

The Basic Principles and Model of the Integrated
Spiral Social Science Programme

The curriculum of 1978 has produced in Hungary a lot new in the field of social science education in many respects. The subject called "Our Environment" has made efforts to integrate knowledge of nature and society. In geography, practical teaching elements have gained ground, and teaching material on the primary and secondary stage is more appropriately coordinated. The scope of history has been enlarged in respect of topics and regions, the number of cultural historical, contemporary topics and the topics on the Third World has increased. The scientific attitude of the curriculum has also become more up-to-date. The encyclopaedic character of the curriculum has considerably lessened, the objectives also involve the development of abilities besides transferring knowledge, and are better adapted to pupils' age-groups. The gradual spread of subject rooms, the establishment of the system of teaching resources, the differentiation of the teaching material and the organization of the system of optional subjects have provided an opportunity to develop teaching-learning patterns adapted to pupils' needs and abilities, and based on pupils' more original work.

On the other hand, the reform has not made progress in other respects. Social science education essentially remained past-orientated, chronological and concentric. It is still based on the principle of "one discipline - one subject". It lacks the modern social science topics on contemporary issues, and the personal point of view, too. The curriculum is still "over-centralized". Teachers are free to choose topics in respect of supplementary material, and solely in the case of lessons of optional subjects they have an opportunity to make use of and design alternative programmes which present themselves in given local circumstances. Social science education and pupils' everyday experiences are not interlinked because of limited lesson-orientated approach, and school public life is still unable to provide children with patterns of democratic life-

style based on self-government.

Some of the critical observations listed above cropped up already during the preliminary works of the reform. To realize them, a lot of other factors affecting school work ought to have been changed: value-preferences of the school policy, the methods of centralized educational management, school-structure, teachers' training etc. But the late 70s were not favourable to such radical changes, and today there are many who agree that real (bringing the "desirable" nearer to the "possible") reforms should be based on the equilibrium of the local and central decision-making, and "permanent" development and gradual introduction based on scientific researches instead of the strategy of the general introduction which believes in universal and simultaneous settlement of all issues.

Scientific researches, which undertake situation analysis, and to find the roots of contradictions and exploration of future development tendencies, and those implementations, which try to work out alternatives and put them into practice to solve problems, must bare the brunt of this recognition. We seem to live in such an "accumulating" period when, under economic pressures, the "postponed in the long run" decisions of the school policy allow and necessitate slow but multiple research work.

We launched this kind of works in 1981, trying to outline a spiral integrated social science programme for spanning both primary and secondary school education. Theoretical works to lay the foundations of the programme started in four fields.

The first was the international comparative study. Our aim was to find out the common features in the history of the development of social education on those four countries - France, the Sovietunion, the United Kingdom and the US - we focused our attention. The second was what we called "historical problem investigation", and we were curious about the altering connections of history and social studies in Hungary, when and what political circumstances had motivated the spread or lose of influence of this or that one. Thirdly, we studied the development conceptions of the 70s in Hungary and we paid special attention

to the conception worked out by the Sub-Committee of the Social Sciences of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. This conception was put forward as a result of intense debates and was based on the compromise that it is necessary to teach social sciences but within history. And fourthly, we started a fact-finding investigation into aspiration level, for the time being, among the intellectuals who study pedagogy, history and social sciences, or who are just interested in them, in order to find some common concerns, in spite of diverse aspects of value, in terms of the development of social science education.

Yet these studies have not come to an end, we have set about to outline a hypothetical framework, the basic principles and the model of which we would like to describe now.

Our first principle is the principle of double base. It means on the one hand that the study of both history and social sciences are equally important. History is important concerning roots, continuity and interruption, and it explores social laws and their driving forces. Modern social sciences are important in respect of spotting social problems, they provide the necessary competence in taking part in public life, the ability for self-renewal and the establishment of a democratic life-pattern. On the other hand we think that it serves both fields of sciences appropriately if they feed on each other's thoughts and ways of how they handle their own subjects, nevertheless the differences between them must not be overlooked. It is not proper if we consider contemporary events as history when we lack historical perspectives and documents, and evidence which is indispensable to historical insight. The danger of this is that political considerations of the present may take the place of factual historical analysis and evaluation. The danger, however, is valid vice versa. If we approach history from the social sciences' point of view, we would fail to observe that history is a process and has a cumulative character, and that, the results are determined by causes, consequently we produce a mosaic history only. Thus we think it necessary to separate the two blocks to some extent, and the predominance of either of the two in certain stages of school. Our second principle is spirality. It is concerned with the arrangement

of the curriculum material. This principle has been motivated by two viewpoints. The one is the social studies themselves are not diacronic but synchronic in character. Therefore they could only be applied as appendix to a linear curriculum. The other is that Hungarian secondary school education has become widespread thus it is not only uneconomic but it also makes the traditional concentric structure unnecessary. In this respect, we consider Bruner's model of spiral curriculum relevant. The backbone of the program for K-12 grades does not imply chronological sequence of topics as it has been the case so far but three closely related fields of development: key-concepts, skills and attitudes. Or if you like, they are acting as objectives which get broader and deeper in a varied or even alternative context of topics during the pupils' advancement up on the grades.

Our third principle is integration. We have studied the international experiences of integrated subjects, their advantages and disadvantages compared to autonomous subjects, and we have found two basic types of integration: the disciplinary-centred and the problem-centred. In our opinion the whole verticum, that is concerning K-12 grades, both the autonomous and the integrated subjects are necessary. The previous ones are necessary in respect of the analytic, the latter ones of the synthetic image of the society. Concerning the integrated subjects, we prefer the problem-centred integration at the expense of the disciplinary-centred in order to develop the critical and problem-solving thinking.

Our fourth principle is pupils' original work. We would like to enforce this principle in two respects. On the one hand, within the narrow bounds of social science education: in instruction. In this respect, our principle aims at developing primarily the skills of inquiry. On the other hand within the wider framework of social science education: at schools as social laboratories (a concept derived from Dewey). In this respect it means both public and everyday social activities. The basic principle of pupils' original work concentrates on two closely related fields: the establishment of competence and motivation for a democratic way of life.



Our fifth principle is concerned with alternatives. Here the point is that we consider our programme as core curriculum within which we determine only the minimum contents to establish the common national education besides objectives, thus opposing the present centralized curriculum that determines the sequence of topics in details. So we follow the strategy of the so-called adaptive curriculum development which opens up facilities for teachers and schools to instruct new topics, in accordance with the objectives, they find most appropriately under given circumstances, e. g. pupils' interests, their reach of experience, pace and direction of their development, the registration area of the school, and parents' social status, their place in the cultural stratification and the teachers' propensity to self-renewal. At the same time, it is also important that we should provide enough topics for option to complete the core curriculum which apart from that it provides options, it also gives a starting-point to teachers' topic planning.

Now we would like to present the model of our programme.

The place of the figure 1 (s. S. 54)

Let's have a look first at the lower curved-lone part of the figure. On the right we can see the complete verticm, the division of the stages of K-12 grades. Contrary to the present Hungarian school stages we are thinking in terms of the 6 + 4 + 2 school structure and not of the 8 + 4. In the 6 + 4 + 2 school structure, the first 6 grades stand for the primary school, the next 4 grades are the junior stages of secondary schools. In the first 10 grades, general education is given. The last 2 grades stand for the senior secondary schools in which besides subjects giving some general education special vocational and professional education emerge, too. The training of intellectuals is also included. Social science education is present in two respects: pupils who do not go in for careers of social sciences are given general education, and those who go in for careers of social sciences get special professional education. Thus the teaching material of social science education may be divided into two.

On the left, the content frames of respective school stages are indicated. In the first stage of schooling, after Bruner, we base on enactive, in the next two on iconic and in the fourth on symbolic representation. In the fifth stage, that is in grades 11 - 12, we teach integrated social sciences under general education, and integrated history within professional education. At the same time, pupils in both general and professional education can take up optional autonomous social sciences, e. g. sociology, economics, political science etc.

The content, of which a great part is alternative, is arranged around the key-concepts, skills and attitudes which spirally turn back on themselves on a higher level at K-12 grades.

(cf. the three upper sections of the figure.)

Finally, a few examples for the interdependence topics, key-concepts, skills and attitudes.

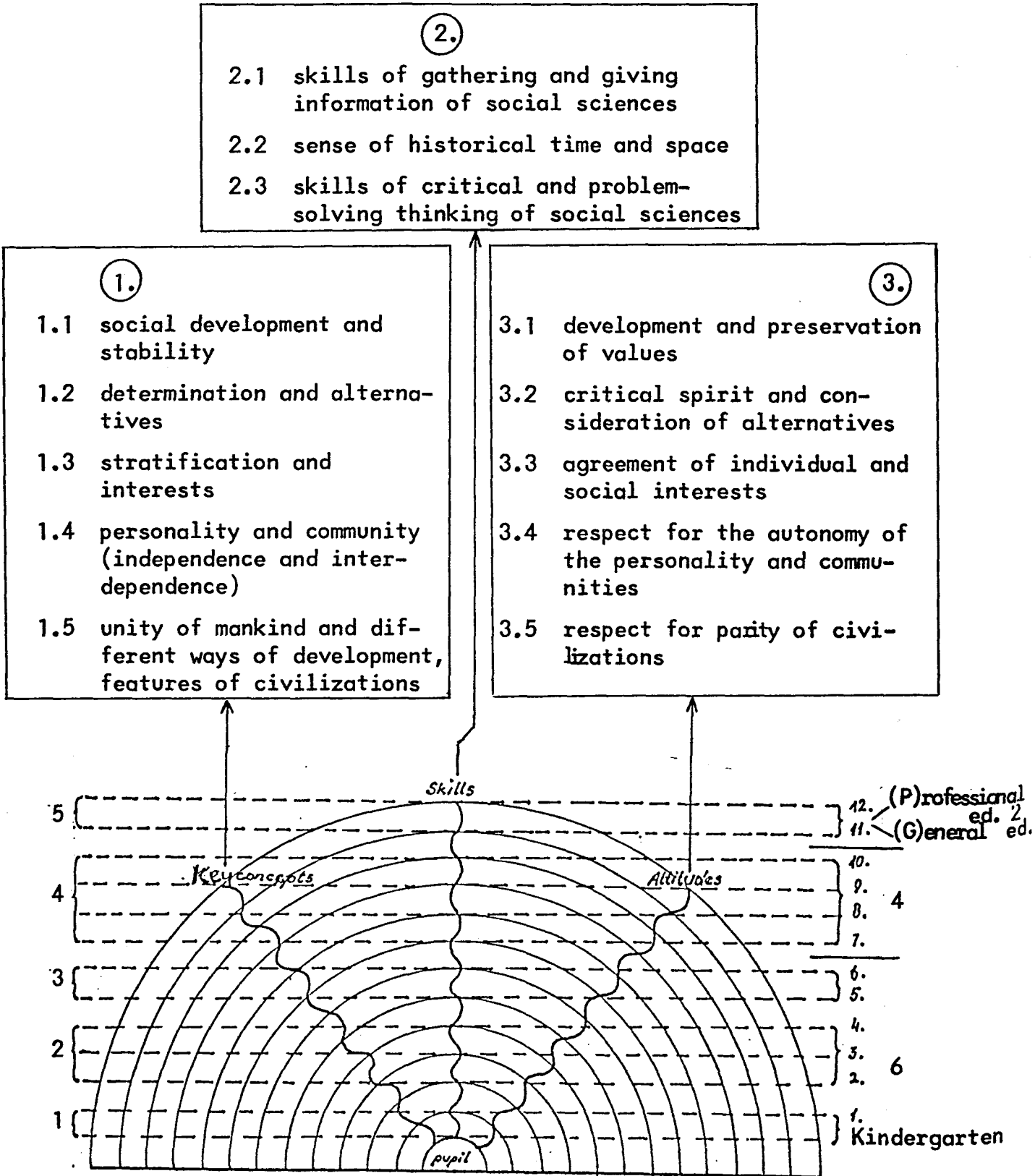
Let's take, for instance, 1.5 key-concept: the unity of mankind and different ways of development and features of civilizations.

- K. 1 How do children live in different parts of the world? (They study picture-books and they can act the similarities and differences with puppets.)
- 2 - 4 Villages and towns in different parts of the world.
- 5 - 6 Hungary under Turkish rule. The Christian and Moslem way of life, brave warriors' morals.
- 7 - 10 Following the ways of development of Europe and Hungary, at definite times, outlook to other civilizations of the world, e. g. peoples of the world before the discovery of America.
- 11 - 12 The global problems of mankind. (General education)
The Asian mode of production. (Special education)

We have got central financial support for the elaboration and trial of the programme. Thus experiments have already started in a joint primary and secondary school of 12 grades in 1986.

Figure 1

The Model of the Curriculum



- 1 everyday children's activities (play, picture—book)
- 2 integrated elementary social studies
- 3 episodes from national and local history
- 4 world and national history in chronological arrangement
- 5 integrated history integrated social sciences