



RESEARCH ARTICLE

REFLECTIVE CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS AND ATTITUDE IN SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION. THE DILEMMA BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE

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Abstract

Reflective critical thinking skills and attitudes are activities associated with social studies since its inception. Even though, these concepts appear to be crafted nicely in the Ghanaian senior high school social studies syllabus, however, how they should be taught appears not to be receiving attention by social studies practitioners. This desktop research explored the practice and theory of these concepts taking into consideration teachers' appreciation of reflective critical skills and how teachers facilitate them. Creative ways in which the concepts can be taught to propel development and economic growth has been outlined by the research.

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Introduction:-

Marrs (2017) writes that 'education that inculcates higher order thinking and decision-making skills are what employers seek today' (P: 306). In this contemporary age, people who internalize, adapt, and keep up with technological and scientific developments are more critical than the ones who adapt and consume ready-made information as it is presented to them. Independent, creative, self-confident individuals who can choose the resources they need appropriately and solve the problem with scientific methods play an active role in a contemporary global society (Kuuk and Arslan, 2020). Nurturing people with these kinds of qualities is made possible by the continuous development of teaching methods provided by education (Freire, 1974; Marrs, 2017). For this reason, changes made in educational systems should show progress from traditional teaching methods to contemporary approaches aimed at building what Paulo Freire calls 'libertarian education' – an educational system in which both the teacher and student simultaneously see themselves as teachers and students (P: 71).

Reflective critical thinking skills and attitudes are activities that have been associated with Social Studies since its introduction as a school subject (Thornton, 1992). This is not surprising, of course, considering the influence of John Dewey and other like-minded individuals on the formation of social studies. The history of social studies education has been influenced by numerous

people working in the Deweyan tradition of education emphasizes experience, reflection, attitudes, skills, and insightful thinking (Grants and Smith, 2018; Ogundare, 2000). In recent years, however, reflective critical teaching and practice have been a major concern in education (Kuuk and Arslan, 2020). There appears to be a movement for increased teacher professionalism and increased involvement of teachers in all aspects of school decision-making involving how social studies education can avoid banking type of delivery. This necessitates holistic reflective critical thinking skills and attitudes inculcation in the quest for educators' voices to be heard internationally and from the national discourses (Rowe et al, 2015). This has caught global attention including in Ghana. However, many scholars have developed a renewed interest

in reflective critical thinking skills, values, and practices. Since the early 1980s, little literature has appeared on reflective critical thinking skills, values, and practice that represents the nature of diverse perspectives on reflection and how educators can encourage it (Agyeman-Fokuo, 1994; Thornton, 1988). Social Studies education responded to this call by infusing some aspects of reflective attitude skills and critical thinking as objectives in social studies education (National Council for Social Studies, 1992; GES, 2007). This research seeks to add to the discourse in addressing reflective critical thinking skills and attitude in social studies education. Critical thinking practice in the social studies curriculum in the Ghanaian and global schools will be explored to identify its fate. Specifically, this research seeks to find out whether social studies practitioners are implementing what the curriculum demands, and suggestions of how social studies educators can improve reflective critical thinking skills and attitude.

Method:-

This is a conceptual article. Therefore, we adopted a desk review of existing articles, books, government reports, policy documents and parliamentary proceedings, law reports, and other relevant documentation on women empowerment specific to the Ghanaian context. Both peer-reviewed and gray literature were consulted. Based on the literature analysis and our understanding of RCTSA issues, we offer a critical perspective on how we can inculcate into students and tutors RCTSA through the social studies education.

Reflective critical thinking skills and attitudes discourse

Reflective thinking is part of the critical thinking process of analyzing and evaluating decisions and focus on the judging process. Students know how to learn in the learning process, and they can combine reflection with thought (Kuuk and Arslan, 2020). Students are aware of what they know and what they need to know. Reflective thinking, however, is crucial to encourage learning in solving complex problems. This is because reflective thinking makes it possible for people to make a retrospective criticality, to involve in problem-solving processes, and to determine their attainment strategies (Ajiboye, 1991).

Reflective thinking is defined in different ways. Boud, Keogh, and Walker (1985) describe reflective thinking as "reflection in the context of learning as a general term for intellectual and emotional activities that individuals engage in discovering new understanding and experience". Boud (1999) defines reflective thinking as an act of thinking about the learning process, rather than insisting on the necessity of learning of the students. Reflective learning is concerned with the educator's understanding of their actions, learning processes, and experiences (Mann et al, 2009). Reflective thinking means that any belief or form of knowledge should be considered in an effective, persistent, and careful manner and the teachers should organize the learning process based on research and constructivism. To achieve this, the primary goal of teachers should be to focus on teaching-learning with the limited opportunities available within the classroom (Dervent, 2015). The reflective thinking learning approach provides the learners with raising awareness about how to learn and how to improve their abilities. Thus, the method creates an environment in which students can take personal responsibility for their learning (Tilley et al., 2017; Agyemang-Fokuo, 1994). Reflective thinking is seen as an important component of education in practice, and many studies in the literature have argued that reflective processes are necessary for the quality of learning (Ogundare, 2000; Shon, 1987). The guiding role of social studies teachers is very important in the application of the reflective method in a classroom environment. In this method, as the teachers use their own lives and experiences in their classes, they are accepted as valuable sources of information. Likewise, their students need to reflect on their knowledge, thoughts, and experiences in the process of learning. Not only that but the ability to question what we learn (Marrs, 2017: 496). Reflective thinking helps students become more aware of their learning when they are faced with an astonishing problem (Moon, 2008). Developing students' and people's ability to think critically is a very important goal of every educational structure (Higher Education Research Institute, 2018). Moreover, Grant and Smith (2018) view Reflective Critical Thinking Skills (RCTs) as the most important purpose of education. Others say RCTs must be the most universally emphasized goal for social studies education (Lindholm, 2005) since it can remedy the situation where students can be turned into containers; receptacles to be filled by the teacher (Marrs, 2017).

Ghana Education Service Teaching syllabus for SHS Social Studies (2007) defined social studies as the study of problems of society (P:1). The subject aims at preparing individuals to fit into society by equipping them with knowledge about the culture and ways of life of their society, its problems, its values, and its hopes for the future (Tamakloe et al, 2008; Agyeman-Fokuo 1994). The subject is multi-disciplinary and takes its sources from geography, history, sociology, psychology, economics, and civic education (Social Studies syllabus for SHS, 2007: P:1; NCSS, 1992). Social Studies education aims at helping students to understand their society better;

help them to investigate how their society functions and assist them to develop reflective critical values and skills and at the same time developmental kind of mind that transforms society (Lawal and Oyeleye, 2003; Merryfield, 1993). It is anticipated that through social studies education, students and teachers will understand Ghanaian society well. It aims at examining society's institutional challenges, and ways of life with a critical and constructive mind, the country will surely be on the path to better and fast growth in development (Social Studies SHS Syllabus, 2007). The teaching Social Studies syllabus for Ghanaian SHS has Reflective Critical Thinking Skills and Attitudes ideas and principles running through objectives 2, 3, and 5 as follows

Develop positive attitudes and values towards individual and societal issues
 Develop critical and analytical skills in assessing issues for objective decision-making
 Develop inquiry and problem-solving skills for solving personal and societal problems.

Moreover, the pre-requisite skills needed for effective study of Social Studies at the Senior High School level are knowledge and understanding of observational skills and a critical mind to life (GES, 2007).

The critical mind should encompass the analytical ability to discriminate thinking and evaluative critical minds. Evaluation entails a detailed reflection, Skills, and Attitudes of tasks that one needs to perform in the teaching-learning process (Derwent, 2015).

Case (2005), defined Reflective Critical Thinking as "comparing, investigating, and creating opinions by using detected similarities, developing cognitive skills, analyzing, comparing various information to conclude" (p. 2). Reflective skills, attitudes, and critical thinking as an indispensable part of a human being since all our day-to-day activities hinge on them. In the view of Ogundare (2000), 'important differences exist between our thinking style in our daily life and our scientific thinking style'. RASCT is occurrence integrated with the senses making it the root and source of life (Mayweg-Paus, et al, 2016). The ability to think critically is a skill that can be taught, learned, and improved (Valpy, 2007). Rowe et al, (2015) explained Reflective Critical Thinking Skills like the ability to recognize existing circumstances and modeling the relations among the features of the situation, and deriving some importance from these relations.

Accounts of the nature of reflective critical thinking ascribe an important place to reflective critical thinking attitudes (Arthur, 1988). It is usually established that it is not sufficient for somebody to have critical thinking skills. They must also be prepared to practice them: suitable attitudes or dispositions are vital for someone to be a critical thinker (Possin, 2008). John Dewey (1933) argued for the necessity for having both skilled methods and the desire to use them. Dewey cited in Grant and Smith (2018) emphasized that these attitudes are "traits of moral qualities character" (P: 12). In other words, critical thinking has a moral dimension: there is an ethics of belief and inquiry as well as of action. Reflective Critical Thinking Skills and Attitudes provide a list of the attitudes, dispositions, or traits of character necessary for the formation of the habit to propel development. Three of the most important traits of Reflective Critical Thinking Skills and attitudes according to Freire (1974) are open-mindedness, whole-heartedness (or absorbed interest), and responsibility in facing consequences. This may increase parents' wish of their children becoming children of nation thinkers and not workers (Marrs, 2017)

The demand for Reflective Attitudes Skills and Critical Thinking, (RASCT) manifests itself through the development of divergent thinking. However, it appears not to be encouraged in the Ghanaian and other international traditional educational structures the practitioners notwithstanding the syllabus demands of its development/ A significant function of educational institutions is to help people to improve their scientific thinking skills through Reflective Attitudes skills and Critical Thinking. Thinking action makes people feel the sense of freedom and joy of discovering something new (Grant and Smith (2018). According to Case (2005), Reflective Attitude skills and Critical Thinking is an active, target-oriented, and organized mental process carried out to assign meaning to a given situation. This can manifest itself through an active and organized cognitive process carried out to understand ourselves and familiarize ourselves with what is happening around us. By being aware of our thinking process, considering others' thinking processes, and applying what we have already learned is the foundation of RASCT (Thornton, 1992). Moreover, reaching conclusions based on observations and information and logically deciding what to believe or not (Case, 2005). The discourse elaborated can be summarized that Reflective Attitudes Skills and Critical Thinking is agreed as a higher level of thinking emphasizing the skills and tendencies of obtaining information, comparing, evaluating, and utilizing it.

Importance of reflective attitudes skills and critical thinking (RASCT)

Critical thinking deals with impartial, objective, and profound thinking, serving the function of asieve enabling a practitioner to select and evaluate freely. In the words of Thornton, (1992) Reflective Critical Thinking enhances purposeful, logical, and target-orientations since it encloses problem-solving, deduction formulation, probability calculation, and decision making. Moreover, In the 21st century, thinking itself is not measured to be an adequate skill and a higher level of thinking skills is more emphasized. Improving the critical thinking skills of learners should be one of the most prominent objectives of education (Gülveren, 2007; Çokluk & Yılmaz, 2006). Furthermore, Critical and creative thinking can serve as a drive of guidance leading individuals to solutions to social problems.

It is impossible to transfer ever-increasing information accumulation employing education. Individuals must acquire information and find solutions to their problems on their own. In an information society, students should be informed about different discourses and evaluate them critically (Moon, 2008). For students to have access to realistic information, they should know how to compare different perspectives, skills necessary to think broadly about an issue and to make use of information from different fields to solve any problem confronted in any specific field, this is the bane of RASCT.

Reflective Critical thinking skills such as focusing on an issue, analyzing discussions, asking explanatory and challenging questions, and responding to questions. Probing the reliability of a source of information, judging the accuracy of data and reaching conclusions, evaluating predictions, and communicating with others (Case, 2005). This skill when adequately nurtured can develop critical minds for world inventions and empowerment.

Dilemma Of What Is In The Curriculum And Real Classroom

Experience

Ogundare (2000) argued that the development of learning and teaching depends on the development of teachers' and students' critical thinking skills. Today, the characteristic most strongly emphasized by educators is not getting higher scores on standardized tests (Whiley et al, 2018). What is more important is students' having skills such as thinking socially, finding scientific solutions to problems, reasoning based on historical and geographical information, viewing things from an aesthetic perspective, reading critically, writing effectively, and carrying out comprehensible dialogues (Valpy, 2007).

The course of social studies is a type of course including many aspects of social life. Social studies are expected to help students get ready for social life, actualize their social existence, acquire qualities required to be a good citizen (Thornton, 1992). Moreover, the development of reflective thinking skills and attitudes like decision-making skills, improving social participation skills while producing information, being effective, productive in social life, and learn their rights and responsibilities (Case, 2005; Arthur, 2002). Within the framework of social studies education, students can understand the influences of and figures on today's world. Social studies contribute to students in terms of attaching greater importance to other people, developing empathy, and being respectful and tolerant to the members of other lifestyles and cultures (Marrs, 2017).

Moreover, it may help students develop some thoughts about human systems such as economy, culture, and state, improve their problem-solving, critical reflection, and creativity skills, understand how people communicate with each other, and construct a perspective of the future (Freire, 1974). According to Case (2005), a qualified teacher is one having grasped the abilities and knowledge required in his/her subject area, equipped with the pedagogical knowledge of the profession, being able to think, question, and criticize, open to development, and innovations. Such teachers are needed to enhance the quality of education and create a quality society. In Ghanaian school education, teachers may undertake important roles in contributing to the development of the critical thinking skills of their students. Hence, it seems to be necessary to instill critical thinking skills in students and teachers. In the teacher's initial training period, teachers should continue to improve their critical thinking skills.

The way some Social Studies educators instruct affects the way of thinking of the learner which in turn affects the perception of the educator towards what is being taught (Gedik, 2013). To teach for effective reflective critical thinking, the social studies teacher must possess a working knowledge of logic in an amount far above that picked up through his incidental learning (Thornton, 1992). This presupposes that social studies teach

chers must be trained in logic to be in the right position to develop the student's ability to think critically as highlighted in the syllabus. The learner must be given the experience in controlling his thinking under the guidance of the teacher through a learner-centered approach. Logic is not only necessary in teaching the student how to control his/her thinking, but it is also an integral part of teaching especially in Social Studies. Akurugu (2010) and Ogundare (2000) identified two lines of reasoning. In the first place, instruction in knowledge starts with the intent to arrive somewhere, to conclude. In other words, it is a studied discourse that aims not only at a conclusion, but also shows the steps and reasons leading to the conclusions. The second is that observation bears out the fact that instruction in knowledge involves logic. Evans (2004) argued for a typical teaching process where teachers perform certain logical operations. The teacher in inculcating reflective attitude skills and critical thinking must define, interpret, explain, justify, prove, and evaluate societal problems in their delivery. Each of these activities could be executed well depending on how well the teacher engages in critical thinking reflections.

Paradoxically, the kind of teaching that goes on in most of the schools reported by Gedik (2013), Asaah-Junior, and Agyiri (2020) study revealed either exclusively instructor-centered or student-centered. The type of approach adopted in the classroom directly affects the attitudes that the learner develops or assumes towards what is taught. In the same vein, Akurugu (2010) study revealed that the instructor-centered teacher believes that he is ultimately responsible for determining goals' (P:23). This thinking appears to be based on the belief that if the teacher merits the responsibility placed in his hands, he knows more than the students about the subject, about the world in which they live, and about how the knowledge he imparts can enrich the learner. Paulo Freire (1993) summarises such teaching styles as involving the following perception

1. The teacher teaches and the students are taught
 2. The teacher knows everything but the student knows nothing
 3. The teacher thinks and the students are thought about
 4. The teacher talks and the students listen – meekly
 5. The teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined
 6. The teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply
 7. The teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher
 8. The teacher chooses the program content, and the students adapt to it (though they were not consulted)
 9. The teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his or her professional authority, which teachers set in opposition to the freedom of the students
 10. The teacher is the subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects (P:71).
- Marrs (2017) concludes that when an education system's foundation is based on the above epitomizes a failed educational system (P:308). However, the more students work at storing the deposit entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of the world.

Kuuk and Arslan (2020) argued 'the student-centered teacher believes that it should be the entire group, including himself that should determine the goals of the group' (P:13). The student-centered instructor usually has a greater emphasis on the students in goal-setting and usually has certain implicit goals which he hopes would be achieved by the students. With this method, the degree of student participation will be higher in terms of what goes on in the classroom to develop critical mind to propel development.

One other phenomenon observed by Lawal and Oyeleye's (2003) study observed that teachers who adopted the instructor-centered approach where the degree of instructor tolerance or acceptance of supposedly erroneous or irrelevant student contributions was very low and virtually condemned any contribution that he deemed divergent.

Apart from the method of teaching, there is the professional competence of the social studies teacher himself in the knowledge of what to teach in social studies. Studies in the educational sector have revealed that the kind of training that teachers undergo in teaching reflective attitude skills and critical thinking is grossly inadequate (Gedik, 2013; Thornton, 1992). More often than not, some teachers dismiss social studies textbooks that are recommended as supplementary readers, with the assertion that such books are too difficult for the students (Valpy, 2007), this rejection in a way seems to suggest that social studies content and ideals must be shallow and uncritical. When it is time for social studies, what some teachers do is to decide for themselves which aspect of social studies to teach. If he/she decides on a topic, some decide on the page to open to for children to read from the recommended textbook (Thornton, 1992). This is followed by the answering of the questions that follow. Students thinking and involvement are often left out completely. This direct method of teaching

social studies makes students grow to believe that the most important aspect of social studies education is the social reproduction of facts without the skill of manipulating knowledge acquired (Grant and Smith, 2018).

When it comes to reflective critical thinking infused in teaching, it merely deals with copying notes and structural items on the board for students to identify without prior treatment of the aspects is as bad as not teaching at all (Mayweg-Paus, 2016). In this 21st century, higher reflective critical thinking skills are emphasized in contemporary social studies education development.

(Marrs, 2017; Evans, 2004). One of the most important functions of education is to improve the scientific and practical Reflective Critical Thinking Skills of the students. However, teachers and students in social studies appear to have less grasp of the concept and even to teach as it is embedded in the subject. Gedik (2013) reported in his research that there was inadequate knowledge of RCTs among students and teachers. This may be as a result of a lack of activities promoting students to think, question, and investigate during schooling. Education affects the development of RASCT, therefore it must be nurtured and utilized in social studies education not only written down in books but must be made practical. This is because the number of activities performed in social studies education is to enhance RCTs (Valpy, 2007).

How to reconceptualize and demystify the Reflective attitude skills and critical thinking (RASCT) dilemma in social studies education.

Thornton (1992; 1988) posit that reflective critical thinking skills and attitudes in social studies take special importance in its delivery and teaching. Without it, the subject can easily degenerate into little more than memorization of information that students perceive as irrelevant to their lives (P:1). University educators have echoed Dewey in calling for actualizing RASCT in Social Studies Education (Grant, 2018). However, little headway has been made towards its realization in schools though the school curriculum has created a lukewarm quasi reflective critical thinking skills floating within the curriculum little is happening in reality. Thornton, (1992) observed that teachers, in general, are in a poor position to teach RCTSA. A cause of this dilemma is debated by Zumwalt (1988) who concluded that local and state policies have often undermined RCTSA in teaching and learning by not making effort to improve it. Probably so they can produce more zombies (uncritical-minded populace) to manipulate and control them (Jim-Mars, 2017). Thornton (1988) maintains that RCTSA teaching remains an exception rather than the rule in social studies. An attempt by Social Studies practitioners to package RCTSA into their instructional checklists of discrete subskills as found in the current practice in Ghana and other countries only trivializes what it means to be a reflective critical thinker and its subsequent effects on solving societal challenges. If social studies practitioners are interested in improving RCTSA, in social studies teaching, then there is the need for policies and procedures that will support teachers doing the important work of solving societal problems and advancement of educational improvement as stated in the objectives of social studies in Ghana. Thornton (1996) writes that teachers are the curricular and instructional gatekeepers of education, they must take steps to inculcate how to teach and practice RCTSA in social studies and other related subjects (Grant and Smith, 2018).

Pedagogical skills in Social Studies Education must focus on giving students insights into how to think about solving societal problems that are unconstrained by the information at hand (Kuuk and Arslan, 2020). Social Studies teaching-learning environment must be couched to develop imaginative skills. Social Studies practitioners are expected to make significant changes in their delivery especially, identifying and studying RCTSA as specific, and intentional RCTSA topic embedded in the curriculum arrangement (Moon, 2008). This will create a sense of feeling freedom and the joy of discovering things and working on their own. Whiley et al (2017) opined that integrative and focused courses in Social Studies such as practical context problem solving enhance RCTSA mind set development. When educators assess divergent opinions and examination become more of student-oriented practical questions, it will eradicate rote learning (Gasper, 2012). Divergent pedagogical goals and strategies must be pursued in the school environment to be a teaser for RASCT development. Marrs (2017) and Frere (1993) advocate the following as what ought to be in the social studies classroom to influence reflective critical thinking:

Observation, formulation of the independent definition of the concept, performance of intellectual discourse beyond repeating what has been said to be true, and students taking part in deciding what to learn. This can be achieved when critical thinking methodology is consciously taught by Social Studies practitioners (Gardner, 2013). Grant and Smith (2017) also support pedagogical implementation improvement. Balin and Siegel (2003) support the claim that RCTSA

deals with how an individual can problematize problems and evaluation of specific beliefs, claims, and actions. It can be constructed by relating teaching-learning processes to real-world scenarios. However, Arthur (1988) extols the importance of RACTs but claimed that Social Studies appeared to be largely ineffective in developing those skills in students to help solve societal challenges creatively.

How to create reflective critical thinking skills in schools

Schools are largely unsuccessful in promoting RCTSA to the students (Abrami, 2008). Critical Assessment Tools (CAT) Website cited by Grant and Smith (2018) identified four Reflective Critical Thinking Skills necessary for social studies educators to promote RCTSA

1. Evaluating information ability-separating factual information from inferences, interpretation, evaluating evidence to identify appropriate and inappropriate conclusions.
2. Creative thinking ability
Ability to identify alternative interpretations for data or observation, recognizing new information that may contradict or support your thinking and experience
 - a) Ability to identify how new information can be used to solve problems.
3. Learning and problem solving this is the bane of the Social Studies curriculum and deals with
 - a) Ability to separate relevant and irrelevant information
 - b) Ability to integrate multiple sources of information to solve problems
4. Ability to learn and apply new information to solve real-world problems communication-deals with the ability to communicate focused ideas effectively and precisely.

Moreover, Gedik (2013) suggested the following ways of improving Reflective Critical Thinking Skills and Attitudes among Social Studies educators:

1. More activities aiming to improve the RASCT of Social Studies educators must be incorporated into their training
2. Social studies educators should be provided with opportunities to apply methods and techniques of critical reflective thinking skills like listening, observing, drawing a tentative conclusion based on information available to the individual
3. Appropriate activities must be incorporated to help students improve their critical thinking skills
4. The information must be provided on how to inculcate RCTSA in the educational curriculum specifically Social Studies
5. Parents' consciousness on how to improve the RCTSA of their children.
6. Roadmaps should be developed on how to use RCTSA in our everyday activity
7. Social studies educators must be informed about how to teach, and which methods and techniques to use in facilitating reflective attitudes, skills and critical thinking.

Approaches to teaching Reflective Critical Thinking Skills and Attitudes.

Traditionally, three general approaches have been used to teach Social Studies students to think reflectively. These are

1. generic thinking skills,
2. direct involvement,
3. unique forms of reasoning approaches (Gomez, 2002)

The generic thinking skills approach

Popularized by writers such as Benjamin Bloom, Robert Marzano, and Louis Rath, divided educational objectives into three domains: knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Valpy, 2007). Proponents believe that there is a core set of thinking skills that can be taught independent of specific content knowledge and attitudes. For example, in Dimensions of Thinking, Marzano et al. (1988) identify eight reflective thinking process skills including concept formation, problem-solving, decision making, including defining goals, setting goals, inferring, and predicting. This approach espouses an information-processing model where each skill is introduced and practiced independently before the skill to a particular body of information (Mullnix, 2012). Many but not all versions of reflective critical thinking advocate a generic skills approach. The appeal of this approach is the promise of teaching a finite set of "skills" that forms the basis of thinking in all domains.

The direct involvement approach

Promoted by John Dewey, is centered on learning by doing. It seeks to involve students in various kinds of authentic tasks that experts and scholars would embark on. In Social Studies, this means using primary documents to construct problem-solving versions and participating in

simulation of cultural events. The goal is to teach students to think by assuming the roles of either of factors (e.g., historical figures, lawyers, and politicians) or of scholars (e.g., historians, sociologists, and political scientists) operating in various fields. The strength of the direct involvement approach is an engaging pedagogy and perceived student relevance (Gomez, 2002).

The unique forms of reasoning approach

It arose as a reaction against the generic skills approach. Writers such as Paul Hirst and Jerome Bruner, John McPeck, and Robin Barrow argued that each discipline (or cluster of disciplines) has its distinctive methods of inquiry, standards of reasoning, and defining concepts (Valpy, 2007). They argued that competent thinking can be mastered only by learning the discipline-specific rules and processes unique to each form of reasoning (Case, 2005, Marzaro, 1988). In the social studies context, this means teaching core concepts (e.g., primary and secondary sources of problem identification, eyewitness testimony, provenance), and examining how it differs from others. Advocates of the unique forms of reasoning approach would, of course, advocate what I call the direct involvement approach. In addition, the tendency in the unique forms of reasoning approach is to teach about the core concepts, standards, and methodological issues, but not to employ them regularly to engage students in thinking about the subject matter. At the risk of oversimplifying, the focus of the unique involvement approach is on the activities within a field whereas the forms of reasoning approach emphasizes the theory of thinking about a field.

The three approaches are often used in combination. However, Social Studies is a study of the problems of society (GES, 2007; Agyemang-Fokuo, 1994; Tamakloe, 1991). The subject prepares the individual to fit into society by equipping him/her with knowledge about the culture and ways of life of their society, its problems, its values, and its hopes for the future.

Essential elements of the knowledge and principles from these disciplines are integrated into a subject that stands on its own. As a subject, Social Studies helps students to understand their society better; helps them to investigate how their society functions, and assists them to develop that critical mind that can transform societies (Arthur 1988). Our society has been a slow-moving society. It is hoped that as students understand Ghanaian society better, and can examine the society's institutions and ways of life with a critical and constructive mind, the country will surely be on the path to better and faster growth in development. The social studies curriculum is defined in terms of "Skills and Processes" needed to solve the ever-evolving challenges of Ghana. This suggests a predominant focus on teaching generic thinking skills. However, the inclusion of historical and geographic thinking and media literacy signals some attention to unique forms of reasoning. The direct involvement approach is more implicit than explicit in this curriculum as evidenced in references to participation in social action projects and interpretation of source documents.

Limitations of the three common approaches

These approaches, especially as traditionally implemented, appear to have fallen short of the desired result. Generally speaking, students are not adequately prepared to think rigorously about social studies issues, and much of the curriculum content is learned through the transmission of information, and not acquired in the context of genuine (critically thoughtful) inquiry. These shortcomings are partly the result of epistemological and pedagogical limitations in the three traditional approaches (Gomez, 2002).

An alternative approach

An alternative—the embedded tools approach—is to some extent a hybrid of the other approaches—avoiding their limitations and building on their strengths. It is the approach that underlies the conception of critical thinking espoused by The Critical Thinking Consortium (Case 2005). The term "embedded" signifies that the purpose is not to teach thinking in the disciplines per se or as a generic skill but to teach students to think in the context of the kinds of disciplinary and cross-disciplinary issues and challenges that citizens need to address. In other words, it integrates instruction in thinking with the curriculum content that students are expected to master. Thornton, (1992) writes that curriculum content is made problematic so learning to think is not a stand-alone topic but how students work through the subject matter. Here recommended the following steps to be followed in inculcating RASCT in schools: choosing the appropriate strategies to explore questions, identifying ways to create the information needed to solve the problem, and presenting an offer for the solution.

Lindholm (2005) suggested that social studies teachers should pay attention to the following steps in the lesson plan:

1. asking the questions to the students clearly

2. contributing to ideas and activities to support the students' evaluations
3. asking sub-questions to help the students think
4. encouraging the students to watch and re-evaluate the learning outcomes
5. preparing reflective projects to encourage the students to think over their progress (Koszalka, 1999).

It is necessary to expose the students to reflective learning experiences for the development of their reflective capacities of the students. Besides, the activities to be carried out should be organized in a way employing what students can make their assessments of their learning and performances (Schon, 1987). Students are responsible for the completion of the activities carried out with both the individual and the group when a cooperative learning model is applied. During this stage, the individual is responsible both for his or her learning responsibilities, as well as for the success of the group. Sünbül, (2010) posits 'To help students gain reflective thinking skills strategies, a curriculum designed must promote students' ability to reflect, teachers having reflective thinking skills, course contents supporting students and a democratic and collaborative classroom environment encouraging scientific thinking of the students are vitally required'.

Edward D'Angelo (1971) lists ten attitudes necessary for achieving reflective attitudes skills:

intellectual curiosity, objectivity, open-mindedness, flexibility, intellectual skepticism, intellectual honesty, being systematic, persistence, decisiveness, and respect for other viewpoints (pp. 7-8).

Ennis (1985) on the other hand identified 13 dispositions necessary for achieving reflective critical thinking skills and attitudes:

1. Seek a clear statement of the question
2. Seek reasons
3. Try to be well informed
4. Use credible sources and mention them
5. Take into account the total situation
6. Try to remain relevant to the main point
7. Keep in mind the original or basic concern
8. Look for alternatives

Be open-minded

- a. Consider seriously other points of view than one's own ("dialogical thinking")
- b. Reason from premises with which one disagrees - without letting the disagreement interfere with one's reasoning ("suppositional thinking")
- c. Withhold judgment when the evidence and reasons are insufficient

Take a position (and change a position) when the evidence and reasons are sufficient to do so

II. Seek as much precision as the subject withholds judgment when the evidence and reasons are insufficient

Deal in an orderly manner with the parts of a complex whole

Be sensitive to the feelings,

levels of knowledge, and degree of sophistication of others (p. 54). What links together the variety of views about critical thinking attitudes and dispositions, a strong sense of critical thinking, and the critical spirit is the conviction that something more than narrowly focused technical skills is needed if someone is to be a critical thinker.

Social studies teachers and the way forward in inculcating critical thinking attitudes in social studies teachers should do to develop critical thinking attitudes is to

model critical thinking, because students have a right to this and because only teachers who are critical thinkers themselves can teach critical thinking (Thornton, 1992). Teacher training institutions need to address the attitudes of teachers and their cognitive and affective skills. Social studies teachers should be modeled to be interested in robust strategies, i.e., methods in which one can have confidence regardless of which controversial theories one holds about the proper analysis of critical thinking. If teachers are affirmed as competent professionals as is now being widely discussed, then it is appropriate to look for robust or "theorist-proof" rather than "teacher-proof" curricula and strategies (Arthur, 1988).

I conclude by identifying the following robust strategies and tactics for teaching reflective critical thinking attitudes and skills.

1. The teacher should model critical thinking and so must be an accomplished critical thinker.
2. It is important to identify any clue of reflective critical thinking processes as they occur in the classroom and to attempt to use them in a variety of situations.
3. Students should be actively involved and be encouraged to take the initiative as much as possible. A class should be

organized as a community of inquirers on issues that are real and of genuine interest to students so that students can actively think critically about experiences and problems identified by them.

4. Students should be helped to identify reflective attitude thinking strategies and group processes that are productive as they emerge from class discussions and activities. They should be helped to discover for themselves productive ways of thinking and inquiring.
5. The classroom atmosphere should encourage students to take intellectual risks and to take their own and their fellow students' ideas seriously. The intellectual worth of each student should be affirmed. A variety of specific techniques can foster this aim. For example, students can take leadership roles in class discussions and can be evaluated in part on how well they have tried to grapple with the ideas of fellow students.
6. The self-esteem of students as persons and thinkers should be affirmed by paying attention to the affective and interpersonal dimensions of critical thinking will bring rewards in the form of greater satisfaction.

Conclusion:-

Developing an appreciation of the way our emotions, thought, and attitudes enter into our reasoning is essential in becoming an effective critical thinker. Reflective critical thinking has an affective, cognitive, and social dimension that educators in general and social studies practitioners specifically must adapt in their classroom interaction. Attitudinal and reflective skills, such as tolerating criticism or recognizing the emotional sources for many strongly-held beliefs, play an important role in successful reflective critical thinking. The affective model is intended to refer to awareness, planning, and organization of emotion. Critical thinkers need to be aware of their feelings, emotions, and motivations. They need to be able to control their emotions in appropriate ways in reasoning. A critical thinker must recognize when a good objection to a statement he or she has made is infuriating but will be aware of the inappropriateness of replying angrily and will be able to admit error, or modify the statement, or come up with a counterargument, or simply adjourn the discussion. However, good teaching strategies do not require the elimination of RCTSA, even if this were possible. Social Studies education provides its recipients with intellectual education which encourages the acquisition and utilization of critical and reflective thinking as well as problem-solving skills. Learners should be allowed to develop abilities needed for perceiving and investigating human actions systematically, consciously, and adequately. Through this kind of education, students can conduct independent searches for relevant information from a variety of sources (library, internet, directories, etc.). This will help in developing learners who constitute a society where citizens can act intelligently concerning the resolution of social problems.

When we inculcate RCTSA in students, the global education systems and specifically social studies practitioners will help in averting what Marrs (2017) summarises as 'dumb down education system producing dumb –down teachers who produce –dumb down students with its resultant dumb-down population of the nation of workers, not thinkers' (P:496). They also maintain that the subject helps to meet the social needs of the learner through the promotion of the development of social equilibrium and well-integrated personality, relatively free of undue anxiety, and who can tackle personal problems realistically. When educators provide the RCTSA as a support service to the classroom environment it will fulfill the possible range of needs to students and the educational enterprise to stimulate a critical mindset for the total growth and development of the learners to propel economic development (Asaah-Junior and Agyiri (2020).

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