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ABSTRACT

The writings of 33 authors in either curriculum theory or social studies are analyzed to determine whether each author supports structure-discovery views, reflective-inquiry views, or expresses views that tend to reflect both positions or neither position regarding the new approaches to teaching social studies. The structure-discovery method is designed to teach substantive concepts and procedures from the knowledge structure of a specific discipline. Students, through problem solving, hypothesis testing, or some other involvement, determine the concepts or generalizations for themselves. The reflective-inquiry method is designed to develop each student's ability to make decisions about personal and societal problems. The "content" to be studied is not predetermined but is comprised of data needed to investigate the problem and make decisions about it. Reflective-inquiry emphasizes student values analysis, reflection, and classification in order to make a decision on a specific societal problem. Thirteen writers in the sample favor the structure-discovery approach; twelve favor the reflective-inquiry approach; while eight are inconsistent between the two approaches. Although some of the authors' views may have changed since completion of the study in 1971 and more materials have been recently written, the descriptions of positions can help teachers to conceptualize social studies teaching alternatives. (Author/DE)

THE "NEW SOCIAL STUDIES" IS PLURAL

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Since colonial days, the teaching of subjects which have become known as social studies has been designed to achieve two purposes:

A) the transmission of selected facts regarding the history, geography, and political organization of the United States and some other cultures, and
B) the inculcation of certain attitudes and values.

Summing up both purposes, social studies was designed to develop "good citizenship". However, as Dale Brubaker noted regarding the term "citizenship", ". . . no word with the possible exception of 'sin' has been talked about more but precisely defined less."[1] Many times teachers in rooms next door to each other are trying to inculcate widely divergent values: one may be teaching that America has always been fair and just in its dealing with all people and the other is stressing the plight of the American Indians; one may be teaching "imperialism" using the takeover of Eastern Europe by the Russians as an example and the other is using the United States' conquests in the Mexican and Spanish-American Wars to teach the same concept. However, all are developing attitudes about our country.

Some of the basic assumptions that underlie this traditional approach are:

A) Each generation can accurately predict the future needs of its children and thus can select the appropriate content, values, and attitudes to be taught.

B) Students are not capable of self-direction in determining the content they want to learn or the manner in which they can best learn it; thus, the teacher must control the plans and make all the selections.

C) Students are far more alike than they are different; therefore, they must be moved along at the same pace, through the same lessons, doing the same assignments, which cover the same content.

D) The textbook is the proper basis for study, supported by the teacher's knowledge and occasional outside sources such as films and guest speakers. Thus the curriculum is controlled by the textwriters and publishers who often produce bland texts designed to offend no one (and consequently they excite no one).

The Reformer's Tradition

This traditional approach has been attacked since the turn of the century. John Dewey's book, How We Think began his notoriety as an educational critic. This was soon followed by the 1913 repoft by the NEA's Committee on Social Studies of the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education. Some of their recommendations could still be made today; for example:

A) More attention should be paid to the present needs of students. "The best question that can be asked in class is the question that the pupil himself asks because he wants to know, and not the question the teacher asks because he thinks the pupil sometime in the future ought to know."[2]

B) Students should be given the opportunity to express their convictions by word and deed.[3]

C) Students should be trained to weigh facts and judge relative values both in regard to the nature of the problem and the best way to solve it.[4]

D) It is important to teach students how to test and organize their knowledge.[5]

E) Historical topics or problems should be taught "unhampered by chronological and geographical limitations."[6]

F) Selection of historical topics and materials should be based on the pupil's own immediate interests and on current problems.[7]

Later in the 1930's, Ernest Horn was a major critic of the traditional approach to teaching social studies. Horn advocated processes of "inquiry" and 'discovery" and clearly stated the rationale for these processes.

> Scholarship is not merely an accumulation of knowledge, no matter how fundamental and well ordered this knowledge may be; it is also a point of view and a method of attack.[8]

Horn also advocated concept development, the use of primary and secondary sources, utilization of multi-media materials, the study of controversial issues, and learing activities. But Horn, as Dewey, was ahead of his time.

Change At Last

Finally, with the flight of Sputnik the public was ready for some changes. In many cases, these changes had been advocated for many years. Through much effort and money the "new social studies" burst onto the scene. While the new social studies (which is no longer so new) was a conglomeration of many approaches, it was seen as a position in opposition to the traditional approach. Many educators have dichotomized teaching approaches in the social studies into two catagories--the traditional transmission position, which utilizes expository teaching on the one hand; and the "new social studies," which utilizes inquiry of discovery on the other hand.[9] In this view, the terms "inquiry" and "discovery" are considered to be synonyms. Either term designates the method of the new social studies which involves: active learning on the part of students, teaching students the process of learning rather than requiring them to merely memorize content, the use of hypotheses to explore data and to subsequently draw conclusions, and the utilization of concepts and generalizations rather than facts as the focus of study.

While on the surface there seem to be many commonalities among advocates of the new social studies, several social studies educators have noted that there are at least two major groups or schools of thought among advocates of the new approaches. Shirley Engle[10], William Gardner[11], and James Shaver[12], have described differences among new social studies advocates in articles they have written. Jan Tucker[13], Robert Ribble[14], and Warren Brown[15] have discerned different groups among new social studies advocates and described them in their Ph.D. dissertations. Finally, James Barth and Samuel Shermis wrote an often cited article on this topic, which appeared in the November 1970 issue of Social Education.[16] Their model has been discussed in an earlier paper in this series by Mary Jean Lantz and is probably the clearest single published attempt to clarify positions within the new social studies. Each of the authors just mentioned perceive two schools of thought in the new social studies. Based on their descriptions, this author hypothesized two approaches or positions which were explored to determine their reality in terms of the written statements of noted educators. This study was undertaken in 1970 - 1971. The purpose of the study was to determine if there were two separate sets of ideas regarding the new approaches to teaching social studies.[17]

Descriptions of Two Positions Within the New Social Studies

Structure-Discovery: Advocates of this position believe that each social science discipline has a structure of knowledge. This structure of knowledge consists of the most basic concepts, generalizations, and methods of investigation in the discipline. The structure(s) then should

be the basis of the curriculum. The goals of this approach are for students to A) develop an understanding of the substantive concepts and generalizations and B) to learn some methods of investigation that can be transferred into life situations. In order for students to really understand the structure, they must come to know the structure through their own efforts--they should discover elements of the structure for themselves. Hence, the instructional program for such an approach relies heavily on learning activities which are designed to lead the student to make predetermined discoveries.

The teacher's role in this approach is not one of transmitting knowledge, but one of helping students develop the skills and abilities to perform tasks such as collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing evidence in such a way that they uncover the basic ideas of the disciplinee.

Following the value-free, objective approach which is the professed norm of social scientists, the structure-discovery approach does not seek to teach values. In fact, the only study of values might be that of encouraging students to analyse the values of some society under investigation. However, even the decision of the scientist to attempt to keep his personal values from infringing on his scientific conclusions is in itself a value choice. In addition, such values as rationality and the value of data over suspicion and superstition are taught through this approach. Yet, curricula strictly following this model would not deal with controversial issues (which are value-laden) nor would it try to teach any particular societal values.

Reflective Inquiry: Advocates of this point of view believe that the main purpose of social studies should be to develop students' ability to make decisions about social and personal problems. This implies the ability to A) identify problems, B) apply a process of rational investigation to problems, C) make decisions, and D) evaluate these decisions. Therefore in this approach, instruction begind with the perception of a problem by an individual student, a group of students, or a whole class. The "content" to be studied is not pre-determined but is the data needed to investigate the problem and make decisions about it. Nor is the content limited to one discipline; it is only limited by the nature and scope of the problem and by the material and mental limitations and experimental backgrounds of the students. Content (historical, geographical, political, sociological, or whatever) is important to the degree to which it is useful in understanding the problem and in aiding decision-making. Content, in a reflective inquiry class, is learned within the context of the problem, not becaude it fits the logic of some textbook writer.

As students investigate any social or personal problem and begin considering the alternatives, they will find that no one solution has only positive consequences and no negative ones. (If such occurred there would be no problem, the solution would be obvious.) As students attempt to reach decisions, values come very much into play. But values are not

entities that the teacher tries to inculcate, nor are they to be avoided by students. Rather, values are very real considerations in making decisions. In many cases, honest intelligent persons of good will can agree on the facts but disagree on the conclusion, because they have different values which means there are different sets of consequences they are willing to accept. Reflective inquiry advocates want students to identify their values, to reflect on their values, to learn about others' values, and to consider values (theirs and others') when making decisions.

The teacher's role is to provoke, facilitate, and support. To help students identify problems; to help them find, analyze, and synthesize data (both cognitive and affective); and to reach and defend their decisions. If they don't something is wrong. The teacher must not judge the student on the decision he makes but on how he makes the decision.

Based on these positions (which were quite hypothetical at the time), criteria were developed to differentiate between the structure-discovery and the reflective inquiry positions regarding seven categories of concern:

A) What is the major goal of social studies?

B) What knowledge is of most worth?

C) What are the conceptions of process and content?

D) What is the role of history and the social science disciplines in social studies?

E) Does the study of values belong in social studies?

F) What is the teacher's role?

G) What is the student's role?

If these positions existed in reality, then it would have to be found that individuals do state beliefs consistent with one or the other of the positions and that some individuals support one set of beliefs and other individuals support the other set. The writings of thirty-three authors in either curriculum theory and social studies were studied closely in relation to the seven categories mentioned above to determine whether each author supported the structure-discovery views, reflective inquiry views; expressed views that tended to reflect both positions or neither position, or did not express any view at all regarding the category.

Basically, the standard for determining whether these hypothetical positions existed in reality or not was:

If 3/4 or more of the individual views could be classified as supporting either of the two positions and if at least 1/4 of the views can be classified as being congruent with each position, then it can be said that the positions reflect the real world views of the individuals studied.

In other words, the positions had to be congruent with 3/4 of the total views studied for each category and each position had to be supported by at least 1/4 of the individuals. Both of these conditions were found to hold for every one of the seven categories. Thus, on each of the questions studied (categories) there are varying viewpoints which are congruent with the predictions based on the positions.

However, this in itself did not mean that the positions as entities existed, since an individual could have stated views categorized as structure-discovery in three cases and those categorized as reflective inquiry in four cases. If such an individual was typical, there may indeed be differences regarding the categories, but not in such a fashion as to justify the conclusion that there are clearly two schools of thought.

Therefore, each individual's views were studied to determine whether he was consistently categorized as supporting one point of view as opposed to the other. Of the thirty-three, fourteen were considered to support one position in all seven categories, another six were considered to support one of the positions in six of the categories and were unclassifiable in the seventh, and another five supported one position in a majority of categories and were unclassifiable in the others. Thus, 75% of those studied consistently supported the views of one position as opposed to the other. Those who are labeled "inconsistent" are labeled as such only in relation to the specific positions included in this study. It is quite likely that each of these individuals has a consistent rationale for his beliefs, but that rationale is not compatible with the positions considered in this study. (See Table I.)

Table I
Consistency Among the Individual Viewpoints

Consistent in Six or Seven Categories		Consistent in Majority	Inconsistent
Ernest Bayles	Meno Lovenstein	Arno Bellack	Jack Allen
Jerome Bruner	William Lowe	Harold Berlak	Robert Cleary
Benjamin Cox	Robert McNee	Irving Morrissett	Edwin Fenton
Shirley Engle	Byron Massialas	Joseph Schwab	Howard Kendler
Authur Foshay	Lawrence Metcalf	Gresham Sykes	Dana Kurfman
Robert Gagne	Fred Newmann		Franklin Patterson
Bernice Goldmark	Donald Oliver		Richard Suchman
Richard Gross	Philip Phenix		Hilda Taba
Robert Hanvey	Lawrence Senesh		
Maurice Hunt	James Shaver		

Table II
Grouping of Individuals by Positions

Structure-Discovery	Reflective Inquiry	Inconsistent
Arno Bellack	Ernest Bayles	Jack Allen
Jerome Bruner	Harold Berlak	Robert Cleary
Authur Foshay	Benjamin Cox	Edwin Fenton
Robert Gagne	Shirley Engle	Howard Kendler
Robert Hanvey	Bernice Goldmark	Dana Kurfman
Meno Lovenstein	Richard Gross	Franklin Patterson
William Lowe	Maurice Hunt	Richard Suchman
Robert McNee	Byron Massialas	Hilda Taba
Irving Morrissett	Lawrence Metcalf	
Philip Phenix	Fred Newmann	
Joseph Schwab	Donald Oliver	
Lawrence Senesh	James Shaver	
Gresham Sykes		

Conclusions

As noted earlier, this study was completed in 1971. Some of those whose views were included may have modified some of their positions by now. Also, a good deal more has been written in the past few years regarding social studies curriculum. Yet, the descriptions of the positions still seem valid and they are useful in helping teachers conceptualize the alternatives available to them. Such questions as the following are useful to help both pre-service and in-service teachers develop and assess their own beliefs.

Which position should I use as a basis of my teaching?

When is it desirable to use the other position as a basis for my teaching?

Are the positions in opposition, or are they complementary?

Which approach is best for given types of students?

Another conclusion is that "inquiry" and "discovery" are not synonyms. In fact, there are differences between the instructional process of the structure-discovery advocates and the process of the reflective inquiry advocates. While discovery and inquiry are both process oriented, utilize active student involvement, and usually include some form of problem-solving, there are differences. Below are descriptions of the two processes which make sense to this writer. Perhaps they can serve a useful purpose as a focus for some scholastic debate about process education in social studies.

Discovery: a method of instruction designed to teach substantive concepts and generalizations, and procedural concepts from a structure of knowledge; either formal (created by social scientists) or informal (created by the teacher) ; in which the student, through problem-solving, hypothesis testing, or some other involvement, figures out the concept or generalization for him or herself. Discovery is a convergent process designed to help students focus on the essential elements of the structure of knowledge. Discovery learning has a specific goal (an element of the structure) which guides the teacher's planning and aids his or her evaluation of the students. Since discovery requires active student involvement it develops intellectual skills as well as teaching cognitive knowledge. Thus, a secondary goal is to develop process skills (borrowed from social scientists) which will enable the student to transfer his abilities to make discoveries into the real world.

Inquiry: a method of instruction designed to develop each student's ability to make decisions about personal and societal problems. Thus, the focus in this process is an intriguing problem which becomes the center of study, rather than pre-set content. Inquiry is an open-ended divergent process which does not require student's to reach preconceived ends. Cognitive content is learned as it applies to the problem being studied. However, the emphasis is more on having students develop skills and to identify and act upon their values. There is no set pattern that must be followed. However, a variation of the "scientific method" is probably useful with some modifications.

Scientific Method	Inquiry
1. Perception of the problem	1. Perception of the problem
2. Stating the problem and organizing presently known data	2. Stating the problem
3. Hypothesizing	3. Identifying the values in conflict
4. Data gathering and analysis	4. Stating the alternatives
5. Drawing conclusions	5. Collecting evidence regarding the alternatives
	6. Projecting the consequences of each alternative
	7. Making and justifying a decision
	8. Acting on the decision (if possible)
	9. Evaluating the decision

The Positions and Humanistic Education

Regarding traditional education, Weinstein and Fantini have said,

> To summarize, then, our present educational system gives highest priority to the cognitive content and regards other content areas merely as instruments for getting to prescribed cognitive content. The prevailing assumption is that by mastering cognitive content, the individual learns to behave appropriately as a citizen in an open society. We question the validity of this assumption that extrinsic subject matter alone can lead to humanitarian behavior--that is, whether the cognitive man is necessarily the humanitarian man.[18]

Clearly they feel that traditional education has not been humanistic education. The directors of the Humanistic Education Project of the University of North Carolina--Greensboro, feel that same way and have stated as the goal of their project,"...the exploration of different ways in which affective and psychomotor dimensions of teaching and learning can be given greater play while at the same time being wedded to the cognitive dimension of teaching."[19]

Both the structure-discovery and the reflective inquiry positions involve greater degrees of psychomotor involvement by students and to this extent are more humanistic. However, the reflective inquiry approach, with its emphasis on value identification, value clarification, and decision making seems to offer the most in terms of humanistic education, for after all it is man's ability to value and to make decisions that makes him human.

FOOTNOTES

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3. Ibid., p. 24.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., p. 36.

7. Ibid., p. 37.

8. Ernest Horn, Methods of Instruction in Social Studies: Report of the Commission on the Social Studies, Part XV, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), p. 22.

9. Edwin Fenton, The New Social Studies, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967). pp. 28-34; Fred A. Johnson, "Methods and Techniques of Instruction," in Social Studies in the Secondary Schools, ed. by William E. Gardner and Fred A Johnson, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1970), pp. 184-185; Jerome Bruner, "The Act of Discovery," Harvard Educational Review XXXI, Winter, 1961), p. 219; John Jarolimek and Huber M. Walsh, eds., Readings for Social Studies in Elementary Education, 2nd. ed., (New York: Macmillan, 1969), pp. 184-185; and Joe L. Frost and G. Thomas Rowland, Curricula for the Seventies, (New York: Houghton-Mifflin, 1969), p. 161.

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17. Terry E. Northup, "Structure-Discovery and Reflective Inquiry: An Exploration of Two Positions in Social Studies," (unpublished Ph. D. thesis, Purdue University, 1971).

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19. Dale Brubaker and James Macdonald, Co-Directors, "Summary of Progress of UNC-G Humanistic Education Project," (April 25, 1973), p. 1.