CONCEPTUALIZING A
JUNIOR SECONDARY SOCIAL STUDIES PROGRAM
FOR BOTSWANA

by

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Paper presented at the April 16 - 20, 1990 annual meeting
of the American Educational Research Association
Boston, Massachusetts.

I gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Felix Rex O'mara, Chairman of the Social Studies Department of the Molepolole College of Education in Botswana, in the preparation of this paper.

The world is changing rapidly. Botswana is changing even more rapidly than most of the other countries in the world. This change is affecting all aspects of the lives of the Batswana, the people of Botswana. A proper education in social studies can assist the Batswana to cope with these changes and improve their individual and collective lives. To accomplish this, social studies teachers must be equipped with the necessary skills and materials. As it currently exists, social studies education fails to exert much influence for helping the Batswana maintain pace with the changes of our time. The need to conceptualize a social studies program for Botswana to further the development of its people is apparent.

Background on Botswana

Botswana is a south African country, bordered by South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and Zambia. It is approximately the size of France (about 582,000 sq km) with most of the land semiarid desert. Most of the population of about one million is concentrated on the eastern side of the country, where all educational institutions are located. The people of Botswana are practically all of a common cultural origin -- 80% are Setswana-speaking Bantu.

Membership is the dominant means of making a living in the traditional sector of society. There are employment opportunities for the educated in the private and the public service. However, many Batswana are forced to seek employment in neighboring countries, especially South Africa, because few alternative agriculture and other means of employment are so scarce. Those with an education can find well-paying jobs and those without training are very poor. This leaves a dual economy which, as in other Third World countries, has a deep influence on the educational system.

Botswana gained its independence from Great Britain in 1966, it was known as Bechuanaland. The first schools in Bechuanaland were established by Christian missions. In 1885, the country became a British protectorate, but the development of education was neglected by the colonial rulers because sons, it was assumed that the protectorate would eventually become part of the Republic of South Africa. The few students selected to receive
Education is individual development. The individual is of unique value and it is only through changes in the developed capacities and attitudes of individuals that they can contribute towards progress in society. As a result, education should be consistent with the aims of democracy, development, self-reliance, and social harmony.

Education for Kagisano

The Botswana educational system seeks to promote the national philosophy called Kagisano, or social harmony. This philosophy embodies the ideals of democracy, development, self-reliance, and unity. The objectives for education based on Kagisano, formulated at the beginning of the 1980s, include: a) increasing opportunities and decreasing inequality in educational opportunities; b) meeting personnel requirements for balanced economic development; c) fostering desirable personal qualities to encourage the full development of individuals; and d) extending the role of schools and colleges in the community and vice-versa.

Education for Kagisano, or social harmony, aims to guide educational, social, political, and economic development in Botswana. The National Commission on Education states: The principal aim of education development, using government and local community resources, in order to provide employment, especially in developing self-reliance and providing employment opportunities for national development. Admission to schools is restricted, beginning at the junior-secondary level, through the use of selection tests. The exams at a combination of attainment and aptitude tests. Upon completion of junior and senior secondary schools, students must pass subject-based exams to continue their schooling.

Education for Kagisano as an educational system seeks to promote the national philosophy called Kagisano, or social harmony. This philosophy embodies the ideals of democracy, development, self-reliance, and unity. The objectives for education based on Kagisano, formulated at the beginning of the 1980s, include: a) increasing opportunities and decreasing inequality in educational opportunities; b) meeting personnel requirements for balanced economic development; c) fostering desirable personal qualities to encourage the full development of individuals; and d) extending the role of schools and colleges in the community and vice-versa.

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By the time students complete junior secondary school, they should be able to:

1. Knowledge of democracy must lead to effective participation of the children in the democratic process of their communities and country.

The fourth national principle that Batswana children must be taught is the importance of unity: Unity embraces many important ideas such as loyalty, cooperation and a sense of identity that goes beyond one's ethnic group, religion, political party, or economic circumstance. (National Commission on Education, 1977, p. 30) Loyalty, cooperation and a sense of identity lie at the heart of the social studies curriculum. Social studies should teach that all the people of Botswana are one with rights, duties and responsibilities; that the attitudes that bring about a firm commitment to the nation and protect the nation from divisive elements. Social studies for Botswana should emphasize the balance between unity and diversity. The richness of its people should not be sacrificed for uniformity or conformity. There is a need to strike a balance between unity and diversity.

The third national principle is self-reliance. The school should inculcate a spirit of self-help in the minds of the children. Children must be taught not to expect much to be done for them by the government or other agencies. They must be ready to take initiative and to seize opportunities that exist for their own self-reliance. Social studies should teach them the principle and practice of self-reliance. The inquiry and problem-solving methods of teaching social studies are suited for developing this principle in the children.

The second national principle that children should learn relates to the concept of development. Development refers to the removal of social injustice and want of human and natural resources to their greatest potentials. Pupils and students must be taught about their country, its resources and conditions. They must be helped to develop their own skills and abilities to participate in this development process -- literacy skills, problem solving skills and manual dexterity. (National Commission on Education, 1977, p. 28) Since social studies teaches a people about their country, its resources and conditions, it can play a vital role in realizing this principle.

The aims of the Nine Year Curriculum are based upon these four national principles of Botswana. These aims are stated in terms of what students should be able to do after nine years of basic education. On completion of the nine year school program, students should:

- Be able to adapt to social, economic and technological change by adjusting acquired knowledge to new situations and by taking appropriate action.
- Have developed a sound moral code of behavior compatible with ethics and traditions of Botswana.
- Be able to observe and record accurately and draw reasoned conclusions.
- Understand English and use it appropriately, both as a medium of learning at school and as a vehicle of communication beyond school.
- Be able to assess their own achievements and capabilities in pursuit of appropriate employment and/or further education.
- Apply knowledge and imagination to identify problems in household management and everyday commercial transactions, and have mastery of scientific and mathematical concepts to resolve them.
- Be able to resolve them.
- Be able to run a home and care for a family.
- Acquire skills in food production and industrial arts for self-reliance, self-sufficiency and rural development.
- Effectively use commonly needed tools and instruments in activities connected with later studies and out-of-school occupations.
- Appreciate climatic and ecological conditions prevalent in Botswana.
- Know how to cook and prepare a meal.
- Realize the effects on Botswana's location in the African continent on political, economic and social life in Botswana.
- Appreciate Botswana's position within the African continent in terms of regional, political, and economic groupings and its bilateral relations with countries.
- Understand the structure of their government including its executive, legislative, and judicial branches.
- Describe and appreciate Botswana's environment, society, and development and their inter-relationships.
- Recognize the vital role that all aspects of culture have within Botswana and the problems that accompany cultural or societal change.
- Identify the main development issues facing Botswana and the most serious social problems facing Botswana, Africa, and the World.

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The national principle that Batswana children must be taught is the importance of unity: Unity embraces many important ideas such as loyalty, cooperation, a sense of national identity. It does not mean uniformity, but rather emphasis upon the common bonds and interests between Batswana of different regions, religion, political party, or economic circumstance. (National Commission on Education, 1977, p. 30) Loyalty, cooperation and a sense of identity lie at the heart of the social studies curriculum. Social studies should teach that all the people of Botswana are one with rights, duties and responsibilities; that the attitudes that bring about a firm commitment to the nation and protect the nation from divisive elements. Social studies for Botswana should emphasize the balance between unity and diversity. The richness of its people should not be sacrificed for uniformity or conformity. There is a need to strike a balance between unity and diversity.

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These aims and objectives are consistent with the national principles. Although all of the above aims are dealt with in social studies instruction in the last two years of the nine year programme, there are subject aims which pertain only to social studies instruction in the last two years of the nine year programme.

The aims and objectives which are meant for the entire nine years of basic education: literacy skills, problem-solving skills and manual dexterity. (National Commission on Education, 1977, p. 28). Since social studies teaches a people about their country, its resources and conditions, it can play a vital role in realizing this principle.

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analyze and use simple statistical information and maps
collect, organize, and evaluate data (Social Studies Revised Junior Secondary Syllabus, October 30, 1987, p. 3)

State of Social Studies Education
Social studies, an integrated, interdisciplinary field of study, was introduced in the primary schools in 1980 and the junior secondary schools in 1986. It is a new field of Botswana, especially to make education more practical and to make students better and more employable citizens. The teachers in Botswana are resistant to teaching social studies, as they lack the basic knowledge of what to teach and how to teach it. Because social studies is a new subject area, even those who have received teacher training have been trained mainly in either history or geography. These teachers are not clear about methods strategies and content of social studies, and therefore tend to teach that with which they feel comfortable. In addition, there has not been a clear statement of the purpose, objectives and methods of social studies for Botswana. All of these factors have left teachers and students with a negative view that may be hard to remove. The need to develop a clear idea of why, what and how social studies should be taught in Botswana is a vital element in developing and promoting Kagisano -- social harmony through the ideologies of development, self-reliance, and unity.

Social studies is an even newer field of teaching for the junior secondary teachers in Botswana. The syllabus for junior secondary social studies was only approved by the Social Studies Panel of the Botswana Department of Education in October 1987. The first group of teachers trained to teach social studies was conducted at the junior secondary level completed their programme at the Molepolole College of Education in December 1987. These new social studies teachers have few skills, little experience or support to assist them in their tasks. Currently there are two sets of published texts for teaching that are tied to the national junior secondary Social Studies Syllabus: Botswana Social Studies and Junior Secondary Social Studies.

Recommendations

A social studies program for the junior secondary school should be clearly articulated with that of the primary school. This will bring about a continuity of social studies learnings and experiences in the nine year program of education. This articulation is important so that students will be prepared to cover the material presented at the junior secondary level, and will not be repeating what they have already learned at the primary level.

Leadership is needed at all levels if the success of the social studies programme is to be realized. As it is a new program, and the teachers are unsure as to how to implement it, much direction and guidance needs to be given.

A program of inservice education will be necessary to help the teachers learn social studies strategies and content.

A need to be developed for the teachers and students to use. The most valuable material would be a students' text that would contain the information a teacher's guide to assist in teaching the knowledge, skills and attitudes of social studies is also needed. In addition, such things as charts, slides and other materials should be supplied to the schools. These things could be produced centrally.

Institutions must be congruent with the curriculum. The students should be tested on what they are taught. If the tests do not reflect the content of the syllabus, then the teachers will become frustrated and unsure of what to teach. Various methods of assessments should be used to measure all of the domains. These methods of assessment should go beyond paper and pencil tests and should be conducted on an continuous basis.

A thesis must be put on testing, and more on the practical aspects of learning. The traditional over-emphasis on testing for selection purposes has left students with a negative view of social studies. The new social studies teachers have few skills, little experience or support to assist them in their tasks. This also requires a change in the teaching methods. Such things as problem-solving, inquiry and other methods that develop critical thinking must be used in the classrooms.

Social studies activities should be geared towards the betterment of the human condition. Students should be given the opportunity to apply their knowledge and behaviors in practical situations to achieve this goal.

Social studies activities in Botswana need to be well-coordinated on the national level, so that the development of the programme progresses in a systematic and coordinated way. The roles and responsibilities for the various aspects of the social studies programme need to be clarified and coordinated.

A urgent need for trained personnel on all levels to further develop and implement the social studies programme. The teachers and other personnel with social studies need more training to enable them to effectively carry out their duties. The teacher training institutions can play a major role...
these needs.

**Lessons from Other Nations**

Knowledge, content, and approach of social studies differs depending on the needs and conditions of the society it serves. For example, social studies was developed in the United States as the development of social problem-solving abilities at one time, as knowledge for effective citizenship during a different time, and as adapted social sciences for the schools at yet another time. Each of these views was a reaction to different circumstances in the United States. Social studies was introduced after World War II into the schools of West Germany as a means of developing a new order and introducing the schools of Japan to democratic societies. In Africa and other developing countries, social studies has been included in school curricula as a tool for nation-building. Sierra Leone introduced social studies to improve their self-image after colonial rule and Ghana included it as a way of improving the economy. Social studies was to transform their political culture and Nigeria's purpose was to inculcate nationalism among its diverse peoples. Thailand introduced social studies to foster individual and national development.

**Tates**

Implementation of social studies in the United States has some parallels that may help in better understanding how the recent introduction of social studies may be facilitated. In 1916, the National Education Organization, an influential professional organization in the United States at that time, brought together a group of educators to study the curriculum and make recommendations. This group decided that the purpose of American schooling was to develop citizens. They recommended that less emphasis should be placed on memorizing factual information and more on preparing people for the future work world. On required that attitudes and skills be taught along with knowledge. Social studies was considered an integrated curriculum combining the three subjects of history and geography with the newer social sciences of political science, economics, sociology, and anthropology. At first, it was taught as just a combination of history, geography, and the social sciences of political science or civics, but later the other social sciences were included, and continue to be a part of the curriculum. The first introduction of social studies as a formal school course in the United States in the early part of this century until today, confusion and disagreement regarding what social studies is and what it should be. As social studies is intended to fulfill the present and future needs of society, that society's needs must be taught to its younger generations. As Botswana is still in the beginning process of developing and teaching social studies, it can look to countries such as the United States, which have gone through the process before.

**Nations**

Botswana can look to other African nations involved in similar processes. The following definitions of social studies by those involved in recent social studies programs for African nations provide a framework for developing a conceptualization of social studies for Botswana: Social studies is a programme of education which utilizes the study of human life for the purpose of giving children the opportunity to practice solving the problems of crucial importance, both for the individual and society. It is based on those common learnings of man's interactions with his social and physical environments. (DuBey, 1986, p. 3)

The African Social Studies Programme (ASSP), an intergovernmental organization of seventeen African nations that stimulates, promotes, and monitors the curriculum, states that social studies is to enable the students to: a) understand man's interaction with his cultural, social and physical environment in his home and heritage; c) develop the skills and attitudes expected of citizens; and d) express their ideas in a variety of media (Dondo, Krystall & others).

P (Merryfield, 1988) stresses: a) the study of the local and immediate before the study of the foreign and remote; b) the skills and attitudes which through teaching social studies are those required by citizens in a free society and can only be developed through participating in experiences where; and c) that students need stimulation from a variety of media and the ability to express themselves through these media.

The Department of Curriculum Development and Evaluation of Botswana has agreed on the following definition of social studies:

dy of man; the way he behaves and, organizes in groups; his relationship with his physical and social environment and his interaction with them in the past, present and the emerging future. (Department of Curriculum Development and Evaluation, undated)
Social studies is intended to fulfill the present and future needs of a society. Botswana is in the beginning process of determining what its programme of social studies should be. It is important that much thought and consultation go into the developing of the curriculum, but it must be remembered that social studies should remain a dynamic and organic subject, constantly changing and growing with the society it serves. A balance must be found between preparing the best possible curriculum, which is a long-term and on-going process, and actually getting a curriculum in place.

Social studies has only recently been introduced into the schools of Botswana, we should realize that its content has been taught informally in the groups of Botswana that is related to the content of social studies. This information can form the basis of what needs to be taught in the school formation will be adopted, some adapted and some discarded, and replaced with new knowledge and understandings.

Everything that is traditional is not necessarily good. Most traditions have a beneficial influence at one time or else they would not have continued to exist, the beneficial influence may have been limited to a certain group of people at the expense of another group, or the benefit may have been in time, place and condition. There are groups of people in Africa who look down upon and unfairly discriminate against other groups of people there are ethnic groups that teach ideas that are neither beneficial for their own welfare, nor for the welfare of the whole. These practices are based on beliefs and prejudices, but are no longer supportable or acceptable in today's world. As long as these ideas are allowed to continue, unexamined, progress and development will be hampered. Social studies can assist the students to examine and evaluate the practices and policies with which they live and help them achieve a position to change those that are not functional.

We only have to look at history to see the evidence of what has happened to societies and civilizations of the past that failed to adapt to changing conditions. The customs and traditions of the Batswana have changed with the times. These changes might be compared to the growth and development of a person. When a child is an infant it needs milk to grow and develop, but as it grows older it must be weaned from the milk and given solid foods. In the same way, some customs and traditions that were vital for growth at earlier stages in development, may actually impede progress today.

Social studies in Botswana can find a blending and balance between unity and diversity. The rich diversity of its people should not sacrificed for uniformity. But there is a need to develop a sense of unity and identity that goes beyond one's immediate family and community to the nation and the world.

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of Education (Undated). Aims and objectives of the Nine Year Curriculum.


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