

Chapter 2 Broad Areas of Learning



Table of Contents

Broad Areas of Learning

- 2.1 Introduction 1**
 - The Broad Areas of Learning: Focal Points of Educational Action . . . 2
 - The Broad Areas of Learning: Resources for Professional and Institutional Choices 3
 - The Prescriptive Nature of the Broad Areas of Learning 4

- 2.2 Five Broad Areas of Learning 5**
 - Health and Well-Being 5**
 - Introduction 5
 - Focuses of Development 6
 - Career Planning and Entrepreneurship 7**
 - Introduction 7
 - Focuses of Development 7
 - Environmental Awareness and Consumer Rights and Responsibilities 9**
 - Introduction 9
 - Focuses of Development 10
 - Media Literacy 11**
 - Introduction 11
 - Focuses of Development 12
 - Citizenship and Community Life 13**
 - Introduction 13
 - Focuses of Development 14

2.1 Introduction

We must try to understand the central problems of the world, however uncertain and difficult it is, or risk cognitive failure.
Edgar Morin

The Québec Education Program presents a number of broad areas of learning, which deal with major contemporary issues young people will have to confront, both individually and collectively, in different areas of their lives. These issues also represent challenges to their talent and creativity. Five areas were chosen on the basis of their importance for society and their relevance for the students' education:

- Health and Well-Being
- Career Planning and Entrepreneurship
- Environmental Awareness and Consumer Rights and Responsibilities
- Media Literacy
- Citizenship and Community Life

While each broad area of learning deals with specific problems, they are interdependent; together they cover the reality facing today's citizens. Their inclusion in the curriculum is a reminder that life is at the centre of school learning and that the school should make a major contribution to preparing students for it. They define the learning that is essential in the development of individuals who can look at the major realities with lucidity and meet their own and others' needs in their personal, social and working lives. With regard, for example, to the first broad area of learning, *Health and Well-Being*, all students should at the end of secondary school be able to make appropriate decisions concerning their health and that of their families and to grasp the major collective issues involved. Furthermore, some of them should have developed an interest in the occupations that contribute to maintaining the health and well-being of their fellow-citizens, and should have acquired the basic competencies needed to begin training in these fields.

The broad areas of learning have a central place in the Québec Education Program. They present a set of educational aims, key propositions that are directly related to the aims of the Program¹ and that enable students to:

- develop a sense of responsibility for adopting good living habits with respect to health, safety and sexuality
- make and carry out plans to develop their potential and integrate into adult society
- develop an active relationship with their environment while maintaining a critical attitude toward consumption and the exploitation of the environment
- exercise critical, ethical and aesthetic judgment with respect to the media and produce media documents that respect individual and collective rights
- take part in the democratic life of the classroom or the school and develop an attitude of openness to the world and respect for diversity

The broad areas of learning define the learning that is essential for the development of a lucid view of the major realities.

The content of the broad areas of learning is not exclusive to these areas; it is also included in various ways in the subject-specific programs, where it is dealt with in terms of the point of view and methodology of each subject. It is the perspective that distinguishes its treatment in the broad areas of learning: instead of the analytical approach taken in teaching the subjects, the approach is comprehensive and integrative. This brings out the systemic aspect of reality, which is rarely evident within the clear-cut logic of specific subjects. Furthermore, people generally have to deal with complex problems that go beyond the bounds of specific disciplines.

The broad areas of learning bring out the systemic aspect of reality.

Because of their contextualized nature and their direct relationship to life, the broad areas of learning are also related to people's everyday habits and life choices. As they are in the process of constructing an identity, students are open to influence by educators, with whom they may often identify. By defining common educational aims for all

1. These aims are presented in Chapter 1, section 1.4.

school personnel, the Québec Education Program encourages them to undertake joint action to develop the attitudes and competencies young people need to meet the complex demands of this century. It should be stressed that the broad areas of learning do not call for indoctrinating students on major contemporary issues or interfering in their personal lives, ideological positions or personal health habits; on the contrary, they demand the exercise of free, conscious choice.

The broad areas of learning provide opportunities for students to develop a refined understanding of various realities and to envision a variety of possible actions in related situations. They enable students to make connections among different areas of learning and make judgments about things and events around them. The broad areas of learning thus bring out the fact that learning acquired at school takes on its fullest meaning when it is used outside the school's walls.

The inclusion of the broad areas of learning in the Québec Education Program highlights the need to have students make connections between what they learn in school, situations from their everyday lives and present-day social realities. In order to benefit from their exposure to these areas, students should do research and work with information, solve multidimensional problems, exercise their critical judgment, argue and debate, collaborate with each other, etc. They thus have to use all their cross-curricular competencies as well as many subject-specific competencies and concepts. The broad areas of learning provide a particularly rich context in which students can use their ability to transfer their competencies quickly. They have to deal effectively on an almost daily basis with problems that are associated with these areas and that have not been covered specifically in the school context.

The Broad Areas of Learning: Focal Points of Educational Action

The broad areas of learning involve problems with many theoretical and practical ramifications and necessitate coordinated action. Choices with regard to lifestyle habits, maintaining a critical perspective on consumption and the media, making

The broad areas of learning are tools for motivating students, supporting them in their learning and guiding their education as citizens.

plans and carrying them out, openness to others and participation in democratic institutions all require systematic, long-term guidance that cannot be provided in a context and a time period reserved exclusively for the purpose. A period specifically devoted to one of the broad areas could deal only with the superficial factual aspects, without leaving room for students to put the facts into perspective, take a reflective distance or make the personal choices that arise from them. Hence, the broad areas of learning cannot be associated with a single subject or a particular complementary educational service.

The fact that responsibility for the broad areas of learning is shared does not preclude the existence of important connections between them and the different subjects, although the closeness of these connections varies depending on the subject. In fact, certain subjects provide particularly suitable contexts for addressing certain broad areas of learning. For example, learning in the area of *Citizenship and Community Life* requires a knowledge of the principles on which our society, laws and institutions are based, and thus is closely related to History and Citizenship Education and Ethics and Religious Culture. However, instruction in these subjects cannot in itself ensure that students become responsible citizens with a concern for the common good. The attitudes and behaviour required are acquired through practice.

This means that schools should offer students a wide variety of opportunities to experience democratic participation in the manner of a citizen (e.g. student council, governing board of the school, participation in writing a code of conduct, discussion of various social issues). Indeed, all aspects of school life offer lessons in citizenship education. Similarly, there are complementary relationships between the Physical Education and Health program and *Health and Well-Being*, between the Science and Technology program and *Environmental Awareness and Consumer Rights and Responsibilities* and between the Languages and Arts Education subject areas and *Media Literacy*.

The broad areas of learning cannot be associated with a single subject or complementary educational service; they should be central to the concerns of all educators.

In addition, the use of interdisciplinary learning situations is a key way to approach many of the issues in the broad areas of learning. Such situations provide opportunities to transfer and use a range of subject-specific knowledge in the analysis of problems that are important not only to young people but also to adults and to society as a whole.

Addressing the broad areas of learning is a challenge that demands the convergence of the activities of the school and the surrounding community, particularly employers, who have an important role to play with students in the Work-Oriented Training Path. The broad areas of learning reflect the aims of education for young people and they should be at the centre of everyone's concerns.

The Broad Areas of Learning: Resources for Professional and Institutional Choices

Although schools do not have sole responsibility for educating young people in these areas, and cannot prepare them to answer all the questions raised, they do have an essential role to play. In particular, schools can provide students with the opportunity to carefully examine these questions, using a great deal of their subject-specific knowledge and taking into account the cognitive, social and affective dimensions. In this way, schools pursue the aims of the education system: they support students in the construction of a solid personal identity and a broad, organized world-view. They also help empower students by providing the basis for an informed analysis of the major issues of the century.

The broad areas of learning are valuable tools for motivating students, supporting them in their learning and guiding their education as citizens. They are also tools for learning, because their focuses of development support the acquisition of a range of effective, connected subject-specific knowledge and intellectual, methodological and relational tools. Structuring knowledge facilitates learning, and the broad areas of learning provide a network of meaningful connections that aid in the organization of knowledge.

Collective actions based on an integrated educational project

The existence of a shared educational project facilitates joint action. Although all the broad areas are socially relevant and should therefore be included in the school's educational project, some correspond more to problems a school actually faces or to its specific orientations as a green school, a guidance-oriented school, a healthy school, etc. In such cases, they represent a viable starting point for the school's educational project. The relative importance accorded to each broad area and the various ways in which they are addressed may thus vary from one school to another. However, school administrations must ensure that all the broad areas are genuinely part of school life. Collective planning is thus needed to ensure the coordination and consistency of individual actions.

Professional actions that are both planned and spontaneous

In pursuing the underlying educational aims of the broad areas of learning, school personnel have to be personally engaged, plan activities appropriately and be aware of their role as models of values and attitudes. It is therefore important for the team to discuss the presentation of the values associated with the different areas and the choice of the focuses of development to be stressed, depending on the situation of the school.

The learning and evaluation situations based on these areas require students to be actively involved in a process focusing on a question that must be defined, examined and debated or resolved. For example, students can develop the three competencies of the French or English language of instruction program as well as certain cross-curricular competencies by carrying out a critical analysis of young people's eating habits: doing documentary research, designing a survey, analyzing the results, presenting a report and debating the conclusions. In this kind of situation, students use methods specific to the subject to become aware of the consequences of their personal choices on their health and well-being, which is one of the focuses of development of the area *Health and Well-Being*.

Situations based on the broad areas of learning should encourage students to make connections among various areas of knowledge and produce results that are meaningful to them. They should broaden their culture, give them a more solid grasp of the world and reinforce their confidence and self-esteem.

The school has a responsibility to make the values it embodies consistent with those it is trying to promote, in both its organization and its practices.

The ideal time to deal with any of the focuses of development of the broad areas of learning is not always the result of coordinated planning. Incidents in school or social life sometimes provide teachers and other staff with opportunities for targeted educational action. Hence it is important to highlight the value of the spontaneous actions educators are called on to carry out daily. Many of the attitudes and behaviours associated with the broad areas of learning can only be developed if they are encouraged in a variety of contexts: these include creating egalitarian relationships, paying attention to the effect of one's attitudes and behaviours on one's psychological well-being, enjoying meeting challenges and taking a critical stance toward the media. The school has a responsibility to make the values embodied in its organization and practices consistent with those it is trying to promote.

The Prescriptive Nature of the Broad Areas of Learning

The broad areas of learning are a fundamental component of the Québec Education Program. However, their status is different from that of the cross-curricular or subject-specific competencies: they present the major issues that it is hoped students will be able to deal with at the end of their schooling, while the various types of competencies are the tools or means for doing so. The mechanisms for evaluating students' progress should focus on the mastery of these tools.

Learning associated with the broad areas is partly distributed among the various subjects taught, where it is evaluated indirectly. The decision not to systematically monitor students' learning in these areas in no way diminishes the school's responsibility with regard to the educational aims of the five broad areas. It is essential that the school establish evaluation mechanisms that ensure that the broad areas of learning are meaningfully covered in its educational action. The evaluation of the school's educational project provides the ideal context in which to do so.

Through institutional evaluation, the school should ensure that the broad areas of learning are meaningfully covered in its educational action.

2.2 Five Broad Areas of Learning

The introduction to each area of learning includes a brief description, a statement of the educational aim intended to guide actions by school staff, and focuses of development indicating the knowledge needed to take effective action and defining the behaviours and attitudes to be promoted. These focuses of development enrich the design of teaching and learning situations that are intellectually stimulating and conducive to the development of both subject-specific and cross-curricular competencies.

Health and Well-Being

Introduction

Being in good health means, on the one hand, possessing the physical and psychological conditions for satisfying one's needs and carrying out one's plans, and on the other hand, being at ease in one's surroundings, developing harmoniously and having confidence and a sense of security.

Students' physical and psychological health can influence their progress in school positively or negatively. To fulfill their mission, schools should take a preventive approach and should seek as far as possible to develop habits that are conducive to physical and psychological fitness and, in turn, success in school and social adjustment. This is part of educational action in the broadest sense, and parents are largely responsible for it, along with other social partners. The school, however, has full responsibility for what takes place within its walls: it must ensure students' physical and psychological security and see that they have access to the information they need to make informed decisions on health, safety and sexuality.

Students in Secondary Cycle Two are going through a period in life marked by questioning of personal and sexual identity and image. The denial of certain physical or psychological characteristics can lead to harmful behaviour or attitudes. For example, the wish to conform to a socially valued physical type can sometimes lead to eating disorders and serious physical problems, and difficulties associated with sexual orientation can lead to depression.

Educational Aim

To ensure that students develop a sense of responsibility for adopting good habits with respect to health, safety and sexuality

For students who are experiencing difficult situations that could hinder their development, it is important to go beyond prevention. Schools should adopt measures to reduce or compensate for the negative effects of disability or illness and support students who are experiencing emotional distress, whatever its cause: gambling, alcohol or drug addiction, exclusion by peers, taxing, unwanted pregnancy, violent relationships, etc.

While most young people have inherited good health, they need to be made aware of the fact that it is not indestructible and that the choices they make and the risks they take have consequences for their present and future well-being. They need help in understanding issues related to their health and well-being. The school should play a major role in providing this help. It should equip them to make informed choices regarding diet, sleep habits, recreation, the place of remunerated work in their lives, their physical and psychological well-being, emotional and sexual relationships, risk taking, etc.

The school should also see itself as being concerned with the health and well-being of everyone in it and should provide models of healthy and safe living. It should focus on prevention as well as dealing with existing problems:

- preventive measures geared to creating an environment conducive to personal and emotional growth for all students
- measures involving quick action to deal with difficulties

Fulfilling this responsibility requires concerted action by all school staff, especially physical education teachers; members of the governing board, in collaboration with parents; health professionals; community planners; and others in the school and the community.²

2. See *Healthy Schools: For the Educational Success, Health and Well-Being of Young People: Guide for the Education Community and Its Partners*, Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, Institut national de santé publique du Québec and Association québécoise d'établissements de santé et services sociaux (Québec, 2005).



Focuses of Development

- **Self-awareness and awareness of his/her basic needs:**
 - need for self-affirmation
 - need for respect for his/her physical and psychological well-being
 - need for acceptance and growth
 - need for recognition and fulfillment
 - need to express his/her feelings
- **Knowledge of the impact of his/her choices on health and well-being:**
 - knowledge of the principles of good nutrition
 - knowledge of the basic principles of health and hygiene
 - knowledge of the principles of balanced sexuality
 - knowledge of the effects of stress
 - awareness of the influence of behaviour and attitudes on psychological well-being
- **Active lifestyle and safe behaviour:**
 - regular physical activity at school, with family and elsewhere
 - adoption of safe behaviour in all circumstances
 - adoption of a healthy lifestyle
- **Awareness of the consequences of collective choices on individual well-being:**
 - making connections between the lifestyle of a population and its health and well-being
 - knowledge of the political issues related to health and well-being
 - concern for collective well-being

Career Planning and Entrepreneurship

Introduction

In the area of *Career Planning and Entrepreneurship*, educators are called on to make the school a place where students are motivated to meet challenges and envision their future. Learning is more meaningful for students when they are able to define their abilities and project themselves into the future, confident that they will find a place in society.

Most students in Secondary Cycle Two are thinking about their academic and career plans. For some, the cycle leads to vocational training or directly to the job market. Although the school's mandate is much broader than to prepare young people for the working world, it cannot shirk its responsibility to provide qualifications.

When schools encourage a broad range of experiences and projects that challenge and involve students, they give the students the tools to find a path that corresponds to their aspirations, interests and aptitudes. In so doing, they help students develop the qualities they need to fulfill their potential: creativity, self-confidence, initiative, tenacity, leadership and satisfaction in work well done. These challenges provide opportunities for students to discover their strengths, to strive to surpass themselves and to become aware of the career and entrepreneurial possibilities available to them.

It is important that the school make students aware of the relevance and usefulness of school learning for their future lives, including their working lives. To facilitate this, several subject-specific programs in Secondary Cycle Two refer to jobs and occupations that are related to the subject. In addition, teachers are urged to include information related to career planning in their teaching, and to show that their subjects can lead to a variety of occupational paths.

Educational Aim

To enable students to make and carry out plans designed to develop their potential and help them integrate into adult society

Making career choices in the short or long term and deciding on the means to attain these objectives is a complex process. The school should provide support for the process within a structure in which "objectives are set and services (individual and collective), tools and pedagogical activities implemented to guide students in their identity development and career planning."³

It takes a serious institutional commitment to encourage every student to undertake life planning. This is a responsibility that is shared by teachers, specialized personnel in complementary educational services and the school administration, and that must be part of the school's culture as well as its structures. To create the best conditions for giving students a desire to fulfill themselves and to succeed in life, the school should work in partnership with parents, people in the job market and community organizations.

Focuses of Development

- **Self-knowledge and awareness of his/her potential and how to fulfill it:**
 - recognition of his/her talents, strengths, interests and personal and career aspirations
 - awareness of personal responsibility for his/her successes and failures
 - awareness of the connection between his/her self-knowledge and plans for the future
 - familiarity with the resources of the school system and the options offered and their requirements
 - awareness of factors related to success in school subjects

3. Ministère de l'Éducation, *Making Dreams Come True: Achieving Success Through the Guidance-Oriented Approach* (2002), p. 18.

- **Adoption of strategies related to planning:**⁴
 - awareness of the connection between his/her self-knowledge and plans for the future
 - self-visualization in various roles
 - exploration of plans for the future based on his/her interests and aptitudes
 - learning of strategies associated with carrying out a plan
 - learning of strategies for collaboration
- **Familiarity with the world of work, social roles and occupations and trades:**
 - understanding of the nature and demands of roles in society and family and community responsibilities
 - knowledge of occupations and trades related to different school subjects or to the immediate community
 - knowledge of goods and services associated with these occupations and trades
 - knowledge of work methods in certain contexts (factory, business, company, home)
 - knowledge of the demands of the working world
 - knowledge of the main work functions and entry requirements related to a job
 - knowledge of the main elements of the legal framework regarding employment
 - knowledge of how to balance work, family and social responsibilities

4. For students in the Work-Oriented Training Path, strategies related to work functions will be added.



Environmental Awareness and Consumer Rights and Responsibilities

Introduction

The increasing importance of science and technology, the proliferation of consumer goods and the exponential growth of information and communications technologies have radically changed our physical and social environment, lifestyle and world-view. It is essential to exercise critical judgment regarding the pressure to purchase goods and services of all sorts and to assess their impact on the environment, our social relationships and our well-being.

As regards the environment, the school must enable students to see human beings' relationship with the world in terms of sustainable development and to become more aware of the interdependence of systems in their immediate context as well as in the world as a whole. It is important that students realize how their own actions affect the survival of an environment on which their living conditions depend in large measure, and that they be made aware of the long-term impact of the uncontrolled or abusive exploitation of natural resources. Critical thinking about the environment, however, concerns more than the protection of the natural environment; it also involves the quality of the human habitat, much of which is urban. This broader view brings together questions related to aesthetics, architecture, land use planning, heritage protection, control of light and sound pollution, waste management, etc.—the entire relationship between humans and their ecosystem, natural or built.

Adolescents place a high value on the consumption of goods and services, and it plays an important role in shaping their behaviour. For many of them, the possession of material goods is an important value; it may be a motive for performing remunerated work, to the detriment of their schooling. The distinction between real needs and desires is often a tenuous one.

Educational Aim

To encourage students to develop an active relationship with their environment while maintaining a critical attitude toward consumption and the exploitation of the environment

However, there is nothing reprehensible about consumption in itself. It is at the centre of life in society, and determines the structure of production and the social division of work. It is important that the school encourage students to think about the impact of human activities on the individual and collective quality of life. This will enable them to perceive the value of their own role in the exchange of goods and services. Connections may be made with choices and commitments involved in the area of *Career Planning and Entrepreneurship*.

The school should encourage students to look critically at the consumer behaviour of society and to examine its economic and social repercussions. It should equip them with knowledge, values and attitudes that enable them to become informed consumers and to act responsibly and make sensible choices as both consumers and producers. It should help them to develop solid critical judgment with regard to advertising. Young people also need to realize that there are close connections between high levels of consumption and the deterioration of their environment, in terms of both the depletion of resources and the resulting wastes, which are disposed of indiscriminately.

In both cycles of secondary school, the subject-specific learning, together with collective activities provided by complementary educational services staff, should provide students with many opportunities to take an active and

critical approach to their environment and to examine their behaviour as consumers. The subject areas Social Sciences; Mathematics, Science and Technology; and Personal Development provide complementary information on the social, political, economic, scientific, technological and ethical dimensions of the human relationship with the environment. They also promote reflection on the many factors that influence lifestyle, particularly as regards consumption, and their impact on the world

as a whole. This helps students to understand the consequences of their actions and to adopt responsible behaviour with regard to the environment.

Focuses of Development

– Knowledge of the environment:

- understanding of certain characteristics of the human environment
- making connections among the various elements of an environment
- awareness of the interdependence between the environment and human activity
- understanding of issues related to biodiversity
- knowledge of renewable and nonrenewable resources
- respect for our natural and built heritage



– Responsible use of goods and services

- knowledge of the relationship between production and consumption
- recognition of the difference between individual and collective needs
- recognition of the difference between wants and needs
- knowledge of the influences on consumption
- critical stance toward advertising and other forms of propaganda or manipulation
- desire to make informed consumer choices
- concern for the integrated management of resources and waste
- concern about the impact of science and technology
- desire to balance his/her budget

– Awareness of social, economic and ethical aspects of consumption:

- understanding of the importance of the production and consumption of goods and services in social and economic organization
- knowledge of the origin of various consumer goods
- knowledge of the working conditions of those who produce goods and provide services
- concern for the impact of globalization on cultures, ways of life and the distribution of wealth
- concern for healthy consumption and the equitable distribution of resources

– Construction of a healthy environment based on sustainable development:

- knowledge of the impact of a population on the territory it occupies
- concern for the rational use of resources
- concern for environmental values in the production of goods and services

Media Literacy

Introduction

A wide range of different media are omnipresent in our daily lives and represent an important dimension of our cultural universe. They provide access to a world of knowledge, thought, sound and images, as well as information of all kinds from a wide range of sources. They influence—and sometimes determine—our world-view, values, tastes, personalities, relationships with the environment and personal, social and cultural identity.

While the media may in many respects present a challenge to it, the school is called upon to play a major role in enabling students to become familiar with the functions of the different media, to master the different modes of communication employed, to develop the critical judgment necessary to take full advantage of the possibilities they offer and to recognize their potential effects. Various media resources can be useful for obtaining information, learning or communicating in the framework of learning activities. Although the different media can be used to advantage in all the subjects, the language and arts programs lend themselves particularly well to the development of students' ability to produce media documents and to understand how the various media work, the ways they are used and how to evaluate their effects.

By producing media messages and analyzing this production process, students will become familiar with the codes that govern them, their uses and their positive or negative effects on their target audience. They will also learn to use media messages for a variety of purposes while respecting individual and collective rights.

Educational Aim

To enable students to exercise critical, ethical and aesthetic judgment with respect to the media and produce media documents that respect individual and collective rights

In both cycles of secondary school, students are encouraged to look at media productions as constructions and “re-presentations” of reality, which express specific points of view, ideas, values or beliefs. They are encouraged to analyze media messages in terms of content, technology, language and target audience and to assess their aesthetic value. Through their subject-specific learning, they will observe the richness and diversity of possible interpretations of information presented in the media.

A broad range of activities are proposed: they include simply learning to read a newspaper, analyzing the handling of the same information by different media, using media content and creating complex productions such as radio or television broadcasts, advertising posters or clips and Web sites. All these activities give students opportunities and methods to make better use of information, to communicate appropriately and to use a variety of technological resources.



Focuses of Development

- **Awareness of the place and influence of the different media in his/her daily life and in society:**
 - reflection on the functions of the media
 - search for media consumption guidelines
 - awareness of the influence of media messages on his/her world-view and everyday environment
- **Understanding of media representations of reality:**
 - understanding the elements of media language (sound, image, movement, message)
 - comparison between facts and opinions
 - recognition of the positive and negative impact of media messages
 - distinction between reality, imagination and virtual reality
 - critical comparison of different representations of reality or events
 - assessment of the aesthetic qualities of media productions
 - comparison of media productions based on different techniques and forms of artistic expression
- **Becoming familiar with methods for producing media documents:**
 - knowledge of procedures for producing and distributing media products
 - use of various techniques, technologies and modes of communication
- **Knowledge of and respect for individual and collective rights and responsibilities regarding the different media:**
 - respect for intellectual property
 - defence of freedom of expression
 - respect for people's privacy and reputation

Citizenship and Community Life

Introduction

Like the society of which they are a part, schools bring together students of diverse social and cultural origins, with a variety of traditions, beliefs, values and ideologies. Students therefore confront on a daily basis situations that pose challenges related to cooperation. This makes the school an ideal place for learning to respect others and accept their differences, to be receptive to pluralism, to maintain egalitarian relationships with others and to reject all forms of exclusion, such as those based on physical characteristics, age, ethnic background, gender or sexual orientation. The school also gives students opportunities to experience the democratic principles and values that are the basis of equal rights in our society. The preparation for playing an active role as citizens should not, however, concern only the students' social development; it depends as much on their acquisition of knowledge and attitudes as on the promotion of shared values and a sense of belonging.

Schools have a major role to play in educating young people about their role as citizens and facilitating their integration into a democratic society. They have several means to achieve this goal. A school's educational project can provide an institutional framework conducive to respect for the principles of citizenship. Its pedagogical practices can help students to

develop the attitudes and behaviours essential for responsible citizenship. Its subject-specific instruction should enable students to learn about the principles and values characteristic of a democratic society, its laws, its social and political institutions, the roles, rights and duties of citizens, the role of debate in the democratic process, etc.

Educational Aim

To enable students to take part in the democratic life of the class or the school and develop an attitude of openness to the world and respect for diversity

It is important to provide activities that allow students to explore different aspects of citizenship in the classroom, in practicums and in the school as a whole. By participating actively in decisions that concern them, becoming aware of organizations that help citizens and workers, solving problems collectively by means of discussion and negotiation, debating various issues of importance to them and

making decisions cooperatively with respect for individual and collective rights, students acquire hands-on experience in exercising their citizenship. With their specific pedagogical practices, all the subject areas can contribute to students' citizenship and participation in community life. However, some subject areas, such as Social Sciences, Career Development and Personal Development, are especially useful for helping students to discover the diversity of options and beliefs, to place their own standards in perspective and to participate in discussion in a spirit of dialogue.



Focuses of Development

- **Promotion of the rules of social conduct and democratic institutions:**
 - respect for the democratic process in establishing rules of conduct in the school and in the municipal, national and international contexts
 - knowledge of the principles of democracy and the charters and basic laws that ensure their application
 - knowledge of the main actors in political and social life and respect for their roles
 - knowledge of the rights and responsibilities associated with democratic institutions
 - critical thinking regarding various ideologies and forms of political organization
 - knowledge of the mechanisms for protection of citizens' rights
- **Participation, cooperation and solidarity:**
 - respect for the principles, rules and strategies of teamwork and for complementary roles in the classroom and in workplace practicums
 - respect for a decision-making process based on compromise, consensus, etc.
 - establishment of egalitarian relationships
 - use of debate and argumentation
 - exercise of leadership in various ways
 - mutual help
 - involvement in community action projects

– Adoption of a culture of peace:

- knowledge of international conflicts
- reflection on the concept of power: situations of cooperation and of aggression, taxing and violence in the school, peaceful management of power relations
- awareness of the interdependence of individuals, generations and peoples
- application of the principle of equal rights
- understanding of the negative consequences of stereotypes and other forms of discrimination or exclusion
- understanding of mechanisms that contribute to poverty and illiteracy
- respect for confidentiality, promises, agreements and contracts