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## ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTOR

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## **The Curriculum Change Process - The Case of 'O' Level Geography in Zimbabwe.**

by

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper explores the processes which were followed to review and revise a syllabus designed before the attainment of Independence to come up with a post-independence one. The former was referenced as syllabus 2222 and the latter as syllabus 2248. The paper argues that syllabus design and development should follow logical steps such as rationale; needs assessment through consultation with teachers and other interested parties; selection of content using an acceptable paradigm; evaluation procedures; and provision of teaching and learning resources. Above all, the procedures followed should be grounded in literature on curriculum design and development.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Since Zimbabwean Independence, concrete plans have been afoot to revise and localise all externally examined syllabi at 'O' and 'A' levels. A two pronged strategy has been and is being utilized in this exercise - the first phase involving 'O' levels and the second 'A' levels. This paper focuses on the steps which were undertaken to revise the Cambridge syllabus (2222) which was introduced into our schools in 1982. From the onset, it should be emphasized that the original syllabus was not changed unnecessarily and without any justification but that change was only effected wherever desirable.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Kelly (1989) and Bishop (1985) agree that there are many meanings attached to the word 'curriculum'. This explains why it will be helpful to distinguish the use of the word to denote the content of a particular subject or area of study from the use of it to refer to the total programme of an educational institution. For the purposes of this paper, the word curriculum is used to mean "syllabus".

### **Determinants of curriculum**

Despite the debate surrounding what constitutes a curriculum, one should also consider the determinants of curriculum. This is important and is well supported by Bishop (1985:2) when he says,

a curriculum does not develop in a vacuum; one must consider the values, the traditions, the beliefs, the whole culture, or way of life, of the society in which it will be implemented.

Curriculum decisions are therefore multifaceted and are not only confined to content and the most efficient ways of organizing the teaching and learning of subject-matter. They touch on social, cultural, philosophical, moral, political and ideological issues.

### **The process of curriculum development**

It is essential to use a holistic approach when developing a curriculum for it provides a total picture of the whole process. Wheeler (1971) Skilbeck (1976) offer useful frameworks showing the curriculum development process. They focus on the specification of aims, objectives, selection of learning activities, selection of content and evaluation.

### **Models of curriculum design**

Having acknowledged what is meant by curriculum and the need to view curriculum development as an interactive and continuous process it is important to decide on which model of curriculum design to use. In the forefront are the "Objectives" and "Process" models whose main advocates are Tyler (1946) and Stenhouse (1970) respectively. The objectives model is oriented towards pre-specified, measurable pupil behaviours which determine the content and methods to be included in a curriculum. Naturally it entails the identification of objectives, selection of content, selection of the means for the attainment of these objectives, organising these means and evaluating the outcomes. The process model on the other hand argues that the design of a curriculum by stating its ultimate goals and then devising a step by step series of objectives which lead us to those goals is educationally self defeating. The argument continues by saying that the objectives model makes no allowance for developing the human nature of the learner because of its prescriptive characteristics. Despite the plausible arguments presented for or against either of these models, an objectives oriented curriculum was selected in the design and development of syllabus 2248 in Zimbabwe.



## **Curriculum innovation and implementation**

In his study of how innovation in virtually any field (including education) came about, Havelock (1971) identified three main models of innovation, namely: the Research Development and Diffusion Model; the Social Interaction Model; the Problem-Solving Method and the Linkage Model.

The Linkage Model was used in the curriculum change process from syllabus 2222 to 2248 because of its ability to link a whole cross-section of parties involved in the curriculum innovation process. Some of these included colleges of education, universities and other interested parties.

### **Syllabus 2222 to Syllabus 2248**

Before analysing the merits and demerits of syllabus 2222 and the mechanics of its revision, it is imperative to narrate a rationale to justify this curriculum change. Naturally, this should start from the course structure of geographical studies in Zimbabwean secondary schools where a pure approach as opposed to the integrated social studies one, to the teaching and learning of the subject prevails.

The study of geography in Zimbabwe's secondary schools is divided into three phases namely: ZJC (12 - 14 years old) 'O' level (14 - 16 years) and 'A' level (16 - 19 years). The aim of the ZJC course is to provide a broad - based background and foundation suitable for further education. This is the stage at which, if one applies Piaget's phases of cognitive development, most of the pupils will be at the "concrete operations" level although a few will be showing flashes of formal propositional thought.

At the ZJC level a concentric paradigm is adopted which as Marsden (1976) writes "has the complementary advantage of obeying the sound pedagogic principle of moving from the familiar to the unfamiliar, yet avoiding the dangers of parochialism present in pure local studies approaches". At this level, it is assumed that all pupils are given a broad knowledge of the local area and Zimbabwe. It is this ZJC background which is vital when developing an 'O' level syllabus, a fact which was taken cognisance of, when syllabus 2222 was revised. In fact one can justifiably argue that there is little point in repeating the same material covered at ZJC at 'O' level. Syllabus 2222 was oblivious of the this fact hence its tendency to repeat some ZJC work, an



approach which failed to challenge pupils and so demotivated some. The designers of syllabus 2222 could have obviated these flaws by working from a scope-and-sequence chart of the work to be covered from ZJC through 'O' level to 'A' level. Such an approach guards against unnecessary repetition and also gives a clear overview of the courses to be covered and their levels of cognition.

### **Spiral curriculum**

The idea of dovetailing ZJC to 'O' level work blends very well with Bruner's (1977) "spiral curriculum" strategy which effectively avoids the repetition of topics covered at different levels of education. Such an approach circumvents most of the problems or weaknesses associated with repetition as teachers will consciously organise their teaching to avoid this. In line with Bruner's strategy what is being advocated here (unlike in syllabus 2222), is an approach whereby ideas are introduced gradually and in a different form from the first year of education to the last. If this is adopted, it will mean that unlike syllabus 2222 the revised 'O' level course (2248 syllabus) should follow on from ZJC and not merely repeat what would have already been covered - a point which re-emphasises how essential a scope-and-sequence chart really is. As a matter of fact, the 'O' level course should provide a bridge between ZJC study of the "home area" and the theoretical and world approach of 'A' level.

The spiral curriculum as postulated by Bruner should nevertheless be looked at flexibly and not rigidly. Bruner is the first one to agree with this when he articulated that "a curriculum as it develops should revisit the basic ideas taught at a lower level repeatedly, building upon them until the student has grasped the full formal apparatus that goes with them". This contention was also echoed by Graves (1979) when he says that the spiral approach ... does not mean that old ideas are not revised or their understanding deepened. The revised syllabus therefore guards against unnecessary repetition but consolidates on the work covered at ZJC level by deepening on the level of perception in line with the formal operational cognitive development in which most of the learners will be. This philosophy, one hopes, will rectify some of the loopholes in syllabus 2222 especially those pertaining to content and the level at which it is taught (Table 1).

Table 1: Spiral Curriculum

ZJC	SYLLABUS 2222	REVISED (22448)
<p>School meteorological station and instruments; observation measurement and recording of weather phenomena. International symbols of recording rainfall, temperature, relative humidity. Rainfall types: relief and convectional. Wind force, direction, cloud types and amount, max. and min. thermometer, range, means, totals, sunrise/sunset (bar charts, line graphs and pie charts).</p> <p>National weather bureau production of meteorological charts.</p>	<p>School recordings of weather instruments; draw and describe and explain the use of the simple instruments e.g. rain gauge, max. and min. thermometer, barometer. Simple cloud type recognition and associated weather based on a weather map. Rainfall types: relief, convectional and frontal. Tropical storms and sequence of weather</p>	<p>a) Air masses: their origins, characteristics and movement with reference to South Africa.</p> <p>b) Anticyclones, fronts depressions including tropical storms and the weather associated with them. (N.B. types of rainfall can be revisited whenever necessary)</p> <p>c) The construction and interpretation of simple weather maps including station model.</p> <p>d) Concepts of climatic classification including characteristics of climate type e.g. temperature, precipitation, wind and humidity.</p> <p>Construction of climatic graphs and diagrams. N.B. The range and mean concepts can be revised.</p>

The spiral thread can clearly be seen in the transition from ZJC to 'O' level (under the revised) but its absence is also seen if one attempts to link ZJC to syllabus 2222. Admittedly, entirely new topics not dealt with at ZJC such as river processes, forestry and fishing were virtually retained as they appeared in syllabus 2222 format.

### **Limited scope of coverage**

Similarly the division of syllabus 2222 under the "home area" (Zimbabwe) and the "wider region" (Africa South of the Sahara) was eliminated in the revised syllabus. One feels it was really unnecessary to have these two categories as similar themes were repeated in both sections. The general principles in each one of these topics (e.g. forestry) are basically the same. There was also a general feeling that the original syllabus was too "inward looking" as it was confined to Africa South of the Sahara thus giving candidates a largely Developing World perspective of the subject especially in Human Geography.

To counter this anomaly, the revised syllabus draws examples from the Developed World whenever such a strategy improves the learner's conceptual overview of certain topics. For instance a comparison of the population age - sex structures from a developing world country to that of developed one could only help refine a pupil's understanding of varying population dynamics such as growth rates and their implications in the socio-economic environment of the respective countries. The "inward looking" approach which was used in syllabus 2222 ignored a basic tenet of geography, that of providing pupils with knowledge and in this case global knowledge, for the learners are part of an international community. This idea is supported by Boardman (1986) when he asserts that "If pupils are to understand the world in which they live, and the interdependence of individuals, groups and nations, they will require a great deal of knowledge about the world."

### **Approaches to Revising the Syllabus**

#### **Content Selection**

Various elements are scrutinised when drafting or revising a syllabus. The most problematic of this is the content to go into a syllabus. It is often not easy to decide on what to and what not to teach especially in a wide ranging subject like geography, a senti-

ment which was shared by Graves (1979). He observes that "the vast content of geography means that the selection process can sometimes be painful since there may be no strong reason why one body of content should be chosen rather than another." This is a major problem one has to grapple with even when revising a syllabus.

### **Essential considerations**

In addition one has to consider a host of other important variables such as the length of the course itself, the amount of teaching and learning time available, the target group especially their level of cognitive development and of course the calibre of the teachers and the teaching and learning resources at their disposal. All these elements were taken into consideration when the revised syllabus was designed and developed.

### **Needs Assessment**

The words of Hawes (1972), have some relevance to our deliberations here. He argues that "new syllabuses are, by tradition, imposed on schools for their own good and if the medicine proves a little too difficult to swallow, schools are nevertheless expected to realise that it contains the best ingredients". This philosophy is to a large extent quite true of the manner in which syllabus 2222 and its predecessors were introduced into our schools. There was very little, if any consultation on syllabus design with teachers and yet they are the implementers of the curriculum. It was a question of take it or leave it. The truth however, is that consultation, at all levels, is essential when one is planning to introduce a new syllabus or thinking of revising a pre-existing one. This reconciles the objectives of those who design the curriculum with those for whom it is designed - some form of teacher empowerment in curriculum design and development.

Tyler (1975) shares similar concerns when he argues that particular attention should be given to teachers when one is considering the positive and negative dynamic factors that must be taken into account in any curriculum development project. He warns that a curriculum designed as a complete, almost teacher-proof, learning system will not usually be acceptable to teachers in any field in which they feel confident that they can teach and do not dislike the teaching role. A strategy valuing the role of teachers in curriculum development was used when moulding the revised syllabus. The vital cog in the successful implementation of



a new curriculum, the teachers, were consulted using a needs assessment approach. According to Oliva (1982), Needs Assessment is a process for identifying programmatic needs that must be addressed by curriculum/educational planners. He argues that the objectives of Needs Assessment are two fold, that is, to identify needs of the learners not being met by the existing curriculum and form a basis for revising the curriculum in such a way as to fulfill as many of the unmet needs as possible. So what we are talking about here as Tankard (1974) argues are "total needs minus needs being adequately met by existing programme equal unmet needs".

The Needs Assessment was carried out through the use of a questionnaire which was distributed to 400 randomly selected secondary schools out of the 1515 (1991) in the country. The questionnaire was based on syllabus 2222 since this is what the teachers were using. A differently designed questionnaire was also dispatched to government ministries and parastatals to solicit their views on the course material which they felt was relevant to their respective activities. This was considered crucial as it helped the investigators assess the practical relevance of geography in the world of work for which the pupils are being prepared. Failure to use such an approach in the design phase, was a major flaw in syllabus 2222. Everything was imposed on the system. In the revised syllabus, teachers knew they were consulted, knew they had an input into the new syllabus and any changes introduced did not come as a shock and thus allayed Hawes' fears to some extent.

### **Other essential considerations**

In addition to consulting teachers as mentioned earlier, a number of other important elements were considered when selecting the content for the revised syllabus. Among many, the key ones were validity, the principles of feasibility and relevance. As for validity one was supposed to ascertain that there is a close connection between content and the goals which it is intended to serve and the learning outcome/s expected of the learner. There were no qualms here with syllabus 2222 as most of the content in it was accurate and authentic.

In response to the principle of feasibility, steps were taken to guard against over-loading the new syllabus with content as on average, two hours to two and a half hours a week are allocated to the teaching and learning of geography. As will be mentioned later, efforts have been made and still are, to provide teaching and learning resources for implementing the new syllabus. This was not a major concern of the designers of

syllabus 2222.

More important is the question of relevance which was given ephemeral attention in syllabus 2222. In the revised syllabus, it was imperative that the designers satisfied themselves that the content is functional, that is, it has maximal relation to life in the present and future and that the content selected catered for the needs of the learners.

### Guidance Notes for Teachers

While it is commendable that syllabus 2222 was quite useful especially on the guidance notes it offered to teachers, it was felt that these could still be further developed. This is because the excellent guidance notes in syllabus 2222 only focused on "Basic techniques and skills" an idea which would have been extended to the other topics. The guidance notes in the revised syllabus cover all topics. Such assistance, in our circumstances, becomes increasingly important given the present high number of inadequately qualified and untrained teachers who teach geography in secondary schools.

In the same vein it was resolved to design a syllabus which did not only include content but also relevant guidance on the key principles and concepts involved in the teaching and learning process and the sequence of learning together with the skills and abilities which may be tested. This was done in order to focus the teacher's attention towards the objectives of the syllabus (Table 2). The notion of identifying main ideas and operational objectives for teachers was another omission in syllabus 2222.

**Table 2: Main Ideas and Operational Objectives**

TOPIC	MAIN IDEAS	OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES
Migration	Migration both within and between countries can vary in causes; organisation, duration and distance.	Define migration and explain its causes and consequences. Classify different types of migrations using examples with reference to push-pull factors and their consequences.

It was planned that each topic in the new syllabus will be treated using the above format whose usefulness to teachers could be seen by comparing it to the section on migrations (Section F) in syllabus 2222.

## CONCEPTS AND SKILLS

### The need

Any progressive geography syllabus can not be sustained if it fails to give due care to the idea of concepts and skills. As stated by Boardman (1986:14) similar feelings were articulated by the Schools Council Working Paper (1981) - The Practical Curriculum which gave more prominence to skills by declaring that:

We believe schools ought to emphasise the development of skills.

Teachers could help themselves to be more effective if they saw the pursuit of certain types and levels of skills as one of the dimensions of curriculum planning.

Geography can make a vital contribution in this direction. Fortunately our thinking on this score seems to be in consonance with the intentions of syllabus 2222 which

also emphasised the understanding of principles and concepts. The only unfortunatething here was that the designers of syllabus 2222 assumed that the generality of our teachers comprehended what concepts and skills really are. Staff development in-service courses actually revealed something to the contrary hence the desire in the revised syllabus, to clarify this to teachers in the form of additional notes, a feature which was given superficial attention in syllabus 2222.

### Trends

In keeping with recent trends, most geography courses are consciously shifting from approaches stressing the memorisation of facts in favour of those focusing on the acquisition of concepts and skills. Such a persuasion is supported by Hall (1976) who contends that "the emphasis upon concepts is a renewed attempt to lever geography in school away from the particular and discrete, and seek more generalised statements which link phenomena together." One can not question the merits of such an ap-



proach which is given a fillip by the fact that a syllabus document which tailors classroom experiences in relation to concepts and skills not to facts per se, is more rational than one which encourages rote learning. The strengths of a conceptual approach to the teaching and learning of geography according to Hall (1976, p.226) are further concretised by Graves (1982) when he writes:

It is necessary to accept that in structuring a syllabus one is essentially concerned with concepts and skills rather than facts. Facts (he argues) are impermanent, they change rapidly, whereas concepts enable us to handle situations with great ease, to classify order and relate what may otherwise prove chaotic.

In a nutshell therefore, concepts and skills are more flexible and more permanent than facts as they have the ability to generalise the particular, they are the basis upon which the brain moulds and internalises experience.

As intimated earlier, one is in total agreement with syllabus 2222 in terms of using a conceptual approach in the teaching and learning processes. However, due to our peculiar circumstances - lack of qualified teachers, lack of resources in general, large classes (averaging 45) and thus depriving the teacher of any room to be innovative and creative as desired, one is compelled to step in and assist the teachers by providing concrete guidance notes on concepts. Needless to say teachers are still free, if circumstances permit, to use their own judgment and discretion in the use of these notes. But one derives some comfort from such an approach because the "framework" would have been provided and from grassroots experience, it is the majority of teachers who will benefit. This was a sad omission in syllabus 2222 and the addition of this in the revised one is invaluable.

### **Walker's scheme**

Walker (1976) came up with a useful scheme of concepts which was adopted in the revised syllabus because of its clarity and simplicity. Teachers will be encouraged to utilise this flexibly to suit their day to day activities and make any positive changes to it. This is because as stated earlier, a rigid teaching and learning system that permits or requires very little artistry on the part of the teacher is likely to be frustrating. Walker's scheme is outlined below.

#### **FIRST AND SECOND ORDER GEOGRAPHICAL CONCEPTS (After Walker - 1976)**

PRIMARY CONCEPTS	SECONDARY CONCEPTS
1. <u>Location</u>	Position and distribution; areal specialization regions; association/segregation of functions; least cost/optimum location.
2. <u>Interaction</u>	Man and the environment; factors influencing locations and links, trade, aid.
3. <u>Distance</u>	Efficiency of route; actual distance; time and cost distance; effects on locations.
4. <u>Scale</u>	Scale of representation; scale of operations /problems economies of scale;hierarchies.
5. <u>Change</u>	Diffusion of ideas, methods; growth and decline; sequent occupance, inertia.
6. <u>Representation</u>	Maps, graphs, photographs, diagrams, statistics, models.

Such a scheme could easily be weaved into any topic in the syllabus and if the teacher follows the general outline above, not religiously though, s/he will be unconsciously marrying the teaching to a conceptual approach. Perhaps what is envisaged here could be amplified by illustrating the advantages of Walker's scheme using a topic from the revised syllabus.

TOPIC	CONCEPT
Agricultural Studies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Location</u>: Agricultural landuse patterns in Zimbabwe and their distribution.</li> <li>2. <u>Interaction</u>: Factors influencing landuse-relief, soils, climate, distance, scale of operations (e.g. subsistence/commercial demand, government actions, human attitude and knowledge and trade).</li> <li>3. <u>Distance</u>: Effects on land use both on a farm and in terms of distance to a market</li> <li>4. <u>Scale</u>: Scale of operations e.g. size and organisation of farms.</li> <li>5. <u>Change</u>: Changing patterns of Agricultural landuse e.g. effects of rural resettlement schemes.</li> <li>6. <u>Representation</u>: Maps/topology, graphs, photographs, diagrams, models.</li> </ol>

The use of an approach like this, in the implementation of the revised syllabus, will undoubtedly refine the teaching and learning process and surely refocus the teaching strategy from one emphasising factual memorisation to one promoting the acquisition of concepts and skills - an approach whose value can not be over-emphasized.

## PARADIGM FOR THE REVISED SYLLABUS

### The need for a paradigm

Having analysed syllabus 2222 in relation to the revised one in terms of the selection of content procedure, the need for consultation with teachers, the general structure of the study of geography in Zimbabwe, the strengths of adopting a spiral curriculum strategy linked to the cognitive development of the learners, the general syllabus format (topic/main ideas/operational objectives) and the need for a conceptual approach, the crucial question still to be answered was: "What paradigm, if any, was to be used in the revised syllabus?"

The response to this question was significant because all the elements discussed so far had to be absorbed into whatever structure was decided upon by the Panel and operate within the parameters designated by the paradigm. There are several formats which could be used in a syllabus, namely: a regional approach; a systematic approach with

a regional bias; a systematic approach reworked within a different framework of "broader" groupings allowing greater flexibility e.g. the ecosystems approach; and a strongly conceptual syllabus based largely upon ideas/patterns/relationships. The choice of a paradigm is not an easy task but the natural starting point here is the one which was used in syllabus 2222.

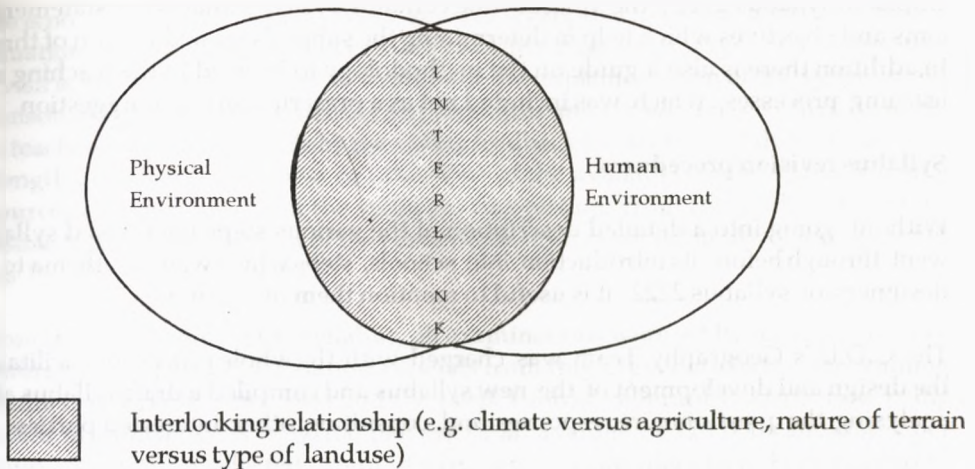
### **Flaws in syllabus 2222**

Syllabus 2222 used a systematic approach with a regional bias. As mentioned earlier, its major drawbacks were that it was too "inward looking" and lacked world depth, was repetitive especially with reference to the "home area" and the "wider region" and repeated some of the work covered at ZJC. In addition the syllabus was not as relevant as first envisaged e.g. problems of conservation or development were not adequately covered and yet these are what the learners are experiencing on a daily basis. It also failed to clearly show the links between physical and human environments. Besides, the systematic/regional approach it adopted was not clearly articulated for teachers to comprehend and use comfortably hence the confusion among some of them.

Whilst it is true that some teachers were making an effort to approach the teaching with a more systematic bias others, especially the conservatives, were still using a purely regional approach, dated as it is. Such problems are, unfortunately, reflected in the examination scripts, as the pupils who are exposed to a regional approach perform dismally while those who learn geography through a systematic approach have better results.

### **Choice of a paradigm**

In as much as the acquisition of concepts and skills (in the revised syllabus) as outlined earlier was advocated, care was taken to match these to the cognitive levels of the learners. One could warn that learners differ from each other in respect of abilities, values, aspirations, environmental circumstances, home background, and hence likely to have different levels of cognition as Lewy (1977) notes. Admittedly, our classes are made up of a heterogeneous population but the escape route in the revised syllabus was to tailor it for the "average" student. It was therefore felt that a purely conceptual syllabus will perhaps be encouraged at 'A' Level. In the revised syllabus the systematic elements in syllabus 2222 were retained but geared to operate within an ecosystem paradigm as postulated by Graves (1980). He argues that the ecosystem paradigm provides a way of dovetailing natural systems with human-made systems and has the advantage of making possible the achievement of the general aims of geographical education (Fig. 1).



***N.B. When physical and human geography are shown as systems entwined, an interlocking relationship results.***

**Fig 1. INTEGRATING THE HUMAN TO THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

The aims of geographical education focusing on the development of the skills of graphicacy, acquisition of world knowledge, promotion of international understanding and fostering of environmental awareness are also satisfied by using such an approach. The strength of this format lies in the fact that it is composed of dynamic elements, a reflection of the very nature of behaviour of the systems. To avoid unnecessary criticism of this paradigm, it should be noted that the oil which keeps the geography machine running, "basic mapping skills and techniques" are assumed as their use and application filter through the whole ecosystem model. Like in syllabus 2222, these were retained as is, and specified in the revised syllabus. However, such a clear cut specification of the paradigm on which the syllabus was based was completely ignored by the designers of syllabus 2222. The revised syllabus also contains a rationale (in the form of a preamble) high-lighting the place of geography in the school curriculum. Again this was omitted in syllabus 2222. The rationale is essential because it is the vehicle through which people are made aware of the subject's contributions to the overall education of our offspring.



Unlike in syllabus 2222, the revised one contains a fairly exhaustive statement of aims and objectives which help in determining the subject's main direction of thrust. In addition there is also a guide on the methodology to be used in the teaching and learning processes, which was included not as a prescription but a suggestion.

### **Syllabus revision procedures**

Without going into a detailed description of the various steps the revised syllabus went through before its introduction into schools, steps which were anathema to the designers of syllabus 2222, it is useful to mention them in passing.

The C.D.U.'s Geography Team was charged with the whole process of facilitating the design and development of the new syllabus and compiled a draft syllabus after analysing the questionnaire responses and consulting other interested parties.

In a series of meetings, the National Geography Panel composed of professional geographers from throughout the country, refined and restructured the first draft to produce a final draft which was then presented to the Subject Team Leaders at CDU. These further brainstormed the final draft and their input was invaluable, but mainly professional e.g. refining the objectives and the language. In line with Tyler's (1949) thinking, the leader's deliberations focused on the selection and definition of the learning objectives, the selection and creation of appropriate learning experiences, the organization of the learning experiences to achieve a maximum cumulative effect and the evaluation of the curriculum to furnish a continuing basis for necessary revisions and desirable improvements.

The final draft was then sent to Heads of Divisions at Head Office for their approval - a rubber stamping input unless the document contained glaringly offensive elements especially in the political sphere. Paradoxically, the localised syllabus was sent to Cambridge University for a further professional and experiential input and final printing. This last step is done to maintain the international momentum of recognition of our syllabi and examinations.

### **Evaluation**

The course is mainly assessed through a summative evaluation process. This involves the writing of an external examination by all candidates at the end of their fourth year of secondary education. Due to a number of constraints, especially logistical,

there is no evaluation by course work as such, an approach open to abuse. Formative evaluation of the syllabus however takes place in a number of ways. Education officers visit schools on a regular basis to monitor the implementation of the syllabus and in liaison with the teachers, identify any strengths and/or weaknesses in it. In addition teachers play an extra role by providing feedback on elements of the syllabus such as length and the effectiveness or otherwise of the available teaching and learning resources used to implement the syllabus. Suggestions from the field are noted for possible future improvement of the curriculum since curriculum development is not static but an on-going process.

Before the localisation of the syllabus, all examinations were set by the University of Cambridge. As part of localisation, officials from this University have been training examiners (markers) since 1984 and the proportion of geography scripts now being marked in Zimbabwe is now 100 percent of an average of 120 000 candidates per annum. Recently, a selected group of experienced examiners have been trained to prepare items which will be used in examinations. The first full-fledged Zimbabwean prepared examinations started in November 1991 composed of a 40 question multiple choice test (Paper 1) and an essay paper made up mainly of data based questions (Paper 2). In format and questioning techniques, these papers are virtually similar to their predecessors.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, one should note that it is not easy to introduce changes in a syllabus or even to revise it. As such the Curriculum Development Unit of the Ministry, in liaison with the National Geography Panel, is mandated to provide supportive teaching and learning materials to allay teacher's fears and to facilitate the incorporation of new ideas and themes into the teaching. This has been and is being done in recognition of Lewy's (1977) sound advice that:

The syllabus can not be considered final until adequate instructional materials have been developed to fit its specifications and until it has been successfully implemented in the system. This means that one can not really tell whether a new syllabus is adequate without examining the instructional materials representing its specifications. A syllabus is adequate only if it is possible to produce curriculum materials which are suitable for attaining the objectives specified in it (p.15).



Already a practical geography kit to promote the teaching and learning of the subject through field work was distributed to schools. In addition an information atlas with key concepts and some exercises has been produced plus a host of other texts from private Publishing Houses. Teachers use these materials the way they see fit but this sort of help is essential and is supported by Graves (1980) who states, in connection with extra supportive materials that "at the same time, curriculum development teams have realised that if they are to help teachers to develop their geography curricula they must provide more than stimulating ideas for teachers, have a limited amount of time to spend on this task and firm guidance with suggested schemes of work and curriculum frameworks will be seen as useful help rather than interference in the curriculum planning process." All these concerns were given inadequate attention in the original syllabus.

In the final analysis therefore, syllabus 2222 was not being overhauled as such because it had its own strengths but what was done here was to streamline it, improve on its relevance and give more concrete guidance to the teacher without tampering with the pedagogic fabric of the subject - geography.

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