

# **SOCIAL PARTICIPATION AS A MAJOR GOAL IN SOCIAL STUDIES TOWARDS AUTHENTIC INSTRUCTION AND LEARNING IN CARIBBEAN SCHOOLS**

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Although the major goals of Social Studies have been clearly articulated in the literature over the years, the teaching, as well as evaluation in the subject area in Caribbean schools, still exhibit a tendency to focus rather heavily on the cognitive aspects of learning to the exclusion of application and authentic learning. There is a view, however, that the classroom needs to be perceived as a social arena for students to engage in social criticism, and in authentic and critical reflection on public issues, in order that they may acquire deep understandings of their society through real-life experiences. Within the Social Studies curriculum, this approach reflects the goal, and process, of social participation. This goal, it is argued, can be achieved by viewing social participation as being operative at different levels. This paper examines the extent to which the Social Studies curriculum in Caribbean schools can focus more tightly on social participation as a major goal of Social Studies instruction by engaging students in learning at three sequential levels: knowledge acquisition, active social participation, and reflective social participation, each subsumed under the next higher level.

## **A Background to the Purpose of Social Studies**

The term 'social education' was first used, according to Saxe (1992), as a generic term for socially centred school curricula. The term was later redefined and narrowed to identify a particular area of the school curriculum devoted expressly to social concerns, the social sciences and citizenship--and was now also referred to as Social Studies. This conceptualization of Social Studies, Saxe further argues, came out of the ideas and activities of the social welfare activists, in both the United States and Britain in the latter part of the last century, to improve social

conditions through education. At this early stage as well, the purpose of Social Studies was seen, and advocated, more in terms of its meaning as an active verb—that is, something one does, rather than as a noun—or content to be studied or acquired. Active participation for the improvement of social conditions and to help solve societal problems, particularly with regard to the disadvantaged, has always therefore been a central feature of Social Studies.

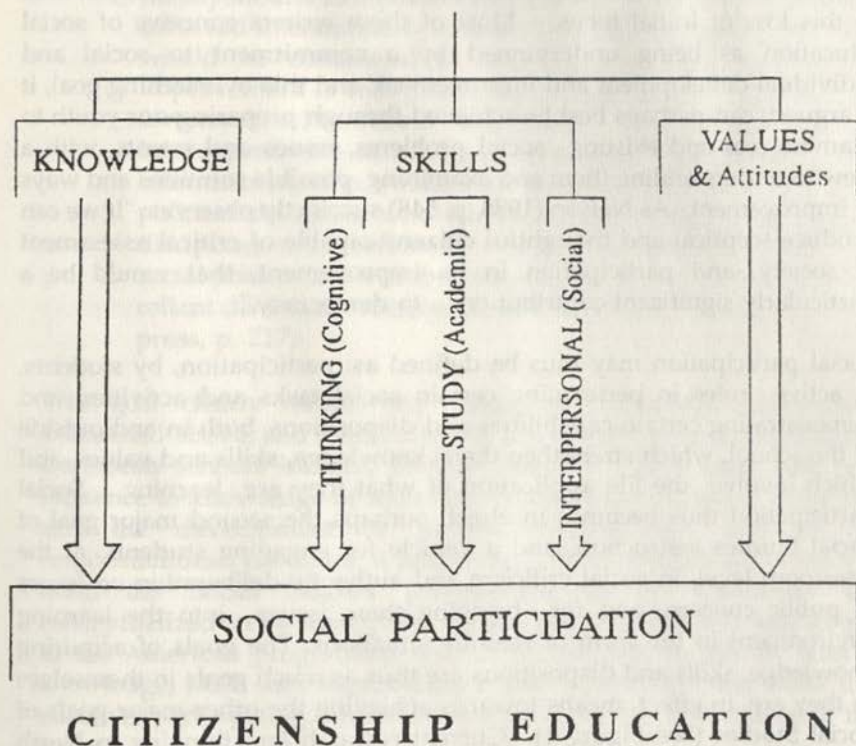
Another major focus of social education, from its beginnings, was the provision of a framework for citizenship education and for cultivating 'civic competence.' This, in the American tradition, involved a conscious effort to critically examine the workings of democracy with a view to producing informed citizens, competent to make reasoned decisions for the public good (NCSS, 1993) and, at the same time, strengthening their democratic institutions. As Saxe (1992, p. 269) puts it, the early proponents of Social Studies were "... progressive-styled, activist-oriented educators..." who were developing alternative ways of preparing young people for citizenship. A recent major volume has also been devoted to identifying and expatiating on what constitutes 'civic competence' (Quigley & Bahmueller, 1991); and some of the indicators of this competence are identified as: (i) knowledge of the institutions, structures and processes of government, (ii) familiarity with one's rights and responsibilities, (iii) an understanding of present conditions and problems, (iv) monitoring public policy and taking action to influence it, (v) loyalty to country and principles of government, and (vi) tolerance of diversity. Clearly inherent in all of these is an intention to empower individuals to share in the governance of their society or, as articulated by Quigley & Bahmueller (p. 39), to cultivate civic virtues and to facilitate the widespread participation of citizens in the governance of the groups to which they belong.

Although competing curricular conceptions have, over the years, introduced different emphases and directions in Social Studies, these have been, in most cases, perceptions of different paths to the same essential goals (See Figure 1), which are all closely and inherently inter-related. The NCSS itself (1993) and the major writers in the field have all acknowledged citizen education as the major, overarching goal of Social Studies (e.g., Brophy & Alleman, 1993; Conrad, 1991; Engle & Ochoa, 1988; Fraenkel, 1980; Martorella, 1985; Michaelis, 1992; Parker, 1991; Savage & Armstrong, 1991; Sears, 1994); and this is defined as

"...providing students with the knowledge, skills and values they will need to understand modern life and to participate in it effectively as prosocial group members and responsible citizens" (Brophy & Alleman, 1993, p. 27).

**Figure 1**

**Goals of Social Studies**





Some current writers in the field, however, point to evidence of what they perceive as a loss of this focus in the Social Studies curriculum and teaching, and of a drift away from the original, major concerns of Social Studies (Barth, 1993; Brophy & Alleman, 1993; Engle & Ochoa, 1988; Nelson, 1988; Saxe, 1992). These writers lament what they see as a redefinition of Social Studies, over the past three decades, to mean, according to different conceptual orientations, the exposition of separate social science disciplines, or a series of atomistic behavioural activities, or uncritical content coverage and isolated facts and skills; and they attribute many of the conceptual and curricular problems within the subject area to this loss of initial focus. Most of these writers conceive of social education as being underpinned by a commitment to social and individual development and improvement; and this overarching goal, it is argued, can perhaps best be achieved through preparing our youth to examine real and existing social problems, issues and events, with a view to understanding them and examining possible solutions and ways of improvement. As Nelson (1988, p. 548) succinctly observes: "If we can produce sceptical and thoughtful citizens capable of critical assessment of society, and participation in its improvement, that would be a particularly significant contribution ... to democracy."

Social participation may thus be defined as: participation, by students, in active roles in performing certain social tasks and activities, and demonstrating certain capabilities and dispositions, both in and outside of the school, which strengthen their knowledge, skills and values, and which involve the life application of what they are learning. Social participation thus becomes in effect, perhaps the second major goal of Social Studies instruction, and a vehicle for engaging students, at the classroom level, in social criticism and authentic deliberation on issues of public concern, and for bringing these issues into the learning environment in the form of real-life situations. The goals of acquiring knowledge, skills and dispositions are thus as much goals in themselves as they are, in effect, means towards achieving the other major goals of Social Studies (See Figure 1). Current research and thinking in North America suggest that, while various forms of social action underlie most Social Studies curricular frameworks, much of the instructional practice tends to focus on this participation more as the performance of a community service than as effective learning activities (Wade & Saxe, 1995).

## Social Studies in Caribbean Schools

The formal adoption of Social Studies into the curriculum of Caribbean schools in the 1960s was grounded on an initial goal expectation of helping to produce:

... participating citizens... who would have a deep understanding of their society and the forces at work in it; who would play their part as workers, voters, taxpayers, and as members and leaders of various groups involved in community and national development; who would be committed to their country and to the improvement of living conditions, especially of the less fortunate; who would understand the concept of interdependence at all levels—domestic, regional and international; who would think critically and make wise political decisions; who would develop habits of self-discipline, resourcefulness, initiative, co-operation and social justice, and thereby promote the growth of a self-reliant democratic society. (Morris, Morrissey, & King, in press, p. 227)

This goal clearly reflects the concept of citizenship education as articulated above; and most curricula and syllabuses in Social Studies in Caribbean schools include, in their aims or major objectives, some reference to knowledge of social institutions and processes, social skills and the development of pro-social behaviours, and to civic responsibilities. Therefore, it seems logical to conclude that, in theory at least, the Social Studies programmes in the Caribbean were conceptualized on the same philosophical premises and with similar goals to the American programme: that is, to provide the youth with the knowledge, skills and dispositions which would empower them to be effective, participating citizens and to share in the governance of their society.

However, a number of factors have, in practice, tended to influence the development, implementation and renewal of Social Studies curricula in the Caribbean. Among these was, and still is, a perception of History and Geography as established, traditional subjects, both more rigorously



academic and thus quite capable of achieving whatever educative purposes Social Studies was intended to achieve. Social Studies was, in fact, perceived by some as offering simplified coverage of these subjects for so-called "weaker, less academic" students.

Secondly, an initial lack of adequate teacher education programmes in Social Studies, particularly to train teachers in the nature and methodology of the subject area, militated against the effective implementation of the newly developed curriculum; and in a situation in which virtually all the teachers were separate subject specialists—in either History or Geography—both the selection and the treatment of content in the classrooms tended to be coloured by these perspectives (Morris et al., in press; Murray, 1976).

A third factor which influenced the curriculum reform activities in the Caribbean was an acute shortage of relevant and appropriate instructional materials and guidelines, to support the new, culturally sensitive curricula (Morris et al., in press). Fourthly, the focus, in the Caribbean context of education, on academic knowledge and examinations has tended to emphasize the cognitive aspects of the subject at the expense of the other dimensions.

The result has been three-fold. First, there has been, and still is in some circles, a lingering perception of Social Studies as essentially a content-based subject which, at the secondary level in particular, is designed more for the "weaker students"; and secondly, and perhaps consequentially, there is evidence of a rather heavy emphasis on knowledge-based questions and on low-level cognitive objectives in both the local classroom testing and in the regional CXC (Caribbean Examinations Council) examination (Griffith, 1993). The discrepancy between the evident practice and the implied theory clearly suggests, thirdly, that Social Studies appears to have lost some of its initial focus, and that the current programmes do not appear to be driven by the important goals of civic action and effective citizenship education.

Social Studies instruction in the Caribbean has therefore traditionally tended to focus almost exclusively on the first three goals of knowledge, skills and attitudes (see Figure 1)—and this mainly in an academic/intellectual sense and almost exclusively within the artificial confines of the classroom. Further, with respect to the skill objectives, the

emphasis has been more on academic skills--for finding and decoding information, with rather less attention being paid to cognitive and thinking skills--for analyzing information, and to social skills. The bigger goals of social participation and citizenship education have been studiously neglected, in any explicit forms, in the Social Studies curriculum and in instructional practice, - although, implicitly, there are constant references to these in national statements of educational philosophy.<sup>1</sup> Although the rationale for the CXC Social Studies syllabus explicitly refers to social participation and has moved to introduce a project activity as part of the final assessment, its philosophical constructs still remain underpinned by largely academic considerations, as evidenced in the rationale itself and in the overall assessment procedures (Griffith, 1993).

While the first three goals are clearly important, it is equally important that they be seen as mainly providing a sub-structure, or foundation, for the two major goals and as being, to that extent, subsumed under these latter. Stated differently, while the foundation is critical, yet it remains as part of the building and does not constitute the entire and completed structure.

The restrictive emphasis on goals thus represents a Social Studies pedagogy which is clearly less than authentic, powerful and effective. Therefore, it would seem that there is a rather compelling need for Social Studies instruction in the Caribbean to move beyond the basic but first-level goals and to address the higher level and bigger goals of the subject area. In this new paradigm, the knowledge, skills and attitudes, though still critical, are intended to be applied in certain ways in order to facilitate the achievement of the higher goals, and thus of "powerful Social Studies teaching and learning" (NCSS, 1993). The question therefore is: how can a Caribbean Social Studies programme more effectively address these neglected higher goals and contribute to the development of democratic thinking and civic competence?



## A Framework for Social Participation for Caribbean Schools

If one accepts the need for social education to "get back to its roots" and to its original goals, and if one is of the view that students should be exposed to opportunities to acquire citizenship skills and to contribute to improvement in the human condition in the Caribbean, then one needs to articulate certain curricular prerequisites.

Citizenship education, according to Parker (1989), requires citizenship participation and involvement in a strong sense; and this involves students in the life application of what they are learning, and in making decisions and reflecting on the outcomes and consequences (Brophy & Alleman, 1993; Conrad, 1991; Patton, 1980). This conception of social participation appears to fulfil rather adequately the five criteria, as articulated by Newmann and Wehlage (1993, p. 8), for "authentic instruction" which engages the student in using disciplined inquiry, based on reality, to construct meaning and to produce significant, useful knowledge that has value and meaning beyond the school. Essentially therefore, in the context of the Social Studies curriculum, there are two fundamental components of social participation: knowledge, and opportunities (See Fig. 2).



**Figure 2**  
**A Framework for Effecting Social Participation**

SUB-GOALS	OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES
3. Reflective Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Active involvement at the level of decision-making, policy formation/analysis.</li> <li>- Opportunity to participate in the process and practice of governing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In-school</li> <li>- Out of school</li> </ul>
2. Active Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Active involvement/ participation in societal organizations, groups, events at the level of implementing policy.</li> <li>- Opportunity to apply previous knowledge and gain deeper insights.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In-school</li> <li>- Out of school</li> </ul>
1. Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In-depth knowledge of social, local/Caribbean, social, political, legal and economic system acquired through purposeful inquiry, investigation, observation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In-class</li> <li>- Out of class</li> </ul>

Poorly informed citizens cannot reasonably be expected to make wise decisions. Such persons, in fact, tend to depend rather heavily--whether consciously or unknowingly--on the opinions and influence of others; and their level of social and political participation will undoubtedly be very low. Therefore, an in-depth **knowledge** of one's society, its institutions and their functioning (Newmann & Wehlage, 1993, p. 9), is clearly a prerequisite for social participation and civic competence. This essential knowledge and understanding of the social, legal, political and economic subsystems of a society, and of their harmonious inter-relationship, provides citizens with what Jarolimek (1990) calls a social memory and

an appreciation of their heritage. A knowledge, too, of global events and changing relationships is also critical in assisting students to view things in perspective, and to understand the dynamics of social, political and economic relationships. This understanding can be further enhanced if students are given the opportunity to critically analyze this knowledge and information, treating all truth claims as hypotheses to be tested, and applying the information as evidence in support of one action or another (Engle & Ochoa, 1988). Thus students, in the process of acquiring this knowledge, develop important higher-order thinking skills (Newmann & Wehlage, 1993, p. 8) in identifying significant social issues of local concern and in gathering information and evidence from different sources in their community through observation, surveys, and so on. Although these learning activities may be somewhat transmissional in nature, the students nevertheless also learn, and are encouraged and supported in their efforts (Newmann & Wehlage, 1993, p. 10), to evaluate information, draw conclusions and validate them—all of this in full awareness that all such conclusions and decisions are tentative (Engle & Ochoa, 1988; Fair & Kachaturoff, 1988). This essential knowledge is thus constructed as much within the context of the community in which the students live as in the classroom.

However, this in-depth knowledge base, though necessary, is not a sufficient requirement for effective social participation or the development of civic competence. The student also needs to be provided with the opportunity to actively participate in social roles and practices (Parker, 1989), which are themselves of two different, but equally important categories/strands: practices which promote personal growth and development, and practices which promote civic-mindedness (Newmann, 1989).

The former group of practices involves what, in this paper, will be referred to as 'active social participation' (Fig. 2): authentic deliberation, by students, on real-life issues and events of public concern (Newmann & Wehlage, 1993, p. 10; Parker, 1989). These activities, which relate to the question of social participation at one level, can be realistically and effectively addressed through (i) the active involvement of students in ongoing debates on current issues, (ii) investigating social issues through local surveys, community research projects and other 'out-of-class' activities, and (iii) involvement in some form of community service or activity. The latter may include such experiences as taking part in



electoral campaigning, some form of social advocacy, involvement in neighbourhood organizations and in school or church committees. This level of civic involvement is what Barber (1989) calls 'public talk,' and reflects what Newmann and Wehlage (1993, p. 10) refer to as 'substantive conversation.' In addition to the obvious knowledge they engender, these learning activities also enable the student to acquire a number, and variety, of useful civic skills. These would include, for example, (i) how to obtain information on issues of public concern (e.g., consumer complaints, or teenage pregnancies), (ii) how to be assertive with respect to one's rights, (iii) mastering the rules of processing a legitimate grievance against a government department, and (iv) analyzing issues, events and proposed solutions to problems.

This new knowledge, and the skills acquired through these more transactional activities, will, it is maintained, contribute to students' sense of efficacy and to their personal growth and development, as well as, on a broader scale, to the empowerment of otherwise disenfranchised groups. While these achievements and outlook, and the level of participation which fosters them, are seen as both important and necessary in any programme of civic education, they are nevertheless viewed as a further step towards civic-mindedness (Newmann, 1989), or what is identified here as 'reflective social participation.'

The promotion of reflective social participation (Fig 2), or civic-mindedness, requires that students be placed in settings and roles which require them to think critically and reflect upon their role as citizens and upon the nature of the public good (Newmann, 1989), and that students be given the opportunity to participate in the processes which influence and guide decision-making on public issues. While these opportunities are, as in the case of active social participation, potentially available through community service activities--such as serving in voluntary organizations, social advocacy groups and civic offices, and working for political parties or interest groups--the nature of the involvement is seen, at this level, to be much deeper and more substantial. It thus engages students in practices which actually require them, for example, to formulate positions and win support for them, to act as mediators, to engage in policy analysis, to exercise public judgement, to make decisions on possible solutions to problems of public concern, to accommodate conflicting interests, and to set priorities in terms of both the scheduling

of actions on issues and the allocation of time and resources to these actions (Barber, 1989; Newmann, 1989).

Applying this form of authentic instruction (Newmann & Wehlage, 1993, p. 8), and engaging students in these significant and meaningful learning activities is, it is submitted here, an effective and meaningful strategy for not only increasing the competence of students to think critically and to function and participate as citizens in a democratic environment (Parker, 1989; Stanley & Nelson, 1985), but also for equipping them with an in-depth knowledge of their own social, legal, political and economic sub-systems. It is thus to be equated with what an NCSS position statement (1993, p. 213) refers to as "... powerful social studies teaching ... which enables students to ... develop social understanding and civic efficacy." This sub-set of social participation equates with what Wade & Saxe (1995, p. 3) identify as "community service-learning," or the opportunity and "... method by which young people learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service experiences." This form of social participation is thus both constructivist and transformational in character.

These reflective, participative learning activities are also seen as operating at the highest of the three levels and, at the same time, clearly subsuming the civic-learning activities and experiences at the other levels. They thus provide an integrated package of learning activities for, as it were, transforming students into what Martorella (1985) defines as "... competent, concerned and reflective citizens." This framework, like the Social Studies curriculum itself, is thus driven by the major goals of social education (Brophy & Alleman, 1993) in terms of objectives, content and activities.

But, one may justifiably ask, how relevant and necessary are such curricular proposals in the context of Caribbean society and schools? In a recent study on Barbadian youth, Carter (1992; 1993) concluded that, even allowing for generational factors and contextual differences, there is sufficient evidence of a general decline in youth behaviour in terms of values, positive attitudes, and appreciation for existing social services and amenities. The study also indicated a significant sense of political and economic powerlessness, and of apathy and disenchantment with both political matters and societal institutions. Additionally, polls taken during recent national election exercises in a number of Caribbean



countries also indicated that a larger percentage of young voters than that of any other age-group either did not intend to vote or were not sure if they would.<sup>2</sup>

Given these realities, and given the marginalization of an increasing number of minority and disadvantaged groups in our society, it would seem that there is a case to be made for the relevance, need and worthiness of a programme in social education, as outlined above, for Caribbean schools. A curriculum, infused with an authentic participative approach, has the potential to effectively address some of these negative behaviours and attitudes, and to promote greater feelings of efficacy, belonging and commitment among our young people. The current trends noted above clearly need to be reversed; and the above framework, it is argued, can produce informed thinking and involved citizens who are, in fact, our best guarantee for maintaining democracy and achieving a sustainable society.

As indicated, important issues relating to the social, legal, political and economic sub-systems of our society are all valid topics for deliberation in an authentic civic education programme. Therefore, issues pertaining to the functioning of the local education sub-system and institutions--such as, for example, the purpose and benefits of the Common Entrance Examination, or of school zoning--are equally in place in a Social Studies programme as are issues of teenage pregnancies, the environment, unemployment, the responsibilities of government, or the whole question of prosocial behaviours and values. Furthermore, if the concept of democracy connotes both the rights and the responsibilities of individuals as both citizens and as members of groups, and if this concept requires, for its sustainment, the active and informed involvement of every citizen in the governance of the community to which he/she belongs, then clearly the citizen needs to be prepared, from early, for this very critical role.

### **Some Guidelines for Participative Activities**

Currently, most of the knowledge acquired by students in Social Studies classes in the Caribbean is still transmitted in the classroom setting and largely through a two-by-four pedagogy. Remarkably little is facilitated

through the use of surveys, community projects and other 'out-of-class' activities which perceive of, and use, the community itself as a major resource (Alleman & Brophy, 1994). Similarly, although some identifiable participation activities are currently being, and have for some time been, actively engaged in at many Caribbean schools, these tend to focus on such things as the election of class prefects, the operation of school clubs and societies, games and graduation committees and, in a few cases, student societies. These activities and groups, moreover, are invariably under the direct supervision of teachers, have very little autonomy, and are very rarely, if ever, involved in decision-making or in the formulation of policy. Students are, therefore, rarely given the opportunity to be engaged in authentic participation in activities which promote the acquisition and construction of knowledge, or in the process of governing.

What is perhaps needed is for these, and other civic education activities, to be more specifically and deliberately written into curriculum practice; and for some provision for all of these, together with linkages with relevant societal organizations, to be tied to the curriculum in such a way as to meaningfully engage the students in direct involvement in, and reflection on, the functions, activities, and processes of the various organizations and institutions in our society. Students could, for example, spend a given number of hours per week over a given period, with co-operating institutions, engaged in certain agreed and thoughtfully organized participative activities. These hours would represent a specific portion of their Social Studies 'class time,' and would perhaps need to be arranged, in the context of the institution's normal business, to facilitate and enhance the students' participation. Students would also be expected to maintain a diary of their participation, report to the class on their experiences, and to share their reflective evaluation of these.

These real-life exercises, which can be reinforced through co-operative learning approaches in the classroom itself should, of course, represent an integral part of the Social Studies programme and could therefore carry a certain percentage weighting of the final grade. One would therefore need to ensure that all activities conform to the criteria (Conrad, 1990) of being valuable, worthwhile and challenging, and of providing opportunities for students to make decisions, to be depended upon, to work together with adults and to engage in systematic reflection on their experiences.



There is also little reason why issues of public or social significance in any of the social sub-systems--and there are specific criteria for determining such significance (Fair & Kachaturoff, 1988)--should not be subject to such examination and reflection by our students through classroom discourse. In this context, it is pertinent to note here the innovative attempt by Beddoo et al (1989) to integrate a specific focus on social participation activities into a Caribbean Social Studies textbook. This is clearly a positive direction to take, and it represents, to some extent, a recognition of the importance and value of active learning and inquiry with respect to relevant social issues.

### **Some Obstacles and Implications**

The framework being suggested here, though it is not new and is, in fact, employed in a wide variety of modalities in the North American system, nevertheless represents a radical departure from what currently obtains in Caribbean schools; and while the implementation of it is a very desirable objective, one needs to be mindful of certain obstacles, both real and potential, to its realization. Most of these obstacles seem to emanate from sociological, political, or educational sources. Parker (1989, p. 354) identifies three such problems as: (i) the conservative nature and climate of schools, (ii) the institutional organization of schools, and (iii) the lack of evaluative criteria for what he calls "civic education in the strong sense."

Schools, it is argued, have a long-standing difficulty with including, for study in their programmes, topics and issues on which there is some disagreement or controversy--irrespective of how deeply these topics matter to people in the society. Political and racial issues, or capital punishment are cases in point. And this is compounded by the view (Newmann, 1989) that the purpose of teaching is to transmit fixed bodies of knowledge. In the Caribbean context, too, the functioning of the education system, in most territories, makes it quite sensitive to expressions or indications of political displeasure at any area of its programme or operation. Thus, Caribbean schools and teachers tend to be rather reluctant to introduce what may be considered as controversial or politically sensitive topics into their classes, or even to respond openly and honestly to them when raised by students. Yet one can argue that,

if knowledge is a social artifact (Leinhardt, 1992), and if learning is the active process of knowledge construction, then the classroom--that is, learning situations--becomes an important arena for the public examination of social issues and ideas. This assumption, if accepted, has important implications for the preparation of Social Studies teachers, particularly in the areas of critical commentary and in dealing with controversial issues.

Secondly, schools are organized as much to manage and control students as to educate them (Parker, 1989); and both class schedules and teaching practices tend to reflect this. One result of this is that schools and teaching remain somewhat isolated from the community they are intended to serve. In any given Caribbean territory, daily schedules and routines are generally, and monotonously, identical across schools--as is the school year across territories. The local community is not generally viewed as a teaching/learning resource, and schools are not always sensitive to the peculiarities of the local community. Thus, inspite of the significance of 'banana days' in several Caribbean countries--when this major crop is packed and transported to the dock for export--and of the demand of these days on family labour--particularly in rural areas--the local school programmes seldom address these realities. Involvement in both active and reflective social participation would require much greater scheduling flexibility in order to accommodate relevant and meaningful community activities and experiences on a regular basis.

A lack of clearly formulated criteria for evaluating reflective participation and civic-mindedness poses a third obstacle to the implementation of a strong social participation programme. There is a need, for example, to determine and select the specific experiences, issues, and controversies to be deliberated upon and, equally important, the specific activities which will best address each of these. Criteria also need to be established for evaluating students and student learning with respect to these more experiential learning situations. This would perhaps require closer examination of alternative forms of evaluation: such as interviews, observation checklists, peer and self-evaluation, attitude questionnaires or inventories, behaviour journals, quality circles, conferencing, learning contracts, and so on--forms which inherently promote such social skills and dispositions as decision-making, responsibility, self-direction and reflection. These forms of evaluation go beyond the current practices of teaching mainly for examinations and of testing predominantly for



knowledge (Griffith, 1993), and they also recognize the learners' experiences as an integral factor in assessment.

A fourth potential obstacle, embodied in the Caribbean context, relates to the authority structure within the school system. Principals/Head teachers, according to both convention and regulations, have tremendous authority with respect to the management and control of their school and school activities. It would certainly, therefore, be necessary and politic to sensitize these to the new instructional modes which inherently demand a significant amount of 'out-of-class' and even 'out-of-school' time and activity. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education, as both employer and provider of training opportunities, would also be a critical player to be won over in this new teaching/learning framework.

## Conclusion

The promotion of citizen participation is a basic philosophical goal which is generally stated or implied in the school curriculum of all Caribbean territories. While schools are generally entrusted with this major task, it would be rather unrealistic to assume that the school alone can accomplish this, and/or initiate wide public participation in the affairs of state. Clearly, other social and political factors outside of the school impact significantly on its functioning.

Social participation in the Social Studies classroom also needs to be seen much more as understandings to be achieved and as skills and dispositions to be practised and developed, than as subject-matter to be taught and learned. An effective Social Studies programme needs to be both clearly driven by all of its major goals, and to be specifically structured in such a way to reflect its primary concern with methodology. Unfortunately, the goal of social participation, and the concomitant curricular considerations, have been conspicuously neglected in most Caribbean Social Studies programmes.

The approach suggested here calls for a definitive shift away from preoccupation with the first-level goals of knowledge, skills and attitudes, and towards a focus on the higher goals of social participation and citizenship education, and for a commensurate shift in Social Studies

pedagogy. Such a shift will have important implications for curriculum renewal, for a reconceptualization of the teaching of Social Studies and the preparation of Social Studies teacher (Stanley & Nelson, 1985), for time-tabling and, very importantly, for school-community relationships.

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## Notes

1. See, for example, (i) the Barbados Ministry of Education's *Statement of Philosophy relating to primary schools*. and (ii) St. Lucia's *Search Conference in Education*, 1990.
2. Sunday Advocate, Barbados. August 28, 1994, and personal communication from Professor Selwyn Ryan and Dr. Patrick Emmanuel.