



B O A R D O F S T U D I E S
NEW SOUTH WALES

Studies in Society Syllabus

Years 7–10

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Published by Board of Studies NSW
GPO Box 5300
Sydney 2001
Australia

Tel: (02) 9367 8111
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Internet: <http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au>

ISBN 0 7313 48834

2001308

RATIONALE

Human nature gives rise to certain basic needs which are physical, psychological and spiritual in character. These characteristics of persons impel people to satisfy their needs by establishing a society.

A society is an intricate network of personal relationships, culturally diverse groups, social institutions, organisations, social behaviours and belief systems.

The establishment of this network generates a variety of derived needs which, in turn, lead to the growth of institutional patterns designed to satisfy them. For example, once the food supply is established, it becomes the focus of all kinds of social attitudes, beliefs and practices whose functions are symbolic rather than physiological.

The satisfaction of needs usually involves competition for resources and rewards which are relatively scarce in relation to demand for them. As a result, most societies are characterised by inequality in wealth, power, prestige and privileges. Most conflict within society arises from the rivalry caused by these inequalities. Societies develop different methods of dealing with this conflict.

Societies vary over time and place as groups of people perceive different ways of relating to each other and to their environments. Change is a continuing process as societies respond to internal and external cultural and environmental pressures. Institutions and systems may fail to satisfy new needs, or may create further needs which stimulate the growth of new social structures. Social change is frequently the cause of conflict. The need for society, whether at the national or international levels, to adapt itself peacefully and effectively to the explosive social changes of the present day, is one of the biggest problems now facing all societies.

Students need to be provided with opportunities to understand themselves, to learn about *their* society, to explore personal and social values, and to make informed decisions based on a wide range of relevant experiences.

Studies in Society is an interdisciplinary course which derives perspectives from various fields of knowledge including sociology, economics, geography, politics, anthropology, social psychology, law, art, music, literature and history. These fields of knowledge are concerned with the structure and properties of human groups, and the way in which individuals interact with one another and with their environments. All of them contribute content and methods of inquiry to Studies in Society which, however, seeks to avoid the divisions which reflect academic specialisation and to link the social sciences, the humanities and the environmental sciences within a common frame of reference. As an integrative study of society, this course has a unique place in the secondary school. Moreover, it allows for the continuing development of the thinking, feeling, valuing and acting processes promoted by the Investigating: Social Studies K-6 Curriculum Policy.

Information about social behaviours, social processes, and social institutions is available to every intelligent observer. The laboratory of Studies in Society is the everyday world. Studies in Society involves inquiry learning processes and assumes that students are active learners with developing skills of investigation, communication and expression.

AIMS

The broad educational aims of Studies in Society are:

- to assist students to understand themselves and the social world in which they live;
- to assist students to develop skills to operate more effectively within society;
- to provide opportunities for students to explore, to test and to evaluate differences in opinions, attitudes and values in the light of evidence and beliefs.

OBJECTIVES

PRODUCT OBJECTIVES

1. *Knowledge*

It is intended that students will:

- acquire knowledge and understandings of social behaviours, processes and institutions with emphasis on Australian society;
- develop an understanding of appropriate concepts: change, class, community, conflict, culture, function, group, institution, locality, organisation, power, process, role, self, society, status, structure and system;
- develop an understanding of the interaction between Australian society and the global community.

2. *Skills*

It is intended that students will be able to:

- identify and clarify social issues;
- observe social phenomena;
- search for data;
- organise data;
- interpret data;
- analyse information;
- evaluate evidence;
- generalise on the basis of evidence;
- hypothesise;
- make predictions;
- verify generalisations, hypotheses and predictions;
- solve problems;
- make value judgements;
- communicate understanding and judgments;
- plan with others and participate productively in group discussion.

3. *Values*

It is intended that students will further develop:

- an awareness of values expressed or implied in Australian and other societies;
- an awareness of their own values;
- an ability to identify and make value judgments which are based on evidence, logic and belief;
- patterns of responsible action based on the values they hold and the decisions they make;
- appreciation that clarification of values is rarely straightforward and that differences and conflicts of opinions, beliefs and attitudes will arise;
- sensitivity to the needs, values and behaviour patterns of others;
- a sense of individual, group, national and international identity.

PROCESS OBJECTIVES

Learning experiences should be provided which enable:

- teachers and students to collaborate on the design and development of units of work;
- a classroom climate conducive to the development of individual and group inquiry;
- students to operate directly on data obtained from a variety of sources;
- students to share resource materials, examine each others' ideas and to work towards common goals;
- students to make first-hand observations of their society outside the classroom and the school;
- students to become actively involved in, and to take responsibility for, their own learning;
- teachers and students to engage in a continuing evaluation of student outcomes, teaching practices and learning materials.

CONTENT

1. AREAS OF INQUIRY

To teach about society, it is essential to break down its complex fabric into a number of areas of inquiry.

A minimum of two areas of inquiry, including at least one from Group A, must be studied each year. It is expected that by the end of a four year course students would have studied all areas of inquiry listed in Group A. In the first instance each selected area of inquiry should be studied in the Australian context.

The following areas of inquiry have been chosen because they embrace a large cluster of social phenomena.

GROUP A (Basic)

- The Multi Cultural Society
- Science Technology and Society
- Sport, Games and Recreation
- Authority in Society

GROUP B (optional)

- The Arts and Society
- Cities and Society
- Conflict and Society
- Current Issues in Society
- Economic Systems
- Education and Society
- Family
- Health and Society
- Language Speech and Communication
- Religion and Belief
- Rural Communities
- The Small Group

2. CONCEPTS

The study of society is assisted by and, in turn, enriches the students' understanding of certain concepts.

Concepts may be regarded as general ideas which refer to a group of items or events.

The list of concepts below is not exhaustive but the attainment and development of these concepts should be considered as a matter of particular importance in Studies in Society

courses. To define particular concepts may limit the range of possible understandings of them. However, some leading questions have been given to guide the exploration of their meanings.

CHANGE

What was it like in the past? What will it be like in the future? Why is it different now compared to what it used to be? Who or what instigated the change? Was the change worthwhile?

CLASS

What inequalities exist in society? How do social, as distinct from natural, inequalities occur? How does economic inequality affect people? To what extent is the society divided into economic groups? What effect on lifestyle does belonging to an economic group have? Can people move between economic groups? What do people from one economic group think of the people from another?

COMMUNITY

What distinguishes a group of people from other groups? What values does the group hold? How does their value system show in their everyday life? Where do you usually find this group of people? What holds the group of people together even though they do not live in the same area? In which ways do groups of people interact in the society?

CONFLICT

What are the sources of disagreement in the society? What groups of people disagree with other groups? Why cannot competing needs and desires of all persons be satisfied? How does the society deal with conflict? When is it important for conflict to be resolved? When does conflict have a positive outcome?

CULTURE

What are the main features of the social environment? How do art, language, science, technology, morality, customs and ways of living combine to make a group of people distinctive? Which patterns of behaviour and relationships between people, things and ideas characterise the group of people?

FUNCTION

What are the purposes and goals of any social institution, group or process? Why does the institution, group or process exist? Why do different institutions, groups and processes have different purposes? What do they do to achieve their purposes and goals?

GROUP

What distinguishes a number of people from the rest of society? What social relationships do the people have? What binds them together? How are they recognised as a separate body?

INSTITUTION

How does a society display long enduring patterns of behaviour? What established habits, customs and relationships has the society developed? What are the signs or evidence of these customs and relationships between people, things and ideas? What are the links between institutions such as the family, the school, the factory and the parliament?

LOCALITY

How does a geographical area influence the social relationships occurring in it? In which ways do people interact with the physical environment of an area? How does the built environment affect and reflect the behaviour and values of the people living in it? What gives a particular place its character?

ORGANIZATION

How does the structure of an institution or group distinguish it from another institution or group? What are the set of formal rules and procedures of the group of people? Do groups with an orderly structure have more influence than other less formal groups?

POWER

How able are people to carry out their will? What resistance do people have to overcome? How do people become leaders? How do people share responsibilities? Who makes the rules, laws, and how are they implemented? In which ways do legalised forms of power, or authority, operate in the society?

PROCESS

What continuing patterns of activity involving relationships between people, things and other people are occurring? How does the society produce and distribute its goods, services and ideas? How does the society arrange things such as its education system? How does the past influence the present social system? How to you distinguish between processes, actions and outcomes?

ROLE

What behaviour code is expected of certain individuals, certain jobs, certain groups in society? How does society make certain expectations of various people?

How are people's expectations learnt and accepted? How does change affect roles in society?

SELF

Who am I?

What do I look like?

What is important to me?

How to I relate to others?

What are my roles? How important am I to me and to others?

SOCIETY

How do diverse individuals, groups, communities, institutions and organisations combine to form a complex entity? What unifies these components of a society? How does the network of relationships between people and things work? How do processes and systems operate so that the relationships can work?

STATUS

What inequalities exist in society? How do social inequalities occur? How do differences in occupation, education, age and lifestyle affect the way people relate to each other? Can people move from one social group to another? What evidence is there that people are held in different esteem? To what extent does prestige influence the behaviours of individuals or groups?

STRUCTURE

What organised and enduring network of institutions, groups' organisations and processes exist? What keeps groups, organisations and communities together? What keeps the who society together?

SYSTEM

How are individuals, groups, institutions and organisations linked within their social and physical environments? How are people and things related? How do people and things interact? How do people affect each other? What institutions relate to each other?

3. SKILLS

Students are to develop certain general skills which will assist the development of concepts and the processing of information.

Opportunities to practise these skills should occur frequently within the course.

More specific skills such as mapping, interviewing, reading prose and graphs, building models, listening, and creative writing are subsumed within the general skills. These more specific skills should be used whenever appropriate in implementing the program designed by the school. Hence, the list is not exhaustive but represents those skills which are of high priority.

The skills listed in the objectives are briefly expanded below.

To identify and clarify issues

This is the process of defining the problem to be investigated, and formulating hypotheses which can be investigated.

To observe social phenomena

This is the process of gathering information using the appropriate senses. It is not restricted to the operation of seeing.

To search out data

This is the process of obtaining information on which to base the investigation.

To organise data

This is the process of grouping on the basis of common characteristics. It involves careful observation of items, or events, and identification of distinctive features.

To interpret data

This is a process of selecting from the data that information which is relevant and necessary to the investigation.

To analyse information

This is the process of seeking from the information relationships which will lead to valid conclusions.

To evaluate evidence

This is the process of assessing the quality of the data by means of external criteria related to its relevance, presentation and sufficiency.

To generalise

In this process students use the evidence of inquiry to make valid general statements about the issue being investigated.

To hypothesise

This is the process of making statements, about relationships, which are tentative and designed to be tested.

To predict

This is the process of forecasting events in terms of previous experience and knowledge.

To verify

This is the process of checking the validity and accuracy of predictions, hypotheses and generalisations. Verification may take the form of observation, research, measurement or experiment.

To solve problems

This is the process of using the evidence of inquiry to suggest solutions to social problems or the resolution of social issues.

To make value judgements

In this process students use the evidence of inquiry as the basis for formulating reasoned value positions on the problem or issue being investigated.

To communicate understanding and judgements to others

This would include essay writing skills, pictorial representations of phenomena, oral reporting and debating.

To plan with others and to participate productively in group discussion

This includes social skills such as listening, encouraging others to contribute, sharing ideas and establishing personal relationships.

4. VALUES

Values represent ratings which people place on an object, a person, an event, a policy, a belief etc. These ratings may be positive, negative or neutral.

Values are held by individuals, groups, organisations, societies and cultures. People function as a result of clarifying their own values, making value judgements and decisions and taking action based on the values they hold. Within any social group, one set of dominant values may exist, while minority value systems may also be identified. Conflict between these systems may arise, being a product of the tension created when a choice must be made between alternative values.

The aims and objectives of Studies in Society: 7-10 emphasise the need for students to explore values held by individuals, groups, societies and cultures. Through inquiry, students are able to increase their awareness of values, to clarify their own values, to appreciate the values positions of others and to make value judgements. The Course is explicit in supporting the promotion of 'a sense of individual, group, national and international identity' within the Areas of Inquiry.

Investigating values involves the process of VALUING. There are three broad categories of strategies which can be used to achieve the valuing objectives of the Course.

1. Value Clarifying is a process whereby people learn to understand their own values and how these influence their decisions and behaviour. The intention is not to change a student's values but to contribute to their value development.
2. Value Analysing is a process whereby the values of other individuals, groups, societies and cultures are explored for the purpose of increasing understanding. This process also assists individuals to increase understanding of their own values positions.
3. Value Judging is a process whereby people choose between alternative values and make judgements as to the values and values position they prefer. Value judging is based upon evidence belief and logical thinking processes.

As a result of employing these aspects of valuing, students may make more informed and considered decisions and develop more responsible patterns of action.

PLANNING

1. Each school has the responsibility for developing a program of teaching units based on Areas of Inquiry.
2. In order to give the course cohesion and direction and to provide for sequential development, an outline program for the whole course should be prepared before any part of the program is taught.
3. Planning the program involves making decisions about appropriate aims and objectives, teaching procedures, resources and evaluation, as well as about appropriate subject matter.
4. Decisions as to the selection and programming of Areas of Inquiry and units of work will depend on such factors as:
 1. maturity, knowledge, interests, needs, and skills of students;
 2. teacher knowledge, skills and interests;
 3. the nature and expressed needs of the community of which the school is a part;
 4. availability of suitable teaching and learning resources within the school and the community;
 5. judgements on what content is of most worth for teaching and learning.
 6. the number of years in which the course will be studied. It should be noted that students may commence the Studies in Society Course in Year 7 or Year 8 or Year 9.
5. Collaboration between students and teachers on the design and development of teaching units will contribute to achievement of the aims and objectives of the Course.

IMPLEMENTATION

Once the school has planned a program based on Areas of Inquiry, the successful implementation of Studies in Society relies on the selection of teaching/learning experiences which are appropriate to the achievement of the aims and objectives of the Course and the specific unit of work.

Teaching/learning activities will have enhanced meaning for students when they build on and expand the students' prior experiences. Their purposes should be clearly understood by the teacher and the learner and they should be linked directly with the other components of the unit of work. The activities should be based in an inquiry approach to learning with both the teacher and the students actively involved in the investigations.

Teachers should ensure that students have an adequate conceptual framework upon which to carry out their enquiries.

Careful consideration should be given to the sequencing of teaching/ learning activities.

Various models can be used as a guide to sequencing. One model is implied in the order in which the skills objectives are listed on page 2. Two other models are The Problem Solving Model, often attributed to Lawrence Senesh, and Jack R. Fraenkel's I.O.D.E. Model.

1. THE PROBLEM SOLVING MODEL

A way of structuring teaching/learning activities into meaningful sequences is to develop a problem solving approach. In this approach teaching/learning experiences are organised to stimulate the recognition of social problems, to assist the understanding of the issues involved and to lead students to the ability to find solutions.

The model contains a sequence of techniques to be used in problem solving:

1. the identification of symptoms involves the recognition of the signs that a problem exists;
2. a survey of the problem considers the range of aspects and viewpoints which relate to the problem;
3. the accurate definition of the problem assists in analysing the main issues;
4. the determination of the scope of the problem influences types of solutions which may be considered;
5. the analysis of the causes is undertaken once the nature and size of the problem is known;
6. the solution of the problem is a never-ending process in which students should participate with the awareness that attempts to solve a problem may lead to other problems.

2. THE I.O.D.E. MODEL

This model may be used for an individual lesson or to sequence teaching/learning experiences over a large number of lessons. It classifies teaching/learning activities into Intake, Organisational, Demonstrating and Expressive activities.

After focusing the specific issues on areas of inquiry the students move through the steps of the I.O.D.E. process.

INTAKE ACTIVITIES

These are introductory activities which provide students with information to work with or to think about. Students must have data to stimulate learning. Activities using the five senses provide this stimulus - observing, reading, listening and asking, feeling, tasting and smelling.

ORGANISATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Once data has been gathered students must organise it by various recording and thinking processes so that they can use the information later in the learning sequence.

DEMONSTRATING ACTIVITIES

These activities should be designed to enable students to use the information they have gathered and organised in order to demonstrate:

- the skills they have learned
- how well they can think
- how much they understand

EXPRESSIVE ACTIVITIES

Students can now apply what they have previously learned to new and different situations, or they can use their learning in a creative way. In so doing they show mastery of how learning can be used, expanded and adapted. They therefore equip themselves for later years by developing the habit of learning to learn.

While the I, O, D, E, model is useful in the sequencing of teaching/learning activities it must be remembered that the steps must not always be I, O, D, E. There can be variation, i.e.,

I, O, I, O, D, E or

I, O, O, D, E

but the following variations should be avoided

I, I, I, I, or

I, D, I, D, or

E, E, E, E,

as they are repetitive and lack the stimulus to encourage the student to learn in a logical manner. In addition, they destroy the pleasure in learning and the satisfaction from mastery of the learning process.

The table,

| |
|--|
| SUGGESTED TEACHING/LEARNING ACTIVITIES |
|--|

 provides a guide to the

types of activities which might be used to foster learning. Note that some activities will fit into more than one category depending on the purpose behind the activity and its relationship to the learning sequence.

| SUGGESTED TEACHING/LEARNING ACTIVITIES | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| INTAKE | ORGANISE | DEMONSTRATE | EXPRESS |
| ACQUIRE | ORGANISE/ TRANSFORM | APPLY AND COMMUNICATE | |
| <u>OBSERVING – DIRECT</u> field study orienteeing town trails visits transects experiments measuring sampling – <u>INDIRECT</u> slides film strips films videos television pictures painting drawing photographs aerial photos satellite photos <u>READING</u> books magazines newspapers pamphlets work sheets posters signs & labels maps plans graphs diagrams charts statistics instruments <u>LISTENING AND ASKING</u> teacher peers guest speakers lecturettes debates discussions radio television records cassettes music prose & poetry interviewing brainstorming <u>FEELING</u> plants animals rocks soil temperature precipitation humidity objects made by people. | sorting ordering grouping classifying categorising inferring stating re-stating recording summarising writing note taking question asking outlining planning drawing diagrams sketching designing – models flow charts time lines chart making graphing map summaries | relating reporting discussing debating question asking writing drawing explaining interpreting analysing generalising verifying applying photographing preparing collage role playing simulation experimenting | writing scripting essay writing discussing debating question forming model making making posters/displays map drawing film making creating a display photographing sketching drawing painting cartooning designing games composing inventing hypothesising predicting decision making problem solving |

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

A. ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Assessment of student achievement is concerned with establishing what students know and can do at a given time. It makes use of such instruments for measuring assessment that are appropriate to the course.

Assessment should describe what students following a course in Studies in Society have achieved in the areas set out in the Course objectives viz:

- Skills required in the study of society and social issues.
- Knowledge of the society in which students live.
- An awareness of the different values, opinions and beliefs which are held within the Australian Society.

Assessing student achievement in Studies in Society requires the use of a variety of measurement techniques that may include the following:

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| <u>Tests:</u> | The systematic checking of performance in areas of specific knowledge and skills learned in the course of study. |
| <u>Student Research:</u> | Investigative pieces of work which demonstrate the student's ability to apply knowledge and skills learned in class. They may be an individual or group activity. |
| <u>Fieldwork:</u> | Planned experiences which further demonstrate student skill abilities such as interviewing, recording and observing social phenomena. Such experiences will also allow students to draw conclusions based on the interpretation of evidence. |
| <u>Classwork:</u> | Structured activities which demonstrate student growth towards the fulfillment of Course objectives. A debate or prepared lecture might be employed to provide the opportunity for students to indicate their awareness of values, opinions and beliefs in society. |

The information from such measurement techniques can be used for a variety of purposes.

- Determining the progress and identifying the learning difficulties of individuals and groups of students.
- Assessing the extent to which the objectives of the Course have been successfully implemented.
- Ranking of students within and between class groups.
- Providing the basis for determining if a student has attained a satisfactory level of achievement in School Certificate Studies in Society.

B. PROGRAM EVALUATION

(i) Evaluation of teaching strategies

Strategies should reflect amongst other things the process objectives of the Course. The teacher's judgement concerning student achievement should contribute towards determining but not be the sole determinant of the effectiveness of teaching strategies and related resources. The teacher should draw upon a variety of data sources including the judgements of colleagues and students, self evaluation, recordings of lessons, interaction analysis records, checklists and discussions.

(ii) Evaluation of the teaching program

The aims and objectives of this Course specify the knowledge, skills and values to be developed in Studies in Society. The Syllabus also specifies the nature of the learning experiences most likely to achieve these aims and objectives. Program evaluation should include the extent to which the planned teaching program provided for the achievement of Course product and process objectives. Many of the data sources and methods of evaluation suggested in the previous paragraph will be applicable to the evaluation of the teaching program.