

## **THEMATIC PROBE. Primary Education: an International Perspective**

### **Country Description: Canada**

This country description was compiled from the *INCA* Archive ([www.inca.org.uk](http://www.inca.org.uk)).

#### **Introduction**

Canada consists of ten provinces and three territories, each of which has exclusive authority for education in the individual jurisdiction. The Ministers of Education of all provinces/territories have, however, established a National Secretariat - the Council of Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC) - to ensure communication on such issues as funding, curricula and student assessment. From time to time, CMEC undertakes national projects in curriculum and assessment, such as the *School Achievement Indicators Program - SAIP*. This national assessment programme - in mathematics, reading and writing, and science for (post-primary) 13- and 16-year-old students - aims to provide data to assist each province and territory in making policy decisions and planning curriculum improvement.

### **1. Organisation of school phases=**

#### **How are the early years and primary phases organised? (3-5yrs? 5-11yrs?)**

In Canada, the organisation of early years and primary education can vary between the provinces and territories.

Typically, the primary phase covers the first six to eight years of compulsory education and is generally known as 'elementary education'. Elementary education is also very often divided into two levels, primary and intermediate, as follows:

- Level one - primary, which can include one year of kindergarten education prior to Grade/Year 1 of compulsory education, children usually aged five to six years, and Grades 1 to 3 (children generally aged six to nine years).
- Level two - intermediate, Grades 4 to 6 (students aged nine to 12).

Although the starting age for Grade 1 of compulsory education is usually six or seven, full-time, one-year pre-school programmes, commonly called 'kindergarten classes', are provided for five-year-olds in most provinces in publicly-funded elementary schools. School boards in some areas of the country include four- *and* five-year-old children in two years of pre-compulsory schooling ('pre-kindergarten' and kindergarten classes).

#### **What are the points of transfer between phases?**

There will be regional and institutional differences to the generalisations provided below, which are examples only.

	<b>Alberta</b>	<b>British Columbia</b>	<b>Ontario</b>	<b>Saskatchewan</b>
Early years education	3+- to 5-year-olds	no state provision prior to kindergarten/pre-kindergarten	no state provision prior to pre-kindergarten	n.d.
Kindergarten year or pre-kindergarten and kindergarten year provided in elementary (primary) school	5- to 6-year-olds	5-7 years old	4-6 years old	n.d.
Compulsory elementary (primary) education	6-12/13 years old	7-12/13 years old	6-14 years old	7-11/12 years old

n.d. = no data

## 2. Locus of control

### **What degree of control over curriculum content and other aspects of primary schools exists at the national, regional, local and/or school level?**

The Constitution Act gives exclusive authority to each province or territory in Canada to make laws in relation to education. As a result, control over curriculum content in primary education and over primary education in general lies with the individual province or territory. Each provincial (or territorial) Department or Ministry of Education, which is headed by an elected Minister, finances elementary and secondary education; sets standards; draws up curricula; supervises the inspection regime; provides curricula and school organisation guidelines; produces curriculum materials; and is responsible for teacher certification and support services such as libraries, health and transportation. Local school boards also shape school curricula within provincial guidelines.

Most provincial/territorial curriculum guides include a philosophy and rationale for the teaching of the subject in question, provide a description of the content to be taught, outline intended learning outcomes by Grade level and course, and provide suggested time allocations for each subject. These guides are consistent with educational policy in each jurisdiction and are commonly developed by teams of teachers under the direction of the Ministry of Education.

In so-called 'separate schools' established by religious groups (mostly Roman Catholic), a complete parochial curriculum is offered from kindergarten through to secondary school level in some provinces. Private or independent schools offer a great variety of curriculum options based on religion, language, or social or academic status.

### **Western Canadian Protocol (WCP)**

Under the Western Canadian Protocol (WCP), the four Western Canadian provinces and three northern territories (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon Territory, Nunavut, and Northwest Territories) have established a common

kindergarten to Grade 12 curriculum (five- to 18-year-olds). The aim is to provide continuity of educational provision across the age range and across the territories. In this way, the provinces hope, for example, to ensure that there are fewer problems should students transfer from the education system in one province to another. The first provinces/territories to join the Protocol began to work together in the 1993/94 academic year.

The WCP programme is outcomes based and the jurisdictions share materials and collaborate on curriculum or learning resource projects. In subject areas, such as mathematics, for which parallel curricula have been produced, there has also been development of Canadian level texts and other learning resources to serve the larger market. Participation in WCP activities is, however, not mandatory and each of the participating jurisdictions retains the right to use or not use the cooperative products.

**Are there any shifts in the distribution of control between these different levels? (Is it possible to assign percentages to each level, to reflect circumstances in each country?)**

No information is available via the *INCA* Archive.

**At what intervals is the curriculum reviewed? (eg are there established review cycles?)**

In most territories and provinces of Canada, review of the curriculum is cyclical, with a view to ensuring that the curriculum provided for children from kindergarten age (usually five onwards) to high school leaving age (around 18) remains current and relevant. Frequency of review varies considerably between provinces and between subjects and educational phases. In **British Columbia**, for example, the curriculum cycle aims to ensure that all curriculum is reviewed on a regular basis. This does not, however, require the Integrated Resource Packages (IRPs) to be revised each time they are reviewed. IRPs consist of the provincially required curriculum (expressed in terms of learning outcomes), suggested ideas for instruction, a list of recommended learning resources (books, videos, other electronic resources) and possible methods for teachers to use in evaluating students' progress.

In **Ontario**, the most recent revisions of the primary level curriculum took place in 1997 and in 2000.

Generally, curriculum revisions in **Saskatchewan** only occur when curricula have become outdated. The Curriculum Evaluation Programme regularly monitors the effectiveness of curricula in order to facilitate improvements on a continuing basis

Further, detailed information is available from O'DONNELL, S. (2001) *International Review of Curriculum and Assessment Frameworks. Thematic Probe. Curriculum Review: an International Perspective* ('The frequency of, and triggers for, curriculum reviews'), available at [www.inca.org.uk](http://www.inca.org.uk)

### 3. Curriculum content

#### What does the statutory curriculum consist of?

##### General/national

Throughout Canada as a whole, the primary (elementary) curriculum generally emphasises the basic subjects of:

- language;
- mathematics;
- social studies;
- introductory arts; and
- general science.

##### Alberta

The core curriculum for elementary schools includes:

- English language arts;
- fine arts (art and music) (compulsory for elementary school, children aged six to 12/13, optional at high school level);
- French;
- information and communications technology (introduced between 2000-2003);
- mathematics;
- health and physical education;
- science; and
- social studies.

##### British Columbia

Each level of the education programme from kindergarten (aged five onwards) to Grade 12 (aged 18) has particular emphases, which reflect the range of knowledge, skills and attitudes that students develop during these years. All levels of the programme are, however, developed around a common core of learning to ensure that students learn to read, write and do basic mathematics, solve problems and use computer-based technology. These basic skills are emphasised through studies in:

- English;
- mathematics;
- science;
- social studies;
- fine arts; and
- applied skills (such as technology education, home economics, business education etc),

from kindergarten to Grade 12.

In the kindergarten and early primary years, five- to nine-year-old students follow the *Primary Program: a Framework for Teaching*, and study the following 'required subject areas':

- language and citizenship;
- science, mathematics and technology;
- physical education;
- fine arts;
- applied skills; and
- personal planning.

The complete *Primary Program: a Framework for Teaching* is accessible on the Internet at [http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/primary\\_program/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/primary_program/)

### Ontario

A new provincial curriculum for children in kindergarten to Grade 8, aged five to 13/14, began to be introduced in the 2000-01 school year. This new curriculum puts a strong emphasis on reading, writing and mathematics, whilst appreciating that knowledge of Canadian and world history, geography, civics and economics, the arts, and health issues and physical education is also essential to a well-rounded education.

The elementary school curriculum is divided into:

- the arts, comprising three strands: music, visual arts, and drama and dance (Grades kindergarten/1-8);
- French as a second language (Grades 4-8, ages nine to 13/14);
- language, comprising writing, reading, and oral and visual communication (Grades kindergarten/1-8);
- mathematics (Grades kindergarten/1-8);
- science and technology (Grades kindergarten/1-8) (includes aspects of biology, chemistry, physics and earth and space science in every year);
- health and physical education (Grades kindergarten/1-8);
- social studies (Grades kindergarten/1-6, ages five to 12, includes aspects of history, geography, civics and economics); and
- (Canadian and world) history and geography (Grades 7-8, ages 12-14).

### Saskatchewan

The compulsory subjects in the Saskatchewan core curriculum are known as 'required areas of study'. These are the seven areas of study that are important for all students. Each area has its own unique knowledge, values and processes. The required areas of study are:

- language arts;
- mathematics;
- arts education;
- health education;
- physical education;
- science; and

- social studies.

**What other aspects of the curriculum/teaching in schools are statutory?  
Are time allocations for subjects statutory?**

**Alberta**

At the elementary level, curriculum programming may include one or more optional subjects. Optional subjects are those parts of the elementary school programme that are based on outcomes other than those outlined for core subjects. Optional subjects may be developed and approved at the local level. At the provincial level, outcomes have been developed for the study of regional/native languages and cultures such as Cree and Blackfoot, for drama, for French as a second language and for Ukrainian language arts.

Optional subjects may also include other international languages, technology outcomes not integrated with a core compulsory subject, or additional allocations to the core subjects.

In addition, local school boards may add religious and patriotic instruction to the elementary school curriculum. Students can be withdrawn from the subject on receipt of a written request from a parent.

The *Programme of Studies: Elementary Schools* states that the school's first obligation is to provide a solid core programme consisting of language arts, mathematics, science and social studies.

The school's first obligation is to provide a solid core programme consisting of language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. Schools have the responsibility to ensure students will meet the provincial graduation requirements and are prepared for entry into the workplace or post-secondary studies. Schools must also ensure that students understand the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and have the skills and disposition to pursue learning throughout their lives.

In planning elementary level programmes, the following recommended percentage time allocations have been identified as a general guide (produced in 1999). The actual times required to meet outcomes in each subject area may vary from student to student. Additionally, with the introduction of information and communications technology as a subject area in its own right at this level during the period 2000-2003, this guidance is expected to change slightly.

**Grades 1 and 2 (ages six to eight years)**

Core subjects	English instruction %	French instruction %
English language arts	30	0-10
French language arts (immersion programmes)	-	20-30
French (francophone programmes)	-	30
Mathematics	15	15
Science	10	10
Social studies	10	10
Art and music	10	10
Health and physical education	10	10
Time for optional subjects	15	15

**Grades 3 to 8 (ages eight to 14 years)**

Core subjects	English instruction %	French instruction %
English language arts	25	]
French	-	] 35
Mathematics	15	15
Science	15	10
Social studies	10	10
Art and music	10	10
Health and physical education	10	10
Time for optional subjects	15	10

**British Columbia**

*The Primary Program: a Framework for Teaching* requires that children in the kindergarten and early primary years (aged five to nine years) should:

- study all the 'required areas of learning', including language arts (English), social studies, science, mathematics, personal planning, physical education, fine arts and applied skills;
- develop basic skills in oral language, reading, writing and mathematics;
- begin to develop strategies for healthy living, become aware of good nutrition, maintain physical fitness, learn safety procedures and develop an understanding of their personal responsibility to themselves, to others and to the environment; and
- begin to develop critical thinking and decision making and problem solving skills.

The five key areas of development in the *Program* are:

- aesthetic and artistic;
- emotional and social;
- intellectual;

- physical development and well-being; and
- social responsibility.

In the kindergarten and primary years, teachers determine the time allotments for each of the 'required subject areas'.

### Saskatchewan

Alongside the seven compulsory 'required areas of study', there are also six 'common essential learnings'. These are a set of interrelated categories which are considered important as foundations for learning in all school subjects. The six common essential learnings are:

- communication;
- numeracy;
- critical and creative thinking;
- technological literacy;
- independent learning; and
- personal and social values and skills.

In addition, there are locally determined subject options. That is, the core curriculum makes provision for schools to gain time for local or community programme priorities. Approved policy guidelines are:

- At the elementary school level, school divisions may gain time for locally determined options by reducing the time to be spent in one or more of the required areas of study, up to a maximum of 20 per cent of the time in any single area.

Although the core curriculum specifies required areas of study for all students, opportunities for choice of electives (optional subjects) increase as students move through the kindergarten to Grade 12 continuum.

### **Are there statutory timings for the length of the school day/week?**

#### General/national

On average, students attend school from 9:00 am to 3:30 pm, Monday to Friday, and the school year averages 180 to 200 teaching days over the period from September to late June.

#### Alberta

The school year usually extends from September to June 30 with minor variations from system to system. Some schools are now providing year-round schooling and other alternative timetables, and others start their school year in August rather than September.

Most schools close down for two months of vacation in July and August, as well as two weeks of Christmas vacation and a spring break.

The number of instructional days may vary from 190 to 200 days. In elementary schools there are usually 950 instructional hours per year.

### Ontario

The Ministry of Education and Training makes regulations governing the school year and school holidays. It provides charts for the guidance of school board officials in the preparation of school year calendars. School boards are required to prepare, adopt and submit to the Regional Director, Ministry of Education, on or before 1 May of each year, the school year calendar(s) to be followed in the schools in their jurisdiction for the following school year. School year calendars must normally be completed in accordance with the Education Act. Where a board wishes to adopt a school year calendar that is different from the requirements of the Act, the board must submit the proposed school year calendar to the Ministry of Education for approval on or before 1 March of the preceding school year. A school year must include a minimum of 194 school days. These must include at least 190 instructional days; the additional four days are usually designated as professional activity (in-service training) days. The school year usually begins on or after 1 September and ends on or before 30 June.

Typical school days in Ontario run from 9:00 am to 3:30 pm, although many schools offer integrated day care which extends the day from 8 am to 6 pm.

<b>What changes have there been to the statutory/non-statutory elements of the curriculum?</b>
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### Ontario

The most recent curriculum revision for elementary education in Ontario (introduced in the 2000-01 school year; the previous version dated from 1997) aims to put a strong emphasis on reading, writing and mathematics, whilst reflecting the fact that a knowledge of (Canadian and world) history, geography, civics and economics, art education, and health and physical education are essential to well-rounded studies.

The key objectives of the new curriculum are that students should:

- begin to read, write and spell at an earlier age than in the past;
- develop sharper problem-solving skills; and
- be better prepared for high school (secondary level education, aged 14+ in Ontario) than ever before.

Under the new curriculum, primary level students learn more about Canadian and world history, geography, civics and economics than they did in the past. This is with a view to ensuring that, by the time they enter secondary school, they are well on the road to becoming informed citizens in a culturally diverse and interdependent world.

**What government/other initiatives have been introduced? What has been their impact?**

**Alberta**

The *Early Literacy Initiative (ELI)*, which ran from 1998 to 2001, addressed the needs of children in Early Childhood Services programmes and students in Grades 1 and 2 (aged six to eight years) who were experiencing difficulties in developing reading readiness and early literacy skills. The *Initiative* provided school authorities with additional human resources that could be flexibly deployed as long as the ultimate benefit of any assignment served to enhance the literacy skills of those identified as being at risk. The *ELI* also provided funding for resources and for in-service training for teachers and other staff deployed as part of the programme.

**British Columbia**

A programme known as *JASON* offers students in Grades 4 to 9 in British Columbia (aged 10-16, overlapping both primary and lower secondary level education) the opportunity to participate in hands-on research that evolves around an annual field trip and integrates the disciplines of mathematics, technology, English and social studies into scientific fieldwork. Thirteen annual field expeditions had been completed by the start of the 2002-03 school year. Further information is available via the Jason Foundation for Education website at <http://www.jasonproject.org/>

**Ontario**

In June 2001, the Ontario Ministry of Education introduced the *Ontario Early Reading Strategy* for children in junior kindergarten to Grade 3 classes (aged four/five to eight-nine years). The goal is to raise achievement in reading as measured by Ontario's annual province-wide Grade 3 reading test. Under the *Strategy*, all elementary schools are requested to participate in a regular cycle of target-setting, improvement planning and testing. Schools are also expected to report annually to parents on progress made towards meeting their goals. The *Strategy* also includes the development of school improvement teams to work with selected schools requiring extra assistance to improve students' reading skills.

A similar *Early Maths Strategy* was launched in May 2002 to raise the level of mathematics achievement of children in junior kindergarten to Grade 3. This mathematics initiative includes an intensive training programme for leading mathematics teachers, the development of a technical guide on effective teaching in early mathematics, and advice on the best assessment techniques to evaluate young children's mathematics skills. Like the *Early Reading Strategy*, the mathematics programme will require school boards and authorities to set targets for improvements in Grade 3 mathematics, beginning in winter 2004.

**What other trends are emerging in curriculum development? (eg new subjects/areas of learning being introduced)**

See above.

**What other levers may be having an impact on curriculum content? (eg international studies: PIRLS, IEA, PISA, TIMSS)**

No information is available via the *INCA* Archive.

#### **4. Organisation of the curriculum**

**What are the common features of curriculum organisation in the primary phase? (single subjects? planning subjects as ‘topics’?)**

No information is available via the *INCA* Archive.

**How are subjects labelled?**

In **Alberta**, the compulsory elementary school curriculum is broken down into compulsory 'core subjects' and 'optional subjects'.

In **British Columbia**, subjects are known as the 'required subject areas' or 'required areas of learning' and, in **Saskatchewan**, there are 'required areas of study'.

**What examples are there of ‘areas’ rather than subjects?**

**What examples are there of clusters of subjects (eg Humanities, made up of geography and history) being brought together?**

Some information in response to the above questions can be found under the headings ‘What does the statutory curriculum consist of?’ and ‘What other aspects of the curriculum/teaching are statutory?’ For example:

Ontario

Study of the arts in elementary education in Ontario includes music, the visual arts, dance and drama. Social studies includes aspects of (Canadian and world) history, geography, civics and economics. Health and physical education includes sport and aspects such as good eating habits and, later, sexuality and drugs/alcohol education. The science and technology curriculum area includes aspects of biology, chemistry, physics, earth and space science and technology.

**What are the common features of timetabling? (eg weekly lessons in each subject, English and mathematics taught daily)**

No information is available via the *INCA* Archive.

## 5. Assessment

**What is the purpose, nature and scale of assessment? (eg end of phase assessment, statutory, published test results, optional, national, local, timed tests, teacher-assessment)**

### General/national

In most provinces, individual schools set, conduct and mark their own assessment tests and examinations. In addition, many provinces have province-wide standardised assessment programmes, usually for specific year groups.

At the classroom level, there are two main purposes for assessment and evaluation: formative and summative.

- Formative assessment involves the systematic collection of information during the learning process that identifies which concepts students understand and which ones they are having difficulty with. Based on the interpretation of this information, teachers can adjust their methodology to meet the needs of individual students or the class.
- At the summative stage, teachers evaluate how well students understand and can demonstrate their knowledge and skills at the completion of an educational sequence. Information at this stage provides students with an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding and forms the basis for reporting to students and parents.

The purpose of elementary school and secondary (high school) education is the acquisition of basic knowledge and skills. Measuring the levels of knowledge and skills attained by young people during their schooling aims to provide the information necessary to evaluate how well those in school are being served by their education.

Indeed, the trend towards redefining a 'core curriculum' and including more compulsory subjects has been accompanied by an emphasis on the measurement of educational outcomes. These focus not only on the assessment of student achievement, but also on the evaluation of programmes, teachers, schools and school systems. Some provinces have, for example, instituted large-scale student testing in specific subjects at selected Grade levels; a process which allows individual school systems and schools to be evaluated, as well as students.

Student assessment practices at the classroom level are similar across all jurisdictions in Canada. Teachers make extensive use of paper and pencil tests, class projects and individual assignments in the assessment and evaluation of student achievement. Examples in textbooks and exemplars in curriculum guides have considerable effect on the type and nature of questions asked on teacher-made quizzes and examinations.

Due to the shift towards more active learning in many classrooms, teachers are beginning to expand upon traditional assessment procedures. For example, the use of observational techniques is becoming more important as students become directly engaged in the learning process. Using this approach, teachers learn which specific

student behaviours are more important in both individual and group learning situations, how to document this information and how to interpret it. Other important techniques gaining in popularity include portfolio assessment, self assessment and peer assessment.

At the elementary school level, more attention is also currently being paid to the development of evaluation and assessment techniques to monitor student progress on a day-to-day basis, rather than summatively, at the end of term.

### Alberta

Most teachers use 'authentic' assessment, such as day-to-day performance assessment, daily writing, and teacher-made tests, in addition to statewide, provincial standardised tests, under the provincial student assessment programme, the *Assessment of Student Achievement*.

The provincial student achievement testing programme in Alberta is intended primarily as a means of ensuring accountability. The standardised tests used in the programme aim to provide the Ministry of Education (known as 'Alberta Learning'), school jurisdictions, schools and the public with information significant at the provincial and local levels concerning the implementation of programmes of study, students' knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to programme objectives, and consistency across Grade levels throughout the province.

The assessment is, however, not intended to provide information for use in student placement, nor as a basis for teacher evaluation. Alberta Learning recommends to jurisdictions the use of assessment results as an aid to:

- determining the strengths and weaknesses of their instructional programmes and resources;
- plotting courses of action; and
- ensuring that each student receives the best possible education.

Further recommendations include comparison of student achievement in a particular jurisdiction or school with the achievement of students in the entire province of Alberta. However, Alberta Learning 'does not recommend comparison of performance between or among schools'.

Under the *Assessment of Student Achievement* programme, all students in Grades 3, 6 and 9, aged nine, 12 and 15 respectively (Grades 3 and 6 are in elementary level education), are included in the assessment, which provides for the assessment of four subject areas on a four-year cyclical basis. The principal subject areas assessed are English, mathematics, science, and social studies. In addition, French is included in the assessment at Grades 6 (primary level) and 9 (post-primary).

The tests are usually time-limited, paper and pencil tests, in which some multiple choice questions are included. The English language arts and social studies tests often include a composition section. Tests are usually administered at the end of the school year in June and are not issued to schools in advance of this date.

## British Columbia

British Columbia has its own provincial assessment programme, the *Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA)* programme, which is part of the *Provincial Learning Assessment Programme*.

The *FSA* programme is intended to:

- provide information to districts about the performance of their students in relation to provincial expectations and standards in order to assist districts to plan for improvement;
- provide information to the public about the performance of students provincially in relation to expectations and trends over time;
- measure the achievement of students in reading comprehension, first-draft writing and selected components of numeracy;
- determine if there are any trends in student performance at the district and provincial levels; and
- determine if there are any groups of students who under-perform with respect to provincial standards.

The *FSA* programme is held annually for all students in Grades 4 (primary level), 7 and 10 (ages 10/11, 13/14 and 16/17 respectively) in reading, writing and numeracy.

Additional provincial learning assessments for specific subject areas are administered as needed, on a sample basis.

Ongoing evaluation of student performance in kindergarten to Grade 3 classes (children aged five to nine/10 years) is based on evidence of learning, such as collections of children's work, observations of activities and quizzes, and on assessment of student's progress towards expectations for their age range.

## Ontario

The Ministry of Education and Training has overall responsibility for determining provincial standards for student achievement and setting diploma requirements.

There are province-wide, standardised literacy and numeracy tests (reading, writing and mathematics) in Grade 3 (children aged eight to nine) and Grade 6 (age 11/12) of primary level education. These were introduced in Grade 3 in the 1996-97 academic year and in Grade 6 in the 1998-99 academic year. (In addition, testing in mathematics in post-primary Grade 9 [14- to 15-year-olds] was introduced in the 2000-2001 school year, as was literacy testing in Grade 10 [15- to 16-year-olds].)

These standardised tests are administered by the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO), an arms-length government agency, established in 1995 to develop and implement assessment programmes in schools across Ontario. They are delivered by students' classroom teachers and the results count towards a student's final record and grades.

The tests aim to provide teachers and parents with information regarding student progress and potential for improvement.

Since the start of the 2002-03 school year (September 2002 onwards), additional standardised tests have begun to be introduced in other core subjects to supplement the current Grade 3, 6 and 9 testing in literacy and numeracy. The new testing programme is being phased in over five years. In the first year (2002-03), elementary level students in Grade 4 (aged nine to 10) will begin to be tested in science; those in Grade 5 (aged 10-11) will be tested in social studies (history and geography); those in Grade 7 (aged 12-13) will be tested in science and technology; and those in Grade 8 (the final year of elementary level education in Ontario, aged 13-14) will be tested in social studies. The aim of extending the programme is to assist teachers in determining how well their students are learning the curriculum material; in consistently evaluating their students' learning; and in determining where improvements need to be made. It is part of the Ontario Government's commitment to providing parents and teachers with easily understood information regarding student progress in the core subjects of the statutory curriculum.

In the 2003-04 academic year, in addition, students in Grade 4 (aged nine to 10) and Grade 7 (aged 12-13) will be tested in language; and students in Grade 5 (aged 10-11) and Grade 8 (aged 13-14) will be tested in mathematics.

**How far is the curriculum driven by assessments? (eg evidence of teacher preparation for testing, 'booster' or 'catch-up' classes in schools)**

No information is available via the *INCA* Archive.

## **6. Teaching profession/training**

**What changes can be identified in initial teacher training programmes?**

No information is available via the *INCA* Archive.

**What kinds of continuing professional development/on-going training are provided?**

With the introduction of special initiatives, such as the *Early Literacy Initiative* in Alberta (see above), in-service teacher training is usually provided and funded by the province or territory concerned.

In Ontario, for example, the launch - in 2002 - of the *Early Maths Strategy* includes an intensive training programme for leading mathematics teachers, the development of a technical guide on effective teaching in early mathematics, and advice for teachers on the best assessment techniques to evaluate young children's mathematics skills.

**To what degree are teachers'/schools' planning subject to scrutiny?**

No information is available via the *INCA* Archive.

**To what degree are teachers using electronic formats to plan?**

No information is available via the *INCA* Archive.

## 7. Pedagogy

**Which teaching approaches are dominant or developing a higher profile, and which are receding? (eg collaborative work, whole-class instruction)**

No specific information is available via the *INCA* Archive.

**What is the impact of ICT in teaching practice? (eg use of electronic whiteboards, intranets, managed learning environments/local grids)**

No information is available via the *INCA* Archive.

**To what degree are teaching approaches focusing on developing thinking skills, creativity and building on children's learning styles?**

No specific information is available via the *INCA* Archive.

## 8. Resourcing

**How far are resources to support teaching made available via government/central/local agencies?**

**How far, and in which subjects, are resources statutory/ recommended/ subsidised? (eg textbooks, courses, lesson plans for teachers, web-based materials)**

### General/national

Most territories and provinces review textbooks and other curriculum support materials at the provincial or territorial level and then supply a list of recommended materials to districts. There is a trend away from a single textbook for each subject towards a variety of materials from which to choose. Decisions about which materials to select from the list for use in classrooms are then made at the district or school level.

Curriculum materials produced by departments or ministries of education are normally pilot-tested in schools and revised before receiving official ministry sanction.

Curriculum materials produced by the private sector are usually subject to an approval process involving ministry and school board officials before being sanctioned officially. Other materials are considered to be curriculum support materials.

Textbooks are generally provided free of charge to students.

There is a national portal for Canadian educators at <http://www.teachcanada.ca/> This aims to offer a wide range of online resources for teachers.

### Alberta

The Ministry of Education in Alberta (known as 'Alberta Learning') authorises learning resources in the form of print, non-print (audio, video etc) and electronic software materials which can be used by teachers or students to facilitate teaching and learning. Authorisation indicates that the resources meet high standards and can contribute to the attainment of the goals in the appropriate programme of study. However, the authorisation of resources does not **require** their use in programme delivery. Decisions about the selection and use of resources are a local matter and take into account student skill levels, interests, motivations and stages of development.

Authorised resources may have originally been produced by a division of Alberta Learning, or externally by private publishers. In exceptional circumstances, teacher-devised resources may be authorised for province-wide use.

### British Columbia

There is an ICT and Technology Resources website, which has information, related documents, ministry developed technology resources and useful links to help teachers integrate technology into the classroom. The site is available at <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/technology/>

### Ontario

The programmes of study for the primary level (elementary) curriculum are available on the Internet, along with exemplars and resource documents for all statutory curriculum areas at this level, including sample year-end tasks and tests. These can be accessed at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/curricul/elemcurric.html> and <http://www.curriculum.org>

### Saskatchewan

The Saskatchewan Education, Evergreen Curriculum site provides access to a range of 'Evergreen Curriculum Resources'. See <http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/docs/evergrn.html>