

Thinking Critically About Classrooms and Income Inequality

THINKING CRITICALLY ABOUT CLASSROOMS AND INCOME INEQUALITY

Stones in the road: Poverty, income
inequality, and schooling practices

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INTRODUCTION

“We must, above all else, commit to losing the stereotypes that paint poor people as the problem. That might be the single most important thing that any of us, as educators, can do in our commitments to **equity** and **diversity**.” Paul Gorski, 2013

As we turn our focus of inquiry to an in-depth discussion of **poverty** and **income inequality** in Canada, and their effects on children, families, teachers, schools, and schooling practices, there are two points that need to be foregrounded for the remainder of this discussion. The first is that poverty and income inequality, and particularly the negative effects of income inequality, are inextricably connected to the systemic effects of oppressions such as **racism**, the challenges of disabilities, and **sexism**. That is, people do not “happen” to be poor or more financially comfortable: levels of income are deeply connected to the ways in which people are able (or not) to access the material goods and services (including schooling) that affect greater or lesser degrees of financial prosperity.

The second point which underscores this book is to remind ourselves that, as Jonathan Katz and others have pointed out for more than twenty years, when we talk about any social

category (also referred to throughout this book as **identity categories**), there is always a “default position”, which is always the position of **privilege**. As critical thinkers, we must include in any analysis of the systemic operations of discrimination, the effects also of privilege; to focus only on the communities that are often cast as “**Other**” is to leave the position of privilege unexamined and therefore held up as that to which, it is assumed, all will – or should – aspire.

In this book, where we focus our inquiry on the effects particularly of income inequality, we need to be aware of the notion that Canada is a **classless society**, and bring that idea to the forefront to refute it. While it is the case that Canada does not officially operate with a strict system of class differentiation, there are myriad ways in which the language of a class system, and the operations of a class system, are readily seen and able to be recognized as such when we start to look closely. While this is true in many social spaces, it is particularly true in schooling practices and policies, in curriculum documents, and in many of the everyday practices and assumptions with which schools and teachers make decisions about and for students (which is one of the primary areas of inquiry in this book).

We discuss some of the ways in which income inequality affects students in Canadian schools; some of the ways in which particular communities and students are more negatively impacted by lower incomes in their families and communities; some of the ways in which many curriculum

decisions and school policies and practices rest on explicitly middle-class assumptions and values; and how we as educators can work toward undoing these negative effects for students. Additionally, we briefly outline the **Low Income Cut-Off (LICO)** which is the actual, official determination of whether or not one is considered to be “poor” in Canada. We also walk readers through an in-depth exercise we call the Budget Exercise, which was first developed by Dr. Leighteizer about twenty years ago, and has been used by both of us subsequently in our classrooms. While a much earlier version of this exercise was published in Module 8, “Schooling and Social Justice,” of the former Nova Scotia Educational Leadership Consortium’s program for instructional leaders in this province (2002), it is an evolving document, which has been refined and modified for this book, and which will continue to evolve as wages change. We also note here that as wages and costs of living vary amongst provinces and territories, we use Nova Scotia wages that are current at the time of this writing (2022). There are components added to the Budget Exercise which can also be undertaken, such as Grocery Shopping on a Budget, 24/7 Schedule, and Back to School Shopping, but if not completed do not affect the Budget Exercise itself.

While conceptualizing this book, and thinking more deeply about schooling and issues of social class and income levels (and inequalities), we begin with the words of Jane van Galen, Professor of Education at the University of

Washington, and echo her line of inquiry: “On the one hand, we believe that school can enable all motivated young people to attain the ...dream of self-directed success. On the other hand, we tend to avoid questioning why so many hard-working families have found success elusive in the first place” (2007, p. 156).

While schooling practices and processes have been, and continue to be hailed as “**the great leveler**” (World Bank, 2021), abundant research indicates the complex and myriad ways in which this is simply not true. Black students and Indigenous students are more likely to be suspended or expelled from school for behaviours that are viewed as individual problematic behaviours, rather than the result of forms of **systemic oppression** that give rise to resistance, challenges of teachers and administration, refusal to take up content that is not reflective or is negatively representative of their lives and communities (see for instance: George Sefa Dei, Agnes Calliste, Carl James, Baruti Kafele, Robyn Maynard, Pamela Rose Toulouse, Enid Lee, Michael Apple, Henry Giroux, and many others).

PART I

MAIN BODY

1.

A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON POVERTY AND INCOME INEQUALITY

Across Canada, one in five children live in poverty. Indigenous and African Canadian children are disproportionately represented in these statistics: 40% of Indigenous children in Canada live in poverty, and 60% of Indigenous children on reserves live in poverty. 20% or 1 in 5 racialized families lives in poverty in Canada, as opposed to 1 in 20 non-**racialized families** (Canada without Poverty /Canada Sans Pauvrete, 2020).

In Nova Scotia, one in four children live in families that live in poverty (Frank, Fisher, and Saulnier, 2021). The child poverty and income inequality rate in the rural postal code of Micmac, which includes the Sipekne'katik First Nations...stands at 73.3% (p. 20). Sixty-eight postal areas in Nova Scotia have child poverty and income inequality rates at 30% and higher (p. 20). The rates vary significantly, from

a low of 4.8% in Stillwater Lake, a predominantly Caucasian, prosperous suburban community in the Halifax Regional Municipality (p.40) to 50.0% in North Preston, the largest Black community in Nova Scotia, by population, also located within the Halifax Regional Municipality (p. 22).

When we talk about poverty and income inequality, there are three types of poverty that have been identified by R.W. Connell (1993): Poverty 1, the most widespread, is the poverty and income inequality that exists in rural communities in what used to be called Third World countries, but which are now more commonly referred to as non-industrialized or less-industrialized countries. These are communities that have been brought into the world capitalist economy, but are denied most of its benefits. The economies of these communities are comprised of some combination of **subsistence** agriculture, cash-cropping, and irregular wage labour (Connell, 1993, p. 20).

Poverty 2 describes “the poverty of urban populations in low-wage economies, a situation that includes such massive agglomerations as Mexico or Calcutta” (Connell, 1993, p.20). More recently, the country of South Africa has experienced a shift from predominantly Poverty 1 to Poverty 2, where entire village populations have moved from the rural countryside and subsistence living to shanty towns on the fringes of larger cities, hoping for waged employment and a better life.

Poverty 3 is the poverty and income inequality that results

from inequalities in “high-wage economies such as Canada, the United States or Australia”, as examples (Connell, 1993, p. 20). When we talk about poverty and income inequality in Canada, and its effects on schooling for Canadian children, it is Poverty 3 that is our focus. It should be noted, however, that in recent years, there have been persuasive arguments made that residents of many Indigenous communities live in Poverty 1 situations, particularly in geographically isolated, northern areas of Canadian provinces or territories (Farooqui, 2019). These findings are supported by a report commissioned by the UN General Assembly in 2019.

As Canadian surgeon Dr. Lesley Barron recently remarked, “People most at risk of poverty and income inequality include racialized, black [sic] and Indigenous children, as well as those in lone-parent families, particularly female-led ones, and the elderly, especially women. It is also telling that people from groups who are most **marginalized** are also least likely to be in decision-making positions in government and other institutions. The response to poverty and income inequality is too often to blame the individual. However, people make decisions based on their circumstances and often they have few choices” (Hutt, 2020).

We have been talking thus far about people who live in poverty, which is a common and convenient **vernacular** for what we recognize as a specific social **phenomenon**. However, it is not completely accurate to talk about people who live in poverty and say that Canada has no official

poverty and income inequality measure. Statistics Canada actually produces three main measures of low income: the **Low Income Cut-Off (LICO)**, the **Low Income Measure (LIM)**, and the **Market Basket Measure (MBM)** (www150.statcan.gc.ca).

LICO (Low income cut-off) Measure of Poverty

In Canada, rather than a specific dollar amount being a measure of whether or not someone is “poor”, we use the Low Income Cut Off (LICO). It is a more context-specific and authentic way of measuring how people are living, (although it does have its limitations). Statistics Canada uses five sizes of community, from very rural to very urban, and seven sizes of family unit, from one person to a family with seven or more persons. In total, there are thirty-five categories. An analysis is then conducted to determine the average amount that will be spent for the necessities of living – food, shelter, and clothing. Items beyond those are not deemed necessities for living, and are not factored into the average amount spent by family units for the purposes of establishing the LICO. The following chart details Statistic Canada’s determination of the LICO scale:

A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON POVERTY AND INCOME INEQUALITY | 11

Low income cut-off type		Low income cut-offs after tax, 1992 base ²				
Geography		Canada (map)				
Community size ⁴	Family size	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Rural areas	1 person	13,335	13,525	13,735	14,051	14,325
	2 persons	16,230	16,461	16,718	17,102	17,436
	3 persons	20,211	20,498	20,817	21,296	21,711
	4 persons	25,213	25,571	25,970	26,567	27,085
	5 persons	28,711	29,119	29,573	30,253	30,843
	6 persons	31,841	32,294	32,797	33,552	34,206
	7 persons or more	34,972	35,469	36,021	36,850	37,568
Population under 30,000	2 persons	18,576	18,840	19,133	19,573	19,955
	3 persons	23,129	23,457	23,823	24,371	24,846
	4 persons	28,856	29,266	29,722	30,406	30,998
	5 persons	32,859	33,326	33,845	34,624	35,298
	6 persons	36,441	36,959	37,535	38,399	39,147
	7 persons or more	40,024	40,593	41,225	42,173	42,995
	8 persons or more	43,607	44,279	44,974	45,901	46,861
Population 30,000 to 99,999	1 person	17,025	17,267	17,536	17,939	18,289
	2 persons	20,722	21,016	21,344	21,835	22,260
	3 persons	25,802	26,169	26,577	27,188	27,718
	4 persons	32,191	32,649	33,157	33,920	34,581
	5 persons	36,657	37,178	37,757	38,626	39,378
	6 persons	40,654	41,232	41,874	42,837	43,672
	7 persons or more	44,649	45,284	45,989	47,047	47,964
Population 100,000 to 499,999	1 person	17,240	17,485	17,758	18,166	18,520
	2 persons	20,982	21,281	21,612	22,109	22,540
	3 persons	26,128	26,499	26,912	27,531	28,068
	4 persons	32,596	33,060	33,575	34,347	35,017
	5 persons	37,118	37,646	38,232	39,112	39,874
	6 persons	41,165	41,750	42,400	43,376	44,221
	7 persons or more	45,211	45,854	46,568	47,640	48,568
Population 500,000 and over	1 person	20,386	20,675	20,998	21,481	21,899
	2 persons	24,811	25,163	25,555	26,143	26,653
	3 persons	30,895	31,334	31,822	32,554	33,189
	4 persons	38,544	39,092	39,701	40,614	41,406
	5 persons	43,890	44,514	45,207	46,247	47,148
	6 persons	48,675	49,367	50,136	51,289	52,289
	7 persons or more	53,460	54,220	55,065	56,331	57,429

This is how it works: an average family spends 43% of its take home income on food, shelter, and clothing – the things required to sustain life. This 43% (as the average, not necessarily at all related to how much some families do actually spend) holds across family sizes and across types of communities, although of course the actual dollar amount differs for contexts (your income might be lower, but the cost

of living may also be lower). Families that spend 63% or more of their take home income on these required fundamentals – food, shelter, and clothing – are understood to have met the threshold of the LICO.

A recent study commissioned by the Globe and Mail illustrates the minimum income required to afford average monthly rent in major cities across Canada. According to one commonly used metric, rent plus utilities should amount to less than 30 per cent of a tenant's before-tax income for housing to be deemed affordable. Another general rule suggests renters should ensure their fixed costs – including but not limited to rent and utilities – are no more than 55 per cent of their after-tax income.

Average Rental Prices in Canada

A table of average rental prices for 1 and 2 bedroom apartments, and the gross annual income required to afford those rental prices based on the threshold of RENT + UTILITIES at less than 30% OF GROSS INCOME.

Source: Rentals.ca and Globe and Mail calculations based on data from Energyhub.org, Hydro-Quebec, Crown Investments Corp. of Sask., Ernst & Young tax calculator. Methodology: Utilities include electricity and heating, we assumed the landlord pays for water and other municipal services. Fixed expenses include utilities as well as tenant

insurance, cellphone, broadband Internet and a \$10-a-month streaming service. Income figures have been rounded up.

Canadian City	AVG. RENT - 1 BRDM	AVG. RENT - 2 BRDM	GROSS ANNUAL INCOME REQUIRED - 1 BRDM	GROSS ANNUAL INCOME REQUIRED - 2 BRDM
Vancouver	\$2,176	\$2,983	\$95,000	\$128,000
Victoria	\$1,566	\$2,453	\$71,000	\$107,000
Calgary	\$1,221	\$1,516	\$59,000	\$71,000
Regina	\$939	\$1,140	\$47,000	\$55,000
Winnipeg	\$1,165	\$1,454	\$54,000	\$65,000
Toronto	\$2,013	\$2,715	\$90,000	\$118,000
Hamilton	\$1,540	\$1,841	\$70,000	\$82,000
Ottawa	\$1,618	\$2,023	\$73,000	\$90,000
Montreal	\$1,507	\$1,982	\$70,000	\$89,000
Halifax	\$1,602	\$1,937	\$78,000	\$92,000
St. John's	\$959	\$1,133	\$50,000	\$57,000

It should be noted that the above chart and the LICO figures do not measure exactly the same things: the LICO allows only for food, shelter, and clothing, while the above chart speaks to rental costs, tenant insurance, cellphones, and internet and streaming services, but does not cover food or clothing, since it was a survey done to talk about the cost

of renting across major Canadian cities. Put a different way, the above chart only suggests the amount of gross income needed to be able to afford to rent a place to live, while LICO also reflects food and clothing. Additionally, LICO uses after-tax (take-home) dollars, while the above chart uses gross (before-tax) dollars.

Let's try to develop an example based on one family. Using Halifax, Nova Scotia, as our place of residence, the established LICO line for 2019 (the last year for which figures were established at the time of this writing), was \$ 35,017 for a family of four. Remember, this is LICO – it is take home money, and it is not the total take-home: it's the line at which LICO is established. So if your family of four in Halifax meets the LICO line, they are spending 63% or more of their take home income for food, shelter, and clothing. Let's do the math using 63%: at 63% of take home income being spent on food, shelter, and clothing, and the LICO being met at \$35,017, the take home income for this family would be approximately \$57,000 (it's a little lower, but works for here). Using just under 25% as the tax base, we can say that the gross family income for this family is \$76,000 ("... in Canada the take-home pay of an average single worker, after tax and benefits, was 76.8% of their gross wage.").

Now, this sounds like a lot of money: a lot of families in Canada do not earn \$76,000 or more annually. But how do the numbers actually work? And do remember that for this

example, we are using a family of four, and assuming two adults working:

Before tax income (two adults)	Subtract taxes @ 23.2 %	Take home pay	/12 months	Subtract \$1,937 (two bedroom in Halifax)
\$76,000	$\$8,816 \times 2$	= \$58,368	= \$4,864	= \$2,927 left

But wait – there’s so much more: if we use Statistics Canada figures, the average family will spend 43% of their take home on food, shelter, and clothing. If this two-adult wage-earning family brings home \$4,864 a month, then 43% of their take home salary is \$2,091. This would suggest that they have \$154 left per month for food and clothing. Clearly, this family will spend much more than 43% of their take home salary for the three LICO-defined necessities. In fact, if they spend that \$154 on clothing, and another \$972 on groceries, they have just reached the Low Income Cut Off line of 63%. One last set of figures (for now): we were curious to know how much this couple would need to earn, at an hourly wage, not an annual income, to meet that figure of \$76,000 before-tax threshold. We did some quick math, and here’s what we came up with:

$\$76,000 / 2 = \$38,000$ per adult

\$38,000 @ \$15 per hour (the **minimum wage** some provinces and territories are working toward) – \$587.73 (taxes @ 23.2%) = \$1,945.27 take-home. This is far less than half of the \$4,864 take-home figure we were using above. In fact, to reach that number – in other words, simply to reach the Low Income Cut Off line – these two adults would each need to have hourly-waged employment that pays \$20 an hour. The lowest minimum wage in Canada as of this writing (February, 2022) is Saskatchewan, at \$11.81 an hour. The highest is in Nunavut, at \$16.00 an hour (and where, it must be noted, the cost of living is much higher than in the provinces below it). (See the Appendix One for a complete list of current and anticipated minimum wages across Canada.) And why does all of this matter? Because a loaf of bread costs the same amount regardless of whether you earn \$20,000 or \$200,000 a year. Rent is rent, regardless of your income. Heating costs (typically either oil or electricity) are the same regardless of family income. Clothing costs are the one variable here, but overall, the less you make, the greater the proportion of your income is spent paying for food, shelter, and clothing.

2.

INCOME INEQUALITY AND SCHOOLING PRACTICES: SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER

So, how does all of this impact upon children and schooling? As teachers, how do we **attenuate** the effects of poverty and income inequality on the academic and social success of our students? McKenzie (2019) believes that “If we are truly committed to closing the achievement gap between students raised in poverty and those raised in more affluent homes, we need to use the most current research, alter our classroom environments, empower students, teach social skills, embody respect, create inclusive classrooms, and recognize the signs of poverty” (p.21).

A recently released article suggests that “Children’s brains develop best when they have low exposure to stress in the home. Poverty and income inequality can create a series of emergencies that trigger stress hormones. These hormones have a dampening effect on brain development, which can

result in an inability to pay attention, regulate emotions, or develop proper memory function” (Johnston, 2020, p.3). We do point out here that in no way are we intending to put blame on parents who are struggling financially for not reading to their children, or for the stressful environments in which children may be living; rather, we (and we believe this author also) are emphasizing that in families where daily financial struggles affect every aspect of the living conditions, parents may not have the resources available to read to or engage with their children in the same ways that families who are financially more comfortable may be able to do. It is not a case of parents not caring; it is a case of parents being unable, perhaps, in some instances, to do these things.

When we consider that one in five children in Canada live in a family where the household income is not sufficient to provide the necessities of living – food, shelter, clothing, and care – we must always be mindful that there is a constant give and take of decision making within these families about what will be paid this week or month, and what will need to be shorted or deferred to make the finances work.

3.

PRIORITY SCHOOLS

Paul Bennett (2018) notes in his article, Stark inequalities: High performing and struggling schools in Halifax that twenty of the Halifax area's 95 elementary schools were identified in 2014 by superintendent Elwin LeRoux and senior staff as priority schools, where students 'consistently perform below provincial standards' in literacy and mathematics. The response to these results, which are consistent over multiple reporting periods, has been to provide enhanced learning resources and supports in literacy and numeracy, aimed at closing the achievement gap. The 10 lowest performing schools, comparing 2008-09 and 2015-16 student results, confirm the HRSB's 2014 study findings that the struggling elementary schools tend to be located in disadvantaged neighbourhoods in 'low income pockets' of Halifax region such as north-end Halifax, North Preston, Lake Echo/East Preston, Dartmouth North, Spryfield, and Dartmouth/Woodside. What Bennett doesn't mention in his report is that all of these identified disadvantaged neighbourhoods have sizeable African-Nova Scotian populations.

In contrast “Three of the top five performing Halifax elementary schools, Sir Charles Tupper, LeMarchant-St. Thomas, and Inglis Street, are located in the city’s affluent South End, all near the downtown campuses of Dalhousie and Saint Mary’s universities. In all three schools, over 92 per cent of all students in grades 3 to 6 met or exceeded established standards in two critical competencies, reading and mathematics” (Bennett, 2018).

Beyond the obvious differences in student achievement on **standardized test** scores in literacy and mathematics, income inequality can play out in much more **mundane** and **pragmatic** ways. We may not have officially **segregated schools** in this province, but we do have **de-facto** segregated schools because we use **catchment areas** to determine a school’s student population. These catchment areas are determined geographically by means of their proximity to the feeder schools in their area.

Income inequality within and among school districts makes it difficult to fulfill public education’s promise of equitable schooling experiences for all students. When children come to school, they bring with them a lifetime of social learning and the effects of that learning. While a child may or may not be aware of such concepts as privilege and marginalization, they are very aware of these processes upon their own lives and upon their lived realities. We must, therefore, examine carefully and critically the impacts of poverty and income inequality on parents and children in the day-to-day

processes and expectations of schooling. This involves everything from our expectations around appropriate school clothing and footwear, to the availability of school-sponsored breakfast and lunch programs (and the stigma that is often attached to those who use such programs), to the requisite school supply lists that get sent home in June for the following September, to the associated costs attached to school trips and extra-curricular activities. At the junior and senior high levels, these budget-straining costs often increase exponentially with the added costs of student and graduation fees, proms, course material fees, and participation in extra-curricular activities.

Even something as **innocuous** as a school fundraiser might look quite different in low income and affluent communities. Think about this: in many low-income communities, parents may not have the financial wherewithal to pre-buy a product that their children are then going to sell for a school fundraiser. And, if they did come up with the chocolate bars or the citrus baskets or whatever they're going to sell, who are those children going to sell them to? In a community that is defined geographically, which communities usually are, and where most everyone is struggling financially, families often can't afford to buy a case of chocolate bars to support their children's school fundraiser. If I buy two chocolate bars from your child, it's only because you're going to buy two chocolate bars from my child. And that might be the most

that any individual child gets to sell, two chocolate bars – not cases of them. And these lower-income communities can't host a big money maker like a sit-down dinner or a Monte Carlo night because nobody has the disposable income to attend such an event. Everyone is struggling to put food on their own table. So we no longer have equitable schooling, even in something as commonplace as school fundraising. We now have **resource difference** between two types of schools.

4.

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND ITS EFFECTS ON SCHOOLING

The World Health Organization declared the outbreak of Covid-19 a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on January 30, 2020, and a pandemic on March 11, 2020. Little did anyone know that we would still be dealing with public health restrictions and the social, economic, and emotional costs of this pandemic more than two years later. Covid-19 and its various waves and variants have led to exceptional challenges for governments and policy makers throughout the world. In Canada, Covid-19 has caused provincial educational authorities to re-imagine the delivery of school curricula and support services to students in unprecedented ways. Various models of educational delivery were instituted: fully remote, on-line instruction during closures or by parent choice; blended online and face to face learning; and fully in-person instruction.

Prolonged school closures, physical distancing and masking requirements, reductions in educational support services for students with disabilities, have fundamentally changed schooling in Canada. Even something as **rudimentary** as accessing computer technology and/or reliable and affordable high-speed internet, through which on-line classes are delivered, has been a challenge in many parts of this country. For instance, in April of 2020, thousands of students in the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, one of the largest school divisions in Ontario, were advised to find their way to local school parking lots where they could access Wi-Fi hot spots (CBC, 2020). The challenges of accessing reliable internet connections may be exponentially compounded for students living in rural or remote service areas of Canada.

Kelly Gallagher-Mackay, Prachi Srivastava, et al., of the Ontario COVID-19 Science Advisory panel (2021) report that, “Most evidence suggests a greater impact of school closures on **vulnerable populations**. Closures have interacted with other Covid-related hardships to disproportionately affect students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, racialized children and youth, newcomers, and students with disabilities” (p. 2). One of the most significant ways in which Covid-19 related school closures have impacted many families is the **exacerbation of food insecurity**. For many children, school is not only a place of learning, but also a place to eat. Many schools offer

free or subsidized breakfast and/or lunch programs to their students. When schools are closed, the onus to provide an additional one to two meals a day falls to the home food budget which, in many families, may be stretched to the limit already.

5.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. The Fraser Institute is a Canadian policy think tank headquartered in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Fraser Institute Lesson Plans on Income Inequality

2. Created by Ryerson University professor, Dr. Kosha Bramesfeld, *C'est la Vie: The Game of Social Life* is described as “a role-playing game for teaching about privilege, oppression, and intersectionality.” It includes an instructor’s guide, character profiles and game sheets, a strategy game PowerPoint, and a series of debriefing/discussion questions:
C'est la Vie: The Game of Social Life

3. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPI) is an independent, non-partisan research institute concerned with issues of social, economic and environmental justice. Founded in 1980, its national office is housed in Ottawa, Ontario, with regional offices in British Columbia, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, and Saskatchewan. Each year, CCPI releases a “report card” of selected provincial initiatives to address child poverty and family income inequality. British

Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, English Ontario, French Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island have all just released their annual reports, with reports from Alberta and the Yukon expected in the next few months.

Dr. Lesley Frank is a researcher in food, health and social justice at Acadia University, and has authored or co-authored the Nova Scotia child poverty report card for two decades.

Laura Fisher is a current PhD student in sociology at Dalhousie University.

Dr. Christine Saulnier is the regional director of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

2021 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Nova Scotia: Worst Performance over 30 Years

4. Intersectional Feminism – Kimberle Crenshaw, an American law professor, coined the term intersectional feminism in 1989 to describe “a prism for seeing the way in which various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other.” Further information can be found here: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/6/explainer-intersectional-feminism-what-it-means-and-why-it-matters>

A Twitter thread by Jordan Amaranth on the same topic can be accessed here: <https://twitter.com/JordanAmaranth/status/1558882429590310915?>

[t=MvixuBA1vuzu4EviEkBB8A&s=19&fbclid=IwAR17J-](https://twitter.com/JordanAmaranth/status/1558882429590310915?t=MvixuBA1vuzu4EviEkBB8A&s=19&fbclid=IwAR17J-)

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PART II

ACTIVITIES

To illustrate the impacts of poverty and income inequality on the day-to-day decision making that takes place in many Canadian homes, we include here several interlocking activities: The Budget Exercise; 24/7 Schedule; Grocery Shopping on a Budget; and Back to School Shopping. The main exercise is called The Budget Activity. This activity, which is an evolving document that changes as people interact with it, and as wages and costs of living change, first began as a very simple exercise about twenty years ago, in response to a question in one of Dr. Leighteizer's classes. There are no "right answers" in interacting with the Budget Exercise; its primary intent is to spend some time engaging with the financial realities of a family who are part of the demographic commonly referred to as the working poor. The family you will encounter in this Budget Exercise has two adults, both of them fully employed, at minimum wage jobs. They have two children, one school age and one not. Even the several years' age gap between the two children is a common occurrence for families in this income bracket: they often need to defer having a second child until the first child no longer needs day care, which is usually paid for by parents, and is often quite expensive, particularly for fully-employed parents who may

not be eligible for a highly coveted subsidized day care position.

6.

THE BUDGET EXERCISE

Living on minimum wage

Your family consists of two adults, Amari and Quinn, and two children, Morgan (age nine) and Avery (age three). Amari and Quinn both work full-time minimum wage jobs. Those jobs are at the same location, and shift work is possible 24/7. Shifts begin at 7:00 am, 3:00 pm, and 11:00 pm. If they have a car, it is a 25 minute drive from their home to work. If they use public transportation, it takes 1 hour and 20 minutes from home to work or return. The daycare is a 15 minute car drive in the opposite direction from the adults' workplace, or a 35 minute bus ride, with buses going every 10-15 minutes during daycare hours. Morgan's school hours are 8:30 am to 2:45 pm, and students can have lunch at school. The daycare hours are 6:00 am to 5:30 pm; pickups between 5:30 and 6:00 are charged an extra \$15.00. The daycare does have a before and after school program, wherein it will walk school-aged children to the school in the morning and pick them up after school to go back to the daycare. Calculating take home pay for your family (all figures shown here are based on Nova Scotia in 2021):

$\$12.95 \times 40 \text{ hours/weekly} = \$518 \times 52 \text{ weeks} = \$26,936$
(annual income, one adult)

Subtract: \$6408.07 (NS tax rate: 8.79% plus Federal tax rate: 15% = 23.79% total tax rate)

Take home pay: $\$20,527.93 / 12 \text{ months} = \1710.66
monthly take home after taxes, one adult

Multiply by two = \$3421.32 monthly take home after taxes,
two adults

Add: \$1275 Child Tax Benefit (Nova Scotia Child Benefit is combined with the federally funded Canada Child Benefit, and is based on family income from the previous year and the number and age of your children.

Total: \$4696.32 = monthly household income, two adults working full-time, minimum wage, with two children, one over age six, one under age six

Fill in the following budget, based on a \$4696.32 monthly income: You may work through your budget any way you choose, but remember that each decision you make may impact another decision.

Rent or Mortgage: where?
Electricity
Telephone
Home Heat
Transportation: Bus passes or Automobile: Car payment gas, oil/maintenance, registration, insurance
Child care
Clothing
Groceries
Hygiene and cleaning supplies (personal and household)
Insurance: life, home/possessions
Entertainment (include babysitting,\$10-15 /hour
Credit cards/student loans/etc.
Total Monthly Costs
Total Monthly Remainder

If (or more likely, when) this family encounters a financial crisis*, where are the funds needed going to come from? In other words, what items on the family budget are able to be negotiated or manipulated?

What is missing from this budget?

Full-size copy available in Appendix II.

Discussion Questions for Budget Exercises:

As you work your way through this exercise, (we usually run it in class in small groups of four, so participants can confer with one another about costs, and split some of the tasks, like looking up transit schedules in different communities) ask yourself the following questions:

What kind of decisions do I need to make when deciding on a line item in the budget? For instance, you are able to either have your family rent, or own their own home. But what is associated with owning your own home? You will have needed to come up with a down payment in order to qualify for a mortgage. Typical costs associated with buying a home frequently double the amount needed for a down payment: lawyer fees, property searches, tax repayments to the seller, even the cost of a full oil tank (hint: it's between six hundred and a thousand dollars, depending on the price of

oil). Most banks will say that if you are buying a home that costs \$100,000, you need a minimum of five percent (five thousand dollars) as your down payment, and up to another five thousand dollars for all of the associated fees. If you own your own home, you are also responsible for all associated costs: a new roof, or hot water tank; taxes, maintenance; snow shoveling/clearing and yard maintenance; heating, electricity, and other utilities; home insurance; and so on.

How does a decision in one place affect other decisions I make in my budget? For instance, if you decide they will use public transit rather than own and run your own car, this will directly influence where your family can live. Clearly, you need to live near reliable public transit, and these areas are often more expensive than further out of the town or city you are living in.

When we run the Budget Exercise in our classes, we encourage participants to use real situations: look up the costs of things in the community you are living in, rather than guessing or making up numbers.

*Examples of things that will affect the family budget:

One of the adults comes down with strep throat and is not able to work for four days. In addition to the lost wages (calculate these), the cost of prescriptions and over-the-counter medications totals \$73.00. How does your budget accommodate these costs? One week later, Avery comes down with the same throat infection and is not allowed to go back to daycare for one week. One adult needs to stay home;

calculate the lost wages. Prescription costs are \$39.00. The daycare will also require a signed doctor's letter confirming that Avery is no longer infectious and may return to daycare; many doctors now charge \$40 to write such a letter.

Some good news!! Or is it? Amari bought a \$1.00 raffle ticket to support minor hockey, and just won first prize: a four day, three night trip for two to Montreal to see the Canadiens play the Red Wings. Included in the prize are airfare, hotel, game tickets, and \$300 spending money. Departure from the airport leaves on Thursday mid-afternoon and returns at 8:00 p.m. Sunday evening. Quinn and Amari have not had a vacation together since before Morgan was born. What will they need to take into account – and pay for – to decide whether they can take this trip together/at all?

One last critical thinking question: what would happen if your two-adult family were to become a one-adult family, based on today's scenario? We ask this question because for many families, regardless of income levels, being a single parent family is a reality. We are going to leave the 24/7 schedule to your own thinking, but we offer you a quick set of income figures to see what happens for this family if one adult is no longer present. We thought about just having one adult quit work to stay home, but that does mean that they are still available to do full time child-rearing (so no day care costs), household care and shopping, meal preparation, and etc. Our question is: what does life look like for not just a

single-income family, but a family where one adult is doing all of the work, in and out of the house?

7.

ONE-WAGE FAMILY

Calculating take home pay for your one adult wage earner
(all figures shown here are based on Nova Scotia in 2021):

$\$12.95 \times 40 \text{ hours/weekly} = \$518 \times 52 \text{ weeks} = \$26,936$
(annual income, one adult)

Subtract: \$6408.07 (NS tax rate: 8.79% plus Federal tax rate:
15% = 23.79% total tax rate)

Take home pay: $\$20,527.93 / 12 \text{ months} = \1710.66
monthly take home after taxes, one adult

Add: \$1275.00 Child Tax Benefit (this is the maximum
amount of CTB for one year, beginning in July, 2022, for
one child under six and one child over six, and that annual
total is divided by twelve months.

Total: \$2985.66 = monthly household income, one adult
working full-time, minimum wage, with two children, one
over age six, one under age six.

This new amount of \$2985.66 represents a monthly loss of
income for this family of \$1710.66. Take a look back at your
Budget Exercise, and discuss with your working group how
you are going to compensate for the loss of this income.

i) What kinds of choices will this single parent need to make?

There are several other companion exercises that you can do after the Budget Exercise has been completed: Grocery Shopping on a Budget; your 24/7 Schedule; and Back to School Shopping.

8.

GROCERY SHOPPING ON A BUDGET

Using the amount you allotted in The Budget Exercise, go shopping for one month. You will not be able to buy a month's worth of some items, such as milk, fresh fruit and vegetables, bread (unless you have a freezer), meat (again, freezer), eggs, or cheese. Figure out how much you need to set aside weekly for those items, and purchase the rest for a month. Remember that you can take part of your hygiene budget (or possibly all of it) for items that are often purchased during a grocery shopping trip: soap, shampoo, laundry detergent, dish soap, toothpaste, toilet paper, pet supplies. Also remember that you will need to pack school lunches for Morgan, possibly snacks for Avery, and that depending on the work schedule you decided on for the adults, you might need to account for some "fast food" (or fast to prepare food) for some evenings.

Want to turn grocery shopping on your budget into a challenge? Look up the Canada Food Guide or any of a number of provincial food guides for healthy eating (for example, Manitoba: and build your grocery shopping lists

(weekly and monthly) by adhering to the recommended daily servings while also incorporating your own budget.

9.

24/7 SCHEDULE

Remember that there is more to schedule than work/daycare/school; your family needs groceries, laundry done, errands, meal preparation, activities, and etc. Where and how do these things get done?

Day/ Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sa
6 am						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12 noon						
1 pm						
2						
3						
4						
5						

6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12 am						

Full-size copy available in Appendix II.

When you developed your family budget, you made choices about what shift/s your adults would work, and on what days. In this exercise, you need to figure out who takes the kids to daycare/school, how (by bus or by car), and when? If the adults work different shifts, who picks up the kids, how and when? You might have decided that to cut down on daycare costs, one adult would work Monday to Friday and the other would work Saturday through Wednesday; this would mean only two days of day care costs. However, most day cares have a three day a week minimum, so you might end up paying for a day that you don't use (or, Avery could

go to daycare, and the adult not working could use the day to get a lot of errands done). As you work through your 24/7 schedule, keep asking yourself where all four people are at any given time: we had a group once who made their schedule work really well, until someone realized that the two children were home alone every morning from 6:25 until 7:30 (hint: this is not a good idea, to say nothing of being illegal!).

Also remember to ask yourself what the implications are for quality of family life based on your schedules.

Do your adults ever get to spend time together, either in the evening or at any point during the week, or are their lives spent passing children from one parent to the other as one gets home and the other heads off to work? And no passing judgment on families who are forced into this choice; for many, it's the only viable option within their budget.

10.

BACK TO SCHOOL SHOPPING

One of the annual “rituals” of schooling involves the sending home of school supply lists in June to parents and/or guardians, so that they will know what classroom supplies their children will require in September as they enter a new classroom. Expectations around what constitutes “essential” classroom supplies can vary widely from teacher to teacher and certainly from school to school.

In this exercise, we have provided back-to-school classroom supply lists from six elementary schools located within Nova Scotia’s largest school district. All of the supply lists are for students entering Grade 5. Three of the lists are for students attending “**priority schools**”: schools that fall short of provincial standards in literacy and numeracy.

Three of the lists are for students attending grade 5 in non-priority schools in upper middle class neighbourhoods in the Halifax Region.

In this exercise, we would like you calculate the relative costs of purchasing the items on the back-to-school supply lists for an incoming Grade 5 student in two of the schools listed

below. Choose one from the Priority Schools list and one from the Non-Priority Schools located in more affluent communities. As a way to ensure consistency in purchasing costs, use either staples.ca or walmart.ca as the supplier for each of the two schools you select:

Priority School A:

<p>Must Haves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notebook (hardcover) 2 package of lined paper (200-250 pages) Scissors Glue Stick White Glue Few packs of pencils Coloured Pencils Pencil Case Earphone (available at Dollar stores) 4 pack Hilroy exercise books 	
Remember to label all supplies with your name.	
Please send pencils and colored pencils already sharpened.	
Some items may need to be replenished throughout the year (this list is for startup).	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 pocket folders Erasers Ruler Pack of white board markers Pack of post-its Clipboard Indoor Shoes (for gym) Pencil sharpener 2 Black Sharpies Optional: 2 boxes of facial tissues Markers

Priority School B:

<p>1 – 1 inch binder 5 pkg. HB pencils 2 pkg. 24 coloured pencils 1 pair of scissors 1 – 30 cm. metric ruler (clear) 3 white vinyl erasers 3 glue sticks (large ones) 1 pencil case 1 protractor 1 composition book (Dollarama)</p>	<p>2 Highlighters (different colours) 1 pencil sharpener 1 pkg. dividers 2 twin pocket portfolios 3 pkg. loose-leaf 1 pkg. – 4 lined scribblers 7 duo tangs (one each of black, yellow, orange, blue, green, red, purple)</p>
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Priority School C:

<p>1 school sized backpack (please label) lunch bag (please label) 5 duo tangs (blue, red, green, yellow, orange) 1 package of crayons 1 package of markers 1 package of colour pencils 3 packages of pencils 1 pair scissors 2 glue sticks</p>	<p>5 white erasers 1 pencil tool kit 2 black Sharpies 3 highlighters 1 package of graph paper 1 pocket Folder 1 package of Hilroy scribblers 1 pair of headphones water bottle 1 composition book</p>
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Non-Priority School A:

<p>3 – 1” binders (no larger please, as they will not fit in the desk)</p> <p>1 package of dividers to divide up binders</p> <p>3 packages of good quality pencils (10 per package) already sharpened or</p> <p>a few mechanical pencils with a supply of lead</p> <p>1 good quality pencil sharpener that has a closed container to catch the pencil shavings</p> <p>1 large glue stick</p> <p>1 pair children’s scissors</p> <p>1 clear ruler (metric – with centimetres)</p> <p>1 pencil case (not too large)</p>	<p>3 white erasers</p> <p>1 package coloured pencils (sharpened)</p> <p>1 package of coloured markers (unscented)</p> <p>1 package of loose leaf (200 sheet package)</p> <p>1 pocket folder</p> <p>1 pair of inside sneakers for Phys. Ed. to be left at school</p> <p>1 pair of headphones that are durable. Ear buds are the best option since they will fit in the desk.</p> <p>Optional:</p> <p>2 boxes of tissues</p>
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Non-Priority School B:

<p>2 blue duo tangs with inside pockets 3 white erasers 3 large white glue sticks package of coloured markers package of coloured pencils basic calculator 4 packages of HB pencils (please send a few already sharpened) covered pencil sharpener 30 cm metric only ruler pair of pointed tip scissors 4 packages of 200 sheets of loose leaf (leave 2 at home until needed) 1” binders packages of dividers plastic pencil case/ container package of graph paper highlighters</p>	<p>package of fine tip Sharpies pair of ear buds/ear phones (not expensive) in a labeled Ziploc sketch book roll of scotch tape Agenda \$4.75 to be sent to classroom teacher on first day of school in an envelope labeled “agenda” and your child’s name. French Class: pocket folder (labeled) pencils (labeled with your child’s name) eraser Optional: pair of indoor sneakers (to be kept at school) large boxes of tissue</p>
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Non-Priority School C:

<p> pack HB Pencils (NO Staples, Simply, or yellow Papermate) white erasers large glue sticks handheld pencil sharpener pair scissors pack 24 crayons pack original colour broad tip markers pack 24 coloured pencils pack 200 page loose-leaf pack 1-cm grid paper permanent marker (black Sharpie brand fine point) extra-large sturdy pencil box or case to hold all colouring tools highlighters (yellow) 30cm transparent ruler – (non-bendy) 7 – 3-pronged duo tangs (1 red, 1 yellow, 1 green, 1 blue, 1 orange, 1 black, 1 purple) “Composition Notebook” (lined 180 pages -24.7cm X 19 cm) (Dollarama) unlined notebook for sketching/ </p>	<p> large coiled 30 page scrapbook (30 cm x 25 cm) lined Scribblers/ Exercise Books, 32 pages each pair indoor sneakers for gym (non- skid, non-marking) backpack, lunch bag, water bottle pair of headphones (not ear bud style) in a zippered case French Supplies: Hilroy exercise book (scribbler) two-pocket folder Pocket folder ** Good quality name brand items are suggested, as they tend to last longer and work well. ** Please put all supplies in a large sturdy reusable shopping bag. Clearly label the bag and all supplies with the student’s printed first name. ** Any supplies that are not used will be returned in the reusable bag at year end. Some items may need to be replaced throughout the year. We are asking for 1 or 2 boxes of Kleenex. </p>
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drawing (Dollarama) plastic 3-pronged duo tangs with DOUBLE POCKET FOLDERS 1.5” binder with pockets in the covers vinyl legal sized courier zipper bag (Dollarama)	
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Full-size copy available in Appendix II.

What has your price checking revealed? Remember that these lists are for students entering grade 5 within the same school district. They will be taught the same curriculum, be expected to meet the same **learning outcomes**, and yet the quantity and quality of the school supplies that they are expected to have on the first day of school in September vary significantly from one type of school to another. Why is that?

Is there any correlation between the quality of school supplies purchased and a student’s ability to meet learning outcomes?

A 2018 survey conducted by Angus Reid and Associates found that Canadian parents can expect to spend an average of \$883 on supplies and clothes for students heading back to class in September (Hennig, 2018). How then might the costs associated with purchasing all of the items on these school supply lists impact a family’s household budget,

particularly if there is more than one child in the family who attends school?

As educators, we must always be **cognizant** of the ways in which schooling practices and expectations privilege some students and their families over others. When these taken-for-granted assumptions about schooling go unnoticed and/or unchallenged, we are contributing to an environment in which active and inveterate harm is a real and probable consequence for many of our students.

It seems to us that one of the most important messages we can instill in our pre-service teachers is the importance of their commitment to develop and nurture a climate conducive to the promotion of equity education and social justice within our schools. By this, we mean drawing on the knowledge and experience of students, respecting native languages, cultures, and communities; devising a variety of instructional methods to stimulate multiple ways of learning and to ensure the academic and social success of every student. Weighty expectations, certainly, but matters of absolute necessity if we genuinely desire a schooling system that empowers all of our students, regardless of social and/or economic circumstances.

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APPENDIX I

Current minimum wage across Canada

Province/ Territory	Minimum Hourly Wage	Notes
Alberta	\$15.00	Effective as of October 1, 2018. View more information.
British Columbia	\$15.20	Effective as of June 1, 2021. View more information.
Manitoba	\$11.95	Effective as of October 1, 2021. The minimum wage is based on the inflation rate. View more information.
New Brunswick	\$11.75	Effective as of April 1, 2021. The minimum wage is set to \$13.75 in October 1, 2022. View more information.
Newfoundland & Labrador	\$12.75	On April 1, 2022, the province's minimum wage will increase. View more information.
Northwest Territories	\$15.20	Effective as of September 1, 2021. NWT's minimum wage has not changed in 10 years. View more information.
Nova Scotia	\$12.95	Effective as of April 1, 2021. The minimum wage was part of step one of a five step plan to bring the wage to \$15.00. In 2022, the minimum wage rate will be adjusted with inflation. View more information and report from Minimum Wage Review.
Nunavut	\$16.00	Effective as of April 1, 2020. The minimum wage is set to increase in 2022. View more information.

Ontario	\$15.00	Effective January 1, 2022. View more information.
Prince Edward Island	\$13.00	Effective as of April 1, 2021. The minimum wage is more information.
Quebec	\$13.50	Effective as of May 1, 2021. The minimum wage in 2022. View more information (in French).
Saskatchewan	\$11.81	Effective as of October 1, 2021. The minimum wage relative to the Consumer Price Index. View more information.
Yukon	\$15.20	Effective as of April 1, 2021. The minimum wage is Consumer Price Index. View more information.

<https://www.retailcouncil.org/resources/quick-facts/minimum-wage-by-province/>
Retrieved: February 24, 2022

APPENDIX II

Budget

Rent or Mortgage: where?	
Electricity	
Telephone	
Home Heat	
Transportation: Bus passes or Automobile: Car payment gas, oil/ maintenance, registration, insurance	
Child care	
Clothing	
Groceries	
Hygiene and cleaning supplies (personal and household)	
Insurance: life, home/possessions	
Entertainment (include babysitting,\$10-15 /hour	
Credit cards/student loans/etc.	
Total Monthly Costs	

Total Monthly Remainder	
If (or more likely, when) this family encounters a financial crisis*, where are the funds needed going to come from? In other words, what items on the family budget are able to be negotiated or manipulated?	
What is missing from this budget?	

24/7 Schedule

Day/Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
6 am			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12 noon			

1 pm			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			

9			
10			
11			
12 am			

Priority Schools

Priority School A:

Must Haves:

Notebook (hardcover)
2 package of lined paper (200-250 pages)
Scissors
Glue Stick
White Glue
Few packs of pencils
Coloured Pencils
Pencil Case
Earphone (available at Dollar stores)
4 pack Hilroy exercise books

Remember to label all supplies with your name.

Please send pencils and colored pencils already sharpened.

Some items may need to be replenished throughout the year (this list is for startup).

Priority School B:

1 – 1 inch binder

5 pkg. HB pencils

2 pkg. 24 coloured pencils

1 pair of scissors

1 – 30 cm. metric ruler (clear)

3 white vinyl erasers

3 glue sticks (large ones)

1 pencil case

1 protractor

1 composition book (Dollarama)

2 Highlighters (different colours)

1 pencil sharpener

1 pkg. dividers

2 twin pocket portfolios

3 pkg. loose-leaf

1 pkg. – 4 lined scribbles

7 duo tangs (one each of black, yellow, c

Priority School C:

1 school sized backpack (please label)

lunch bag (please label)

5 duo tangs (blue, red, green, yellow, orange)

1 package of crayons

1 package of markers

1 package of colour pencils

3 packages of pencils

1 pair scissors

2 glue sticks

Non-Priority School A:

3 – 1” binders (no larger please, as they will not fit in the desk)	3 white erasers
1 package of dividers to divide up binders	1 package coloured pencils (sharpened)
3 packages of good quality pencils (10 per package) already sharpened or a few mechanical pencils with a supply of lead	1 package of coloured markers (unscented)
1 good quality pencil sharpener that has a closed container to catch the pencil shavings	1 package of loose leaf (200 sheet package)
1 large glue stick	1 pocket folder
1pair children’s scissors	1 pair of inside sneakers for Phys. Ed. to be left at school
1 clear ruler (metric – with centimetres)	1 pair of headphones that are durable. Ear buds are the best option since they will fit in the desk.
1 pencil case (not too large)	Optional: 2 boxes of tissues

Non-Priority School B:

2 blue duo tangs with
inside pockets

3 white erasers

3 large white glue

sticks

package of coloured
markers

package of coloured
pencils

basic calculator

4 packages of HB
pencils (please send a
few already sharpened)

covered pencil
sharpeners

30 cm metric only
ruler

pair of pointed tip
scissors

4 packages of 200
sheets of loose leaf
(leave 2 at home until
needed)

1" binders

packages of dividers
plastic pencil case/

container

package of graph
paper

highlighters

package of fine tip Sharpies

pair of ear buds/ear phones (not
expensive) in a labeled Ziploc

sketch book

roll of scotch tape

Agenda

\$4.75 to be sent to classroom teacher
on first day of school in an envelope
labeled "agenda" and your child's name.

French Class:

pocket folder (labeled)

pencils (labeled with your child's
name)

eraser

Optional:

pair of indoor sneakers (to be kept at
school)

large boxes of tissue

Non-Priority School C:

pack HB Pencils (NO
Staples, Simply, or
yellow Papermate)

white erasers

large glue sticks
handheld pencil

sharpener

pair scissors

pack 24 crayons

pack original colour

broad tip markers

pack 24 coloured

pencils

pack 200 page loose-
leaf

pack 1-cm grid paper
permanent marker
(black Sharpie brand
fine point)

extra-large sturdy
pencil box or case to
hold all colouring tools

highlighters (yellow)
30cm transparent
ruler – (non-bendy)

7 – 3-pronged duo
tangs (1 red, 1 yellow, 1
green, 1 blue, 1 orange,
1 black, 1 purple)

“Composition
Notebook” (lined 180
pages -24.7cm X 19 cm)
(Dollarama)

unlined notebook
for sketching/ drawing
(Dollarama)

plastic 3-pronged
duo tangs with
DOUBLE POCKET
FOLDERS

large coiled 30 page scrapbook (30 cm x
25 cm)

lined Scribblers/ Exercise Books, 32
pages each

pair indoor sneakers for gym (non-
skid, non-marking)

backpack, lunch bag, water bottle

pair of headphones (not ear bud
style) in a zippered case

French Supplies:

Hilroy exercise book (scribbler)

two-pocket folder Pocket folder

** Good quality name brand items
are suggested, as they tend to last longer
and work well.

** Please put all supplies in a large
sturdy reusable shopping bag. Clearly
label the bag and all supplies with the
student’s printed first name.

** Any supplies that are not used will
be returned in the reusable bag at year
end.

Some items may need to be replaced
throughout the year.

We are asking for 1 or 2 boxes of
Kleenex.

1.5" binder with
pockets in the covers
vinyl legal sized
courier zipper bag
(Dollarama)

GLOSSARY

Attenuate

to reduce the force, effect, or value of something

Catchment areas

the area of a city, town, etc., from which a school's students are drawn

Classless society

refers to a society in which no one is born into a social class. Distinctions of wealth, income, education, culture, or social network might arise and would only be determined by individual experience and achievement in such a society.

Cognizant

to be aware of

De-facto

in fact, or in effect, whether by right or not

Diversity

the practice or quality of including or involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds and of various/varying genders, sexual orientations, etc.

Equity

the quality of being fair and impartial; equity and equality are not the same thing

Exacerbation

the process of making a problem, bad situation, or negative feeling worse

Food insecurity

Household food insecurity is the inadequate or insecure access to food because of income or finances. It is a serious public health issue in Canada as one in eight Canadian households do not have enough money to buy sufficient nutritious food.

Identity categories

are usually defined by some physical, social, and mental characteristics of individuals. Examples of social identity categories are race/ethnicity, gender, social class/

socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, (dis)abilities, and religion/religious beliefs.

Income inequality

the extent to which income is distributed unevenly in a group of people

Innocuous

not harmful or offensive

Learning outcomes

are statements that describe the knowledge or skills students should acquire by the end of a particular assignment, class, course, or program, and help students understand why that knowledge and those skills will be useful to them. They focus on the context and potential applications of knowledge and skills, help students connect learning in various contexts, and help guide assessment and evaluation.

Low Income Cut-Off (LICO)

income threshold below which a family will likely devote a larger share of its income on the necessities of food, shelter and clothing than the average family

Low Income Measure (LIM)

defines low income as being below a fixed percentage of income. A household is considered low income if its income is below 50% of median household incomes. It is, therefore, a relative measure of low income.

Marginalized

to relegate to an unimportant or powerless position within a society or group

Market Basket Measure (MBM)

a measure of low income based on the cost of a specific basket of goods and services representing a modest, basic standard of living. It includes the costs of food, clothing, footwear, transportation, shelter and other expenses for a reference family of two adults (aged 25 to 49) and two children (aged 9 and 13).

Minimum wage

is the lowest amount a worker can be legally paid for their work. Most countries have a nation-wide minimum wage that all workers must be paid. Canada's minimum wage, however, is set by each province and territory.

Mundane

dull and ordinary

Other

a set of dynamics, processes, and structures that engender marginality and persistent inequality across any of the full range of human differences based on group identities

Phenomenon/phenomena (pl.)

the influences that shape people's behavior and opinions

Poverty

Essentially, poverty refers to lacking enough resources to provide the necessities of life - food, clean water, shelter and clothing. But in today's world, that can be extended to include access to health care, education and even transportation.

Pragmatic

dealing with things sensibly and realistically in a way that is based on practical rather than theoretical considerations

Priority schools

schools requiring more attention, resources, and extra support programs to close the student achievement gap

Privilege

a special right, advantage, or immunity granted or available only to a particular person or group

Racialized families

Racialized persons are defined as individuals who are non-Caucasian. Factors such as discrimination, language barriers, historical trauma and colonization can have a cumulative effect on these families.

Racism

prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against a person or people on the basis of their membership in a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalized

Resource difference

School resources mean any funds, facilities or resources (including equipment and consumables, use/supply of heat, light or power) of a particular school

Rudimentary

involving or limited to basic principles

Segregated schools

segregation can be considered a measure of how students are distributed across schools within school systems (e.g., districts or cities) that draw from the same students

Sexism

prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination, typically against women, on the basis of sex

Standardized test

any form of test that (1) requires all test takers to answer the same questions, or a selection of questions from common bank of questions, in the same way, and that (2) is scored in a “standard” or consistent manner, which makes it possible to compare the relative performance of individual students or groups of students.

Subsistence

the action or fact of maintaining or supporting oneself at a minimum level

Systemic oppression

is the intentional disadvantaging of groups of people based on their identity while advantaging members of the dominant group (gender, race, class, sexual orientation, language, etc.)

The great leveler

Historically, education has often been seen as the great leveler—a mechanism that can allow even those from the poorest circumstances to succeed and climb up the socioeconomic ladder. But as a growing body of research has shown, educational systems can entrench rather than weaken inequality.

Vernacular

the language or dialect spoken by the ordinary people in a particular country or region

Vulnerable populations

Vulnerable and at-risk populations refer to children, youth, students, and schools that are most vulnerable or at risk of disparities in access, service use, and outcomes.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dr. Valda Leighteizer, PhD, teaches in the Education Faculty of Mount Saint Vincent University. She has been working with pre-service and classroom teachers for more than twenty-five years. Her teaching and research areas include: curriculum theories, critical curriculum practices, and the intersectionalities of social identities with one another and how they impact the teaching and learning processes in schooling. She works with a critical and feminist lens.

Sonya Singer, MAEd., MEd., was a teacher and English department head for thirty-one years in the Nova Scotia public school system. Since her retirement, she has held faculty positions at Mount Saint Vincent University, Acadia University, and Cape Breton University, where she has most recently served as a curriculum development consultant and part-time instructor in the Bachelor of Education program. She has a particular interest in teaching for social justice and L'nu education.

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Monet's Water – Deborah J. Ferguson (2007)

