YDi

Navigating the World

What the YDI Measures

- Gender equality
- Trust in institutions
- Views on multiculturalism
- Prosocial orientation
- Global and local concerns
- Climate concern
- Eco-anxiety
- Community service
- Civic engagement
- Future plans and priorities

Navigating the world uniquely captures the way youth envision their future and encourages them to reflect on the local and global environment around them. This dimension asks youth about their social values, social priorities, active citizenship, and future plans and priorities. As youth begin to navigate early adulthood, it is important to understand their long-term goals, values, and concerns to better prepare them for future worldly challenges and opportunities. On the 2022 YDI, most youth (72%) agreed that multiculturalism should be recognized as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society. 68% said gender equality is an important concern. Half (50%) of youth agreed that taking care of people who are having difficulty caring for themselves is a social responsibility. 44% of youth reported experiencing symptoms of eco-anxiety.

Equity means ensuring that each student is given the resources they need so that all students thrive (Safir, 2016). In 2023, the BC Ministry of Education released the Racial Equity Together K-12 Action Plan, which aims to address discrimination and racism within the BC education system and create a sense of belonging for all students, staff and families. It is important to adopt an intersectional lens when promoting equity and inclusion as unique identities interact to shape individuals' experiences (BC Ministry of Education, 2023).

Action ideas:

- Check out this set of 10 anti-racism and mental health in schools practical resources. The resources focus on diversifying the curriculum to increase representation, and facilitating cultural exchange activities within your school, among others**.**
- Check out this BC Ministry of Education resource, which outlines resources, partners and practices for promoting cultural responsiveness and humility in BC schools.
- Focus on creating gender inclusive classrooms. Invite students to share their pronouns and their chosen name at the start of the school year. Support student-led groups, such as Genders & Sexualities Alliances (GSAs), which can promote dialogue, social mobilization, and change toward a safer and more inclusive school environment (Gender Inclusive Classrooms).

Prosocial behaviours are voluntary behaviours that are intended to benefit others (Eisenberg, 2006). They are associated with health and well-being benefits, including reduced stress and depression (Raposa et al., 2016), increased happiness (Post, 2005) and self-esteem, and stronger academic attainment (Padilla-Walker & Carlo, 2014). Developing students who are active, global citizens is an important component of encouraging prosocial behaviours. Strategies that focus on students' engagement in real-world issues, such as Global Citizenship Education (GCE), can help them translate their critical thinking and problem-solving abilities into active citizenship (Davies, 2006).

Action Ideas:

- Promote random acts of kindness within the classroom. Model kindness by recognizing students' strengths. Have students create a "jar of joy" where they fill a jar with positive messages to share with a classmate (Beachboard, 2019).
- Consider incorporating global citizenship education into your school. Check out the Greater Good in Education webpage for resources and additional practices.

Digital literacy is a crucial step to fostering safe and responsible social participation, going hand in hand with developing students' critical thinking, decision-making and problem-solving skills (Darvin, 2018; Klepper et al., 2023). Digital literacy is also an important step toward equity, as digital equity intersects with other layers of social exclusion (Andrey & Abdelaal, 2022). Misinformation reduces civic engagement and increases young people's fear and mistrust in news media and other institutions (European Youth Information and Counselling Agency, 2022). Exposure to misinformation and fake news online is also linked with harmful mental health impacts (Rocha et al., 2021). On the 2022 YDI, less than half of youth (43%) said they have trust in the police, while only 35% expressed trust in the justice system. Levels of trust were also low in the school system (32%), the government (26%), the Canadian media (20%), and major corporations (16%).

Action Ideas:

- Check out the American Psychological Association's (2023) recommendations to promote digital literacy and healthier adolescent social media usage (APA, 2023).
- Go to mediasmart.ca for resources to promote digital and media literacy in the classroom. Educational videos and digital literacy lesson plans focus on themes such as identifying and tackling hate content, assessing online information validity, and debating data collection and algorithms. It is important to consider students' different experiences, use and familiarity with technology, so the strategies are relevant and inclusive (Darvin, 2018).

Newly emerging terms in the literature such as **climate and eco-anxiety** describe heightened levels of anxiety, worry, and concern related to the threat of global ecological and climate disaster (Clayton & Karazsia, 2020; Pihkala, 2020). Intense experiences of climate and eco-anxiety could add to daily stressors, increase feelings of hopelessness about the future, and diminish overall well-being. This is of particular concern among children and youth, who are at a crucial point in their physical and psychological development (Wu et al., 2020). Indeed, chronic stress and worry during adolescence may result in permanent alterations of brain structure, as well as emergence of psychopathologies later in life (Sheth et al., 2017). Thus, addressing and helping youth cope with these feelings is crucial with the growing urgency of the ecological and climate emergencies.

Action Ideas:

- Efforts to address climate and eco-anxiety include the creation of support groups and online resources. Although few existing resources are specific to youth, many may be adapted for their use. Resources to consider checking out include the Mental Health and Climate Change Alliance and the Climate and Mind websites, Time Magazine 7 Resources To Help You Cope with Climate Anxiety and Yale School of the Environment Eco-anxiety Resources.
- For those teaching about climate change, it may be beneficial to hold space for emotions that arise during lessons, as well as set group guidelines. A guide to setting guidelines when discussing climate change and the environment is detailed in this guide about climate grief (pg. 7). These guidelines can be adapted for classroom use.

References

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Website Resources

BC Ministry of Education Anti-Racism strategy: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/erase/documents/k-12-anti-racism-strategy.pdf

Anti-racism and mental health in schools resource: https://www.annafreud.org/schools-and-colleges/anti-racism-and-mental-health-in-schools/anti-racism-and-mental-health-in-schools-resources/.

BC Ministry of Education Mental Health and Well-being in Schools resource:
https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/erase/documents/mental-health
wellness/supports_for_mental_health_and_well-being_in_schools.pdf

Greater Good in Education Global Citizenship Education resources:
https://ggie.berkeley.edu/collection/honoring-our-community-and-world-for-secondary-students/

American Psychological Association's 2023 recommendations for social media use in adolescence:
https://www.apa.org/topics/social-media-internet/health-advisory-adolescent-social-media-use

Media Smarts: https://mediasmarts.ca/teacher-resources?gclid=Cj0KCQjwmZejBhC_ARIsAGhCqndECcDAuDiuWik7O_0akb4q6AjTg7Xs9JIP3Npgh7TalXwuePzpZv4aAulKEALw_wcB

Mental Health and Climate Change Alliance: https://mhcca.ca/resources

Climate & Mind: https://www.climateandmind.org

Time Magazine 7 Resources to Help You Copy with Climate Anxiety: https://time.com/6112146/climate-anxiety-resources/

Yale School of the Environment Eco-anxiety resources: https://fore.yale.edu/Resources/Eco-anxiety-Resources

Addressing and Coping with Climate Grief guide: https://sustain.ubc.ca/sites/default/files/2020-077b_Climate%20Grief%20Toolkit%20_Wu_0.pdf

Suggested Citation: Maluf, G., Herring, J., Maloney, J., Wu, J., Blake, J., Goossen, R., Whitehead, J., Long, D., Low, B., Samji, H. (2023). Youth Development Instrument navigating the world quick sheet. Simon Fraser University. https://chartlab.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/YDI-2023-Navigating-the-World-Quick-Sheet.pdf