

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 *What is Environmental and Social Studies ?*

Environmental and Social Studies (ESS) is a student-centred syllabus drawing together the disciplines History, Geography and Civics in a thematic approach to learning. This systematic study of environmental and social issues will enable young people to reflect on the world in which they live and to develop the skills and competencies required for active participation in society.

1.2 *Origins of Environmental and Social Studies*

The subject has its roots in and draws heavily on the City of Dublin Humanities Curriculum and SESP the Social and Environmental Studies Programme, Shannon. It combines elements of the Junior Certificate History and Geography syllabuses and Civic Education in a thematic framework.

1.3 *Why Environmental and Social Studies ?*

ESS is a multidisciplinary course with an integrated methodology. Themes are used to provide a context within which the knowledge and understanding of History, Geography and Civic Education can be applied and within which young people are introduced to the work of historians, geographers, archaeologists, cartographers, meteorologists, ecologists and town planners.

ESS is constructed on the rationale that:

- themes of immediate and obvious relevance to students can provide important motivation for further learning;
- the multi-focal perspective provided by the thematic approach allows concepts from the separate disciplines to interact in mutually enriching ways;
- each concept is explored both in space and time by coordinating the geography and history inputs;
- the study of real-world issues requires an integrated approach since many disparate disciplines must be simultaneously brought to bear to understand such issues. Thus an integrated methodology is relevant to the vocational needs and life-experience of students;
- the pedagogical principle of integration, introduced in the Primary school can be

continued into second level and used as a springboard for specific disciplines.

- integration of the separate subjects allows the expertise of teachers of the disparate disciplines to interact positively;
- a multidisciplinary approach based on a small number of well-defined subjects can provide the basis for the further development of links with other areas of the curriculum;
- the specific skills of the integrated subjects can be taught in an issues-focused manner, so that their relevance is clear to students.

1.4 Environmental and Social Studies is student-centred

This means that:

- the use of a thematic approach allows the local area to be used as a starting point for exploration of concepts at national and global levels;
- the experience of the adolescent is recognised as an authentic and valid starting point;
- the spiral approach to curriculum design allows concepts to be revisited in new contexts of greater abstraction and generality;
- the programme is explicitly designed to cater for a range of abilities.

2. AIMS

- 2.1 To develop an understanding of oneself as an individual, as a member of a local, national and European community and of the interdependence of all people.
- 2.2 To develop a respect for the local, national and global environment.
- 2.3 To develop an understanding of the major factors, events and people who have shaped and are currently shaping the world in which we live.
- 2.4 To develop an awareness of the contrasting opportunities and constraints facing people living in different places and times under different physical and human conditions.
- 2.5 To encourage the development of independent thinking through a variety of activities and experiential learning, using a variety of media to express and communicate what is learned.

3. OBJECTIVES

3.1 *Knowledge*

Students should develop a knowledge and understanding of the content of the syllabus as specified in the topics set out for each of the settings prescribed in Sections 1, 2 and 3. Through their study of particular topics and settings, students should develop a generalised knowledge and understanding of

- their immediate social and physical environment;
- human needs, different ways of life and social groupings;
- issues relating to the world's natural resources and to conservation;
- patterns and examples of human settlement, past and present, rural and urban;
- causes and resolution of conflict;
- contemporary social, cultural, environmental and economic issues.

3.2 Concepts

Students should develop an understanding of themselves as human beings, of relationships with other people and of interaction with the environment.

This involves students developing an understanding of concepts such as:

- identity;
- basic human needs/interdependence;
- pattern and areal association;
- change/continuity;
- location and spatial distribution;
- cause/consequence
- power/conciliation;
- culture and civilisation.

3.3 Skills

3.3.1 Using Information Sources

Students should develop the ability to use and critically evaluate information from a wide variety of sources including the following (not in order of importance):

- personal observation (including fieldwork);
- written and textual sources (primary and secondary);
- maps (atlas, ordnance survey, small scale, historical);
- photographs (historical and geographical);
- figures (graphs, charts, models etc);
- drawings (illustrations, cartoons, etc);
- statistics;
- TV, film, video, radio, newspapers, magazines;
- artefacts (buildings, archaeological finds, memorabilia, etc);
- orally transmitted information;
- computer databases.

3.3.2 Information Management

Students should use the information thus acquired in a variety of ways, including:

- recording/reporting/collating;
- memorising;
- classifying (putting like with like);
- summarising;
- ordering (putting in sequence, eg chronological, logical etc);
- interpreting/evaluating (recognising trends, patterns, distinguishing fact from opinion etc);
- synthesising (using information to answer questions, make generalisations, form opinions, drawing conclusions etc);
- presenting (using a variety of media, including written and oral language, to communicate information clearly and accurately).

3.3.3 Social and Personal

Students should acquire the following social and personal skills:

- self-presentation - informal and formal;
- interacting in small and larger groups;
- learning process skills:
 - asking questions;
 - understanding directions;
 - setting realistic goals;
 - organising time;
- communication - using language to express themselves and inform others with clarity and accuracy, and listening with sensitivity and comprehension;
- decision making/opinion forming.
- initiative;
- active citizenship;

3.4 Attitudes

Students should develop;

- a positive perception of self;
- an awareness of people's different perceptions of issues and events;
- a readiness to consider two or more viewpoints about any issue;
- an appreciation of their natural environment, built environment and cultural environment, both from the point of view of aesthetic value and conservation;
- a positive attitude to their culture, both inherited and current;
- an awareness of the need to be thorough and accurate in the collection and recording of data;
- an awareness of the role of women in society.

4 . STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF SYLLABUS

4.1 Structure

The structure of the course is spiral, starting with the experience of the young person moving out to the world she/he inhabits, leading to an analysis of some of the factors that influence life on this planet. The focus of the study moves from the personal to the global.

The course is structured around three sections, usually corresponding to the three years of junior cycle -

Section 1: Settlement/Resources

Section 2: People in their environment:

Section 3: The Modern World:

Each section contains a number of TOPICS for study in specified SETTINGS. Most settings are common to both Ordinary and Higher Level requirements. Some further settings, usually requiring more abstract and generalised treatment of the common settings, are also specified as Higher Level requirements only.

4.2 Knowledge Content

The key concepts, skills and attitudes permeate the three sections of the programme. The knowledge content is detailed below. The list of topics is treated in each setting.

Section 1 Settlement/Resources

Topics: Food; Shelter; Energy; Water; Clothing;
Settings

Higher and Ordinary Levels

1. Introduction to Settlement and Resources
 - Personal needs and resources
 - Local settlement

2. Pre-Christian Ireland and *one* of the following:
 - Ancient Egypt
 - Ancient Rome
 - Ancient Greece
 - The Incas

3. Early Christian Ireland
 - and***
 - Viking Ireland
 - and***
 - Norman Ireland

4. Development of Modern Irish Settlement
(urban & rural)

Section 2 *People in their Environment*

Topics: Transport; Communication; Planning; Community Organisations; Trade Unions; Employment; Production and Consumption.

Settings

Higher and Ordinary Levels

Additional settings for Higher Level only

1. The Industrial Revolution in the 19th Century

Background, causes and effects of the Industrial Revolution.

Case studies: Irish, English and mainland Europe

2. Life in a modern city

Urbanisation as an issue

Case Studies: 1st world city
3rd world city

3. Life in rural areas

Theories of rural development

Case Studies: developed country
developing country

4. Impact of settlement on the environment

- positive and negative

Section 3: The Modern World

Topics: Justice/Peace; Race; Gender; Land;

Settings -

Higher and Ordinary Levels

1. Colonialism and its effects
Case Studies of land ownership:
- Irish Plantation 17th Century

o r

- Brazil in the 20th Century

2. Conflict

A Case Study of conflict:

- World War 1

o r

- World War 2

Additional settings for Higher Level only

Development and consequences of
colonialism

-impact of Irish Plantation of 17th
Century on Ireland today

o r

-Land ownership in Brazil and its impact on
the global environment

Cause & consequences of conflict

3. Ireland's role in International Affairs
- 1945 to the present

- A study of *either* UN membership
o r EC membership

- A study of *both* UN membership and EC
membership

4. Contemporary Issues:

Case Studies (*for both Ordinary and Higher Levels*)

A

migration

gender equity

minority languages

leisure and work patterns

B

conservation

government and the citizen

comparative religions

popular culture

Contemporary Issues: One study to be chosen from List A in 1994 and one study from List B in 1995 and thereafter in alternate years for both Higher and Ordinary Levels.

5. METHODOLOGY

The syllabus requires an active, student-centred approach. Students should experience working in partnership and co-operation with each other. Special emphasis should be put on active research, the use of primary source material and the use of information technology. Within this methodological framework teachers will have freedom to choose those areas most suitable to their students, and individual students will have the freedom to pursue special studies within the framework of the syllabus.

6. ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

Students should be able to demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the topics as outlined in the settings of the three sections of the course.

Students should be able to:

- * report this knowledge and understanding of the underlying themes of the syllabus through written/visual and oral presentation;
- * use historical, geographical and sociological terminology in their proper context;
- * carry out simple investigative work in the field including the collation, recording, interpreting and presentation of data;
- * to carry out basic historical, geographical and social studies research using a variety of primary and secondary resources;
- * to assemble information into logical/chronological sequence;
- * to present information in a multi-media context.
- * to critically evaluate media coverage of issues encountered by the students.

7. DIFFERENTIATION OF LEVELS

The syllabus will be assessed at two levels, *Ordinary and Higher*. The basis for discrimination between Ordinary and Higher levels will be determined by the breadth and depth of content as outlined in the course structure. The course at both Higher and Ordinary levels may be taught to one class group if required.

8. ASSESSMENT MODES AND TECHNIQUES.

The assessment should reflect the experience of the pilot projects (Humanities and SESP) which allowed for the provision of short term goals and the positive accreditation of various forms of student learning.

A diversity of assessment techniques congruent with the aims of the syllabus will be used. These may include the following :

1. Terminal written examination using a variety of question types.
2. Portfolio Assessment - a representative sample of students work over a period of time.
3. Oral and Aural examination.
4. Assignments e.g. field-study, historical research.
5. Reports to be included with terminal written examination.

The recommended weighting between terminal written examination and other assessment techniques is as follows:

Terminal Examination - 60%

Other assessment techniques - 40%