

**PROGRESSIVE METHODS OF TEACHING HISTORY AT
SCHOOL LEVEL IN SWAZILAND: TEACHERS'
PERCEPTIONS OF WHAT IS ESSENTIAL TO THEIR
CLASSROOM PRACTICES.**

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**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the Masters Degree in
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DECLARATION

**I declare that this is my own unaided work, and that it has not
been submitted before for any degree at any university.**

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ABSTRACT

The primary aim of the study is to investigate teachers' views about what is necessary for the effective use of progressive methods in the teaching of history. It argues that the mere adoption of procedures associated with progressive methods in teaching without awareness of the essentials for using them, does not lead to the expected results. The study draws its research from two high schools in the Manzini Region in Swaziland, and concludes that even though teachers were using a terminology of progressive methods when talking about their teaching strategies, they were unaware of the essential skills related to such terminology, and subsequently could not encourage the development of such skills. Their understanding of the nature of history as a discipline and its value as a school subject is also identified as limited. The study recommends that for teachers to overcome these shortcomings, they need to be part of the discourses that defines their discipline and the discussions on what is essential for the teaching of history.

Key Words

Swaziland, Progressive, Teaching, School History

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The fact that "historians select the facts they write about, and their selection is influenced by their social position and by factors such as who they write for" (Bam and Visser Undated: 71), highlights the element of subjectivity in the nature of history. As a result no version of history should be taken to be "unbiased" and not requiring any questioning. The conditions under which historical knowledge is constructed, make it tentative, controversial and always inviting further thought. However, the situation has been different in a number of schools. Historical knowledge is taught as facts that should be accepted passively. Teachers tend to neglect the interpretive and controversial nature of history. Students are made to internalize what they get from their teachers and textbooks without question. "The teacher after absorbing thousands of facts, usually from the textbook currently used by the school, speaks for thirty minutes or more on the topic" (Bam and Visser Undated: 95). In this way of learning the teacher is responsible for passing to students what he \ she considers to be facts, and students, on the other hand, are expected to accept everything told without questions or discussions.

The heavy dependence on teacher-centered methods in the teaching of History has led to the subject being badly presented. As a result, the subject has lost its value in the school curriculum. Low numbers of students choose to study the subject and there is an assumption that the subject is a soft option of little value. The negative attitude towards

the subject is also reflected by claims that it has no practical value compared to other subjects in schools.

The belief is that history lacks knowledge that can be practically applied and that no skills can be learned from it. This leaves little hope for its survival in the school curriculum. Even though in the words of Bam and Visser (Undated: 3-4), "education is not about fitting people into an economy; it is about preparing people to live in a society" it may also be true that in comparison to other disciplines and in a vocational sense, history (knowledge acquired) may not directly open up opportunities for the students. However, this does not mean that the subject is useless. It does and it can contribute to the development of useful skills if correctly taught. What is highlighted by these concerns is that in the face of pressures from market oriented subjects history has to justify its place in the school curriculum.

1.2 The importance of history in the school curriculum

My experience as a history teacher has made me realize that in most schools in Swaziland history is not a compulsory subject. In most cases students are forced to do history because they are considered weak to do the other sciences. The assumption is that such students will be able to cope with the subject because it expects recalling what the teacher or text has said and nothing more. There is a misconception that there are no other skills involved in the learning of history. It is such conceptions that are generally considered as threatening the survival of the subject. The misconception has resulted in students, other teachers in the profession and the community in general, believing that history is 'barren'

and not related to the needs of the students. "History's greatest threat comes from misunderstanding and misconceptions of pupils, parents and in some cases teachers of other subjects" (White 1996:25). Such misconceptions are of concern to those who believe that history synthesizes all the subjects in the school curriculum and that the knowledge and skills that students could gain from the study of history are linked to many subjects in the curriculum. For Burston and Green the synthesizing element of the subject comes from it being a study about past communities.

For if history is the study of a past community in all its aspects, then it obviously has considerable value as a synthesizing subject which would show all the subjects of the curriculum in their relationship with one another (1972:15)

In addition, for some the nature of history involves controversy and interpretation, thus making historical knowledge an ongoing debate. For example, history involves weighing evidence and this is important to all students regardless of careers. The skill of weighing evidence is crucial in modern society and it can be put into practice every day.

The ability to recognize different perspectives is critical in a world where we are bombarded with information. All citizens need to be able to make informed and independent judgements about newspaper editorials, television news accounts, persuasion in advertisements, political speeches and so on" (Bam and Visser Undated: 5).

Writing in relation to South Africa, Bam and Visser assert that through the learning of history, students can also be prepared to be citizens in a democratic society. In their view students do need to be accustomed to skills related to learning history, and which are essential for meaningful participation in a democratic society.

We would argue strongly that for our new democracy to be effective, we need citizens with critical and reflective thinking abilities. We believe that the history classroom is the ideal place to develop these skills (pp93-94).

Sieborger (1994) and Kallaway (1995) have also argued that the integrity of history in schools can be restored by the use of progressive teaching methods. They advocate a move from distorting the nature of historical knowledge in schools and making students passive in the history classroom. They call for a situation where history is taught as a form of inquiry similar to that of professional historians. Their argument is that students should be allowed to question and critique information that they are exposed to. If history is taught in this way, its value as teaching students to be productive and active participants in society will become clear.

1.3 Defining progressive methods of teaching

The idea of progressive teaching methods started in the 1960s in the UK and the United States. The methods were viewed as a solution to the problems faced by history in schools. According to Cuban progressive teaching refers to a situation where "students exercise a substantial degree of responsibility for what is taught, how it is learned, and for movement within the classroom" (1993: 7). He uses the word progressive to refer to more than just pedagogy but to students' involvement or control in the selection and organization of content to be covered in their lessons. "Students help choose and organize the content to be learned" (*Ibid.* p7). By selection and organization of content Cuban refers to a situation where teachers involve students in actually choosing what topics they are interested in, deciding which ones should be learned first and which ones should

come last in order to ensure that instruction and the curriculum are tailored to the students' interests and creativity. Notwithstanding Cuban's point of view, in the case of this project, the term progressive will be confined to issues of pedagogy, students controlling their learning by being involved (doing history) and will not concern itself with how content is selected and organized. The latter is centrally done by National Curriculum bodies in Swaziland. Generally teachers do not have meaningful participation in these bodies. It is from these bodies that curriculum requirements are determined and then passed on to teachers to implement. (see Appendix I). The methods I call progressive in the teaching of history are sometimes referred to as student-centered, skills-based or new history (Kallaway 1995).

According to Kallaway 'new history' methodology emphasize the acquisition of critical skills and historical understanding as against the memorization of content (p 13). Therefore, in the context of this study, observable features of progressive methods of teaching in history would be demonstrated by the following aspects: when students are given the opportunity to do history rather than the teacher doing it for them, when students do history through investigations, develop historical explanations and interpretations; when they do not just memorize the history others have done and when students are exposed to raw material such as documents, objects, pictures and films with actual footage and are allowed to work like historians as they try to interpret the sources. The assumption is that this gives them the opportunity to think and work for themselves, exchange ideas and try to justify their reasoning thus helping to develop important intellectual capacities.

1.4 Purpose of the study

Aim

There is growing literature on why history is in decline as a school subject and how the situation can be remedied by the use of progressive teaching methods. (Seixas 1993, Sieborger 1994, Kallaway 1995, White 1996, Levistick and Barton 1997). Krige 1992, Lowry 1995 and Giroux 1995 also emphasize the importance of the subject in relation to skills such as critical and creative thinking. These studies focussed on finding ways that could help revive or change the position of the subject in schools. Since there is a general belief that History in schools is the one subject that most students do not like, the underlying concern in research has been to encourage history teachers to use methods of teaching that can evoke learners' interest in the subject and develop skills associated with it. The assumption is that such methods will help to develop the skills associated with learning history.

This research has been conducted primarily to establish the extent to which students are helped to acquire the skills related to the learning of history when teachers employ what they understand to be progressive ways of teaching. The assumption is that there is a general neglect of the essentials of strategies which could help students to acquire the skills targeted.

In order to establish whether attention is given to these essentials, the researcher felt that it was crucial to find out how teachers teach and their rationale for their practices. The

aim was to find out from teachers, who believed they were using useful strategies that would promote success in history learning whether they were aware of what is necessary for the effective use of such strategies or methods.

In order to achieve the above aims the following questions called for a rigorous investigation and have provided stimulus and basis for the survey undertaken:

1. What methods do history teachers use in teaching the subject?

With this question attention was given to what teachers do when they teach History and to establish the nature of the methods used.

2. What is their understanding of the methods they use?

Here the teachers' perception about the methods they use and their conceptual implications were of interest as a means of defining how they 'talked about' these methods and their importance in the teaching of history. The aim was to establish the extent to which teachers understand what was essential when they used the methods.

3. What is the purpose of using such teaching strategies?

The intentions of the teachers and what they hoped to achieve when using the methods was of particular interest to the study.

4. What is the explanation for the way in which methods are used by teachers?

The assumption here was that to some extent the way in which the methods were used would be influenced by the teachers' perception of the subject. The focus was on the teachers' understanding of the nature of historical knowledge and the value of teaching History, such as; the kind of skills which could be acquired by students who are learning the subject and how History can prepare students for life outside school.

1.5 Organization of the study

Chapter 1 outlines the problems that history as a school subject is facing due to unsatisfactory forms of pedagogy. The chapter also outlines the importance of history in the school curriculum. Progressive methods are defined and reasons are given for the definition adopted for this study.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the literature on the importance of history as a subject that would encourage students to develop skills such as critical and creative thinking. The chapter emphasizes that in order for history to be able to develop such skills teachers need to adopt methods of teaching that would allow students to do history in the same way as historians.

Chapter 3 provides an account of how the study was designed. It highlights concepts that are essential for the study and then gives an account of how appropriate research tools were selected to inquire into these concepts. Finally, it explains how the concepts have been employed to read meaning into research data.

Chapters 4 & 5 focus on the presentation and analysis of the research data. First, chapter 4 provides an analysis of teachers' conceptions of history, their views on the value of teaching history and how such perceptions impacted on the methods used. The next chapter (5) discuss the methods used by teachers and their rationale for adopting them in order to highlight the teachers' understanding of what history teaching is about. There is also an attempt to illustrate how this is influenced by the teachers' conceptions of historical knowledge.

Chapter 6 The main arguments of the study are summarized, conclusions are drawn and recommendations are made for improving the Swazi teachers' knowledge about current ways of thinking associated with teaching history at school level.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the literature that deals with issues related to the importance of first, history as a discipline and second, how consideration of these issues would help the crisis faced by the subject at school level. The chapter draws mainly from work done in the UK and USA to outline the essence of these issues and then looks at writings produced, in particular, in other Southern African countries in order to highlight how these issues are dealt with in this context. The latter has been relied upon greatly for deriving concepts that underpin this study. It has not been possible to also draw on work done in Swaziland as it seems as if these issues have not yet caught the attention of theorists and researchers in this part of the world despite the common problems faced by schools here as well. The researcher could not find any work in this regard within tertiary institutions.

A number of writers have pointed out how history in schools can lead to the development of skills that are essential. The general feeling is that the position of History in schools is threatened. Societies are questioning the relevance of the subject to the current requirements of work places. The questions asked include, amongst others, how much monetary value does the study of History have and of what use is History to present day society? Mulholland (1981) argues that such questioning arises from the concern about common practices in the teaching of the subject;

the ability to reproduce the ideas contained in one text as faithfully as possible very often counts as adequate historical knowledge within the school situation, this is, in fact, a subversion of the genuine historical method... (p80).

She also points out that the questions about History should not be interpreted as suggesting that it should not be taught in schools but that teachers need to change the way in which they teach. Mulholland stresses that if taught correctly, history can develop habits of thinking and inquiry that are not only useful but essential in our time. "The very difficulties encountered in a careful study of history are an excellent preparation for training logical habits of thought relating to the realm of human action" (p 59).

2.2 The school version of history as a field of study

Seixas suggests that to improve the school version of history, rather than import historical facts generated by historians into the history classroom, the students should be given the opportunity to replicate the way in which historians deal with knowledge. The point is explained further by Evans when he asserts that "students should use the same procedures in reading secondary sources as we do in reading primary materials" (1997: 110). Schools should offer basic skills in handling sources, such as the relationship of sources to other documents on the same topic, their reliability and usefulness and the circumstances in which they were written. He argues that the process should involve asking who has written the document, to whom the document is addressed, reasons for this and a check for internal consistency in relation to other documents on the same subject.

However, it is also crucial for history teachers to understand that relaxed frames will not automatically ensure that students are learning something in their activities if they do not have basic principles. For example, for students to be able to get on with the rigorous work of historical inquiry they need background information on the particular historical event they are dealing with. The use of progressive methods would ensure changes in the school version of history not only in terms of encouraging the development of skills related to the learning of the subject but also ensure that the constant abuse of history in the school system is done away with.

The way History is taught in schools does not only destroy the nature of historical knowledge but there is also the tendency to use the subject to indoctrinate or socialize students to certain ideals of those in power. In most countries the history classroom is a good place to socialize students to the dominant culture. Thus we can say history is taken to be the handmaiden of political ideologies. This is another reason why controversy and interpretation has been removed in the history classroom because students should not be encouraged to develop a critical mind lest they start to be critical of those in power. It would seem that history is abused by people in power to preserve their beliefs. Kaye (1991) discusses the above issue when he alludes to the role of history in both America and Britain after the Second World War. In both countries history in schools was in decline but those in power were determined to solve the crisis and revive the subject in the school curriculum. This was done not on the basis of the nature of the discipline and its capability to contribute to development of thinking capacities but because the subject promised to help develop the hegemony they so much wanted to achieve. Post war social

changes in the two countries and the socialist ideas that were spreading became a problem to those concerned with preserving the status quo. "The British and American New Rights' attempts to mobilize the past and history have represented concerted efforts not only to ideologically legitimize their policy and programme initiatives but to refashion late twentieth century capitalist hegemony" (Kaye 1991: 66). There was a tendency to create a conservative consensus in the two countries by reviving the importance of history teaching in schools. The aim was to use history education to legitimize existing social structures and achieve hegemony. According to Kaye hegemony refers to;

a relationship between classes in which the dominant class secures the conformity and consent or, at least, the acceptance and accommodation of the lower classes to the given social order...(1991: 67).

This notion of hegemony is underpinned by the belief that struggle in society cannot be reduced by force but through persuading those ruled that the way things are is the way they ought to be and any change would be disastrous to the society or nation. Kaye (1991) asserts that history has been seen as the best tool to achieve this. The general stance has been that when students learn about their society in the past, this might provide a way of legitimizing the present social order. For example, according to Kaye the curricula advanced to revive crisis in history teaching proposed a dimension of national history that was not critical but showed the past glory of the two nations, that is Britain and America. He argues that when history is abused in this way, it ensures that there is no development of dissent and dreams of alternatives to the status quo. "History in both Britain and America was used to refashion capitalist hegemony and political ideologies"

(p 66). Such use and abuse of history is questionable especially in societies such as United States and Britain where there was emphasis on liberalism and democratic rights.

The abuse of history is also alluded to by Goodson (1993), who argues that in the UK, history has been used as a vehicle for conservatism. He feels that history can be used by nations for other purposes, such as, reassertion of ideology and control of the nation. He believes that in the UK the subject has been chosen to revive national identity and ideology prompted by an economic decline pointing to the nation being at risk of losing its identity and control due to globalization. To solve the problem history was to be revived as an important subject in the school curriculum reforms enshrined in the National Curriculum. "History has been embraced as a foundation subject even though it is quite clearly a subject in decline within the schools" (Goodson 1993:263).

Goodson argues further that;

this project (abuse of history) is diametrically opposed to the alternative project of educating pupils from a plurality of cultures, for active citizenship in a democracy. The history of mass mechanical obedience as a bedrock for nation building is well known, but it leads not to democracy but to totalitarianism (1993: 276).

The implication of Goodson's position is that the crisis that history is facing in schools should not be resolved by abusing the subject, that is, serving ideological motives. Instead it should be revived because as a discipline it has much to offer students in terms of skills and virtues that are essential for democratic communities. (see also Kaye 1991 on this point).

In Britain Jenkins (1991) and Booth (1994) have pointed out the need to re-think the way history is taught in schools if the status of the subject is to be defended. They have suggested a move towards adopting progressive methods that will enable students to acquire not only knowledge but skills as well. Jenkins argues that, "passive learning, which has been associated with more traditional methods of teaching, should give way to active, well directed inquiry where students are given greater opportunities to control their own learning" (Jenkins 1991:17). Booth agrees with Jenkins that such a move will ensure that students develop skills that can be acquired when engaging in rigorous activities in the learning of history.

The idea of skills in the teaching of History is also supported in Britain by White (1996) when she emphasizes the importance of history skills to the present society. She further argues that if History is to survive teachers must demonstrate that the subject can and does promote skills that are crucial to all young people. "The study of history clearly develops the intellectual skills of reasoned argument, synthesis of evidence, debate and justification, testing hypothesis against evidence"(White 1996: 24). White claims that it is only then that we can say history has a role in preparing students for both adult life and work places.

Levistick and Barton (1997) argue that in the teaching and learning of history it is crucial to be aware that historical accounts involve interpretation. This supports the idea advanced by Seixas, Jenkins and Evans that historical knowledge should be presented as a process of inquiry and emphasize that historical knowledge cannot be presented as

'real' or facts unless the aim is to preserve the status quo, because history is controversial and interpretive. "If schools are to prepare students for active citizenship in a democracy, they (teachers) can neither ignore controversy nor teach students to accept passively someone else's historical interpretation" (Levistic and Barton 1997:8). They further assert that teachers should encourage an in-depth understanding of historical issues, meaning that, "students have to study topics in enough depth to understand them and reflect on the meaning and significance of what they have studied" (Ibid: 11).

In South Africa, the use of history as a vehicle for conservatism has been also criticized by Enslin (1994) where she discusses her concerns about education for nation building. Her argument is that nation building is incompatible with the project of democracy because it undermines the development of critical thinking that is a key component of democracy. She asserts that the role of education is to help students to become autonomous people, capable of engaging in thoughts of their own and to act rationally and independently. Such people, according to her, are able to take part in democratic participation politically and at the work places. She argues that education for democracy means helping students to learn the skills of rational inquiry and also to encourage them to practice those skills.

The crucial features of education for democratic participation would be in the first place, that authority would not be accepted unquestioningly. In the second place, to be able to participate rationally and with independence, individuals would need to acquire skills of critical thinking (Enslin 1994: 25).

Enslin's argument that nation building is not compatible with democracy can be found wanting because nation-building can be different from nationalism. Her failure to define

nation building in her context makes her argument debatable. I would say it is nationalism that is not in line with democratic virtues as it fosters uncritical socialization into a particular ideology. However, to build a nation may mean achieving understanding and tolerance amongst different groups of people in one country. As Bam and Visser puts it, "nation building referring to a sense of creating a country in which all people can live in relative harmony as members of a single, diverse, but no longer divided society" (Undated: 6).

It can be argued that democracy can contribute to nation building. Some of the virtues involved in democratic practice being free talk, listen and to be ready to change one's view when there is reason and evidence. In order to build a nation there is a need for education that would encourage such democratic virtues. Therefore skills learned in history can be essential in helping students to acquire these virtues and becoming ready to take part in the building of their nation.

In the same light Lowry (1995) and Giroux (1995) have pointed out the importance of ensuring that history is not used to conserve ideologies. When history is used in this way it is equal to indoctrination and such indoctrination can stifle attempts to develop citizens with a critical mind needed in a democratic society. Lowry shares sentiments with Enslin when he argues that history has a role in the development of citizens who are not only patriotic but also responsible. He contends that much as it is important for students to develop a sense of identity and belonging to their country, they should be encouraged to be competent citizens.

They will be loyal, but not of the version my country right or wrong. Rather they will develop a critical version of loyalty where they are not scared or too pathetic to engage in discussion about the community, region or country and the roles of each of these in international affairs. They may feel empowered too, to participate in activities aimed at changing the policies and philosophies of the governing party (Lowry 1995: 116).

Giroux also believes that competent citizens could be developed in the history classroom by allowing students to express and assess their own experiences in relation to the dominant culture. He alerts us to the social, political and cultural boundaries that place demands on the way the subject is to be taught and suggest that one way of doing this is by allowing students to critically analyze how the dominant culture marginalizes other groups of people.

This suggests taking seriously the knowledge and experiences that constitute the individual and collective voices by which students identify and give meaning to themselves and others and drawing upon what they know about their own lives as a basis for criticizing the dominant culture (Giroux 1995: 55-56).

Giroux fights the conception of taking critical teaching as unpatriotic, pointing to the fact that students will learn more about their culture and country when these are analyzed on the basis of their (students) life experiences. The main concern is to develop a pedagogy that will shift history from being used as a vehicle to preserve status quo and allow an approach that give students the opportunity to speak from their own histories. The introduction of critical pedagogy will ensure the creation of critical rather than merely patriotic citizens and this should be the focus of history learning in schools.

Giroux (1989) clearly expresses the point that if history is to be taught in a way that will ensure the development of competent citizens, there is a need for a teacher to be a

'transformative intellectual'. A teacher should not play the role of being public servant who is an agent concerned with exposing students to a dominant culture without being critical. He explains the role of transformative intellectuals as being more than just empowering students individually and academically, but as:

also concerned in their teaching with linking empowerment – ability to think and act critically – to the concept of social engagement and transformation: that is, teaching for social transformation means educating students to take risks and to struggle within ongoing relations of power in order to be able to envision and promote those unrealized possibilities in the wider society that point to a more humane and democratic future (p. 138).

This means that teachers have a responsibility of making sure that the history classroom is not a place where they simply and uncritically socialize students to knowledge about basic structures in their society. Giroux argues for a case where teachers would help students to learn about their society, culture, economy and work places in a critical manner thus ensuring that in future they are capable of transforming those institutions if there is need. He concludes that when teachers do this, they will be contributing to the building of a democratic culture in their societies.

Gutmann (1987) points out that developing students thinking abilities is not only necessary for political reasons but also for their personal decision-making and at the work places. His argument is that responsible citizens in a democratic society are people with the capacity to think critically and also have a sense of social commitment, that is, willing to participate on political issues.

Even the ability to think critically about politics is an incomplete virtue from a democratic perspective. If primary schooling leaves students with the capacity for political criticism but no capacity for political participation or sense of social commitment, either because it fails to cultivate their sense of political efficacy or

because it succeeds in teaching them deference to authority, then it will have neglected to cultivate a virtue essential to democracy (p92).

It has been clearly established that in the process of learning history students can acquire skills that form the basis for a democratic society. This does not mean that only history in the school curriculum can foster democratic virtues but the point is considering the nature of the subject and if taught correctly it can encourage ways of thinking that are essential for democratic dispositions in all spheres of life within a society.

American philosophers' views such as those of Barber- strong democracy (1984) and Rawls- the ideal of public reason (1993) are useful here for clarifying the importance of the skills related to learning of history. Their views describe what they believe should be responsibilities of democratic citizens.

2.3 Democratic citizenry and its responsibilities

One important issue that comes up in Barber's and Rawls' work is that in a democratic society people should be willing to talk and also listen to what others have to say. Barber says that at the heart of a strong democracy is talk and this also entails listening to other people's point of view (p174). Democratic citizens participate by engaging in discussions aimed at problem solving for the benefit of the community. This is supported by Rawls who argues that the ideal of public reason "expresses a willingness to listen to what others have to say and being ready to accept reasonable accommodations or alterations in one's own view" (1993: 253). Rawls takes the argument further by emphasizing that in

public discussions people make their deliberations based on reason and evidence so that besides listening and talking, the willingness to alter or accommodate other views on the basis of rationality and sound evidence is crucial in a democratic society.

Both Barber and Rawls further point to democratic citizens as people who can make reasonable decisions. According to Barber citizens who make decisions are reasonable, non-impulsive, thoughtful and fair (p126). This points to a person who can weigh evidence relating to issues and then come to a decision. Such requires a critical mind that Gutmann feels can only be developed through training in didactic thinking. Rawls says that the ideal of public reason is very crucial when citizens engage in political advocacy in public forum, when political parties campaign and how citizens vote. Citizens who engage with such issues should be critical and have a questioning approach to what others are saying before making choices.

The issues raised by the two philosophers have implications for Southern African countries especially when it comes to the importance of participatory democracy which Barber refers to as 'strong democracy' as against 'thin democracy'. This is more so when one considers that these countries are at the early stages of creating democratic societies. Their theories do also have implications on the teaching of history in schools. As it has been already pointed out, history is capable of encouraging democratic virtues if correctly taught. This means history teachers need to be encouraged to use methods of teaching that will ensure that students acquire the skills essential to prepare them for a democratic

society and workplaces (listening, talking and rationality). These are the skills that can be fostered through the use of progressive methods in the teaching of history.

2.4 Progressive methods of teaching history

Seixas sees progressive methods as an attempt to bring about the idea of a community of inquiry in the classroom similar to that which historians do. He acknowledges that the community of historians and that of students studying history are different in terms of members' intellectual capacities and knowledge. However he insists that if teachers would think of their history classes as a community of historians they might make an attempt to do what is done in the real community, even if it is not to the fullest extent.

The two communities cannot be conceived as one, given the differences in their member's knowledge...However, understanding the two communities in an analogical relationship is more conducive to a stimulating and authentic pedagogy (Seixas 1993:315).

Literature on progressive methods considers the methods as enabling history students to acquire skills that are usually associated with the historical method namely, analysis, critique and interpretation. Krige, Taylor and Vadi (1992) point to the interpretive nature of historical knowledge and further emphasize the importance of correctly presenting history in the classroom if students are to develop critical thinking. They argue that in the history classroom students should be given the chance to analyze evidence or records of the past as historians do. This will ensure that they develop a critical and questioning approach. Krige and co-authors make an important point when they say critical thinking

can only develop with a mastery of language skills. This further points to the importance of allowing students the chance to develop their language through reading, writing and talking. They argue for a skills-based approach in the learning of history. According to them at the heart of this approach, which they qualify as critical, is giving opportunities for group work and discussions and making learning to be collaborative. "Central to this mode of learning (critical approach) is the democratisation of knowledge through regular group discussions, a collective approach to answering questions and developing responses, a sharing of opinions and thoughts about evidence and a mutual exchange of information in the group as a whole" (Krige *et.al* 1992: 17-18).

Authors such as, Sieborger (1994), Dean and Sieborger(1995), Kallaway(1995), Sieborger, Weldon and Hinton(1996), and Bam and Visser(undated), also argue that for History to justify its place in the school curriculum it has to encourage students to develop skills crucial and relevant to the needs of contemporary society. For example, Kallaway (1995: 13) refers to the value of teaching history as follows, "the purpose of teaching History was to develop critical skills and insights, rather than for pupils to remember vast hunks of factual content." According to Kallaway the skills relevant to the learning of History cannot be achieved unless teachers use methods that allow students to be active in the learning process. These suggestions have been expressed as a way of retrieving the integrity of history as a school subject. As he puts it;

As the whole nature of history education in the schools comes under review it is necessary to ensure that the subject regains its educational legitimacy and credibility in the eyes of the public in general, and teaching profession in particular (Kallaway 1995: 13).

Also in South Africa, the National Education Crisis Committee argued for the interrogation of sources. It contends that a reason for the interrogation of sources would be establishing the extent to which they do not agree about the same incidence, because contextual and temporal factors make it crucial for historians to scrutinize evidence or sources since they are likely to be influenced or to have been influenced by the views of those who wrote them at a particular time.

The pieces of evidence we have from history do not always agree. Often historians are confronted by various different explanations and stories about the same incident. This is partly because an incident will be recorded from the point of view of the teller, and the telling will be affected by the situation in which it is told (NECC 1987:24).

These views are also emphasized by Sieborger (1994: 5). For Sieborger, learner-centered methods would give students the opportunity to engage deeply with or interrogate historical knowledge. In the process they would learn the elementary skills of historical thinking, such as questioning, analyzing sources and interpretation. The argument is that, the learning of History in schools should be activity-based, meaning that, students should learn by doing things themselves.

Mathews, Moodley, Rheeder and Wilkinson (1992) also assert that progressive methods are important in the teaching of History, but point out that the effectiveness of such methods depend on whether teachers understand their conceptual implications. They argue that, when history teachers are not provided with the rationale for adopting the methods, there is a tendency constantly to go back to traditional methods. "There are important lessons to be learnt from these failures. Firstly, to implement a skills-based approach, teachers must clearly understand what History is and what it involves"

(Mathews *et.al* 1992: 2). Unless teachers come to terms with the nature of History and its purpose there will always be a mixture of traditional and progressive methods in the teaching of the subject. This is the stance adopted by Mathews *et.al* because they view effectiveness as implying a complete move from traditional ways of teaching. Their stance is problematic because to use progressive methods does not mean that history teachers should do away with traditional methods that have a crucial role in the teaching of the subject. As Bam and Visser argue, traditional methods are useful in giving students the historical background they need before they can engage issues on their own.

Despite the stance taken on the value of progressive methods, Bam and Visser argue that such an argument does not imply a total abandonment of what has been generally referred to as traditional methods. They still see the value of these methods and view them as having a role to play in the learning of History. "Traditional teaching methods can be highly useful in imparting historical information, and teachers will continue to use the methods for that reason" (Bam and Visser undated: 98). According to these authors the general concerns expressed about traditional methods are not about whether they are ineffective but that in being used on their own they sometimes fail to encourage students to engage the skills which are crucial to the study of History. In other words, Bam and Visser's point is that the significance of content cannot be underplayed in the effort to develop skills in History. They believe that skills are as important as content or historical knowledge. Hirst (1974) in his ideas on liberal education asserts that, knowledge is important because it fulfills the mind a virtue that has nothing to do with utilitarian or vocational considerations. This highlights the fact that in the process of ensuring that

students develop skills it is crucial not to down play the value of knowledge. Further more, students need to have historical background of the events they will be engaged with and it is through the use of traditional methods that such can be given to them. Without the historical background they cannot be in a position to engage on analysis effectively.

The importance of viewing progressive and traditional methods as complimentary has also been emphasized by Cuban (1993), who asserts that often teachers do not fully engage in progressive practices, but they tend to mix student- centered and teacher-centered methods. Consequently, their pedagogy becomes what he refers to as 'hybrids of progressive and teacher-centered practices'. For him such hybrids are the result of teachers' lack of autonomy over what they do in the classroom. "Teachers have a limited autonomy to choose what they teach and how they teach. Thus, situationally constrained choice helps to explain the practical pedagogy that teachers hammered out daily in their classrooms and also the substantial changes that many teachers decide to make in their routines" (Ibid: 273).

What can be concluded from the discussion so far outlined is that unless we understand the nature of history as a field of study it will be difficult to appreciate fully what is critical to advocating the use of progressive methods. There are two main positions with regard to the nature of history. On the one hand, there is a position that considers history to be a science. On the other hand, history is viewed as an interpretive discipline.

2.5 History as a Science

Those who advocate this position view history as highly generalizable and seek to make its study as objective as possible. They argue that history employs the same procedures as the natural sciences and that its findings should be judged by scientific standards. The facts will determine how the past will be interpreted.

They believe that in the process the beliefs and values of historians are irrelevant; their sole concern is with the facts and generalizations to which they logically lead (Tosh 1991:132).

In Tosh's view those who view history as a science argue that the duty of the historian is to accumulate factual knowledge about the past and verify facts critically by interrogating sources. Such is the position, even though historians work by formulating hypothesis on issues and test their hypothesis by using primary and secondary evidence (sources). According to Tosh in order to establish the authenticity of a source, historians ask questions such as, does the language used in the source fit the time of its production and the material used (quality of paper). As Evans (1997: 18) explains as well, it is only after "gathering, criticizing and verifying all the available sources, that they can put themselves in a position to reconstruct the past accurately" The assumption here for those who follow such procedures, is that judgement and interpretations made by historians about the past follow a rigorous interrogation of sources. Historians before they decide to use a source start by establishing its authenticity. Truly, "all recorded evidence of the past has to be treated with caution and it is this factor that perhaps needs to be borne in the mind when historians go about their task" (Farrista 1996: 14).

Notwithstanding views on hypotheses testing, Tosh does not accept that history is a science. In his view hypotheses formulated by historians are provisional and there is never general consensus about the assumptions they make about issues under study and this clarifies why the discipline, in his view, comprises of ongoing debates about issues. In addition, hypotheses put forward by historians are tentative and bound to change as new evidence comes up. Facts in history are selected and interpreted, and the criteria for such may not be objective as it is relative to a particular historian. Therefore, the work of historians bears some relation to their personality, the circumstances in which they live and their ideology. This does not only refute the idea of objectivity in the discipline but also strongly show its subjective nature. This implies that historical accounts on past events are considered objective in so far as historians follow the standards set for inquiry but mainly subjective because they reflect the thinking and conceptions of particular individuals.

2.6 History as an interpretive discipline

Relativists challenge the idea of history being a science and argue that objectivity is impossible. They see every aspect of historiography as infected with preconceptions that the historian has. This renders objectivity in history highly impossible. For example, among others, Tosh, Jenkins, Collingwood and Appleby believe strongly that historical knowledge is subjective. Since History is a reconstruction of the past by a historian, it will always reflect the partiality and interest of a particular writer.

Nobody can become completely dispassionate about his or her own assumptions or those of earlier ages; the evidence can usually be read in support of conflicting hypotheses; and since the sources never recapture a past situation in its entirety, the sense of historical context depends also on an imaginative flair which will

vary according to the insight and experience of the individual scholars. (Tosh 1991: 151).

The argument is that, the nature of history is such that no matter how rigorously professional is the adopted approach, there will always be a plurality of interpretation. Historical knowledge will never be placed beyond controversy (Collingwood). However, to say historical knowledge is not objective does not mean that it's a lie or not true, but it points to it being a personal construct and thus subjective. Carr put it this way;

The facts are available to the historian in documents, inscriptions and so on, like a fish on the fishmonger's slab. The historian collects them, takes them home, and cooks and serves them in whatever style appeals to him (Carr 1990: 9).

He argues that it is the historian who makes the facts to speak as he decides what to present and how to present it in support of his hypotheses. I think that what Carr is saying is plausible when one considers that whenever history is written there is a purpose. It is this purpose that shapes the way historians interpret the facts or evidence about the past. It can be argued that the purpose or reasons a historian has for writing history become a window through which the facts are seen regardless of following the rules for a historical inquiry.

Jenkins's stance (1991) in relation to the nature of the discipline is that history is a discourse about the past manifested in the writings of historians and it has a subjective element in it. The evidence left behind by the past becomes the object of inquiry that can be read differently by different historians, "when we study history we are not studying the past but what historians have constructed about the past"(1991:5). Therefore, historical knowledge is a reconstruction of the past by particular individuals. This being the case historical accounts are tentative and bound to change as new evidence come to

depend on the purpose for writing those accounts. For him history changes as people use it to legitimize social relations that are in existence. It is such issues that make Jenkins to argue that history is a personal construct and it will always be tentative. He asserts that;

the fact that history *per se* is an ideological construct means that it is constantly being re-worked and re-ordered by those who are variously affected by power relationships; because the dominated as well as the dominant also have their versions of the past to legitimate their practices... (Jenkins 1991: 17).

Jenkins provides three reasons for what he describes as tentative in history. First, for him to say something about an absent subject like the past is difficult because the past has gone and only fragments are left. In his view no historian can be in a position to recapture the past as it was. Secondly, despite the standards followed by historians when reconstructing the past, "historians have devised ways of working to cut down the influence of the interpreting historian by developing rigorous methods which they have then tried variously to universalize, so that if everyone practised them then a heartland of skills, concepts, routines and procedures could reach towards objectivity" (1991:19). Notwithstanding such procedures that historians have to follow, Jenkins still feels that subjectivity is impossible to eliminate in the study of history because of factors like preconceptions and one's ideology.

Regardless of the differences the positivists and the relativists have concerning the nature of history as a field of study, what is common to both positions is that history will always involve interpretation by the individual historian. The interpretive nature of the discipline raises a lot of interesting questions about the objectivity of the findings of the historian, especially because never will there be a case where historians approach evidence with a

mind that has no preconceptions. Furthermore, the hypothesis formulated by the historian not only influences the selection of source material but also the interpretation and the way of presenting the findings. This being the case, history as a discipline and historical knowledge will remain controversial and underpinned by ongoing debate.

What one can conclude from the discussion developed in this chapter is that for history to be 'saved' as a school subject, there are two essential requirements, that is, understanding the nature of historical knowledge and the purpose and value of teaching the subject. Since it is the purpose of this project to establish the extent to which teachers in Swaziland possess these qualities, it has been crucial to try and identify ways in which data concerning these qualities could be obtained. One could argue that these are in fact qualities that relate to the teachers' consciousness as history scholars. The extent to which they had a grasp of the nature of the content was crucial to find out as it would enable me to understand the strategies they adopted to teach the subject. The strategies would by implication reveal their (teachers) awareness of the complex issues involved in the study of history. It was therefore important that the project should employ research tools that would facilitate the gathering of data on these points. The research tools decided upon and the reasons for adopting them to design fieldwork done are looked at in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3

OUTLINE OF METHOD USED IN THE STUDY

3.1 Introduction

The literature on the importance of using progressive teaching methods (for example, Sieborger 1995, Bam and Visser undated, Kallaway 1995, White 1996), highlight the important skills that students learn from history, namely, critical and creative thinking. It argues that history should be taught as a disciplined inquiry. Historical knowledge should be taken as arguments that are tentative and invite further thought. It is interpretive and controversial and should always be perceived this way.

In order to establish whether such a perception underpinned what happened in the history classrooms, I decided that observing the lessons of teachers would provide the necessary evidence. The assumption was that strategies adopted for teaching would reflect how teachers thought of the nature of the subject. Evans 1994, Harries 1975, and Mathews *et al* 1992. Cornbleth (1990) also asserts that classroom practice communicates messages about the teacher's conception of curriculum and meaning of knowledge. This implies that from looking at the way teachers taught, one could actually establish or draw conclusions about their way of understanding history as a discipline and school subject.

A video camera was to be used to record the lessons. Further, this tool was used so that the lessons could be recovered for the teacher and the researcher to use in discussions. From the onset, the researcher had full awareness that her own unsupported interpretation of the observed lessons would not be adequate for a complete explanation and understanding of the teachers' ways of doing things. Therefore there was a need for another tool that could be used not only for corroborating, but also for clarifying misinterpretations and distortions, and above all obtaining a complete picture of how the teachers thought about what they were involved in. Personal interviews were useful in this regard. Through them the researcher was able to establish the extent to which teachers were aware of the implications of practices identified as essential to historical skills and their importance in the teaching of history. As Brown and Dowling (1998) explain, interviews would enable the researcher to explore issues in detail and give opportunity for probing and prompting. In order to capture the finer details about the recorded lessons the interview discussions were recorded on an audio tape recorder. This helped to make the researcher's interaction with the interviewees more relaxed.

3. 2 Selection of samples - schools

The survey was conducted in two schools in the Manzini region in Swaziland. The schools are both urban and were selected because their resources made it possible to use the kind of research tools the researcher judged to be suitable for this study. Before choosing the schools that were to be part of the survey, I did a little detective work to find out what was available in the schools. My acquaintance with the Deputy head teacher of one of the schools became useful here. He informed me about a number of schools around town. It was from our discussions that I decided to choose a co-educational high

school and girls high school. Both schools are church schools. However, the policies for admission into these schools are not selective. Students from different denominations are allowed in the schools as long as they abide by the rules. Students in the co-educational school are allowed to be boarders on campus or to be day school students. Students here also have the chance to be exposed to a variety of history books as there is a library in the school. In addition, it is compulsory for students to visit the library in the mornings before lessons or in the afternoon whether they have an assignment or not. In this school there are no different classrooms for the various subjects, this means that each class is allocated a room to use and only move out when it is time for Science or Agriculture. There were no electricity plugs in the classrooms. They were only available in the science laboratory.

As in the co-educational school, in the girls school, students can also be boarders or day scholars. The school had a library where students did their research work and read newspapers. Unlike in the other school, the girls' school allocates different classrooms for different subjects. As a result students had to move to specific rooms for different subjects.

In both schools the Head teachers' permission was sought to conduct research. This was done in person. They (Head Teachers) gave their permission for the survey to be conducted but also pointed out the importance of seeking the consent of the teachers who would be involved in the study as it was crucial to have participants who were willing. Moser and Kalton (1979) argue for the importance of having a motivated research

population. Motivation to them means the research population's initial decision to co-operate and give accurate answers, for if answers are distorted they equal no answers at all. In the co-educational school the head teacher assembled history teachers so that the researcher could talk to them. I explained what I intended to do and assured them that information collected in the survey would be treated as confidential and used only for purposes of writing a research report as partial fulfillment of the degree.

At the girls' school, after talking to the Head teacher, he discussed the issue with the head of the history department in the school. The latter was to talk to the history teachers about the survey. The researcher was asked to give them a day to discuss the matter and to come for their response the following day. The following day she found that they had not met and gave them time to meet. The teachers asked to discuss the proceedings of the survey with the researcher. In the discussion they were concerned about the background of the researcher, what they were expected to do and how the information gathered in the process would be used. The researcher introduced herself as a student from the University of Witwatersrand who wanted to know more about the teaching of history. She also explained to teachers that the information gathered in the survey would only be used for purposes of writing a research report for the university.

3.3 The Sampling of teachers

The intention of the researcher was to get two history teachers who taught at different levels from each school. The costs of using a video camera for collecting data and financial resources available to me as a student placed restrictions on the number of

teachers who could take part in the survey. Also it was important to be sensitive to time constraints not only on the researcher's part but also the time it would take to use the research tools with the teachers. "Interviews are time consuming and thus place practical restrictions on sample size" (Brown and Dowling 1998: 72). Not only did the researcher think of interviews but using a video camera also seemed to take a much longer time than it would have been the case with an ordinary observation schedule.

It was the intention of the researcher to have one teacher teaching any junior class such as Form 1, 2 or 3 and the other one a senior level class, that is, Form 4 or 5. Teachers who were to participate in the survey were to have at least a Secondary Teacher's Diploma or a B.A degree in Humanities plus a postgraduate teaching qualification. The teachers needed to have studied history as a major in their tertiary education. The assumption here was that this would have had an impact in shaping their understanding of the nature of the subject. The researcher also assumed that teachers with the above qualifications would have been exposed to the latest research and debates on the teaching of history in their teacher training programs. Furthermore, participants should have been teaching history for at least six months and above. It was felt that familiarity with the classroom environment would ensure that lessons were conducted comfortably. I expected my research population to have some experience in teaching because I thought it would be useful to deal with teachers who have established some relationship with students. It would help in ensuring that the classroom is relaxed and had more freedom to interact. See Appendix V for a background profile of the research population.

Some difficulties were encountered in the selection of the intended research population.

In one school both teachers were selected at the junior level. It was not easy to get a teacher at senior level as he was the school deputy. Initially he had agreed to be part of the research, however, when the collection data was done, he could not avail himself as he was involved in preparations for a school function (speech and prize giving day). At other times he was not in class and only gave students revision questions to work on. In the other school, both teachers who were part of the survey, were at senior level. The junior level teacher is disabled and felt uneasy with taking part in the research, in her opinion, because of the nature of one of data gathering tools. Neither did she come to our discussions with the other teachers about what was entailed in the survey. She communicated the message through the head of department and did not allow the researcher to speak to her about the nature of the research and how data was to be used. This according to Moser and Kalton rendered my sampling incomplete, "it means that some of the population members who are supposed to be on it are in fact not on it" (Moser and Kalton 1979: 155).

As Moser and Kalton (1979) advise, one way of dealing with missing elements in sampling is to change the coverage from the target population to a population that comprises only those elements on the sampling frame. In the case of this study a decision had to be made to have two junior level teachers for one school and two senior level teachers for the other.

3.4 Collection of Data

History lessons were video recorded and followed up with interviews in which teachers whose lessons were recorded were asked to clarify issues that the researcher had isolated as essential. Conceptual underpinnings of the manner in which they organized their interaction with students were considered as crucial by the researcher in this regard.

Video Recording

The initial intention was to record two lessons per teacher at different times. However, because of the teachers' reluctance to be video recorded several times, the researcher had to compromise. Brown and Dowlings (1998) explains that in most cases teachers are reluctant to be video recorded because they are not used to it and they find it inhibiting. They encourage that as a way of solving problems of being recorded, teachers need to be habituated into the instruments. Since the video camera was not owned by the researcher habituating teachers to the device was not possible. It was finally decided that for each teacher, one lesson be observed without recordings on video and then the second lesson was to be video recorded and used for the analysis. This was aimed at ensuring that teachers were relaxed.

Three recordings were done instead of four. One double period (80 minutes) was done in one school. The next lesson recorded was a single period (40 minutes). This was a Form 1 lesson and it could not be recorded in their classroom because of facility problems. About five minutes of the lesson time was taken as we moved to the science laboratory. The setting of the laboratory did not allow students to sit as groups according to the

teacher's intention. Despite this organizational inconvenience the lesson went on without interruptions. The last lesson to be recorded was also a single period. The recording was done in the classroom that is used for all subjects so that nothing related to history could be seen on the walls.

In all the lessons teachers were not told how the recorded lesson was going to be used so that they could "do things" normally.

Interview schedule (See Appendix III)

The questions for the interviews were written down and all interviewees were to be asked the same questions in generally the same order. The major reason for this was that according to Moser and Kalton "only if all respondents are asked exactly the same questions in the same order can one be sure that all the answers relate to the same thing and are strictly comparable" (1979:296). However, this does not imply that there was no flexibility in terms of wording and probing where necessary.

The first part of the interview schedule was on the position of the subject in the respective schools to determine how history was perceived in relation to other subjects. Questions involved issues related to subject blocking, that is, finding out which subjects are usually blocked against history and why? Teachers were also to be asked about what they are doing to promote the subject besides what went on in the history classroom. This was done to establish the extent to which these teachers were enthusiastic about their subject.

It was also important to generate a discussion on the nature of the subject and how best it could be presented to students especially when considering the views about its nature. This was aimed at finding out the different ways teachers use when teaching the subject and to try to get them to explain why they felt those teaching methods were crucial to the nature of the subject.

The second part of the interview questions was focused on the video-recorded lessons. What teachers understood about the methods they were using and the conceptual implications of such methods was considered interesting here. Furthermore, teachers were to explain why they used the methods and what they hoped to achieve in terms of skills. The researcher hoped that such questions would lead to a discussion of the importance of the methods used in the teaching of history.

Interviews with the History teachers

Teachers were interviewed individually and each interview lasted about 15-20 minutes. The interview discussions were recorded on an audio tape recorder. Teachers were a bit calm when we got to this part though they tried by all means to make sure that they did not spend much time on it. The teacher who was not video taped did not have time for an interview even when asked to do it during lunchtime because she seemed too busy. To accommodate her, the interview questions were given to her as a questionnaire. The fact that she was happy to do it in writing shows that she felt comfortable with the research method where she could not be probed nor prompted to say more than what she intended.

3.5 Limitations \ problems of the study

Video Recordings

The teachers' reluctance to be video recorded made them to keep on postponing arrangements for recording which was a bit disorganizing on the part of the researcher. Because of uneasiness on their part, the researcher decided to observe the first lesson and make short hand notes afterwards, and then record only one lesson per teacher (which is the one to be analyzed). One teacher allowed me to observe her lesson but when it was time to make recordings she managed to avoid that by concentrating on revisions with the exam writing classes. However, I did not give up on her and had to find a way of involving her in the interview sessions.

Interviews

There were some technical problems with interview sessions conducted in the mixed school. The recording machine used was voice activated so that the minute a respondent glanced at something in a different direction while talking what they said was not recorded. There were a lot of gaps and I felt I should ask the teachers concerned to re-do the interviews. They were really out of it. As a result, what was recorded for the second time was more of summarized versions of their initial opinions. However, this did not affect the study adversely because when the recordings were done for the first time short hand notes were made on what the teachers were saying. These notes were subsequently relied upon to cross-check the two versions of interviews and fill up gaps in the first where it was possible to do so.

3.6 Analysis

Brown and Dowlings (1998) say that if interviews were not recorded using pre-coded categories it is necessary to transcribe the responses of the interviewees and they insist that this should be done by the researcher who will later on write the report. Their argument for this is that as the researcher transcribes he \ she gains greater familiarity with the content of the interviews and also is in a position to note the subtler nuances in the responses of the interviewees. Based on this, once data was collected the most appropriate way of analyzing it was through transcribing all responses from the interviews from audio tape recorder onto papers. I used teachers' names to code their responses in order to allow for comparison. For example, the questions asked during interviews were written down and then underneath each question the responses towards that particular question transcribed. When this was accomplished correlation and differences between the responses of the four teachers and between the two schools were checked. Data from the survey was read for patterns of teachers' responses and using their responses, their conception of history was then developed. The teachers' conceptions of the subject were then cross - tabulated with their background profiles indicated in Appendix V.

This process yielded great rewards as the researcher could easily identify trends that were evident in all responses. The analysis also sensitized the researcher to the kind of thinking that is common among the teachers in the survey.

3.7 Findings of the study

Part I of interviews

There were a number of interesting issues that came up in the survey concerning the position of the subject, teachers' enthusiasm for the subject and what they considered to be the value of teaching History.

Position of History in the two schools

In the mixed school, at junior level, history is compulsory which means that all students are supposed to take it. At senior level it is blocked with Geography and Accounts. The way the grouping is made gives a chance to all students who would like to do history even if they are prospective scientists.

In the girls' school, subject grouping shows that history is considered as a cushion for the less gifted \ weak students who cannot do science. At junior level, students choose between History and Agriculture. And at senior level, History is blocked against Science.

One can argue that history is taken to be one of those not so important subjects in the school curriculum and this reflects misconceptions that prevail in some schools and need to be challenged.

Value of teaching history

Most of the teachers but for one argued that history is important in the school curriculum because it relates to issues of identity, current world affairs and it is linked with other

subjects. However, none of the teachers discussed the value of teaching the subject in relation to the kind of skills that it is capable of developing in students.

How to teach history in an interesting way

In response to this teachers argued for the use of what they called methods that involved students. Examples of such methods included, small research projects, use of films with actual footage, discussions and debates. Their main reason for arguing for these methods was that when such methods are used students are not passive but are actively involved in 'discovering' facts for themselves.

Part II of interviews

The way of instruction in all the lessons pointed to an attempt to engage in progressive methods. Teachers gave different reasons for the methods they used. The common one was related to issues of acquiring knowledge in a way that one could not forget. Examinations were identified as also impacting on what happens in the classroom. For teachers the implication of using progressive methods was that they enabled them to encourage students to discover facts for themselves and not to be spoon fed. However, despite the view all the teachers still seemed to believe that history comprises only of facts that should be acquired by the students.

The issues outlined here are dealt with in greater depth in the following chapters, to illustrate that even though teachers might be using procedures associated with

progressive methods of teaching, this alone is not enough to bring about meaningful changes in the teaching of history.

CHAPTER 4

TEACHERS' CONCEPTIONS OF HISTORY AS A SUBJECT IN SCHOOL

4.1 Introduction

The use of progressive methods of teaching history and the teachers' knowledge of the subject content have been singled out by a number of theorists as central to good teaching. However, there is acknowledgement that they are not the sole determinants of effective teaching for the development of history skills. It is also important that teachers have a certain understanding of the nature of history as a discipline. It is only when teachers are clear about what the subject entails, that it will be easy for them to teach it in a manner that is relevant. (Mathews *et al* 1992:1)

This chapter focuses on the teachers' awareness of the value of promoting what is essential to teaching history. It draws from the view that such awareness would be reflected by the teaching strategies they highlighted as important in teaching the subject, the way they treated interpretation and controversy in the classroom and the emphasis they put on the importance of factual knowledge.

4.2 Teaching strategies employed in the teaching of history

When asked about what was crucial in the teaching of history, teachers in the survey listed methods that include discussions, debates, field trips, small research projects and the use of visual aids such as films and videos.

Teacher 1:- Field trips, films with actual footage of particular events, research and questioning.

Teacher 2:- Research where students interview people in local community, use of sources such as newspapers and those found in textbooks.

Teacher 3:- Research projects, films, presentations by resource persons involved in local events.

Teacher 4:- Discussions, presentations and questioning.

For these teachers, the main reasons for using such strategies had to do with arousing interest and the belief that when students discover knowledge on their own it will not be forgotten easily.

Teachers pointed out that the lecture method made students less interested and to easily forget the content they are expected to acquire. As a result, they felt the need to bring in alternative strategies, and considered such strategies as important for encouraging

students to be actively involved in their learning. The belief was that they motivated and kept students interested.

The use of field trips was seen by most teachers as important in the teaching of history. The trips usually entailed visits to museum, places of historical interest such as caves and bushmen paintings. Teachers in this study also found the method of teaching useful when dealing with local history. Its value, in their opinion, was that it brought students into contact with primary evidence. For example, in Swaziland when students visit the bushmen paintings they touch and see the paintings and this makes the pre history people a reality not fiction. Truly, "through this process, pupils are introduced to a variety of primary sources, they acquire a meaningful historical vocabulary and learn skills as observation, interpretation and deduction" (Mathews *et al* 1992: 88-89). The teachers also felt that for such field trips to be successful, there should be careful planning. Students should be made aware of what they will be looking for, and where necessary, they should have a few questions so that the process becomes focussed and educational.

Another method cited by teachers was the use of audiovisuals such as films and videos based on historical events. According to them such aids can ensure greater understanding of historical issues. Their stance was that since History is about the study of events that took place in a period and places that are remote to the students, its content can present problems in terms of understanding when students fail to reconstruct the period in their minds. Understanding will not be a problem when valuable information that is left out in books can be found in films and videos. Students will see exactly what was happening in

the past and the situation people were faced with can enhance students' appreciation of the choices those people had to make and thus develop compassion and understanding. True, as expressed by Mathews *et al* (1992: 111),

Films can bring a number of aspects of life in the past into focus: they show how people lived, the weapons, clothes and utensils of that time, as well as peoples' responses to famous events or speeches.

In addition, teachers viewed research to be essential in the teaching of history. In their opinion when students engage in research they come to realize the value of using other source material for information and thus break dependence on textbooks. It gives them the experience of working with evidence, sifting what is related to their topic and using the evidence to come to their own conclusions. The following are teachers' views on the teaching strategies.

Teacher 1:- Field trips and films on historical events will make students realize that history is real.

They do not need to be told facts. When they read on their own they discover facts and it is hard for them to forget what they have discovered on their own, it sticks with them. The methods makes learning to be interesting, it makes the class at ease as students are free to talk and ask each other questions thus being involved in the lesson.

Teacher 2:- Research is challenging to the students as they find information on their own and the use of newspapers (referring to the work of the United Nations) make them see that history is an ongoing thing- to link the past with the present.

Discussions make students to be involved in the learning process and involvement is meant to motivate students because when they are passive they easily forget what they have been told. Further, they are free to contribute and ask questions from their peers. Discussions give a relaxed environment that makes it suitable for all students to learn.

Teacher 3:- Films in history are a good way of teaching because students are not likely to forget something they have seen. It is easy to discuss events they have seen rather than talk about abstract things.

I want students to be fully involved in the lesson and it is not easy to forget information they discovered themselves.

Teacher 4:- Presentations encourage students to be actively involved in the learning process, they will increase their (students) confidence in talking in front of people and develop their language skills.

I used the method because I wanted them to be involved in the lesson rather than listen to me. I also want to see if they have read and understood their work. And more importantly if you discover something it is rare to forget it.

Lessons of two teachers who engaged in discussions as a teaching strategy will be used to illustrate the extent to which they reflected their understanding of the subject. Both teachers had prepared for their lessons by assigning reading tasks to students and questions to guide them as they researched the subjects of the lesson. They had to read from their textbooks and also get more relevant material that the teachers and the librarian had organized, from the school library.

In the lessons teachers divided students into groups of 5 – 6 in order to discuss their findings. There was a slight difference in the procedure adopted by the two teachers. One teacher organized different topics for the discussion groups. The topic questions were presented as simple question statements and not as problems to be solved or bring students into an inquiry. For example, The broad topic was how Russia responded to activities of America and her allies after World War Two. The different groups were to discuss their findings on the *Cominten* (group 1), *Cominform* (group 2), *Comencon* (group 3). The students were expected to describe, using what they have gathered from their own research, what the three policies were about. In response students restated knowledge from books using their own words or sometimes verbatim.

The other teacher constructed one general topic for all groups. Students were to discuss the effects of slave trade in West Africa. Like in the other lesson, students sat in groups

and discussed what they found in their books. There was no sign of them interpreting and analyzing what their books said about the situation of Africans as a result of the trade.

Both teachers gave their students about 20- 25 minutes for group discussions. They shared their findings and had to choose one to represent the group in reporting back to the class. Teachers monitored the discussions by checking the progress of the students with the intention to direct them and to see that everybody was participating. Each group had to make presentations and in most cases presenters were reading to the class what they wrote as a group. Questions from the other members of the class were to be directed to the presenter, and when there was need, members from her group had to help. The rest of the class had to make additional contributions to the presentation where necessary. Mostly, the contributions were in the form of additional points or correction of factual errors made by the presenter. After students' presentations both teachers made summaries of what was discussed and a few notes were written on the board.

According to Bam and Visser, in principle when discussions in groups are used as a teaching strategy,

the emphasis is on getting students to reason and debate, and then subsequently to appreciate the fact that at times it is difficult to be certain of our understanding of historical situations and that there is room for a variety of views. Through such activities students can be shown that history is not just a body of established and indisputable facts (Undated: 97).

However, for the above to take place the students needed to be asked questions that were not encouraging the recall and restatement of information they had gathered during their reading. They needed questions that would engage them in an inquiry. Also in Meyer's

(1987: 58) view discussions can create a classroom environment that could go a long way towards fostering critical thinking provided the strategy is mediated properly. However, his concern is that, while the advantages of a discussion as a means of teaching critical thinking may seem obvious, most teachers are not trained or skilled in the use of dialogue and discussion as a teaching tool. As a result, attempts to engage students in a dialogue may therefore backfire, reinforcing the very passivity that the advocates of the strategies are trying to challenge. In the case of participants in this project, one could argue that it was more than lack of training, but the way teachers viewed knowledge, especially in the learning of history which impacted on the way discussions were handled in the classroom. For instance, they knew what the strategies entailed but because they were not aware of the essential features and procedures of producing knowledge in history, they could not use the strategies in an effective way and hence confined activities to recall of knowledge.

From talking to teachers it became clear that the intentions for engaging students in reading other material besides textbooks was aimed at enabling students to discover the facts for themselves rather than alerting them to the essence of studying history as a discipline. This is how the teachers tried to explain this to me.

Teacher 1: they discover facts by themselves rather than wait for the teacher to tell them.

Teacher 2: I always tell my students that we are on a fact finding mission and they (students) also get exposed to using the media.

If this is the case, one wonders how worthwhile the teachers' approaches were especially when looking at them in terms of Levistick and Barton's description of a disciplined inquiry, namely, that, in a disciplined inquiry the students are not only supposed to master the content of the subject, but they should also understand the nature and purpose of the subject. Students will thus not understand the nature of the subject if knowledge is taken as unquestionable. If this is the case, students should be allowed to understand and master the different ways of thinking and the processes of constructing knowledge in history. These ways would involve being analytical, critical and creative when dealing with knowledge in the history classroom.

However, in this study teachers emphasized the reading of newspapers and other material besides textbooks, not to draw the attention of students to the controversial nature of the subject, and how different people can come up with different interpretations of the same event, but what they described as arousing interest and promoting participation in the lessons. This is the case despite what Mathews *et al* (1992) assert when they say, when teachers use a variety of references and not take textbooks as the only source of information, it shows that they are aware that there are different interpretations in history. Teachers in this study did not go beyond getting students interested and finding facts. This was evident through the kind of questions they asked when they were given opportunity in the lessons. They asked for concepts to be explained, for example, *what do we mean by containing communism? and what is initiation?* These were not challenging any content in a manner that evoked a thoughtful inquiry. It was also useful for students to talk with one another to discuss and refine their ideas, but when this is done they are

supposed to engage in asking and answering questions critically and creatively. Once more, in the case of this study their discussions were simply a recitation of what their books and other texts have and not a historical conversation.

Loewen (1995) explains teachers' failure to show the controversial nature of history in terms of them not being used to it and the fact that they feel threatened when controversial issues are discussed; "many teachers do not like controversy" (p. 250). Controversial issues in the classroom are avoided because the teacher is afraid that his \ her weaknesses could be exposed to students. In most cases teachers would like to present an image that they know everything, yet in actual fact teachers can learn something from their students. To make sure that teachers do not find themselves in a position where they expose uncertainties they resort to avoiding controversy and present history as objective. He argues that, "many teachers are frightened of controversy because they have not experienced it themselves in an academic setting and do not know how to handle it" (p.280). He further asserts that many teachers teach as they were taught, so that if they never experienced controversy in their history lessons there is no way they could engage their students in such.

In an attempt to establish the validity of Loewen's view the researcher wanted to find out why teachers equated familiarity of historical content with meaningful learning of the subject. When asked why they thought students would be interested in history by referring them to the library and newspapers, the common answer from the teachers was that when students discover facts for themselves they develop interest. This means that

the issue of lack of controversy can be looked at differently, that is, teachers seemed to avoid controversy but this seemed to be unintentional. It appeared to be largely the result of the way they themselves were taught. The point made here can be supported by drawing from Evans' (1994) views when he asserts that conceptions of history are developed in the way the teacher was taught. Hager and Beckett (1995) explain this in terms of the way the concept of competency is understood. They highlight that the ability to perform tasks is crucial for competence but not sufficient. "Abilities are central to the concept of competence however, not sufficient if not applied to performance of tasks with an overall conception of what one's work is about. Competence is essentially a relation between abilities or capabilities of people and the satisfactory completion of appropriate task(s) (*Ibid*: 2). To focus on one competence could lead to impoverished competency standards. Implied in this is that when teachers concentrate on displaying their abilities they also should not neglect the fact that they need to teach the subject in a variety of satisfactory ways. They need to bring out all that is essential to teaching a particular subject in order to be described as competent. It was therefore crucial for this study to establish the extent to which this would be a valid assessment of the rationale behind teachers' teaching strategies.

4.3 Teachers' rationale for strategies

Research (Krige 1992, Seixas 1993 and Levistick and Barton 1997) has proved that what makes history important are the thinking skills that students can develop when engaged in a disciplined inquiry as opposed to memorizing knowledge. When the nature of the subject is distorted, people develop misconceptions about the it.

Teacher 1:- "History is interesting stories about the past".

This teacher encouraged his students to remember the stories. For him history is the stories found in the textbooks and other books that are a truthful revelation about the past.

Teacher 2:- When we do history with research we are on a fact finding mission. This was the teacher's response when asked about her intentions on assigning students activities such as research in the library and reading newspapers. It would appear that to her history is none other but facts which students are to discover and internalize.

Teacher 3:- I expect my students to read their books thoroughly and be able to respond to all questions that I will ask them.

She feels that the books have everything that the students need to know about history. To her when students can recall (referring to factual recall) all that is in their books then it is a sign that they know history.

Teacher 4:- To see if they have read and understood the topic assigned to them. This was one of her reasons for the importance of questions in the teaching of history. Her response shows that she feels content when students can repeat what they have found in the books because it shows that they know history.

All teachers point to the fact that what is important when teaching history or what they are concerned with is students discovering facts on their own rather than being told by the teacher. The way teachers thought about the relationship between history and facts they taught was also reflected in the type of questions they asked in their lessons.

Relationship between history and facts

Two teachers used the question and answer method in their lessons. They both started with questions that were aimed at helping students to link prior knowledge with what they were to do in the lessons. For example, one of the teachers introduced her lesson by asking students *what were the effects of colonization in Rhodesia?* The lesson was mainly focused on how the government made attempts to solve problems faced by Africans in the reserves. It seemed important to the teacher that students understand how reserves were created and how this affected the lives of Africans. Though the way of introducing lessons was the same for the two teachers, they later on differed in the way the teaching strategy was used.

In one lesson the teacher was responsible for asking questions and probing. The teacher asked questions to elicit information based on the tasks assigned. The questions required students to restate knowledge and sometimes make provision for students to show their understanding of the topic by using their own words to describe or elaborate on an idea.

Here are few examples;

- * What did the government do for African farmers?
- * What was the work of the agricultural supervisors?

Students responded to these questions very well because they had to draw answers directly from their books.

In the other lesson the teacher acted as a facilitator as students engaged in their own discussions using the formulated questions. Students were assigned to read on Mzilikazi and the building of the Ndebele Nation. During the lesson two students were to be leaders and they divided topic questions amongst themselves, one leading at a time. The role of the leaders was to ask questions and allow students to respond. When the leader sensed difficulty in answering a particular question she had to ask the teacher to intervene. Usually this happened when questions were on issues not explicit in the textbook. Other than this, generally, students responded very well.

In both lessons there were few questions that required thinking and it was interesting to note that some of the questions came from the students rather than the teacher. Here are some examples from the class where students were leading discussions;

1. Why did Shona chiefs hate each other?

2. Why did Mzilikazi not allow his soldiers to marry until they were forty years of age?

The students found these questions challenging as they tried to come up with reasonable answers based on the evidence before them. For example, the discussion to the second question was in two ways; it could be because he wanted to control population growth or because he wanted to ensure that he had a standing army ready to fight at any time. This challenged the students to use evidence from their books to support the stance they took in answering the questions.

In the class where the teacher led the discussion a few questions were asked that challenged students to think. For instance,

1. What do you think was the effect of having poor infrastructure in the reserves?
2. How did it affect the economic situation of Africans in reserves?
3. With such problems what do you think Africans should do to support their families?

These are the kinds of questions I found satisfactory, somehow challenging the students to think beyond what they read in the books and also link the knowledge they have on the topic. The questions prompted students to go beyond what they were learning that day, access their prior knowledge and connect it to the new knowledge. They struggled to answer these questions and the teacher used probing questions to help them think even more. Here is an example:

Teacher: How did the lack of infrastructure affect the economic situation of Africans?

Response: they became poor

Teacher: yes but how did it happen?

Response: Africans in the reserves relied on selling agricultural goods in the market places to support their families. They had no equipment to increase their produce and the little they produced could not easily reach the market because there was no transport.

Teacher: What was the problem with transport?

Response: They (Africans) had to carry the goods to the markets that were far and when they got there goods were bought on low prices.

Teacher: Why?

Response: because the white people felt they were in a bad condition and were given lower grades.

Teacher: then what was the economic position of Africans?

Response: they made little money from their goods and had problems in supporting their families as a result many Africans went to work in the mines and white farms.

At the end of the lessons summaries of the main points were made, in one class by the teacher and in the other by both students and the teacher.

Levistick and Barton (1997: 22) asserts that questions are at the heart of a disciplined inquiry and it is the type of questions asked in a lesson that reveal the teacher's understanding of the discipline. With the four teachers observed one could say that most of the questions they asked revolved around establishing how much content the students have grasped. Teachers operated at the lowest level of knowledge construction. They asked more of factual questions and expected knowledge restatements. These involved recalling facts in reading materials and definitions sometimes given verbatim. The exact words found in the texts were used. Here are some examples:

Teacher 1:

*What happened in the Yalta Conference?

*Describe the containment policy.

Teacher 2:

*How were slaves gathered for selling to the merchants?

*Where were the slaves taken to?

*What kind of work were they going to do in their final destination?

There were one or two questions that were of a higher order such as those on inferences, interpretation, analysis and justifications. Here are few examples,

Teacher 1:

* What is the evidence or signs that point towards the Cold War after World War II?

*How do you think the comminten served as an instrument that helped to develop the Cold War?

Teacher 2:

*How did the creation of reserves destroy the independence of Africans?

Levistick and Barton and Bam and Visser point out that questions asked in a disciplined inquiry are aimed at making students historians. "The point of these questions is not to see if students have read a particular text; rather, it is to provide direction and motivation for the rigorous work of doing history" (Levistick and Barton 1997:22). This means that the questions should push students to interpret, synthesize, analyze and critique the knowledge they are exposed to. However, this is not to say that teachers should do away with questions that require recall and comprehension, it means such should be limited and used as scaffolding to the other type of questions.

The general tendency on the part of teachers to use mainly lower order questions, reflected the value they put on facts in history. They did not seem to take seriously that assertions coming from the students' textbooks are not absolute or unquestionable. If teachers were aware of the tentative nature of historical knowledge they would not have allowed students to take their texts or any other source as authoritative and accept it uncritically. It can be argued, in the case of this study, that questions formulated by teachers were underpinned by their understanding of knowledge in history. Drawing from Lave's (1991) concept of *legitimate peripheral participation*, students ought to have been given the opportunity to see the practice (what they are learning) in its complexity and have an idea of what it is about than just the particular tasks engaged with. "Access for the apprentice (learner) to ongoing work and participation in that work are important conditions for learning" (p. 3). This implies that full participation is a condition for effective learning as students master the practice in its complete nature. In order for full participation to take place in the classroom, teachers should have exposed students to the controversial and interpretive nature of the discipline.

Given the similar background of the teachers in the study, it is no surprise that their thinking about history as a subject in school is more or less the same. They all find history and facts to be synonymous. To them when students know facts it is equal to knowing history, thus making facts the basis of the subject. They used different teaching strategies that were assumed progressive with no realization that they all reflected the importance of factual knowledge in their lessons.

Looking at the way the teachers in this survey taught, Cornbleth (1990) would say that their conception of curriculum is instrumental. Teachers were not concerned with the processes of constructing knowledge in the classroom but they viewed it as a finished product that had to be internalized in order to meet the requirements of examination. In this case we can agree with Cornbleth when she says that, the technocratic conception of curriculum tacitly presume that knowledge is pre-determinable thus it is often treated as an object that can be reproduced. The reproduction of facts in the lessons was taken by the teachers to mean that the students have learned the subject. When curriculum is developed this way in the classroom Stenhouse (1975) would say these teachers have taken an instrumental approach as they are concerned with processes extrinsic to knowledge rather than those intrinsic. History as a form of knowledge has procedures and structure that should have been opened up to students. Students should have been introduced to the process of how knowledge comes about rather than make them repeat what has already been constructed.

It should be pointed out that though the method of instruction in all the four lessons was mainly centered on the students doing or working in the classroom, there are elements of traditional methods that could be witnessed. For example, teachers making summaries, writing a few notes on the board for students. In an informal discussion I asked one of the teachers why she kept on making summaries after presentations. Her response was;

though I would like my students to work on their own I often have to summarize the main points for them so that I can be sure that they have got everything right in preparation for examinations.

The teacher seemed to be concerned with meeting the requirements of the examinations, a fact to which the other three teachers also alluded. This seems to reveal another factor that limit the autonomy of teachers in the classroom, that is, examinations.

Sieborger *et al* (1993) argue that examinations have a 'backwash' effect on both the nature of the subject and how it is taught. From the onset teachers see their main task as preparing students for the requirements of the final examinations. The point is that though there has been efforts to change teaching strategies in schools the nature of examinations has remained the same thus making it difficult for teachers to fully engage in progressive methods.

The influence of examinations in teaching will always be significant because teachers are concerned with their image in the school and the community. Good performance in examinations can contribute to the creation of that image. However, examinations can also encourage the development of thinking skills in history.

Assessment can, however, also be used to promote change by acting as a catalyst for new approaches. If an examination were to require of students an understanding of and competence in a range of new skills and concepts associated with the learning of history as a discipline, instead of the factual recall which is the current norm... (Sieborger *et al* 1993: 211).

The way teachers taught and assessed history implies that they had a limited understanding of the nature of the subject as a discipline. The neglect of the crucial skills in the learning of history could thus be viewed as related to the extent they appreciated

the purpose or value of teaching the subject at school. The point is dealt with in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5

PURPOSE FOR TEACHING HISTORY

5.1 Introduction

According to Levistick and Barton (1997) people learn best when they understand the purposes of their learning. This implies that teachers should handle history content in a manner that will enable students not only to find it interesting but also of value to their everyday life. In this study the value attached to history in schools is demonstrated first, by the way subjects are grouped and the position of history in the grouping, and second, by what teachers expressed as their views on the importance of history in school.

The teachers' views referred to issues of identity and history's relationship to other subjects. Teachers also talked about the skills they thought the learning of history could develop. They mentioned language skills, confidence to speak and skills of finding information. From the position of history in the two schools and the teachers' views on the value of teaching the subject, it has been possible to draw conclusions about the conceptions held by teachers about the subject.

5.2 Position of history in the two schools

The way the subjects are grouped in the schools involved in this study reflected teachers' ways of thinking about them in terms of utility or their practicality, a point emphasized

by Bam and Visser (undated: 3). History in the two schools is not in the same position. In one school it is seen as important for all students and in the other it is good for the less gifted students who cannot cope with the demands of Natural Sciences. For example, in one school at the junior level history is compulsory, and at senior level, it is streamed with Geography and Accounts and not with Natural Science subjects. History in this school is not taken as a soft option for those who do not qualify for natural sciences.

One of the teachers explained the grouping as follows, "the way subjects are grouped here, give chances to all students to do history even those who would like to take Science as a career". In this school history is important for all students and they are all given the chance to learn it regardless of their career interests. This is consistent with the position taken by Read (1985) who argues that history should not be given to those who cannot do sciences but all students should do it because it is important, especially when it is associated with skills that are essential for everyone in society. He concludes that, "it should be noted that, it is important that some history be taught to all pupils at least until they finish their 'O' level even if they are prospective Scientists" (1985: 9). This argument is also supported by Mathews *et al* (1992) when they say that the knowledge and skills that the study of history can offer to students is a valuable asset in many careers, and to people as diverse as economists, journalists, accountants, bank managers, librarians, diplomats and artists. These groups of people find history directly or indirectly related and useful in their fields of work.

At the other school history is not compulsory. At the junior level students choose between history and Agriculture, and at the senior level, History is alternative to Science. One of the teachers explained this by saying, "the grouping is made this way so that the child who is weak in Sciences may have an option". Implied in this statement is that history is taken to be one of those subjects considered not difficult and can serve as a cushion for slow learners. Bam and Visser assert that, in most schools "as a matter of school policy, academically promising students are not encouraged to study history as they qualify for Maths and Science, thus history is left to less academically promising students" (Undated: 3). They also point out that this is wrong as it is important for all people to possess the understanding and skills that the study of history can impart.

This causes concern as the subject does involve skills that are associated with investigation. They ought to ask and answer questions in a historical manner and not just acquire facts only. As Carr puts it, "history is not an easy subject, it is demanding and as serious as Science" (1990: 85). When history is considered easy it implies that the teacher has a certain conception of the subject that is not exactly the way the nature of the subject is. Learning history cannot be easy if teachers were to teach it as an inquiry that involves students in analyzing and negotiating their own meanings about evidence.

The extent to which teachers who participated in this study appreciate the value of teaching history will reveal their awareness of the essentials of teaching the subject and this will in turn enable an understanding of their practices and the rationale provided for them.

5.3 To what extent do teachers appreciate the value of teaching history

It was surprising and unusual to find out that one teacher pointed out that there is no value of teaching the subject as she sees it to be unrelated to the students' needs. She said that history is redundant and if given a choice she would replace it with Development Studies, a subject that integrates some bit of History, Geography, and Commerce. It could be argued that for someone with such an attitude, teaching history provides her with a job otherwise she sees no other value for doing so. However, her view that there is no value in history stands in sharp contrast with what she did in the lesson and the reasons she gave using that strategy. In her lesson she engaged students in small groups for discussions and besides this she mentioned small research projects during vacations and emphasized reading newspapers as a way of arousing students' interest in the subject. Could it be that her practice was simply a consequence of her being a teacher who takes it for granted that teaching and learning should be interesting, because her views made it clear that she did not associate her practice with skills essential to history? The "lived curriculum" of the teacher was better than the espoused (ref Cornbleth 1990 and Jackson 1992).

Another interesting point concerning the teaching of history was related to identity development. Let us look at this next.

History and identity

The most popular view for teaching the subject was related to the issue of identity development. The three teachers related history with being able to find ones' identity, making the point that it is through knowledge gained from learning history that students can know their background or who they are. The teachers' responses were:

Teacher 1: history is important because people need to know their past

Researcher: Why do people need to know their past?

Teacher: because they will know who they are.

Teacher 2: history is a very useful subject because you are able to tell who you are, where you come from and who are your ancestors

Researcher: How does this contribute towards a self-image?

Teacher: in history students learn the culture of their ancestors and from the culture students can see how they are different from other societies.

Teacher 3: It helps students to know about their background

Researcher: What is the significance of this?

Teacher: they will know their culture.

Though the wording is different, underlying all the three responses is the issue of linking history with knowing ones' background that can be associated with establishing one's identity.

The teachers' point is that, people need to know their identity and it is in the study of history that they can be in a position to know who they are, through learning about the culture and history of their societies. "History can contribute to self-knowledge by revealing to students strands in their own cultural background that have helped to form their identity, to make them what they are" (White 1994: 9).

It should be noted that relating the subject to issues of identity can be problematic. Identity is more than cultural values born into, it is shaped by experiences and it is limitless. The problematic nature of the relationship between the learning of history and development of one's identity emanates from the fact that it would be absurd to expect of history to reflect every aspect of everyone's background. According to Bourdieu (1977) the educational system, among other things, function to inculcate values that would encourage the maintenance of a particular social order. As a result, that the aspects of the students' background that are included in their history are those that have been ascribed value by the people who are in positions of power. This means that such 'strands' are to serve as a 'conservatising' force.

In schools in Swaziland the history syllabus (cf Appendix I) at all levels does have a section on the building of the Swazi nation, their culture and traditions. Examples of these important traditions are the Reed Dance for young girls, 'Lusekwane' for the young boys and the Incwala for the whole nation. Bourdieu (1977: 188) would argue that these elements of culture together with the practices they underpin or call for, constitutes one of the possible ways to reproduce the values of the society, and legitimate the existing

social order. It is through classroom history that the importance of these ceremonies can be explained to young people. They concern social sanctions, such as those on premarital sexual relations but the major reason given for these ceremonies is that they identify the Swazi nation. It follows from what has been said that certain individuals in society have the power to determine what it is that should define other people's identity.

According to Thompson (1990: 151) power enables people to act in pursuit of their aims and interests and because of their power they can make valuations carry more weight. In the case of Swaziland, Thompson (1990) would imply that the culture taught in schools is carefully selected to ensure the centralization of power. Furthermore, it enhances a particular kind of national unity that owes its allegiance to the monarchy and the cultural beliefs and practices it upholds. In addition, this culture signifies what is essential to preserve and maintain a Swazi identity.

Therefore, from the teachers' responses, it is possible to argue that knowledge related to culture in schools is presented from one perspective. Lowry (1995: 119) argues that, this is also influenced by the teachers' conception of knowledge, "the uncritical teaching of values and attitudes can lead to uncritical socialization that is indoctrination". It is indoctrination when students are meant to see or view culture from one angle. As Giroux (1995) asserts, students should be provided with a chance to criticize their own culture in terms of their experiences in life. When students criticize the dominant culture on the basis of their everyday experiences, they also find a way of understanding their own identities based on experience. They do not accept an identity formulated by other

people. Students will learn who they really are through a careful analysis of their everyday life experiences. This is only possible when teachers understand the nature of history as knowledge in a broad context of the school curriculum rather than take knowledge to be selected facts that carry with them, at times, some material value, ascribed by those who made the selection.

History and the broader curriculum

One teacher pointed to the link between history and other subjects in the school curriculum. She made a case for history as an important art subject that informs the other art subjects. History is integrated studies. In its study students learn about issues such as over- population and how it links to the economy, technological developments and how they changed societies and raw materials and fertile land in relation to trade. Furthermore, the teacher argued that information that students gain in history could be useful for understanding other subjects in the school curriculum such as Commerce, Geography, Literature and may be Science, "history is linked with other subjects, there is information that students get from history which is useful in other subjects". The position re-affirms Read's point (1985:9) in his reference to history as a core art subject, "it should be noted that history is the core art subject, meaning that it links with an understanding of many other disciplines. For instance, it provides context and chronology for literature, Geography, for politics, Anthropology and for sociology".

The relationship drawn between teaching methods and what teachers saw as the importance of learning history at school thus reflected their understanding of the subject.

5.4 Relationships drawn by teachers between their strategies of teaching and the essentials of learning history

Teachers put forward a number of reasons for teaching history at school. They talked about issues of language development, students being able to search for information and confidence in making presentations or expressing their views. It was nevertheless interesting to note that the teachers interviewed did not show any awareness of other crucial skills that the learning of the subject could develop. If they had a full understanding of the nature of the subject, they would have gone beyond the basic skills, they talked about to issues of creativity and critical thinking that are associated with the learning of history.

One of the most important advantages of a study of history is that it develops critical skills. It obliges us to ask questions about the past and to think creatively in trying to answer these questions. The skills of interpretation, deduction, evaluation and synthesis, to name a few, are essential for scholars of history. Everyone needs to know how to acquire information, how to assess material honestly, distinguish between important and the secondary and how to process information to a conclusion in a readable form (Mathews *et al* 1992: 7).

The lack of awareness of the essentials of teaching history and the extent to which they appreciated the value of the subject had an impact on the way they used their teaching methods in the classroom. It appeared that even though they used procedures associated with progressive strategies, they still could not abandon the factual approach that such strategies aim to eradicate. This had an effect on the type of skills that students were exposed to in the learning process.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This project has illustrated the extent to which history is taught in schools to develop skills that are crucial for a democratic society. It has indicated how teachers fail to promote creative and critical thinking through the subject. To some extent the project has also indicated how teachers wittingly or not teach the subject for other purposes mainly indoctrination to the hegemonic structures of Swazi society. Drawing from work such as Carr (1990), Tosh (1991), Jenkins (1991), Collingwood (1993) and Appleby (1994) it has been possible to look into teachers' understanding of the nature of history as a discipline and draw the conclusion that teachers' knowledge in this regard is still wanting. Such a conclusion has been drawn on the basis of what teachers expressed as essential to the teaching of the subject. The strategies used by teachers reflected their notion of what is crucial in the learning of history. Their particular emphasis on invoking interest and motivation highlighted for this project their conceptual positioning with regard to the subject. Writings on the interpretive and controversial nature of the subject referred to in this project and emphasized by authors such as Levistick and Barton (1997) indicate that the way teachers handle controversy and interpretation in their lessons is useful as a means of reflecting their understanding of the subject. Therefore, one can justifiably argue that despite the fact that these writers draw from contexts other than Swaziland, their views still do have some applicability to this context.

It could be that some people would argue that methods used to collect data in this project could have prevented full exposure of teachers' perceptions about what they were doing. But as this was anticipated as a possible problem such concerns cannot be valid because the research tools employed here were specifically meant to provide the teachers who participated with all opportunity to reveal their understanding of their classroom practices. In fact it is in discussions conducted later on in the interview process that the researcher's uneasiness about her interpretation of the lessons observed was settled. As the data in the project demonstrates, the teachers expressed views that could be said to be distinct from what is currently of interest to the teaching of history.

Chapter 4 has highlighted that teachers in the study used lesson organizational practices that may be said to be in line with progressive instruction. Teachers engaged in discussions and question and answer when teaching the subject. They viewed their strategies as encouraging students to participate in the learning process, discover information for themselves and subsequently arouse interest and ensure that students do not forget what they have learnt. Further it has also highlighted the teachers' lack of awareness of the interpretive and controversial nature of history. Their lessons lacked critical and creative thinking and they did not demonstrate awareness of the significance of these skills. They emphasized the acquisition of factual information and relied mainly on the factual approach.

Chapter 5 showed the teachers' understanding of what history is about. It has illustrated that teachers could not relate history with crucial skills associated with learning it. The

purpose of teaching the subject was related to issues of identity, history knowledge in relation to other subjects and basic skills such as language development.

From the evidence presented in this study, it is clear that as educators working in schools, the teachers seem not to view it as part of their responsibilities to keep abreast with debates that mainly take place within tertiary institutions. What this means is that unless teachers become part of the professional and academic discussions which are taking place, it will remain difficult to make the views expressed in such fora to filter into schools.

This is a question related to the significance of theory to practice in teaching. For example, Smith (1992) argues that theory can improve practice. When teachers are part of discussions related to their subject, they widen the knowledge on the concepts and procedures that characterize their discipline. This may result in them being in a position to teach effectively. Smith points out that theory helps people develop a sense of how they view or perceive issues. "There is the sense in which theory entails a more thorough-going scrutiny in which our ideas are challenged by other people, in which we read books and test our thinking against the ideas to be found in them, where we acquire a historical perspective, wrestle with fundamental concepts that may not be peculiar to classroom practice but still affect the whole way the educational enterprise is conceived" (p. 392). The point is that teachers need to get exposed to the theory related to the subjects they teach as it helps shape their conceptions of the disciplines they are in. Every subject as a form of knowledge has a structure and procedures which form part of its theory and

philosophy. Teachers do need such exposure in order to develop the capacity to change the way they teach.

Recommendations

It is clear from the study that a lot has been assumed about teachers being able to implement reforms in a way that is expected. The current problem as shown in the study could be solved by conducting in-service workshops. It is recommended that the History Teachers' Association in Swaziland organize workshops where professionals in the field from higher institutions of learning could meet with teachers. This would provide an opportunity for the two groups to work together to help teachers refine and shape their understanding of the essentials of the subject. It is in this forum that any research and discussions that relate to the teaching of the subject could be put forward and give teachers a chance to relate their experiences to the research findings. It would then be possible that professionals in higher learning institutions and some teachers could conduct research in relation to what is happening in the history classroom and how changes could be introduced. However, because traditionally research has been conducted mainly as a course requirement, teachers have not been given the chance to get feedback on the findings of the research conducted as researchers have no obligation to share their findings. In-service workshops will enable proper circulation of findings and also bring teachers into the discussions about the nature of their discipline. Teachers need to be aware of what they are doing and where it falls short before they can think of making changes.

Also such fora would provide teachers with an opportunity of self-affirmation. It has been common practice to expect teachers to receive ideas from people outside their own context. In the workshops people from institutions of higher learning would be forced to take on board teachers' experiences. For instance, as it has been evident in the study what teachers have expressed as arousing interest could be looked at critically and its true meaning revealed to both teachers and those who write about teachers' work. Instead of the latter being a sole responsibility of the academicians in higher institutions talking to each other, might make teachers realize the need for collaboration in order to improve the position of history in schools. However, as this is a project that requires dedicated social commitment the likelihood of it causing ripples especially with those the current situation favours need to be appreciated.

APPENDIX I

Jc SYLLABUS

530 HISTORY

530 HISTORY

The examination will consist of one paper 2½ hours.

To develop in the students:

- a) an interest in and an enjoyment of History.
- b) an awareness of the people, forces and events which have led to the social, economic and political situation around them today in Southern Africa and the world. This awareness should begin with the students' environment and expand to nation, Africa and the world;
- c) a critical ability to analyse and synthesise historical material;
- d) human understanding.

To provide the students with a sound background for the Cambridge History 242 syllabus option.

It is a requirement that in approaching the various topics, teachers in the
Boleswa countries will treat in detail the aspects of the syllabus
relating to their nations.

I : Introduction to the methods of studying history through the study
of local history - e.g. family, clan or local institution.

II : Africa before 1900.

A Beginning of African culture.

Early man in Africa

Khoisan - Hunters and Herders

Iron Age Cultures: Early peoples' movements in South Africa.

B Early European Expansion in brief with special emphasis
on Southern Africa:

The Portuguese, Dutch and British

Slave Trade: its cause, effects and abolition.

C Selected African States and their interaction with
Europeans.

General treatment of the following with special emphasis on Home
(Country)

Rise of Nationalism

Early forms of Nationalism: African and Afrikaner

Formation of the Union of South Africa

African Reaction to the formation of Union:

Within South Africa

In Boleswa

In Rhodesia

Consolidation of Afrikaner Nationalism

Struggle for Independence within Southern Africa:

Botswana

Lesotho

Swaziland

Any one of the following

South Africa

Rhodesia

Mozambique

Namibia

Angola

Zambia

National Development in Boleswa achievements and problems:

Social developments

Economic

Political developments.

IV : The Modern World

A Introduction

B Developments of Political Ideas (Democracy, Socialism, Facism):

C Emergence of World Powers: A General Survey of the following:

USA

USSR

China

Amazulu

Emaswati

Basotho

Batswana

Amxosa

Amandebele

Mashangane

Griqua and coloured Communities

White settlers.

D. Late 19th Century Imperialism in Southern Africa.

General treatment of the causes and effects of the Scramble for Africa, and the responses of Africans to it.

The Mining Revolution in Southern Africa.

Diamonds in Kimberly
Gold at Tati and Witwatersrand
Consequences.

Germans in Namibia.

Rhodes in Rhodesia

High Commission Territories

Anglo-Boer relations leading to the war of 1899 - 1902.

PART III : Southern Africa 1900

A Impact of Colonialism. General treatment of the following with special emphasis on the Home Country:

Botswana
Lesotho
Swaziland
Rhodesia
Mozambique
Malawi
Zambia
Namibia
Angola

D International Organisations

League of Nations
United Nations
Organisation of African Unity
Commonwealth
European Economic Community

E Social and Scientific Developments of the 20th Century:
(A study of any two of the following):

Transport and communications
Civil Rights
Sources of Power: oil to atomic power
Computerisation
Space Exploration
Conservation
Population
Population Explosion

Subject 2160. History for candidates in Central and Southern Africa

This subject will be available in June and November.

There will be two papers, each of 1½ hours duration.

Paper 1. African History. (1½ hours)

Candidates must answer three questions, with not more than two questions being taken from any one Section. At least six questions will be set on each Section.

Section A. Outline History of Africa (excluding Central and Southern Africa) in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Special attention should be given to the following topics:

(a) *Survey of Africa.* Main cultural and political groupings at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Types of African states.

(b) *The role of trade.* Effects on African society of slavery and the slave trade, with special reference to East and West Africa. Other types of trade in the nineteenth century and their effects: ivory, cloth, firearms, liquor, gold, palm oil, cotton, cloves.

(c) *The role of Islam.* Jihads of the Western Sudan: Othman dan Fodio, Ahmadu, Samori. The Mahdist movement in the Eastern Sudan. The Arab and Swahili impact on East Africa. The modernization of Egypt under Mehemet Ali and Ismail Pasha. North Africa and resistance to French colonialism.

(d) *The role of Christianity.* The missionary factor with special reference to East and West Africa (e.g. the Christian revolution in Buganda, the C.M.S. and Abeokuta). Indigenous Christianity in Ethiopia: cultural effects, unification and resistance to colonialism in the nineteenth century.

(e) *The European partition and its consequences.* The roles of Britain, France, Germany. The emergence of modern frontiers. The effects of colonial rule economic developments, transport, white settlement in North and East Africa, Indirect Rule.

(f) *Modern nationalist movements and the winning of independence.* Nineteenth century resistance movements to colonialism. The character of modern nationalist movements with special reference to East and West Africa. Nationalism in Muslim Africa: Egypt from Arabi to Nasser, the independence movement in Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco.

Section B. History of Central Africa (including the Congo) to the present day.

(a) *Bantu migrations.* Iron Age economy: technology and food crops.

(b) *Early states and kingdoms.* Mwene-mutapa (Monomotapa), Luba-Lunda states.

(c) *Subsequent peopling of Central Africa.* Luba-Lunda dispersion (c. sixteenth century). Rise of Mwata Yamvo, Kazembo, Bemba and Lozi (Barotse) kingdoms; the Malawi kingdoms, Kalonga, Undi; the Tambuka-Kemanga peoples. Role of other peoples, e.g. Bisa, Lala, Luvale, Ushi, Zambian Tonga.

(d) *Early European colonial activities.* The Portuguese. Portuguese political and trading relations with the Congo and Angola (sixteenth to eighteenth centuries); the penetration of the Zambezi valley, the relations with Rozwi and Mwene-mutapa empires. The prazo system; the missions of Kazembe.

(e) *The Nguni incursion and its effects.* The Ngoni, Ndebele (Matabele), Kololo states.

(f) *Other nineteenth century incursions.* Political and economic effects of Arabs, Yeke, Yao, Chikunda, etc., European hunters and traders.

(g) *The missionary incursion.* Livingstone and early missionaries. Political and economic effects of Scottish and U.M.C.A. missions in Malawi, P.M.S. in Barotseland, Plymouth Brothers in Katanga, White Fathers in Bembaland, etc.

(h) *The European partition and African resistance.* Leopold II and the Congo Free State, Rhodes and the occupation of Mashonaland and Matabeleland. Lobengula, the Matabele War and the Ndebele and Shona Rebellions of 1896-7. Sir Harry Johnston and the British Central Africa Protectorate. The Arab, Yao and Ngoni wars. Lewanika and the Barotseland Protectorate. The colonial occupation of Eastern Zambia: Kazembe's Lunda, the Bemba and Arabs, Mpezeni's Ngoni.

(i) *Colonial rule: social and political consequences.* Mineral and agricultural developments; taxation, land and labour problems; the growth of a 'dual economy'.

(j) *Colonial rule: politics.* The respective roles of the British South African Company, the Colonial Office, settler and African groups. Moves towards closer association; Federation.

(k) *The rise of modern African political consciousness.* Religious movements, voluntary associations, trade union organisations, their aims and methods.

(l) *The struggle for independence.* The formation of mass nationalist parties; their role in decolonisation. The break-up of Federation and the formation of Malawi, Zambia, and Rhodesia. Independence of Zimbabwe.

Section C. History of Southern Africa to the present day.

Special attention should be given to the following topics:

- (a) *The peopling of Southern Africa.* San, Khoikhoi and early Bantu migrations.
- (b) *Dutch colonisation of the Cape.* Relations with San and Khoikhoi. Rise of Boer stock farming and the problems of a frontier society.
- (c) *British occupation.* Effects of British legal and administrative measures on Boer communities. The expansion of pastoral farming and the intensification of frontier wars. The Voortrekkers. European occupation of the Orange Free State, Natal and the Transvaal.
- (d) *The Mfecane and Nguni-Sotho dispersion.* Rise of the Zulu power. Careers of Zwile, Sobhuza, Dingiswayo, Shaka. Origins of the Sotho, Swazi and Tswana nations. Careers of Moshesh (Moshoeshe I), Mswati, Khama. Migrations of Ndebele under Mzilikazi, Gaza under Soshangane. Kololo under Sebetwane, etc.
- (e) *Economic developments.* Mineral discoveries and the rise of the mining industry. Railway developments; railway tariff and customs rivalries. African migrant labour.
- (f) *The missionary factor.* John Philip. The London Missionary Society and relations with the Tswana peoples. Missionary influence on Lesotho.
- (g) *European rivalries.* British relations with the Boers. Federation schemes. Annexation of Transvaal and Anglo-Boer war of 1880-1. Effects of diamond and gold discoveries. Growth of Afrikaner nationalism. Rhodes, Hofmayr and Cape politics. German colonisation of S.W. Africa. The emergence of the protectorates of Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland. The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902. The formation of the Union of South Africa, 1910.
- (h) *African resistance to colonial rule.* Cape Frontier Wars after 1835. Voortrekker conflicts with Zulu, Ndebele and Sotho. Natal Zulu War 1878-9. Cape-Basuto War, 1880-84. Zulu 'Bambata Rebellion', 1906. Boer-Tswana Wars. Herero revolt.
- (i) *Development of white South Africa since Union.* Rise of Nationalist party. Development of apartheid policy. Constitutional changes leading ultimately to Republic. Incorporation of S.W. Africa. Growth of industry and economic developments.
- (j) *Growth of modern African political and social consciousness.* Early trade unions and African churches. African nationalist organisations (African National Congress 1912. All African Convention, 1936; Pan-Africanist Congress, 1958, etc.).
- (k) *The independence movements in Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland.*

Paper 2. Modern World History from 1870. (1½ hours)

Candidates must answer three questions. At least sixteen questions will be set on major themes in modern world history.

Syllabus

General Outline

1. The relations of the Great Powers, 1870-1914 — the causes and course of the First World War, 1914-18.
2. The relations of the Great Powers, 1919-39 — the causes and course of the Second World War, 1939-45.
3. The aftermath of the Second World War — 1945 to the present day. The Cold War. The rivalry of the Super States — alliances and pacts. The end of the Cold War.

The changing pattern of World Power

4. Imperialism — its origins and consequences with particular reference to the partition and decolonisation of Africa.
5. The search for international co-operation — the League of Nations — the United Nations Organisation and its specialised agencies.
6. The United States of America — from isolation to the Super State.
7. From Tsarist Russia to the Soviet Union and the Communist Super State. The collapse of the Soviet Empire.
8. The United Kingdom — from Empire to Commonwealth — present position in world politics.
9. Germany — from Empire to the two Germanies — problems of re-unification.
10. France — from the Third Republic to the Fifth Republic — Gaullism.
11. Italy — post-unification difficulties — Fascism and after.

APPENDIX II

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

When observing teachers' lessons the researcher was looking for the following particular activities:

- i) Identify strategies adopted for teaching. Focus on how strategies are employed by both the teachers and the students.
- ii) Role played by both teachers and students in the lessons for instance, how are teachers facilitating classroom activities and what activities are students engaged with.
- iii) Questions used in the lessons.

*What methods of teaching are used by teachers?

*What is involved when these methods are used?

*What is the role of the teacher – what is he \ she doing in the lesson?

*What sort of activities are students engaged with?

*What is the nature of questions that are used in the lessons?

APPENDIX III

QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH TEACHERS

N. B: One teacher was interviewed at a time and the discussions were recorded on an audio tape recorder.

Position of History in the school

- *How are subjects grouped at the various levels? (Senior and Junior)
- *Are you happy with the way subjects are grouped?
- *What time do you normally have your lessons?

Nature of History

- *May I ask, why are you a history teacher?
- *How do you think we can make students who are not doing well to improve their performance?
- *What other benefits do you think can come out of this?
- *Why do you think this might be important ?

Teaching History: in relation to video recorded lessons

- *How can you describe or define the methods you have used when teaching History?
- *What does using such methods mean for you?
- *Why do you think the methods you use to teach are important?
- *When you use the methods, what are you hoping to achieve?

APPENDIX IV

SUMMARY OF RESPONSE SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS

Position of History in the two schools:

Co-educational: At junior level history is compulsory meaning that it is done by all students. At senior level students choose between History \ Geography \ Accounts.

Teachers' feelings about grouping

Teacher 1: The way subjects are grouped gives chance to all students to do history even if they will become scientists.

Teacher 2: In principle there is an attempt to all students a chance to do history, but because the subject is looked down upon in the world of Science and Commerce most students go for Accounts and Geography which is considered as a science thus only the less gifted go for history.

Girls School: At junior students have to choose between History and Agriculture and at senior level they choose between History and the natural Sciences.

Teachers' feelings about grouping

Both teachers pointed out that history is offered as an alternative to those who cannot cope with the demands of the Sciences (weak students).

Activities to promote subject

Co-educational: Students are involved in

- i) Debates on current historical issues such as, the work of the Constitution Review Committee in Swaziland (Is this committee of necessity to the needs of the people?)
- ii) Encourage students to read newspapers and cut interesting issues and pin them on notice board
- iii) Essay writing based on history topics and the best is pinned on the board for all students to read
- iv) Students are given small research topics to work on.

Girls School: Students are involved in

- i) Small research topics that are done during holidays, for instance, students have been assigned to interview ex-service men who were part of World War II about their experiences and their role
- ii) Students assigned to read newspapers and to look out for information on the work of the United Nations in settling disputes and other social problems

iii) The school has educational tours for the students and it is not just the history students that benefit, but all students. In the educational tour they visited the parliament, unfortunately because they were in session students were not allowed in; they were only given a presentation on how parliament is organized and how it functions.

Teachers' reasons for teaching history at school

One teacher pointed out that History is not related to the needs of the students and if possible it could be replaced with Development Studies

History is important in helping students to establish their identity and know more about their background

History is linked with other subjects, students can find information from their history lessons helpful in understanding other subjects at school.

History is about current issues, students keep informed about what is happening around them and the whole world.

How to keep students interested in the subject

This can be summarized in two main points;

- i) by involving them in research work and inviting resource persons in case of dealing with local events
- ii) by giving them a chance to participate actively in the learning process.

Strategies that can improve the way the subject is taught

Audio Visuals such as Videos and films on historical events

Discussions and presentations

Research especially during holidays

Field trips to places relevant to history

Reasons for taking the above as good teaching strategies

Teacher 1: Videos are a good way of teaching history because students are not likely to forget something they have seen. It is easy to discuss events they (students) have seen rather than talk about abstract things.

Teacher 2: Presentations will increase their confidence to talk in front of other people and they also develop language skills which are skills they will use even when they finish school.

Teacher 3: Research is challenging to the students as they find information on their own and also develop their research skills. Students read newspapers so that they are in a position to see the link between the past and the present (work of the U.N) and also to get exposed to the media. When students take the initiative to learn they never wait for the teacher to tell them.

Teacher 4: Field trips and films with actual footage will make students to realize that history is 'real'.

Teaching history: Video recordings

Teachers described their methods as child-centered, students finding information for themselves and an alternative to the lecture method they viewed as boring.

Conceptual implications of the methods described as child-centered: (N.B teachers avoided answering this question, may they did not exactly understand what the researcher was talking about) Examples of their responses are as follows:

students are doing the work themselves, they are on a fact finding mission, they should be able to answer questions using their own words to show understanding.

Why strategies used are important and what is to be achieved when they are used?

Teacher 1:

- because they encourage students to be involved in the learning process
- students are free to contribute and ask questions from their peers
- it gives a relaxed environment that makes it suitable for all students to learn
- involvement is aimed at arousing students' interests because when they are passive they easily forget what they have been told

Teacher 2:

I use question and answer method to see if my students have done their readings and also to see if they understood what they been reading. Further this method involves students in learning rather than for them to listen to the teacher. When they are involved they discover information by themselves and they will not forget it.

Teacher 3:

Students do not need to be told facts. When they read on their own they discover facts and it hard for them to forget what they have discovered on their own, it sticks with them. The method motivates students and keeps them interested. More importantly the class is at ease as students are free to talk and ask each other questions thus being involved in the lesson.

Teacher 4: I want students to be fully involved in the lesson and I expect presenters to respond to any question asked during discussions. This will make sure that students do not forget what has been discussed in the lesson.

APPENDIX V

TEACHERS' BACKGROUND PROFILE

TEACHERS' RESPONSES

QUESTIONS ASKED	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4
What is your genda?	Female	Male	Female	Female
What is your age group?				
a) 20- 25 years				
b) 26-30 years	c	b	b	c
c) 31 years and above				
What is your teaching qualification?				
a) Secondary Teachers Diploma	b	b	b	b
b) B. A Humanities Plus Teaching certificate				
Teaching experience				
a) 0-5 years				
b) 6-10 years	c	a	a	c
c) 11 years and above				
Which classes are you teaching? (F- stands for Form class)	F1&2	F1&3	F3&5	F2&4

*All teachers were trained at the University of Swaziland

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