

# Social and political factors: national curriculum



In understanding the factors that led historically to the formation of the Education National Curriculum, it is important to understand the position of Britain throughout history in the past three centuries in terms of socio-economical structure, political trends, religious climate as well as the position of the country in the international arena, both economically and socially. With these three aspects together, and the different historic events and legislations that took place during the XIX and XX century, it becomes clear the reasons, motivations and necessities that led to the establishment of such curriculum within the already established education structure of the country, as well as its objectives and purposes.

The British Government attached little importance to education until the end of the 19th century, however there is evidence of the change in mentality before the end of the century. It all began on 1807 when Samuel Whitbread, a champion of religious and civil rights, and a proponent of a national education system he proposed the abolition of slavery, (1) proposed a new poor law , establishing a free educational system -two years of education for those unable to pay- the measure was of course seen too radical for the time and thus easily defeated in the house of common. (2) This thinking is nurtured mainly to the climate of the time, where higher classes of society had no interest in cultural developement, the relationship that Britain had with other countries was totally vertical, Britain had a reputation and status and has always been more concetrated in colonial adquisitions, external growth and power, Britain was leading the world in industry and commerce, there was a laissez-faire feeling that education would somehow take care of itself.(3)

The Idea of education for the masses remained within the spirit of the times, but it only started to gain real interest on the second half of the 19th century when the commercial and manufacturing supremacy of Britain was in decline in comparison to other European counterparts (4) it now seemed financially viable to have an educated workforce. At that time, the Church of England was responsible for most schools, „ Before 1870, education was largely a private affair, with wealthy parents sending their children to fee-paying schools, and others using whatever local teaching was made available” (5). It became clear that education needed to (surpass) that frontier of elite, and be more centred towards the masses, In the second half of the 19th century, not only Britain’s supremacy was in decline, but crime, pauperism and social distress increased as well, as a sign of lack of a developed education system, political and social stability were now linked with education of the people (6)

It is only until 1870 that we can see real State intervention in the education field, The Education Act of 1870 drawn by William Edward Foster, and thus known as „ the Foster Act” , gave birth to the modern education system in England (4, 6) (5), at the time the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Robert Lowe, remarked that the government would now “ have to educate our masters.”

(7) It can be seen clearly that there was an advancement in mentality towards education of the people and the future of the country; this act stressed four main points : first, the country will be divided into School districts. Second, School Boards were to be elected by ratepayers in each district. Third, School Boards were to examine the provision of elementary education in their district, and make arrangements if necessary. And fourth, school Boards could make their own by-laws, allowing them to to charges

fees if necessary. It was an establishment of elementary schools nationwide, not replacing those schools run and/or erected by the Church or any other independent body, but it supplemented them. (8)

Following to the Foster Act, many others followed such as : The Free Education Act 1891 , The , The Voluntary Schools Act 1897, which stresses in areas such as funding and compulsory age leaving, started to „ modernised” and forge the education system that we know, Later acts such as The Education Act 1902 , abolished school boards and created Local Education Authorities (LEA) and the 1918 Fischer Act which concentrates on compulsory age of leaving school for Secondary. (5)

A well structured Education system was being born in England, driven by the need to have skilled and qualified work force, what followed is the 1944 Education act also known as the Butler Act which changed the education system for secondary schools implementing a tripartite education system and secondary education free for all pupils (9). And thus replacing all previous legislation. 1944 Education Act was an attempt to create the structure for the post-war British education system (10) It only took effect until 1947 after WWII.

WWII played an extremely important role in the vision that politicians had on education. In effect, the example set by other European countries in terms of political and social balance – everyone else seemed to be doing better than England, mainly because they had better education systems, what struck the most was the advancement in technology that Germany showed off during the war(13), the astonishing organization of its people, the loyalty to the Nazi

cause, and the fact that they were all pursuing the same goal. This opened the eyes, not only of the British but to the world. The Nazis were aware that education would create loyal Nazis by the time they reached adulthood, schools were to play a critical part in developing a loyal following for Hitler - indoctrination and the use of Nazi propaganda. The sole purpose of this educational structure was to create a future generation that was blindly loyal to Hitler and the Nazis. (11) This historic event led to favouring the formation of a national curriculum, not to follow Hitler's steps per se, but learn from the education experience, however, there is the doubt and fear of political indoctrination, in the formation of such curriculum. There was however a strong motivation to educate the people, produce better citizens and better workers, the British were now more concentrated in quality of the labour rather than quantity. (12)

The real revolution in education legislation came in 1988 with the education reform act, which is so far the most important since Butler's act, with this reform was born the National Curriculum(14), so far the most important provision, giving an statutory entitlement to learning for all, regardless of gender, race, or special situation, determining what should be taught, how, and when, it also sets attainment targets for learning and how this should be assessed. (15) The British government finally understood that it is important to organize education in the country without letting anyone out, they also understood the need of educated people, not only in the workforce but as well educated persons, nurturing with moral and values, education became the reflexion of a whole society and society is what makes a country,

We have seen the past of Education in the British society and how little importance it had in times when power and wealth seemed the most important, we have also seen how a laissez-faire policy on education did not bring any strength to society or feeling of collectivity, it is seen as well the different motivations and changes in mentality towards education for the masses throughout history, many pieces of legislations and acts have been drafted in order to secure educated generations to come. Knowing as well the position of power, influence and wealth that England has always represented in the global arena, and following the repercussions and experiences from WWII, it was just a matter of time for England to start thinking in investing in its people, in creating a society that reflects the wealth and power that it endeavours, and that society is built throughout education, and the creation of the National curriculum sets the criteria to the delivery of such education aware and responsive to changes in society and the economy, aware of the need to nourish a multi-ethnic society in the spiritual, moral, social and cultural areas adapting to the needs and demands of the time. Society reflects a nation, and a nation reflects society, the National curriculum allows today to educate both, the future nation, and the society to come.

B- demonstrate understanding of the National Curriculum by showing how it makes provisions for meeting the holistic needs of all learners.

The art of holistic education lies in its responsiveness to the diverse learning styles and needs of evolving human beings. (16) Having an holistic approach means taking into account and consideration the complete person, both, physically and psychologically, in education sector this is based in giving sense

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to identity to every learner, a purpose in life and connections to a collectivity. The National Curriculum in England promotes development in many different areas that can be qualified as „holistic” in the sense that their purpose is to foster a balanced education in the knowledge or academic field and the pastoral or more psychological care of each pupil as well. The National Curriculum makes various provisions to meet this holistic needs such as the promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural attitudes and understandings, also promoting key skills, thinking skills and other important aspects(17) that will enable every pupil to develop independent reasoning and thinking, in order to make decisions and be an active and correct member of this society, both intellectually and morally. We will go through this provisions to demonstrate how the National Curriculum aim to meet the holistic needs of every learner regardless .

In a rapidly changing society, it is important to have a curriculum that will adapt to its sudden changes, that is why the four main purposes of the curriculum are set in a way that will enable everyone to be responsive to the needs of the time, these four main purposes are, first: to establish an entitlement of areas of studies and develop of knowledge. Second, establishing standards of performance and assessment in order to examine the learning progress. Third, promoting continuity and coherence that will enable learners to facilitate transitions in a fast moving society and fourth, promoting public understanding leaving to the public the right to discuss about educational issues, giving the collectivity confidence in the opennesses of its work. By this, it is intended to guarantee to the

collectivity effective ways to meet the individual needs of every child by clearly and transparently establishing these four main purposes in education.

Being a very important aspect taking into account the age of the learners, the National Curriculum has been developed in a cognitive style, this is with the purpose of creating a more balanced and relaxed way of learning, meeting the needs of each pupil at the correct stage of their development. That is why the National curriculum is organized and establishes key stages, every child develops at different rates and this is important to not let anyone behind, and also to ensure the same standards of teaching and learning across the nation. This rigorous aspect of the Curriculum intends to meet the needs of the learners holistically, by being aware of the external and internal influences of a whole generation in a country, giving coherence in what is being taught and taking into account the aging factor.

Another important component of the National curriculum is Religious education; on despite of the fact that parents are free to withdraw their children from these, it remains a basic component of the curriculum it is considered to make a distinctive contribution to the School curriculum by developing the pupil's knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs, by which pupils will consider and respond to a variety of important questions related to their own spiritual development, develop identity and common belongings and values in the community(17). Great Britain has been mainly Christian, but other principal religions presented in Britain and must be taken into account. The spiritual aspect of a human being plays an important role in its development and the National curriculum provides guidelines to foster this, in a multiethnic society.



Other Aspects that promotes the national curriculum are the development of skills. In effect, the National curriculum promotes Key skills and thinking skills as part of the learning experience. Key skills are intended to help learners in understanding how can they improve and perform better in their own education, these are embedded in the National curriculum, in all subjects, pupils will be taught skills such as : communication, Application of numbers, information and technology, working with others, improving own learning and problem solving. Skills that will not only nurture their academic education but will enrich their interaction with the outside world. Thinking skills, on the other hand complement the latter and will give pupils all the tools to have creative and analytical thinking, reasoning deducting and evaluating skills, allowing pupils to understand the why and how of their environment.

The National Curriculum promotes financial aspects, as is important nowadays to be aware of the changes in the economy and be aware and informed costumers, to make intelligent financial decisions aware of the responsibilities and rights as knowledgeable costumers. In order to do it so, the national curriculum Promotes the acquisition of, financial capability knowledge, enterprise and entrepreneurial skills that will enable pupil's to have some foundation knowledge if they consider as a career path, and the promotion of education for sustainable development, which encourage pupil's to understand and value the taking part in how we do things individually and in collectively.

We have seen how in order to adapt to a changing environment the National curriculum has set criteria to meet these changes and how the age

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factor is an important issue in the delivering of the education that the national curriculum promotes, being aware that as human beings we develop at different rates. It also takes into consideration Religious education, which enlighten mind and soul in the understanding of ourselves as beings. With all this clear and set up as a statutory entitlement for pupil's in England, it is clear that the National curriculum aims to the delivery of an academic and pastoral education in a balanced style and thus having an holistic approach, giving chances to all learners to develop at their rate and providing order and criteria to educators in order to deliver such education, the face of the nation relies on the development of their students, and it is important for a nation to have educated people in knowledge and sound in mind, ready to make part of a multiethnic society.

#### C- Understand the strengths and weaknesses of the National Curriculum

The National Curriculum is the most essential and important tool for teachers and it has been a revolutionary approach to education in this nation.

Developing Differentiated lesson planning skills:

Learning outcome a) : In demonstrating understanding of the key areas of a lesson plan,

A lesson plan is a teacher's detailed description of the course of instruction for an individual lesson, it should encourage learners to progress and motivate them to improve in their work, it should also excite interest and commitment and willing to continue the learning. To achieve this results, it is very important to have a clear understanding of the key areas of a lesson

plan, their purpose, their significance and impact in the lesson itself and very importantly, be proactive in the adaptation of varied approaches in addressing all learners needs in each key area of the lesson in order to differentiate every learning need, creating an environment conducive to learning for all.

A quality lesson plan must be a reflection of the school vision as well as philosophy and obviously integrating the National Curriculum guidelines both in the pastoral and academics, making provisions for pupil's different learning needs, these should not be time-consuming and should become a teacher's second nature. A well composed lesson plan allows any person educated in the subject to deliver a lesson without any further details, just using the lesson plan as a guide. There are six key areas in a lesson plan.

1) General Background: is the detailed information about the lesson, such as : date, Year group, classroom number, unit of work, subject, support available, number of SEN pupils, risk assessment, links to National Curriculum and type of pupils (mix-abilities, mono ethnical, multi-ethnic, etc) all these information will enable the teacher to know, What, Where, and Who, is he going to teach and by knowing these details, the teacher can then adapt or create teaching resources accordingly.

2) Lesson Objective: What do you want your students to learn as a result of the lesson? In a nutshell, the answer to this question is a ' lesson objective'. A Lesson objective should be clear, realistic and measurable, always be aware of what grade level the lesson plan is being put in place for.(page 20) it shows the keywords of the lesson, the teacher must know; where the

students are heading, how are they reaching there and know when they have arrived (page 34) A lesson objective is what the teacher wants to achieve with the pupils, these must be coherent and always within the framework of the National Curriculum programme of study.

3) Learning outcomes: is what the learner will be able to do as a result of the learning experience. They vary depending on the pupil's ability, learning outcomes are a tool to examine learning process in certain pupils and know where to improve, they should be differentiated and always tailored in what the pupils will achieve, it is important to use formats such as: all pupils will be able to... Most pupils will be able to... Some pupils will be able to.

Teachers should prepare or adapt resources beforehand at different levels to allow pupils to advance at their rate, also encourage students and share the objectives in the classroom so that they can make decisions about their own improvement, the teacher must of course apply many different strategies to achieve differentiation.

According to Bloom Learners should benefit from: cognitive, affective and psycho-motor domains, that is why is very important for teachers to prepare a large variety of resources to enable a benefit learning, thinking about the learning styles of the pupils and adapting all of these thoroughly. The teaching should focus on the particular intelligences of each person (multiple intelligence H. Gardner) .

4) Starter: it can be defined as an “ attention grabber”, teachers as part of their lesson delivery must be creative and think in ways to grab and incite attention to the lesson, a starter is defined by many as a “ fun based”

activity that will ignite curiosity. Creativity can be in any form, the starter should be brief, allowing pupil's mind to get interest in the subject making them want to know more. Starters can be linked as well with previous subjects to carry on continuity of the lesson, always bearing in mind to use as much as possible all learning styles, also keeping in mind strategies to grab the attention of SEN pupils who might not be as excited as his peers in knowing more about the lesson, always have differentiation as a second nature.

5) Main Lesson: Is the period of time in which learners are taught about a particular subject or taught how to perform a particular activity, In other words, is the delivery of the lesson by the teacher; the transfer of knowledge, it should be in an oderly fashion, using as much teaching methods and ressources as possible in order to integrate all learning styles and learning intelligences (H gardner). It is the duty of the teacher to build some kind of motivation from the part of his pupil's into the lesson and thus, enabeling an enthusiastic learning. The main lesson can include: Videos, peer talk, debates, discussions, visits from people into the classroom. There should be a variety of student activities, they should be engaged, active, not passive in order to reinforce the learning experience, this activity part takes place soon after the learning experience.

6) The Plenary: The plenary helps Students to have an overall picture of what they are learning; What have we learned today from this/these activities? Pupils usually reflect their difficulties and doubts, these can be discussed and help clear common difficulties; Summary notes can be given at the end. After completion of work it is important to go over any common difficulties

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with the group, it is important to ask for feedback from the class as a whole in order to summarize what has been learned, the plenary can be a very interesting part of a lesson for inexperience or new teachers as own teaching performance can be asses to see if the primary lesson objective is being met, teachers can then realize what is going wrong in the delivery of their own teaching through the plenary.

Lesson plan is a rigorous method to structure what is going to occur in the lesson. Lesson plan is an art not a Science, (442 teaching today) Which lead to the conclude that a lesson plan is the key for a succesful lesson, planning carefully and thourufully each lesson, taking into account the needs of the students, encounter unexpected situations, always thinking in preparing too much because at the end of the day: fail to plan is plan to fail.

B) Explain how a lesson plan can meet the needs of individual learners:

Inclusion, differentiation, diversity, entitlement, equal opportunities, special needs, personalised learning, ensuring equal opportunities... All of these concepts are highlighted strongly to trainee teachers and always brought up as if it was the most important concepts in teaching; and the reality is indeed that those concept are the most important and the first that should be bared in mind at all times when wanting to teach in an UK classroom, concepts that must become an automatism in the teaching profession. The UK is hitherto a multi-ethnic and cultural society that has put equality of rights at the top, reason why education must reflect the same vision and values. But how can a lesson plan meet the needs of individual learners in a classroom where every individual might have a learning need?

It will be illustrated the issue of inclusive education and mix ability in the classroom and how a well prepared lesson plan can meet the needs of individual learners and have an inclusive approach.

In 1978 Baroness Warnock in the early 1980s laid the foundation for the Statement of Special Education Needs: a legally binding assessment guaranteeing resources for children with severe needs, she denounced as well segregation in the schools and coined the term SEN. The principle of Inclusion is that children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) or a Disability have the right to be educated in Mainstream Schools alongside other children from their community rather than being educated in Special Schools(cita). Main education needs are the following:

Cognitive and learning difficulties (dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia)

Autistic spectrum difficulties

Behavioural, social and emotional difficulties

Sensory and physical (Visual and hearing impairments)

Interaction difficulties (EAL-English)

Inclusion can be seen as a “ top up” for integration, is about removing all possible barriers that avoid development, learning and participation in the school, and that includes drafting every lesson plan in this fashion. Teachers can always consider his pupil’s special needs and integrate appropriate strategies and resources on his lesson plans, they should not be necessarily time or money consuming and should be, of course effective.

There are however situations in which the need of the pupil is severe and such an approach can be inadequate in meeting certain pupil's needs, in these cases, special provisions and IEPs Individual Education Plan, can help the concerned pupil in achieving identified targets in his learning, and thus ameliorating by identifying his learning style. IEP will be explained more in depth in section (D) of this module.

As a result of inclusion, integration and diversity in the classroom, teachers face themselves with the challenging task of delivering lesson to mix-abilities pupils. Education in the UK is dealt in a cognitive progression (citation), The National Curriculum sets targets and attainment levels, their purpose is to differentiate that pupils have different abilities, they all have differences in learning styles, different ways of thinking and preferences, Hence the reason why teachers must integrate sustainable and measurable learning challenges, integrating a variety of activity for each learning and ability group in order to extend their abilities.

An example would be as illustrated in annex where, as shown in this lesson plan for year 3, teacher introduce all VAK learning styles into his lesson plan, making as well provisions and arrangements for students who might demonstrate a lack of "inclusion" to the mainstream lesson, the teacher had the previous acknowledgement about his classroom, knowing that he has two statemented pupils, an autistic and an ADHD. Teacher has made provisions for a rich lesson in resources and VAK styles (citation), taking into account the fact that they will be pushed to develop their way of learning and understanding, challenged to carry on their learning in mainstream at the same time that their peers, this will give confidence to them, encouraging,

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making them part of the lesson as a whole, including them, integrating them into the lesson, which is exactly what the National Curriculum says. Teachers should understand of course, how far to push and how, understand the limitations of the learners.

When a teacher sees a sign of alarm e. g, a pupil left behind and lost in the lesson, is the teacher's duty to have made previous provisions and take immediate action to help meeting that particular pupil's learning need. Teacher can first, as part of his lesson, expect this situations arising and have a " back up" plan to support, they should be effective but not exhausting and consuming that would distract the teacher from the rest of the pupils (see annex " special provisions") drafting an IEP in cases where there is a genuine strong difficulty, it's the tool will allow us in identifying the root of these difficulties as well as in understanding how to reach this learner, what is his learning style ? and the special provisions that will be done for him, would be discovered, and easier to implement in the future. See IEP (section d of this module)

We must not forget that as teacher, we will have the opportunity to encounter many gifted and talented pupils, who themselves, happened to have a learning need, in fact, if as teacher we concentrate too much in delivering a lesson objective without preparing more in depth resources and knowledge, these students will not be benefiting of and appropriate education, these pupils demonstrate leadership, initiative, creativeness, high level of practical skills, so there must be provisions done to meet these demanding needs as the group is achieving as well in its many different abilities.

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Research and observations from educators has led to a large variety of teaching methods, research done by Professor John Hattie concluded that successful methods share three characteristics: They set challenging tasks, students and teacher get informative feedback and that the teaching was constructivist. Concluding that after all the teaching process should include both parties constantly evolving (Student - Teacher) and have a dialogue approach. Learning from studies done about education will enable teachers in many different ways about delivering an inclusive education. Teachers must make sure to acquire as much academic knowledge regarding inclusion as possible and apply in many different ways, being an energetic proactive person willing to enthusiastically and objectively deliver a lesson plan with the solely objective in mind (in the mind of the teacher), of making that lesson objective for the day create great learning outcomes from the part of the pupils, and repeat that every day.

c. Be able to adopt an inclusive lesson plan for a mix-ability group.

D) Be able to demonstrate understanding of an IEP.

When do we write an IEP? More than just understanding an IEP, knowing when to apply one is the real challenge. When the expected results in the pupil learning are not met, and there are signs of alarm, an IEP is an early intervention. IEPs are working documents for all staff that must be written in a jargon free language understandable for all. In it, a structured planning documentation to help students achieve identified targets. It dictate what should be teach and the criteria; setting realistic targets that should be assessable and understandable. They should be teaching and learning plans

setting out what, how and how often particular knowledge, understanding and skills should be taught. Using additional or different activities from the mainstream lesson. It contains the steps and teaching requirements needed to help students achieve identified targets.(inclusive edu)

Purposes of IEPs are mostly focused in addressing an identified learning need in order to discover proper ways on how to meet the pupil's learning need, and how to address it. As a result of an IEP, teachers have two tools: early action plus and school action plus. The former, focuses on what provisions can the school make to help the pupil using internal resources in the school, the latter, is intervention of external parties from the school that can address more appropriately e. g psychologists, police, etc... (cita)

An IEP should include: Short term targets, teaching strategies, provisions, revision date, success or exit criteria, outcomes. Everything should be realistic and integral to classroom and curriculum planning. Targets should be achievable for both pupil and teacher, they should be in small steps so that the success is clearly visible to the pupil as he will become more self-confident, the challenges will be made rigorous. Parents should always be informed and communicate with them, they are a great source of information and help.

Pupil's information should be communicated to all staff unless issues of confidentiality should be considered. However if the need is severe or complex, all staff should be informed, record progress and share with parents all the information. It's important to note that one-to-one tuition will not always be the best way: an alternative and most appropriate way will be

providing differentiated or additional learning material, equipment, peer or adult support.

As a result of an IEP, concerne pupil's will be monitored and will benefit from differentiated or additional learning that in some cases led the educators the task to make the pupil achieve targets, an IEP is the first step in cases when educators are identifying a genuine learning difficulty requiring a statementing process, informaton about the

#### 5- Classroom behavious management

A) Understand different strategies for dealing with children's behaviour in the classroom and their link with different theories on behaviour.

Classroom management is how the teacher delivers the curriculum and the environment at which students will learn (cita pag55 mana). Throughout time, q lqrve variety of theories and strategies about behaviour have been made available, thanks