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Social Studies Curriculum Development In Belize: 1950-2001

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Social Studies Curriculum Development In Belize: 1950-2001

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Social Studies Curriculum Development in Belize: 1950-2001

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This study describes social studies curriculum development in Belize from 1950-2001. Additionally, this study examines how the social studies component of Belize's national curriculum has included or excluded the study of the ancient Maya. A qualitative analysis of Ministry of Education documents, National Archive documents, informal interviews with Department of Archaeology personnel, Ministry of Education and Belizean teachers were completed for this study. The data addresses the development of the social studies curriculum and instructional materials used at the primary and secondary level, examination of school enrolment figures of government, government-aided, church related, and private schools in Belize. Educational needs that need to be

addressed in Belize include inadequate funding to access and develop instructional materials, limited staff development offerings for teachers, weak cross-communication within the government, lack of certified teachers, and irrelevant curricula. This study determined progress has been made in social studies curriculum development, but Belizean educators need to address the limited social studies curricula and limited textbooks available to learn Belize's precolonial history, which provides a culturally relevant connection for present and future Belizean students.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore the development of precolonial history in the primary social studies component of Belize's national curriculum from 1950-2001. There are two important reasons for Belizean students to understand their past. First, studying precolonial history provides a link to their development as a nation. I. E. Sanchez (1977), a former Chief Education Officer in Belize and currently a professor at the University of Belize in Belmopan, in an address to Belizean educators entitled, *Belizean history: Its role in a cultural revolution* said: "No land is a nation until it has found its soul: one beacon which lights the road to unity, a prerequisite of nationhood, is pride in its past" (Thompson, 1972). The second reason for Belizean students to understand their past is that it corresponds with one of three directives proposed by Belize's National Culture Policy Council in 1992. The directive stated,

> …"the "pluralistic mode," in which the government commits itself to the principle that all groups must share and recognize an all-embracing national identity that is defined by citizenship, along with a compatible form of identity in one of the Belizean ethnic groups" (National Culture Policy Council, 1993, p.2).

This directive presented by the National Culture Policy Council was added to the social studies curriculum of each guide in Belize (Haug, 1998). Belize's

historical development as a nation and policy-driven recommendation to recognize and include the study of the contributions of various ethnic groups described the rationale for students to learn its precolonial history. The prescribed policy placed into the social studies curriculum at each grade does not preclude the problems and confusion that arose. Haug (1998) described the conflicts of constructed identity based on ethnicity, especially if the students came from a multiethnic family. She also described the lack of relevant material within the curriculum to adequately study the diverse ethnic groups in Belize. The National Culture Policy Council's recommendation attempted to provide a solution to create a Belizean national identity by developing a program to recognize the past and present contributions of Belize's multiple ethnic groups. Since 1994, this idea has been included at each grade level in the social studies component of Belize's national education curriculum.

The placement of the national identity policy into the schools is a recent phenomenon in Belizean education. The study of precolonial history in social studies classes in Belize has developed slowly over a period of time. This was directly related to Belize's political and economic history with Great Britain. The study of the ancient Maya culture in Belize has been noticeably absent from the social studies component of Belize's national education curriculum. A brief overview of Belize's history is necessary to explain current educational views and the absence of Maya culture from the school curriculum.

A Brief History of Belize

Belize, a small Caribbean nation bordered by Mexico, Guatemala, and the Caribbean Sea, was the last English-speaking British colony to achieve independence in the Central American region in 1981. Historically, Belize was known as the Settlement of Belize in the Bay of Honduras from 1638 until 1862. Later, the region was officially claimed as a British colony from 1862-1964 and called British Honduras. In June of 1973, the Belizean government officially changed the name from British Honduras to Belize. In this study, The Settlement and/or British Honduras will be used to refer to the region until the term Belize is historically appropriate to refer to the region. British Honduras had its history narrowly portrayed and scripted as a part of Britain's Anglocentric past. Britain considered British Honduras as another territory in the New World and exploited its natural resources such as logwood, a dye highly valued in Europe. During the latter part of the 18th century, the demand for logwood in Europe declined because new technology allowed the use of other materials to create dyes. Eventually, Britain turned to the mahogany trees in British Honduras to manufacture furniture and construct ships. In time, agricultural development, particularly sugar in the region, would replace the mahogany trade. Ultimately, British Honduras provided Britain with valuable natural resources as well as opportunities to claim territory in a region dominated by the Spanish in the New World.

Belize's colonial experience was in stark contrast to her Spanish colonial neighbors. Despite Spain's conquest of Central America during the sixteenth century and claiming Belize as a colony, the Spanish never settled or secured control of Belize. Prior to the arrival of settlers to Belize, Spain focused its export of logwood from other parts of Central America. Because Guatemala and Honduras had an abundance of logwood to meet the demands in Europe, Spain did not search or survey Belize for economic profit. As a result, Spain did not recognize the economic value of Belize until a group of British pirates settled in the area and began to ply their own logwood trade (Grant, 1976; Dobson, 1973; Bolland, 1977; and Caiger, 1951).

The First Settlers

The first settlers to British Honduras were English pirates shipwrecked off the coast in 1638. The pirates named the area The Settlement in the Bay of Honduras (Merrill, 1993). Additionally, some English pirates, or buccaneers, used the hazardous coral reef that runs near the shore of Belize as a hideout after attacking passing Spanish ships loaded with wood cut from the land near the Gulf of Campeche (Grant, 1976; Dobson, 1973; and Caiger, 1951). Ultimately, the buccaneers determined it profitable to settle on the Belize River, cultivate the abundant logwood themselves, and sell the highly demanded product to the British and European markets.

These pirates plied away at their logwood trade. Immigrants from other English settlements and the surrounding Central American region emigrated to The Settlement to make their fortunes in the logwood trade as well (Dobson, 1973). The entrepreneurial spirit of these immigrants and other laborers competed with the Spanish export of logwood from other parts of Central America. As a result, Spain, which had had a monopoly on the logwood trade since 1550, saw export profits undermined and began to seek ways to secure their claim to Belize.

Despite Spanish raids on the settlement of the English buccaneers turned logwood traders, The Settlement flourished for eighty years. The settlers, who called themselves Baymen, referred to their territory as The Settlement of English Wood-cutters in the Bay of Honduras (Palacio, 1973). Additionally, Spain attempted diplomatic efforts with Britain to control the development of settlements and trading activity of the woodcutters. The Godolphin Treaty of 1670 was the first of numerous diplomatic attempts to resolve the Belizean problem between Spain and Britain (Grant, 1976).

The Godolphin Treaty

The Godolphin Treaty of 1670 required Spain to recognize British rule in Jamaica and cede all lands in the New World occupied by British settlers to Britain (Grant, 1976; and Dobson, 1973). This treaty acknowledged for the first time Britain's right to the countries and islands it occupied in the West Indies and

America. However, The Settlement, although not well established, had a number of isolated logwood settlements in the Caribbean area (Caiger, 1951). The logwood cutters relied on this treaty to support their right to be in Belize and to continue their trade in the region. Initially, the Spanish government ignored the British logwood cutters (Grant, 1976; and Bolland & Shoman, 1977). However, in 1671, animosity and hostility between Spain and Britain grew as a result of continued British expansion in the Central American region both politically and economically. The late 17th century and early 18th century proved to be a tumultuous time for the conflicting interests of Spain and Britain in Central America.

Spanish involvement

Beginning in 1718, Spain intensified attacks on the Baymen and other settlements (Caiger, 1951). Many of the settlements were destroyed and settlers were imprisoned or forced into slavery. The Baymen's logwood trade and rising British influence in the region impeded Spain's ability to control the changing political and economic climate in the region. Ultimately, Spain and Britain went to war. The Treaty of Paris in 1763 settled the English right to cut logwood, but did not resolve the boundary disputes (Grant, 1976; Dobson, 1973; Caiger, 1951; and Humphreyss, 1961). Continuous claims on settlements along the Mosquito Coast by Spain lasted for several years.

Spain's rising hostility and weakening global power was devastating to the once powerful Spanish monarchy. Spain wanted to maintain power in the Central American region. The Baymen's trade had to be silenced. In 1779, the most devastating raid occurred on St. George's Caye. The Spanish captured 140 Englishmen, women, and children, and shipped them to the dungeons of Havana (Caiger, 1951). This disastrous event magnified the need for the remaining Baymen and settlers to claim ownership to the land they had occupied for over 100 years. One legitimizing factor came in the Treaty of 1786.

The Convention of London

The Convention of London in 1786 was the last formal treaty between Britain and Spain concerning logwood settlements (Caiger, 1951; Humphreyss, 1961; Dobson, 1973; and Grant, 1976). Parameters of the treaty resolved the settlement issue and claims to the disputed territory: St. George's Caye would be developed as a settlement, and the settlers' boundary would extend north to the Rio Hondo and south to the Sibun River (Grant, 1976). The settlers were permitted to cut mahogany and other timber, however, Spain would continue to rule the area. Spain would continue to have problems with the settlements and maintain global dominance, given the rising strength of the British Crown. Trying to resolve the settlement and economic problems in the region, Spain attempted a final raid on St. George' Caye.

The Battle of St. George's Caye

In 1798, the Spanish navy attacked the Baymen at St. George's Caye. The Baymen were able to repel the attack and defeat the Spanish Navy. The Baymen's victory at St. George's Caye was the last attempt by Spain to secure control of British Honduras (unofficial name used by Britain beginning in 1786). This failed attempt provided Britain the opportunity to assert and position herself in British Honduras (Waddell, 1961). However, Spain would not be the only raiding power to lay claim to British Honduras. As time passed, Guatemala's claim would prove to be the most challenging and threatening to British Honduras.

The Anglo-Guatemalan Treaty of 1859

The main concerns of this treaty were to define the boundary of British Honduras and assert sovereignty of the territory from a settlement to a colony under British control. Additionally, Article 7 of the treaty included the construction of a road for economic trade extending from Guatemala through British Honduras. Due to misinterpretation of the treaty, Guatemala going to war with El Salvador, lack of funding by Guatemala, and ambiguous instructions in the treaty regarding the location of the road through British Honduras and Guatemala, the road was never constructed. War in Central America and Guatemala's failure to ratify the agreement with Britain at the Convention of 1863 left Guatemala's claim to territorial rights over British Honduras denied and no terms to construct a road.

Inevitably, Guatemala's boundary claim would continue to be a challenging obstacle for Belize throughout the 20th century.

British colony

After two hundred years of occupation by British settlers, British Honduras, initially identified as a settlement, emerged as a British colony on May 12, 1862. The boundaries were established by international treaties. British Honduras developed into an English-speaking colony. It became immersed in Britain's English language, its customs, culture, education, and political structure. Additionally, various ethnic groups came to Belize as laborers during colonial rule: the Creoles, who were of African descent; the Garifunas, descendants of Carib peoples of the Eastern Caribbean and Africans who escaped slavery; Mexicans, from neighboring Mexixo; indigenous Maya, and some Maya refugees fleeing eastern Yucatan during the Caste War of the Yucatan between 1847-1853 (Grant, 1976).

Current Belize demographics

Currently, the ethnic population distribution in Belize is 44% Mestizos (Spanish and Indian descent); 31% Creole; 9.2% Maya; 6.2% Garifuna; and 9.5% Other (http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/bh.html. December 20, 2000). The 9.5% other ethnic population groups include East Indians, Arabs, Chinese, Euro-Americans and German-speaking Mennonites (Merrill, 1993). Euro-Americans include British and United States expatriates (Merrill, 1993).

The German-speaking Mennonites immigrated between 1958-1962. The Mennonites have complete autonomy from the government of Belize. The Privilegium signed in December of 1957 outlines the agreement of the Mennonite's and the government of Belize (Merrill, 1993). They do not vote and are exempt from military service. However, the Mennonites pay all taxes established by law, and provide dairy products and furniture to assist the economy of Belize (Merrill, 1993).

Belize, located 17 15 N, 88 45 W, has a total land area of 22, 960 square kilometers. (www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/gh.html. December 20, 2000). It is about the size of New Hampshire. There are two main physiographic regions: (1) the Maya Mountains and (2) the northern lowlands and southern coastal plain. The highest point in Belize is Victoria Peak, which rises 1,120 meters. This is a heavily forested highland and is sparsely inhabited (Merrill, 1993). Eighteen rivers run through the northern lowlands and southern coastal plain region. There are numerous lagoons in this region that played a major role in the historical development of Belize. The Belize River, also known as the Old River, is navigable up near the Guatemalan border and played a major role in the commerce and communication between the interior and coastal area of the country (Merrill, 1993).

Belize lies in a tropical climate zone with definite wet and dry seasons. The location of Belize on the Caribbean coast of north Central America lies in an

area prone to hurricanes. Several hurricanes have devastated Belize since the early 20th century. A major unnamed hurricane killed more than 1,000 people in 1931. In 1944, Hurricane Janet leveled the town of Corozal. The devastation to Belize City by Hurricane Hattie in 1961 led to the relocation of the capital to the planned city of Belmopan. In 1978, the southern coast of Belize was hit by Hurricane Greta that caused more than US$25 million in damages.

The economy of Belize is based on agriculture, agro-based industry, merchandising, tourism and construction.[1] Sugar, the main crop, accounts for more than half of Belize's exports. The population of Belize is estimated to be 249,183 (www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook, December 20, 2000). English is the official language. The government is a parliamentary democracy. The country is divided into six districts: Belize, Cayo, Corozal, Orange Walk, Stann Creek, and Toledo.

Education in Belize

Since 1816, education was based on the British model and separated into three levels: primary, secondary, and tertiary. Primary education began with two years of "infant" classes, followed by six "standards" (comparable to elementary school in the United States). There were four "forms" (comparable to high school in the United States) at the secondary level. A two-year postsecondary course was known as "sixth form" (Merrill, 1993). Curriculum, planning, and other

[1] [On-Line], Available: www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook. December 20, 2001).

aspects of educational development in Belize have been heavily influenced by foreign institutions and governments, especially Great Britain (Bacchus, 1975). As a result, efforts to "decolonize" education in Belize have been difficult.

Tantamount to understanding Belizean history is the colonial legacy embedded in the social studies curriculum of Belize prior to independence. The curriculum was focused on understanding an Eurocentric perspective, not an ancient, cultural, regional or local view. Belizean students learned about Queen Elizabeth, Lord Nelson, and so forth, not about the ancient Maya nor other significant past or present cultures. As a result, Belizeans were systematically taught in school to relate to a country and history very different from their ancient cultural past. Exposure to Belizean history was minimal if not completely omitted in the European colonial curriculum until the early 1990s. The only good history was a British history. For "The Crown," Belize was exploited for its abundant resources of wood, as another chapter in British history.

Learning the past

Understanding how Belize was to find its soul, Sanchez (1977) emphasized the need to appreciate and teach history in the Belizean context and from the Belizean point of view. His address, occurring 13 years after self-government and four years prior to the country's full independence, recognized the hurdles the Belizean people, leaders, and educators confronted in pursuit of political, social, economic, and educational change. Sanchez encouraged

Belizeans to seize the opportunity to develop a sense of national history and an appreciation of their common destiny by honoring its own cultural heritage. Sanchez also believed in, recommended, and encouraged present and future Belizeans to establish a meaningful link of culture to their past. Clearly, Sanchez believed one solution to finding Belize's soul, and establishing a historical record of her past, was to develop a strong study of cultural heritage in Belizean schools.

Post-colonial rule marked a major turning point in the history of the social studies curricula in Belize. For Belize, the transition from colonial rule to self-government, 1964 until 1981, significantly affected the content of the existing curricula, primarily in the field of social studies. The ensuing transitional period supplied Belize with the opportunity to develop culturally relevant historical studies, empowering writers of the new curriculum to represent a Belizean perspective and not a British view.

Sanchez (1977) understood the need for local historical study in the curriculum. The significance of the transitional period from postcolonial rule to independence reflected how Belizean educators mapped their curriculum course development separate from the existing British curriculum design. This study will examine the development of precolonial history of Belize in the social studies component of Belize's national curriculum from 1950-2001.

Personal Rationale for study

In July, 1998, I traveled to Belize to attend the Programme [sic] for Belize (PFB)-Archaeology and Education workshop. This project was organized by Dr. Kathryn Reese-Taylor of the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse (now of The University of Calgary), Dr. Mary S. Black from The University of Texas at Austin, and Dr. Fred Valdez, Jr. from The University of Texas at Austin. The intent was to bring teachers from the United States, Belizean educators, Department of Archaeology personnel, and members of the PFB together to learn about the archaeological research on Maya sites being conducted in the La Milpa area. Additionally, educational materials on the ancient Maya were developed in this workshop for use in Belizean and American classrooms. The workshop provided participants the opportunity to travel to a number of archaeological sites in Belize, participate in a dig, and listen to lectures. The lectures were significant elements in the educator workshop. Presentations by American and Belizean archaeologists on the history of the Maya and their archaeological sites were given. Additionally, information was gleaned regarding the interpretation of artifacts uncovered, and the importance of agricultural production by the ancient Maya was discussed. Additional presentations were given by indigenous people at various archaeological sites, such as Lamanai and Santa Rita. Some of the lecturers related stories passed down in the oral tradition. The lectures clarified understanding of the significant role of the ancient Maya in the history of Belize.

Additionally, the integration of archaeological research in the lessons developed on the Maya by the participants generated culturally relevant material for students in Belize. Combining archaeological research into social studies curriculum illustrates an effective use of local context in developing students' knowledge and understanding about Belize's historical development. Special emphasis was placed on developing lessons for Belizean educators about archaeological sites near their home school.

I have taught a variety of subjects at the high school and university level. Most of my teaching career has been in geographic education. In geographic education, I incorporated government, sociology, history, and economic elements in my teaching, but not archaeological contributions. However, archaeological research can add immensely to lessons about ancient cultures, especially the Maya. As a result, I wanted to learn more about the social studies structure of Belize's national curriculum. I realized I was unfamiliar with the educational system of Belize. Additionally, I learned that the Belizean teachers attending the workshop felt that they had a weak background of their cultural history, as well as limited knowledge about past and present archaeological research conducted in their country.

I expected the Belizean teachers to be knowledgeable about their ancient history, but they were not. Equally surprising, the teachers were not familiar with the open archaeological sites that were close to their schools that potentially could

provide a rich learning experience for their students. My curiosity about curricular issues and archaeological research of the Maya in Belize led me to focus my research on the history of curriculum development of the social studies component from 1950-2001. I want to ascertain how precolonial history is taught in Belize's national curriculum. The information obtained from this research can be used to provide a cross-cultural exchange of lessons that would assist and encourage Belizean teachers to teach about the ancient Maya. Additionally, this research will add to the body of knowledge on curriculum development in emerging countries.

Research Overview

This study examines social studies curriculum development of precolonial history in Belize from 1950-2001. This study describes how the social studies component of Belize's national curriculum evolved prior to and after the transition to self-government. Examination of the social studies curricula, social studies textbooks, and education and government documents identified what students were taught about their ancient past. Analysis of records (e.g., curricula and social studies textbooks) provide written communication that have an official purpose and rely primarily on language to convey meaning (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996).

Determination of how the documents for analyses were developed, and the contexts in which they were produced were important. Gall, Borg, & Gall (1996)

stated four areas of study that the researcher needs to know to understand the context of the documents produced: (1) the author's purpose in writing it; (2) the author's working conditions; (3) the author's intended and actual audience; and (4) the audience's purpose for reading it I tried to address these four considerations. Additionally, I recognized that I developed meaning from the records, perhaps different from the author of the documents used in this study.

There is a need to know why Belizean teachers and students do not know their ancient history. Understanding how social studies curricula were developed in Belize requires knowledge of the context in which the examined documents were created. Using qualitative research methods to study Belizean curricula, social studies textbooks, and so forth, I ascertained why the ancient Maya have been noticeably absent from Belize's primary social studies curriculum.

For my dissertation, I analyzed Belizean Ministry of Education documents, government documents, social studies curricula, and social studies textbooks. I analyzed each type of document separately, then compared them as a group. Results of the content analysis revealed what aspects of precolonial history were included or left out of the Belizean school curricula.

Research Questions

The research questions to be answered were:

1. What is the history of social studies curriculum development in Belize from 1950-2001?

2. What is the scope of the current K-8 social studies curriculum in Belize?
3. Has the study of the ancient Maya been presented in Belizean curriculum in the past, and if so, how?

Research Site

In 1991, the Education Act directed the creation of the new national education curriculum, currently being implemented in Belize. This new curriculum was to provide for an efficient and equitable education in Belize (Ministry of Education, 2000).

The new curriculum was based on UNESCO's International Commission on Education for the 21st century's four pillars of learning: (1) learning to live together; (2) learning to be; (3) learning to know; and (4) learning to do (Ministry of Education, 2000). The first pillar influenced social studies learning and involved the understanding of others and their history, traditions, and spirituality in this context (Ministry of Education, 2000). This pillar encouraged curriculum writers to include the study of ancient Belize, previously omitted. For Belizeans, the development of this national comprehensive curriculum involved input from a cross-section of the nation. Parents, students, teachers, nongovernment individuals, government ministers, Belizean specialists and foreign specialists participated in the creation of the new curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2000).

Based on 1993-1999 school figures, the new curriculum would impact an estimated 54,616 students (Ministry of Education, 1999).

UNESCO statistics for pupils by grade at the primary level since 1970 has grown steadily in Belize. In 1970, there were 30, 842 primary students in school (UNESCO, 2001). Since 1970, half the population of Belize has had minimal exposure to precolonial history during their tenure at the primary level. The Education Act of 1991 provided Belizeans the first opportunity to include instruction of precolonial history at the primary level. Twenty years after gaining independence, students of the 21st century will finally have the opportunity to learn about their ancient history.

The nature of Belize's British governance heavily influenced its educational system. It would take 138 years before Belizeans were able to include precolonial study in the social studies component of their national curriculum.

Belize, with a population of 249, 183[2] people, spends one Belize dollar per year (50 cents in U.S. dollars) on education (D. Eck, Personal communication, July 12, 1999). Statistics indicate education is 22% (see Appendix) of the government expenditures. However, the unfortunate low economic status[3] of this country limits teachers and students' access to current educational technology and supplemental materials.

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[2] www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/hg.html.. February. 2001.

I had a rare opportunity to study a young independent country that is historically ancient in archaeological years. Gary Nash, in his essay, "American history reconsidered: Asking new questions about the past," wrote, "Among academic historians, agreement is widespread today that history has been presented—whether in school textbooks, college courses, museum exhibits, or mass-media in a narrow and deeply distorted way, not just in the United States but in every country" (Ravitch & Vinovskis, 1995). This narrow perspective described by Nash correlates to the study of the ancient Maya in Belize's national curriculum. Students are limited in the opportunity to study, learn, and embrace their rich cultural history (Goodson & Marsh, 1996). I have described a piece of curriculum history not represented in the literature.

Documents from the Ministry of Education, Department of Archaeology, curricula and personal interviews were collected for this study. The opportunity to learn about social studies curriculum development in Belize provided a unique cross-cultural exchange with Belizean educators. This study contributes knowledge to a limited field of study in Belize: social studies curriculum development.

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[3] www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/hb.html. February 21, 2001.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This literature review will examine three areas: historical perspectives on Belize, colonial education policy, and Belizean education policy since Independence. Additionally, this literature review reveals a paucity of information specifically on Belize's social studies curriculum development and education system in general. However, there are several qualitative studies on historical and educational development identified for analysis in this study. The latitude of this literature review was derived from journals, books, theses, dissertations, colonial reports, and Belizean government documents. The material included in the review focuses specifically on Belize. Belize's political development shaped the way social studies curricula were conceived in its national education curriculum. Additionally, this study will add to the discourse of how Third World countries, like Belize, struggle to develop relevant curricula notwithstanding poor economy, colonial influence, and reliance on outside funding such as The World Bank in an attempt to achieve educational goals.

Historical perspective

The three areas that emerged from the literature review were critical in piecing together curriculum development in Belize. The first area described is a historical perspective of Belize. Burdon (1931, 1934, and 1935), a former

Governor and Commander-in-Chief of British Honduras, chronologically describes the first history of the colony. Burdon explains that no written records existed on the early history of the colony because they were destroyed by fire, hurricanes, pests, and lack of safe storage (Burdon, 1931, 1934, and 1935). Burdon's work contributes to the earliest records of the colony from a British perspective.

The historical studies found minimal research written about Belize (Dobson, 1973; Grant, 1976, Setzekorn, 1975, Bolland, 1986, and Shoman, 1994). Dobson (1973), a graduate of Oxford University, described the historical development of Belize from precolonial history to 1972. She briefly detailed the beginning of formal education in Belize. Her perspective on education development included two observations. First, woodcutters were apprehensive about teaching their slaves. They saw no benefit in having an educated worker. Their workforce needed only to know how to cut timber, not to read or write. Secondly, the churches' involvement in education provided initial financial stability to a colonial area not adequately financed by Britain (Dobson, 1973). Dobson's (1973) work continues to be used in Belizean schools as a supplemental text to teach Belizean history. Grant (1976), a former Guyanese Ambassador to the U.S., examined and analyzed the modern historical development of Belize. Grant describes the influence of the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches in developing schools in Belize. The structure and curriculum of the schools were

the responsibility of the clergy. Funding for the schools were provided by the ruling government during precolonial and self-government rule in 1964. A major weakness of clerical control of education was its contribution to racial and cultural division among the schools. Both the Protestant and Roman Catholic priests imposed their social and political views upon the students. Another consideration was the churches inability to fund their schools without government support. Additionally, the Catholics opened Teachers' Training College for primary educators in 1954. As was later revealed in UNESCO's 1964 report, the government needed to take a more active role in the development and funding of the schools in the country. These and other historical texts associate the progression of Belize's educational system with its political expansion.

A number of other broad-spectrum histories were completed on British Honduras (Winzerling, 1946, Craiger, 1951; Waddell, 1961; Humphreyss, 1961; Clegern, 1967; Ashcraft, 1973; and Setzekorn, 1975). Shoman (1994) was the first Belizean to write about the general history of Belize from the sixteenth century to the present. Personal accounts are included in this work. The last chapters focus on present aspects of Belizean society with respect to Belize's past. This book was written for young Belizeans to use as a Belizean history text in the secondary and tertiary classrooms.

Each of the general history texts examined the development of British Honduras from the time of Maya occupation in the Mesoamerica region (as early

as 7500 BC) to the time of self-government. Shoman's (1994) book included additional information on Belizean history after independence to the early 1990s. These texts identified key political events in Belize's history that impacted its growth as a nation. Knowledge of how institutions such as educational systems developed is critical to understanding Belizean history. These texts provided essential elements about how education expanded in Belize. These elements include the influence of colonial control of Belize during most of the 19th and 20the centuries; religious control of Belize's education curriculum; and economic factors related to a limited infrastructure and limited monetary funds to develop the educational system in Belize. Britain's colonial policy was pivotal in expanding Belize's educational system and the subsequent theme arising from the literature: educational policy acts.

Colonial Educational policy

Education development in Belize was described in several historical texts (Caiger, 1951; Grant, 1976; Dobson, 1973; and Setzekorn, 1975). These works examined Belize's political progression in Central America and the Caribbean. Additional literature focused on specific time periods in Belize's history (Humphreyss, 1961; Clegern, 1967; Bolland, 1977; Zammit, 1978; Grant, 1976; and Woodward, Wright, Coutts, 1993). Belize's political evolution significantly influenced the development of its educational system (Clatworthy, 1969). Evidence of British influence on education was recorded in the yearly colonial

reports provided to the King and later Queen of England. These documents described the success and failure of Belize's economic, political, and social infrastructure. They provided a uniquely British perspective of the status of the colony in the Central American region. The Colonial Secretary, a British appointment, wrote many of the reports for the King and later Queen of England.

The *Colonial Reports on British Honduras* (His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1905, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1947, 1949, 1951, 1952; and Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1954, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1963, 1965, and 1968) were yearly reviews of British Honduras' economy, governance, education, and so forth. The report on education described the aims of the territory's educational policy, administration and management matters, status of primary and secondary education schools, and other pertinent data. These reports encompassed policy issues recommended or implemented during the year. Additionally, the reports disclosed the colony's education budget, number of schools, number of trained teachers, school populations, teacher training, and the primary and later secondary school curriculum modeled on England's system.

The first documented colonial educational goal, written in 1942, mandated total literacy of the colonial population (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1954). Total literacy as well as other educational aims were targeted throughout the mid 20th century in Belize. Educational needs were met on a need-by-need basis.

Many of the educational policy recommendations were in response to colonial economic needs. In the *Colonial Reports on British Honduras: 1955* (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1957), it was reported that secondary, technical, and agricultural education along with teacher training needed to be addressed to meet the growing demand for technical and professional posts in the Civil Service of the colony. Thus, schools became the training ground to produce qualified persons for specific posts in the colony. Additionally, the curriculum was to be modified to meet the needs of the territory (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1957). The annual reports from the colony identified factors affecting school curriculum. The curriculum was to correlate with the needs of the colony through increased agricultural education, technical training, or training in other specific areas. These reports indicated that the school curriculum was influenced by the economic demands placed on Belize to make the colony viable for Britain via agriculture production. So, in 1955, Britain applied to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to send a curriculum expert to advise on the revising and preparation of teaching material with a British Honduras background (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1957). This request was accepted and UNESCO sent Dr. T.G. Finn of Canada, a curriculum expert, to assist in making changes in the curriculum and in teacher training. The report eluded to new approaches applied to the curriculum in the instruction of reading, social studies, and physical education (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1958).

This and future directives from UNESCO assisted Belizeans to address curriculum change in a practical and realistic manner (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1958). In order to illustrate how education was influenced by British policy, a brief overview of key milestones in its educational policy follows.

Education history

By order of His Majesty's Superintendent in January 1816, the Honduras Free School (primary) was established in the Settlement of Belize in the Bay of Honduras as the first school (Burdon, 1934). The location of this school was in the area known today as Belize City. It was built across from the present site of St. John's Protestant Episcopal Church in Belize City. This school was created for the woodcutters children. Records indicated only a dozen (ten in Burdon's 1934 report) students were enrolled in 1816 (Grant, 1976; Dobson, 1973, and Young, 1995).

By 1828, enrollment of the school rose to 116. During this time the Baptist and Wesleyan churches opened private schools in Belize City. Palacio (1973), a Belizean educator, stated that the curriculum of these early schools is believed to have consisted of reading, writing, arithmetic, and perhaps religion. The growing population assisted in the development of the private religious schools. To meet the growing educational needs, the British government voted to provide money annually to the churches in Belize. This established the practice of state-community-church involvement in the education development of Belize

which continues to this day. In 1850, the first education act was passed. One important element of the act was the creation of The Board of Education (BOE) (Palacio, 1973).

The BOE was entrusted to manage the government and government-aided schools. Educational development in Belize was based on a church-state partnership. The government provided subsidies for students to attend school. Administration of the curriculum was handled by the church. Leadership and management of the school was entrusted to the Superintendent (His Majesty's Chief representative), seven Magistrates, Church Wardens, and subscribers who paid an annual fee of 10 British pounds (Palacio, 1973; Frazer, 2001; and Young, 1995). This religious and government partnership in education has continued to this date. In 1868, the BOE was abolished and educational responsibility in British Honduras (officially a colony of Britain in 1862), was transferred to the Executive Council of the Colony (Frazer, 2001).

Under the leadership of the Executive Council, attention was placed on the quality of teachers in British Honduras. By 1877, the Executive Council introduced a certification examination for 1st and 2nd class teachers in order to develop better qualified teachers in the colony. Additionally, the colonists requested more trained teachers to come from Britain. By 1882, there was a greater demand to develop educational opportunities at a higher level. The Methodist Church responded by opening the first high school for boys, St.

George's Wesleyan located in Belize City. Additional church denominations added to the growing higher level educational needs for the colony. In 1883, the Catholic Church opened St. Catherine's Academy for girls and St. John's College for boys. St. Catherine's and St. John's College have successfully remained strong educational institutions in Belize to this date. Continued change in the educational climate of British Honduras was reflected in the Education Ordinance of 1892. This second major legislation in Belize's education history reestablished the BOE and this board had wide executive and legislative power that lasted until 1962 (Palacio, 1973).

The BOE in 1892 was comprised of the Governor, executive council members, and five other governor appointees. The BOE managed the educational system in British Honduras until 1962 when the BOE was abolished and replaced with the Ministry of Education, the structure in place to this date. The main role of the government was to provide grants to the elementary schools that were matched by church funds. Dobson (1973) noted that annual government expenditures on education never exceeded 3.3% during the time funding was locally controlled. This abysmal expenditure of education funds increased when the Imperial Treasury took control on the budget in 1932 due to financial woes in the colony and increased education spending to 9% (Dobson, 1973). Educational development in British Honduras was closely monitored and controlled by Britain. Administration of educational policy in British Honduras during the 20th

century had the greatest impact on the schooling of children in the region. The 1915 Education Ordinance made education compulsory for children ages 6-14 in Belize. Initial creation of this ordinance was to require Maya Indians to attend school (Palacio, 1973). The Maya Indians did not consider the instruction provided in the schools to be relevant or reflective of their cultural development. However, the act was for all children ages 6-14, no matter what their religious belief or race, to attend school.

The 1926 Education Ordinance increased the BOE's power in making educational management decisions. A year later, a devastating hurricane hit the colony. The British took control of the colony's treasury, including the education budget under the BOE's administration. The British established a Superintendent to oversee administration of the schools and provide scholarships for numerous school children. However, a visit by Easter (1935), Director of Education for Jamaica, had a profound effect on education in Belize.

Easter's report was a comprehensive survey of the existing system of education in relation to the present conditions and the needs of the population (Sanchez, 1977). Additionally, he recommended an efficient use of economic funds to accomplish his educational recommendations. Easter's (1935) recommendation led to the Education Ordinance of 1935 (No. 14 of 1926 as amended by No. 38 of 1935) (His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1936). Two years later, an Assistant Superintendent of Education was appointed. Presently, these

positions are Chief Education Officer and Principal Education Officer respectively, in Belize's Ministry of Education. There were twelve recommendations made by Easter (1935). The most pertinent recommendation to this research was his fifth recommendation regarding curriculum revision. He recognized a need to revise the curriculum which affected student learning and teacher instruction (Sanchez, 1977). Easter's (1935) recommendations led to the reorganization of the BOE to include a Governor, Colonial Secretary and seven unofficial members appointed by the Governor. Title changes occurred which led to the first Superintendent of Education in the colony, B.E. Carman (Sanchez, 1977). Additional impact on education in the colony would follow with J.C. Dixon's report (1936).

Dixon was a Georgia State Supervisor of Negro Education and developed the "Jeanes Teacher" system of training (Grant, 1976). The "Jeanes Teachers" were specially trained teachers who became supervisors who visited schools for at least two weeks at a time over Belize to make recommendations to improve a variety of activities in the schools (Palacio, 1973).

Activities included:

(1) assisting teacher to maintain good school records and developing a scheme of work;

(2) organizing instruction to deal with individual student needs;

(3) introducing new instruction methods and new courses;

(4) introducing extracurricular activities;

(5) mentoring pupil teachers;

(6) creating parent-teacher associations; and,

(7) assisting teachers to develop gardens (Palacio, 1973).

Later, these supervisors would be called education officers, a position still in place in Belize's educational system. Dixon was asked to advise and inaugurate this system in British Honduras in 1936 (Sanchez, 1977). Two of the seven recommendations relevant to this review were the following: (1) the duties of the Jeanes Supervisors were to improve classroom instruction and (2) the training of teachers.

Dixon's (1936) recommendations led to the first three teachers being trained as supervisors in Jamaica: S.E. Daley, E.A. Nicholson, and A.S. Frankson (Sanchez, 1977). These supervisors were civil servants and reported to the Superintendent of Education. Their position changed over time from an inspector role to a supervisory position. In 1941, these positions became known as Education Officers, titles in place today.

The Easter and Dixon reports significantly impacted the primary school curriculum. In 1945, geography and history courses were added to the curriculum. In 1949, an Indian School Curriculum was introduced for the Maya students (Sanchez, 1977). Sanchez (1977) described this curriculum as being simpler and more realistic, but with no specific details about the curriculum

content for the Maya students. This curriculum was discontinued at the end of the 1950's. Easter's report led to a periodic review of the primary curriculum. Primary curriculum revision occurred in 1957, 1959, 1970, and later in the 1980's and 1990s. Postcolonial rule led to educational changes in Belize, another important theme that arose in the literature.

Belizean educational policy

Belize experienced a number of benefits from British colonial control in the area of education. Colonial education in Belize was modeled and modified throughout Britain's control of the country. Some overlap of education policy occurred prior to and after self-government in Belize. This section will describe Belize's approach to curriculum change separate from its mother country Britain.

Easter (1935) significantly influenced educational development in Belize. His recommendations continued to mold education policy in Belize after 1935. Passage of the Education (Amendment) Ordinance of 1934 was the result of Easter's (1935) recommendations. Data from the 1931 report of the Sub-Committee of the Board of Education was used to restructure Belize's education policy, including curricular development that influenced education in Belize prior to and after self-government in the colony. Specific aims of the report were to revise the power of the Board of Education and include one teacher and one female representative on the board. A demonstration school was established in 1937 for pupil and teacher training in Belize City (Sanchez, 1977).

Recommendations were made to revise the school curriculum beginning in 1945. Geography and history were added to the usual subjects of reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar and singing (Sanchez, 1977). Additional recommendations made by Easter included the introduction of vocational subjects in the primary schools. Agricultural education was introduced in 1937 in the primary school curriculum (Sanchez, 1977). Agricultural education has continued to be an integral subject for Belizean students to take in school.

As mentioned previously, UNESCO sent Dr. T.G. Finn to recommend changes to the curriculum in 1957. The following year, approval was given to revise the curriculum on a subject-by-subject basis (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1960). Although no specific works describe how these revisions were completed, Belize recognized the opportunity to implement changes in the curriculum to meet the needs of the colony's population. In 1962, the Education Ordinance was passed in Belize. This was the legal device for execution of the government's educational policy of affecting a national system of education which retained traditionally accepted denominational character, but allowed a greater degree of control by the government over the system (Bennett, 1973).

In 1964, UNESCO returned at the request of the government to conduct a comprehensive survey of the education system. Members of this taskforce included: C.L. Germanacos, a specialist in general education and educational planning from Great Britain; M. Gaskin, an economist from Great Britain; and S.

Syrimis, a specialist in technical and vocational education training from Cyprus (Palacio, 1973).

After five weeks of gathering data on the state of the educational system, recommendations were made in the areas of school organization, teacher education, vocational and technical education, and in the administration of the educational system (Palacio, 1973). No significant recommendations were made in the social studies curriculum.

Curriculum reform in Belize has been suppressed throughout its colonial and postcolonial rule due to limited financial resources and political position. In 1964, when Belize achieved self-government educators moved toward a Belizeanization of the curriculum.

The Education Plans of 1972-76 adopted the Rural Education and Agriculture Program (REAP). It was funded by the Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE), Heifer Project International, and the Government of Belize (Thompson, 2001). This curriculum was developed to meet needs of the rural student and prepare them for agricultural jobs (Jennings, 1988). The curriculum was geared toward agricultural education and was to extend over a ten-year period. Its success and implementation depended on the outside funding agencies. This would be a consistent feature of curriculum reform in postcolonial Belize. The disadvantage of this curriculum was that it was completely agriculturally based with little attention paid to other core academic areas.

However, REAP was successful in providing Belizeans a structure to engage students in the socioeconomic development of their country upon completion of their primary education (Jennings, 1988).

In 1975, the Curriculum Development Unit was established. With financial assistance from outside entities, Belize was able to develop several curricula projects. A number of projects were instituted in Belize: The School Health Education Program (SHEP), the Primary Education Program, the Wildlife Inquiry through Zoo Education (WIZE) program, the Posterized Program Teaching Technology (PPTT), and the Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). These programs were funded by foreign funds to institute relevant curricula for Belizean students. Once the financial support of a program ceased, so did the project.

Financing for the Belize Primary Education Development Project (BPED) came from the World Bank in 1991, and the project began in 1992 (Usher, 1993). The project was divided into three categories: teacher education, education development, which includes curriculum development and assessment and evaluation, and planning and management (Thompson, 2001). The members of the curriculum development project included parents, teachers, administrators, and students (Usher, 1993). This was the first time revision of the curriculum included a range of education stakeholders in the community.

The curriculum plan included the updating of the social studies component of the primary school. This directive is currently in progress. In association with *The National Primary Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2000), by the end of the primary school years, Belizean students are to know the history of Belize's social, political, and economic development. This includes a study of precolonial Belize, previously minimally studied in the curriculum. Changes to social studies curricula were aligned with Belize's involvement at UNESCO's World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand.

Jomtien, Thailand

In 1990, two representatives from Belize, H.E. Mr. Juna Vildo Marin, Minister of State for Education, and Mr. Eldred Roy Cayetano, Principal Education Officer, attended the World Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien, Thailand. The Education for All (EFA) conference was sponsored by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United National Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the World Bank. The three principal objectives of the conference were the following:

> 1. to highlight the importance and impact of basic education, and renew commitment to make it available to all
>
> 2. to forge a global consensus on a framework for action to meet the basic learning needs of children, youth and adults;
>
> 3. to provide a forum for sharing experiences and research results to invigorate ongoing and planned programmes [sic]

(Haddad, Colletta, Fisher, Lakin, Rinaldi, 1990, p.2).

One outcome of the three objectives was the development of the document, *World Declaration on Education for All*[4]. This document provided the initial thrust for Belize to develop their *National Comprehensive Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2000). The conference provided participants' the forum to find solutions and develop various strategies to institute the concept education for all. The Executive Secretary, Wadi D. Haddad, stated that the World Conference is "a unique occasion to influence the future development of education and of our many societies" (UNESCO, 1990, p.6). During the 1990s, Belize and participating countries began a new educational direction funded by the hosting organizations. Additionally, attention was given to teacher participation in the framing of educational policies, especially in regards to preparation, implementation, and evaluation of educational innovations (Ibid, 1990, p. 16). One of the overall goals of the conference was to specifically address ways to improve the conditions of curriculum in participating countries. Partnerships with schools, communities, teachers, and other personnel were imperative to provide basic education for Belizean students. In 1993, an international committee on education was created to provide specific details in accomplishing the goals set forth at the Jomtien meeting.

International commission on education for the twenty-first century

In 1993, UNESCO's General Director, Mr. Federico Mayor, established a 15-member international panel to "reflect on education and learning for the twenty-first century" (UNESCO, 1993, p.1). Mr. Jacques Delors, President of the Commission of the European Communities, was appointed chair of this commission. The aim of the commission was:

> …to study and reflect on the challenges facing education in the coming years and to formulate suggestions and recommendations in the form of a report which can serve as an agenda for renewal and action for policy making and officials at the highest levels. (UNESCO, 1993, p.4)

The audiences targeted for the commission's findings were governments, policy-makers, private agencies, and decision-makers of educational development like curriculum writers. The commission's educational quest was broad based. Review and analysis of educational systems for the twenty-first century included pre-K through higher education and formal and non-formal schooling. The charge of the commission was to support basic education for all and the opportunity to enjoy a lifetime of learning. The success of the plan required contributions by all stakeholders in an educational community that includes parents, teachers, and community members. The foundations of education set forth by the commission were the four pillars of education (Delors, Amagi,

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[4]www.unesco.org/education/efa/ed_for_all/background/jomtien_declaration.shtml. (September 28, 2001).

Carneiro, Chung, Geremek, Gorham, Hornhauser, Manley, Mufti, Quero, Savae, Singh, Stavenhagen, Suhr, & Nanzhao, 1995).

The four pillars of education are learning to live together, learning to know, learning to do, and learning to be. The pillars provide the basis for the recognition of the growing interdependence of the global community. The development of the four pillars led to significant changes in the social studies curriculum in Belize. The most significant curricula change in Belize's history during the early 1990s is attributed to Belize's participation in UNESCO's educational opportunities. Additionally, legislative initiatives were put in place in Belize with passage of the Education Act of 1991 and revisions made to it in 1996. The Education Act of 1991 repealed the Education Act of 1980. The Education Act of 1991 was in response to Belize's participation in the World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) in 1990. One goal of this conference was to develop basic educational opportunities for every person, including effective curricula development, which would greatly affect Belize. In conjunction with the publication of the Delors et al. (1996) report, *Learning the treasure within*, revisions were made to Belize's Education Act in 1996 to incorporate the proposed adoption of UNESCO's Four Pillars of learning. Until the *National Primary Curriculum* draft was published in 1999, curricula in Belize, specifically in the area of social studies, would be a paltry source for Belizean teachers and students to use in the classroom. Belize's participation at the

WCEFA, and at later UNESCO sponsored educational summits, were the catalyst for the Ministry of Education to set a new course in curricula development, especially in social studies course work.

The proposals resulted in Belize's pursuit of a comprehensive national curriculum. The four pillars would be the foundation for the development of their national curriculum. In 1997, the Ministry of Education in Belize published the *Belize primary curriculum: Education goals, curriculum policies and structure.* This publication identified national education goals of Belize in conjunction with the four pillars and four spheres of reference in determining objectives and content of primary education (Ministry of Education, 1997). Educational objectives were in place, especially in the area of social studies curricula. The curriculum would provide Belizean students the opportunity to learn Belize's history.

The National primary curriculum: Belize Draft 1998

This preliminary document detailed the outcomes that Belizean students should learn at the end of their primary education. Additionally, the document "is intended to act as the compass guiding any and all education activities within the schools of Belize" (Ministry of Education, 1998, p.1). The curriculum correlates with UNESCO's 21st century educational goals. This and future educational curricular publications like the 1999 *National primary curriculum* and the 2000 *National Syllabus,* launched Belize's educational ministry to aggressively realign

and develop a relevant national curriculum. Additionally, educational initiatives to develop this plan were included in Belize's Educational Act of 1991.

The Educational Act of 1991

This piece of legislation established specific criteria related to compulsory school age, 5-14 years, development of the National Council for Education, and definitions of school types like government schools and government-aided schools. Primary school would provide instruction for children 5-14. Secondary school provided education for children 12-18. Educational rules, definitions and leadership structure in Belize were now in place. The Ministry of Education's responsibilities were defined. For the first time as an independent nation, Belize could work to provide "efficient and equitable delivery of quality education" for Belizean children (Ministry of Education, 2000, p.i). Specific knowledge to be learned, especially in the area of social studies would be identified. The national curriculum led to development of new curricula in social studies, presently still being drafted to meet the criteria of the Education For All in the 21st century goals (See Appendix).

The National Syllabus

Proposed in March 1999, the *National Syllabus of Belize* provided the strategies to improve student learning by "specifying minimum standard of achievement" in four areas of study, specifically for this research in social studies

(Ministry of Education, p.1). Specific knowledge elementary Belizean students' would learn about Belizean history include:

> SS1 Know the history and status of Belize as a nation, including its social, political, and economic development
>
> SS5 Know the different cultural groups in Belize, their lifestyle and languages (Ministry of Education, 1999, p.41).

Additionally, one of the learning outcomes to be accomplished by Belizean students by the end of their elementary learning years was to understand "why life in their community now is different from life in the past" (Ministry of Education, 1999, p.42). National goals were established to provide Belizean elementary learners knowledge of their past, previously minimally addressed in the curricula.

For the first time, the text of the national curriculum eluded to the idea that Belizean students would be able to learn their own ancient history. This drafted document ignited the flame for many Belizeans, first called for by Sanchez (1977) and other social studies educators during the 1970s, for students to learn Belize's precolonial history. The *National Syllabus* (Ministry of Education, 1999) provide a guide to assist specific subject area curricula writers to include instruction in precolonial Belize, otherwise noticeably absent from existing curricula.

Belizeanization

Sanchez (1977) wrote,

"To be colonized means to be dehumanized, to be depersonalized

> and to be pitted one against the other. But colonization does more: it imposes an inferiority and dependency complex on the colonized; it severs the colonized from their history, tradition and culture, in its place the colonizer forcibly substitutes his history, tradition and culture…ashamed of his past…" (p.3)

During the 1970s Sanchez (1977) advocated the study of history from a noncolonial perspective. He recognized the need to study history from a Belizean perspective, not a European view. Sanchez (1977) appealed to Belizean educators and others to promote national pride and cultural harmony by studying their heritage. His views were echoed by others. Humphreys (1989), a professor at St. John's College in Belize City, described the development and implementation of Belizean studies programs in the secondary level during the period 1964-1987. Humphreys (1989) noted…"no courses in national history, culture, geography, demography and government" were introduced until 1971 (p.4). During the 1970-1971 school year, Muffles College in Orange Walk instituted a national history course in the first year social studies programme [sic] (Humphreys, 1989). Additionally, Humphreys (1989) examined the implementation of Stann Creek's Ecumenical College's Belizean study program. This program offered the first precolonial study of the Maya in Belize and other aspects of Belize's development as a nation from a Belizean perspective, not a British or Anglocentric view. Humphreys (1989) recognized the Ministry of Education in Belize had the power to initiate the development of relevant and non-Eurocentric perspectives in the curriculum, but the Ministry of Education failed to directly mandate

implementation or development of Belizean history courses. As a result, in order for historical study to be included in the curriculum, Belizean educators had to solicit the agent of change, the Ministry of Education. It was not until the creation of the 1993 National Culture Policy Council that precolonial study, from a Belizean perspective, would be mandated in the production of a revised social studies curriculum.

The 1993 National Culture Policy Council

As previously mentioned, the purpose of this panel was to determine what Belizean culture was and how to promote it among the general population (Haug, 1998). Recommendations placed in Belize's schools included the practice of recognizing national holidays and publicly displaying ethnic costumes, music and dancing (Haug, 1998). All levels of the social studies curriculum include lessons on what national holidays and cultural events are to be recognized and considered significant to the country's diverse ethnic population (Haug, 1998). Belizean students would have the opportunity to learn about past and present cultural groups through a variety of learning activities. This was a major step to address the minimal inclusion of precolonial instruction in the social studies component of the education curriculum.

Relevant studies

Minimal research has been completed on Belizean education. As a result of the limited research conducted in Belize, this study will add to the research on

Third world educational systems like Belize. Previous research conducted on Belize included Beal (1973), a former General Manager for one of the denomination school systems in Belize. His research analyzed education perceptions of parents, students, and teachers in Punta Gorda, Belize. Beal (1973) made five conclusions: (1) analysis of the communities education need was made and Punta Gorda's occupational goals were correlated with the type of training available in the schools; (2) minimal emphasis was placed on agricultural and vocational training for the community; (3) Punta Gorda established a government junior secondary school to emphasize scientific, technical and agricultural subjects; (4) future Belizean education might emphasize scientific, vocational, agricultural and mechanical training; and (5) longitudinal study of the same respondents was recommended as well as other studies related to education perception (e.g., ethnic group). Palacio (1973) described teacher education development and identified and recommended solutions to solve basic problems in teacher training. Palacio (1973) ranked the teaching training problems and provided a remedy to some problems and the need to develop solutions to resolve the remaining concerns. Palacio (1973) articulated that teacher education policy was tied to UNESCO (1964) recommendations. Belize continued to seek avenues to provide better qualified and prepared teachers for Belizean schools from recommendations by UNESCO (1964). Tillet (1978), a Belizean and a Ministry of Education officer, examined the preparation of primary teachers in Belize and

the need to identify possible discrepancies between the curriculum to prepare primary school teachers and the curriculum subscribed to at the time. She recommended that the teacher-training curriculum integrate national and cultural development changes in the teacher-education program at Belize Teacher's College to enable educators to be better prepared for teaching in the schools of Belize (Tillet, 1978). Tillet (1978) concluded there were a lack of sufficiently trained teachers in the primary schools in Belize and problems with authority between church and state control. She described the absence of long and short term planning related to education development (e.g., 1971-1977) which resulted in inefficiency and the absence of specific education directions and goals. Norales (1980) examined secondary teachers' perceptions of discipline problems as it related to students' attitudes toward education. Her study described how teachers managed and resolved discipline problems in their classrooms. Rosado (1990) surveyed teachers' perceptions of their training between 1976 and 1987 in Belize. He focused on the development of teacher training programs in Belize. Pastor (1995) examined the history and evolution of preschool, primary, and secondary education during the 20th century. Pastor (1995) discussed how access to schooling, the quality of education, and the use of limited resources has impeded education development in Belize. One relevant recommendation she identified was the need for curriculum to be relevant to Belizean students. Pastor (1995) believed improvement of Belize's educational system could resolve

numerous problems associated with nonrelevant curricula and low academic achievement evident in the country.

National Primary curriculum in Belize

In June, 2000, the Ministry of Education published the *Handbook of policies and procedures of school services.* Included in this publication was the *National primary curriculum.* This document was the culmination of legislative and educational initiatives in Belize since 1990.

Development of the new national curriculum required collaboration from a variety of education stakeholders, e.g., teachers, students, parents, community members, and so forth. A new direction in curricula adoption was charted, and made a tremendous impact on an existing limited program in the elementary through the secondary level social studies. The new curriculum would include the study of precolonial history previous excluded.

Educational change, e.g., curricula, requires money. Funding for Belize's curricula development in the early 1990s came from the British Overseas Development Association (ODA) (Ms. Borland, personal communication, August 24, 2001). Furthermore, educational funding for Belize during the mid to late 1990s was furnished, but not limited to, the World Bank, the United States of America, UNICEF, and UNESCO. Belize's involvement in UNESCO's EFA, especially in the area of curricula development, made the greatest difference to this young independent nation.

The literature search revealed minimal documentation on how social studies curricula developed in Belize. Research of colonial and government documents and historical studies were used to piece together how Belize's education system developed, but revealed minimal attention to the evolvement of social studies curricula in Belize. This study will add knowledge to a limited field of study on social studies curricula development in Third World countries like Belize.

Chapter 3

Methodology

A content analysis combining structural and reflective analysis (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996) of the data was used to study documents from the national Archives of Belize (see Appendix), Ministry of Education (see Appendix), the Department of Archaeology (see Appendix), and informal interviews (see Appendix). Additionally, articles on Belizean history, recommended social studies textbooks in Belize, theses, dissertations, colonial reports, and other texts were acquired as data. Patterns discerned from the analysis assist in recognizing precolonial history as it appears in the data. Additionally, the use of reflective analysis rathern than an explicit category classification system helped make sense of the data (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996).

Content analysis permits the study of particular aspects of the information contained in the documents (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). In order to ascertain what Belizean students learn, the data was examined to determine what precolonial history was or was not included in the curriculum.

Documents

Current national mandated social studies curricula from the elementary level was used to discern possible patterns of precolonial study that Belizean students learned. Acquiring curricula for analysis was limited due to lack of poor archival storage in Belize and disregard by Ministry of Education personnel to

keep older curricular materials. The curricular materials were gathered from the Ministry of Education and the Curriculum Development Unit in Belize City. Analysis of the available curricula was emergent (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; and Patton, 1990). Content analysis (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; and Patton, 1990) was used to examine the curricula to determine the contents of the material. Additionally, interpretation (e.g. structural and reflective) of the curricula reflected a number of relationships and meanings as a result of the analysis. Consideration of alternative meanings and patterns generated from the curricula were addressed during data analysis.

The textbooks (see Table 1) used by teachers and students in Belize contribute other sources of information to reveal how historical material was represented. These texts for the study were purchased from a government bookstore and Angelus Press store in Belize. The texts were social studies books recommended by the Ministry of Education for use in the classroom.

Table 1 Recommended Textbooks for Social Studies in Belize

Caribbean Social Studies 1	-a series of books for the elementary level 1-6
Tapir and Toucan	-based on characters for the elementary level
Our Country Belize	-geography and history of Belize for elementary level
A History of Belize: Nation in the Making	-secondary level
A Geography of Belize: The Land and its People	-secondary level
Atlas of Belize	-elementary and secondary level
Caribbean School Atlas	-elementary and secondary level

**See Appendix B for an annotative bibliography on these texts*

Source: Ministry of Education (2000, June). *Handbook of policies and procedures for school services.* Belize City: Ministry of Education.

Informal interviews (see Appendix) with members of the Ministry of Education, Department of Archaeology, and teachers about curriculum provide personal insights not available in the literature. Preliminary interviews were completed in the summer of 1999. These initial interviews led to further refinement of the study. Organizing interviews with Belizean education ministers and government officials was difficult. The ability to communicate with many of the government officials was hindered due to distance and their lack of response to e-mails and letters. As a result, my summer and fall trips to Belize to make contact with education and government officials and collect data proved to be the most profitable method.

Methods of Analysis

The transition period of Belize from colonial to self-government was one of several events that influenced change in Belize's national curriculum. Historical research (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; and Patton, 1990) was one effective method to understand the impact of political change on what Belizeans learned about their past. Interpretation of written documents can explain some of the historical evidence that influenced social studies curricula decisions in Belize. Additionally, studying curricular history of Belize provided knowledge of current educational policy decision-making in Belize. Gall, Borg & Gall (1996) stated that another purpose of historical research is to provide a moral framework for understanding the present.

Analyzing curricular documents can assist educators in determining present and future directions of social studies curricula decisions. Historical research (Brickman, 1982; Carr, 1967; and Hill, 1993; and Tuchman, 1981) methods exist to understand present educational directives of what Belizean students learn about their ancient past. The development of my study included knowledge of Belize's curriculum history (Kliebard, 1993; Reid, 1986; Tanner & Tanner, 1980 and 1990; Goodson, 1981 and 1983; and Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery & Taubman, 1995). Curriculum history promotes exploration of relationships between events and/or causes of past events as it relates to curricular development. Reid (1986) stated that history can be beneficial to a practically based conception of curriculum change. Consideration of historical and curriculum history methods provided the structure to gather data for this study. The content of the material (e.g., historical and curricular documents) was analyzed for this study.

Analysis of the documents were examined to identify patterns and comparisons to answer the questions of what precolonial history was or was not included in the data. Review of the collected data was ongoing throughout the study. Written and telephone contact with Belizean educators and government officials continued for the duration of this study. I also met with knowledgeable educators to discuss my writing and development of my qualitative study.

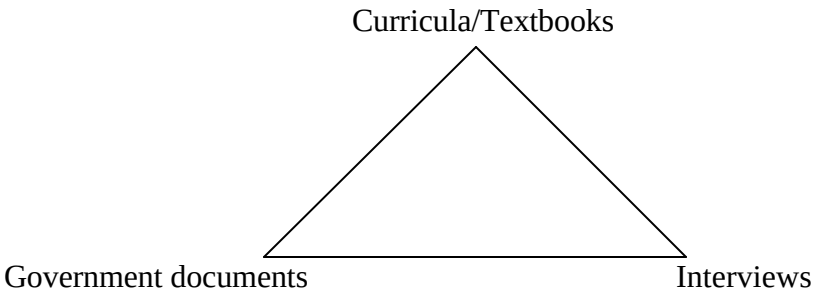
The results of the content analysis were validated by triangulation (Denzin, 1970; and Maxwell, 1996) of the data to compare curricular/government

documents, social studies textbooks, and interviews were achieved through discussions with Belizean educators and ministry officials.

Validity

The triangulation of the various data illustrated how social studies curricula developed in Belize. Using this multiple data collection method of triangulation (see Figure 1) helped corroborate the evidence for validating my research findings.

Figure 1



Triangulation excludes biases that could occur if relying on one data collection method. This study examined the content of the curricula materials, documents, statistical information, texts, and textbooks to establish a correlation with historical events in Belize from 1950-2001.

Schubert's (1986) work recognized the need to study curricula history, especially in Third World countries like Belize. Numerous factors play an intricate role in determining the curricula and its development in these countries. Data from a variety of sources (see Appendix) minimize problems of

interpretation that generalize actions from a single source for the final analysis. The available data illustrate how social studies curriculum development was a catalyst for educational change in Belize.

There were a number of plausible threats to the validity of my conclusions. There were minimal examples of previously used social studies curricula to be examined for this study. The lack of curricula was due to lack of storage, minimal funds available to maintain records, the distance, poor mail service in Belize, and the inability of many of my contacts to access e-mail or return phone calls to the United States. Additionally, contacting certain Belizean educators for this study was difficult because they did not answer my e-mails nor my letters of request. However, Mr. Eck, from the Ministry of Education; Mrs. Eck and Mr. Cima, teachers from Corozal Junior College; Mr. Tzul, from the Programme for Belize; and Miss Batty, and Mrs. Blanco from the Department of Archaeology, were very helpful in providing me with information I requested when in Belize and in the United States.

Chapter 4

Belizean Curricula and Social Studies Textbooks

The transition period of Belize from colonial to self-government was one of several events that influenced change in Belize's national curriculum. Historical research (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; and Patton, 1990) is one effective method to understand the impact of political change on what Belizeans learn about their past. Interpretation of written documents can explain some of the historical evidence that influenced social studies curricula decisions in Belize. Additionally, studying curricular history of Belize can provide knowledge of current educational policy decision-making in Belize. Gall, Borg, and Gall, (1996) stated that another purpose of historical research is to provide a moral framework for understanding the present. Analyzing curricular documents can assist educators in determining present and future directions of social studies curricula decisions.

Historical research (Brickman, 1982; Carr, 1967; Hill, 1993; and Tuchman, 1981) methods exist to understand present educational directives of what Belizean students learn about their ancient past. The development of my study included knowledge of Belize's curriculum history (Kliebard, 1995; Reid, 1986; Tanner & Tanner, 1980 and 1990; Goodson, 1981 and 1983; and Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery & Taubman, 1995). Curriculum history promotes exploration of relationships between events and/or causes of past events as it relates to

curricular development. Reid (1986) stated that history can be beneficial to a practically based conception of curriculum change. Consideration of historical and curriculum history methods provided the structure to gather data for this study. The content of the material (e.g., historical and curricular documents) was analyzed for this study to identify patterns and comparisons to answer the questions of what precolonial history was or was not included in the data.

Belizean curricula

Documents presented here represent a limited example of social studies curricula developed since 1950. This reflects the minimal attention to archiving education materials in Belize due to lack of funding and/or storage space. The following documents were acquired on my visits to Belize during the summers of 1999, 2000 and fall of 2001 (see Table 2).

Table 2 Belizean Social Studies Curricular documents

1984 Revised Social Studies Curriculum Guide

1989 Social Studies Scheme of Work for Form One of Secondary School

1991 Social Studies Scheme of Work Year Two, Terms Two and Three

1992 Primary Social Studies Scheme of Work

1992 Standard I Primary Social Studies Scheme of Work

1994 Social Studies Scheme of World for Form one of Secondary School

1999 Infant I Lower Division Social Studies Curriculum

1999 Lower Division Social Studies Infant II Curriculum

1999 Lower Division Social Studies Standard I Curriculum

2001 Middle Division Social StudiesUnits of Work

2001 Upper Division Social Studies Units of Work

In 1984, the Ministry of Education published the *Revised social studies curriculum guide* developed by Belizean principals and primary teachers, Ministry of Education Officers, personnel from the University of West Indies, the United States-Aid Primary Education Project, general and local managers (p.i). Developers of this curriculum emphasized the role social studies had in providing elementary students in Belize with learning their past. However, the curriculum limited instruction to post-colonial history. In the area of social studies development, this revised document does not adequately address precolonial history, which correlated with the newness of Belize becoming an independent nation three years prior to publication of this guide.

This guide, 65 pages long, was developed for instructing primary school students. It targeted "infant one, infant two, and standard one" primary levels. The structure of the guide is divided into three categories: objectives, content, and

suggested activities. These sections are further divided into themes, topics, organizing concepts, and generalizations. The following statement was included in the curriculum as it related to social studies education: *Social studies might be considered as that area of study which deals with man's relationship to his physical and social environment, his interaction with other men and their ideas in the past, and the constantly changing present which shapes the future* (Ministry of Education, 1984, p.iv). The portion of the statement regarding ...*their ideas in the past…* was interpreted by this researcher to represent what knowledge and understanding of Belize's past was important to learn. However, analysis revealed a limited perspective on learning what "past" was included in the social studies framework of this and other curricula in Belize.

The design of *Infant I* (infant students are lower elementary level learners) curricula provided an introduction to the guide to assist teachers "…facilitate better understanding and effective implementation" (Ministry of Education, 1984, p.ii) of information to be taught. The structure of the guide was divided into five topics: Myself; myself as a member of my family; myself as a member of the class; myself and my immediate neighbourhood [sic]; and, my country.

The inclusion of the topic country was of particular interest. Students learned the name of the country, the location of the capital, identified national leaders, identified national symbols, and recognized national holidays. However, it was the material excluded about the country of Belize prior to becoming an

independent nation that caught the attention of this researcher. There was no proviso for students to learn how Belize became a nation, nor identify the numerous ethnic groups that have impacted Belizean history. The only ethnic group recognized was the Garifuna. Additionally, Baron Bliss Day, a national holiday observed every March 9, honored Englishman Baron Bliss, a royal from the Kingdom of Portugal. Upon his death in 1926, due to food poisoning off the coast of Belize, he bequethed $2 million dollars to Belize (www.sanpedrosun.net/old/98-91.html, September 28, 2001). The Baron is considered Belize's greatest foreign benefactor.

No attention was placed on learning about Maya contributions to the country of Belize at this early elementary level. Perhaps the new government determined it was best to study the present and future, move forward in history, but not look to the past. Informal interviews with several Belizean teachers indicated curriculum writers of this and later guides included areas of study that reflected the political controlling party's view at the time, as well as the dominant ethnic perspective developing this guide at the time. One could infer the reason for minimal attention to the Maya or other ethnic groups in the curriculum is a result of the political and ethnic climate during production of this work.

The writers of this guide inserted aims and objectives designed to promote the concepts of "better understanding and effective implementation" by Belizean teachers. A page with suggested skills for students to develop was provided. For

each part of the curricula, guidelines for teacher evaluation, suggestions for evaluation procedure, and suggested evaluation exercises were provided.

The first theme, *Our home, school and neighbourhood* [sic] and topic *Myself* included six objectives, six organizing concepts around identifying social groups, and six suggested learning activities. There is no inclusion of the Maya as an example of social groups to be studied in this section. Theme two, *Our home, school, neighbourhood* [sic] and topic, *Myself as a member of the family* covered five objectives, five concepts on individuals, relationships and family, and five suggested activities. Theme three, *Our home, school and neighbourhood* [sic], and topic, *Myself as a member of the class,* provided four objectives, four concepts on individuals, schools, classes and four activities. The fourth theme, *Our home, school and neighbourhood* [sic] and topic *Myself and my immediate neighbourhood* [sic] included five objectives, five organizing concepts of places of interest, people, transportation, and public facilities, and five different activities. The final theme, *Our home, school and neighbourhood* [sic] and topic *My country,* suggested four objectives, four concepts to learn about country symbols and national leaders, and four activities to complete this unit. As previouisly mentioned, a limited historical perspective of Belize's development as a country was presented. At the end of each level, e.g., *Infant I,* several ideas were provided for teachers to assist them in the instruction of their study. Use of visual aides including graphs, maps, and pictures were suggested to introduce or

reinforce information being learned by the students. For each topic, suggested procedures and questions were provided for the teachers. The final section of the *Infant I* curriculum included suggested outcomes for the students to have accomplished. The same format was followed for the *Infant II* and *Standard I* curriculum.

The *Infant II* curriculum focused on one theme, our local community, and was divided into three topics for study: Where is our local community?; who are the people in our community?; and who are some of the workers in our community? The first topic, where is our local community, included four objectives, four organizing concepts on location, and four suggested activities. There was no specific instruction on the Maya, only a reference to the settlement by ancestors. The examples included in this section included the Mestizo and Garinagu settlers. The second topic included three objectives, three concepts about groups of people and families, and three activities. The ethnic groups noted in the local community for study included the Mestizo, Garinagu, Mennonite, Creole, Salvadorans, East Indian, and Chinese, but no reference to the Maya. One of the objectives focused on discussion of things used by ancestors of a specific ethnic group. Examples included tools, weapons, food, clothing, and medicine and so forth used by the groups. The exclusion of the Maya from this section negated their contributions in food production, clothing, and other areas. A

pattern has developed regarding the exclusion of studying the Maya in the social studies curriculum.

The final topic, organized around interdependence, included nine objectives and activities. There was no inclusion of precolonial history in this section. This section discussed how the community used its natural resources, animal resources, and identified basic human needs. Additionally, included for study were identifying different types of workers or helpers that supplied basic needs to the community, e.g., nurses, doctors, farmers, and so forth. Attention in this early primary grade focused on cultural and physical geography of the students' immediate community. Suggested planning and instructional review questions were provided for the teachers in this guide. The final core curriculum included in this revised guide was *Standard I.*

Standard I was divided into three topics: Where are other communities located in relation to ours?; what resources do other communities have?; and how and when do people travel from one community to the next? Learning experiences, guidelines for teacher evaluation, suggested evaluation exercises and suggestions for evaluation procedures were included. No provision or instruction was included for Belizean students to learn about their precolonial history. This curriculum would begin the task of accessing available curricula or other government documents to determine if precolonial history was or was not included in the social studies curricula in Belize.

Social studies scheme of work for form one of secondary school, 1989

In 1989, the Curriculum Development Unit in Belize City, in partnership with a research panel, prepared this scheme of work to use with the book *TIPS for teachers of social studies* (Ministry of Education, 1989). This guide provided information for the first term of the academic year, 1989-1990. The 2nd and 3rd term scheme would not be available until the 1990-1991 academic year. Upon acquisition of this curriculum, the 2nd and 3rd term scheme was not available. However, the spirit of the scheme was to provide instruction of social studies in the lower secondary schools noticeably absent prior to the publication of this guide.

This guide contains 58 pages. The book was prepared by a panel of 12 teachers participating in a four-day workshop for social studies. The workshop provided teachers the opportunity to "bridge the gap between the primary social studies curriculum guide and various Caribbean Examination Council's (CXC) syllabuses in related fields" (Ministry of Education, 1989, p.1). The guide presented the participants' assessment of student weaknesses and needs in the area of social studies education. The participants noted Belize suffered from a shortage of qualified history and geography educators as well as a weak transition of primary to secondary social studies instruction.

An "expanding horizons approach" was the basic model used to develop this guide. Students would begin their social studies learning from a personal to

family view, and move outward to study their local, state, national and international perspective. Themes in the guide revolved around relevant and topical calendar historical dates and events. The idea was to provide teachers the opportunity to use newspapers, current at the time, to assist in their instruction. Additionally, this was the second scheme to be completed. English was the first prepared scheme of work and science and the creative arts scheme had not been produced. Overall, the schemes of work were to be used as an integrated curriculum for instruction and learning.

Thirteen themes were developed in this book. The 2nd theme, Early settlements, provided the most information on what Belizean students would learn about their precolonial history. The contents of the theme included a section on the names and locations of early settlements in Belize, including the Maya. Additionally, a section of study focused on the occupations and living conditions of the early settlers. However, it is not known how much or to what extent precolonial instruction was provided. This guide did provide evidence that only minimal instruction was included on the study of the Maya.

Each of the 13 themes included sections of content to be covered, ideas for concepts to be learned, skills, activities, and assessments to be completed at the conclusion of study. All of these were structured in an outline format. References were provided for use at the end of each section. Many of the

references were the recommended textbooks provided by the Ministry of Education.

Appendix 1 provided a cross-reference of concepts applied in the instruction of the guide, which correlated with the CXC social studies syllabus from June, 1985. Appendix 2 provided six types of activities to engage students in their learning process: reading assignments; writing and notemaking [sic]; classroom discussions; working in groups; creative activities; field work and learning resources. Using multiple learning methods provided Belizean teachers and students the opportunity to actively engage in social studies learning. This guide was a model from which Belizean educators could draw ideas for implementing better instruction and learning opportunities. This was the most comprehensive guide on social studies produced at the time. It represented a change in what students needed to learn about social studies, e.g., the ancient Maya, and the need to modify instruction.

Year Two, terms two and three, 1991

The *Social Studies scheme of work: Year two, terms two and three* (Ministry of Education, 1991), has 41 pages. This guide was produced for the second year of high school. Term two is divided into 10 themes land use, forestry, food and agriculture, landscape, weather, housing, settlements, rural/urban migration, aliens, and kids having kids. Each theme covers six areas, content and concepts to be covered, skills to be applied throughout the lesson,

suggested activities to teach the lesson, examples of different assessments to use, and suggested references to supplement student learning. Interestingly, many of the references are journal articles, and government documents. There is no study of precolonial history at this level.

Revised social studies scheme of work for form one of secondary school, 1994

This guide has 83 pages. This is a revised guide for form one, secondary level, in Belize. This scheme of work was revised by a panel of secondary teachers. One of the main goals of this new guide was to "bridge the gap between the Primary Social Studies Curriculum guide and the various CXC syllabuses in related fields" (Ministry of Education, 1994, p.2).

The panel of teachers included a rationale for teaching social studies at the secondary level. The theme of the guide is freedom of thought. This relates to the added study of human rights and civil liberties. The ideology appears to be correlated with Belize's involvement with UNESCO's educational goals. The guide includes an expanding horizon and thematic approach to teaching social studies. There are 25 themes of study divided over the three term grading period. This curriculum guide uses the same structure as the *Form two* guide e.g., content, concepts, skills, activities, assessment and reference sections. For purposes of this research, attention will be given to the themes of early settlements and the development of nationalism in Belize.

The theme, early settlements, covers seven different topics in a two-week period. Students consider the nature of early settlements, e.g., the Maya in Belize. Students map migration routes and discuss why people came to this area. One activity suggested was to role-play a public meeting before the Battle of St. George's Caye. This guide illustrates the minimal attention to in-depth study of the Maya at the high school level. There is no indication that students will add knowledge to their understanding of precolonial history previously learned during their elementary schooling. This is a significant factor illustrating why Belizean students do not know their history. Precolonial study topics are repetitive throughout the elementary and secondary level. As a result, Belizean students continue to be instructed on the same materials, examples and activities in the area of precolonial history. The third theme, development of nationalism, briefly traces Belize's nationalistic movement. Students discuss why they would rather be a Belizean citizen as opposed to a British subject.

There is a pattern of minimal inclusion of precolonial history in the elementary and secondary social studies curriculum prior to and after independence in Belize. This pattern did not change until the development of the new national curriculum in Belize during the end of the 20th century.

Infants primary social studies, 1992

In 1992, the Ministry of Education published the *Infant I* and *Infant II* social studies programme [sic] of work for primary teachers. The curriculum has

20 pages. This was an interim curriculum used during the 1992-1996 development phase of the Belize Primary Education Project. This guide replaced any previous published social studies curricula. The structure of the guide was similar to previously used social studies curricula. The guide was divided into the following sections: objectives, content activities, materials, and reference. The only format change to the guide was the addition of the material/reference column.

The first term of study in this guide centered on students learning the rules of the classroom, and learning about themselves and their family. Near the end of the first term, students are introduced to the story about the arrival of the first Garinagu to Belize. Student activities include making a Garifuna flag, listen to Garifuna music and re-enact their arrival to Belize. No other settlement stories are discussed during this term.

The second term of study focuses on the home, school, and neighbourhood [sic]. Historical discussion evolves around the story of Baron Bliss. Children discuss Bliss' contributions to the development of Belize. Additionally, Belizean students learn why the Baron is considered a national hero in Belize.

The third term's topic centered on the country of Belize. Students label a map of Belize, e.g., Belmopan and the districts. Another topic presented for discussion was the story of the Battle of St. George's Caye. Topics studied by Belizean students are narrow and represent a minimal perspective about their

historical development as a people or nation. The only other historical study was identifying selected Maya historical preservation areas, e.g., Lu Ban Tuun and Ux Ben Ca. The Maya were listed as an example of a group living in the local community that possibly could be used to describe a way of life for appropriate related students. Furthermore, no additional information was contained in the guide recognizing contributions or pertinent historical events of the Maya. One pattern arising from the guides is the emphasis on teaching four events in Belizean history: the Garifuna's arrival to Belize, the Battle of St. George's Caye, recognizing Baron Bliss, and knowing when Belize became an independent country. This limited focus of study of these four events indicates Belizean students have a minimal perspective about their historical development as a people or nation.

This curriculum mimics the format and language of the 1984 social studies *Infants* curriculum. The main differences between the 1984 and 1992 curricula included an expanded activity section and a column for materials and references to be used with the different activities. Additionally, one objective added in the 1992 guide included identification and description of an appropriate group in the students' community, e.g., the Maya. Otherwise, no major changes were made to the minimal historical study of Belize.

The age level of this curriculum may indicate the writers' of this guide did not think young Belizean students were capable of understanding their ancient

past. Ironically, the writers' concluded Belizean students could understand selected British historical events, e.g. the Battle of St. George's Caye (Ministry of Education, 1992, p. 11). The social studies curricula in Belize repeats the study of several British historical events, and so forth, in the elementary grades, but excludes historical events, e.g., Maya farming techniques, disputes with the Spanish, and so forth, that precede British influence and dominance in the country. For Belizean students, historical study has been shaped by British perspectives, not regional or broader indigenous precolonial history, reflective of Belize's past.

Primary social studies scheme of work for Standard I, 1992

In 1992, the Ministry of Education produced a provisional curriculum for *Standard I* upper elementary students. This curriculum has 20 pages. This guide was a temporary plan of social studies instruction until the new comprehensive curriculum was completed. The format duplicates the *Infant* curriculum structure. There are five columns of structure for teachers to follow during the three terms of the school year: objectives, content, activities, materials, and reference.

During the first term of study, students learn about the Battle of St. George's Caye that occurred September 10, 1798. On September 10, 1798, the Spanish attacked The Settlement of Belize. The Spanish met strong opposition from the British settlers. The Spanish were defeated at St. George's Caye. This event marked another major victory for the settlers in the region against the

Spanish. Additionally, this time period began the demise of Spanish dominance in the New World. For Belizean students, this lesson focused on British influence in Belizean history, but the next lesson shifts quickly to the year 1981. Students study the 1798 Battle of St. George's Caye, and leap 183 years to 1981, to identify the year Belize became an independent nation. The elementary social studies curriculum is repetitious and illogical in its presentation of historical study. The students are exposed to a limited perspective of Belizean history, and have minimal opportunity to examine the country's precolonial history. The elementary social studies curricula in Belize is a paltry source for students to cultivate knowledge about historical events, people, and places, other than the Garifuna and British exploits.

The next topic for discussion is Belize as a British colony. However, the unsystematic design of this scheme of work gives minimal indication on what information is covered with students. The illogical aimless progression of study in this guide illustrates the meagerness off this curriculum. Additionally, students learn map skills, e.g., cardinal directions and identify natural resources, discuss Christopher Columbus and Pan American Day, October 12th. Other areas of studies include the recognition of Garifuna Settlement Day, November 19, 1832, the national holiday commemorating the arrival of the Garifuna to Belize, and comparing neighboring communities physical, cultural and economic resources.

The second term of study focused on the theme "the local community and neighbouring [sic] communities. The organizing concept is studying resources. Belizean students learn about their local resources, e.g. water, humans, and animals. Additionally, students learn about neighbouring [sic] community resources and learn how their local and neighbouring [sic] community communicates, e.g., t.v., radio, and so forth.

For the third term of study, students discuss Baron Bliss Day and factors influencing communities. Additional topics covered are identifying types of travel, e.g. cars, boats, and so forth; what is labour [sic] day; safety rules; locate commonwealth countries; and, hurricanes.

The *Standard I* social studies guide is a diluted scheme of study for Belizean students. On reason for the deficiency in this guide is the result of the Primary Education Development Project. The goal of this project was to develop a comprehensive curriculum for Belizean teachers and students. However, until the projected completion of the project in 1996, the Ministry of Education personnel did not create adequate schemes of study to be used in Belizean schools during this time period. In fact, correspondence with an Information officer for the Society for the Promotion of Education and Research (SPEAR) wrote, that during a retrenchment of personnel in the Ministry of Education in Belize, the successor to ms. Richards, "burned all the research and development material gathered in an effort to standardize secondary education across the board"

(personal correspondence, Ms. A. K. Borland, August 24, 2001). Even though this information targeted the secondary level, all of the curricula being developed for the 1996 deadline ceased, and a new direction for curricula development occurred. However, the social study guides produced between 1992-1996 were an interim measure, a diluted attempt to keep social studies instruction in place, but with minimal structure, coherence or direction, especially in connection with social studies learning year to year in Belize.

The most significant curricula change in Belize's history during the early 1990s is attributed to Belize's participation in UNESCO's educational opportunities. Additionally, legislative initiatives were put in place in Belize with passage of the Education Act of 1991 and revisions made to it in 1996. The Education Act of 1991 repealed the Education Act of 1980. The Education Act of 1991 was in response to Belize's participation in the World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) in 1990. One goal of this conference was to develop basic educational opportunities for every person, including effective curricula development, which would greatly affect Belize. In conjunction with the publication of the Delors et al. (1996) report, *Learning the treasure within,* revisions were made to Belize's Education Act in 1996 to incorporate the proposed adoption of UNESCO's Four Pillars of Learning. Until the *National Primary Curriculum* draft was published in 1999, curricula in Belize, specifically in the area of social studies, would be a paltry source for Belizean teachers and

students to use in the classroom. Belize's participation at the WCEFA, and at later UNESCO sponsored educational summits, were the catalyst for the Ministry of Education to set a new course in curricula development, especially in social studies course work.

Social studies lower division units of work for Infant I, 1999

This guide has 28 pages. The *Infant I* course of study is divided into nine themes: myself and my family; my family and my home; my community; rules; culture; first language; we have rights; land and water; and weather and climate. Each theme is divided into organized content sets, suggested teaching/learning strategies and suggested strategies/activities for assessment, linkages and connections and recommended resources. The resource section identified specific recommended texts to be used with each activity. This is the first time recommended textbooks and activities have been correlated. The guide has 28 pages.

The first theme, myself and my family, students complete five activities. Students learn their name, age, gender, identify immediate family members, draw their family tree and create a picture book or chart of their family. Textbooks aligned with this theme include *Caribbean Social Studies book 1* (Morrissey, 1990) and *Tapir* (Ministry of Education, 1994).

The second theme, my family and my home, includes seven activities: myself; myself as a part of my home; myself as a part of my class; myself as a

part of my neighbourhood [sic]; family members and their roles; love within the community; and water, shelter, food and clothing. Recommended textbooks include *Caribbean Social Studies book 1* and *Tapir*.

The third theme, my community, has seven activities: defining community; location of my community using cardinal points; transportation in the community; fellowship-feeling, working, worshipping together; community workers; natural resources of the community; and marketing of local products. No additional social studies textbook is included for use during this unit of study.

The fourth theme, rules, is divided into eight activities. No social studies textbook is used for any of the activities. Students learn rules for home and school, and safety rules in the community.

The fifth theme, culture, covers six activities. Activities completed include differences in people; ethnic groups within the classroom; belonging to an ethnic group; staple food for different ethnic groups; clothing for each ethnic group; and ethnic music. New texts for this area of study include the *Atlas of Belize* (Cubola Productions, 1996), a Tesol reader and a book on the history of Belize. No specific citation is given for the Tesol reader or history of Belize. The only specific text with the title *History of Belize* is by Narda Dobson (1973). The activities included in the culture theme provide students the opportunity to learn about their classmates ethnic clothing, food and some history, but unless a child is

of Maya descent, it is unlikely students will be exposed to any precolonial Maya history or culture.

The sixth theme, first language, includes six different activities. There is no linkage of previously learned cultural attributes of oral history, writing or storytelling in this unit. Students are not exposed to Belize's precolonial history or cultural past, expressly identified by Friar Diego De Landa's (de Landa, 1566/nd) work and Maya folklore.

The seventh theme, we have rights, includes six activities. Students learn to identify poor people and learn how to help people less fortunate then themselves.

The eighth theme, land and water, students complete five activities. Students learn about the importance of water and identify some natural landscapes in the local community.

The final theme, weather and climate, has two activities: types of weather and the effects of weather. Infant I students do not study precolonial history. The lack of exploration of percolonial history by Belizean students at this age could be related to their developmental level, not the material included for study.

Social studies lower division units of work for Infant II, 1999

This guide has 26 pages. This curriculum is divided into nine themes: myself and my family; interdependence with myself and my family; my community; interdependence within the community; need for rules; culture (of

ethnic groups within the classroom); languages, music, dance (of four main ethnic groups); rights of the child; and land and water. The format for this and the entire new primary curriculum is the same. The guide is divided into content sets, suggested teaching/learning strategies, suggested strategies/activities for assessment, and recommended resources for teachers and students. Additionally, the guide includes cross-curricular outcomes for the students.

Theme six, Culture (of ethnic groups within the classroom), provided students the opportunity to share their individual ethnic background and history. Interestingly, the guide addresses four main ethnic groups, none of which are identified. However, if any children in a classroom at this level are Maya, it would permit an unique chance to share information about their customs and traditions, perhaps customs that occurred prior to colonial times. Resources in this unit indicate students will learn some history of Belize, but no specific contributions or information is listed. The following unit, languages, music, dance (of four main ethnic groups), students learn the historical and cultural contributions of the Garifuna culture, but the guide does not address any of the other three ethnic groups in Belize. Historical study of the four ethnic groups is limited and biased. This could represent a narrow perspective by the curriculum writers concerning contributions made by the other groups, or reveal a bias to include specific information/example of one ethnic culture.

Social studies lower division units of work for Standard I, 1999

This guide has 29 pages. Elementary students at this level cover nine themes: weather and climate (wet and dry seasons); myself and my family; types of families and their basic needs; my community and its resources; culture; rights of a child; land and water; and weather and climate. The *Caribbean Social Studies book 2* is used during this unit.

Historical study of Belize is conducted in the culture theme. The organization of the new curricula does not indicate how Belizean students' differentiate learning about the four main ethnic groups at the different elementary levels. Added to the suggested learning activities for students complete include writing and recording poems in their first language and exhibiting students' work at an open day cultural presentation. One consistency within the curriculum is the inclusion of the Garifuna. Recognition and example of a main ethnic group in Belize is the Garifuna. The omission of any other main group, even as an example limits historical perspective for students learning about Belizean history, cultural or otherwise. The theme on culture is the only source to study some Belizean history. A history exemplified by the Garifuna, but not of any other ethnic group.

The *Standard I* social studies guide is a diluted scheme of study for Belizean students. One reason for the deficiency in this guide is the result of the Primary Education Development Project. The goal of this project was to develop

a comprehensive curriculum for Belizean teachers and students. However, until the projected completion of the project in 1996, the Ministry of Education personnel did not create adequate schemes of study to be used in Belizean schools during this time period. In fact, correspondence with an Information officer for the Society for the Promotion of Education and Research (SPEAR) wrote, that during a retrenchment of personnel in the Ministry of Education in Belize, the successor to Ms. Richards, "burned all the research and development material gathered in an effort to standardize secondary education across the board" (personal correspondence, Ms. A. K. Borland, August 24, 2001). Even though this information targeted the secondary level, all of the curricula being developed for the 1996 deadline ceased, and a new direction for curricula development occurred. However, the social study guides produced between 1992-1996 were an interim measure, a diluted attempt to keep social studies instruction in place, but with minimal structure, coherence or direction, especially in connection with social studies learning year to year in Belize.

Social studies middle division units of work for Standard II, III, and IV, 2001

As previously mentioned, initial drafts of these elementary social studies components were piloted in some primary classrooms in Belize during the 1999-2000 school year. The structure of these guides include study outcomes, cross-curricular outcomes, content organized into manageable sets, suggested teaching/learning strategies, and suggested strategies/activities for assessment.

The model of the new curriculum provides teacher specific content to be covered, strategies, and ideas on how to implement the learning to be accomplished by the students. Additionally, for purposes of this research, the curricula include study of Belize's pre-European period on the Maya civilization. This significant step provides Belizean students the opportunity to gain cultural capital about historical events previously excluded.

Standard II, 2001

This 30 page social studies curriculum is divided into nine themes to be taught over a three term grading period. The first theme covers 6 topics on Belize's Pre-European period. Topics include: Maya settlement, types of Maya, culture of the Maya, e.g., food, clothing, language, and religion, achievements/contributions, and subsistence farming. Belizean students have the opportunity to locate early Maya settlements and selected major Maya ruins. Contributions of language, religion, the calendar and other important achievements of the Maya are taught. This document, similar in design to previous curricula, contains a variety of details to be taught about the Maya, as well as other material to be covered then previously printed.

The second unit of study is on slavery in Belize. Students learn the origin of slaves in Belize and compare lifestyles of Africans and Belizeans. Students also learn about British colonialism in Belize. Discussion is also organized

around life in the mahogany camps and the impact of the logwood and mahogany trade on Belize's environment.

Belize's weather and climate are examined in the third unit of study. Discussion includes the importance of disaster preparedness in Belize. Students learn how natural disasters, e.g., hurricanes and floods, impact Belizean's way of life.

The fourth unit is organized around natural resources. Students label where natural resources are found in Belize. Laws governing the protection and conservation of natural resources are introduced to the students. Belizeans at this level learn how to protect their natural resources including but not limited to water and animals. Additionally, types of settlements in the local community are identified and labeled on a map of Belize. The last section is deveoted to uses of natural resources. Identification of tourist attractions including but not limited to Maya ruins are located. Discussion is encouraged on the benefits of tourism as it relates to foreign exchange and job opportunities for Belize.

The fifth unit covers aspect of Belize's government. Students learn about their structure of government and how it is financed. Additional discussion focused on the reasons for independence and the significance of the colors of the Belizean flag. Human rights and child's rights and responsibilities were the last two sections discussed. These areas relate to the four pillars as proposed by UNESCO (Delors, et al., 1996).

The earth as a part of the solar system is the sixth unit of study. Students learn terms related to physical geography, e.g., rotation and revolution. Additionally, students create climographs to compare average rainfall around the country.

The seventh unit covers information related to land and water. Sources of water supplies are discussed and how it is used on the landscape. Map building exercises are completed to identify main rivers of Belize. Students identify continents on a world map. The unit concludes with discussion on how Belizeans have adapted to the climate in Belize.

The eighth unit considers the way of life in Belize in relation to Central America. Map skills are used to identify national boundaries. Students discuss the acculturation of foods, music, and so forth from Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras in Belize. Additionally, education, transportation, and communication comparisons are illustrated among the neighboring countries in Belize.

The final unit defines the organization of different ethnic groups in Belize. Students identify how different culture groups have influenced Belizean customs e.g., food, education, family life, religion, music, and so forth. Ironically, this section promotes contributions of national and cultural heroes, but no one person or group is suggested to illustrate this point.

Standard III, 2001

This document has 35 pages. The guide is divided into nine units. Units of study include: the Mayas-the first people of Belize, slavery in Belize and the Caribbean, weather and climate, natural resources and settlements of Belize, government, the earth as a part of the solar system, adaptation to physical environment, life in Belize as it relates to the Caribbean, and the organization of the Garifuna and Maya ethnic groups.

The first unit, the Mayas-the first people of Belize, traces the origin of the Mayas. Students learn how the Mayas lived and survived off of the land. Additionally, students are exposed to Maya education, types of dwellings, education and family life. Comparisons are drawn from governance of the past and the present. Mayan achievements are examined in the area of mathematics, the calendar, architecture, agriculture, trade, and so forth. At the close of this unit, students identify the different types of Maya in Belize, e.g., Ketchi, Mopan, and Yucatecan, and compare and contrast the customs of each of these groups.

The second area of study covers slavery in Belize and the Caribbean. Students learn about early logwood and mahogany trade and how slaves were used to cut the logwood and mahogany trees. The final topic of study in this three-week period is on the Anglo-Guatemala dispute and the Belize-Guatemala dispute.

The remaining units of study include: weather and climate, natural resources and settlements in Belize, the government of Belize, the earth as a part of the solar system, adaptation to physical environment, life in Belize as it relates to the Caribbean, and lastly, organization of the Garifuna and Maya ethnic groups. The last unit, organization of the Garifuna and Maya ethnic groups, encourage students to use these to groups to learn how they are organized and how these groups transmit traditions and customs to their communities and others.

Standard IV, 2001

There are 35 pages in this component of the social studies curriculum. Areas of study are divided into 10 themes. The first unit of study is on the Mayan civilization. Five topics are covered during this two to three week unit. The first topic is origin of the Mayas. Students discuss the hierachical structure of the government, e.g., nobles, freemen, and slaves. The end of the unit is devoted to cultural practices and achievements of the Maya, and how Belize's economy, especially through tourism, benefits from Mayan sites.

The second theme of study describes the political development of Belize. Students learn the roles and responsibilities of legislative and national assembly members. Additional emphasis is placed on learning Belize's Constitution and impact of achieving political independence in 1981.

The third theme, physical environment of Belize, emphasizes understanding of weather changes in Belize. A chronology of natural disasters,

e.g., hurricanes are identified and the need to have an up-to-date meteorology system to warn Belizean's of severe weather.

The fourth theme, natural resources and settlements of Belize identify major settlements by group on a map. Discussion of how natural resources are used in Belize and by the different groups is encouraged. Students learn how to protect and conserve natural resources. The unit ends with descriptions of heritage sites and the impact these sites have on tourism in Belize.

The next theme is organized to understand the function of government in Belize. Students identify government leaders and discuss their role in making laws. The unit concludes by describing how the government distributes tax monies received from the people. Some explanation of economic problems, e.g., supply and demand, inflation, and so forth are included.

The sixth theme identifies the various branches of government in Belize. Students learn the roles of the legislative, executive, and judiciary branches of government. Resources, such as guest speakers, field trips, and so forth are utilized to dramatize the duties of the various branches of government.

The seventh theme is devoted to earth's movement and its effects on time and seasons. Students learn the about the universe and its components. There is a review of the solar system and factors that influence changes in time around the globe.

The eighth theme focuses on understanding Earth's physical features and physical environment. Four activities are suggested to help students understand the physical characteristics of the world, uses of land areas, how to limit pollution and conserve natural resources, and discuss how people adapt to a variety of climate zones.

The ninth unit is devoted to understanding the concept of life in Belize as it relates to North America. Students define and illustrate a variety of cultures that exist in Belize and the world today. The end of the unit has the students identify various political organizations e.g., the United Nations and the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Students learn about economic development and the need for global interdependency.

The final unit, how the Creole, Chinese and Mennonites organize themselves to preserve their culture, is an opportunity for students to discuss the varied cultures that live in Belize. Cultural contributions of all the groups are discussed and the impact of their economic contributions to Belize is examined. *Standard II, III, IV,* are designed to provide appropriate learning outcomes in the area of social studies at the middle elementary level. Each level begins with a study of the ancient Maya, previously excluded in the curriculum. Attention to including precolonial history demonstrates the Ministry of Education's initiative to "know the history and status of Belize as a nation, including its social, political, and economic development" (Ministry of Education, 1999, p.41). At

long last, Belizean students have the opportunity to have knowledge of their rich cultural past, including precolonial times, previously dismissed or omitted in their social studies curriculum.

The disadvantages of content included in *Standard II, III, and IV* are relflected in the redundancy of information covered, especially concerning the ancient Maya. For example, Table 3 identifies the repetitive content and learning strategies found at these three levels. The study of the Maya is presented with minimal differentiation and is interpreted to be the same information learned year-to-year, but using a synonym to give the appearance the students are adding knowledge to understanding their precolonial history.

Additionally, students explain religious beliefs, cultural practices and identify at least three achievements of the Maya. In analyzing the content of the activities within the curriculum, specifically for *Standards II, III,* and *IV*, the writers ignore the redundancy of the material to be covered, especially concerning the ancient Maya. For example, Table 3 illustrates the repetitive content and learning strategies found at these three levels. Material covered is the same, but the activities and assessment vary minimally.

Table 3	Content	Learning Strategies
Standard II	Locate early Maya sites Brainstorm great Mayan Achievements	Locate Maya ruins in Belize Oral or written explanation of Maya achievements
Standard III	Trace origin of Maya Create a booklet of Mayan Achievements	Trace the origin of the Mayas through Belize Evaluate the booklets
Standard IV	Discuss original settlement of the Mayas in Belize Research Maya Achievements	Identify the original settlement of the Mayas in Belize List 3 achievements

Social studies upper division units of work for Standard V and VI, 2001

Standard V and VI represent the upper division of the primary grades in Belize. The *Standard V* curriculum has 65 pages and is divided into16 themes. The first theme History 2 includes four activities: the making of Mesoamerica, phases in the development of the Maya civilization, the Mayan society and the conquest of the Maya land. Students label a map to locate and identify Mayan sites, but a greater emphasis is placed on oral assessment. Interestingly, recommended resources at this level include textbooks not presently available in the government stores. One of the recommended texts is Shoman's (1994) *Thirteen chapters of a history of Belize.* Shoman's (1994) book is the most recent historical text available, but is considered by most Belizean teachers I spoke with too difficult for primary students to read and understand. Most of the recommended history textbooks do not include precolonial history or are not reading level appropriate for the elementary students.

The next theme, History 2, includes four content areas of study: slavery in Belize, human rights, Burnaby's Code and the timber trade. Group presentations and oral reports are the basis for assessing information in this section. A written test is suggested as an assessment tool for information covered concerning the timber trade in Belize.

The next theme, History 3, includes one area of study, Independence in Belize. This theme has six topics of study, which include independence status, from colony to independence (political changes/transformation), social changes including the development of Belize's educational system, economic changes and attempts at settling the Anglo-Guatemalan dispute. Students compare and contrast colonial rule versus being an independent nation, discuss benefits of gaining political independence in 1981, and discuss issues related to the Anglo-Guatemalan dispute.

The next topic covers information on the physical environment of Belize 1 and 2, government of Belize 1 and 2, world geography 1, 2, and 3, culture 1 and 2, tourism, and technology and entrepreneurship, The first two include data relevant to this research on precolonial history in Belize. The first unit explores the making of Mesoamerica. Students trace the migratory path of the ancestors of the Mayas and identify the physical features in Belize. Students identify significant time periods in the development of the Maya civilization. Topics to be studied include major achievements of the Mayas, class structure of the culture,

trade and trade routes in the region, and a brief history of the conquest of Maya land by the Spain and Britain.

Many of the topics are similar to what was included at the lower primary grades, but includes students to study Belize's development prior to independence. This seemingly minor recognition of precolonial history in social studies curricula represents an immeasurable step for Belizean students' to connect with their past, previously minimally addressed or absent from their social studies courses.

The *Standard VI* curriculum established a contemporary view of Maya history and life. This guide has 62 pages. Students discuss the impact of Columbus' arrival to the region and debate the advantages and disadvantages of European occupation of Maya land in the Americas. Additionally students discuss the culture of the Yucatec, Mopan and Ketchi Maya communities. Lessons focus on the struggles these communities endure in the contemporary world. Students learn about contemporary Mayan culture through their food, arts, and political involvement.

Of particular interest at this level is the study of the social, political, and economic transformation of Belize beginning with Spanish attacks on the Settlement of Belize. The Battle of St. George's Caye begins the discussion of transformation of the country and jumps through the 1800's quickly to discuss the nationalistic movement for independence from Britain. From 1838, to the 1860's,

and then to jump to the 1950's are quick leaps through historical events. This is one negative aspect of the curriculum. Selected dates and events are highlighted, omitting a great deal of history. Many events could be broken down into smaller learning sets to provide students a better picture of past events in Belizean history.

In the next unit, history 3, Belizeans review a constitutional time line to explain the events that led to independence. This unit begins with Belize becoming a colony 1862, includes 1954 when Universal adult suffrage was given, 1964, when Belize attained self-government status, 1975, when the United Nations supported Belize's quest to become independent, and concludes with 1981, the year Belize became independent.

The new primary curricula in social studies incorporates precolonial history previously absent from earlier guides. This is a major step in social studies curriculum development in Belize. Belize has initiated historical study to be more inclusive, rather than exclusive, as previously encouraged by her former Crown monarchy. For Belizean students, it is an opportunity to openly discuss history prior to colonial control. Additionally, students can relate to their previous sequential occupants of Belize (e.g., the Maya), to recognize their historical relevance to their present political, economic and social situation.

Belizean social studies textbooks

Curricular guides are the structure for Belizean teachers to use to incorporate and develop lessons of material to be learned by students. These

guides are not the only tools to assist social studies teachers' in implementing instructional strategies to help students learn. Another source of information to learn social studies material is through textbooks. The Ministry of Education is responsible for developing the list of suggested texts to be used in classrooms throughout Belize. Interestingly, Belizean students are required to purchase textbooks, at all levels, for all courses throughout their school years. Textbooks are purchased at government bookstores, office supply stores, e.g., Angelus Press, and some private bookstores. Additionally, many of the textbooks for the upper elementary through high school use the same textbook for social studies. Minimal emphasis is placed on specific textbooks to be used in the classroom at the secondary level. Texts are suggested, but not specifically assigned at the secondary level. However, for grades 1 through 6, specific social studies texts are used at each level.

The early social studies primary students use the *Caribbean social studies* (Morrissey, 1990,1991,1992 & 1996; and Pastor & Holland, 1993). The series was designed to align with the curriculum used throughout the region. Some of the material was generated from a workshop of primary school teachers. Mike Morrissey, a lecturer at the University of the West Indies, and Shirley Hamber, a social studies writer, organized this six-level series for the primary schools in Belize.

Caribbean social studies 1 (Morrissey, 1990) has 38 pages and is divided into 5 topics. The topics include: myself, my family, my home, my school, and the weather and me. This first topic includes information for students to learn basic needs, e.g., how to brush teeth and avoid dangerous situations. The next topic helps students to learn about their family, e.g., types of jobs and celebrations. The third topic describes the types of homes students live in, and how they help at home, e.g., rake leaves. The fourth topic, my school, reviews the design of the school and what materials were used to construct it. Students discuss what activities take place at school and learn the jobs of the people working at the school, e.g., teachers, cafeteria workers, and so forth. The final topic reviews information on weather and the individual students. Students learn the difference between a cloudy, wet and windy day. Additionally, students learn what types of clothing to wear on certain hot or cold days, and what to do if severe weather occurs, e.g., stay inside during a storm. The topic ends with a brief illustration of how water comes to the students' home, and the importance of conserving water. Illustrations are the main medium for students to learn about the information covered in this text. Minimal emphasis is placed on historical learning.

Caribbean social studies 2 (Morrissey, 1990) has 44 pages. This text focuses on the local community. The five topics include: our community, people

in our community, how we communicate, change in our community, and other communities. A vocabulary section is placed at the end of the text.

The first topic helps students to learn about their community, e.g., the name, and population, and so forth. Information covered in the second topic describes the different types of people who work in the community and the importance of working together. Communication is the third topic in this text. Students learn how to communicate, e.g., the telephone, letters, and so forth. The fourth topic identifies how change occurs in the community, e.g., land use, travel, and so forth. The fifth topic allows students to the opportunity to learn about other communities. Students compare and contrast their community with other communities. The last section of the book contains a list of new vocabulary words.

Caribbean social studies 3 (Morrissey, 1991) is a 60 page book. There are five topics of study and a new word section at the end of the text. The topics include: where we live, transport, work, the weather, and enjoying ourselves. The first topic covers information on reading a map, e.g., directions, locations, and so forth. Included within the text are activities to reinforce the concept of boundaries, e.g., puzzle map exercise, and learning facts about the local community. Students have the opportunity to compare and contrast their community with other communities.

The second topic reviews information about transport. Woven with the text are exercises to illustrate the concept of transportation. Students identify types of transportation systems and discuss how goods and services are moved in and out of the community and by whom.

The third topic explores different types of work, e.g., fishing, farming, and so forth. Students learn what types of products are grown or produced in some communities. Students complete several activities throughout the chapter to learn where products come from and who a product is manufactured at a factory. Additionally, students learn about the tourist industry and why it is important.

The fourth topic of discussion is on weather. Students learn how to monitor weather changes, e.g., temperature and rain. Activities within this topic include recording weather changes and how to read a climograph. Students learn the water cycle. Identifying types of leisure activities is the last topic of this text. Students discuss what types of games they play in their community. Students learn how to keep fit through exercise and a good diet. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion on different types of celebrations. The vocabulary list at the end of the chapter defines 35 terms.

The fourth year books, *Caribbean social studies: Belize,* (Pastor & Holland, 1996), covers information about the country of Belize. There are 108 pages in this text. There are six topics of study: the landscape, the people of our

country, our natural resources, tourism and trade, our government, and our independent nation. A glossary of terms is included at the end of the text.

The first topic, the landscape, includes content and activities to identify different physical and man-made features in Belize. Students identify rivers of Belize and geographical terms associated with physical features. Other information students learn include demographic information, the location of Belmopan, the capital of Belize, and major road systems of the country.

The second chapter includes some information about the Maya, an Amerindian group. General information is included about the Maya. Students learn they were a religious people, farmers, and had a short life span. The sixth chapter, our independent nation, discusses the importance of students knowing their past to live in the present. The Maya are cited as the first people to settle in Belize.

This chapter identifies the earliest known Maya settlement in Belize at Cuello, in the Orange Walk District. Other Maya sites identified include, Xunantunich and Altun Ha. A short generalization about the Maya empire is inserted and the next topic introduced Christopher Columbus being the first European to visit the Caribbean. He never visited the area known as Belize, but came as far as the Bay of Honduras. Students learn the first Europeans settled in Belize around 1638. Historical moments in Belize's history are inserted, but not fully covered in the text.

Caribbean social studies 4 (Morrissey, 1990) and *Caribbean social studies 5* (Morrissey, 1992) contain information about the Maya. For purposes of this research (see Table 4), illustrates the paltry amount of precolonial information included in these two higher elementary social studies texts. The sixth level text excludes information about the Maya. For Belizean primary students in levels 1-6, this series of textbooks minimally includes precolonial information about the Maya.

Caribbean social studies 6 (Hamber, 1996) has 155 pages. This book covers seven topics: planet Earth, understanding our planet, how we use the land, forests and fish, mines and factories, distributing the goods, and the family of nations. The main emphasis is on studying the Earth. There is no inclusion of precolonial history in this text.

Table 4 Caribbean Social Studies (CSS) 4 & 5 Precolonial Comparison Chart

	Maya	**European Influence**
CSS 4	First people of Belize Early settlement at Cuello Ruins: Xunantunich Altun Ha	British pirates, 1638 Treaty of Paris 1763 Burnaby's Code, 1765 Battle St. George's Caye 1798 British Crown Colony, 1862
CSS 5	Ameridians killed by Spanish Ameridians lived in groups	Columbus, first European To Caribbean French, Dutch, Danes, Swedes and Spanish came to Caribbean

Additional school texts

Two lower elementary texts include *Tapir* (Ministry of Education, 1994) and *Toucan* (Ministry of Education, 1994). This 80 page text, *Tapir,* is divided into four units: me and my family, my neighbourhood [sic], people need people, and the place we live in. There are ten lessons in the first unit, six in unit 2, 17 activities in unit three and 11 lessons in unit 4. Students are to read each section, discuss the stories and complete the questions and activities at the end of each section. This book does not include any historical study.

Toucan (Ministry of Education, 1994) has 30 pages. It is divided into three units of study: learning about the earth, living together, and making changes. At the end of each section, students answer questions and complete suggested activities. Examples of lessons in the text include aspects of the environment, the ocean, the coral reef, and so forth. There is no historical information included in this text for students to learn. The final texts for analysis are intended for use at the secondary level, but may be used at the upper elementary level. Belizean teachers can use the texts for supplemental information or at their discretion.

Originally published in 1995, *A history of Belize: Nation in the making,* was one of three texts "specifically aimed at giving students a complete portrait of Belize, covering history, geography and natural environment" (Leslie, 1997,

p.i). This text is used as the principal history book in Belize. The text is written for secondary students, but can be purchased and used at the elementary level.

A history of Belize: Nation in the making, (Cubola, 1995), has 125 pages. It is divided into three parts: colonialism in Belize, dependent Belize in the world economy, and toward an independent Belize. Study of precolonial history includes settlers in the Caribbean and Central America and the Maya. Descriptions of what the Maya grew e.g., corn, beans, and so forth, system of writing, how they traded, housing styles are included for study. The descriptions are not rich in detail, but provide information not found in other resources used in the social studies.

Chapter 2 focuses on European rivalries in the Caribbean. Students are exposed to some concepts about exploration to the Caribbean and learn the British took control of much of the Caribbean by the end of the 18th century. Chapter 3 reviews the Spanish and British control in Belize. Students learn of the early British settlers, pirates, during the 17th century. Brief descriptions guide the students through 200 years of change in Belize as a result of Spanish and British rivalry.

Chapter 3 describes Britain's attempt to rid Belize of the Maya. Many of the Maya resisted and retreated into the forests around San Ignacio, in the northwestern part of the country. Ultimately, the British wanted to use the Maya as laborers in the woodcutting camps. The Mayas were not cooperative in this

venture. The British turned to African slaves to fill the void of laborers to harvest the mahogany trees.

This text provides Belizean students the opportunity to become familiar with some of its country's history. This text, since its publication, continues to be the primary source of historical study in Belize for Belizean students to purchase for use in their social studies course of study.

A geography of Belize: The land and its people (Cubola, 1997), is the second of three textbooks in the Explorers Series. This text has 139 pages. It is divided into three parts: the earth is our home, Belize: the land and its people, and Belize in the region. The text explores the diverse landscape of Belize. Diagrams, photographs and drawings illustrate the descriptions of the geography of the country**,** Table 5 illustrates what information of precolonial history, e.g., the Maya, is discussed in the textbook. Minimal inclusion of precolonial history, e.g., the Maya is found in this textbook. Emphasis in this textbook is for Belizean students to identify and learn about their geography, e.g., geology of Belize, soils of Belize, political divisions, and so forth. The final book in this series, *The environment of Belize: Our life support system* (Jolly & McRae, 1998) discusses aspects of environmental issues and policies affecting Belize and how students need to learn to maintain a balance of human and environmental development.

Table 5 A geography of Belize: The land and its people
p. 80 The Maya population during the Classic period is estimated at 1 million people. No census was taken in 1790 of the Maya population.
p. 89 The Maya occupied vast area in Central America. Little is know how Maya city-states were organized. Three main Maya provinces include Dzuluincob, Chetumal, and Chol Maya. The Maya traded with one another. The Maya retreated inland with the settlement of the Baymen.
p. 90 Maya rebellion in neighbouring [six] Yucatan in mid 19th century defined northern border of Belize.
p. 119 Maya languages are spoken throughout Central America.
p. 120 The Maya's civilization extended from the Yucatan to northern Honduras and El Salvador.
p. 122 50% of Guatemala's 10 million people are Maya. Over 20 Maya languages are spoken in this country.

The text has 152 pages. It is divided into three parts: looking at life, ecosystems of Belize, and ensuring a future. This text was written to address a science perspective, but to be included for use in the social studies curriculum. Students identify ecosystems, cells, biological cycles, and so forth. Reference to the Maya is limited to impact of the 1972 *Ancient Monuments and Antiquities Laws*, enacted to protect archaeological sites, e.g., Caracol, Altun Ha, Cahal Pech, Cerro Maya, Lanamnai, Lubaantun, Nim Li Punit, Santa Rita, Serpon Dugar Mill,

Xunantunich, El Pilar and Uxbenka, and structures or buildings over 100 years old.

Belizean students, throughout their elementary and even in the secondary education careers, receive minimal precolonial instruction about their country. The most informative textbook for teachers and students to use in their social studies classroom is *A History of Belize: Nation in the making* (Leslie, 1997). This is the only recommended government textbook Belizean students can purchase to learn about precolonial history, e.g., the Maya. Belize, a small country with limited resources, as described from available curricula and textbooks, for the last fifty years, has minimally presented historical information for Belizean students to learn. However, this trend is changing as a result of Belize's involvement with UNESCO's *Education for All* (Haddad, et al., 1990). Belize is currently developing a comprehensive social studies curriculum to include precolonial history, previously excluded or minimally represented the curricula and textbooks. The data revealed curricular change occurred in Belize as a result of political, economic and educational change, especially as a result of Belize's involvement with UNESCO.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

This dissertation attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What is the history of social studies curriculum development in Belize from 1950-2001?
2. What is the scope of the current K-8 social studies curriculum in Belize?
3. Has the study of the ancient Maya been presented in Belizean Curriculum in the past, if so, how?

The history of social studies curriculum development in Belize during the past fifty-one years evolved slowly and on a need-by-need basis. Curriculum development during this period concentrated heavily on agricultural education and technical training. Documents analyzed revealed geography and history had been added to the curriculum in Belize after WWII, but emphasis was on learning British history, not Belize's ancient history. Educational policies in Belize were choreographed and financed by Britain. As a result, minimal attention was given to social studies curriculum reform until Belize gained independence from British rule. A result of this action necessitated Belize to secure foreign aid (money) to develop economic and educational programs (e.g., curriculum reform) previously subsidized by the mother country. Such reform in postcolonial Belize relied upon outside funding. If financial assistance of a program ceased, so did the project.

This was a consistent problem identified in social studies curriculum development.

Until the 1990s, minimal effort was made to include the study of precolonial history in Belize's social studies curriculum. Belize's association in UNESCO's EFA would be the catalyst for social studies curricular change in the new primary national curriculum. Interestingly, the termination of curriculum-reform funding by the World Bank in the mid-1990s forced Belize to cease the curriculum project in progress. In order to reactivate funding, Belize had to start from scratch to develop effective and relevant national curriculum. This event, specifically in the area of social studies reform resulted in the destruction of curriculum materials. This was one example why some social studies curriculum material was difficult to acquire: it was burned, thrown away, or, sometimes destroyed by natural disasters.

Climatic factors (e.g., hurricanes and seasonal rains) play a major role in the dearth of social studies curricula documents in Belize. Numerous catastrophic hurricanes have hit the country of Belize causing damage and loss of materials. One of the main reasons for Belizean's moving their capital from Belize City to Belmopan was to safeguard government buildings and documents from potential damage or loss caused by severe weather systems that plague the country. Additionally, due to inadequate storage facilities, many historical documents have been lost or misplaced. This researcher's recent visit to Belize in November,

2001 encountered the SPEAR office shuffling boxes of documents and books to the second floor of their building to safeguard them from the recent flooding in Belize City. Surprisingly, the safe relocation of these documents resulted in the misplacement or inaccessibility of books and documents. The constant threat of additional rainfall caused a mild panic to the workers at SPEAR because they did not know if the materials would be safe on the second floor of their building. Interestingly, activities in the new primary curriculum provide students the opportunity to discuss hazardous weather like hurricanes.

As a result of severe climatic conditions, severe flooding in Belize City caused many educational documents to be destroyed or lost. Several schools in southern Belize were damaged by the September 2001 hurricane, and requested replacement of curricula, books and other education supplies. Another example of lost documentation due to inclimate weather occurred during the 1931 hurricane that hit Belize. Governor Burden had finished compiling the history of Belize when the hurricane hit. Three of four copies of Burden's work were destroyed. Fortunately, a fourth copy was found unscathed in a tin box after the disaster. This story demonstrates how severe weather can ruin or completely destroy documents (e.g., government, education, and others). Belize's low economic status does not provide the infrastructure to properly store documents to withstand horrendous forces of nature.

Two additional examples illustrating Belize's poor storage facilities were experienced by this researcher during her first and second visits to Belize in 1998 and 1999. In 1998, I visited the Department of Archaeology and had the privilege to view Maya artifacts dating back more than 2000 years. However, the crowded storage of these rare and beautiful artifacts were displayed on metal and wood shelving, and the area was not temperature regulated. The limited budget to provide appropriate storage of these artifacts and the poor condition of the facility illustrated the disadvantages of being a Third World country. In 1999, I returned to Belize to gather curricula data for this study. The curricula I obtained were gathered from the University of Belize's Teacher's College library. The librarian gave me extra copies of available social studies curricula. Continued inquiry into obtaining curricula generated from 1950-1990 was limited due to Belize's budgetary limitations (e.g., only a limited number of copies were printed and revised) or older copies were thrown away. Additionally, the Ministry of Education had inadequate storage facilities to store older educational materials.

Social studies curriculum development has been closely tied to colonial rule, inadequate funding and storage facilities, and climatic conditions in Belize. Understanding these limitations facilitates knowledge of how social studies curriculum change has developed in Belize. This study pieces together historical information describing the noticeable absence of Belize's precolonial history in social studies instruction. Belize's social studies curriculum development

parallels the statement by Joseph Iyo (2000), an instructor at the University College of Belize; he wrote, "what is happening in Belize is the birth pains of transition from a colonial-driven education system, which sought to produce loyal British subjects, to a yet to be relevant education system that is capable of addressing the needs of a generation that is critical and expects new challenges" (p.55). The new national primary social studies curriculum provides Belizean students the opportunity to learn about their ancient past (e.g., the Maya) previously neglected or omitted in the curriculum.

Question #2

The scope of the current K-8 social studies curriculum in Belize is completely different from earlier curricula developed in the country, with the exception of the secondary level, which has not been developed. The secondary level is yet to be developed. However, a trip to Belize during the fall of 2001 revealed that even though the new curriculum had been sent to Belizean teachers, but many of them were not using it. Reasons given by several teachers for not implementing the new curriculum included the following: minimal workshop sessions to learn how to use the document; no textbooks available to teach the new information (e.g., the ancient Maya); and reluctance to accept educational change. The latter reason identifies a major problem with curriculum change in Belize. Many teachers have never used a curriculum guide. Research findings uncovered rural and urban teachers' facing similar, yet different problems

pertaining to curricular change. Sometimes, only one curriculum guide is sent to a rural school. Minimal funding is available to send multiple copies of expected teaching and learning goals. Funding is in place to create the materials, but often does not cover post-curriculum training or copying fees. Analysis of the new curriculum revealed several problems; the most obvious was exclusion of a key to interpret the abbreviations for each lesson and connected learning areas. If a teacher does not know what SS1[5] represents, then it will be difficult for him or her to implement the curriculum. When this researcher questioned the meaning of the various abbreviations to Mr. Eck (personal communication, November 22, 2001), he recognized the need to include a key for the information. Unless a teacher had access to the *National Primary Syllabus* (2000), her/she would not be able to decode the information nor determine what goals and connected learning is to be applied to the lesson.

The new social studies curriculum includes precolonial (e.g., the ancient Maya) concepts up to the present. The major problem is many of the activities at each grade level are repetitive. There is little distinction about how students learn the same historical concept (e.g., the Maya) year to year. Additionally, there are no history textbooks written for primary students. Recommended textbooks for the primary level are the same as those at the secondary level. Teachers find it

[5] SS1 refers to the Lower Division Learning Outcomes in the area of History and Status of Belize in the *syllabus for Belize Primary Schools* Ministry of Education and Sports, 2001).

difficult to use the secondary level textbooks to teach their primary students (Ms. R. Rivero, personal communication November 21, 2001).

Previous curriculum guides were poorly designed and covered limited spans in history. Much of the history taught was repetitive at each primary grade level (e.g., discussion of Baron Bliss and of the Garifuna). Additionally, other variables such as limited access of curriculum guides and minimal assessment of historical study covered, required teachers to be creative in their history instruction or to omit it entirely. The scope of the K-8 social studies curriculum prior to the 1990s was limited and did not address precolonial history in Belize.

Question #3

The study of the ancient Maya has been limited in Belizean curriculum until the publication of the new *Primary Social studies Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2001). The minimal inclusion of the Maya in Belizean schools has created in Belizeans a void of knowledge of their own history. Economically, the Maya ruins provide a substantial amount of money, via tourist dollars, to Belize. This study was undertaken because of this researcher's amazement that many Belizean teachers did not know their own precolonial history. Many of these teachers live very close to Maya archaeological sites, but have no connection to these places. For Belize, knowledge of her past can provide an identity previously suppressed due to European colonialism.

The findings of this research concur with Sanchez (1977) who emphasized the need to appreciate and know history in the Belizean context and from the Belizean point of view. Accomplishing this goal in Belize can be done by establishing a historical record of its past and developing a strong study of cultural heritage in Belizean schools.

This researcher traced the development of social studies curriculum in Belize from 1950-2001. Examination of the historical perspective on Belize, colonial education policy, and Belizean education policy since Independence were critical in piecing together curriculum development in Belize. Sparse information specifically on Belize's social studies curriculum development was one major factor in researching this topic. However, this researcher can not ignore that Belize is an impoverished nation that has limited storage capability, unreliable communication systems, and regularly contends with the tragic consequences of its climate (e.g., hurricanes and rainy seasons). These factors required data to be gathered from various agencies like UNESCO, in order to effectively articulate how social studies curriculum developed and how Belizean's study their ancient past.

Recommendations for improving Belize's social studies curriculum

In November, 2001, this researcher returned to Belize to meet informally with Ministry of Education officers, teachers, and Mr. J.A. Bennett, a Belizean who is considered an authority on Belizean educational history. Additionally, this

researcher uncovered information related to case studies undertaken at fourteen schools in Belize from 1995-1996. One aim of the project [*Belize primary education development project case studies and impact evaluation (CSIE): Synthesis report* (Bennett, 1997)], was to improve primary school education in Belize in the area of curriculum development. The study, linked to the BPEDP, received funding from the Overseas Development Administration of the U.K. government. Problems identified in the CSIE report related to the curriculum include

1. provision of existing guides is not sufficient;
2. curriculum guides and textbooks recommended are not always compatible; and
3. confusion exists in the schools as to what the latest version of the guides is since the national curriculum practice do not always correspond. (Bennett, 1997, p.iv).

These problems address concerns related to the minimal attention given to curriculum change in Belize. Additionally, inadequate textbooks and outdated curricula in use in many of the schools perpetuate the problems identified in the CSIE report. As a result, this researcher recommends the following to improve Belize's social studies curriculum:

1. Establish a strategy to implement the new curricula throughout the entire country of Belize;

2. Develop workshops to teach educators how to use and implement the new curriculum;
3. Provide appropriate textbooks to teach the newly added content, e.g., study of the ancient Maya for teachers and students;
4. Provide workshops to develop a variety of instructional strategies for teachers to improve their practice, like lesson planning, using a variety of resources, and so forth;
5. Develop school libraries to include a variety of books, journals, and so forth for extended learning and research;
6. Develop programs to encourage participation from parents, community members, and education stakeholders in curriculum development;
7. Provide funding to continue development and review of the social studies curriculum from the elementary to secondary level;
8. Provide adequate personnel at the Ministry of Education to assist in professional development needs of Belize's educational community at private and government-aided schools;
9. Develop long-term educational goals, e.g., curriculum planning, staff development, and so forth; and
10. Address teacher certification at the tertiary level, e.g., course work, and educational instruction.

These 10 recommendations reflect an overall need to review the existing heirachy of educational decision making in Belize, especially in the area of social studies curriculum development. It is difficult for one Ministry of Education Officer like Mr. Eck to transform the entire educational community in Belize. Mr. Eck is responsible for developing and distributing curricular materials, and providing in-service training for Belizean teachers. Inadequate funding for workshop opportunities, materials, and man-power impede individuals like Mr. Eck to implement curricular change in a timely and effective manner in Belize. Attention to improving educational funding to the Ministry of Education in Belize could help provide better services and materials for Belizean teachers. Mrs. Rivero, a teacher at St. Catherine's Academy stated, "there is no consistency with the curriculum. There is no training and inadequate textbooks to teach the new curriculum" (personal communication, November 21, 2001). Similar comments were made by other teachers I talked to in Belize. In order for effective curricular change to occur in Belize, the country must make a financial commitment to provide the new curriculum to all the schools, train teachers to use and implement the new curriculum, and provide appropriate textbooks throughout the elementary and secondary level.

Limitations of this study

There are several limitations to this study. First, distance to Belize can not be ignored. It was expensive to gather data about social studies curriculum

development in Belize due to distance and minimal availability of data on this topic in the United States. Additionally, due to climatic factors, inadequate storage facilities, lack of archiving of documents in general, a great deal of this study was pieced together using a variety of resources. Many of the resources were derived from UNESCO documents, historical texts and educational documents, not from educational materials assumed to have been readily available in Belize, but which in reality, did not exist.

This researcher recognized that many of the contacts in Belize did not have access to e-mail or home phones. Correspondence through the mail occurred, but there was no guarantee of delivery and if it was received, it was very slow (sending and receiving mail). Additionally, many Belizean contacts who received my letters did not respond, but always accommodated my requests when I was in Belize.

Directions for future research

There is a need for continued research in social studies curriculum development in Belize. Research in teacher preparation, curriculum planning and implementation, and the impact of the new curriculum on student learning are other areas that need to be examined in Belize. One critical area that needs to be studied is teacher preparation in Belize. Studies on teacher education by Palacio (1973) and Tillett (1978) need to be updated and used to propose solutions and make recommendations to provide better trained teachers in Belizean schools. It

is important to recognize that tertiary teacher education is pivotal in providing trained and qualified educators in the elementary and secondary schools. Studies of teacher training programs at the university level, as well as studies on educational policy implementation in Belize are needed.

There has been minimal educational research carried out in Belize. This researcher can not explain the lack of interest in studying this young country's educational history. Perhaps knowledge that Belize offers a unique setting to study educational history, curriculum development, teacher training, policy implementation, and funding sources, will provide future researchers a region to explore.

In the *National standards for history* (1996), the National Center for History in the Schools stated, "without history, a society shares no common memory of where it has been, of what its core values are, or of what decisions of the past account for present circumstances" (p.1). For Belizean students, knowledge of their past is critical to understand their current status as a people and nation. Inclusion of precolonial history in the social studies curriculum is imperative to provide the connection of the past to the present and future goals of the country of Belize.

This is the first study related to social studies curriculum development in Belize. There is no similar study available on this topic. As a result, this study

adds new knowledge to curriculum development in Third World countries like Belize.

Appendix A

Post-Independence Education in Jamaica

1957 - 1967 – Education policy must plan for Jamaica's expanding economy
1966 - 1980 – "New Deal" in education

- Increase graduation rates of training college
- Enrolment in CAST (College of Arts, Science and Technology) was raised
- 50 new Junior Secondary schools were built
- Canadian loan scheme sponsored construction of 40 primary schools
- Expanded post secondary education
- Teacher-training centres [sic] were established

1965 - Education Act

- Provide an integrated education primary through tertiary level

1966 – Examination Committee was established

- Develop a system of evaluation

1973 – Thrust of the seventies

- New government programme established "Free education for All," primary to tertiary level

Source: Whyte, M. (1977). *A short history of education in Jamaica.* London: Hodder and Stroughton.

Post-Independence Education in Belize

1964 – UNESCO Educational Planning Mission
1965 – 1969 – Belize's educational system was diversified
1970 – 1971 First year a social studies program is developed. Emphasis on national history.
(NOTE: Ten years after self-government, little emphasis or teaching was provided on Belizean studies at the secondary level)
1975 – Established Curriculum Development Unit

- Developed to help teachers effect change in curriculum

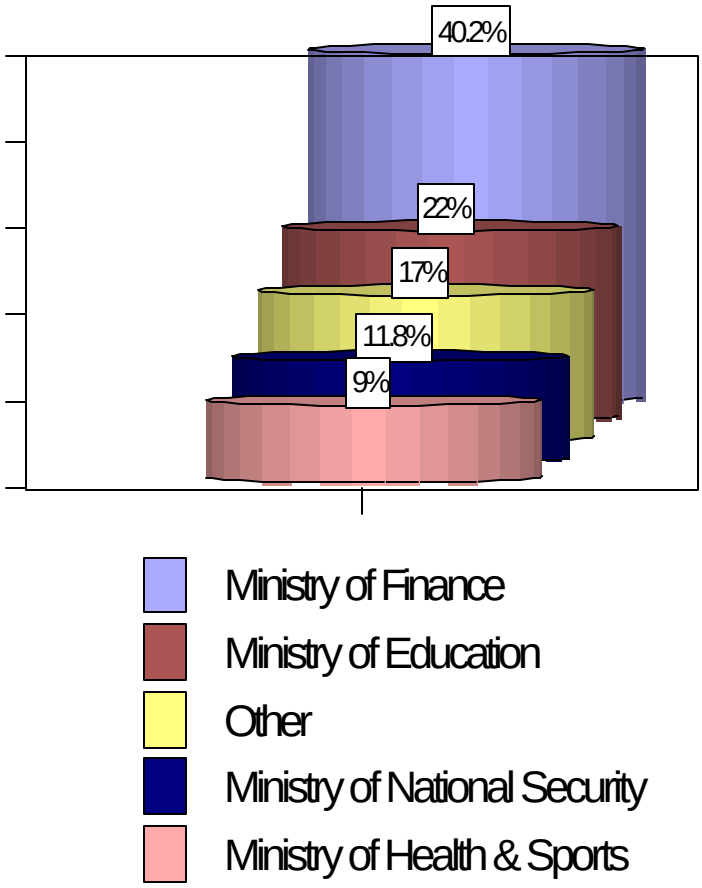
1977 – Chief Education Officer Inez Sanchez condemned colonialism for severing Belizeans from their historical and cultural heritage.
1982 – UNESCO Report
1985 – Curriculum guides produced in four content areas including social studies
1988 – Initiated establishment of the Belize Primary Education Development Project (BPEDP)

- designed to improve primary school education in Belize and give attention to teacher education, curriculum development, provision of textbooks and materials, examination and assessment and planning and management.

1992 – Primary Education Development Project funding of $25,000,000 loan from World Bank
1995 – Mid-term review ceased funding of project and called for a completely new curriculum construction
1999 – Implementation of new *National Syllabus* in Belize

Appendix B

Education Expenditure as a Proportion of Total GoB Expenditure – 1998 -1999



Source: *Education Statistical Digest: 1998-1999.* Belmopan: Ministry of Education.

Appendix C

Belize National Archives Document

1. Sanchez, I.E. (1974). "History: It's role and teaching in Belize."

   Paper presented to Belizean teachers discussing the importance of teaching history.

2. Social Studies Committee. *Social studies in the primary school* curriculum. No publication date.

   Outline of studies to be taught by teachers at the primary level

3. Manifesto of the People's United Party 1998-2003. "Set Belize free." People's United Party.

   This was the political PUP's party platform representing their views of how they would make Belize a better place. This was written prior to the elections held in 1998.

4. Ministry of Education. (1976). *Senior social studies curriculum, standards IV, V, & VI.* Belmopan: Ministry of Education.

   Proposed curriculum development unit, in the traditional format to be used at the secondary level.

Appendix D

Ministry of Education Documents

Ministry of Education. (1984). *Revised primary social studies curriculum guide.* Belmopan: Ministry of Education.

Social studies curriculum guide to be used at the primary level. Content matter and instructional strategies are included.

_____ (1992). *Infants primary social studies.* Belmopan: Ministry of Education.

Social studies curriculum guide for the primary level. Part of Belize's PEDP from 1992-1996.

_____ (1993). *Belize education statistical digest planning unit.* Belmopan: Ministry of Education.

Information gleaned aided in understanding the structure and framework of Belize's education policy.

_____ (1994, July). *An education policy for improving access, efficiency and quality of education.* Belmopan: Ministry of Education.

The document outlines the goals of education Belize must reach for the 21st century.

_____ (1997). *Belize: Statistical digest 1996-97.* Belmopan: Ministry of Education.

This is the fourth issue of information tracking progress of education goals set in Belize. Statistical information for years 1995-96 and 1996-97 have been included in this report.

_____ (1997). *The Belize primary curriculum education goals, curriculum policies and structure.* Belmopan: Ministry of Education.

This document includes descriptions of the new curriculum that is being developed in Belize. The document includes the four pillars of learning proposed by UNESCO for the
21st century. These pillars will be the basis for the new curriculum begun

in Belize the 1999-2000 school year.

_____ (1997). *Specifications for national assessment at primary level for BNSE and BJAT with effect from 1997.* Belmopan: Ministry of Education.

This document represents possible assessment questions relative to the national examinations given at the primary level. The document is to assist teachers in guiding assessment of their students.

_____ (1999). *Textbook standardization committee report.* Belmopan: Ministry of Education.

This report reviewed in detail selection of appropriate textbooks for academic areas for use in Belizean classrooms. Additional information included discussion on the lack of available textbooks produced by Belizean's and the need to develop reference and resource materials for teachers.

_____ (ND). *Curriculum monitoring: Overall process and logistics.* Belmopan: Ministry of Education.

This document was developed in the Quality Assurance and Development Services of the Ministry of Education. Its purpose is to describe how schools will be monitored during the new curriculum implementation period.

_____ (1998-99). *Education statistical digest.* Belmopan: Ministry of Education.

This digest detailed educational information for the 1997-98 and 1998-99 school year. It provides data on population and vital statistical, e.g., number schools, enrolment, dropout, and so forth.

Appendix E

Department of Archaeology Library Documents

*Some references did not include a full citation. Documents represent citations as copied from the department library.

Anderson, A. H. (1952). "Archaeology in British Honduras today." *Actas*. XXX

International Congress of Americanists. Cambridge, England. Pp. 222 224.

Anderson describes a number of Maya sites and discusses the importance of continued archaeological research in the listed areas. Additionally, Anderson includes information on the formation of an Archaeological Society in the Colony. The society would encourage protection and hopefully arouse public interest in maintaining research of the Ancient Maya's.

Branche, W. (1980). "Why save the ruins?" *Brukdown*. IV (6/7). Pp.30-32.

Branche discusses the importance of preserving archaeological ruins not only to view, but to research. Additionally, Branche impolores Belizeans to preserve their archaeological ruins and not destroy them or sell them to the highest bidder. The Maya ruins should be studied and researched, not pillaged or destroyed for monetary gain.

Department of Archaeology. (1992, July). "Archaeology in Belize: A window to the past. *Belize Today*. Pp. 35-40.

This first article in a series details the role the Department of Archaeology has played in preserving the rich cultural heritage of Belize. Information includes Antiquity Laws and the role of educating Belizeans on its culture and history as a result of archaeological research.

Corbishley, M. J. (1983). (Ed.). *Archaeological resources handbook for teacher*. London: The Council for British Archaeology.

The purpose of this resource is to encourage teachers to create a course in archaeology in their schools. An extensive bibliographical archive is provided to assist teachers in developing and implementing an archaeological course. Guidelines and suggested books and areas of study are included in this text.

Hammond, N. (1982). "The prehistory of Belize." *Journal of Field Archaeology.* 9. pp. 349-362.

Hammond explains the historical review of research in Belize and discussed current and future archaeological direction in the region.

Matsuda, D. (1994). "Looted artifacts: Seed of change in Latin America." *Anthropos.* 89. pp. 222-224.

Matsuda describes how some Latin American indigenous people loot archaeological sites during the off-agricultural season. Matsuda intertwined metaphors to describe these people and the act of looting.

McKillop, H. (1981, October). "The development of archaeology in Belize: A report on the 1981 education program for caretakers of archaeological sites in Belize, Central America." Peterborough, Canada: Trent University, Department of Anthropology.

McKillop discusses the training program conducted during the summer of 1981 for caretakers of prehistoric sites in Belize.

Mckillop, H. & Awe, J. (1983). "The history of archaeological research in Belize." *Belizean Studies 11* (2). Pp. 1-9.

McKillop and Awe describe four time periods in understanding archaeology history of Belize.

Phillipson, L. (n.d.). *Archaeology in the holidays.* Cambridge: Cambridgeshire County Council.

This short text provides suggested short archaeological activities to be completed around the Cambridgeshire area. The text can be applied to archaeology projects for Belizean students to complete.

Wilford, J. (1996, June 23). "Belize tomb yields new insights on Maya." *The New York Times International.* p. 9.

Wilford discusses the location of a royal tomb in northern Belize. It is speculated the burial ground is Bird Jaguar, a King who lived in A.D. fifth century.

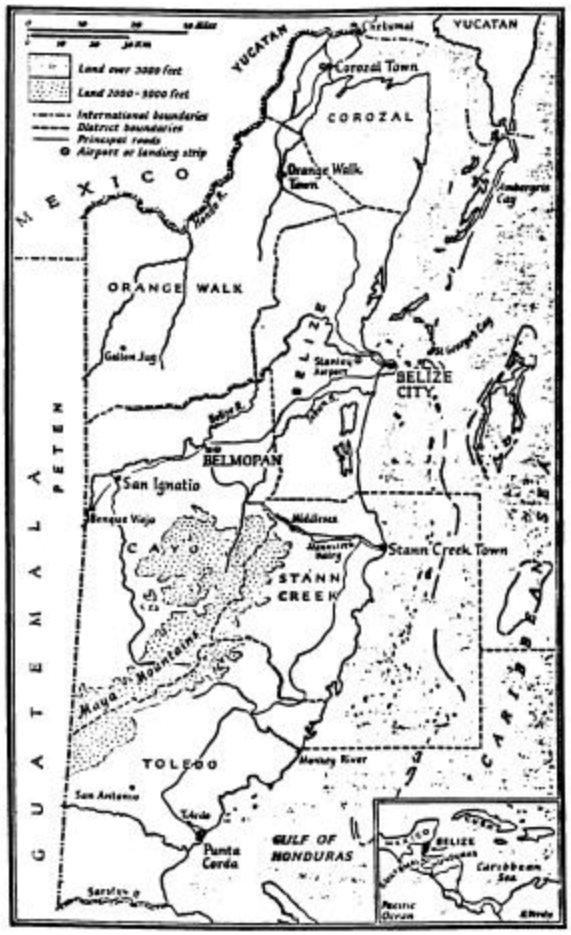
Appendix F

Timeline of Education Development in Belize
1950 – 2001

1816	Honduras Free School established
1850	Creation of The Board of Education
1851	St. George's Wesleyan High School for boys opens
1883	St. Catherine's Academy for girls established
1883	St. John's College established
1915	Education Ordinance mandating compulsory education for children ages 6-14
1935	B. H. Easter Report
1936	J. C. Dixon Report
1937	Demonstration school established in Belize City
1949	Devaluation of British pound in Belize
1950	People's United Party (PUP) & People's Committee (PC) established
1964	UNESCO Report
1973	Official change of British Honduras to Belize in March
1974	Curriculum Development Unit established
1977	Sanchez Report
1981	September 21, Belizean Independence Day
1982	UNESCO visit
1988	Belize Primary Education Development Project (BPEDP) initiated
1989	Belize participates in Jomtien, Thailand Conference
1991-95	The government of Belize's Education Plan introduced
1992	BPEDP new curriculum development begins
1992	National Culture Policy Council
1995	World Bank mid-term review of BPEDP/funding ceased
1996-97	Institutes curriculum reform including UNESCO's 4 Pillars of Learning
1999	Implementation of National Syllabus in Belizean schools

Appendix G

BELIZE



Source: Grant, C. (1976). *The making of modern Belize*. London: Cambridge University Press.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Mr. Eck, Curriculum Development Unit Head
Belize City, Belize

Mr. Ramiro Peralta, Teacher
San Felipe Village, Belize

Mr. J. A. Bennett, Educator
Belize City, Belize

St. Catherine's Academy, Belize city, Belize

Belmopan Community Pre-School, Belmopan, Belize

Belmopan Baptist High School, Belmopan , Belize

St. Mary's School, Belize City, Belize

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