

ABSTRACT

DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF A HISTORY CURRICULUM FOR THE LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL IN THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

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In order to enhance student learning and develop a variety of skills and attitudes, teachers need to use a variety of strategies as well as make subject matter relevant to the lives of the students. With this in mind, this thesis sought to develop a history curriculum for the lower secondary school in the British Virgin Islands. In this curriculum guide; a thematic approach is used to bring about integration in the classroom; a variety of teaching methods are suggested with an emphasis on the use of cooperative learning groups; and the teacher is promoted as a facilitator. The thesis further sought to evaluate the materials developed.

The materials were pilot and field tested in the classrooms of the first and second forms of the British Virgin Islands High School. Twenty-eight students in the first year and twenty-five in the second year were exposed to some themes of the curriculum under the guidance of one teacher.

The research tools were questionnaires administered to both teachers and students, interviews of teachers and students as well as observation of the actual lessons taught. The data were summarised and analysed and the conclusion drawn was that the objectives of the research were achieved. Cooperative learning and integration were observed in the classroom, as well

as the use of a variety of methodologies for instruction and evaluation. The pretest/posttest results, though not generalizable, show some increase in knowledge in some areas. Enhanced personal and social skills were also evident as teacher and students engaged in the teaching/learning transactions.

The main obstacle experienced was the whole school climate and resistance to change. However, the response was generally positive suggesting a high level of acceptance for this curriculum guide.