

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 081 706

SO 006 201

TITLE The Use of Social Studies Concepts in Curriculum Development.

INSTITUTION Pennsylvania State Dept. of Education, Harrisburg. Bureau of Planning and Evaluation.

PUB DATE 73

NOTE 29p.

EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.65 HC-\$3.29

DESCRIPTORS Affective Objectives; Anthropology; Cognitive Objectives; \*Concept Formation; \*Curriculum Development; Economics; Generalization; Geography; History; \*Intellectual Disciplines; Interdisciplinary Approach; Models; Political Science; Psychology; Skill Development; \*Social Sciences; \*Social Studies; Sociology; Teaching Techniques

ABSTRACT

A framework, based on the idea that social studies curriculum should be founded on conceptual understandings and processes drawn from the various social science disciplines, suggests how concepts and related generalizations from each of the disciplines may be used as initial building blocks for developing curriculum. The disciplines are considered resources for providing the key concepts, insights and methods of inquiry enabling students to gain a better understanding of present and past societies and cultures. This approach to curriculum development is suggestive rather than prescriptive. A brief list of affective concepts and a list of social studies processes and skills precede the main part of the framework. Emphasis is upon listing major cognitive concepts from the seven social science disciplines. The concepts are followed by a list of generalizations. Examples are then provided to illustrate the development of single concepts into performance objectives and suggested strategies. A sample unit of an interdisciplinary topic which involves both affective and cognitive concepts and suggests teaching strategies concludes the work. (Author/SJM)

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# The Use of Social Studies Concepts in Curriculum Development

Pennsylvania Department of Education 1973



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# The Use of Social Studies Concepts in Curriculum Development

Division of Arts and Humanities  
Bureau of Curriculum Services  
Pennsylvania Department of Education  
1973

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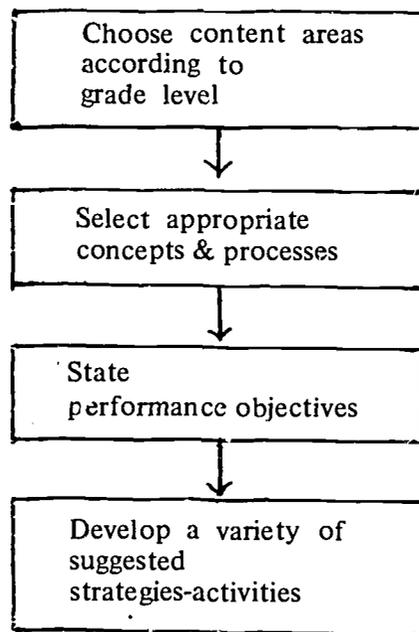
## INTRODUCTION

There is general agreement that the social studies curriculum should be revised on some type of conceptual basis with understandings and processes drawn from the various social science disciplines rather than centered on specific content. The disciplines—anthropology, economics, geography, history, political science, social psychology and sociology—are considered resources for providing the key concepts, insights and methods of inquiry which will enable students to gain a better understanding of present and past societies and cultures and be able to function more effectively and with greater satisfaction. While goals of the social studies program may be stated in general terms, specific objectives are necessary to outline desired student performance or behavior. Teaching strategies and materials are selected to implement these objectives.

The following framework illustrates these steps in curriculum development. It suggests how concepts and related generalizations from each of the disciplines may be used as initial building blocks for developing curriculum. We have tried to include most of the major concepts from each of the social science disciplines to provide alternatives for curriculum committees. Selection will be influenced by student needs, staff interests and abilities and levels of placement. Since many of the affective concepts and the processes or skills are applicable to all of the social sciences, they are not listed under separate disciplines.

This approach to curriculum development is provided, not as a final answer but as an example of how social studies content may be systematically organized to provide meaningful relationships.

The following chart illustrates this pattern of organization.



## Affective Concepts

The affective domain is concerned with interests, attitudes, opinions and values. These are essential ingredients of a good social studies curriculum and need continual reinforcement through all the disciplines. Although we have tried to include most of the major affective concepts, this list is not a definitive one, and teachers should feel free to use any others which seem of particular significance to their situation.

Freedom  
Justice  
Equality  
Honesty  
Objectivity  
Empathy  
Prejudice  
Humanism  
Loyalty

Right to dissent  
Self-concept  
Acceptance of majority vote  
Clarification of one's own values  
Commitment to one's own values  
Respect for rights and values of others  
Appreciation of diversity

## Social Studies Processes and Skills

These processes are applicable to all areas of social studies, but certain ones will be more appropriate in the achievement of various objectives. Teachers should exercise flexibility in determining which processes they can use most effectively in a given situation. Selected processes will be implemented in a variety of strategies/activities designed to achieve the stated objectives.

Observe  
Classify  
Analyze  
Infer  
Interpret and use maps, globes, charts, graphs, pictures and artifacts.  
Synthesize ideas  
Locate and evaluate varied sources  
Use sampling techniques  
Role play  
Interview  
Present ideas in a variety of oral and written forms  
Use appropriate questioning techniques  
Cooperate in group activities  
Predict future trends or possible solutions  
Solve problems through an inquiry approach

1. Define problem
2. Examine available data
3. State a tentative hypothesis
4. Identify needed evidence
5. Collect evidence from variety of sources
6. Evaluate sources
7. Organize data
8. Draw inferences and seek relationships
9. Draw a conclusion
10. Apply to a new situation

## COGNITIVE CONCEPTS AS BUILDING BLOCKS FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The following section lists the major cognitive concepts from the seven major social science disciplines. These are not necessarily the only concepts from each discipline, but an effort was made to provide a concise list of many of the major ones. Curriculum development teams should certainly feel free to add other concepts and to selectively choose those concepts most relevant to their needs.

The concepts are followed by a list of generalizations. The main purpose of supplying these generalizations is to clarify their relationships with the accompanying concepts. Though they could possibly be used as building blocks for curriculum development, it is suggested that concepts will lead to more divergent thinking.

An example is then provided to illustrate the development of a single concept into performance objectives and suggested strategies. The objectives are not as specific as some authorities suggest. This is deliberate since we believe that objectives too precisely stated often result in a low level factual recall rather than in open-ended discovery. Many of the objectives should lead to higher levels of student performance such as classification, analysis, application, synthesis and evaluation.

The suggested strategies are not meant to be definitive. It is the teacher's prerogative to select activities in accordance with his/her background and style, the materials available and the needs of the particular students. This framework should provide individuality for both teachers and students. There are many ways to achieve stated objectives and new materials may be "*plugged in*" at a later time without changing the basic design of the curriculum.

## Cognitive Concepts of Anthropology

Culture	Acculturation
Cultural patterns	Enculturation
Cultural change	Diffusion
Cultural lag	Mores
Universals of culture	Customs
Social organization	Institutions
Kinship	Evolution (Physical and Cultural)
Symbolization	Natural selection
Linguistics	Ritual and ceremony
Archaeology	Social selection
Beliefs	

### Generalizations

1. All humans have universal traits such as:
  - a. Language
  - b. Technology
  - c. Social organizations
  - d. Political organizations
  - e. Moral and legal sanctions
  - f. Religion or philosophy
  - g. Creative activities - art, music, dance
  - h. Ways of resolving differences
  - i. Methods of protection
  - j. Leisure activities
  - k. Methods of education or enculturation
2. All elements of culture, whether explicit or implicit, are integrated.
3. A change in one aspect of culture influences the total pattern of culture.
4. Cultural change may occur by diffusion, invention and innovation.
5. The manner in which a culture adapts to its environment accounts for unique cultural patterns.
6. Acculturation, or the acceptance of ideas from other cultures, is always selective.
7. Cultural lag occurs due to selectivity of cultural change.
8. Cultural lag may cause problems of integration of cultural patterns.
9. Symbolization and tool making are significant factors in the development of human characteristics.
10. Genetic capacities influence culture, which in turn influences adaptability to environment; thus there is a continual interaction between biology, culture and environment.
11. Biological similarities are far more significant than biological differences.
12. Cultural differences are far more significant than genetic difference.
13. Races are constantly changing; there is no such thing as a pure race.
14. The worth of each culture is judged by how well a pattern of living meets the needs of its people rather than upon the judgment of people from different cultures with different values.
15. The personality of an individual is circumscribed by cultural values.

Concept: Cultural Change

Placement: World Cultures - High School

### Performance Objectives

Students will be able to:

1. State the three ways change occurs; i.e., through inventions, innovations and dissemination.
2. Give an example from his own society of each of the above.
3. Provide a reasonable hypothesis concerning possible change in a society due to diffusion.
4. Define cultural lag and provide examples.
5. State problems that might occur due to cultural change and suggest ways of alleviating difficulties.
6. Clarify their own values concerning change in their society.
7. Accept differing value statements of others without becoming offended.

### Suggested Strategies

Teachers may:

1. Discuss cultural changes students are aware of in their own life. List changes and reasons for change.
2. Assign students to discuss with parents or some older person, the changes occurring between the youth of their generation and the youth of today. Follow with discussion.
3. Have students read several ethnographs of different cultures undergoing change and categorize change as influenced by invention, innovation and diffusion.
4. Have students examine problems occurring in the culture as a result of change and discuss possible reasons for problems. Suggest ways problems might be alleviated.
5. Have students list in order of priority those changes in society that they feel would be desirable.

## Cognitive Concepts of Economics

Supply and Demand	Credit
Needs and Wants	Inflation and Deflation
Scarcity	Depression and Recession
Surplus	Business Cycle
Land or Property	Insurance
Labor	Taxes
Services	Monopoly and Trusts
Capital	Mercantilism
Industrialization	Tariff
Subsistence	Economic Determinism
Commercial Agriculture	Market Economy
Distribution	Demand Economy
Price (market)	Unions
Production	Collective Bargaining
Money	Cooperative
Profit	Consumer Protection
Division of Labor	Commerce
Management	Automation
Efficiency	Cycle of Poverty
Technology	Trade
Advertising	Corporations
Stocks and Bonds	Interest

## Generalizations

1. The individual plays three roles in economic life: as a worker, as a consumer and as a citizen.
2. The general social-political-economic environment affects the individual's economic opportunities and well-being.
3. An individual's economic choices and behavior may affect the system as a whole.
4. The market system is the basic institutional arrangement through which production and distribution of goods and services is determined in a free economy.
5. Markets differ in the extent to which competition or monopoly prevail.
6. Most market economies are regulated by laws that protect the consumer or the public good.
7. All economic systems must be concerned with problems of relative scarcity and of unlimited wants.
8. The economic system of a society reflects the values and objectives of that society.
9. As a society moves from a subsistence economy to a surplus economy, the interdependence of segments of the economy is greater.
10. A command economy regulates the allocation of goods and services through central governmental planning.
11. Command economies have not been as subject to fluctuations in the business cycle as free-market economies.

12. Market economies have been more successful in raising standards of living.
13. Real wages, not money wages, are a better indication of how well-off workers are.
14. Productivity is dependent upon efficient work, capital, technology and management.
15. In modern technological societies, service industries tend to grow at a faster rate than production industries.
16. Increased production is dependent upon investment and demand.
17. Technological advances in automation tend to reduce the number of workers necessary in production.
18. In a market economy, prices are the major factor in the allocation of resources and the production of goods and services.
19. The unrestricted accumulation of wealth tends to lead to a reduction of competition within an economic system.
20. Rapidly expanding technology creates problems in manpower training and allocation.
21. Taxes are the major means of diverting incomes from the private to the public sector of the economy.
22. Growing governmental activities (i.e. military) tend to increase governmental control of the economy.
23. The cycle of poverty in underdeveloped nations is characterized by subsistence economies which lack investment funds, education, surplus and demand.

Concept: Consumer Protection

Placement: High School

#### Performance Objectives

1. Using the quote, "*Consumers must always be their own first line of defense*", the student will be able to explain the role that education plays as the key to that defense.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of how decisions made by citizens acting as voters at the local, state or national level help to determine regulations that affect the choices of consumers and/or businesses by tracing several recent decisions to show what effects they had.
3. Be able to identify and list laws at the federal, state and local level designed to regulate and/or stimulate business activities.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of the laws in objective number 3 by describing the effects each law has had on the relationship between government, private business and individual consumers.
5. Be able to explain the protection afforded consumers under laws passed by federal, state and local governments in the areas of consumption and credit.
6. Show that they understand about the protection afforded the consumer by private agencies or organizations by listing them and the services extended.

#### Suggested Strategies

Teachers may:

1. Have students attempt to trace how recent decisions made by voter-citizens at the local, state or national level have helped to determine regulations that affect the choices of consumers and/or businesses, e.g., election of a mayor, state representative or national representative who favored strong gun-control legislation.
2. Have students prepare and share in class reports on major laws passed by Congress to regulate or stimulate business activities, e.g., FTC, FCC, FDA, Federal Reserve Act, Flammable Fabrics Act, etc.
3. Assign students to study mass media advertising efforts to determine how advertising helps to develop consumer tastes and preferences. Have them identify problems confronting consumers as they attempt to make wise buying decisions.
4. Have students study the characteristics and buying habits of disadvantaged people to determine why and what kinds of special consumer assistance they need.
5. Have students identify and study state and local consumer laws to determine the kinds of protection afforded consumers at these levels.
6. Have students identify and prepare reports on private agencies or organizations which devote their efforts toward protecting consumers, e.g., Consumers Union, Better Business Bureau, Ralph Nader's groups, etc. Note particularly those which are active in the students' own community.

## Cognitive Concepts of Geography

Globalism	Pollution
Round Earth or Flat Paper	Distance
Eco-system (life layer)	Interdependence
Areal Distinctions -	Demography
Differences and Similarities	Continent
Region	Ecology
Natural Resources	Topography
Resources culturally defined	Climatic Zones
Location	Transportation and
Spatial Relationships	Communication Networks
Habitat	Urbanization
Conservation	

## Generalizations

1. Location of people and economic activities are influenced by both external factors and internal value choices.
2. Environmental conditions place restrictions on cultural choices.
3. Nature and culture are interlocking components of our eco-system.
4. Movement of cultures from subsistent economies and self-sufficient communities toward surplus-oriented interdependent cultures means an increased technology, trade, migration and communication network.
5. The more highly specialized and specifically adapted livelihood forms have limited potential for cultural change. (Nomadic pastoralism and hunting societies are becoming extinct.)
6. Patterns of land use are affected by natural resources, history and values of a society.
7. Climatic zones and topography are significant predictors of environmental conditions.
8. Technological advances that lead to new sources of power may influence location decisions and future environmental problems.
9. Technology provides changes in the environment, both positive and negative.
10. The use of natural resources to better economic conditions often is in conflict with creating dangerous environmental conditions.
11. Regions are defined by set criteria.
12. The key determinant of regional growth is the ability of a region to create a surplus and expand its export base.
13. Communication networks and transportation systems are vital preconditions for spatial interaction.
14. Distances can be measured in miles (or equivalent), and terms of time.

15. Benefits resulting from urban conveniences accrue to the firm which locates in an urban environment.
16. Cities are interrelated with other urban areas.
17. Location of industries depends on the accessibility of materials, markets, transportation and qualified labor.
18. Racial, ethnic and economic segregation has had a pronounced effect on urban-suburban development and population patterns.

Concept: The Round Earth on Flat Paper and Globalism

Placement: Junior High School

### Performance Objectives

Students will be able to:

1. Measure distances on a map between two given points with 90% accuracy.
2. Use map symbols to determine varied population densities.
3. Develop a chart from map interpretation that lists available recreational facilities within a region.
4. Identify political divisions within a region or along a transportation route.
5. Determine the best routes for varying types of transportation.
6. Locate different regions within the world with similar environmental patterns.
7. Locate a future industrial site from environmental conditions as portrayed on a map and substantiate reasons for such a location.
8. Investigate the reality of the above choice by research into the area chosen.

### Suggested Strategies

Teachers may:

1. Provide state road maps and have students:
  - a. measure distances between two given points.
  - b. list all cities with a population of 1000 or more along the route chosen.
  - c. give possible reasons for location of urban concentrations.
  - d. develop a chart of recreational facilities within the state.
2. By use of topographical maps of the United States and globes, have students determine the best routes for:
  - a. future roads .
  - b. railroads .
  - c. ships .
  - d. airplanes .
3. By use of the globe have committees of students locate regions with similar environmental patterns.
4. Assign committees to use the globes or maps to identify placement of different types of industry based on environmental conditions.
5. Assign committees to research the region chosen in No. 7 and determine whether economic realities confirm their location hypothesis.

## Cognitive Concepts of History

Multiple Causation  
Cause and Effect  
Continuity  
Time Perspective and Chronology  
Change  
Leadership  
Evolution/Revolution  
Nationalism/Internationalism

Relativity  
Objectivity  
Civilization  
Ideology  
Conflict Resolution  
Cultural Creativity  
Imperialism

## Generalizations

1. Change has been a universal characteristic of all human societies.
2. A knowledge of the past is necessary to understand present and future events.
3. No historical events have resulted from a single cause.
4. Leadership has had a profound influence on the course of human history.
5. Our interpretations of the past are constantly changing as new data and trends result in altered perspectives.
6. Changes in human society have been gradual through evolution or have been violent through revolution.
7. All revolutions have altered the institutional structure of society.
8. Civilization is characterized by surplus production, large urban centers, trade and written communication.
9. Technological advances have been a major influence in changing power structure.
10. Basic values and beliefs of every society have been reflected in their creative accomplishments.
11. The motivating factors in human achievement have been either ideological or materialistic.
12. Great ideas have affected all civilizations.
13. Until the present century, individuals have had little control over their economic, social or political destinies.
14. Human progress has most often occurred under conditions of inter-societal communication.
15. The rise of nationalist movements, in which a people are bound together by ideology, tradition and political boundaries, has altered the course of human history.
16. Powerful societies have tended to establish control over weaker ones unless restrained by regional or international controls.

Concept: Relativity

Placement: Senior High

### Performance Objectives

Students will demonstrate an understanding that interpretations of an historical period or event will differ according to:

1. The passage of time.
2. The emotional climate.
3. The political structure.
4. The background of the interpreter.
5. Attitudinal change.

### Suggested Strategies

Teachers may:

1. Have students analyze and compare contemporary primary sources with secondary sources written at a later time period.
2. Have students determine the ways in which Russian history was rewritten following the Communist revolution.
3. Have students read two contrasting accounts of the deaths on the Kent State campus (the Report of the National Guard and Report of the Scranton Commission).
4. Have students read or view several books or films related to war, produced in the 1920s and 1930s. How do the interpretations reflect the period in which they were produced?
5. Have students compare British and American textbook accounts of the War of 1812.

## Cognitive Concepts of Political Science

Government	Dictatorship
Political Institutions	Totalitarianism
Power	Monarchy
Balance of Power	Oligarchy
Nation	Theocracy
State	Communism
Laws	Fascism
Constitutionalism	Parliamentary Government
Separation of Powers	Republic
Checks and Balances	Federalism
Laissez-faire	Revolution
Propaganda	Lobbying
Citizenship	Political Parties
Conflict and Conflict Resolution	Bureaucracy
Democracy	Executive
Socialism	Legislature
Judiciary	

## Generalizations

1. The study of politics and government includes the study of the institution of government and how individuals behave as citizens.
2. Democracy is government in which the decision making is in the hands of the people who make their demands known through voting, political parties and pressure groups.
3. Democracy seeks to protect the rights of individuals and minority groups though its actions are based on majority opinion.
4. Citizenship in a democracy is the exercise of duties, responsibilities and privileges as a reasoned and functional act of political behavior.
5. Political systems exist to make authoritative decisions binding on all citizens.
6. Political decisions are a result of the need to settle problems, many of which are of a continuing nature, e.g., the conflict between majority rule and minority rights, loyalty and dissent.
7. Every society creates laws and imposes sanctions and penalties for violations of the laws.
8. There is a division of responsibility and an interdependence at all levels of government.
9. All nations of the world are becoming more interdependent.
10. Individuals can increase their political power through membership in groups that represent their interests.
11. The values of a society are implicit in the political documents and behavior of a people.
12. Leadership within government is dependent upon the functional structure of that government and the degree to which power is controlled by varied segments of the society.

13. International power is a factor of technological advancement, wealth and size of a nation or agglomeration of nations.
14. Conflict resolution may be achieved through adjudication, arbitration, mediation and compromise.
15. Change in political institutions may occur through evolution or revolution, depending upon the degree of power and the responsiveness of government to change.
16. Modern governments are frequently concerned with economic power.

Concept: Checks and Balances

Placement: High School

### Performance Objectives

1. Show by a chart the Constitutional checks and balances in the United States government.
2. "*Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.*" Students will explain and give examples to prove or disprove this quotation.
3. Given the three branches of government in a communist state (i.e., Soviet Union) students will explain why the branches fail to control each other.
4. Be able to classify a variety of given activities as being under the control of local government, state government, national government or international control. Be able to substantiate choices.
5. Given a problem of Constitutional nature, students will indicate what procedures each branch of the government might take to solve the problem.
6. Identify areas of government operations in which the checks and balances system seems less effective today.

### Suggested Strategies

Teachers may:

1. Have students play *Star Power* to realize the abuses of unlimited power.
2. Have students study the U. S. Constitution as it relates to the system of checks and balances. In class they would analyze the system in terms of power granted to and exercised by individuals in the several branches of government.
3. Have the students study and discuss the changes in the interpretation of the Constitution as they relate to the concept of power as it pertains to the several branches.
4. Have the students make a comparative study of the American form of government and that of a communist state (i.e., the Soviet Union) noting especially the powers granted to each branch and the manner in which they are exercised.
5. Have the students study the Constitution to determine what powers are granted to the several levels of government, either by direct assignment or by assumption. They will develop a chart or list of these powers.
6. Assign students the study of the state constitution in a manner similar to strategies #2 and #4 (above) relative to assignment and operation of powers between the state and local levels of government.

## Cognitive Concepts of Social Psychology

Multiple Causation of Behavior	Frustration
Behavioral Interaction	Anxiety
Biological and Cultural Differences	Projection
Social Environment	Self-Image
Deviant	Habit
Dynamics of Group Processes	Conformity
Adaptive Behavior	Conditioning
Perception	Maturation
Rationalization	Internalization
Motivation	Reinforcement
Aggression	Ego

### Generalizations

1. Many of an individual's preferences and values are determined by environment.
2. When an individual's behavior is reinforced in a positive way the individual may be conditioned to repeat this behavior.
3. Individual growth and development involve a constant process of change.
4. Human behavior is far more dependent upon socialization processes than upon instinct.
5. The long period of dependency of the human species facilitates the learning process.
6. Many human wants are not related to survival but to other culturally induced desires.
7. Human perception is limited and selective.
8. An individual's behavior is often affected by the way he/she is perceived by others.
9. Personal experiences, both with individuals and groups, influence an individual's self-image.
10. Motivation is influenced by the intensity of what people want or desire.
11. When people experience frustration, they may exhibit behavior such as aggression, withdrawal, projection or anxiety.
12. Habits allow humans to reduce decision-making processes to a manageable level.
13. Personal insecurity or a weak ego often results in prejudice and discrimination.
14. Most behavior is the result of multiple causes.
15. An individual's behavior in a group is determined by his/her assumed role.

Concept: Multiple Causation of Behavior

Placement: Junior High School

### Performance Objectives

Students will be able to:

1. Identify probable causes of behavior from illustrations or simulations.
2. Classify aspects of behavior such as feelings, intentions and actions.
3. Give an example of the circular process of behavior.
4. Distinguish between starting causes and in-between causes of behavior.

Reference: *Social Science Laboratory Units, SRA.*

### Suggested Strategies

Teachers may:

1. Have students read imaginary case study vignettes and make inferences about the causes of the behavior.
2. Play records and show films and have students identify different aspects of behavior described.
3. Have students suggest problem situations and role-play them for the class.
4. Give students sets of behavior specimens and have them deduce causes and effects of the behavior illustrated.
5. Introduce problem situations and have students predict future behavior and substantiate their predictions.
6. Have students diagram the circular process of behavior.

### Cognitive Concepts of Sociology

Social role	Social change
Status	Social institutions
Norms	Demography
Stratification	Cultural diversity
Group	Social mobility
Socialization	Urbanology
Culture	Ecology
Collective behavior	Social problems
Social processes	Folkways - Mores

### Generalizations

1. Norms define the boundaries of social interaction.
2. Differentiation of social roles is based on sex, age, kinship and occupation.
3. Complex technological societies tend toward greater stratification.
4. Social interaction involves cooperation, conflict, assimilation or accommodation.
5. Cultural lag occurs when one aspect of society changes more rapidly than others.
6. Each society develops institutions to aid the socialization of its members.
7. Socialization is the process by which the individual becomes a functioning member of society.
8. Human survival depends on living in groups.
9. The quality of human existence is dependent on the degree of intergroup cooperation.
10. Groups maintain an internal solidarity and stability of membership by attitudes of exclusiveness.
11. Patterns reflect the degree of social mobility and stratification in a given locality.
12. Social problems arise from a lack of integration within a society.
13. Ecological processes have resulted in continuously changing patterns of population distribution.
14. Collective behavior (frequently) permits individual deviation from societal norms.
15. Groups exercise social control over the activities of their members through a system of folkways and mores.

Concept: Social role  
Placement: Senior High

### Performance Objectives

1. Students will be able to define and illustrate the following: social role, role change and role conflict.
2. Students will list all the roles which they assume in the course of one week.
3. Students will classify these roles according to the following categories: ascribed or achieved.
4. Students will identify the required roles expected of people in specific social positions in our society.
5. From research on other cultures, students will compare role expectations based on sex and age in different societies.
6. Students will be able to recognize examples of role conflict in their own lives.
7. From readings, students will give examples of role alteration caused by changes in society.

### Suggested Strategies

Teachers may use:

1. *Simulation Games*

Have students play a simulation game such as *Ghetto* in which they assume the roles of the individuals described in profiles selected. *Generation Gap* will illustrate role conflict in family interaction.

2. *Research*

Have each student select a role to research in primary source collections dealing with the social history of America and present class report on this work.

3. *Case Studies*

Have students read sociological studies of other cultures and list the variations in the sex and age roles in these societies. Panel discussion on comparison with contemporary American role expectations.

4. *Films/Filmstrips*

Show films such as the series "*The Many Americans*" dealing with life styles of children from minority groups - Puerto Rican, Afro-American, Chicano, Oriental - to determine the effect of minority group membership on role expectations.

## DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTERDISCIPLINARY UNIT

The following sample unit extends the process of conceptual curriculum development in two ways: by selecting an interdisciplinary topic which involves both affective and cognitive concepts and by suggesting teaching strategies designed for class, small group and individual activities. This framework will give more emphasis to skill development. With the exception of those strategies directly concerned with established process goals, these activities are merely suggestions. Individual teachers and students will undoubtedly be able to develop their own effective strategies. The criterion is whether the selected strategies will lead to the achievement of the stated objectives.

Thus, it is the objectives that should furnish the major thrust for evaluation. Some of the objectives may be capable of measurement through objective testing. Others may be better determined through subjective tests with established criteria. Thus, a problem solving case study could be provided. Students would have to use their knowledge base for data, but would be judged on their ability to solve problems and substantiate hypotheses rather than giving predetermined answers.

There might also be processes and affective concepts that cannot be determined through written tests but can be evaluated in terms of observation of student behavior. In this type of evaluation it is important that well defined criteria be established by students and teachers, e.g., individual responsibility in small group activities. In working with affective concepts, teachers must avoid demanding conformity. It is the ability to clarify and substantiate one's own values that is important.

The following example of an interdisciplinary unit is provided for illustrating the above ideas in a concrete form. Although a number of concepts are listed from each discipline, not all the concepts relating to Poverty are mentioned. It must be assumed that a number have been explored earlier in the structure of social studies. Thus it becomes apparent that curriculum revision must take into account the total social studies sequence K-12.

**SAMPLE UNIT**

**AMERICAN POVERTY**

**(4-6 week unit to be used in Grades 9-10)**

### Concepts

Subsistence level	Apathy
Discrimination	Frustration
Cultural deprivation	Self image
Consumer protection	Aggression
Multiple causation	Empathy
Segregation	Equality
Migrant labor	Human dignity
Welfare	Prejudice
Social problem	

### Skills - Processes

1. Locate appropriate resources
2. Interpret graphs, charts, tables and other arrangements of statistical data
3. Draw inferences from written and non-written sources (especially pictures); test validity and form conclusions
4. Role play in simulated situations to experience and develop a sensitivity to *difference*
5. Cooperate in effective group activities
6. Research (Library and community)
7. Clarification of values

### Performance Objectives

1. Students will define a social problem and explain why poverty is a social problem in the United States.
2. Students will list *five* basic causes of poverty and identify the group(s) most directly affected by each.
3. Students will be able to locate on a map of the United States the geographic distribution of poverty; repeat the exercise with a map of their state; identify the major factors responsible in each location.
4. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the following terms by giving illustrations: *poverty level, subsistence economy, cycle of poverty and culture of poverty.*
5. Students will identify sources of information about poverty existing in their local community.
6. Students will be able to list the various types of welfare programs - federal, state, local - and eligibility requirements for each.
7. Students will evaluate the effectiveness of the poverty programs (federal, state, local) in operation in their community. Clarify values related to topic.
8. Students will write a paper discussing at least *five* ways to reduce or eliminate poverty in the U. S.

## Activities

### Class

Look at slides/pictures showing various types of poverty. Identify types and assign each to small group for research.

### Small Group

After research on their assignment, each group will report to the class on the type of poverty studied.

### Individual

Select a case study/personal account of an individual living below poverty level. Write paragraph containing content information and attitudinal response to the reading.

### Class

Collect data on: distribution of income in the United States  
per cent below poverty level by age, sex, race, location  
number of welfare recipients

### Small Group

Assign committees to investigate sources of information about poverty in their community and report to class.

### Individual

Write a report on one of the categories below poverty level - age, race, etc.

### Class

Divide class into two groups - each of which will play a simulation game with students role playing individuals below poverty level, *Ghetto*, or *Blacks and Whites*.

### Individual

Write a reaction to the assigned role including any change in attitude which occurred.

### Class

On basis of the game - discuss the "*culture of poverty*".

Diagram the interrelationships of the following: health, discrimination, living standards, education, race, employment, housing.

### Small Group

Assign committees to investigate local poverty programs, and report on effectiveness and/or arrange for resource staff from various programs to speak to entire class.

### Small Group

Have groups check supermarkets in poor neighborhoods to determine any change in prices relative to welfare payment dates.

### Individual

Students will contact agencies for samples of welfare applications and directions for completing them. Each will assume one of the following roles and attempt to fill out an application.

1. A deserted mother with six dependent children.
2. An unemployed migrant worker.
3. A 70-year-old widow living on Social Security benefits of \$84 a month.
4. Untrained school dropout.
5. Unemployed Vietnam veteran.
6. Unemployed miner in Appalachia.
7. Unemployed space engineer.
8. Recent immigrant from Puerto Rico.
9. Unmarried mother of blind child.
10. Disabled father of five children.