

SUBJECT MATTER AS A SOURCE OF EDUCATIONAL GOALS AND INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES: THE CASE FOR HISTORY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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THE NEED FOR CLEAR EDUCATIONAL AND INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

Imaginative planning and continuous improvement of an educational system crucially depends on a clear conception of the goals that are being aimed at. The educational goals become the criteria for selecting material, outlining content, and developing teaching methods and techniques. The objectives are also basically accountable for the nature of tests and examinations in the system. Clear educational and instructional goals are therefore a necessary pre-requisite for a competent educational system. All scholars and educationalists should work towards the realization of this feature.

In East Africa particularly in Uganda and Kenya, lack of clear educational and instructional ends has been easily one of the most apparent weaknesses in the countries' systems. In the early 1960's Kenya's Education Commission and Uganda's Castle Commission attempted, among other things, to identify the national educational goals. In both cases, however, these goals were too briefly and generally discussed. In Tanzania, the UNESCO Report of 1962 failed to effectively outline and discuss the implications of curriculum or educational aims although the 'Arusha Declaration' and Nyerere's "Education for Self Reliance" tried to improve the situation later on. Detailed five-year development plans were drawn in the three East African countries, but no similar planning was effected in curriculum, that might be necessary to help towards successful implementation of these plans. Moreover, virtually all the problems and needs identified, as well as the goals set, in the development plans were almost exclusively economical. Cultural and political considerations often received only passing mention.

Concern about this dearth of clear educational goals in East Africa has been loudly vocal. In 1967, for example, R. C. Honeybone, expressed the view that time had come for the planning of education to be co-ordinated by "some form of Permanent Planning Commission which would include politicians, economists, manpower planners, sociologists as well as educationists." According to Honeybone "changes will be more effective if public opinion is well informed and co-operative" (2). The Director of the Institute of Education, Professor Senteza-Kajubi (1968) advocated the formation of National Policy Commission "with the realisation that the devising of an

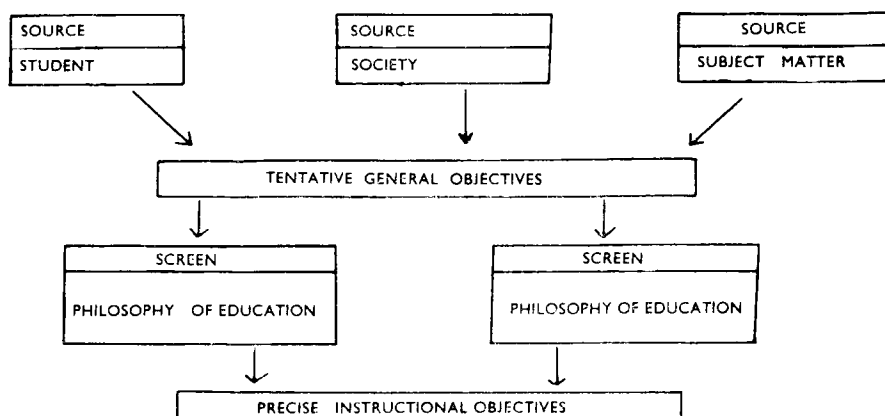
education system is not only complicated but also a very important task". Kajubi's commission was to focus its operation in the area where educational objectives were not clear.³ Furthermore, one of the central recommendations of the Annual Conference of the Uganda Education Association in 1969 was establishing an ad-hoc National Seminar to clarify issues and implications, and to set up a standing National Education Policy Committee that would play an advisory and consultative role in regard to the discussion and implementation of policy.

The relevance and potential value of the above advocated seminars committees or commissions for curricula improvement cannot be overstated. Unfortunately such organs have not yet become a reality in East Africa. Nevertheless, partly in spite of, and partly in view of the absence of these curricular assets, the writer submits that an increased examination of subject matter as a source of educational and instructional objectives by educationists will considerably widen the relevance and utility of curricula not only in East Africa but also in a number of other parts of the world.

SUBJECT MATTER AS A SOURCE OF EDUCATIONAL GOALS

Perhaps the most widely accepted and used scheme to develop curriculum is explicated in Ralph W. Tyler's *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* which is popularly known as "The Tyler Rationale". In this book the author recommended that educational objectives should be derived from three data sources, namely the student or learner, society and subject matter. As implications for education emerge from the three data sources tentative general objectives are stated. These should be screened through the educational philosophy and psychology of learning that is accepted by the individual, group or nation that is developing the curriculum. It is assumed that out of the two screens, that is the philosophical and psychological, the curriculum designer will have only a few important and achievable objectives.

These must subsequently be stated in precise terms of measurable learner or student behaviour. Let us present Tyler's scheme diagrammatically for clarity:



Since I have already dealt elsewhere with the student and society as a source of educational and instructional objective⁴ I shall now be quick to examine how a subject in a given field can generate such goals.

Subject matter is the source of most objectives used in schools and colleges. They are incorporated in textbooks which usually contain the conception of the writers regarding what the school should attempt to achieve in that particular field. In deriving educational and instructional ends from subject matter, therefore, the view and co-operation of subject specialists are basically crucial.

The curricula developer must work hand in hand with a specialist or, preferably, a group of specialists in the field where objectives are sought. The specialist should begin by making an outline indicating his conception of the subject field, and then suggest ways in which the subject can be used for purposes of general education. His first job is to articulate what, in his view, his subject is and should try to accomplish.

In some subjects like history the task of establishing an operational conceptual framework of the subject is a particularly difficult one. Various historians have given different and often contradicting answers to questions like the following: What is history? Is it a factual record of the past? Is it contemporary society's version of what happened in the past? Is it a selection of these past happenings which seem significant now (or which seemed significant then?). It is possible to trace a pattern of evolution in history?

A brief examination of specific examples of reactions to the above questions will help reveal not only the difficulty involved in establishing a convincing operational philosophy of the subject of history, but also of the need to do so. According to Sir Charles Firth history is not only "a branch of learning that should be studied for its own sake, but a kind of knowledge which is useful to men in their daily life".⁵ J. Burchkardt basically makes the same point when he claims that "history is the record of what one age finds worthy of note in another—the past is only intelligible through the present".⁶ In the same vein Rowse shares the view that the effect of/studying history is to make one a realist, possibly a pessimist . . . but never a cynic".⁷ On the African front Joseph Ki-Zerbo was positive that "the teaching of history must promote the aspirations of African unity. History must develop an historical conscience according to African tradition"⁸ Francis Bacon was in a way summing up the positions of the above scholars when he declared that it "is history that make men wise".⁹

Some scholars, however, have increasingly less faith in the subject. T. F. Trout, for example, felt that "we investigate the past not to reduce practical political lessons but to find out what really happened". H. A. L. Fisher griped thus:

"Men wiser and more learned than I have discovered in history a plot, a rhythm, a pre-determined pattern. These harmonies are concealed

from me. I can see only one emergency following upon another as wave follows upon wave, only one great fact with respect to which, since it is quite unique, there can be no generalizations, only one safe rule for the historian: that he should recognise in the development of human destinies the play of the contingent and the unforeseen.”¹⁰

Hegel was depressingly similar to Fisher when he grumbled that the “one thing that one learns from history is that nobody ever learns from history”. Finally this dim view of history will probably never be more radical beyond Henry Ford’s designation that “history is bunk”.

The theme of conflict and controversy about the philosophy of history surfaces on a number of other fronts. For example, according to A. E. Housman, “to the historian accuracy is a duty not a virtue”. Sir George Clark, however, contends that “there is no objective historical truth”.¹²

It goes without saying therefore that in outlining his conception of what history should attempt to achieve in school historians must somehow safeguard or deal with the above or similar conflicting points.

There are two types of information required of a history specialist for the purpose of generating educational goals. First is a list of suggestions with regard to particular contributions history can make to other functions of the subject itself. From the suggested functions the curriculum developer should be able to infer a variety of important objectives relating to areas like knowledge, intellectual skills, ability and techniques to solve problems, attitudes and values, interest and so on.

Let us take one example to illustrate more specifically what has been discussed above. R. E. Crookall begins his book *Handbook for History Teachers in West Africa* with a chapter on the broad functions of History. Among these he enlisted the following:

1. Introducing children to their heritage.
2. Implanting moral values.
3. Quickening the imagination.
4. Laying the foundations of a tolerant outlook.
5. Imparting a sense of human solidarity.
6. Training the mind.
7. To give pleasure.
8. Providing for children’s growth.

As it was suggested already the curriculum designer should at the outset identify functions that are particularly unique to his field and those that are peripheral. Secondly he must determine the ability and age of the pupils for whom he is generating the objectives. This is important mainly because it facilitates selection of the right material and adoption of the most appropriate methods.

From the function of “Introducing children to their heritage” the following objectives can be inferred at the SI-II level:

Educational goal

1. Students will analyse the migration by the various ethnic groups of Uganda.
2. Students will examine the cultural aspects of various ethnic groups of Uganda.

Instructional Objectives

- (a) Students will be able to locate on a map the different places of origin of identified ethnic groups.
- (b) Students will be able to trace the various routes which the various ethnic groups might have followed to their new places of settlement.
- (a) Students will be able to enlist at least five musical instruments originally belonging to certain ethnic groups.
- (b) Students will name the main type of dance for the different ethnic groups.
- (c) Students will be able to compare and contrast the religious practices among certain identified ethnic groups.
- (d) Students will be able to write down at least three similar features between the style of Government of their own ethnic group and any other.
- (e) Students will point out any number of features they like or dislike about the government of any ethnic group other than theirs.

Regarding the function of “giving pleasure” the following objectives might be generated :

Educational goals

1. Students will develop a lively and active interest in reading history.

2. Students will appreciate the historical wealth of the museum.

Instructional Objectives.

- (a) Students will reveal some initiative to read a number of text-books on a historical theme.
- (b) Students will show their historical involvement by reading a variety of historical books during their spare time.
- (a) Students will be able to compile a list of items found in the museum that relate to Ugandan indigenous music.
- (b) Students will write an essay describing the various types of indigenous Ugandan building basing themselves on their observations in the museum.
- (c) Students will be able to answer history questions in class by drawing back on their experience in the museum.

The curriculum developer must be cautioned about one major difficulty to be faced about objectives suggested by specialists. Such objectives often tend to be too technical or too academic and specialized; as such they are often inappropriate for the majority of school pupils, especially in most African countries where less than 5% of the secondary school leavers find places at the university. The basic cause of this difficulty is that specialists are often asked the wrong question which runs more or less like this: "What kind of instruction should secondary school students who intend to do more advanced work in your field be subjected to?" The most appropriate questions should be something like this: "What can your subject contribute to the education of your people who are not going to be specialists in the field? What can your subject contribute to the common man or the average variety of citizen? What can your subject contribute to the education of young people who will not specialize in it?" Armed with such proper questions even an ordinary practising history teacher can individually carry out some valuable consultations with trained historians and greatly improve his teaching.

CONCLUSION:

The purpose of this paper was to explicate subject matter as a source of educational goals and instructional objectives in order to encourage practising

teachers and curricular developers in East Africa to improve the quality of their curricula, particularly in the field of history. It was not intended to add to the already familiar outcry of educationists for elaborate national commissions, committees and seminars for establishing educational goals. It cannot be denied, however, that subject matter can most effectively suggest educational goals when examined by well organised curricular organs such as those advocated by various scholars and educators in the 1960's in East Africa.

Four essential points were made in the paper. First it was suggested that subject matter was one of the three main data sources for educational and instructional objectives according to the Tyler Rationale. Most objectives attempted in schools and colleges are derived from this data source. A specialist or group of specialists are crucial in generating objectives from subject matter in their particular field in an attempt to satisfactorily answer the following question:

“What can your subject contribute to the education of your people who are not going to be specialists in the field; what can your subject contribute to the common man or the average variety of citizen?”

Finally the writer hopes that the brief discussion and illustration in this paper will provoke more constructive thought and action on the part of history specialists and education practitioners about the process of deriving educational and instructional objectives from history.

FOOTNOTES

1. *Educational Goals*

These are the kinds of changes in behaviour that an educational Institution seeks to bring about in its students. They are the ends of learning, and they are composed of two parts, namely the content and the behavioural part.

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- Instructional Objectives*

These are the ends of instruction, that is the types of changed in behaviour that a particular phase of instruction attempts to bring about in its students. These objectives are normally stated precisely, in terms of measurable or observable learner behaviour.

2. R. C. Honeybone “Priorities and Strategy in the Field of Curriculum Development” in Carl J. Manone. ed. *A Report of the Conference on Teacher Education for East Africa*, 1967. p. 89.
3. W. Senteza Kajubi “The Pre-Service and In-Service Training of Teacher Educators: Today's Curriculum and Suggestions for Change” in Carl J. Manone ed. *Staffing Teacher Education*, 13, 14, 15 October 1969, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. 56.
4. P. Muyanda-Mutebi “The Human Factor as a Source of Educational and Instructional Objectives in East Africa”. A Paper presented at the 10th Annual Symposium of the East African Academy, 2nd to 5th January 1974, Kampala: Makerere University, Kampala.
5. Sir Charles Firth quoted in A. L. Rowse. *The Use of History*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, Ltd., 1946 p. 21.

6. J. Burckhardt. *Judgements on History and Historians* (1959) p. 158.
7. A. L. Rowse. *The Use of History*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, Ltd., 1946 p. 179.
8. Joseph Ki-Zerbo "The Fundamental Level of History". *Presence Africaine* (English Edition), IX (1961) pp. 152-56.
9. Francis Bacon quoted in A. L. Rowse *op. cit.* p. 179.
10. H. A. L. Fisher quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 19-20.
11. G. W. F. Hegel quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 29.
12. Sir George Clark quoted in E. H. Carr. *What is History?* London: Macmillan 1961 p. 5.

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