

The “New” Social Studies and Teacher Education*

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“Unless we know where we are going, there is not much comfort in being assured that we are on our way and travelling fast. The result is likely to be but seeming.”¹ These words of warning, uttered nearly fifty years ago by Boyd Bode in the midst of the great educational revolution in which he took part, seem to me to be equally appropriate for all of us who are involved in the second great educational revolution of the twentieth century. In particular, when I work through the literature of the “new” social studies, it sometimes seems to me that we are just “travelling fast” and have no idea where we are going.

But perchance I exaggerate. It is an old and well proven rhetorical device for a writer to paint an overly dark and sombre portrait of the chaos he perceives in an effort to enhance the brightness and clarity of the pattern which he proposes to call forth from the void. I shall try to steer clear of both extremes. And, indeed, perhaps a measure of chaos is a positive good — at least it precludes our stating a conventional wisdom in social studies education which, after we promulgate it from on high, will be forever entombed in curriculum guides and textbooks for all to follow.

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By now I have indicated a measure of the ambivalence which I feel about the "new" social studies — or, better, the *many* "new" social studies — an ambivalence which will, I hope, prevent this paper becoming too doctrinaire in its point-of-view. Much as I would like, for my own peace of mind more than anything else, to write "this is the new social studies and here is how you teach its content and processes to student teachers," I fear that there is as yet no such answer or, if there is, I have yet to stumble upon it.

First, then, what are the new social studies? A brief historical digression will, I believe, help us in our search for answers to this question. In the 1950's in both Canada and the United States it became increasingly obvious that the various versions of the social studies produced during the second phase of the Progressive era in education were failing to achieve their lofty goals. They were severely attacked. Out of the heated debate which took place on the social studies there emerged three possible courses of action for those desiring change. There was, first of all, the "great leap backward" which meant, in effect, abandoning altogether the social aims of social studies education and, in their stead, teaching separate academic disciplines (usually history and geography) in a manner guaranteed to have the pupils master the basic facts and concepts of these subjects.² The second choice was to retain at least some of the social aims of social studies education but to graft them on to new methods of teaching separate academic disciplines.³ The third choice was to continue with the integrated disciplines approach which underlay the traditional social studies while making a great effort to improve their effectiveness.⁴ By and large, most Canadian curriculum makers and teachers took the second of these choices, while their American counterparts followed the third. The work done by those who took either of the latter two choices was greatly influenced by the concept of "structure," which was first clearly articulated, in 1960, in Jerome Bruner's *The Process of Education*.

In his recent book, *The New Social Studies*, Edwin Fenton provides us with a reasonably clear and systematic account of work which he sees as going on in five broad areas of this domain. First, there are the groups of teachers and psychologists who are trying "to state objectives of instruction in terms of specific mental and physical acts expected from students and to develop tests to deter-

mine when these objectives have been attained."⁵ Second, there are those who are working to develop new teaching strategies by which the objectives can be achieved. Third, there are the many organizations which are producing new teaching materials across the whole range of the social sciences. Fourth, there are those who are experimenting with various and hopefully more efficient groupings of pupils for teaching purposes. Finally, a smaller group has been trying to improve the preparation of new teachers and to upgrade the talents of those already on the job. While our central concern in this paper is in the last of these areas, we will be unable to comprehend the vastness of our task of improving the education of social studies teachers, unless we consider briefly some of the major developments in each of the first four fields of activity.

Teaching Objectives

Long lists of objectives have always appeared at the beginning of curricular guides and they seemed to me, when I was a beginning teacher, to have been specifically and cunningly designed to make me feel completely inadequate no matter how hard I worked. To reduce my anguish, I stopped reading them. Nevertheless, I do not believe that I was then the only teacher in Canada to take such an irreverent step. Now, however, we are attempting to translate these piously hopeful catalogues into behavioral terms so that teachers and school systems may not only know much more precisely *what* they should be doing, but they can also measure with some degree of accuracy whether or not they arrive at their stated destinations.

Let us take from the new forms an example from each of the clusters into which we have traditionally divided our teaching objectives:

Knowledge of Selected Content

The pupil can recall in two minutes the names of the ten Canadian provinces and their capital cities.

Inquiry Skills

In order to extract the geographical relationships expressed in a previously unseen photograph, the pupil can recall and apply the analytical procedures used by him and his class on other photographs.

Attitudes and Values

In a discussion of the present problems in the relationships between French-speaking and English-speaking Canadians, the student defends his opinion with relevant factual and conceptual information rather than with appeals to prejudice or authority.

One can obtain an insight into the tremendously complex nature of this process by examining the exciting work done by my colleague Dr. Gerald Walsh in producing a detailed application of Bloom's cognitive taxonomy to the discipline of history.⁶

Between the statement of aims in behavioral terms and the process of measuring whether or not the aims have been achieved lies the realm of teaching strategies. Or, as Fenton puts it, "much of what children learn stems from *how* they are taught as well as what they are taught."⁷ Since we have found that the traditional teaching strategies of recitation, teacher presentation, and the so-called "problems" approach are not adequate vehicles for achieving our behaviorally stated aims, we have been forced to develop new teaching strategies. Discovery exercises (such as Senesh's one for primary grades on making gingerbread men in order to teach the economic concept of the division of labour) are but one example of the many developments taking place in this field.⁸ In my view, the recent efforts to use techniques of social psychology, such as role playing and group dynamics, to teach the attitudes and values traditionally included amongst the social aims of education are potentially the most exciting practical changes taking place in this particular segment of the new social studies.⁹ In addition, however, the work of some philosophers of education in what they describe as the "natural history . . . of the behavior of teachers as it occurs under classroom conditions" may in the long run produce a whole range of new teaching strategies.¹⁰

New Teaching Materials

It is in the third area of change, that of the new teaching materials, where one can see not only the greatest volume of activity in the new social studies, but also the greatest amount of diversity. The central theme is "confusion." In 1965, Fenton and Good reported that there were "more than 40 curricular development projects of national significance" underway in the United States alone¹¹ and, by October, 1967, the number had increased to more than 70.¹²

The major "Project Social Studies" programs, financed by United States federal government funds, are probably the best known of these engines of curricular change, but others involve a great variety of organizations, foundations and curriculum centres. Their products range from the multitude being designed by Educational Development Centre, Inc. (EDC), "the General Motors of Curricular Reform,"¹³ to the six unit outlines fashioned by the Naperville, Illinois, Public Schools.¹⁴ Although such work is also underway in many areas of Canada, I am sure that our projects are probably much less extensive than the American ones both in scope and in financing.¹⁵ The lack of a national publication for the social studies in Canada means not only that there is little exchange of information amongst those working in curriculum change but also that there may be some wastage, through needless duplication of effort, of the slim funds available for this work.

The objectives of these curricular projects are as varied as their sponsorship and structure. Some propose to produce materials for a single course in a single discipline, others are preparing units which can be included in courses presently offered in the schools, and yet others are developing entirely new curricula and materials for elementary schools, for secondary schools, or for the whole range of the school system. In the next year or two, the small trickle of materials produced so far by these projects will turn into a flood. From the larger ventures, we will receive coordinated "packages" made up of detailed teacher guides, kits of materials and graded texts of various kinds for the pupils, and a whole range of closely coordinated records, films, film strips, single concept film loops, slide tapes, picture sets, and programmed learning materials. Lawrence Senesh's economics program for primary grades is but a prototype of the inundation to come.¹⁶

While team teaching and individualized instruction are probably the best known of the new schemes to improve or vary instructional procedures, they are by no means the only developments along these lines which have had, or will have, an effect on teaching social studies. Examinations are underway on school size, on the deployment of teachers — should we, for example, allow elementary teachers to specialize in subject teaching, even in the primary grades? — and on the more effective use of school libraries in social studies and other teaching.¹⁷ I can see the raw material for a potentially explosive debate in plans, which are just beginning to take shape, for

grouping pupils in social studies as we have done for so long in reading and in arithmetic. Is grouping in social studies consistent with our aims of developing democratic ideals and giving practice in democratic citizenship? If we do group, do we divide our pupils on the basis of their grasp of knowledge in the disciplines, on their measured ability to use various modes of inquiry, or on the level of their progress in internalizing certain required attitudes and values? Will we have, for example, special remedial classes for those whose moral and ethical systems do not measure up to a standard set by teacher, school, or community? On the other hand, if we consider these as bizarre questions, then are we not also admitting that we are not really serious in all of our palaver about attitudes and values?

"Teacher-Proof" Kits or Quality Teachers?

From this brief and superficial survey of the present ferment in the social studies, it is now more than time that we turn to our central question: what effects will, or should, all of this bustle have on teacher education? When we compare what the new social studies will demand of elementary and secondary school teachers with what they are now doing, we should not be surprised to find that some pessimists judge that our only hope for the future lies in the widespread use of "teacher-proof" devices. And, indeed, it is clear that some at least of the new programs being prepared have this concept as an implicit part of their structure. If this saturnine assessment is correct, the major implication for teacher education of the new social studies is an extremely simple one: we will give prospective teachers plenty of practice in using their "teacher-proof" kits. We will evaluate them, I suppose, on how slavishly and enthusiastically they follow the stated procedures in the teaching manuals in almost the same way that I at one time tested army recruits on their competency in stripping and reassembling a bren gun. I firmly believe, however, that if this pattern is to be the shape of schooling in the future then our great educational revolution is over before it begins. No man or woman with the qualities of mind and character which we need to help in fashioning the minds and characters of our children would choose to follow the mindless profession which a whole range of "teacher-proof" goods in all subjects would make of teaching.

If we must therefore reject this simple (and simple-minded) solution to our problems, then what proficiencies must be the harvest of our teacher education programs? In my view, fully-trained teachers of the new social studies would have to possess the following:

1. Appropriate knowledge of the content of the academic disciplines which they will be called upon to teach either separately or as part of a unified program. Most lists of these disciplines usually include history, geography, economics, political science and anthropology.
2. Knowledge of the structures (which includes the methodologies) of these disciplines.
3. Knowledge of, and practice in, the various strategies of teaching, together with the implicit assumption that they understand and can apply the philosophical and psychological principles on which these strategies are based.
4. Skills in the practice of role playing and group dynamics techniques in a social studies context, with again the implicit assumption that they understand and can apply the psychological and sociological principles on which these skills are based.
5. An awareness of the already great and rapidly increasing range of teaching materials available, together with practice in their use.
6. The ability to evaluate and select from all of the programs and materials available those which are appropriate to their particular pupils. Implicit in this competency is the eventual ability to work with their colleagues in the preparation of new programs and materials.

Policies for Teacher Preparation

Now the appropriate question to ask at this point is, of course, what kind of teacher education program will produce Social Studies teachers with this awesomely full range of competencies? The answer is both simple and obvious — none! So far as I can tell, no teacher education program anywhere comes near to doing so, nor can I conceive of one that will. If we choose to do so, however, we can proceed at least part way towards this impossible goal by making three crucial policy decisions, two of which apply specifically to the elementary school and the other to all levels of teaching.

1. In the training of elementary teachers particularly we can, and we must, encourage a much greater degree of specialization than we presently allow. Taking this step means, of course, that we are committing ourselves to a policy of specialist teaching in the elementary school on a far larger scale than is presently the practice in Canada today. The alternative to this approach seems to me to be the use, by generalist elementary teachers, of "teacher-proof" packages.
2. We must extend the education of elementary teachers to a minimum of four years. It is particularly encouraging to note that an increasing number of prospective elementary school teachers have come to this decision for themselves without waiting for university or provincial rulings making such longer training compulsory.¹⁸
3. Since there is not time to teach, even in full elementary or secondary degree programs, the appropriate content and structures of all the social studies disciplines which I listed previously, we must therefore select, or let prospective teachers select, from the range of disciplines included in the new social studies. If we let prospective social studies teachers specialize in their choice or choices of one or two of these disciplines, then it follows that we must also let them choose the programs they are going to teach to their classes. The net effect of taking these two decisions, however, will be to reduce drastically the overall consistency of a total social studies program from grade to grade within a school, and from school to school within a district, a province or the nation as a whole. Nevertheless, the disadvantages apparent in this lack of consistency might well be outweighed by the quality of the teaching done by teachers who are free to work in the area of their deepest interest and ability.

Alternatively, school districts or provinces could decide to restrict the social studies program to two or at most three disciplines, and teacher education institutions could then confine their programs to these disciplines. Since carefully and imaginatively planned courses in those superbly unifying disciplines of history and geography provide ample scope for the inclusion of insights, concepts and materials from the other social sciences, my own bias is to

select this approach, and argue for sound preparation in these subjects. In history, for example, there is an encouraging trend, in both universities and the schools, away from political history and towards the new analytic kind of social history which involves the use of both concepts and data taken from sociology and social psychology.

If we make appropriate decisions in these spheres of general educational policy, we will make it possible for our institutions of teacher education to face squarely the questions which they *must* answer if they are to furnish their students with the learning which the new social studies will claim from them. Since the present state of knowledge in this realm is just not sufficiently clear, or settled, or sound enough for me to make definite statements implying a choice from a span of options, I have deliberately framed my thoughts on this subject in the form of clusters of questions.

1. What is the best way to provide our students with the basic knowledge in the disciplines they are going to teach? Will we teach them special content courses or will we let them select from the cafeteria of courses offered in the appropriate academic departments? Will we let them major in one or two of these disciplines, or will we structure "social studies" majors combining courses from two or more of the social sciences? For elementary school teachers, in particular, we must realize that, however we answer these questions, the amount of training time which must be involved is about the same as that now taken by secondary social studies teachers to prepare themselves for their specialty in secondary schools. In all likelihood it requires, for example, a more profound knowledge of Canadian history to make a selection of appropriate content and materials for teaching purposes from this field for elementary than for secondary pupils.
2. If we agree that a knowledge of the structure and methodology of a discipline is as essential for a teacher as is a knowledge of the facts and concepts of that discipline, then how will we teach them? Will we ask the appropriate academic departments to set up special courses in structure for our students? Will we require our students to take a course or two in the logic of the social sciences? Will we try to teach content and structure simultaneously

or teach the latter as a culminating course? Is it possible to include an analysis of structure and methodology within the context of a considerably extended version of our traditional methods courses?

3. How can we more effectively extend and integrate the psychological, sociological and philosophical backgrounds to the group processes and the strategies of teaching within our educational process? Should these be taught in the form of a sort of "super" general methods course? Should they be substituted for the more usual courses in educational philosophy, psychology and sociology? Should these areas be included within the content of the specific methods courses? Is there some sort of team approach — involving the philosopher, psychologist, sociologist and methodological expert — which might help the students to understand and develop their competence in the variety of teaching strategies?

In the context of these sets of questions, I should note that the history and geography program for which I expressed a preference earlier in this paper is not superficially very different from those which now prevail in the training of secondary school teachers in most parts of Canada. Since it is teachers whose education has been more or less along these lines who are in part at least responsible for the dismaying evidence on poor history teaching in Canada (and, by reasonable implication, poor geography teaching as well) which was cited by A. B. Hodgetts in his preliminary report on the National History Project,¹⁹ particular and special care must be given to these questions as they apply to the preparation of secondary school teachers. On the subject-child continuum, they tend, far more so than prospective elementary school teachers, to bunch themselves at the subject end of it and, *however* their program is rearranged, they will probably be much less susceptible than their elementary colleagues to those aspects of their education which go beyond the content of their chosen discipline or disciplines. How can we overcome this tendency?

4. How do we help students to select, evaluate and use the teaching packages? How do we prepare them so they can eventually prepare their own packets which combine the clusters of objectives, the strategies of teaching and evaluation of effectiveness? Can we do this work best by com-

bining it with the content courses? With the psychological and sociological courses? With the methods courses?

5. How can we integrate this elaborate theoretical edifice with meaningful practice teaching across the whole range of objectives, strategies and materials? How do we overcome the sway of those sponsoring teachers whose own objectives, strategies and materials all lie at the traditional end of the continuum?

Since there is as yet no really ample answer to any of these questions, we must experiment around the compass of them, and fashion many others for testing. We must carefully, and critically, observe varying practices wherever we can find them. We must more quickly and more efficiently share both our experiences and our conclusions.

Commitment to Continuous Education

Progressive education, that great reforming crusade of the earlier years of this century, ultimately failed, and in the sources of that failure we can find two lessons for all of us who are on our way in the new crusade. Let me put it this way. The Progressives were never able to bridge the gap between their goals and their practice; most teachers were just not able to cope with the impossible demands placed upon them. When one looks at the theoretical formulations of the new social studies, both in isolation and within the wider context of the present educational revolution, one wonders whether the gap of the first revolution will not quickly become the unbridgeable chasm of the second. While the general implications of this wider transformation of the schools are beyond the scope of this paper, I do want to make, as emphatically as I possibly can, one integrating observation. We must, both in the specific education for the new social studies and in the whole design of teacher education, build into our students, far better than we have ever done before, a firm commitment to their own continuous education and re-education. Our fledgling teachers are, and will increasingly continue to be, rapidly approaching obsolescence as soon as they graduate. If we and they do not have this concept indelibly fixed in the forefront of consciousness, then our great revolution will, and must inevitably, fail.

And, finally, this. In their search for the "whole" child many Progressive practitioners lost sight of the curriculum, ignoring al-

together the fact that, to be useful in the widest sense, knowledge, in *its* widest sense, needs form and order. In our efforts to introduce the new social studies, the new mathematics, the new language arts, the new science, and all of the other "new" subjects of the school curriculum, we may be in mortal danger of losing the living, loving, becoming person. It is for him, on his way towards his existential moments and beyond, that we are, hopefully and helpfully, building our elaborate curricular structure. "A boy," says Uncle Benjy, "can be two, three, four potential people, but a man is only one. He murders the others."²⁰ In our obsession with the stuff of teaching, we must not become the agents of premature deaths.

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2. Hilda Neatby's *So Little for the Mind* (1953) is the best Canadian example of this view, and Arthur Bestor's *The Restoration of Learning* the best American.
3. See, for example, George S. Tomkins, "Geography in the Elementary School," *Journal of Education* (U.B.C.), #6, December, 1961, pp. 87-94, and Neil Sutherland, "Structure in the History Curriculum," *Social Education*, v. 26, #3, March, 1962, pp. 133 - 136; 140.
4. Much of the "Project Social Studies" and other curricular reform efforts discussed later on in this paper proceeded from this basic premise.
5. Edwin Fenton, *The New Social Studies* (1967), p. 3.
6. Gerald Walsh, "History." This paper is one of a series of applications of the taxonomy to each subject in the school curriculum which are being prepared by the British Columbia Educational Research Council.
7. *The New Social Studies*, p. 57.
8. Three recent examples of books which concentrate on strategies for teaching inquiry skills, for example, are Maxine Dunfee and Helen Sagl, *Social Studies Through Problem Solving: A Challenge to Elementary School Teachers* (1966), H. M. Clements, W. R. Fiedler, and B. R. Tabachnick, *Social Study: Inquiry in Elementary Classrooms* (1966), and Bruce R. Joyce, *Strategies for Elementary Social Science Education* (1965).
9. For a wealth of practical examples of these processes at work, see Fannie R. Shaftel and George Shaftel, *Role Playing for Social Values: Decision-Making in the Social Studies* (1967) and Mary A. Bany and Lois V. Johnson, *Classroom Group Behavior: Group Dynamics in Education* (1964).
10. B. O. Smith, M. Neux, J. Coombs, G. Nuthall, and R. Preciano, *A Study of the Strategies of Teaching* (1967), p. 3. Cf. also P. J.

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11. Edwin Fenton and John M. Good, "Project Social Studies: A Progress Report," *Social Education*, v. 29, #4, April, 1965, pp. 206-227. See also Dorothy M. Fraser, "Annual Review of Curriculum Materials" in the same issue, pp. 228-237; 249.
 12. See "A Directory of Social Studies Projects," *Social Education*, v. 31, #6, October, 1967, pp. 509-11. The United States Office of Education now lists 59 elementary and secondary projects (of which 20 are now completed) and 15 in higher education. In addition, there are now 17 Social Studies and related projects sponsored by other organizations.
 13. James D. Koerner, "EDC: General Motors of Curriculum Reform," *Saturday Review*, v. 50, #33, 19 August 1967, pp. 56-58; 70-71.
 14. Dorothy M. Fraser, "Review of Curriculum Materials," *Social Education*, v. 31, #4, April, 1967, p. 310.
 15. One large Canadian undertaking, the National History Project, may in its proposed second stage rival the size of the larger American efforts. See A. B. Hodgetts, Director of the National History Project, "The Teaching of Canadian History and Civics," a paper presented to the Canadian Education Association, 28 September 1967. The almost completed first phase of this project will cost \$140,000.
 16. Lawrence Senesh, *Our Working World: Families at Work* (1963). In Canada, the National Film Board is just beginning to produce materials such as single-concept film loops, sets of slides and urban kits which it hopes will fit into the products of new Canadian curriculum projects.
 17. For a fuller discussion of these efforts see Fenton, *The New Social Studies*, pp. 93-105. For a comment on the faddish adoption of one of these devices, team teaching, see Jack R. Fraenkel and Richard E. Gross, "Team Teaching: Let's Look Before we Leap!" *Social Education*, v. 30, #5, May, 1966, pp. 335-337.
 18. As one small example of this trend, the Elementary Division of the Faculty of Education at U.B.C. was surprised and delighted in the autumn of 1967 to find that well over half of the entering freshmen class had elected to take its program which does not permit teaching until the end of third year rather than the basic two year program. Previous experience has shown that most students who elect this program complete their degree before beginning their teaching careers.
 19. See note 15 above.
 20. Mordecai Richler, *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* (Penguin Edition, 1964), p. 279. See also Neil Sutherland, "From Existence to Choice — the Educational Dimension of Existentialism," *Journal of Education* (U.B.C.), #11 (March, 1965), pp. 65-74.