

UNITED NATIONSEDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANISATIONSEMINAR ON EDUCATION FOR A WORLD SOCIETY:THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT OF LECTURE: TEXT BOOK IMPROVEMENT
AND TEACHER EDUCATIONby I. James Quillen

The need for improving text-books as an aid to international understanding was recognised before World War I. Under the leadership of the League of Nations and related agencies a world movement to secure greater accuracy and objectivity in text-books developed. On this foundation UNESCO is seeking to build.

At the First Session of the General Conference (Paris, 1946) UNESCO adopted "a programme for the improvement of text-books and teaching materials as aids in developing international understanding" and this programme was reaffirmed at the Second Session (Mexico City, 1947). Accordingly, basic information is being collected from Member States, ^{including} data respecting all previous and current efforts at improvement (especially bilateral and regional agreements and enterprises), ~~are being collected,~~ and an attempt is being made to prepare lists of principles and criteria, and a model plan by which Member States can study their own text-books and take appropriate action where needed.

The following is a tentative list of proposed principles and criteria that might be used to appraise existing text-books and teaching materials and to serve as guides in the preparation of new ones.

Principles1. Accuracy

The information included in text-books and teaching materials should be accurate. Interpretations of events and generalisations about them should be substantiated by the facts presented. The highest standards of scholarship should be utilised in the treatment of all content. Illustrations, charts, graphs and maps should be representative, accurate and up-to-date.

2. Clarity

The meaning of the content and illustrative materials in text-books and teaching materials should be clear. The terms used should be well-defined, and those which develop prejudice, misunderstanding and conflict should be avoided.

3. Worth

The contents, illustrations, and learning activities in text-books and teaching materials should be selected carefully on the basis of demonstrable worth in the development of the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to effective living - locally, nationally and internationally.

4. Fairness

Minority groups, other races, and other nations and nationalities should be treated justly and fairly. The same standards of scholarship, justice and morality which are applied to one's own nation should be applied to others, including former enemies in war and nations with whom there is current rivalry and conflict. Unpleasant facts and undesirable conduct should not be ignored, but they should be placed in perspective and all sides of controversial issues should be objectively presented.

5. Comprehensiveness

All the information necessary to an accurate understanding of the subject should be included. In the school programme as a whole, there should be adequate content on local and national history and culture, on the cultures of other nations, on world history, and on contemporary events and problems.

6. Balance

Content should be balanced in selection, interpretation and presentation. The more important content should be given greater emphasis than that of lesser importance. Wars and international conflicts of all kinds should be viewed in the total perspective of international relations. Not only politics, but also arts, music, literature, religion, education, recreation, science, health, business, labour, agriculture, and other aspects of cultural living should be considered in the study of history and contemporary events.

7. Peace and Justice under Law

The treatment of the efforts to achieve peace should stress the importance of justice based on the development and enforcement of international law. The supreme aim is not peace at any price, but a just and rational peace with freedom and security under law.

8. Citizenship

The emphasis should be on the development of a wholesome and effective citizenship in all areas of living: home, school, community, nation, and world. Love and respect for one's own locality and nation should be reinforced by an appreciation of the peoples of other nations and of the need for world organisation and co-operation.

9. World-Mindedness

The content should emphasise the ideas of human freedom, dignity, equality, and brotherhood. The advances of civilisation, world ideals and heroes, world interdependence, and the need for international organisation and co-operation should be stressed.

10. International Co-operation

Adequate content should be included on the history of the efforts to achieve peaceful relations between nations and the current operations, problems, and accomplishments of the United Nations and its specialised agencies. A reasonable optimism toward the advancement of civilisation and the preservation of peace should be maintained.

Criteria

1. Is the information accurate?
2. Are the interpretations of events and the generalisations about them adequately supported by the facts presented?
3. Are the illustrations, charts, graphs and maps representative, accurate and up-to-date?
4. Is the meaning of the content clear?
5. Is the meaning of the illustrative materials and learning exercises clear?
6. Are important terms clearly defined?
7. Are words and phrases which develop prejudice, misunderstanding and conflicts avoided?
8. Are the ^{text} content, illustrations, and exercises those of maximum ^{value} worth in the development of the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to effective living locally, nationally, and internationally?
9. Are minority groups, other races, nations, and nationalities treated fairly and justly?
10. Are the same standards of scholarship, justice, and morality applied to other nations?
11. Are all sides of controversial issues presented objectively?
12. Is adequate information given to develop an accurate understanding of the subject, or are important facts omitted?
13. Is there adequate ^{material} content on local and national history and culture? On the cultures of other nations? on world history? on contemporary events and problems?
14. Is the ~~content~~ content balanced in selection? in interpretation? in presentation?
15. Is the concept of a just peace under international law explained and supported?
16. Is wholesome local and national citizenship stressed? world citizenship?
17. Are the contributions of the peoples of other nations recognised?
18. Are the ideals of human freedom, dignity, equality, and brotherhood given adequate stress and support?
19. Are the advances of civilisation stressed? the set-backs and obstacles to human progress? world ideals and heroes? world interdependence?
20. Is there adequate ^{reference to} content on the history of the efforts to develop peaceful relations between nations?
21. Is the need for international organisation and co-operation recognised?

22. Is there adequate content on the United Nations ? on its specialised agencies ? which specialised agencies are discussed?
23. Is a reasonable optimism maintained toward the advancement of civilisation? toward the preservation of peace?

These principles and criteria are not intended to be comprehensive guides for the appraisal of text-books and teaching materials. They have been deliberately restricted to focus directly on the objective of improving text-books and teaching materials as aids in developing international understanding. It would be most helpful if the members of this Seminar would consider the proposed principles and criteria and make suggestions for their improvement.

In the improvement of text-books and teaching materials as aids to international understanding and peace, no one has a greater responsibility than those who educate and train teachers.

It is recommended that programmes of teacher education:

1. Emphasise the importance of text-books and teaching materials in the development of international understanding and misunderstanding.
2. Familiarise educational workers with the reports of studies of text-books and teaching materials, the organisations and agencies working in this field, bilateral and regional agreements and enterprises, and the progress achieved nationally and internationally.
3. Encourage in educational seminars and thesis research projects the analysis of text-books and teaching materials to determine their effects on international understanding.
4. Equip educational workers with principles and criteria that they can use to appraise text-books and teaching materials.
5. Stress the importance of making the improvement of text-books and teaching materials, as aids to international understanding, a world movement.