved (states, international institutions, multinationals, citizens' groups or media), establish facts and define the context in which it occurs.

When adult learners analyze a problem, they establish the relationship between different aspects of society¹ and determine causes and consequences. This analysis may lead them to identify the points of view of various actors and the interests at stake and to recognize the power relations among these actors.

When adult learners consider a problem as a whole, they compare various manifestations of the problem in the world and identify similarities and differences among them. They examine the problem on different scales² while taking into account various aspects of society. This overview should modify the adults' perception of the problem and help them put it in perspective. It should

¹ Aspects of society: social, political, cultural, economic or territorial aspects

² Scales: in world, national or local terms; in the short or long term

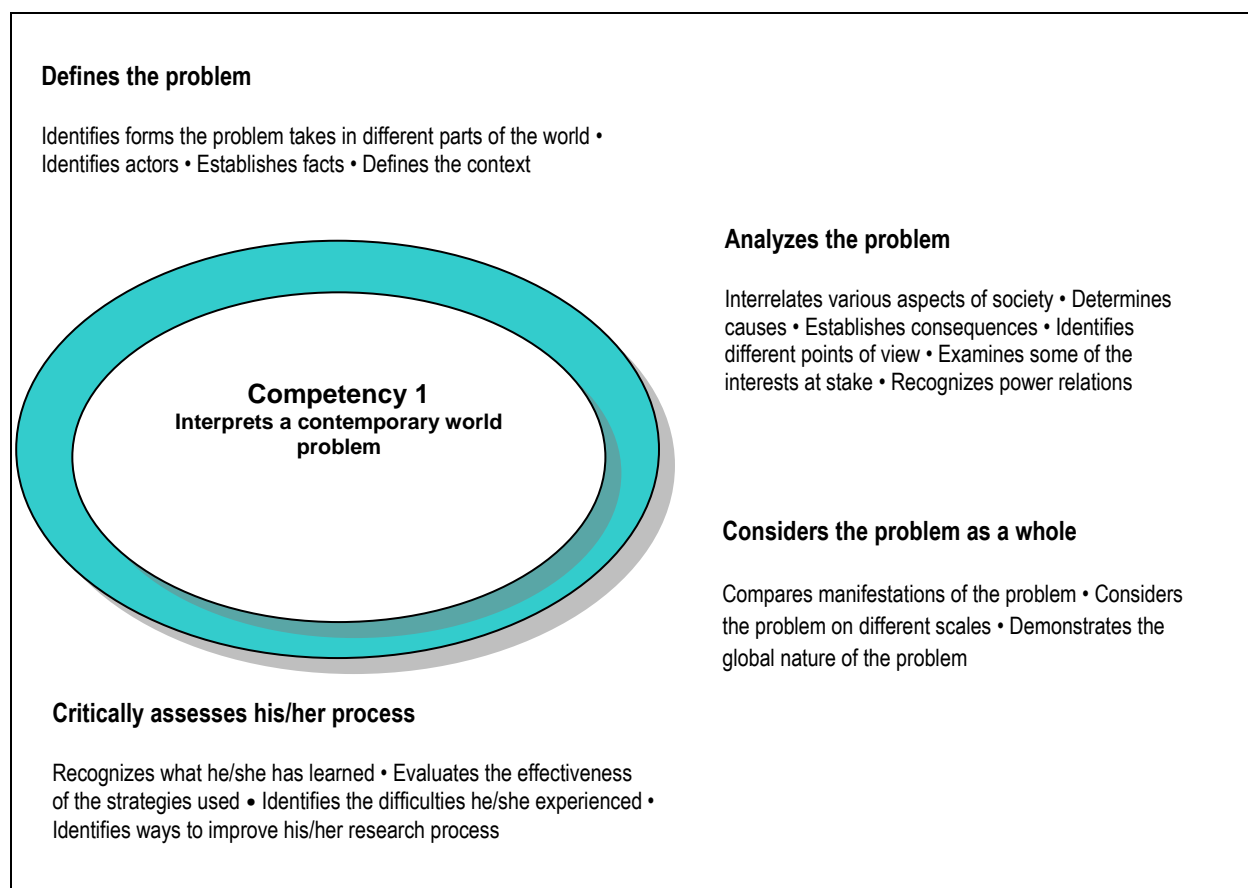
help them establish the global nature of the problem and permit them to build on their understanding of the problem so that they can take a position on an issue to which it has given rise.

This competency also encourages adult learners to take a critical look at their learning. For this reason, they must gather and keep records of what they have learned. This critical assessment throughout the development of the competency allows them to consider what they have learned, evaluate the effectiveness of their strategies, identify the difficulties encountered and determine how they can improve their learning practices.

3.2.2 Key Features and Manifestations of the Competency

The table below shows the key features and manifestations of Competency 1.

Table 1
Key Features and Manifestations of Competency 1



3.2.3 Development of the Competency

The competency *Interprets a contemporary world problem* is developed in interaction with the other subject-specific competency *Takes a position on a contemporary world issue*. To ensure the development of the competency, teachers must provide a range of learning situations of gradually increasing complexity, while varying the parameters shown in the following table. These parameters are related to the context and procedures, the subject-specific content to be drawn on, as well as the adults' reflective process. They define the respective contributions of the adult learners and the teacher to the development of the competency.

Table 2
Parameters Related to the Development of Competency 1

Parameters of the context and the procedures used	
From the beginning to the end of the course	
Adult learners use different scales to identify various elements of the problem.	Adult learners use different scales to identify connections between various elements of the problem.
The teacher guides adult learners in planning their research processes.	Adult learners plan their research processes.
The teacher suggests research strategies.	Adult learners use appropriate research strategies.
The documents are not all provided. With the teacher's help, adult learners find the documents they need.	The documents are not all provided. Adult learners find the documents they need.
Parameters of the subject-specific content to be used	
From the beginning to the end of the course	
Adult learners use the concepts related to the theme studied.	Adult learners use the concepts related to the theme studied as well as concepts related to other themes.
Adult learners draw on content from programs in the Social Sciences subject area.	
Adult learners use various techniques to illustrate their interpretations.	Adult learners use various techniques to illustrate their interpretations, and justify their use of these techniques.
Parameters of the adults' reflective process	
From the beginning to the end of the course	
The teacher decides when adult learners should reflect on their process.	Adult learners decide when to reflect on their process.
The teacher helps adult learners regulate their research process.	Adult learners regulate their research process.
Adult learners explain their research process and reflect on problems encountered and solutions found.	
The teacher provides adult learners with tools for evaluating their research process.	Adult learners choose tools for evaluating their research process from among those provided by the teacher.
The teacher helps adult learners choose the records to keep as evidence of their research process.	Adult learners choose the records to keep as evidence of their research process.

3.3 Competency 2

Takes a position on a contemporary world issue

3.3.1 Focus of the Competency

Taking a position on a contemporary world issue involves participating as a responsible citizen in social debate. To fulfill this role, adult learners examine various points of view on a given issue and reflect on anything that may influence their thinking. They also consider the media treatment of the issue, debate the issue with their peers or teacher, and consider opportunities for social action.

Adult learners are expected to take a position on the issues stemming from the problems they have interpreted. An issue generally arises when various interests clash over the resolution of a problem. In the ensuing debates, various actors support their respective viewpoints and propose solutions.

When adult learners examine the points of view related to an issue, they identify those defended by different actors, such as states, international institutions, multinationals, citizens' groups or the media in order to establish the main points of controversy. They identify the values and interests that underlie these viewpoints, establish points of convergence and divergence, identify possible solutions proposed by different actors and consider their advantages and disadvantages.

When adult learners take a position on an issue, they consider the way in which the media treat the issue, they look at the choices made by some media and determine the influence of the media on their own opinion and that of the public.

When adult learners debate an issue on which they are taking a position, they base their opinions on facts and develop arguments. They demonstrate an open mind towards opinions different from their own so that, at the end of their reflective process, they arrive at a more informed and balanced position.

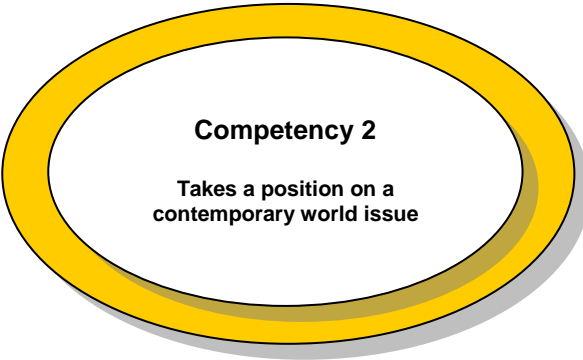
When adult learners consider opportunities for social action, they identify possible types of actions as well as contexts or institutions in which these actions could be taken. They then develop an action plan in order to make their opinion known.

Throughout the development of this competency, adult learners take a critical look at their learning. Information gathering and record keeping are therefore essential. Throughout the learning process, this critical assessment allows adult learners to recognize what they have learned, evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies used, identify the difficulties encountered and determine ways to learn more effectively.

3.3.2 Key Features and Manifestations of the Competency

The table below shows the key features and manifestations of Competency 2.

Table 3
Key Features and Manifestations of Competency 2

<p>Examines some points of view on the issue Identifies various points of view • Identifies the values and interests that underlie these points of view • Establishes points of convergence and divergence among these points of view • Identifies possible solutions • Considers the potential impact of the proposed solutions</p> <div data-bbox="224 682 803 1039">  <p style="text-align: center;">Competency 2 Takes a position on a contemporary world issue</p> </div> <p>Critically assesses his/her learning Considers what he/she has learned • Evaluates the effectiveness of the strategies used • Identifies the difficulties he/she experienced • Identifies ways to improve his/her research process</p>	<p>Considers the media treatment of the issue Recognizes the choices made by some media in their treatment of the issue • Establishes the influence of the media on his/her opinion</p> <p>Debates the issue Bases his/her opinion on facts • Develops arguments defending his/her opinion • Demonstrates an open mind toward opinions differing from his/her own</p> <p>Considers opportunities for social action Recognizes types of action that could be taken • Identifies contexts or institutions that could provide the framework for his/her actions • Establishes an action plan</p>
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3.3.3 Development of the Competency

The competency *Takes a position on a contemporary world issue* is developed in interaction with the other subject-specific competency *Interprets a contemporary world problem*. To ensure the development of the competency, teachers must provide a range of learning situations of gradually increasing complexity, while varying the parameters shown in the following table. These parameters are related to the context and procedures, the subject-specific content to be drawn on as well as the adults' reflective process. They define the respective contributions of the adult learners and the teacher to the development of the competency.

Table 4
Parameters Related to the Development of Competency 2

Parameters of the context and the procedures used	
From the beginning to the end of the course	
The teacher helps adult learners identify influences on their positions.	Adult learners identify influences on their positions.
The teacher guides adult learners in planning their research process.	Adult learners plan their research processes.
The teacher suggests research strategies.	Adult learners use appropriate research strategies.
The teacher helps adult learners identify types of actions and contexts or institutions through which to voice their opinions.	Adult learners develop action plans in order to voice their opinions.
The documents are not all provided. With the teacher's help, adult learners find the documents they need.	The documents are not all provided. Adult learners find the documents they need.
Parameters of the subject-specific content to be used	
From the beginning to the end of the course	
Adult learners use the concepts related to the theme studied.	Adult learners use the concepts related to the theme studied as well as concepts related to other themes.
Adult learners draw on content from programs in the Social Sciences subject area.	
Adult learners use appropriate techniques to support some of their arguments.	
Parameters of the adults' reflective process	
From the beginning to the end of the course	
The teacher helps adult learners decide when to reflect on their process.	Adult learners decide when to reflect on their process.
The teacher helps adult learners regulate their research process.	Adult learners regulate their research process.
Adult learners explain their research process and reflect on problems encountered and solutions found.	
The teacher provides adult learners with tools for evaluating their research process.	Adult learners choose tools for evaluating their research process from among those provided by the teacher.
The teacher helps adult learners choose the records to keep as evidence of their research process.	Adult learners determine the records to keep as evidence of their research process.

3.4 The Research Process

When adult learners interpret a problem or take a position on an issue, they use a research process.

To do this, they ask questions; become familiar with a problem; plan the research; gather, organize, process and analyze information; and communicate their findings. At any point, adults may return to one of the steps of the process described in Appendix 4.

Chapter 4



Subject-Specific Content

4.1 Knowledge

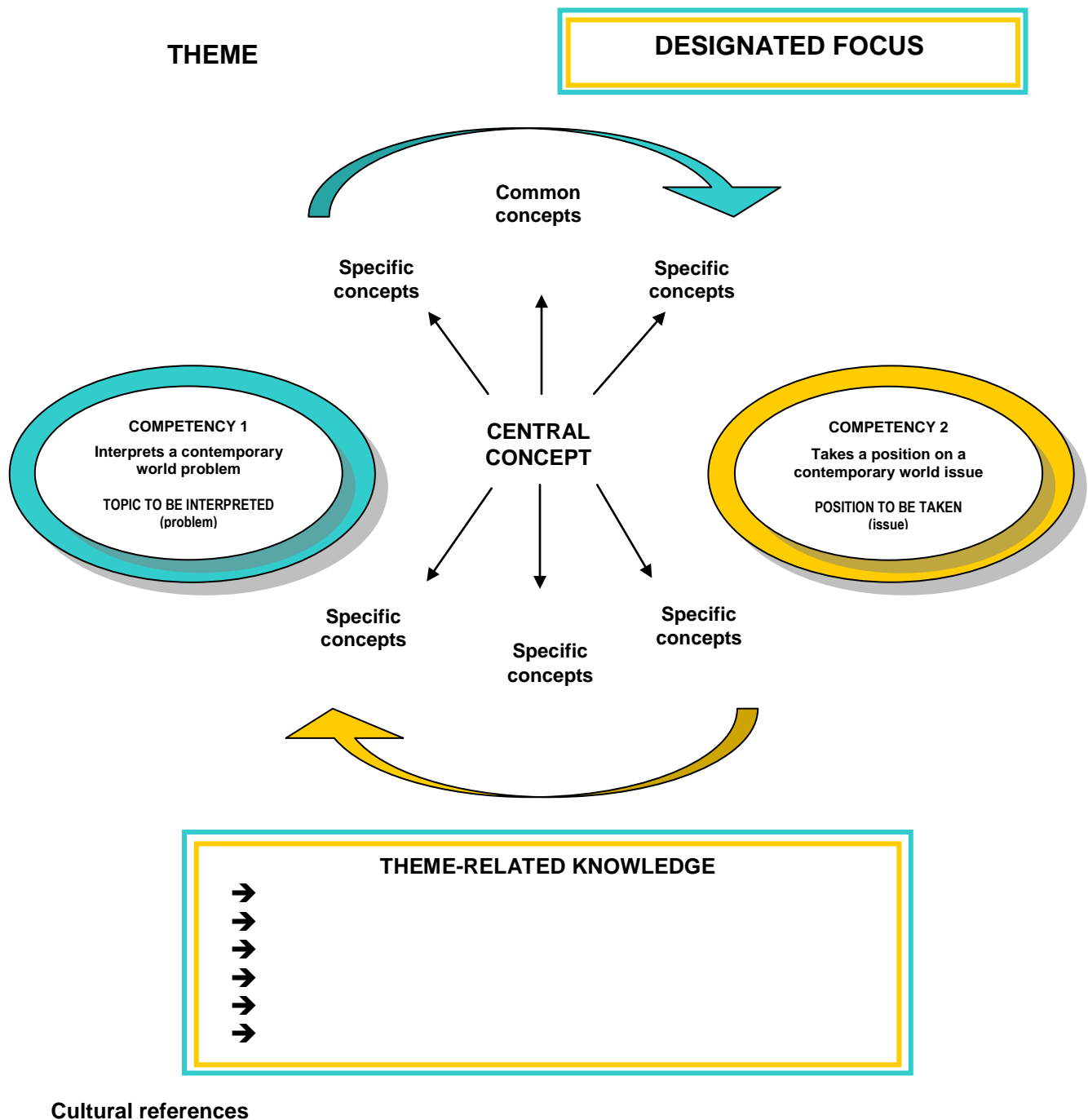
The subject-specific content of the Contemporary World program is based on a set of themes: *Environment, Population, Wealth, Power and Tensions and conflicts*. Each theme is presented in Chapter 6, using a short text, followed by a diagram.

The following elements of the subject-specific content are prescriptive:

- designated focuses
- objects of learning related to the subject-specific competencies (topic to be interpreted, position to be taken)
- concepts
- specific theme-related knowledge
- cultural references

The diagram on the following page shows how the prescribed elements of the subject-specific content relate to the subject-specific competencies.

PRESCRIBED ELEMENTS OF THE SUBJECT-SPECIFIC CONTENT AND SUBJECT-SPECIFIC COMPETENCIES



4.1.1 Designated Focus

A designated focus establishes the context for the study of each theme. It orients—or focuses—the study of the problem and the issues to which it gives rise. This focus should be reflected in the learning situations.

4.1.2 Objects of Learning

Each theme has two objects of learning: a topic to be interpreted (problem) and a position to be taken (issue). For each theme, two issues are proposed so that the teacher or adult learners have a choice. The purpose of objects of learning is to relate the competencies to the subject-specific content.

4.1.3 Concepts

Understanding the themes involves developing concepts and conceptual frameworks. A concept is a mental representation of a concrete or abstract object of knowledge.

Concepts form a large part of the cultural knowledge shared by different societies. For each theme studied, a **central concept** (in boldface and uppercase) is targeted. The central concept is supported by specific concepts that appear around the central concept in the diagram. The diagram also designates certain concepts as “common,” as they are used in all the prescribed themes in the program. The concepts of interdependence, globalization and power fit this description.

4.1.4 Theme-Related Knowledge

Theme-related knowledge is compulsory and is presented in a general manner in the organizational diagram so as to respect teachers’ professional autonomy. It is up to teachers to decide the number and nature of the facts to present in relation to this knowledge, while paying attention to the characteristics and needs of adult learners. The knowledge acquired by adult learners depends on the number, variety and richness of the documents they consult as they carry out the tasks suggested in the learning situations.

4.2 Cultural References

Other resources, such as cultural references and techniques, must be drawn upon in order to foster the development of the subject-specific competencies.

Cultural references are presented in the organizational diagram of prescribed elements for each theme studied. They enable adult learners to broaden their world-view by considering significant social phenomena or cultural trends. These references may take different forms (international agreements, events or media products) and concern figures, works of art, territories, literary works,

scientific discoveries, ways of thinking and so on, provided they are culturally significant and can be used in a learning situation.

Teachers are encouraged to choose other cultural references for each theme based on the following criteria: the references must be in keeping with the designated focus, they must refer to several aspects of society and have the potential to be used in the development of both competencies.

Although the examples provided are not themselves specific objects of study or research, **the use of cultural references in the classroom is prescribed. However, the examples provided in the program are not prescribed elements.**

4.3 Techniques

The study of the social phenomena prescribed in the Contemporary World program requires the use of techniques to obtain information and help communicate research findings. These techniques are built on those acquired in the other Social Sciences programs. They are not taught specifically as such, but their repeated use helps adult learners develop them. The techniques presented in Appendix 2 are as follows:

1. Interpreting and creating a map
2. Interpreting a written document
3. Interpreting and creating a time line
4. Interpreting a picture
5. Interpreting and creating a graph
6. Interpreting and constructing a contingency table



Chapter 5



Organization of the Courses in the Program

The Contemporary World program is in keeping with the aims of the Québec Education Program and the Diversified Basic Education Program in that it promotes the construction of a world-view, the construction of identity and empowerment.

The Contemporary World program is divided into two courses. The themes prescribed by the program focus on major concerns at the world level.

For each course, the themes are presented in alphabetical order, not in order of priority. The table below shows how the courses are organized.

Table 5
Organization of the Courses in the Contemporary World Program

Secondary V Course	Themes	Number of hours	Number of credits
<i>Contemporary World Problems and Issues I</i> SST-5101-2	Environment Population Wealth	50	2
<i>Contemporary World Problems and Issues II</i> SST-5102-2	Power Tensions and Conflicts	50	2

Chapter 6



Courses

The courses in the Contemporary World program contain the following ten sections:

Sections
Introduction
Subject-Specific Competencies
Research Process
Cross-Curricular Competencies
Subject-Specific Content
Family of Learning Situations
Broad Areas of Learning
Example of a Learning Situation
End-of-Course Outcomes
Evaluation Criteria

Course
SST-5101-2
**Contemporary World
Problems and Issues I**

Contemporary World



INTRODUCTION

The goal of the course *Contemporary World Problems and Issues I* is to help adult learners understand the nature of the relationships that form among societies and the way in which these relationships shape the organization of the world today, through the study of three themes.

The themes studied are: *Environment*, *Population* and *Wealth*. Each theme is defined by a designated focus, objects of learning related to the subject-specific competencies, concepts, specific theme-related knowledge and cultural references.

At the end of this course, adult learners will be able to interpret a contemporary world problem and take a position on an issue for each of the themes studied.

SUBJECT-SPECIFIC COMPETENCIES

The course *Contemporary World Problems and Issues I* targets the development of the two subject-specific competencies described in Appendix 3:

1. *Interprets a contemporary world problem*
2. *Takes a position on a contemporary world issue*

When interpreting a problem related to the themes studied, adult learners use facts, establish connections among these facts in their explanation of the problem and use concepts appropriately. They develop a clearer overview of the problem by identifying similarities and differences in the forms the problem takes in the world, by making connections between the elements of the problem and by identifying global trends.

When taking a position on a contemporary world issue and taking into account their interpretation, adult learners establish a critical distance by making connections between the viewpoints, interests and values of the actors involved, and by identifying the advantages and disadvantages of the solutions proposed. They then express a well-founded opinion, taking into account the influence of the actors on their opinion, using cogent arguments, and suggesting possible solutions.

RESEARCH PROCESS

When adult learners interpret a contemporary world problem or take a position on an issue, they use a research process.

To do this, they consider a problem or issue, become familiar with it, plan their research, gather and organize information, process and analyze the information, and lastly, communicate their findings. At any point, they may return to one of the steps of the process described in Appendix 4.

CROSS-CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES

All the cross-curricular competencies in the program may be required, to varying degrees, in the different learning situations. It is important to determine those that best match the requirements of the tasks for each situation. The cross-curricular competencies are presented in Appendix 1.

In the learning situation *Looking for a Job*, presented further on, the cross-curricular competency *Exercises critical judgment* can help adult learners go beyond stereotypes, prejudices, preconceived ideas and intuitive assumptions to examine issues, consider facts and evaluate their accuracy and put this information in perspective in order to support their position.

SUBJECT-SPECIFIC CONTENT

The subject-specific content of the course *Contemporary World Problems and Issues I* addresses the following themes:

1. *Environment*
2. *Population*
3. *Wealth*

A. Knowledge

Each of the themes is introduced by a short text and the prescribed elements of the subject-specific content, illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6
Prescribed Elements of the Course
Contemporary World Problems and Issues I

Prescribed Elements		Environment	Population	Wealth
Designated focus		Environmental management	The increase in migration	The distribution of wealth
Topic to be interpreted (contemporary world problem)		Economic, political and social choices in environmental management	Economic and social changes related to the increase in migration	The disparity in the distribution of wealth
Position to be taken (contemporary world issue)		The use and consumption of resources OR The harmonization of environmental standards	The management of urban expansion OR Migration and the world of work	Balancing social justice and economic development OR The control of resources
Concepts	Common	Interdependence – Globalization – Power	Interdependence – Globalization – Power	Interdependence – Globalization – Power
	Central	Sustainable development	Migration	Disparity
	Specific	Consumption – Dependence – Regulation – Responsibility	Culture – Relocation – Diaspora – Network – Urbanization	Concentration – Economic development – Flows – Social justice – Resource
Theme-related knowledge		International agreements – Climate change – Environmental groups – Measures taken by states – International organizations	Demographic change – Parallel economies – Migration flow – Urban organization – Labour policies – Immigration policies – International networks	International trade – Wealth creation – Debts and obligations of states – Social gaps – Emerging economies – Influence of colonization, decolonization and neocolonialism – International organizations – North-South relations – Power of multinational firms

Cultural references

Enable adult learners to broaden their world view by considering social phenomena or important cultural trends.

Environment

This theme concerns the economic, political and social choices regarding the environment made by states or other actors, such as organizations or citizens' groups, as well as the effort to establish international agreements recognizing environmental problems and seeking solutions.

The expression "Only One Earth"³ highlights the importance of international cooperation regarding the environment by establishing the principle that every state is responsible for ensuring that activities within its jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment beyond its own borders. Some environmental problems—such as global warming—are too big to be dealt with by good neighbour practices and require an active search for global solutions. To this end, actions are based on agreements or international conventions, which raise questions regarding their application or their real significance.

Environmental concerns are leading societies to rethink their relationship with the environment. Consumption habits differ from one culture to the next, and are based largely on societal choices. It is thus not possible to hold states entirely responsible for these choices, which are also made by individuals, businesses and social groups, whose consumption, production patterns and use of resources all affect the environment.

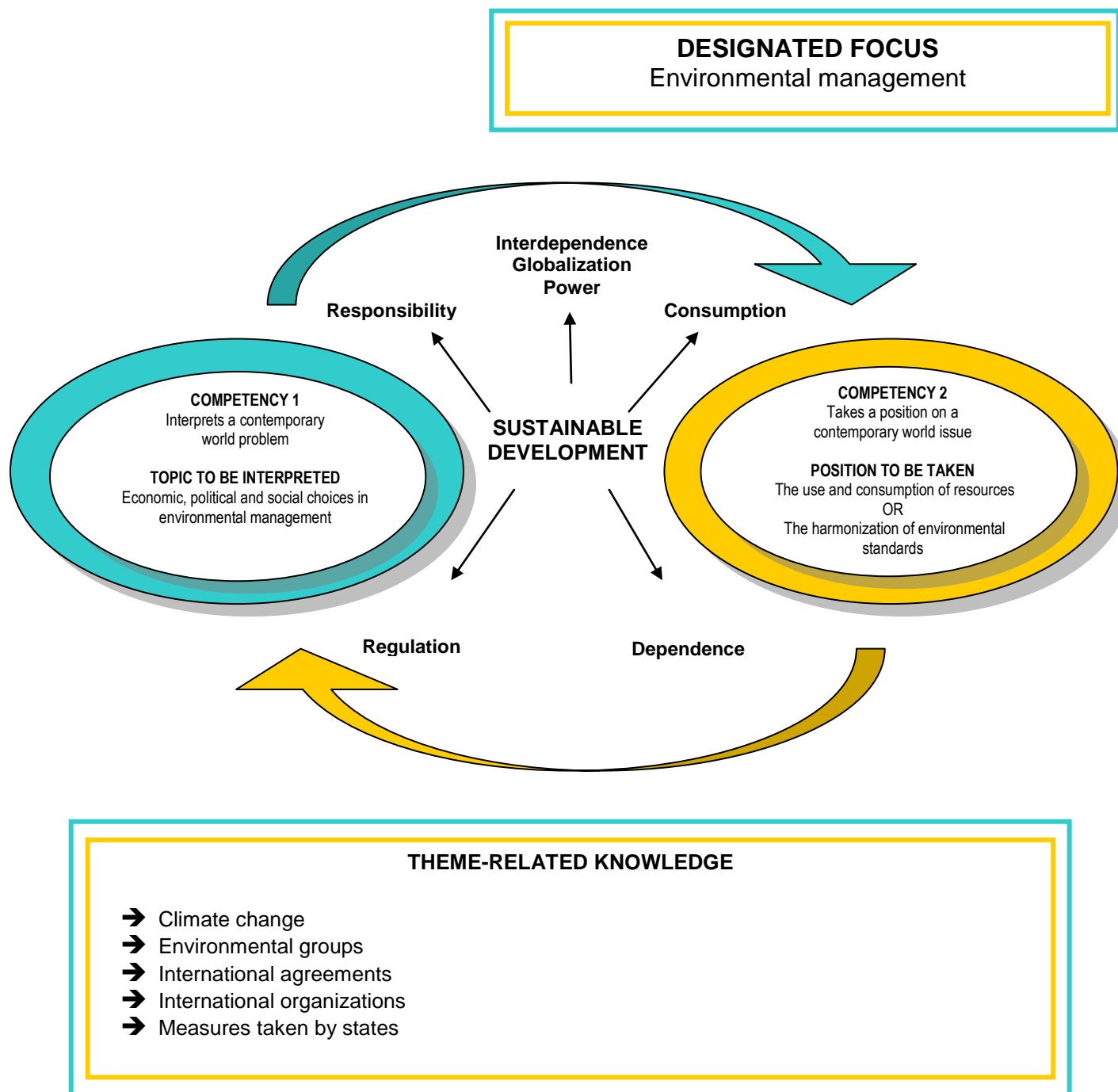
Given the Earth's limited capacity to support economic development, societies face the question of how to regulate environmental practices effectively by establishing global management standards and mechanisms. The overexploitation or scarcity—and uneven distribution—of certain resources (hydrocarbons, drinking water, forest, etc.) call for the revaluation of choices regarding resource use.

Since all states do not have the same capacities, objectives or interests, negotiations are complex, all the more so in that they are based essentially on a voluntary approach. Although the legitimacy of international organizations active in the environmental field is increasingly recognized, there remain questions concerning their authority. Who ensures the application of international environmental standards? Who arbitrates environmental conflicts? Given the global nature of the problems in question, the lack of uniformity and consistency in the actions taken represents a major obstacle facing the contemporary world in its quest for sustainable development.

³ This expression comes from the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm in 1972.

The above text provides an overview of the theme. The diagram on the following page illustrates the relationship between the competencies and the subject-specific content for this theme. Adult learners are expected to interpret the problem *Economic, political and social choices in environmental management* in the world today. They also have to take a position on one of the following issues: *The use and consumption of resources* OR *The harmonization of environmental standards*.

ENVIRONMENT



Cultural references: *Our Common Future* (Brundtland Report, 1987) – *Action 21* (1992) – *Kyoto Protocol* (1998) – *An Inconvenient Truth*, Al Gore (2006) – Other references to be chosen by the teacher

Population

The growth of trade and cultural exchanges in the context of globalization, and the rapid development of means of communication in the areas of transportation and information networks, have greatly increased population mobility and fostered the development of international networks.

Population movement usually occurs for economic reasons. There are also humanitarian reasons, related to political situations or climate issues. Demographic changes, such as aging populations and natural population growth, also lead to increased migration in some societies. These migration movements contribute to the creation of diasporas, that is, the dispersion of members of a community throughout the world.

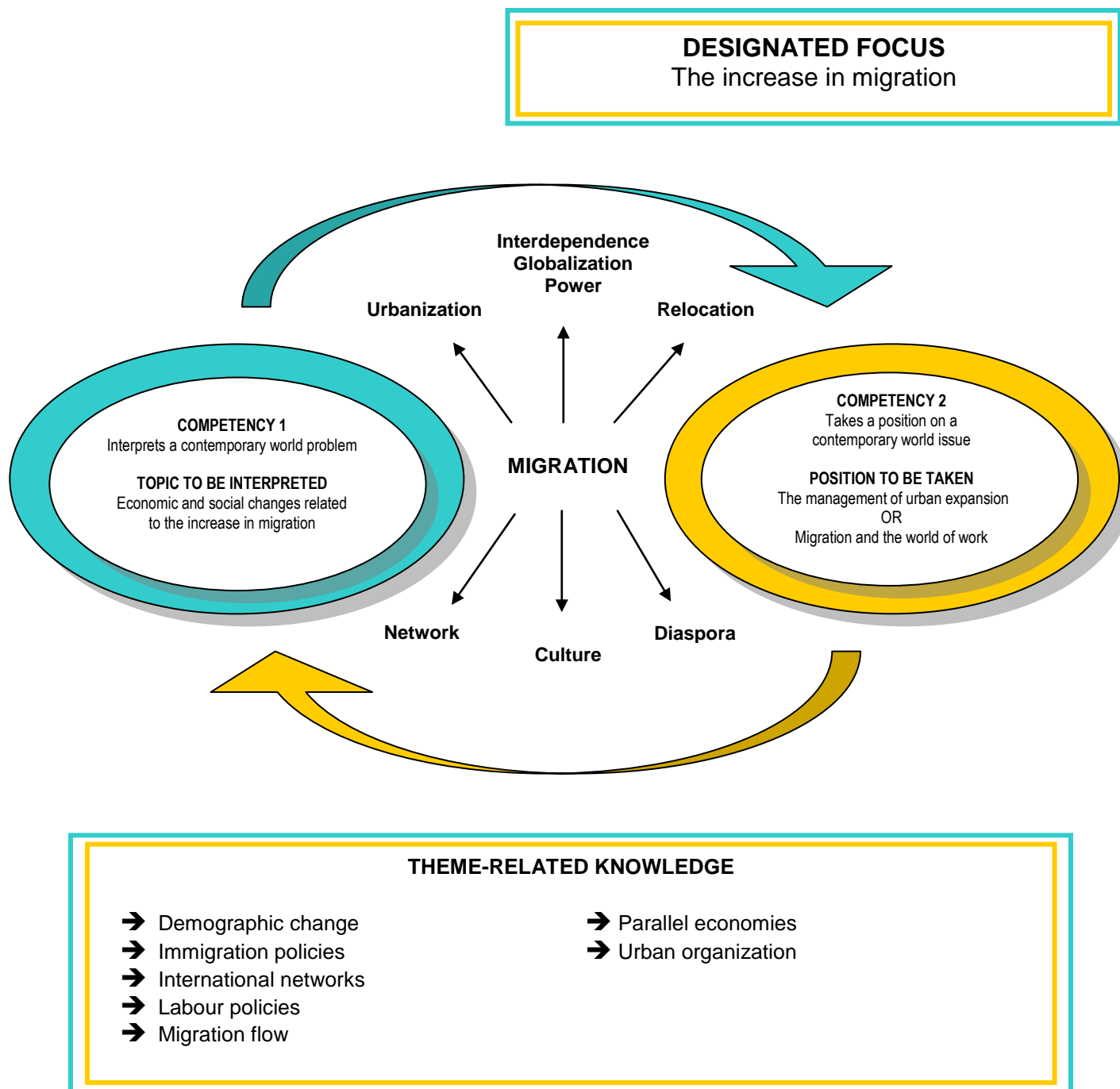
Migration may be permanent or temporary; it may take place within a legal framework or be clandestine. Much of it targets big cities, whether the migrants come from within the country or outside it. The majority of the world's population is now urban. The

concentration of migrants in cities accelerates the phenomenon of urbanization and the problems associated with it. In some parts of the world, these problems have grown to worrisome proportions. Cities have difficulty absorbing the flow of new arrivals. Infrastructures do not always develop in proportion to the needs created by the migrants. How can cities take into account the culture of these new arrivals, whether they are the result of internal or external migration? How do societies handle the intensification of migration flows, whether national or international?

Changes in the world of work are increasing the mobility of both jobs and workers. These changes pose a major challenge for host societies, which must, for example, both facilitate the integration of immigrants by seeing that they find jobs and address the increase in unemployment caused by the phenomenon of relocation. Other societies experience a net migration loss and try to make up for a shortage of skilled labour. How can societies cope with these changes?

The above text provides an overview of the theme. The diagram on the following page illustrates the relationship between the competencies and the subject-specific content for this theme. Adult learners are expected to interpret the problem *Economic and social changes related to the increase in migration* in the world today. They also have to take a position on one of the following issues: *The management of urban expansion* OR *Migration and the world of work*.

POPULATION



Cultural references: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (1951) – Migrinter (1985) – International Labour Organization, *Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work* (1998) – Jane Jacobs (1916-2006) – Other references to be chosen by the teacher

Wealth

Wealth is the result of the economic activity of a community—of the processes involved in the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services. Despite the sustained growth of the world economy in the second half of the 20th century, the distribution of wealth remains unequal. It favours the countries of the North over those of the South. There is also a disparity in the distribution of wealth within societies. The gap between rich and poor is growing wider in many countries.

Inequalities in the areas of employment and remuneration have increased in many developed countries, especially since the mid-1980s. The economic development experienced by some emerging countries, notably in Asia and South America, has widened the gap between living conditions in the city and those in the country. As for the African continent, much of it is characterized by generalized poverty.

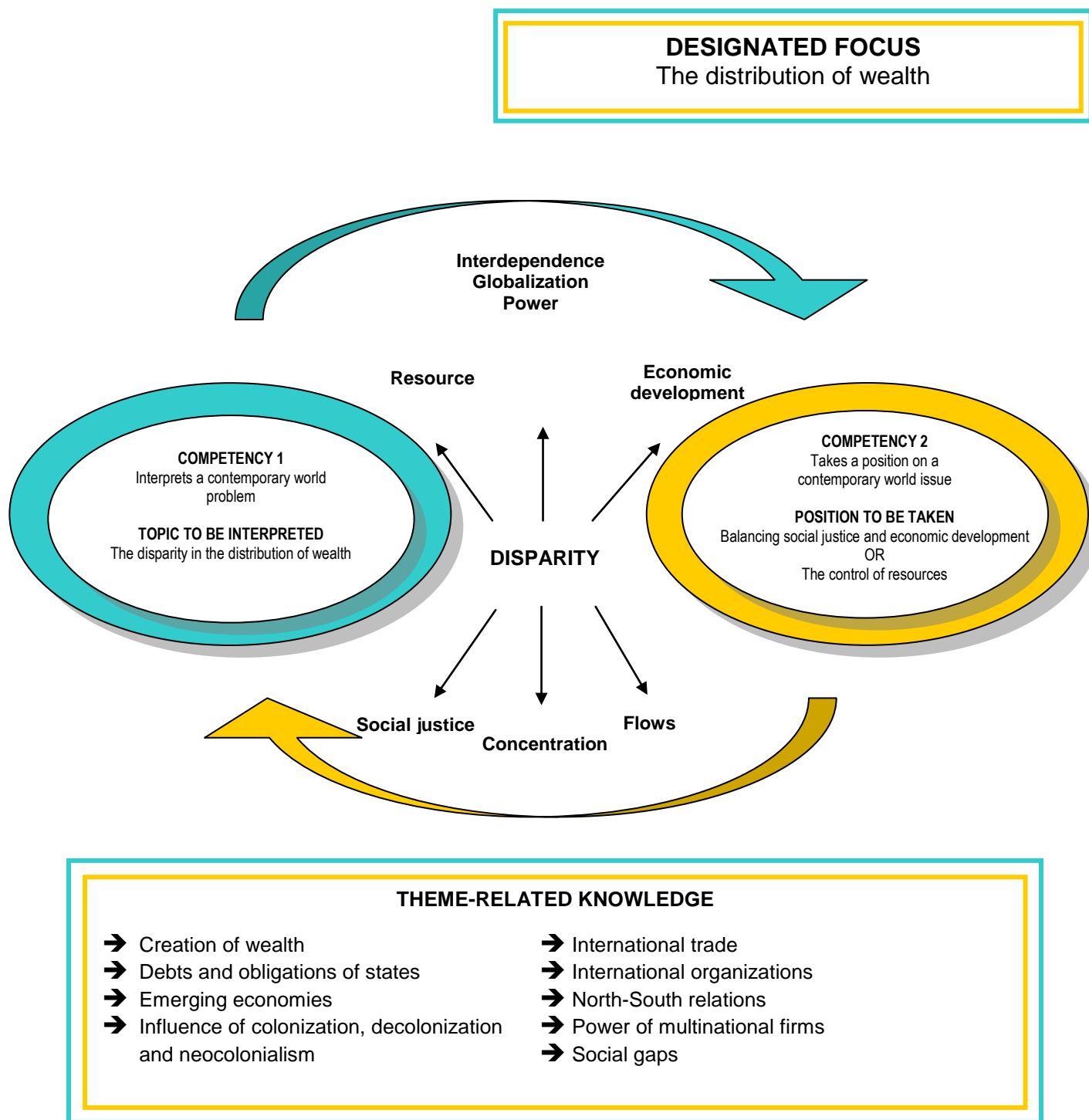
Notwithstanding the worldwide increase in productivity, measures taken by states to redistribute wealth and efforts by various actors to regulate the world market, disparities

continue to grow. The geographic distribution of natural resources on the planet, the control of those resources, the organization of production as well as the effects of colonization, decolonization and neo-colonialism must all be taken into account in explaining this disparity.

There is a consensus on the need to reduce poverty in the world, but the way to achieve this is a matter of debate. Is it possible for economic development to ensure greater social justice on a world scale? Can it benefit all populations, providing every person with adequate living conditions and access to education and health care? Another challenge is to find a way to make the exploitation of natural and human resources, particularly by multinational firms, generate more economic benefits for local populations, particularly in the less-developed countries. To what extent is a fair distribution of wealth possible? How can this objective be attained? Does economic growth increase disparity or reduce it?

The above text provides an overview of the theme. The diagram on the following page illustrates the relationship between the competencies and the subject-specific content for this theme. Adult learners are expected to interpret the problem *The disparity in the distribution of wealth* in the world today. They also have to take a position on one of the following issues: *Balancing social justice and economic development* OR *The control of resources*.

WEALTH



Cultural references: Oxfam (1942) – *We Are the World* (1985) – Fair Trade/Transfair Canada (1997) – Muhammad Yunus (1940 -) – Other references to be chosen by the teacher

B. Cultural References

The cultural references suggested in this course refer to the themes *Environment*, *Population* and *Wealth*. They were selected on the basis of the designated focus to be used in a learning situation.

Cultural references may take different forms—international agreements, events, media products—and concern a person, a work of art, a territory, a literary work, a scientific discovery, a way of thinking and so on. Using cultural references enables adult learners to broaden their world-view by considering significant social phenomena or cultural trends.

Although the use of cultural references in the classroom is prescribed, the examples provided in the program are not.

The cultural references are chosen by the teacher, with the help of adult learners, if applicable. Three selection criteria must be met:

- conformity with the designated focus
- consideration of several aspects of society
- potential use in the development of the two subject-specific competencies

Suggested Cultural References

Environment	<i>Our Common Future</i> (Brundtland Report, 1987) – <i>Action 21</i> (1992) – <i>Kyoto Protocol</i> (1998) – <i>An Inconvenient Truth</i> , Al Gore (2006) – Other references to be chosen by the teacher
Population	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (1951) – Migrinter (1985) – International Labour Organization, <i>Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work</i> (1998) – Jane Jacobs (1916-2006) – Other references to be chosen by the teacher
Wealth	Oxfam (1942) – <i>We Are the World</i> (1985) – Fair Trade/Transfair Canada (1997) – Muhammad Yunus (1940 -) – Other references to be chosen by the teacher

C. Techniques

To study the themes associated with this course, adult learners must use different techniques.

These techniques, presented in Appendix 2, involve interpreting and creating a map, interpreting a written document, interpreting and creating a time line, interpreting a picture, interpreting and creating a graph, and interpreting and constructing a contingency table.

FAMILIES OF LEARNING SITUATIONS

Families of learning situations consist of situations of varying degrees of complexity that are related. They provide specific learning contexts that help give meaning to learning.

The learning situations in the Contemporary World program are divided into two families:

- *Interpreting a contemporary world problem*
- *Taking a position on a contemporary world issue*

BROAD AREAS OF LEARNING

Each of the five broad areas of learning, including *Media Literacy*, raises issues and questions that can be used to develop learning situations.

The educational aim of the broad area of learning *Media Literacy* is to encourage adult learners to exercise critical, ethical and aesthetic judgment with respect to the media and produce media documents that respect individual and collective rights. Its focus of development *Understanding of media representations of reality* enables adult learners to make comparisons between facts and opinions. The example that follows, *Looking for a Job*, is consistent with both the educational aim and the focus of development.

EXAMPLE OF A LEARNING SITUATION

Learning situations place adult learners at the heart of the action. To enable adult learners to develop competencies, construct and effectively apply knowledge, and mobilize a variety of resources, a learning situation must be meaningful, open-ended and complex and require various steps and different tasks, as suggested in the example below. To enable adult learners to carry out the different tasks, this situation *Looking for a Job* should be accompanied by a document file that includes texts, time lines, graphs, caricatures, etc.

Looking for a Job

Through the media, adult learners are able to see that globalization, the growth of trade and cultural exchanges and the rapid development of means of communication have redefined the world of work. Québec's workforce is now made up of individuals of many different origins who are seeking to improve their economic situation. Adult learners looking for a job must become aware of these new realities, including the cultural diversity that characterizes today's workforce. They must consider the place they will hold in the working world.

How can adults interpret the fact that economic and social changes are related to the increase in migration on a global scale? What arguments can they use to support their opinions on migration and its effects on jobs? What possible actions can they suggest?

Various tasks would give adult learners an opportunity to interpret this problem:

- They could analyze a map illustrating international migration patterns to assess the importance of population mobility.
- They could write a fact sheet to establish a portrait of different types of migrants today and identify the causes of population movements.
- They could analyze the social effects of the current brain drain and determine its impact on developing countries.

Various tasks would give adult learners an opportunity to develop arguments in order to take a position on this issue:

- They could read short texts to identify different points of view on the issue and identify the values and interests that underlie them.
- They could write reading reports on the media treatment of the issue in order to recognize the choices that some media have made.
- They could write a short text to demonstrate whether workforce mobility is beneficial for Québec.

END-OF-COURSE OUTCOMES

By examining the three themes, adults learn to apply their knowledge appropriately, develop a rigorous reasoning process and express a well-founded opinion.

Once they have examined the theme *Environment*, adult learners are able to observe that environmental management goes hand in hand with the establishment of international agreements in recognizing problems and seeking solutions. By interpreting a problem and taking a position on an

issue, adult learners become aware of the global scale of the issue of sustainable development and of the importance of taking consistent actions at an international level.

Once they have examined the theme *Population*, adult learners are able to observe that increased migration is related to globalization, increased population movements, changes in the world of work and the mobility of jobs and workers. By interpreting a problem and taking a position on an issue, adult learners become aware of the major changes in the world of work and the need to take into account migration movements when considering the urbanization of societies at the world level.

Once they have examined the theme *Wealth*, adult learners are able to observe that, despite global economic growth, inequalities and disparity remain a reality both within and among countries. By interpreting a problem and taking a position on an issue, adult learners become aware that disparity continues to grow in spite of increased productivity, and try to explain why.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

To evaluate the development of subject-specific competencies with respect to the acquisition of theme-related knowledge and its effective application, teachers base their judgment on the two evaluation criteria.

The criterion ***Appropriate use of knowledge*** applies to both competencies. The criterion ***Use of a rigorous reasoning process*** is related to the competency *Interprets a contemporary world problem*. The criterion ***Expression of a well-founded opinion*** is related to the competency *Takes a position on a contemporary world issue*.

The table below shows the links between the competencies and evaluation criteria.

Competency	Evaluation criteria
Competency 1 Interprets a contemporary world problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appropriate use of knowledge - Use of a rigorous reasoning process
Competency 2 Takes a position on a contemporary world issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appropriate use of knowledge - Expression of a well-founded opinion

Course
SST-5102-2
**Contemporary World
Problems and Issues II**

Contemporary World



INTRODUCTION

The goal of the course *Contemporary World Problems and Issues II* is to help adult learners understand the nature of the relationships that form among societies and the way in which these relationships shape the organization of the world today, through the study of two themes.

The themes studied are: *Power* and *Tensions and Conflicts*. Each theme is defined by a designated focus, objects of learning related to the subject-specific competencies, concepts, specific theme-related knowledge and cultural references.

At the end of this course, adult learners will be able to interpret a contemporary world problem and take a position on an issue for each of the themes studied.

SUBJECT-SPECIFIC COMPETENCIES

The course *Contemporary World Problems and Issues II* targets the development of the two subject-specific competencies described in Appendix 3:

1. *Interprets a contemporary world problem*
2. *Takes a position on a contemporary world issue*

When interpreting a problem related to the themes studied, adult learners use facts, establish connections among these facts in their explanation of the problem and use concepts appropriately. They develop a clearer overview of the problem by identifying similarities and differences in the forms the problem takes in the world, by making connections between the elements of the problem and by identifying global trends.

When taking a position on a contemporary world issue and taking into account their interpretation, adult learners establish a critical distance by making connections between the viewpoints, interests and values of the actors involved, and by identifying the advantages and disadvantages of the solutions proposed. They then express a well-founded opinion, taking into account the influence of the actors on their opinion, using cogent arguments, and suggesting possible solutions.

RESEARCH PROCESS

When adult learners interpret a contemporary world problem or take a position on an issue, they use a research process.

To do this, they consider a problem or issue, become familiar with it, plan their research, gather and organize information, process and analyze the information, and lastly, communicate their findings. At any point, they may return to one of the steps of the process described in Appendix 4.

CROSS-CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES

All the cross-curricular competencies in the program may be required, to varying degrees, in the different learning situations. It is important to determine those that best match the requirements of the tasks for each situation. The cross-curricular competencies are presented in Appendix 1.

In the learning situation *More Than 145 Canadian Soldiers Die in Afghanistan (May 2010)*, presented further on, the cross-curricular competency *Uses information* can help adult learners use a set of resources effectively. They must not only find and compare information and determine its value or relevance, but also learn to organize and synthesize it in order to make use of it.

SUBJECT-SPECIFIC CONTENT

The subject-specific content of the course *Contemporary World Problems and Issues II* addresses the following themes:

1. *Power*
2. *Tensions and conflicts*

A. Knowledge

Each of the themes is introduced by a short text and a diagram of the prescribed elements of the subject-specific content, illustrated in Table 7.

Table 7
Prescribed Elements of the Course
Contemporary World Problems and Issues II

Prescribed Elements		Power	Tensions and Conflicts
Designated focus		The powers of states	External intervention in a sovereign territory
Topic to be interpreted (contemporary world problem)		The redefinition of the powers of states	The legitimacy of external intervention in areas of tension and conflict
Position to be taken (contemporary world issue)		The capacity of states to take action OR The sovereignty of states and economic or political associations	Application of the principle of humanitarian assistance OR The interests of intervening parties versus those of populations
Concepts	Common	Interdependence – Globalization – Power	Interdependence – Globalization – Power
	Central	State	Intervention
	Specific	International law – Governance – Integration – Sovereignty – Standardization	Diplomacy – Human rights – Ideology – Interference – Demand
Theme-related knowledge		International and multilateral agreements – Multinational firms – Pressure groups – International institutions – Globalization of markets – Cultural, economic and environmental policies – Political alliances – Economic zones	International alliances – Political autonomy – Control of resources – Exercise of rights and freedoms – International institutions – Peacekeeping missions – Peace process – Questions related to cultural identity (ethnicity, religion, etc.)

Cultural references: Enable adult learners to broaden their world-view by considering social phenomena or important cultural trends.

Power

The development of worldwide political, economic and cultural relations and exchanges that characterizes globalization has had an impact on the powers of states. All areas of state intervention are affected by the introduction of standards resulting from international agreements. Some states see their power to act being redefined, or reduced.

States that sign agreements accept certain constraints, such as objectives and deadlines. In this respect, some international institutions exercise certain pressures on state actions. For example, in the area of culture, there is a trend toward standardization, particularly as regards films, and in the area of international law, tribunals have been established. In addition, because they extend beyond the country in which they are based, the activities of multinational firms are subject to international regulations, which also call into question the powers of states.

The above text provides an overview of the theme. The diagram on the following page illustrates the relationship between the competencies and the subject-specific content for this theme. Adult learners are expected to interpret the problem *The redefinition of the powers of states*. They also have to take a position on one of the following issues: *The capacity of states to take action* OR *The sovereignty of states and economic or political associations*.

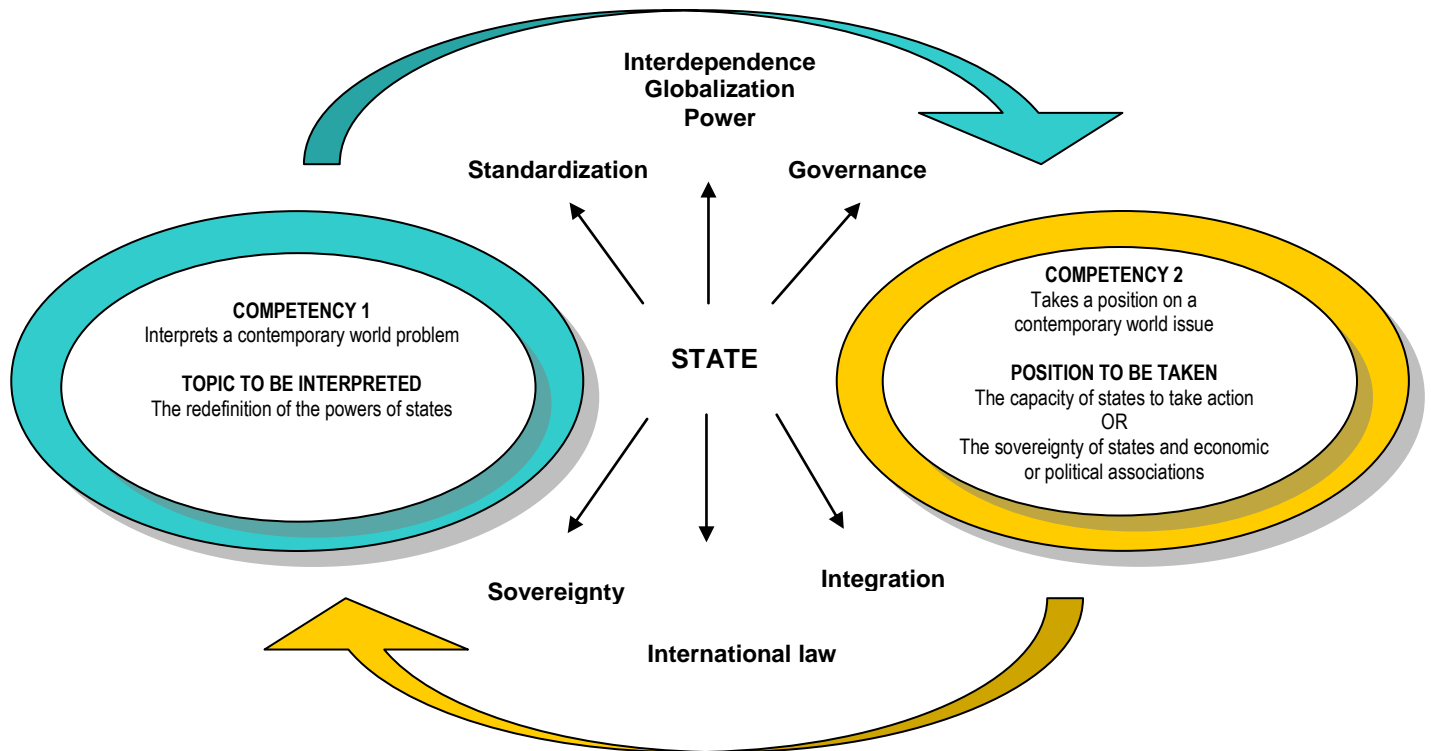
Given the globalization of markets, states tend to establish agreements or even to form economic associations, such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC) and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), or political associations, such as the European Union (EU). Although membership in such associations enables states to intervene more effectively in several areas, it may affect their sovereignty.

Power sharing involves negotiation, sometimes creates tensions and raises questions about the sovereignty of states, which must necessarily share governance more than they used to. Who makes the decisions in the world? Why do states accept or refuse to sign international agreements? Who establishes international consumption standards?

POWER

DESIGNATED FOCUS

The powers of states



THEME-RELATED KNOWLEDGE

- ➔ Cultural, economic and environmental policies
- ➔ Economic zones
- ➔ Globalization of markets
- ➔ International and multilateral agreements
- ➔ International institutions
- ➔ Multinational firms
- ➔ Political alliances
- ➔ Pressure groups

Cultural references: United Nations (1945) – G6 Summit (1975) – Maastricht Treaty (1992) – Dongjiang Free Trade Port Zone (2006) – Other references to be chosen by the teacher

Tensions and Conflicts

The existence of divergent interests in a region may give rise to tension between peoples or states. The tension may culminate in a diplomatic crisis or an armed conflict. This may lead to external intervention, which may take the form of peace forces, humanitarian operations, economic sanctions or military action by third states. Such tension and conflict are part of a broader context involving the international situation, diplomacy and power relations.

Although there has been much tension and conflict in the course of human history, most of the international institutions that intervene in conflicts such as wars and genocides were founded in the second half of the 20th century. Despite the existence of these institutions and the establishment of conflict resolution arrangements, the contemporary world is still the theatre of tension and conflict among peoples or states.

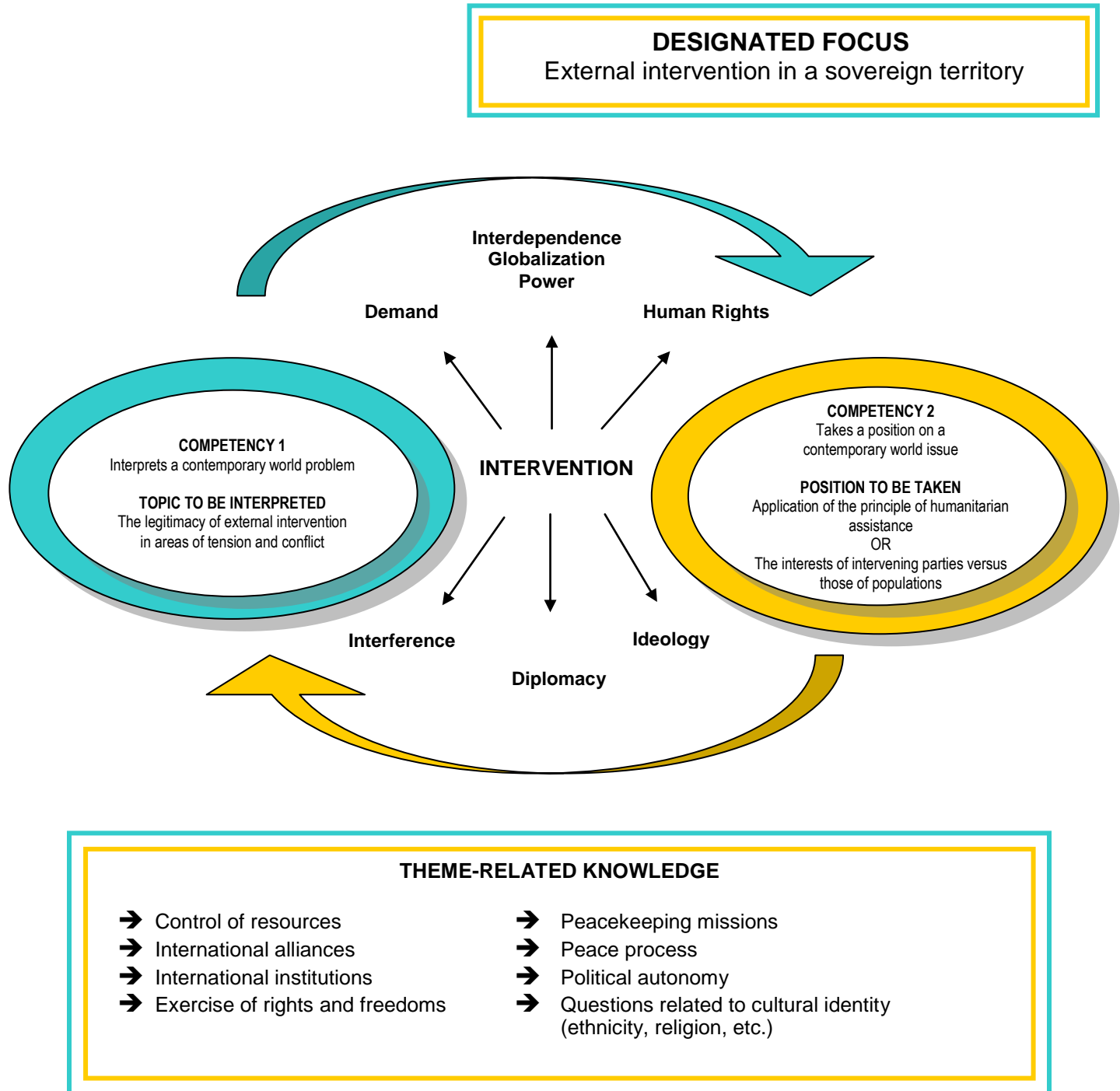
Most tensions and conflicts arise out of explicit demands, which take different forms and are

experienced differently depending on the case. They may, for example, involve questions related to rights and freedoms, territory, the control of resources, political autonomy and cultural identity (ethnicity, religion, etc.). In addition to explicit demands, there may be deeper causes, such as ideological differences or previous tensions and conflicts.

Sometimes, the intervention of third states or international institutions raises questions about respect for the sovereignty of states. To legitimize some of their actions, intervening parties seek the approval of the General Assembly or Security Council of the United Nations (UN), for example, citing humanitarian reasons for their actions. Sometimes they are criticized for promoting their own interests rather than those of the populations concerned. Whose interests and what principles underlie external intervention in areas of tension and conflict? And why does intervention occur in some areas and not others?

The above text provides an overview of the theme. The diagram on the following page illustrates the relationship between the competencies and the subject-specific content for this theme. Adult learners are expected to interpret the problem *The legitimacy of external intervention in areas of tension and conflict*. They also have to take a position on one of the following issues: *Application of the principle of humanitarian assistance* OR *The interests of intervening parties versus those of populations*.

TENSIONS AND CONFLICTS



Cultural references: Blue Helmets (1948) – Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) – Doctors Without Borders (1971) – Reporters Without Borders (1985) – Other references to be chosen by the teacher

B. Cultural References

The cultural references suggested in this course refer to the themes *Power* and *Tensions and Conflicts*. They were selected on the basis of the designated focus to be used in a learning situation.

Cultural references may take different forms—international agreements, events, media products—and concern a person, a work of art, a territory, a literary work, a scientific discovery, a way of thinking and so on. Using them enables adult learners to broaden their world-view by considering significant social phenomena or cultural trends.

Although the use of cultural references in the classroom is prescribed, the examples provided in the program are not.

The cultural references are chosen by the teacher, with the help of adult learners, if applicable. Three selection criteria must guide the choice of references:

- conformity with the designated focus
- consideration of several aspects of society
- potential use in the development of the two subject-specific competencies

Suggested Cultural References

Power	United Nations (1945) – G6 Summit (1975) – Maastricht Treaty (1992) – Dongjiang Free Trade Port Zone (2006) – Other references to be chosen by the teacher
Tensions and conflicts	Blue Helmets (1948) – Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) – Doctors Without Borders (1971) – Reporters Without Borders (1985) – Other references to be chosen by the teacher

C. Techniques

To study the themes associated with this course, adult learners must use different techniques.

These techniques, presented in Appendix 2, involve interpreting and creating a map, interpreting a written document, interpreting and creating a time line, interpreting a picture, interpreting and creating a graph, and interpreting and constructing a contingency table.

FAMILIES OF LEARNING SITUATIONS

Families of learning situations consist of situations of varying degrees of complexity that are related. They provide specific learning contexts that help give meaning to learning.

The learning situations in the Contemporary World program are divided into two families:

- *Interpreting a contemporary world problem*
- *Taking a position on a contemporary world issue*

BROAD AREAS OF LEARNING

Each of the five broad areas of learning, including *Citizenship and Community Life*, raises issues and questions that can be used to develop learning situations.

The educational aim of the broad area of learning *Citizenship and Community Life* is to encourage adult learners to take part in democratic life and develop an attitude of openness to the world and a respect for diversity. Its focus of development *Adoption of a culture of peace* enables adult learners to become aware of the interdependence of individuals, generations and peoples. The example that follows, *More than 145 Canadian Soldiers Die in Afghanistan (May 2010)*, is consistent with both the educational aim and the focus of development.

EXAMPLE OF A LEARNING SITUATION

Learning situations place adult learners at the heart of the action. To enable adult learners to develop competencies, construct and effectively apply knowledge and mobilize a variety of resources, a learning situation must be meaningful, open-ended and complex and require various steps and different tasks, as suggested in the example below. To enable adult learners to carry out the different tasks, the learning situation *More Than 145 Canadian Soldiers Die in Afghanistan (May 2010)* should be accompanied by a document file that includes texts, time lines, graphs, caricatures, etc.

More Than 145 Canadian Soldiers Die in Afghanistan (May 2010)

The current situation in Afghanistan can be discussed under the theme *Tensions and Conflicts*. Every day, media sources report on the conflict in this area and the many Canadians who play an active role on the battlefield. These soldiers leave behind family and friends who live with uncertainty as to whether these soldiers will come home safe and sound. Adult learners are encouraged to reflect on the presence of Canada in Afghanistan. How do they interpret the legitimacy of external intervention in areas of tension and conflict? What position do they take on the interests of intervening parties versus those of the people?

Various tasks would give adult learners an opportunity to interpret this problem:

- They could locate on a world map the main areas of tension and conflict, and identify the areas in the world that are most affected.
- They could read short texts on different conflicts in the world and identify the similarities and differences that characterize them.
- They could read texts on the legitimacy of external intervention in Afghanistan in order to identify the causes of interference.

Various tasks would give adult learners an opportunity to develop arguments in order to take a position on this issue:

- They could identify, using various sources, humanitarian actions in Afghanistan and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies used.
- They could determine the points of view of various actors (e.g. the UN, Taliban, Afghan government, Canadian government) to identify the points of convergence and divergence regarding this issue.
- They could participate in a round-table discussion on the interests of intervening parties versus those of populations in order to express their point of view on the issue.

END-OF-COURSE OUTCOMES

By examining the two themes, adults learn to apply their knowledge appropriately, develop a rigorous reasoning process and express a well-founded opinion.

Once they have examined the theme *Power*, adult learners are able to observe that the powers of states are being redefined as a result of globalization. By interpreting a problem and taking a position on an issue, adult learners become aware of the powers of states with respect to sovereignty and the sharing of governance in the world today.

Once they have examined the theme *Tensions and Conflicts*, adult learners are able to observe that, in the world economy, areas of tensions and conflicts exist. By interpreting a problem and taking a position on an issue, adult learners become aware that the intervention of third states or international institutions raises questions about respect for the sovereignty of states in areas of tensions and conflicts and the legitimacy of intervention in sovereign nations.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

To evaluate the development of subject-specific competencies with respect to the acquisition of theme-related knowledge and its effective application, teachers base their judgment on two evaluation criteria.

The criterion ***Appropriate use of knowledge*** applies to both competencies. The criterion ***Use of a rigorous reasoning process*** is related to the competency *Interprets a contemporary world problem*. The criterion ***Expression of a well-founded opinion*** is related to the competency *Takes a position on a contemporary world issue*.

The table below shows the links between the competencies and evaluation criteria.

Competency	Evaluation criteria
Competency 1 Interprets a contemporary world problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appropriate use of knowledge - Use of a rigorous reasoning process
Competency 2 Takes a position on a contemporary world issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appropriate use of knowledge - Expression of a well-founded opinion

APPENDIXES



Appendix 1

Cross-Curricular Competencies

Cross-curricular competencies are not taught specifically as such; rather they are integrated into a program of study. Programs draw, to varying degrees, on all the cross-curricular competencies, and the latter in turn contribute to the development of subject-specific competencies. In all, there are nine cross-curricular competencies grouped into four categories.

Cross-Curricular Competencies	
Category	Competencies
• Intellectual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Uses information- Solves problems- Exercises critical judgment- Uses creativity
• Methodological	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Adopts effective work methods- Uses information and communications technologies
• Personal and social	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Achieves his/her potential- Cooperates with others
• Communication-related	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Communicates appropriately

Appendix 2

Techniques

The following techniques are explained in this appendix:

1. Interpreting and creating a map
2. Interpreting a written document
3. Interpreting and creating a time line
4. Interpreting a picture
5. Interpreting and creating a graph
6. Interpreting and constructing a contingency table

1. INTERPRETING AND CREATING A MAP

Learning to interpret and create a map is essential in order to study the prescribed themes of the Contemporary World program. A map is a spatial representation of a reality. A thematic map can depict one or more aspects of a situation. Adult learners can use an outline map to illustrate their understanding of a theme. Learning with regard to the production of maps must under no circumstances be limited to reproducing or tracing existing maps or—worse still—to colouring in maps on the basis of preestablished data.

Interpreting a map

- Decoding the title
- Decoding the legend
- Identifying the scale
- Reading the orientation
- Identifying dynamic or static data, if any
- Determining the nature of the information presented

Creating a map

- Defining the purpose of a map
- Consulting several sources (maps, tables, various documents, etc.)
- Identifying the essential elements, in keeping with the map's purpose
- Forming a mental image of the phenomena and spaces to be mapped
- Drawing the map:
 - giving the map a title
 - indicating the scale
 - using signs and symbols to represent essential elements
 - designing a legend

2. INTERPRETING A WRITTEN DOCUMENT

Learning to interpret written documents (newspaper articles, letters, treaties, founding texts, etc.) is essential in order to study the prescribed themes of the Contemporary World program. Written documents reflect the society that produced them. It is sometimes necessary to go beyond simple decoding, seeking the meaning of a document in its symbolic significance.

Interpreting a written document

- Determining the nature and type of document
- Identifying the author's name and purpose
- Identifying the date
- Identifying the source
- Establishing whether or not the document dates from the period it describes
- Decoding the title
- Establishing the main idea
- Noting all the important ideas
- Organizing and synthesizing the important ideas
- Relating and comparing information from several documents in order to:
 - identify similarities and differences
 - identify elements of continuity and change

3. INTERPRETING AND CREATING A TIME LINE

Learning to interpret and create a time line is essential in order to study the prescribed themes of the Contemporary World program. A time line makes it possible to set reference points, establish a chronology, view the themes over time and grasp elements of continuity and change, similarities and differences, and so on.

Interpreting a time line

- Decoding the chronological scale
- Finding information
- Comparing durations
- Establishing sequences and trends
- Identifying continuity and change

Creating a time line

- Indicating the title
- Choosing the information
- Drawing and orienting an axis
- Establishing a chronological scale
- Calculating the amount of time to represent
- Establishing a unit of measure
- Indicating the intervals
- Indicating the information on the axis

4. INTERPRETING A PICTURE

Learning to interpret pictures (photographs, paintings, drawings, caricatures, etc.) is essential in order to study the prescribed themes of the Contemporary World program. Pictures reflect the society that produced them. It is sometimes necessary to go beyond simple decoding, seeking the meaning of a document in its symbolic significance.

Interpreting a picture

- Determining the nature of the document
- Establishing whether it is a direct representation of the reality depicted or a reconstitution
- Identifying the author's name and title
- Identifying the date
- Identifying the source
- Decoding the title
- Determining the main subject
- Identifying the elements of the document:
 - determining the places, the actors, the circumstances and the period
 - establishing connections among the elements
- Relating and comparing information from several documents in order to:
 - identify similarities and differences
 - identify elements of continuity and change

5. INTERPRETING AND CREATING A GRAPH

Learning to interpret and create a graph is useful in order to study the prescribed themes of the Contemporary World program. To construct a graph, adult learners must either have or establish statistical data. A graph may take the form of a histogram, a bar graph, an area graph (or chart), a curve, and so on. It may contain a variable amount of information on the distribution or progression of the data, or it may represent a combination of these two dimensions.

Interpreting a graph

- Decoding the title
- Decoding the legend
- Identifying the type of graph (histogram, pie chart, bar graph, broken-line graph, curve, etc.)
- Determining the nature of the information presented on each axis
- Identifying the scale
- Determining the source on which the graph is based
- Finding a piece of information using two or more coordinates

Creating a graph

- Indicating the title
- Creating the legend
- Selecting information
- Choosing a mode of representation
- Drawing the framework
- Establishing the scale
- Entering the data in the graph
- Indicating the source of the data

6. INTERPRETING AND CONSTRUCTING A CONTINGENCY TABLE

Learning to interpret and construct a contingency table is essential in order to study the prescribed themes of the Contemporary World program. A contingency table may contain either descriptive or comparative information.

Interpreting a contingency table

- Decoding the title
- Decoding the legend
- Identifying the scale
- Determining the nature of the information presented in the rows and columns
- Determining the relationship of the data values:
 - according to the rows or the columns
 - by cross-tabulating

Constructing a contingency table

- Indicating the title
- Creating the legend
- Selecting information
- Drawing and naming the rows and columns
- Establishing the scale of representation:
 - establishing the proportional relationship between the data values to be represented
 - determining the units of measure
 - indicating the intervals
- Entering the data in the table

Appendix 3

Subject-Specific Competencies, Key Features and Manifestations

Competency 1 Interprets a contemporary world problem	Competency 2 Takes a position on a contemporary world issue
<p>Defines the problem</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies forms the problem takes in different parts of the world Identifies actors Establishes facts Defines the context <p>Analyzes the problem</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes connections between various aspects of society Determines causes Establishes consequences Identifies different points of view Examines some of the interests at stake Recognizes power relations <p>Considers the problem as a whole</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compares manifestations of the problem Considers the problem on different scales Demonstrates the global nature of the problem 	<p>Examines some points of view on the issue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies various points of view Identifies the values and interests that underlie these points of view Establishes points of convergence and divergence among these points of view Identifies possible solutions Considers the potential impact of the proposed solutions <p>Considers the media treatment of the issue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognizes the choices made by some media in their treatment of the issue Establishes the influence of the media on his/her opinion <p>Debates the issue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bases his/her opinion on facts Develops arguments defending his/her opinion Demonstrates an open mind toward opinions differing from his/her own <p>Considers opportunities for social action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognizes types of action that could be taken Identifies contexts or institutions that could provide the framework for his/her actions Establishes an action plan
<p>Critically assesses his/her process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considers what he/she has learned Evaluates the effectiveness of the strategies used Identifies the difficulties he/she experienced Identifies ways to improve his/her learning practices 	

Appendix 4

The Research Process

The table below illustrates the research process used in the Contemporary World program. It is based on a process developed in the History and Citizenship Education program of the Québec Education Program, Secondary Cycle Two (Approved version, Spring 2007).

The Research Process	
Steps	Tasks (examples)
Consider a problem or issue.	Formulate questions. Organize the questions by category. Select the most useful questions.
Become familiar with the problem or issue.	Define the problem. Draw on prior learning. Consider research strategies. Develop a tentative answer to further reflection on the problem or issue.
Plan the research.	Establish a research plan. Identify the elements related to the problem or issue (actors, facts, places, causes, consequences, etc.).
Gather and organize the information.	Gather information from various sources. Choose the most relevant information. Distinguish fact from opinion. Classify and compare the information based on its importance with respect to the research topic.
Analyze the information.	Process information on the problem, based on the hypothesis to be verified. Choose information and documents.
Communicate findings.	Confirm or refute the initial hypothesis. Express an opinion. Defend a position, qualifying it, if necessary, and take a stand.

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