

EVALUATION OF COLLEGES OF EDUCATION (COE) SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM VIS-À-VIS THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL (JHS) SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM IN GHANA

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ABSTRACT: *Social Studies as a subject in the Junior High School (JHS) curriculum in Ghana is taught mostly by teachers trained in the country's thirty-eight Colleges of Education. Analysis of the Colleges Social Studies curriculum vis-à-vis the JHS syllabus reveals differences in how the subject is structured to prepare teachers to teach it at the JHS level. An interpretative design was used for the study. The study revealed that: Colleges of Education subscribe to and use a cross-disciplinary perspective whereby facts, concepts and generalisations are bootlegged from the social science subjects which is dominated with geographical concepts, whilst the JHS subscribes to and uses trans-disciplinary approach which is holistic, theme based and problem solving. It was recommended that there must be a national curriculum policy on Social Studies that all pathways to teaching of the subject should undergo review according to such national standards to merits the needs of society.*

KEYWORDS: Curriculum, Evaluation, Syllabus, Social Studies, Curriculum implementation.

INTRODUCTION

This paper results from an evaluation of the Social Studies curricula in both the Colleges of Education and Junior High Schools in Ghana. The paper is structured into five (5) main sections namely; the Introduction and Background, Review of the Literature, Methodology, Findings and Discussion and the Conclusion. The first section introduces the structure of the paper, the context and aims and objectives of the paper. The literature review section reviews the relevant literature on issues pertaining to curriculum conceptions, initial teacher training and teachers' classroom practices. The methodology section presents a broad description of the methodology and procedures adopted in the conduct of the study. Findings resulting from the study are presented and discussed in the section following the methodology and conclusion, also highlighting some implications of the findings, follows as the last section.

MacBeath, Swaffield, Oduro, and Ampah-Mensah (2013), citing McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh (1975) state that it was not until the last quarter of the 19th century that Ghana began to take first steps towards a state-organised education. Before then informal systems of education had been the main way in which Ghanaian communities prepared their members for citizenship. It is interesting to note that in Ghana the first school was the home: the teachers were the parents and the elders in the family. The curriculum was life and learning was by observation. According to MacBeath et al. (2013), the first major purpose of such education was the inculcation of good character and good health in the young members of the community. The second was to give them adequate knowledge of their history, beliefs and culture, thus enabling them to participate fully in social life. This indicates that the collectivist nature of education in traditional communities, writes Antwi

(1992), encompassed the total way of life of the society. It could be seen from the foregoing comments that the purpose of education since the beginning of the Ghanaian society has been for national development.

There have been various initiatives that were used to structurally transform the education system and also helped improved considerably access, quality teaching and learning, infrastructure delivery as well as management efficiency. Aboagye (2002), states that the quality of teachers, the quality of education and the quality of teacher education are inseparable. Quality teacher education has been seen as a crucial factor for effective educational outcomes in moving the nation forward. This shows that the development of education could not be successfully done without looking at the teacher and the training to be acquired. This indicates that teacher training in Ghana should be given priority and subjects like Social Studies taught in Colleges of Education should be geared towards nation building.

As a result of this a lot of efforts were put in place to train and develop teacher training institutions which were to be the grass root implementers of policies and initiatives of educational improvement and development. For instance, under the Education Reform Programme, the 4-year Post-Middle School Teacher Training Programme was phased out in 1991, giving way to only a 3-year Post-Secondary Programme. The 3-year Certificate 'A' Post-Secondary Programme was also phased out for a 3-year Diploma in Basic Education in 2007. With the changes in teacher education in Ghana, Akyeampong (2003) states that one of the significant changes in initial teacher training in Ghana in recent times is the change from a three year "in" college training to two years in college and one year "out". This seems to be a move to make training of teachers more practically focused and ensure that prospective teachers have better insights and understanding into actual job training. It reflects an increasing desire of the Ministry of Education and the Ghanaian teacher educators to see teacher training include more experience learning on the job. This helps a lot as trainees (mentees) are mentored to teach and supervised in a classroom setting by mentors, lead mentors and link tutors.

Despite the various effort that were put in place; teacher education in Ghana has until recently not attracted much attention by way of intense structural and curriculum reforms. Research conducted by the Centre for Research into Improving the Quality of Primary Education in Ghana (CRIQPEG) at the University of Cape Coast showed that despite the reform efforts, pupils' achievement had not made any significant gains, and was in fact embarrassingly poor (Akyeampong, 2003). Ministry of Education in trying to understand the reasons for low achievements among pupils in schools realised that among the main causes of the problems were ineffective pre-service teacher training and inadequate in-service teacher training to introduce teachers to the new curriculum and unmotivated teachers. This is supported by Eshun and Ashun (2013:109) that mentees faced the problem of inadequate supervisory practices by their mentors. Mentors failed to perform their expected professional roles leaving most trainees on their own. Attitude of these mentors greatly affected the mentees in terms of the needed professional guidance during teaching and other sessions of the teaching and learning process. The above gave evidence to the fact that teacher education having an important role to play in improving and raising the academic standards of education in the country is stuck with challenges.

Social Studies is one of the subjects taught in Colleges of Education and student-teachers are prepared to teach it at the Basic Schools in Ghana. Social Studies as a subject has been conceptualized differently by its practitioners since its inception. Thus according to Bekoe and Eshun (2013a:45) “although Social Studies is seen as an integrated body of knowledge, there is an issue of acceptable level of integration”. At all levels of education the goals of Social Studies has been characterized by Martorella (1985) as: (1) transmission of the cultural heritage; (2) methods of inquiry; (3) reflective inquiry; (4) informed social criticism; and (5) personal development. Personal development has traditionally received the greatest emphasis at the elementary level; at the high school level, methods of inquiry have received more emphasis. As phrased in the curriculum guidelines released by the NCSS (1979:262), “the basic goal of Social Studies education is to prepare young people to be humane, rational, participating citizens in a world that is becoming increasingly interdependent”. The objectives which are spelt in the definition of a discipline form the bases for developing a curriculum. However lack of consensus in defining a subject may sway away and turn the various components of a discipline (Bekoe & Eshun, 2013:85b).

In Ghana, according to the teaching syllabus for Social Studies (CRDD, 2010: ii), the subject prepares the individual by equipping him or her with knowledge about the culture and ways of life of their society, its problems, its values and its hopes for the future. These clearly show that it is accepted that the ultimate aim of Social Studies is seen as Citizenship Education. Eshun and Mensah (2013:183a) assert that Social Studies should be taught as a holistic subject, which should reflect behavioural change in students and not facts from other social sciences. Social Studies teachers should stress on teaching of skills more than the factual content. The main role of the Social Studies teacher is to emphasize the development of relevant knowledge, positive attitudes, value and problem solving skills of students.

This, notwithstanding, a research conducted by Bekoe and Eshun (2013:44a) on Social Studies curriculum feuding and implementation challenges in Ghana, revealed that “Teacher Training Institutions subscribe and use a particular conception of Social Studies curriculum for the production of Social Studies education graduates”. The implication here is that teachers may come to conceptualize the subject differently. Bekoe and Eshun (2013:44a) recommended that “if importance is attached to Social Studies then resources already invested in its implementation in Ghana, must be followed by programme review and remedial measures taken early, so as to make it more effective and viable”.

However, documentary evidence on the Social Studies curriculum prepared for Colleges of Education in Ghana shows clear differences in relation to how the Basic School teaching syllabus for Social Studies is structured. The College of Education Social Studies curriculum seems not to reflect problem solving perspective of the subject in Ghana. As a result of the possible differences in curriculum conception of Social Studies by Colleges of Education in relation to the Basic School Social Studies curriculum in Ghana, trained teachers may conceptualise the subject differently. This may confuse them as to how to teach the subject since the structure of the Basic School Social Studies syllabus they will use to teach will not be in consonance with what they were taught while in college. There was therefore the need to conduct a study that will evaluate the Colleges of Education (CoE) Social Studies curriculum vis-à-vis the Junior High School (JHS) Social Studies curriculum design and implementation in Ghana.

The main aim of the study therefore was to determine whether there are differences in the conceptions of the subject in Colleges of Education in relation to how the Social Studies is structured at the JHS level in Ghana and the implication of such differences for curriculum implementation. The question, “are the significant differences in the conceptions of Social Studies in Colleges of Education in relation to the JHS syllabus in Ghana”, guided the study. The research covered only the Social Studies curriculum at the Colleges of Education and the Basic School Social Studies syllabus in used in Ghana.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Curriculum generally has to do with the answers to such commonplace questions as what can and should be taught to whom, when, and how? (Eisner & Vallance, 1974). As Begg (2005:6) puts it, curriculum is “all planning for the classroom”. This implies that curriculum is to provide a template or design which enables learning to take place. It defines the learning that is expected to take place during a course or programme of study in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes. It should specify the main teaching, learning and assessment methods and provide an indication of the learning resources required to support the effective delivery of the course. A curriculum is more than a syllabus. According to Whitson (2007), a syllabus describes the content of a programme and can be seen as one part of a curriculum. Most curricula are not developed from scratch and all operate within organisational and societal constraints. Since teacher-trainees use the curriculum in their teaching practice, it makes sense to appraise the Colleges of Education (CoE) Social Studies curriculum in relation to the Basic School Social Studies curriculum and its implementation in Ghana.

According to Quashigah, Eshun and Mensah (2013: 84-85) teachers need to be reminded of their primary function which is to facilitate learning and if this will be possible they have to be familiar with the major objectives in their subject areas and to practice formulating objectives in all the domains of learning for specific topics following the different classifications by Bloom (1956), Krathwohl (1956) and Taba (1962). This is because, if objectives are formulated in all domains of learning, it will not be difficult for the teachers to assess the students in the three domains. Teachers should also realize that the inclusion of affective and psychomotor assessments, as distinctive features of assessment is a step at getting the truest possible picture of a learner. This will provide feedback about teachers and students effectiveness.

Teachers’ conception represents part of teachers’ mental contents or schemas that influence approaches and practice of teaching (Ernest, 1989). It is in this light that, evaluation of Colleges of Education (CoE) Social Studies curriculum vis-à-vis the Junior High School (JHS) Social Studies curriculum and its implementation in Ghana is worthy of an academic discourse. According to Eshun, Bordoh, Bassaw and Mensah (2014:40) the seriousness of the matter is that there are thirty-eight public Colleges of Education in Ghana, all of which turn out about 9,000 teachers annually. These teachers are expected to teach various subjects including Social Studies at the basic level of education. Products of the Colleges of Education, thus, have an onerous responsibility of laying a firm and sound foundation in the educational career of the young ones entrusted into their care. This implies that clearer conception of Social Studies at the Colleges of

Education need not be taken for granted if quality trained Social Studies teachers are to be produced from the colleges.

Teachers' curriculum conception of Social Studies has become a matter of urgency in the sense that Bekoe and Eshun (2013a:44) assert that different modes of delivering Social Studies may tend to influence students as to what the meaning of Social Studies is, its contents and why it is worth studying. According to Bekoe and Eshun (2013b:93) there are "confusing arrays of conceptual perspectives concerning the aims, nature and content of Social Studies and that cultivation of a clearer conception of the subject in Ghana has become very necessary". This implies that evaluation of social studies curriculum and students' learning in Social Studies needs to be taken seriously.

Quashigah et al. (2013:84) also assert that "the pedagogical content knowledge of Social Studies teachers do influence the way they assess their lessons." This assertion is supported by Bekoe and Eshun (2013:111c) that "the background knowledge of Social Studies teachers is built from their training institutions and this goes to influence the way they teach (i.e. selection of content, unit or topic, formulation of objective(s), mode of teaching, and assessment tool used)." As a result of this, implementers of Social Studies curriculum need to be abreast with how the subject is taught and assessed. Bekoe, Eshun and Bordoh (2013:28) however stressed that "due to the hasty nature in formulating formative assessment and scoring, tutors place emphasis on cognitive domain to the neglect of affective and psychomotor domains which are also of paramount importance." With this, much is needed to assist Social Studies teachers to be abreast with the nature and the content of Social Studies in a harmonized subject matter required to improve the quality of teaching and learning (Bekoe & Eshun, 2013a: 43-44).

Curriculum has been conceived differently, the humanistic, social reconstructionist, systemic, and academic curricula has its own way of affecting the curriculum (Young, 2011). With curriculum implementation the teacher is supposed to build relationship with the students and promotes individual learning. These relationships and beliefs will inspire students to innovate, and help students confidently take risks in learning whereby failure is regarded as progress (Young, 2011).

Research studies (Thompson, 1992; Huang, Lin, Huang, Ma, & Han, 2002) conclude that teachers' conception of a subject or a curriculum would shape their perceived curriculum and therefore their implemented curriculum. This implies that teachers' conception is of high essence in the implementation process. Indeed, the importance of the teacher in the successful implementation of curriculum reform has been revealed in studies both in the West (i.e. Fullan, 2001) and the East (Adamson, Kwan, & Chan, 2000). Under the school-based curriculum development policy, the importance of teachers to the implementation of integrated programmes like Social Studies in schools is even more obvious. The importance of studying teachers' conception and curriculum implementation can be seen from Goodlad's (1979) five levels of curriculum, namely ideal, formal, perceived, implemented, and experiential curricula. The theories and principles about curriculum integration derived from literature and research could be seen as representing the "ideal curriculum." The "formal curriculum" of the initiative is developed or decided by local curriculum developers or policy-makers. Teachers' interpretation of the formal curriculum becomes their "perceived curriculum." The "implemented curriculum" represents the classroom implementation of curriculum integration. Finally, students will go through the "experiential curriculum" as

teachers deliver it. As Goodlad (1979) postulates, the implemented curriculum often differs to various extents from the ideal or formal curriculum. The perceived and implemented curricula vary from the conception of persons (policy-makers or curriculum developers) who plan or devise a curriculum innovation. Teachers usually do not strictly adhere to a proposed change but implement their own version of a curriculum with their own interpretation or conception.

In general, studies of teachers' understanding of the subjects they teach have shown those conceptions affect the way they teach and assess (Ertmer, 2005; Prosser, Martin, Trigwell, Ramsden, & Lueckenhausen, 2005; Bekoe & Eshun, 2013; Quashigah et al., 2013). These implicit orientations to curriculum shape the topics teachers emphasise and the meaning teachers give to curriculum documents. For example, in Social Studies, different major conceptions of the subject (i.e., multidisciplinary, traditional or discrete subjects understanding versus problem-solving oriented and trans-disciplinary understanding) are claimed to be major disagreement. Cheung and Wong (2002) have argued that teachers' conceptions of curriculum affect the content of curriculum implementation.

It is important that a classroom practitioner knows what is involved in implementing the prescribed curriculum. Curriculum implementation entails putting into practice the officially prescribed courses of study, syllabuses and subjects (Urevbu, 1985). The process involves helping the learner acquire knowledge or experience. It is important to note that curriculum implementation cannot take place without the learner. The learner is therefore the central figure in the curriculum implementation process. Implementation takes place as the learner acquires the planned or intended experiences, knowledge, skills, ideas and attitudes that are aimed at enabling the same learner to function effectively in a society (University of Zimbabwe, 1995:8). Viewed from this perspective, curriculum implementation also refers to the stage when the curriculum itself, as an educational programme, is put into effect. Putting a curriculum into operation requires an implementing agent. Stenhouse (1979:4) identifies the teacher as the agent in the curriculum implementation process. She argues that implementation is the manner in which the teacher selects and mixes the various aspects of knowledge contained in a curriculum document or syllabus. Implementation takes place when the teacher-constructed syllabus, the teacher's personality, the teaching materials and the teaching environment interact with the learner (University of Zimbabwe, 1995:9). Curriculum implementation therefore refers to how the planned or officially designed course of study is translated by the teacher into schemes of work and lessons to be delivered to students.

If one aims at quality practice one cannot wish that practitioners take a curriculum proposal literally, but should work towards a one-to-one translation of the curriculum proposal into practice. Curriculum practitioners need to apply it to the local practice as true as possible to the original intentions, since knowledge in general - preliminary, hypothetical, incomplete, more or less de-contextualised and worth of being scrutinised and developed. Rather, one must wish that teachers take the specific circumstances of their locality and of their constituencies into account in order to produce and evaluate a local version of the curriculum which is adapted to what is productive and feasible under these specific circumstances.

METHODOLOGY

A qualitatively, interpretative design was adopted to evaluate the relationship between the Social Studies curriculum of the Colleges of Education vis-à-vis the JHS Social Studies syllabus. Curricula documents on Social Studies of the Colleges of Education and that of the JHS were used. This was based on the two comparative analysis process created by the researchers:

- (1) The course description and objectives for offering the Social Studies programme at Colleges of Education vis-à-vis the rationale and objectives of the JHS syllabus; and
- (2) Content and nature of Colleges of Education Social Studies vis-à-vis the JHS Social Studies syllabus.

It was a purely documentary analysis of curricula documents. . The researchers, thus, compared documents from Colleges of Education and the JHS Social Studies syllabus to ascertain how the Social Studies curriculum has been structured at these two levels.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the findings and the resulting discussions of the study. The presentation is done under two main areas namely; the rationale and objectives of Social Studies at the CoE and the JHS in Ghana, and the Contents of the Social Studies Curricula at the CoE and the JHS levels in Ghana.

Rationale and Objectives of Social Studies in the Colleges of Education and the JHSs in Ghana

An analysis of curricula documents of Social Studies at these two levels of education in Ghana reveals that the Environmental/Social Studies curriculum at Colleges of Education was developed under the supervision of the Institute of Education-University of Cape Coast, whereas the JHS Social Studies curriculum was prepared by the Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD) of the Ghana Education Service (GES). Environmental/Social Studies is studied for four semesters at the Colleges of Education with the following as the descriptions and objectives of the various courses, from Year 1 to Year 2, under this curriculum:

- **Year 1, Semester 1-** The course here is described as “to examine the concept Environmental and Social Studies, the environment and its components buttressed with basic mapping skills. It also examines the various economic roles individuals play to prop up society and the roles of the financial institutions in supporting the various activities”.

The objectives are to:

1. Create an awareness of the components of the environment,
 2. Equip students with basic mapping skills,
 3. Help students to develop the ability to make rational decisions,
 4. Provide opportunities for students to participate in projects and activities, and
 5. Encourage students with the knowledge and skills required to handle the subject effectively at the Basic School level.
- **Year 1, Semester 2-** The course is described as “to examine the purpose and content of this course which is closely related to citizenship education which is cherished in many societies. It emphasises holistic approach to relevant issues such as gender, attitudes, values, beliefs, the skills

of problem solving, and the role of community institutions in the development of society. The course also provides opportunity for students to acquire further knowledge in mapping skills”.

The objectives are to:

1. Create an awareness of the important roles community institutions play in the development of society,
 2. Inculcate in students desirable social attitudes and values for good citizenship,
 3. Create an awareness of the signals that the environment gives about its degradation,
 4. Make students aware of the way in which the environment can be protected from being degraded, and
 5. Enable students to acquire further mapping skills.
- **Year 2, Semester 1-** The course description is “to examine the concept integration, spiral and expanding environment approaches to curriculum design in Environmental and Social Studies. It brings to the fore the meaning of methods, techniques and strategies used in teaching the subject. It also looks at the various teaching techniques such as brainstorming, role-playing, simulation, discussion and debate. It also emphasises the need for other resources such as resource room, resource person and community resource that go to enhance teaching and learning. It finally affords the student the opportunity to plan lessons on given topics in the subject”.

The objectives are as follows:

1. Making students aware of the various teaching techniques that are applied in the teaching-learning process of the subject,
 2. Making students aware of the rationale for the choice or selection of a particular teaching and learning method or technique, and
 3. Provides students the skills that will enable them use the methods and techniques.
- **Year 2, Semester 2-** This course is described as “to provide opportunities for students to discuss how society protects the individual to ensure peace and stability for sustainable national development; Issues on constitutional rule and provision of human rights; health services; food security and Ghana’s relations with international organisations and agencies are examined. Map reading and interpretation which is an importance academic or study skill is also highlighted in the course”.

The objectives of the course are to:

1. Prepare students to participate successfully in the civic life of their community,
2. Inculcate in students desirable attitudes and values for good citizenship,
3. Encourage students to lead healthy lives,
4. Acquaint students with skills to influence policy,
5. Provide opportunities for students to appreciate the importance of Ghana’s relations with international organisations and agencies, and
6. Encourage students to make reflective decisions through map reading and interpretation.

Social Studies at the JHS level has as its rationale the study of society and its problems thereby preparing the individual by equipping him or her with knowledge about the culture and ways of life of his/her society, its problems, its values and its hopes for the future. As a subject, Social Studies should help pupils/students to understand their society better; helps them to investigate

how their society functions and hence assists them to develop that critical and at the same time developmental kind of mind that will transform societies (CRDD, 2007). It can therefore be said that many of the CoE courses, by way of their descriptions and objectives, are in sync with Social Studies at the JHS level.

The general aims of Social Studies at the JHS level are set to help the pupil to:

1. understand the interrelationships between the social and the physical environment and their impact on the development of Ghana;
2. appreciate the impact of history on current and future development efforts of the country;
3. appreciate the various components of the environment and how these could be maintained to ensure sustainable development;
4. recognise the major challenges facing Ghana and be able to develop basic knowledge and skills for dealing with such challenges;
5. understand the dynamics of development in the world and their impact on development in Ghana;
6. develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for personal growth, peaceful co-existence, and respect for peoples of other nations; and
7. develop a sense of national consciousness and national identity.

When the above aims are matched with the objectives of the courses under the Social Studies curriculum at Colleges of Education, it can be said that they are related in majority of the cases. There are however no History related courses in the CoE Social Studies curriculum that will help trainees appreciate the impact of history on current and future development efforts of the country.

Content of the Social Studies curricula at the CoE and the JHSs

The study also ascertained whether the nature and content of Social Studies curriculum of Colleges of Education are in line with or differ from the Junior High School Social Studies. The Colleges of Education have the following as the content and nature of Social Studies from year 1 to year 2:

- Year I, semester 1 has the following courses:–
 1. The subject Environmental and Social Studies;
 2. Component of the environment;
 3. Maps and scales;
 4. Resources and their utilisation for sustainable development in Ghana;
 5. Various types of occupations/productions; and
 6. Financial institutions.
- Year I, Semester 2 courses are as follows:
 1. The role of community institutions in the development of society;
 2. Human resource and development;
 3. Environmental degradation;
 4. Methods of showing relief on maps;
 5. Representation of direction, and position;
 6. Conventional signs used on Ghana maps; and
 7. Other relief features and the concept of Intervisibility.
- Year 2, Semester 1 courses: –
 1. Integration/Integrated approach to the designing of Environmental and Social Studies curriculum;
 2. The spiral approach to the designing of Environmental and Social Studies programme;

3. The Concentric/Expanding horizon approach to the designing of Environmental and Social Studies programme;
4. Methods, techniques and strategies;
5. Brainstorming technique;
6. Role-play technique;
7. Simulation technique;
8. Debate technique;
9. Discussion technique;
10. Teaching and learning resources;
11. Community resources;
12. Resource person/guest speaker;
13. Resource room; and
14. Lesson planning and presentation.
 - Year 2, Semester 2 courses:
 1. Constitutional rule and provision of human right;
 2. Health issues: Reproductive health and significance of reproductive health education;
 3. Food security;
 4. Ghana's relationship with international organisations and agencies;
 5. Map interpretation; and
 6. Statistical mapping.

The scope of content of the Social Studies curriculum at the JHS level reflects the tools needed by the individual to solve personal and societal problems. The units/topics under this curriculum is based on themes derived from the persistent contemporary problems of Ghana and is trans-disciplinary in nature. The nature of the content of Social Studies at the JHS level (CRDD, 2007) does not fall in line with that of the Colleges of Education. The courses in the Social Studies curriculum in the Colleges of Education are mainly facts, concepts and topics bootlegged from the discrete subjects in the social sciences with geography taking precedence. Examples are maps and scales; methods of showing relief on maps; representation of direction, position and conventional signs used on Ghana maps and methods of showing relief and drainage on maps among others.

From the documents on Social Studies curriculum at Colleges of Education and the JHS, one can deduce that Social Studies at Colleges of Education is meant to produce trained and qualified teachers who have subject matter knowledge in areas such as Geography; where many topics are bootlegged from (i.e. map work, statistical mappings etc), but are not taught at the JHS level. The JHS syllabus rather shows that the programme is to equip students with relevant knowledge which form the basis for enquiry into issues and how to solve one's problem and that of society; inculcate in students the attributes of good citizenship.

The above suggests that the Colleges of Education Curriculum is in sync with the 1987 JHS Social Studies syllabus while the current JHS syllabus is theme based, trans-disciplinary in nature and focused on problem solving. Also Environmental Studies, which is part of the Colleges of Education course structure, is not being taught in the basic schools. Rather, Citizenship Education is the subject taught at the upper primary level of basic schools in Ghana.

The Colleges of Education Social Studies course content is more of Geography than themes based on the problems of society, as represented in the curriculum of the subject at the JHS level. For instance, out of the thirty-three (33) topics in the programme of the Colleges of Education, fifteen (15) dwell on professional topics (methods of teaching social studies), while ten (10) are geography topics. Most of these topics have no bearing on the Social Studies curriculum at the basic schools. This means that newly qualified teachers will be found wanting in the teaching of Citizenship Education at the upper primary level and Social Studies at the JHS level.

CONCLUSIONS

College of Education in Ghana use a particular conception of Social Studies for the production of Social Studies teachers, which is very different from that of the JHS. The Colleges of Education rather subscribe to and employ an amalgamation of disciplines perspective, where facts, concepts and generalisations are bootlegged from the social sciences. Although both the CoE and JHS Social Studies curricula see the subject as an integration of knowledge, the point of contention has been the nature and acceptable level of integration.

The foregoing implies that a gap is being created in the knowledge and the ideal practices of newly qualified teachers from the colleges of education. The implication of the many geography topics in the Colleges of Education curriculum is that trainees only learn how to decode facts and generalizations of geographical concepts, and not how related problems are solved. This makes the changeover of the learning of geographical concepts in the colleges of education to the teaching of issue oriented topics in the basic schools very difficult for most of these newly qualified teachers.

It is therefore being recommended that the gap between the Colleges of Education Social Studies curriculum and that of the Basic School be bridged by changing the Environmental / Social Studies curriculum in the colleges to reflect Citizenship Education / Social Studies at the Basic Schools. There is also the need for a quality assurance mechanism to be instituted in the teaching profession to ensure that teacher preparation programmes in the country are designed to focus on the needs of society. The classroom practices of teachers, so far as Social Studies is concerned, must be centred on the current knowledge and understanding of what the subject is; issues centred and problem solving.

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