

Examining Development Studies (DS) Teaching Philosophy, Methods and Desired Competences in Lesotho Secondary Context

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ABSTRACT

Using qualitative approach in document analysis of educational policies and syllabi in CAP (2009) and the Integrated Grade 8 Social Sciences Syllabus 2017, the study sets out to explore Development Studies (DS) teaching philosophy, methods and the desired competences in Lesotho secondary schools. The subject was introduced in order to achieve the goals of self-reliance through education with production. It was further meant to explore the theory underpinning the subject, appropriate instructional strategies and pertinent subject philosophy. The findings revealed that DS as a subject is couched in Constructivism Theory (CT) which upholds that liberatory, critical or transformative pedagogies are more suitable as opposed to transmission or didactic pedagogies. Transformative pedagogies are understood to promote desired competences including innovativeness, creativity, problem solving, critical thinking, collaboration, practical and research skills. The outlined skills are dependent on the teacher's astute subject pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) calling for deployment of learner centred or actively engaging teaching and learning approaches in DS classrooms.

1. Introduction and Background to DS Teaching in Lesotho

Development Studies (DS), sometimes known as 'International Development Studies', 'Third World Development', 'Global Perspectives', 'International Studies' and 'Social Studies' depending on various contexts of study and application is defined by scholars as a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary field of study that seeks to understand social, economic, political, technological and cultural aspects of societal change particularly in developing countries (Sumner, 2006). Development Studies is further described in literature as a relatively young field of academic enquiry which did not come into use until after World War II (Doolittle & Hicks, 2003). This assertion confirms a notion by other group of scholars that the subject was born out of the decolonization process in the late 1960s as numerous former colonial states sought policy prescriptions in attempting to 'catch up' economically with industrialized nations (Bernstein, 2005; Donnelly, 2004).

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As a subject, and taught at secondary schools in Lesotho, DS is intended to promote education for sustainable development (ESD). This is education that is intended to equip learners with skills that have direct impact on the needs of societies or communities from which they originate. Perhaps, it is reasonable to argue that success in Development Studies pedagogy lies in the principles of ESD both on the basis of this notion and the fact that the subject was introduced in the country's curriculum as part of subjects intended to facilitate a transition from teacher centred to learner centered pedagogy (Raselimo & Mahao, 2015). Muzvidziwa and Seotsanyana (2002) claim that upon realization of a mismatch between the education provided and employment opportunities in Lesotho then, government had to introduce education for self-reliance and education with production. These initiatives were meant to ensure learners acquire basic skills to which Development Studies education became a critical component. The subject is aimed at changing the didactic approach to education by integrating principles, values, and practices in all forms of learning. One scholar writes; Development Studies education is intended to abound in problem solving skills, be ecologically relevant, project based and interactive in nature (Dambudzo, 2015).

All these qualities form the bases onto which Sustainable Development (SD) which the subject advocates to promote is grounded. SD is regarded by many as an essential direction for the whole world to take in multiple spheres of life. It is therefore critical to explore existing teaching and learning approaches to establish which of them are likely to elicit the mentioned qualities. Central to the alluring features of these qualities, is the element of collegiality and collaboration which students have to harness in order to learn effectively in Development Studies classrooms as proposed and presented by (Dambudzo, 2015).

The subject is said to be highly integrated in nature and as such, calls for equally interactive approaches to teaching and learning. This nature of the subject, situates it in the Social Constructivism theory (Mentzer et al., 2023; Teague, 2000; Teague & Jacobs, 2000). Mentzer et al. (2023) emphasize that the Social Constructivist theory, or Constructivism presents learners and their instructors as co-constructors of knowledge. In essence, the scholars asserts that Social Constructivism focuses on the role social interaction plays in creating knowledge. The position presupposes that the goals of Development Studies educators are deemed to be in priori fostering the development of effective citizens (Bishop & Verleger, 2013; Brown et al., 2010). For instance, Heilporn et al. (2021); Wilson et al. (1999) state, "Social Studies teachers must encourage their students to engage in collaborative learning, use high-order thinking skills, construct their own knowledge about Social Studies concepts, and relate classroom lessons to their lives and experiences".

The success of pedagogy in ESD is determined by whether teaching is problem or enquiry based, project driven or fosters collaboration and critical thinking (Boeve-de Pauw et al., 2015; Diamond, 2000; Sinakou et al., 2019). These kinds of approaches encourage learner interaction and pre-determine the necessary approach in facilitating the required classroom environment. Use of interdisciplinary problem based approaches to embed sustainable development in curriculum is desirable (Dobson & Bland Tomkinson, 2012). In fact, it is contented that effective or best learning occurs in classrooms where teachers are invisible, students assume an active role and perceive themselves as learners (Mitchell & Weber, 2003; Pinar, 2003; Teare et al., 2013; Wals & Kieft, 2010). This sentiment is shared by Tabulawa (2009) who asserts that learner centered approaches must be the focal point in pedagogy.

2. Statement of the Problem

Development Studies was introduced in Lesotho with a hope to cultivate and entrench its practical qualities in the system to assist Basotho become self-reliant and productive. It was

also part of the education revolutionary contextualisation subject package aimed at reversing the impact of traditional face-to-face transmission education which scholars such as Tlali (2018) allude to as irrelevant and decontextualised in Lesotho. The subject was introduced in order to achieve the goals of self-reliance through education with production. It was meant to explore the theory underpinning practical subjects while at the same time informing practitioners about their teaching philosophy. It further sets out to reflect on the subject's desired competences, appropriate instructional strategies which ensure it is taught in line with its pertinent philosophy. The three (3) research questions guiding this qualitative investigation include; what theory is underpinning and informing DS teaching philosophy? What teaching approaches are congruent with this philosophy? and what competences are the approaches likely to achieve? Raselimo and Mahao (2015) indicate that the subject was meant to bridge the gap between practical and traditional academic subjects.

The overstated significance of Development Studies is however frustrated by several inconsistencies underpinning its existence in the system. First, the subject's awkward positioning as portrayed by the Curriculum and Assessment Policy CAP (Education & Training, 2009). The document allocates Development Studies a far more inferior status compared to other subjects. For instance, Life Skills, which is the most recent subject to be introduced into the secondary curriculum space. Country-wide school practices also support this assertion as Mathematics, English and Science are allocated more time-table hours than Development Studies. This has left DS in an awkward position as an elective instead of a core curriculum subject. Consequently, many new schools have opted not to offer it in their curriculum lately while many others which offered it before, have begun phasing it out.

Studies reveal that newly build government schools in Lesotho chose either Geography or History in their curriculum but not Development Studies prior to the introduction of the integrated curriculum reform (Lekhanya & Raselimo, 2022). Again, with the introduction of the integrated curriculum reform where Development Studies is taught together with History, Geography and Religious Studies under Social Sciences, the subject is likely to experience content dilution which may further aggravate its highly compromised practical component as articulated by Leotla, cited in (Lekhanya & Raselimo, 2022). These negative developments may lead to the subject's loss of value in the system. There is need to monitor and ensure teachers stick to the subject's appropriate teaching philosophy and methods considering the stuttering rate of change in the system despite its lengthy trajectory of forty years (40) since introduction. The key focus of this enquiry is to review the subject's teaching philosophy, methods, and the desired competences. The review is intended to assist teachers in reflecting whether they are sticking to the subject's prescribed pedagogy as articulated in its prescribed teaching philosophy. The research questions guiding the investigation are listed in their application order in the subsequent section.

2.1. Research Questions

- What theory is underpinning and informing Development Studies teaching philosophy?
- What teaching approaches are congruent with this philosophy and why?
- What competences are the approaches likely to achieve?

3. Purpose of the Study

The study explores the theory underpinning Development Studies as a subject while informing practitioners about its teaching philosophy. It further sets out to reflect on the desired competences and appropriate teaching methods to ensure that going forward, Development Studies is taught in line with its pertinent philosophy for attainment of the desired learning

outcomes. The study also explicates Development Studies suitability to promote peace education, which propagates a contemporary idea of infusing transformative pedagogies into classroom practices, thereby liberating learners from oppressive behaviour of their colleagues and teachers. Above all, the study serves to ensure that Development Studies gets to be allotted the recognition it deserves in the country's curriculum space as a practical subject introduced through curriculum diversification reform (CDR) process to bring about a desired change from the system's entrenched traditional rote learning to learner centered approaches (Education & Training, 2009).

4. Literature Review

4.1. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) a Conceptual Framework

Couched in education for sustainable development framework (ESDF), the study examines the possibility for Development Studies as a subject to liberate the desired corporate world skills while incidentally pioneering a transition from broadcasting, top-down or professional to outcome-based, bottom-up or societal approach Khoza (2021) pedagogy in Lesotho. This is to be achieved through examining the inherent subject teaching philosophy, pedagogical approaches and the desired learning outcomes. ESD is potent of equipping learners with applicable skills enabling them to practically address problems as they emerge within their immediate communities. For instance, Dambudzo (2015) asserts that Development Studies education is project based, abounds in problem solving skills, and interactive in nature. When studies are very clear on the value of the subject to any system of education, they have however fallen short of stating clear fallacies which could lead to its phasing out from the curriculum space. Even the current DS predicament in Lesotho's curriculum space, is sadly not informed by research findings. Perhaps safe to suggest its a 'political' decision guided by misunderstandings as opposed to reasoning and logic.

Cebrián and Junyent (2015) state that ESD originates from *Gestaltungskompetenz*, a German coined field of sustainability based on Gestalt meaning 'mind-set'. In this context, learners' abilities to shape future scenarios through active participation are sharpened. The approach is intended to produce proactive learners who may bring about total transformation to their respective communities as opposed to reactive ones who seek state employment instead but with no applicable skills. ESD thrives better in practical subjects which engage students holistically or across the domains of cognitive, affective and psychomotor (Teague & Anfara Jr, 2012). This is commensurate with Boeve-de Pauw et al. (2015); Diamond and Gomez (2004) view that ESD is determined by whether teaching is problem based, project driven or fosters collaboration and critical thinking all of which form the 21st century skills package according to literature (Geisinger, 2016; Kennedy & Sundberg, 2020).

The goals of Development Studies teaching are compatible with ESD in that the subject focuses on holistic learner development. It is similar to ESD whose fundamental element is to view interconnections between different dimensions of environment, development, social, economic and cultural spheres of the society (Mochizuki & Fadeeva, 2010; Wals & Kieft, 2010). In fact, ESD is about providing real-world learning opportunities, while engaging people in the affective, cognitive, and psychomotor domains in the process affecting a shift in the current thinking, values and practices of individuals, organizations, and societies. Attainment of sustainability in a learning process calls for engagement in lifelong learning. Fernández-Espínola et al. (2020) views lifelong learning as rooted in the integration of learning and living through a variety of modalities. The pillars of lifelong learning include; learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be (Carneiro et al., 2011).

Above all, ESD is congruent with teaching approaches that are in nature integrative and interdisciplinary such as problem solving, critical thinking and action competent (Wiek et al., 2011). These are appropriate approaches for Development Studies pedagogy as a highly integrated and interdisciplinary subject aimed at addressing societies' immediate problems. This is consistent with Dewey's pragmatic approach prescriptions to education which advocate for education cultivating thoughtful, critically reflective and socially engaging individuals as opposed to passive recipients of established knowledge; an outcome of the conservative traditional schooling demanding '*quick and correct*' answers (Mathison & Ross, 2007).

Sustainability is encapsulated within Development Studies and augurs well for framing this study. This is because the subject is aimed at ensuring sustainable productivity with exclusive care on resources from human, living and non-living species shaping the eco-system. The physical dimension forms a critical component of the environment as it is upon it where sustainable living is studied with all that it provides to ensure sustainability (Iyengar, 2017). Humanity's impact on earth's life support system is so great that it furthers the global environmental change risks hence undermining long-term prosperity and poverty eradication goals (Ross-Hill, 2009). The significance of incorporating Development Studies into the curriculum as a practical subject and ensuring it is taught as expected is therefore illuminate in this assertion.

Development Studies' significance can be understood in line with the creation of major subject hubs and institutions by several greatest economies in the world (Lekhanya & Raselimo, 2022). These countries decided to offer the subject and continue to draw from it as a composite component of their social science disciplines. The countries in question include the UK with the Institute of Development Studies (Sussex), School of Development (UEA), and the Development Studies Institute (DESTIN) now (London School of Economics and Political Science). The Netherlands with International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) in The Hague, the Nijmegen Institute for Comparative Studies in Development and Cultural Change (NICCOS) as well as the Graduate Institute of Development Studies (GIDS) in Switzerland just to mention a few Thebe, as cited in (Lekhanya & Raselimo, 2022). The hubs and institutions remain vital driving engines of these countries' economic prosperity to date. Why would it be a failure in least developed economies such as Lesotho against its documented success in affluent economies? This concern has triggered engagement in further research to establish root causes of the problematic situation about the subject and its pedagogy.

4.2. Understanding the Appropriate Development Studies Teaching Philosophy

In line with the stated subject theoretical overview, then it would be easy to determine basic teaching and learning approaches which could prove effective and suitable for Development Studies pedagogy in Lesotho's secondary schools. Development Studies is viewed by practitioners as providing opportunities to link classroom activities with the real world. As such, the subject is likely to enhance competences in the nature of problem solving, collaborative skills and general research ethics needed for sustainability (Brundiers et al., 2010). Underpinning its pedagogical approach is the notion that maximum learner involvement should form the axiom of the whole teaching and learning process. This further exemplifies DS as situated in the ***Social Constructivism*** theory. Therefore, to address the first research question of this inquiry precisely, the lead provided by the subject's appropriate teaching approaches points to social constructivism theory. Social constructivism is an accomplice to the 1938 Deweyan pragmatic philosophical perspective which emphasises learning through active learner engagement to develop competences ranging from problem solving, critical thinking, experiential and exploratory abilities. The basic principle advanced by this theory is that

knowledge is constructed through social interaction, and is the result of social processes (Gergen, 1995; Skantz-Åberg et al., 2022). Scholars agreeable to this notion include; Dewey (1998) in his theory of '*Reflective Inquiry*'; Vygotsky and Cole (1978) theory of '*Zone of Proximal Development (ZDP)*'; Biggs (2001) '*Constructive Alignment*' (Webb, 2013) and '*Education for Conscientization*' also manifested in the prescriptions of Paulo Freire in Aliakbari and Faraji (2011) publication "*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*". All these scholars strive to advance support for education that liberates which is competence-based education as opposed to performance-based education (Khoza, 2021).

The subject' teaching philosophy can be briefly described as that which entails methods assisting students to explain how content they are learning is connected to their own living or the real world. For an example, when teaching concepts like government, Kelly (2004) suggests, teachers may hold elections in the classrooms, go through the entire process of candidates' selection, campaigning and voting in order to sustain students' interest. After all these, then the topics such as *Our World, Presidential Elections* could easily be treated. This leads to presupposing that perhaps a suitable Development Studies teaching philosophy should be practical, inquiry based, problem solving and project based in nature a sentiment also shared by (Dambudzo, 2015). The subsequent section looks into teaching and learning approaches in order to guide processes of deciding on the most appropriate for DS pedagogy.

4.3. Basic Teaching and Learning Approaches

Teaching approaches are defined in literature as a broad range of processes from organization of classrooms, resources and moment-by-moment activities teachers engage learners in to facilitate learning (Co-operation & Development, 2010). They are viewed as the cognitive and metacognitive processes employed by learners in attempting to learn something new. Hatch (2010) presents them as including everything teachers do in order to help learners learn while Chamot (2004) and Brogt (2009) describe them as "conscious thoughts and actions that learners take to complete a learning task" and "the aggregate of actions, methods and strategies employed by an instructor to enact a piece of curriculum" respectively. What these definitions presuppose is that meaningful teaching should be accompanied by actions within which there is relevance to reality. How teachers teach and learners learn always has a significant bearing on learning outcomes and the subject itself. It is even much more gratifying when all that is learned is clearly linked to real life developments. This aspect helps to rekindle some motivation even to academically hopeless learners who might fail to read but better understand the practicalities of what is being presented.

4.3.1. Expository Pedagogies (EPs)

Odutuyi (2019); Tarmo and Kimaro (2021) point to the existence of two basic approaches in expository and transformative /learner-centered or context based which would perfectly suit the demands of a Development Studies classroom. The approaches command application characteristics which can determine suitability for use in each setup. Depending on the subject philosophy and desired learning outcomes, it becomes incumbent upon the teacher to decide which approach is suitable for use in a classroom situation on the basis of curriculum documents prescriptions. Also, it is critical to establish why expository approaches, dominated by 'teacher talk' Sinwell (2022) would prove less effective in Development Studies pedagogy as opposed to transformative pedagogies.

Under expository pedagogies EPs, learners are viewed as passive recipients of knowledge. According to Freire (1970) they are empty receptacles waiting to be filled with content by the teacher whom the approach views as more knowledgeable. Expository approaches view

learners as objects of the teacher's narrated content and focus only on how information is received, organised, stored ready for retrieval from their minds when required. Learning in their view is a cognitive affair. In addition, Tarmo and Kimaro (2021) opine that learning under this approach, focuses on acquisition of subject content knowledge as opposed to learners developing competences needed for application in real life. Furthermore, there are emerging arguments to suggest that assessment practices accompanying expository approaches also encourage rote learning through focusing assessment instruments on content knowledge and memory skills instead of applicability (Odutuyi, 2019). This view contrasts the envisaged constructivist view which focuses on external, observable and constructive learner behaviour (Codington-Lacerte, 2018). In fact, Skantz-Åberg et al. (2022) emphasize that working from Vygotskian perspective of social constructivism involves practical engagement of learners to ensure change and development through practical and collaborative experiences. All these provide reasons to justify the expository approach's unsuitability for Development Studies pedagogy. Teachers inclined to expository pedagogies adopt a vertical approach to teaching and learning as illustrated in Figure 1. On this illustration, they remain authoritarian, bellow instructions to the inactive but passively receiving students. This approach yields a performance based curriculum focusing on content more than learners' development (Khoza, 2021). The subsequent section explores transformative pedagogies.

4.4. An Illustration of a Vertical Teaching Approach

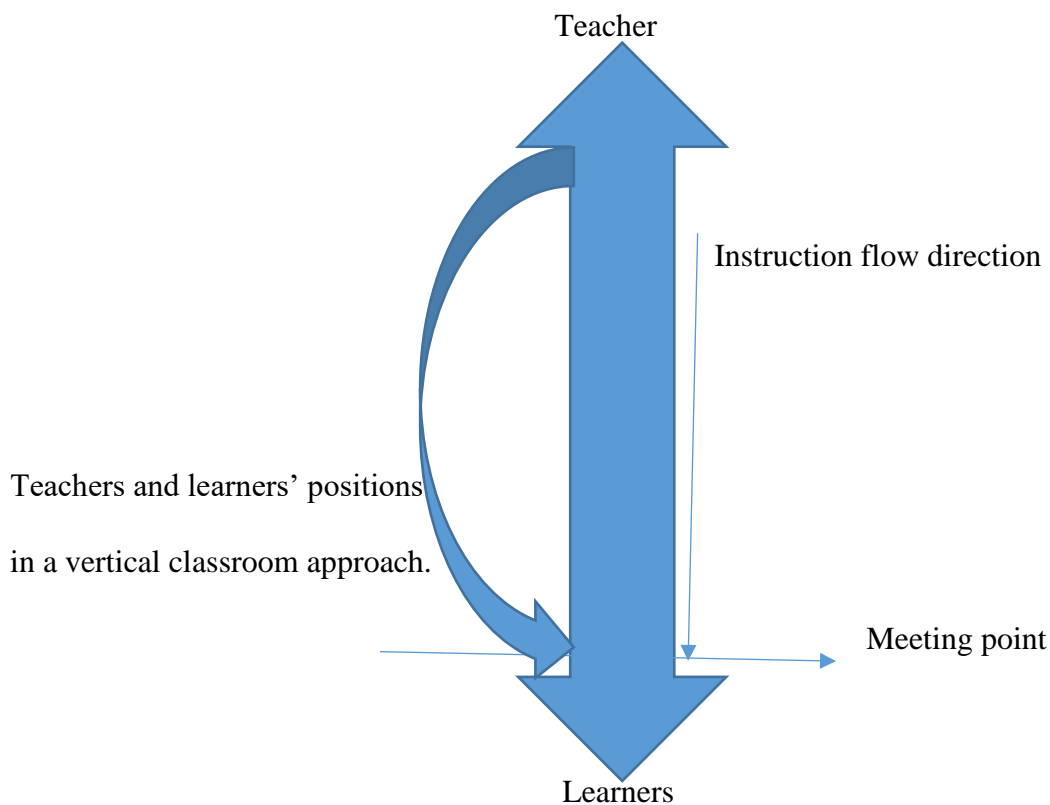


Figure 1. An illustration of a Vertical Teaching Approach

4.4.1. Transformative Pedagogies

Transformative pedagogies (TPs) are understood to be approaches to teaching and learning harboring '*transformative remedies*' (TRs) intended to correct education structures, policies and practices which generate inequitable outcomes (Fraser & Lambie, 2014; Nowell et al., 2018). In the context of beneficiaries of the colonial education system, TRs are entrusted to

bring about a paradigm shift in education systems where practices have been devoid of fostering social justice (Farren, 2016). These are pedagogies embraced for capacity to combine learning, training, information and action since international education should be seen to further appropriate intellectual and emotional development of individuals (Lopez & Olan, 2018; Mehlinger, 1981). In a nut shell, these are pedagogies signifying a departure from broadcasting approaches to learner engaging ones. Teachers inclined to transformative pedagogical practices, adopt a horizontal approach to teaching and learning as illustrated in Figure 2. They value and appreciate contributions learners' experiences bring into the classroom. Hence the lesson proceedings are bidirectional and yielding outcome or competence based curriculum approach (Khoza, 2021).

Unlike expository pedagogies, transformative pedagogies are dominated by learner activities and reduce teachers to mere facilitators of the classroom proceedings. In the process, learners get emancipated to a level of knowledge co-constructors with their teachers and peers. Freire (1971) in his pedagogy of the oppressed refers to them as '**liberatory and critical pedagogies**'. In a way, these pedagogies liberate learners from teacher's authoritarian approach where in teachers dominate classroom proceedings through '**teacher talk**' leaving learners to assume the status of passive recipients of the narrated content. Transformative pedagogies can be understood to draw approval from the philosophical works of John Dewey **Reflective Inquiry** (RI), Lev Vygotsky **Zone of Proximal Development** (ZPD), John Biggs' **Constructive Alignment** (CA) and Paulo Freire's **Education for Conscientization** (EC). What all these scholars have in common is the notion that real knowledge is constructed through social interaction but not an individual's endeavour.

Dewey (1998) in his **Reflective Inquiry** or a pragmatic approach, believes that for real learning to take place, learners should be active participants in the teaching and learning. This is directly opposed to what expository learning seems to cultivate. Dewey's pragmatism as was popularised around 1938 emphasizes learning through active engagement, problem solving and experiential explorations. One of the key propositions of DS pedagogy is the inculcation of problem solving skills. Vygotsky (1979) on the other hand, presents his **Zone of Proximal Development** (ZPD) as depicting a point where a teacher, learners and the problem meet. According to him, this meeting point presents a microcosm of what real learning should entail. This position is consistent with one advanced by this paper suggesting that DS is much more inclined to practical and participatory than expository approaches.

Vygotsky's ZPD emphasizes the pivotal role of guided instruction and collaborative learning. Similarly, Biggs (1999) in his **Constructive Alignment** theory is of the view that knowledge is constructed through interaction of learners with others. He further postulates that real learning occurs when there is personal interaction with the real world. The two converge with the notion that DS promotes collaborative skills. These arguments are also commensurate with those raised by the paper in an attempt to distance DS from rote learning classroom practices for efficiency in its pedagogy. Freire (1973) on his part criticized the transmission approach to education as suffering the narrative sickness which subjects learners to passive recipients whose role in education is to mechanically memorize the teachers' narrated content. He proposed a problem posing education as an alternative to transmission pedagogy. Freire's proposed problem posing mode seems to align with the proposed DS teaching approaches as an inquiry and activity-based subject in the context of Lesotho secondary schools. As such, the subject seeks to advance emancipation of learners in a teaching and learning situations. Ideal learning should present learners as co-constructors of knowledge with their teachers.

These pedagogies view learners as active participants and drivers of the process of learning while reducing teachers to the role of mere facilitators. This proposition draws from the acknowledgement that DS promotes critical thinking.

4.5. An Illustration of Horizontal Teaching Approach

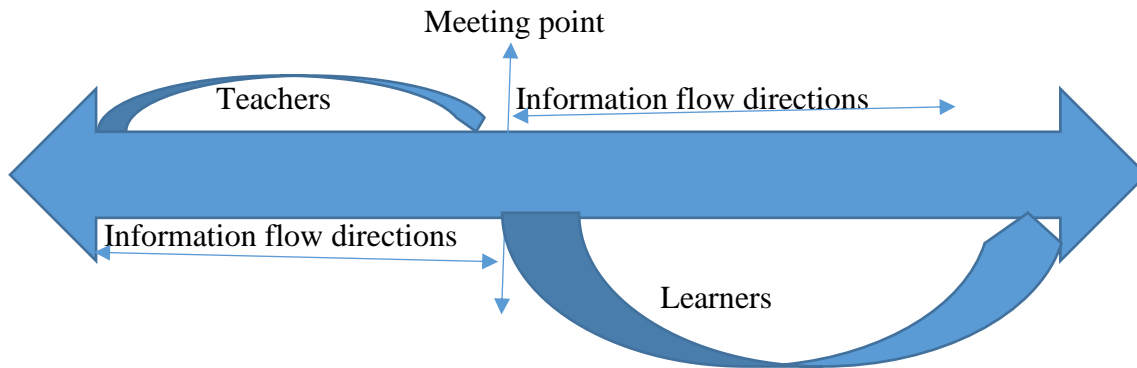


Figure 2. An Illustration of Horizontal Teaching Approach

5. Methodology

Using document analysis technique, the study was carried out through use of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy (Education & Training, 2009) document for the subject position/status, and the Grade 8 integrated Social Science syllabus 2017 document for competences as well as recommended approaches to teaching the subject respectively. The two documents were purposively and conveniently chosen because their tables entail contents central to the discussions of the paper. They also portray contents in a manner enabling readers make judgements and draw conclusions on the bases of comparisons and arguments raised in the paper. Document analysis is a multifaceted process involving the systematic examination of documents to extract meaningful information (Davie & Wyatt, 2021; Morgan, 2022). It can be conducted either qualitatively or quantitatively. The current study has adopted a qualitatively inclined document analysis approach.

5.1. Data Presentation, Interpretation and Analysis

Table 1.

Extracted from (CAP) 2009. Curriculum and Assessment Policy (CAP) 2009

Learning Area	Core Contributing Subjects	Compulsory Subjects
Linguistic and Literary	Sesotho, English, Arts & crafts, Drama, Music, and other Languages	Sesotho and English
Numerical and Mathematical	Mathematics	Mathematics
Personal, Spiritual and Social	History, Religious Education, Health and Physical Education, Development Studies, Life Skills	Life Skills
Scientific and Technology	Science, Geography, Agricultural Science, Technical Subjects	Science
Creativity and Entrepreneurial	Business Education, Home Economics, ICT, Accounting	Any Subject

Source: (Education & Training, 2009).

Development Studies, as a core contributing subject is situated in the Personal, Spiritual and Social (PSS) learning area that promotes development of the learner as an individual and member of the community he/she lives in. These learning areas as indicated by CAP (Education

& Training, 2009) represent a body of knowledge necessary to equip learners with competences to address life challenges. Utilization of these learning areas calls for integrated approaches to teaching and learning. In essence, these also call for collaborative learning which also suggests a shift from teacher-centered or didactic to learner-centered pedagogy.

The question of theory underpinning Development Studies and its teaching philosophy seems to be skewed towards Social Constructivism. The theory is inherent in DS pedagogy because the subject advocates teaching for sustainable development (SD). Garnåsjordet et al. (2012) asserts that sustainable development is regarded by many as an essential direction for the whole world to move towards. Social Constructivism, one of the three main schools of thought under constructivist theory of education according to Teague (2000) suggests knowledge is based on social interaction and consensus. This is a notion congruent with the views of several scholars quoted in the literature. Both social interaction and consensus seem to coincide with learner centered approaches targeted skills such as collaborative skills, problem solving skills and general research ethics. All these skills are promoted by teaching for sustainable development (SD), the initiative well supported by Development Studies teaching.

Development Studies teaching philosophy is therefore informed by Social Constructivism as it abounds in conventional teaching repertoires including cooperative learning, reciprocal teaching, discovery learning, project methods and learning outside the classroom setting (Shulman, 1987). Pinar (2006) add that best practices ensure a proper classroom management under which students ‘want’ to learn. Teaching becomes a stimulus of thoughtfulness and action.

5.2. Teachers’ Best Practices in Development Studies Teaching

Development Studies for what it is as a subject, enables students to study our diverse and changing world. This nature calls for certain specified competences in teachers to deliver the subject content effectively. DS teachers first need to rely on multiple sources of information and be cognizant of current developments; choose to have students read case studies from different perspectives; stimulate active participation of students and get students to work in both independent inquiry and collaborative learning. However, there is need to balance individual and cooperative learning because learners differ and some tend to learn more readily in either of the settings (Zemelman et al., 2012).

The recommendation by these scholars further highlights the teachers’ primary role under learner-centered approach as to create a learning conducive environment in which learners themselves take center stage and direct classroom proceedings (Kanselaar, 2002). A constructivist teacher favours democratic and collaborative pedagogical approaches which empower students to be active participants in their learning but not passive recipients as commonly known to be reputable of expository approaches.

Traditional approaches are time sensitive with teachers always conscious of covering ground on the syllabus to ensure examinable topics have been taught prior to paper examinations. For instance, Lekhetho (2021) states that in Lesotho, school-leaving examination results are a vital measure of the country’s educational quality, particularly primary and lower secondary education levels. Raselimo and Thamae (2018) also pointed out that examinations placed little emphasis on the practical skills and national context in education. These assertions further highlight the incompatibility of expository teaching repertoires with Development Studies. It should be acknowledged that the proposed new teaching repertoires in practical subjects such as DS are also consistent with the 21st century learning skills. Perhaps it is imperative that any form of predetermined subject failure be judged on exhibited teaching approaches before any other factors since classroom teaching is supposedly the most influential factor.

Table 2.

The Matrix for DS Teaching Approaches (Teaching Philosophy)

Desired Competences (students)	Content	Appropriate Methods	Appropriate Assessment Tools
Innovativeness	Diverse and Changing World	Case Studies	Formative/ Continuous Assessment
Creativity	Evolving Democracies	Simulations & Role Plays	Monitoring of Education progress
Problem Solving	Global Economic Development Issues	Concept Mapping	Essay Writing on Global Dev Issues
Critical Thinking	International Trade Mechanisms	Field work/ Trips	Observations and Report Writing
Collaborative Skills	Rights and Responsibilities of citizens	Debate	Provide Topics for Debate from any of the key terms
Research Skills	Governments & International Relations	Group Presentations & Research Projects	Presentations
Practical Skills	Expose learners to environmental problems(physical)	School and Community based Projects for addressing real challenges where applicable	Practical Projects & Individual Research Projects

Source: (Kelly & Schilling, 2010)

6. Interpretation and Analysis

The emphasis of Development Studies pedagogy is the need to link the classroom and the real world (Brundiers et al., 2010). This view becomes evident in the theory underpinning and guiding the subject teaching philosophy. The bulk of the teaching repertoires inherent under this philosophy suggest that teaching in Development Studies needs to be geared towards bringing change in personality, professionalism, and community levels (Capelo et al., 2014; Dearing, 1999; Joseph et al., 2013). All these can be achieved through participation, action learning and action research. Sipos, Battisti and Grimm (2008), report the need to engage the use of the head, hands, and heart. Employing a learning framework such as this ensures achieving a balance between the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains all of which are critical to the development of sustainability in learning principles; a key element in education advocated for by Development Studies (Dambudzo, 2015).

Table 1 presents DS learning area and curriculum position as a core contributing but not compulsory subject as compared to Life Skills and others. Table 2 on the contrary, provides a matrix of the subject teaching approaches congruent with its intended learning outcomes. It also reflects on desired competences all of which fall within the 21st century skills package. This highlights the subject' significance in the curriculum contrary to its inferior status portrayed in Table 1. the subject calls for teachers' awareness of current developments, use of technological gadgets in facilitating learning, fair use of individual and cooperative learning tasks (Daniels et al., 1998; Shuja et al., 2019).

Effective assessment of the subject is that which is based on the type of knowledge and skills it is deemed to inculcate (Decker et al., 2014). This is because academic performance assessment may not be the best technique for all types of learning. It becomes dependent on the nature of learning or knowledge being assessed. Development Studies, being multidisciplinary and context-based in nature, calls for various approaches in content delivery and therefore requires various assessment modes. It may end up covering all the three types of

knowledge in Declarative Knowledge, “knowing that” Procedural Knowledge, “knowing how” and Conditional Knowledge, “knowing when and why” (Decker et al., 2014).

7. A Brief Discussion

Development Studies is more than just a body of knowledge, but a way of thinking and acting to be adapted across multiple contexts (Zimmerer & Bassett, 2012). The discipline focuses on creating relevant knowledge useful in contexts where needed. It is inherently a conduit of social transformation and a critical instrument for cultivating the 21st century skills in education (Sumner, 2006). As illustrated in Table 1, the subject holds a subservient position in the curriculum as a mere core contributing subject but it is not compulsory as compared to Life Skills. Table 2, on the contrary presents an array of desired competences the subject inculcates including; innovativeness, creativity, problem solving, critical thinking, collaborative skills, practical and research skills. These are accompanied by teaching approaches which are also action oriented for applicability in real life situations. The fact that the subject holds a subservient position in the curriculum despite these competences and strategies is a huge spectacle befitting a description ‘curriculum mismatch’ at most. The proposed competences and approaches align with the prescribed subject teaching philosophy as well as the prescriptions of a conceptual framework guiding this inquiry ESDF.

Essential educational benefits to be derived from the subject to empower learners include among others;

- Recognising the complexity of development issues and realising there is no one-size-fits-all solutions.
- Understanding the importance of context specific knowledge and solutions
- Undertaking research and applying practical solutions to problems where need arises
- Empowerment of marginalised voices and perspectives in development discourse
- Facilitating collaboration and partnership between diverse stakeholders
- Promoting critical thinking and creativity in addressing development challenges and many more...

In the light of all the listed subject contributions to enriching curriculum, phasing out Development Studies or any similar subject would be tantamount to cutting off critical thinking and the necessary social transformation at the time when the technological integration paradigm shift in education is inevitable. The new innovation demands a fair share of the cited skills for successful implementation (van Wyk & Rosa, 2024).

In Lesotho, transformative pedagogies should be embraced and upheld. The impact of the historically entrenched traditional face-to-face pedagogies on competences required by the economy is yet to be decided. The post-colonial transmission approaches can be blamed for providing education which exclusively served the clerical and managerial duties of the then administrative systems at the expense of creating technocrats who would be driving this economy to prospective affluence. Currently, there is a clear case of skills mismatch leading to the ever-escalating unemployment statistics among others (Lekhanya & Raselimo, 2022). This situation calls for a need to transform pedagogy through implementation of curriculum reforms which prioritize practical subjects to skew education products more towards self-reliance than just anticipating government hiring.

8. Conclusion

This study set out to identify appropriate DS teaching approaches and underpinning theory(s) guiding its teaching philosophy. It further explored the desired competences of learners, and

teachers' best practices in pedagogy. What emerged from the findings is that the subject is couched in the Social Constructivism theory (Alenezi et al., 2022) and the theory guides its teaching philosophy. The subject philosophy upholds liberatory, critical or transformative pedagogies to be more suitable as opposed to transmission pedagogies. This suggests the country could produce skillful and self-reliant manpower if it adheres to this teaching philosophy. The desired proficiencies promoted by transformative pedagogies include; innovativeness, creativity, collaborative, problem solving, critical thinking, practical and research skills. All these skills are dependent on teachers' competences which call for learner-centered approaches in pedagogy. The subject could over the years serve as a reference point for improving instructional approaches to others in the system for the better.

Assessment methods include competency-based, written tests and practical activities comprising applied projects, essays, oral presentations, collaborative problem-solving engagements, and written assignments. However, it appears the subject' potential is compromised by teachers' excessive use of expository pedagogies which are more inclined to cognitivism than other domains. It is on the bases of these developments that the subject ends up being covertly accused of curriculum dysfunction and as a result, on the brink of phasing out (Odutuyi, 2019).

8.1. Recommendations

It is imperative to conduct studies into teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject teaching philosophy. This would be helpful in guiding their choice of instructional strategies and assessment tools. It would further enable them transit from expository teaching to learner engaging approaches to ensure not only maximum learner participation but also democratization of classrooms. It is also of academic interest to study the position of the subject within the new integrated grade 8 social sciences curriculum. This would help appease suspicions of possible subject dilution and loss of value which may even be the root courses for considering phasing out DS from the curriculum at a time when the country needs it most. Besides, Development Studies would provide a perfect foundation for integration of the newly incepted peace education, an initiative by the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) sponsored by UNESCO aimed at inculcating humanness and tolerance while uprooting traces of violence among Basotho children and society. The current situation calls for serious introspection as to whether the current subject' pedagogy aligns with their stipulated teaching philosophy and learning outcomes.

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