

An Investigation of History Teaching in Ethiopian Senior Secondary Schools

M.A. Thesis in curriculum and Instruction, Addis Ababa University, 1992.

Abebe Fisseha

Abstract

The study was conducted to investigate the teaching of history with respect to four associated problems, viz., the basic reasoning for the placement of history in the senior secondary school curriculum, the practices and processes of syllabus development, the teaching strategies, methods and techniques, and the teaching materials used both in the past and the present. To this end both historical and descriptive-survey research techniques were employed. The historical research attempted to investigate what happened and why it happened in a definite chronological period. It indicated trends, developments, phases, and perspectives of past history teaching in Ethiopian senior secondary schools. Main findings of the historical study were: (i) The inclusion of history in the senior secondary school curriculum was a concomitant development with the beginning of secondary education in the country; (ii) At the earlier stage the history syllabi were solely constructed by subject specialists; (iii) Before 1963 the teaching of history was not aimed

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enquiry approach stands out as the most important ones.

Although the teaching of biology cannot be seen out of the context of the general educational system at this level, the excessive domination of verbalism in biology classrooms has led to what has been called "a dead study of life".

at enabling students to know something about their own country; (iv) except the 1967 syllabus, all other syllabi reflected the traditional view of history teaching; the objectives of the syllabi were the acquisition of knowledge; the view of history reckoned that students should learn history to know about the past and history teaching emphasized on the transmission of information.

The descriptive-survey research attempted to describe the present status of history teaching, with particular reference to the senior secondary schools of Addis Ababa. The findings of this descriptive study are mostly reflective of the situation in these schools. The descriptive-survey derived data from a questionnaire, interviews and classroom observation. The data obtained from the questionnaire were tabulated and presented in tables expressed in numbers and percentages. The views of the interviewees were used to substantiate the interpretation, analysis and the discussion wherever deemed necessary. The frequencies of the categories embodied in the observation schedule were expressed as average lesson percentages. To determine variation among the observed teachers in using the categories, a two-way analysis of variance (teacher by visit) was carried out. Main findings of the descriptive-survey research were: i) School administrators and principals seem to hold an assumption that anyone who could read and understand what is presented in the textbook could teach history; ii) There is a high level of dissatisfaction among history teachers with the quality of the current educational provisions; iii) history teaching is highly textbook oriented; iv) the size of the history

classroom is found to be big. A large-group instruction with expository teaching strategy predominates the history classroom. There is no significant difference among teachers who used expository strategy ($F = 5.48, 9 \text{ df}, p < 0.00.$).

In the light of the problems envisaged, it seems extremely important to design the history syllabus based on a clearer understanding of the nature of history, its educational values and purposes as well as the teaching and learning it requires. The syllabus should be also designed in such a way that it would enable students to exercise socially useful processes or ways of thinking, such as reconciling conflicting evidence, inducing concept from a context and identifying facts from opinion.