

## **Road to Universal Health Care in Canada**

**Concept(s)** Historical Significance, Cause and Consequence

**Prepared for Grade(s)** 9, 10

**Province** AB

**By** Chris Spruyt

**Time Period(s)** 1900-present

**Time allotment** 3 to 5 classes x 50 minutes

### **Brief Description of the Task**

Universal health care is considered to be a social program that makes Canada unique. But how did this happen? What led to the creation of universal health care? The lesson begins by having students examine the biographies of two people who have made a difference in the world and the factors that lead them to take action. The concept of Cause and Consequence and Historical Significance are used in the remainder of the lesson, which explores how Tommy Douglas and others created social services in Canada. The end product is that students create a timeline to show how events linked together.

### **Objectives**

From the Alberta Program of Studies

9.1 Issues for Canadians: Governance and Rights

Students will:

9.1.2 appreciate the various effects of government policies on citizenship and on Canadian society

9.1.3 appreciate how emerging issues impact quality of life, citizenship and identity in Canada

9.1.4 examine the structure of Canada's federal political system by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues:

- To what extent do political and legislative processes meet the needs of all Canadians?

9.2 Issues for Canadians: Economic Systems in Canada and the United States Values and Attitudes

Students will:

9.2.1 appreciate the values underlying economic decision making in Canada and the United States

9.2.3 appreciate the impact of government decision making on quality of life

9.2.4 compare and contrast the principles and practices of market and mixed economies by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues:

- Why is Canada viewed as having a mixed economy?

9.S.1 develop skills of critical thinking and creative thinking

9.S.2 develop skills of historical thinking:

- analyze selected issues and problems from the past, placing people and events in a context of time and place
- distinguish cause, effect, sequence and correlation in historical events and issues, including the long- and short-term causal relations

9.S.7 apply the research process:

- reflect on changes of perspective or opinion based on information gathered and research conducted
- integrate and synthesize concepts to provide an informed point of view on a research question or an issue
- develop a position supported by information gathered during research
- draw conclusions based upon research and evidence • determine how information serves a variety of purposes

### **Required Knowledge & Skills**

Students should have the following skills and knowledge:

- The ability to do research on their own
- The ability to create a timeline

Students will require the following materials:

- Computers or research materials
- Materials for creating a timeline – poster paper and art supplies

### **Detailed Instructions**

Part 1 Cause and Consequence

1) This first part of the lesson introduces the historical thinking concept of Cause and Consequence.

2) Start a discussion with students by asking these questions:

- a. What causes people to become involved in an issue?
- b. Why do people want to make changes in our society?

3) After students have had a conversation about these ideas introduce someone who has taken an active role in social issues. A biography of Craig Kielburger — co-founder of Free the Children — and a graphic organizer to begin this process (Attachment 1). 4) After students have explored the info about Craig Kielburger, they examine the life of Tommy Douglas, the “father” of universal health care in Canada (Attachments 2 and 3). If you prefer, you can also have students go directly to the Greatest Canadian Website to research the life of Tommy Douglas

(Attachment 4): [http://www.cbc.ca/greatest/top\\_ten/nominee/douglas-tommy.html](http://www.cbc.ca/greatest/top_ten/nominee/douglas-tommy.html)

The overall question to be considered is: Why did Tommy Douglas want universal health care?

### Part 2: Historical Significance

1) Ask students to list the three most significant events in their life. Remind them that they should not include events such as what they had for breakfast or their first time having pizza. Better choices would include a sibling being born, or moving houses.

2) Ask the student why they chose these events. Using a mind map with significance at the centre, track student responses on the board (i.e. had a big effect on my life, was a major achievement for me). Once students have had a chance to respond, introduce the criteria for historical significance:

- Resulted in change
- The event had deep consequences for many people
- The event affected many people
- The consequences of this event lasted for a long period of time
- Revealing: The event sheds light on an aspect of the past; helps us understand the past in a new way

3) Spend a couple of moments examining the student responses from before, how many meet these requirements?

4) Emphasize that when determining historical significance — which is different than personal significance — these events need to give us an understanding of the person/event and how it shaped the future or attitudes.

5) You may then want to ask students to apply what they have learned to an event in history.

### Part 3: Final Product

1) Students will be creating a timeline of significant events and people that contributed to the development of universal health care in Canada. People often say that Tommy Douglas is the father of Universal Healthcare but like all major developments in history, a number of people and events were involved.

2) Students will research the events and people that lead to universal health care. Review the instructions in Attachment 5 with students. (Attachment 6 is a modified version.) They will need to research a majority of the events and people listed and then decide on which ones are the most significant.

3) Students will also determine which events and people were the major causes of universal health care, and what the consequences of the events were. Review the instructions in Attachment 7 with students to explain this component of the final product.

4) After they have researched the people and events that contributed to the outcome, they need to decide on five that are the most significant.

5) The next step is to create their timelines. Their timelines need to include the five significant events they selected. When plotting the events and people on the timeline, they should place the causes of the events below the timeline and the consequences above the timeline.

#### Part 4: Extension

1) Have students visit the CBC Archives online to examine opposition to universal health care. This allows students to see that the process did not always proceed smoothly and that there was lots of opposition. The web site contains a number of television news clips and radio clips from the time period:

[http://archives.cbc.ca/health/health\\_care\\_system/](http://archives.cbc.ca/health/health_care_system/)

2) Discuss the following two questions with students: What were some of the arguments of opponents? Why would people have been against it? At the conclusion of the discussion, you may want to have students write editorials from each point of view.