

SOCIAL STUDIES SYLLABUS

Secondary One to Four Normal (Technical) Course

**Implementation starting with
2014 Secondary One and Three Cohort**



Ministry of Education
SINGAPORE

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1. INTRODUCTION

Philosophy of Social Studies Education

At the heart of the Singapore Social Studies curriculum is preparing students to be citizens of tomorrow. The curriculum helps them better understand the interconnectedness of Singapore and the world they live in and appreciate the complexities of the human experience. Drawing on aspects of society that are of meaning and interest to the learners, Social Studies seeks to ignite students' curiosity to inquire into real-world issues that concern their lives. Through inquiry and authentic learning experiences, Social Studies helps students to attain relevant knowledge and understandings about these issues, develop reflective and critical thinking skills, and appreciate multiple perspectives.

Social Studies seeks to inculcate in students a deeper understanding of the values that define the Singapore society, nurture dispositions that inspire them to show concern for the world they live in and demonstrate empathy in their relationships with others. The curriculum therefore envisions Social Studies students as informed, concerned and participative citizens, competent in decision-making with an impassioned spirit to contribute responsibly to the world they live in.



Figure 1.1 The Singapore Social Studies Curriculum

Curriculum Aims

Social Studies seeks to develop the civic competencies of students by the end of a 10-year Social Studies education. These civic competencies, as encompassed in the body of knowledge, skills and values found in the Philosophy of Social Studies, will empower students to be informed, concerned and participative citizens.

As ***informed*** citizens, students would:

- understand their individual identity vis-à-vis their identity as Singaporeans with a global outlook;
- understand different perspectives;
- view the world with an understanding of the Singapore perspective;
- apply reflective thought in making quality decisions;
- analyse, negotiate and manage complex situations; and
- evaluate information, consider different viewpoints and exercise discernment in reaching well-deliberated conclusions and making responsible decisions.

As ***concerned*** citizens, students would:

- have a sense of belonging to their community and nation;
- appreciate the importance of engaging in issues of societal concern;
- be committed to building social cohesion by appreciating diversity in society; and
- have an awareness of the ethical considerations and consequences of decision-making.

As ***participative*** citizens, students would:

- be motivated to identify issues of concern and take action;
- be resilient in addressing concerns of the community or society in spite of challenges faced; and
- be empowered to take personal and collective responsibility for effecting change for the good of society, and serve to make a positive difference to others.

Design of the Social Studies Normal (Technical) Syllabus

How is the Social Studies N(T) Syllabus content organised?

The Social Studies N(T) syllabus adopts an issues-based approach, while requiring students to use inquiry to explore current societal issues.

The syllabus is organised around six issues that represent concerns about society at the national and global levels as shown in **Figure 1.2**. The issues to be explored at the lower secondary level are: *Living in a Multicultural Society*; *Responding to Migration*; *Resolving Conflict and Building Peace*; and *Protecting Our Environment*. At the upper secondary level, students will explore the issues of *Managing Our Financial Resources* and *Caring for Society*.

In exploring these issues, students will draw on the disciplines of the Humanities and Social Sciences, including History, Geography, Political Science, Sociology and Economics. Inquiry-based learning approaches complement the issues-based Social Studies curriculum so that students can be involved in their learning, formulate questions, gather relevant information to answer questions and build new understandings, meanings and knowledge. Students will also have opportunities to reflect on their learning.

| Level | Issue | Inquiry Focus |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Lower Secondary | Living in a Multicultural Society | Is harmony achievable in a multicultural society? |
| | Responding to Migration | Are migrants welcomed? |
| | Resolving Conflict and Building Peace | Is peace achievable? |
| | Protecting Our Environment | Is the environment worth protecting? |
| Upper Secondary | Managing Our Financial Resources | What does it mean to manage our financial resources well? |
| | Caring for Society | How can we make Singapore a better place for those in need? |

Figure 1.2 Content in the Social Studies N(T) Syllabus

Design of the Syllabus

- **Use of Inquiry Focus and Guiding Questions**

Each issue is framed by an inquiry focus that anchors the study of the issue and is central to directing students to respond to a particular cause specific to the issue. Subsequently, guiding questions are positioned to help students gain a deeper understanding of the content. Guiding questions are designed to aid students' exploration of the relevant content which has been scoped for the Social Studies N(T) learner. Students will then be able to develop responses to the inquiry focus.

- **Use of Key Understandings**

Key Understandings go beyond discrete facts or skills to focus on larger concepts, principles or processes. They are applicable to new situations within or beyond the subject matter. Key Understandings highlight main insights that students would gain from studying each issue. They prioritise what students need to learn with respect to the issue being examined. These Key Understandings provide a larger purpose for learning the targeted content and implicitly answer the question, "Why is this issue worth studying?"

- **Use of Narratives and Personal Accounts**

Different strategies such as narratives and personal accounts are introduced in exploring the issue. Using narratives and personal accounts facilitates students' understanding of important concepts and terminology, and serve as triggers to set the context for studying an issue. Such strategies enable students to relate more easily to the issue being studied.

2. CONTENT

USING THE SECTIONS IN THE SYLLABUS CONTENT

Why This Issue Matters:
This section highlights the relevance of the learning in each issue. It makes explicit connections for the student by outlining what the student will be able to do after studying the issue.

Living in a Multicultural Society (Secondary 1)

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Why This Issue Matters</p> | <p>Inquiry Focus</p> |
| <p>Studying the issue of living in a multicultural society enables students to appreciate cultural diversity and understand the importance of harmony. Through examining this issue, students will develop an understanding of who they are as individuals and as members of a group, and how they should accept, respect, appreciate and celebrate diversity as common practices and values in a multicultural society. Studying this issue will heighten students' awareness of the need to promote and maintain harmony and develop personal responsibility towards achieving harmony in a multicultural society.</p> | <p>Is harmony achievable in a multicultural society?</p> <hr/> <p>Key Understandings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our culture and experiences shape our identity. • Living harmoniously means understanding, respecting our differences and appreciating what we share in common. • Harmony can be forged by sharing our common spaces and experiences. |

Inquiry Focus:
Each issue is framed by an inquiry focus question which anchors the study of the issue and is central to directing students to respond to the issue as active citizens.

Key Understandings
The Key Understandings reflect the main insights that students would gain through the study of each issue.
The Key Understandings have been simplified to further facilitate the understanding of key ideas.

| | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| <p>Knowledge Outcomes</p> <p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe how one's identity could be shaped by one's culture; • describe some examples of common cultural practices in Singapore; • describe the benefits and challenges of living in multicultural Singapore; and • share ways of promoting cultural understanding and harmony among cultural groups in multicultural Singapore. | <p>Skills Outcomes</p> <p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gather and organise information; • make observations using sources and interpret data; • consider different viewpoints and alternatives to make informed judgements; and • communicate ideas and findings with clarity and in creative ways through various tools and modes of presentation. | <p>Values Outcomes</p> <p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • respect multiple perspectives of people from different cultural backgrounds; • accept and appreciate diverse cultures and harmony in a multicultural society; and • show cultural appreciation through practical actions in living and working harmoniously with others. | <p>Key Concepts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity • Multiculturalism • Diversity • Harmony |
|--|--|---|---|

Knowledge Outcomes:
The Knowledge Outcomes help students achieve the Key Understandings and respond to the Inquiry Focus.

Skills Outcomes:
The Skills Outcomes seek to promote Communication, Collaboration and Information skills such as assessing information effectively and understanding new perspectives. Critical Thinking is also promoted as students reflect and arrive at conclusions based on objective analysis of information, different viewpoints and various evidence. These skills are differentiated for the Lower and Upper Secondary N(T) students to ensure age appropriacy.

Values Outcomes:
The Values Outcomes emphasise nurturing the dispositions of a concerned citizen and active contributor to the community. Students will also develop Social and Emotional competencies such as social awareness and relationship management in the study of the issues when they learn about the appreciation of diversity, respect for others' perspectives and harmonious living.

Living in a Multicultural Society (Secondary 1)

Guiding Questions

- What makes us who we are?
- What is my culture?

- What are some of the common experiences that members of my cultural group share?

- What are the benefits of cultural diversity in Singapore?

- What are the challenges of living in a multicultural society?

- How can we learn to live harmoniously together in Singapore?

Knowledge and Understandings

OUR CULTURE AND EXPERIENCES SHAPE OUR IDENTITY

- Identity
 - Understanding who we are and how our identity can be shaped by our culture and experiences.

LIVING HARMONIOUSLY MEANS RESPECTING OUR DIFFERENCES AND APPRECIATING WHAT WE SHARE IN COMMON

- Cultural practices of the major racial and religious groups in Singapore
- Developing appreciation of different cultural practices
 - o Greetings
 - o Birth rites
 - o Celebration of major festivals in Singapore
- Benefits of cultural diversity in Singapore
 - Friends with people from different cultures
 - Diverse cultural celebrations
 - Variety of cuisines
- Challenges of living in a multicultural society
 - Misunderstanding, prejudice and misconceptions
 - o Examples of past (Racial Riots of 1964) and present day conflicts between different cultural groups

HARMONY CAN BE PROMOTED BY SHARING OUR COMMON SPACES AND EXPERIENCES

- Sharing common spaces in our neighbourhood
 - Public housing
 - o Ethnic Integration Policy
 - Places of interaction
 - o Food centres, community centres, playgrounds and fitness corners
- Sharing common practices and experiences
 - Schooling as a shared experience
 - Sharing common experiences in community programmes and activities
 - Sharing common experiences through National Service (NS)

Core Content:

Content of each issue is scoped to ensure greater customisation to the learning profile of N(T) students.

Guiding Questions

The Guiding Questions guide progressive understanding of the issue. Placing these questions alongside the proposed content shows teachers how to facilitate student learning using the inquiry approach.

Syllabus Content

Living in a Multicultural Society (Secondary 1)

Why This Issue Matters

The study of the issue of living in a multicultural society enables students to appreciate cultural diversity and understand the importance of harmony. Through examining this issue, students will develop an understanding of who they are, as individuals and as members of a group, and how they should accept, respect, appreciate and celebrate diversity as well as common practices and values in a multicultural society. The study of this issue will heighten students' awareness of the need to promote and maintain harmony and develop personal responsibility towards achieving harmony in a multicultural society.

Inquiry Focus

Is harmony achievable in a multicultural society?

Key Understandings

- Our culture and experiences help shape our identity.
- Living harmoniously means understanding, respecting our differences and appreciating what we share in common.
- Harmony can be forged by sharing our common spaces and experiences.

Knowledge Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- describe how one's identity could be shaped by one's culture;
- describe some examples of common cultural practices in Singapore;
- describe the benefits and challenges of living in multicultural Singapore; and
- share ways of promoting cultural understanding and harmony among cultural groups in multicultural Singapore.

Skills Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- gather and organise information;
- make observations using sources and interpret data;
- consider different viewpoints and alternatives to make informed judgements; and
- communicate ideas and findings with clarity and in creative ways through various tools and modes of presentation.

Values Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- respect multiple perspectives of people from different cultural backgrounds;
- accept and appreciate diverse cultures and harmony in a multicultural society; and
- show cultural appreciation through practical actions in living and working harmoniously with others.

Key Concepts

- Identity
- Multiculturalism
- Diversity
- Harmony

Living in a Multicultural Society (Secondary 1)

Guiding Questions

- What makes us who we are?
- What is my culture?

- What are some of the common experiences that members of my cultural group share?

- What are the benefits of cultural diversity in Singapore?

- What are the challenges of living in a multicultural society?

- How can we learn to live harmoniously together in Singapore?

Knowledge and Understandings

OUR CULTURE AND EXPERIENCES SHAPE OUR IDENTITY

- Identity
 - Understanding who we are and how our identity can be shaped by our culture and experiences.

LIVING HARMONIOUSLY MEANS RESPECTING OUR DIFFERENCES AND APPRECIATING WHAT WE SHARE IN COMMON

- Cultural practices of the major racial and religious groups in Singapore
- Developing appreciation of different cultural practices
 - o Greetings
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 - o Examples of past (Racial Riots of 1964) and present conflicts between different cultural groups

HARMONY CAN BE PROMOTED BY SHARING OUR COMMON SPACES AND EXPERIENCES

- Sharing common spaces in our neighbourhood
 - Public housing
 - o Ethnic Integration Policy
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 - o Food centres, community centres, playgrounds and fitness corners
- Sharing common practices and experiences
 - Schooling as a shared experience
 - Sharing common experiences in community programmes and activities
 - Sharing common experiences through National Service (NS)

Responding to Migration (Secondary 1)

| Why This Issue Matters | | Inquiry Focus | |
|--|--|---|--|
| <p>The study of the issue of migration enables students to better understand how they can respond to this global phenomenon. They will develop an understanding of why people migrate to other countries and the impact of migration on the migrants and the countries they migrate to. In addition, students will explore the roles played by Singaporeans, the government and migrants in creating a sense of belonging for the migrants in Singapore.</p> | | <p>Are migrants welcomed?</p> | |
| | | Key Understandings | |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People migrate for different reasons. • Migration can create positive and negative experiences. • Both migrants and Singaporeans have a part to play to ensure successful integration. | |
| Knowledge Outcomes | Skills Outcomes | Values Outcomes | Key Concepts |
| <p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe what migration is; • give reasons why people choose to migrate to Singapore; • describe the experiences of migrants and Singaporeans; • describe the contributions of migrants; and • share how Singaporeans could respond to migrants. | <p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gather and organise information; • make observations using sources and interpret data; • consider different viewpoints and alternatives to make informed judgements; and • communicate ideas and findings with clarity and in creative ways through various tools and modes of presentation. | <p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • value individual and collective contributions to society; • develop better understanding of Singaporeans and migrants to promote integration; and • empathise and demonstrate sensitivity towards different human experiences. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Migration • Challenges • Integration |

Responding to Migration (Secondary 1)

Guiding Questions

- What is migration?
- Why do people migrate?

- What are the experiences of migrants?
- What are the experiences of Singaporeans?
- What are the contributions of migrants to Singapore?

- How can migrants and Singaporeans ensure successful integration?

Knowledge and Understandings

PEOPLE MIGRATE FOR DIFFERENT REASONS

- What is migration?
- Push and pull factors
 - Reasons for migrants choosing to move to Singapore
 - Peace and security
 - Employment opportunities
 - Quality of education

MIGRATION CAN CREATE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES

- Experiences of migrants living in Singapore
 - Positive and negative experiences
- Experience of Singaporeans with migrants
 - Positive and negative experiences
- Contributions of migrants to Singapore

BOTH MIGRANTS AND SINGAPOREANS HAVE A PART TO PLAY TO ENSURE SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION

- Role of migrants
- Role of Singaporeans

Resolving Conflict and Building Peace (Secondary 2)

| Why This Issue Matters | | Inquiry Focus | |
|---|--|--|--|
| <p>The study of the issue of resolving conflict and building peace enables students to understand that a collective response is vital to managing conflict and maintaining peace in a country. They will develop an understanding of the roles played by different groups in society to maintain peace. Students will learn examples of past and present conflicts at the regional and international scene.</p> | | <p>Is peace achievable?</p> | |
| | | Key Understandings | |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflicts can disrupt peace. • Everyone can help to build peace in Singapore. | |
| Knowledge Outcomes | Skills Outcomes | Values Outcomes | Key Concepts |
| <p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe some causes and consequences of conflict; • give some examples of how conflicts can be resolved; • describe the impact of terrorism on Singapore; and • share Singapore’s response to terrorism. | <p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gather and organise information; • make observations using sources and data; • consider different viewpoints and alternatives to make informed judgements; and • communicate ideas and findings with clarity and in creative ways through various tools and modes of presentation. | <p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • respect the perspectives of others; • believe in individual and collective responsibility in resolving conflicts and maintaining peace in the community; and • demonstrate sensitivity and resilience in resolving conflicts. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict • Terrorism • Peace |

Resolving Conflict and Building Peace (Secondary 2)

Guiding Questions

- What is conflict?
- What are the causes and consequences of conflict?
- What is the impact of terrorism?
- What is Singapore's response to terrorism?
- How can we contribute to building peace in Singapore?
- How does Singapore build peace with other countries?

Knowledge and Understandings

CONFLICTS CAN DISRUPT PEACE

- Causes and consequences of conflict among individuals
 - Conflicts at home or in school
- Causes and consequences of conflict in communities
 - Maria Hertogh riots
- Causes and consequences of conflict among countries
 - Cod Wars
- Consequences of terrorism
 - September 11 terror attack

EVERYONE CAN HELP TO BUILD PEACE IN SINGAPORE

- Singapore's response to terrorism
 - Being prepared for threats (Total Defence)
- Building peace with other countries
 - Building peace through diplomacy and deterrence

Protecting Our Environment (Secondary 2)

Why This Issue Matters

The study of the issue of protecting the environment enables students to appreciate the interdependent relationship between people and the environment. Through exploring this issue, students will find out about the impact of their actions on the environment and learn about how they can exercise stewardship towards the environment.

Inquiry Focus

Is the environment worth protecting?

Key Understandings

- People and the environment are interdependent.
- Everyone plays an important role in protecting the environment.

Knowledge Outcomes

- Students will be able to:
- describe the importance of the environment to people;
 - give examples of the impact of human activities on the environment;
 - describe the importance of nature, waste management and water conservation; and
 - describe ways of protecting the environment.

Skills Outcomes

- Students will be able to:
- gather and organise information;
 - make observations using sources and data;
 - consider different viewpoints and alternatives to make informed judgements; and
 - communicate ideas and findings with clarity and in creative ways through various tools and modes of presentation.

Values Outcomes

- Students will be able to:
- appreciate the beauty and benefits that the environment brings to their lives;
 - believe in individual and collective responsibility in showing care for the environment; and
 - demonstrate commitment to carry out their responsibilities towards the environment.

Key Concepts

- Environment
- Interdependence
- Conservation

Protecting Our Environment (Secondary 2)

Guiding Questions

- How are people dependent on the environment?
- What impact do human activities have on the environment?

- Why is it important to manage the waste we generate?
- How do we protect the environment?
- Why is it important to conserve water?

Knowledge and Understandings

PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT ARE INTERDEPENDENT

- Importance of the environment to people
 - Beauty of the environment
 - Resources from the environment
- Impact of human activities on the environment
 - Resource depletion
 - Pollution due to improper waste disposal

EVERYONE PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

- Importance of waste management
 - Land pollution
 - Reduce, Reuse and Recycle (3Rs)
- Importance of water conservation
 - Water pollution
 - Conserve, value and enjoy water

Managing Our Financial Resources (Secondary 3)

Why This Issue Matters

Studying the issue of managing our financial resources enables students to develop personal responsibility towards their own. Through exploring this issue, students develop an understanding of financial literacy and economics concepts. Students will thus be able to examine how financial resources are managed, allocated and consumed at the personal and national levels; the consequences of financial resources' mismanagement and develop awareness and appreciation towards responsible management.

Inquiry Focus

What does it mean to manage our financial resources well?

Key Understandings

- Using our financial resources wisely means managing what we spend and save.
- Using our financial resources wisely helps us to be self-reliant.
- Careful use of our country's financial resources helps Singapore to progress.

Knowledge Outcomes

- Students will be able to:
- differentiate needs from wants;
 - give examples of how financial resources can be managed and allocated wisely;
 - describe the consequences of mismanagement of financial resources; and
 - explain how they can contribute to the management of financial resources in Singapore.

Skills Outcomes

- Students will be able to:
- gather and organise information;
 - make observations using sources and interpret data;
 - consider different viewpoints and alternatives to make informed judgements;
 - check reliability of information gathered; and
 - communicate ideas and findings with clarity and in creative ways through various tools and modes of presentation.

Values Outcomes

- Students will be able to:
- consider the needs of others and rationality in the way one spends money; and
 - exercise thrift and prudence in the management of financial resources.

Key Concepts

- Needs
- Wants
- Opportunity cost

Managing Our Financial Resources (Secondary 3)

Guiding Questions

- What are my needs and wants?
- How can I better manage my financial resources?

- What happens if I mismanage my financial resources?

- How does the government manage the national budget?

- Why is the national budget important to me?

Knowledge and Understandings

USING OUR FINANCIAL RESOURCES WISELY MEANS MANAGING WHAT WE SPEND AND SAVE

- Needs, wants and opportunity cost
- Budgeting as a decision-making tool
 - Creating a personal budget
- Savings
 - Personal savings
 - Central Provident Fund (CPF)
- Expenditure
 - Personal expenses

USING OUR FINANCIAL RESOURCES WISELY HELPS US TO BE SELF-RELIANT

- Income and investment
- Unhealthy spending habits
 - Impact of people who overspend
 - Impact of people who gamble

CAREFUL USE OF OUR COUNTRY'S FINANCIAL RESOURCES HELPS SINGAPORE TO PROGRESS

- Government expenditure
- Developing Singapore through the national budget
 - Dr Goh Keng Swee
 - Mr S. R. Nathan

THE NATIONAL BUDGET

- Importance of the national budget to citizens
- The role of citizens in contributing to the management of financial resources in the country

Caring for Society (Secondary 4)

| Why This Issue Matters | | Inquiry Focus | |
|--|--|---|--|
| <p>The study of the issue of caring for society enables students to develop an understanding of the 'Many Helping Hands' approach in caring for society. Students will examine the needs of the society and develop an awareness of the importance of an active citizenry in caring for society.</p> | | <p>How can we make Singapore a better place for those in need?</p> | |
| | | Key Understandings | |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone has the responsibility to care for society. • Different groups of people have different needs. • Everyone can make a difference by caring for society. | |
| Knowledge Outcomes | Skills Outcomes | Values Outcomes | Key Concepts |
| <p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe what it means to care; • describe some needs of society in Singapore; • explain how the individual, community and government play a role in taking care of society; and • explain how youths can be active citizens in society. | <p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gather and organise information; • make observations using sources and interpret data; • consider different viewpoints and alternatives to make informed judgements; • check reliability of information gathered; and • communicate ideas and findings with clarity and in creative ways through various tools and modes of presentation. | <p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • believe in individual and collective responsibility in caring for the society; and • show care and empathy for people with different needs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared responsibility • Ageing population • Active citizenship |

Caring for Society (Secondary 4)

Guiding Questions

- What does it mean to care?
- How can we care for others effectively?

- What are some of the needs of society?

- What are some of the approaches to caring for society?
- How can youths show their care for society?

Knowledge and Understandings

EVERYONE HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO CARE FOR SOCIETY

- Aims of care
- Concept of care
- Core characteristics of care (Attentiveness, Responsiveness, Respect)

DIFFERENT GROUPS OF PEOPLE HAVE DIFFERENT NEEDS

- Understanding universal needs
- Understanding the needs of our society
 - Needs of the elderly in Singapore
 - Needs of the lower-income group in Singapore

EVERYONE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE BY CARING FOR SOCIETY

- The network of care formed by the public, people and private sectors
 - Meeting the needs of the elderly in Singapore
 - Meeting the needs of the lower-income group in Singapore
- Active citizenry
 - Youth volunteerism
 - Youth social entrepreneurs

3. PEDAGOGY

Humanities Inquiry Approach in Social Studies

Inquiry is recommended for learning concepts and skills and exploring issues in the Social Studies N(T) syllabus. Inquiry-based learning helps students to become more critical about their thinking and their actions. Hence, when studying the issues, they will be able to deliberate and offer well-grounded answers based on evidence. It also gives them the opportunity to investigate an area of focus related to the world beyond the classroom.

The Humanities Inquiry Approach encompasses an appreciation of the roles and responsibilities of both the teacher and the student in a classroom culture that would be conducive to inquiry as shown in **Figure 3.1**.

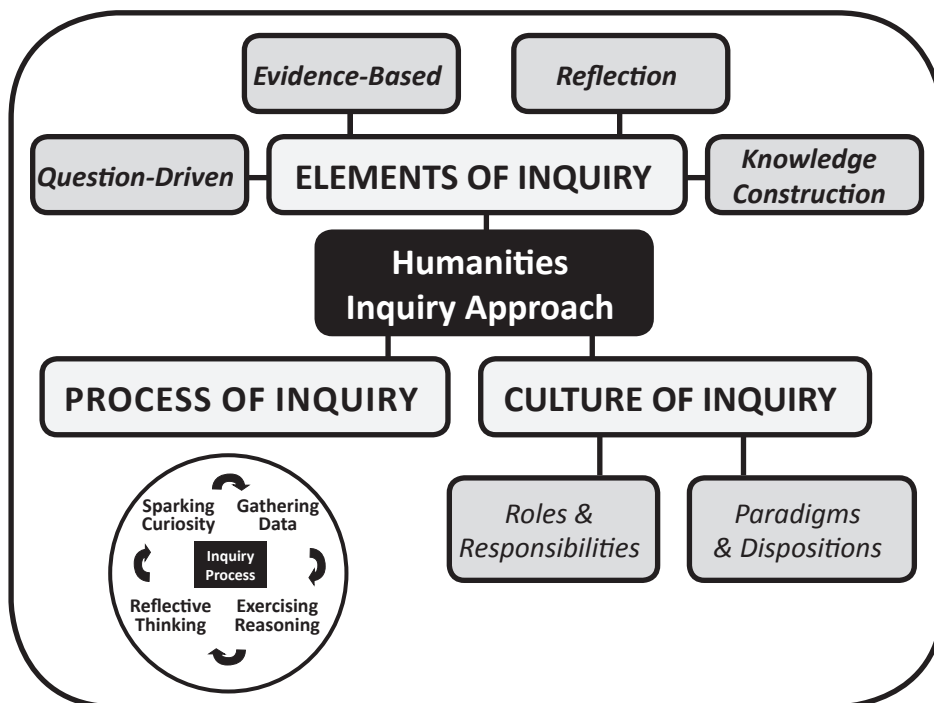


Figure 3.1 Framework of the Humanities Inquiry Approach

Pedagogical Elements of the Humanities Inquiry Approach

There are four common pedagogical elements that underlie the practice of inquiry-based learning in the classroom. These broad elements have been identified from an external scan of inquiry literature, discussions with academics in the field and observations of exemplary classroom practice.

- ***Learning as Question-Driven***

Inquiry-based learning seeks to spark and build on students' curiosity so that the learning experience is an authentic and meaningful one. The choice of questions (what you ask) and their delivery (how you ask) depend on the purpose intended. Questions help activate students' prior knowledge and challenge their assumptions by arousing their curiosity and imagination and considering different perspectives, especially when used to explore problematic situations. This, in turn, elicits other questions from students. Learning thus results from inquiry as it is driven by questions from teachers and students to investigate, extract, analyse and synthesise information regarding issues.

- ***Double Movement of Reflection***

During the inquiry process, students move from personal experience to creating a working hypothesis about that experience, back to their experience again to test the working hypothesis then returning to revise the hypothesis, and so on and so forth, creating a practical working theory about the concept or issue investigated. This constant state of reflection on the hypothesis, in the form of the inquiry question, will lead to the creation of certain beliefs/theses and eventually a deeper understanding of the concept or issue.

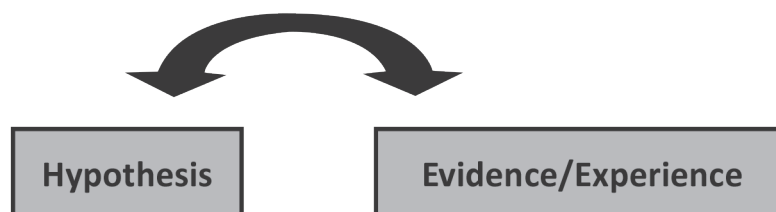


Figure 3.2 The Double Movement of Reflection

- ***Reliance on Evidence***

Inquiry-based learning develops students' abilities to justify their opinions by supporting them with relevant information. Students need to be able to distinguish between facts and opinions, and evaluate the reliability and usefulness of the information gathered.

Based on that, students will be able to draw their own conclusions and compare them with evidence-based conclusions drawn by others to gain a deeper understanding of issues. With teachers facilitating the process, the N(T) learner will use relevant information to explore issues and make informed responses to problems and questions. In the course of searching for relevant and valid information, new insights and findings may surface as they undergo the double movement of reflection.

- ***Knowledge Construction by Students***

In inquiry, students are actively engaged in constructing knowledge, new ways of understanding and new ways of seeing things. They do not simply receive information didactically. Learning opportunities are needed to help N(T) students become aware of how they see things and reconstruct their existing knowledge when exposed to new knowledge. New stimuli may give them new insights and spark off further questions about an issue.

Process of Inquiry

The inquiry process, as shown in **Figure 3.3**, is often known as the scientific method. The general inquiry procedure can be characterised by four aspects: sparking curiosity, gathering data, exercising reasoning and reflective thinking.

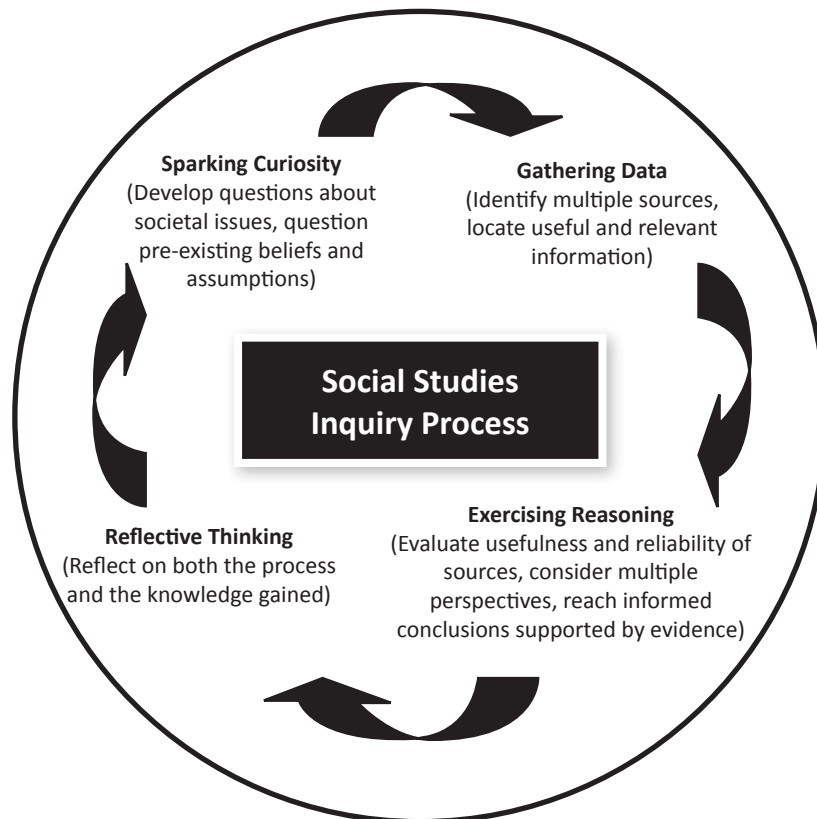


Figure 3.3 An Illustration of the Inquiry Process

- (a) **Sparkling Curiosity:** Teachers have to first activate students' prior knowledge about these real-world issues in Social Studies N(T) to spark their curiosity. Students need to engage with their pre-existing cognitive frames, and be aware of the ways in which they understand the issues and why they have adopted such views. It would also be useful to identify questions about these issues, i.e. fill any gaps in their understanding.

Teachers can then introduce new stimulus materials that would trigger further interest and curiosity about the issue and provoke students to question their own assumptions and beliefs.

- (b) **Gathering Data:** The classroom extends beyond its four walls and students should be encouraged to gather data from a variety of authentic sources to provide them with information to address existing questions. The teacher can help provide basic foundational knowledge on the issue by guiding students to explore possible sources of information, such as books, journal articles, websites and films. Students can also gather data through making field-based observations of authentic scenarios and conducting interviews and surveys with members of the community. Through investigating a variety of authentic sources that reflect a multiplicity of perspectives, N(T) students make use of the data they gather to help address gaps in their understanding.

- (c) **Exercising Reasoning:** Students need to make sense of the data and extract relevant information from the various sources. They need to describe, explain and analyse the information and infer potential implications. Through the process of comparing and contrasting sources, they make connections with their knowledge and deepen their insights into an issue. They apply criteria for evaluating the reliability and usefulness of the information and develop informed opinions.
- (d) **Reflective Thinking:** Reflective thinking is an integral aspect of inquiry and students ought to engage in reflection at **every** stage of the inquiry process. Students can reflect on the process and the knowledge gained. When students engage in inquiry, they are challenged to reflect on their current understanding of the issue. Through asking questions that provoke deeper thought, students can reflect on their thinking, actions and feelings, thereby developing metacognitive self-awareness. As they engage in data gathering and sound reasoning, they critically evaluate their sources, methods, opinions and reflect on the new insights gained.

Field-based Learning

Field-based Learning refers to learning that extends beyond the classroom. In Field-based Learning, teaching is extended to a site outside of the classroom, exposing students to a real-world setting. Students learn through direct interaction with an environment that reflects the concepts, rather than learning through indirect presentations of the setting such as textbooks and lectures. This means going out of the classroom to make observations and take samples of objects, structures, processes and phenomena.

Field-based Learning in Social Studies

Field-based Learning experiences should be woven into the Social Studies N(T) syllabus, as they provide authentic learning experiences that can help students better appreciate the issues that they are inquiring into. A Field-based Learning experience possesses the following five key characteristics:

- It can take place **outside** the classroom, either within the school community and neighbourhood or further beyond;
- It has specific **knowledge** objectives regarding societal issues that challenge and concern the students;
- It has specific **skills** objectives regarding process skills (assessing the validity of multiple perspectives, engaging in problem-solving, conducting research ethically), communication skills (constructing and communicating ideas effectively) and/or participation skills (negotiation, mediation, cooperation, appropriate action);
- It has specific **values** objectives regarding an appreciation of diversity in culture and perspectives, the development of respect and empathy for others, and/or the belief in individual and collective responsibility; and
- It positions **reflection** at the core of the learning experience, as students will be guided to develop metacognitive awareness in both the cognitive (thinking) and affective (feeling) domains through reflection tools and strategies.

4. Assessment

Purpose of Assessment

Social Studies N(T) is a non-examination subject. However, to ensure that Social Studies N(T) is taught effectively, assessment is necessary to measure, certify and report the level of student learning. Assessment should also be seen as an iterative and continuous process that motivates learning and helps students achieve the learning outcomes of the syllabus.

Assessment for the Social Studies N(T) syllabus will include formative assessment and summative assessment, which play an integral role in the teaching and learning of Social Studies. Formative assessment, sometimes referred to as *Assessment for Learning*, takes place during teaching and aims to help students improve their learning. In contrast, summative assessment, sometimes referred to as *Assessment of Learning*, typically takes place at the end of a unit or semester. It plays a critical role in assessing students' knowledge and understanding of the subject.

Modes of Assessment

Formative assessment in Social Studies N(T)

Formative assessment supports the students' learning process. It shapes teaching and learning because the information on student performance helps students master learning goals and allows teachers to refine their teaching practices. It is an integral process embedded in instructional practice.

The activities in the Coursebooks help students gather information, make observations, consider different viewpoints and reflect on their responses to make informed decisions. The activities are designed for students to progressively develop the skills outlined in the syllabus. These activities help the teacher assess students' progress in achieving the learning outcomes.

The formative assessment tasks that students attempt in the Coursebooks are meant to provide students with opportunities to engage in the learning process without the pressure of formal assessment.

Summative assessment in Social Studies N(T)

Students will attempt the Performance Task designed in the Coursebook for each Social Studies N(T) issue for their summative assessment. Through the Performance Task, students develop a tangible product or performance at the end of studying an issue. It assesses students' ability to apply to a new context the knowledge and skills learnt from studying an issue.

Each Performance Task comprises multiple parts based on students' learning experiences while studying each issue. It requires students to gather information through Field-based Learning, process the information gathered, create a product and communicate their findings through various forms of presentation. The Field-based Learning incorporated into the Performance Task gives students opportunities to gather and organise information in authentic and real-world settings.