Curriculum Beyond Borders

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DECLARATION

I, Marina Haikin, certify that: except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the candidate alone and the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; content of the exegesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement of date of the approved research program and any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged.

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List of abbreviations

BPEO –   Burma Project Education Office
CP –   Curriculum Project
FSP -   Further Studies Program
KNU –   Karen National Union
KPT -   Karenni Post Ten Program
LLO -   Lwin Lwin Oo (teacher participant)
NGO –   Non-Government Organization
PX –   Post 10 Program
RTG –   Royal Thai Government
SD -   Saw Doe (teacher participant)
SPDC –   State Peace and Development Council (The current military government
           of Burma)
TG -   Teacher's Guide
TS -   Tun Soe (teacher participant)
UP   Umpiem Mai

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Abstract

This PhD by project used action research to design, evaluate, and refine a social studies curriculum fostering the development of critical thinking strategies in young adults in the refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border in 2004 - 2005. The broader focus of this action research project is to develop an innovative, collaborative, culturally relevant, community focused curriculum model for young adult refugees in places of temporary asylum.

Action research is realized in this project through a constructivist approach to curriculum development where an improved curriculum is being built up from the values and worldviews of the students, teachers, and their community.

The exegesis starts by providing a brief political background to the refugee situation and exploring where the participant community stands as far as education is concerned, while providing a concise review of literature on refugee education.

The research draws its data from a detailed curriculum evaluation project that has been undertaken by the researcher and the participant teachers in 2004-2005. An integral part of this research project constitutes a set of study modules that have been reworked as a result of this evaluation.

The findings and recommendations of this action research stress the importance of a curriculum contextualized to the situation of the learners as this has been found to have a an extremely strong influence on motivation and the development of critical thinking skills.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The purpose of curriculum in the education of marginalized populations should always be liberatory (hooks, 1994). Only through an education that develops their critical thinking will young people from oppressed communities be able to overcome their marginalization. This research develops ways of achieving such education.

1.1 The research question

In this research project I focused on the design, evaluation, and refinement of a curriculum fostering the development of critical thinking strategies in young adults in the refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border. The broader focus of this research was to design, evaluate, and refine a culturally relevant, community focused curriculum model for young adult refugees in places of temporary asylum. This holistic curriculum has been implemented in special further studies programs for high-achieving high school graduates in the refugee camps. I conducted the study in three such programs in three separate refugee camps located in the Tak province of Thailand. For the purpose of this study, the focus was on the social studies segment of the curriculum.

My research question is: *How was an innovative social studies curriculum designed, implemented, and refined through a collaboration between local educators and western curriculum developers in the refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border?*

I identify two outcomes of this research project: 1) An improved social studies curriculum for the further studies programs in the refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border, and 2) a framework for developing locally relevant curriculum for young adults in places of temporary asylum or in other marginalized communities.

A qualitative research methodology was utilized which according to the definition by Denzin and Lincoln (2000b) implements and evaluates a curriculum in its natural setting. Action research method framework described by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) was selected as the most suitable for this project. The following circular process was used: piloting the curriculum; collecting information from the participants; reflecting on it; planning the relevant changes in the curriculum; implementing changes by refining the materials; and then repeating the process by planning the subsequent implementations.

1.2 Curriculum Project

The Curriculum Project (CP), a non-government organization (NGO) under which the curriculum in question has been developed, was set up in 2001 by the Burma Project Education Office (BPEO) with the purpose of developing a curriculum that would effectively address the needs of Post 10 students (Curriculum Project, 2002; Phaik-Lah, 1997). I coordinated the Curriculum Project between 2001 and 2003. I started working alone in 2001 but by 2003, CP became a team of both local and expatriate educators. Throughout its existence, the project has worked closely with the teachers in Post 10 programs to identify the specific areas in each subject that need to be covered by the new curriculum focusing specifically on the topics relevant to the students' communities and the general situation of people from Burma.

The interests of the community, the local education departments, the teachers, students, and parents, in other words, the stakeholders in the Post 10 education in the community, lie in building up a comprehensive post high school skills-based curriculum and designing materials that would enable the students to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to respond and potentially to change their situation.

Throughout the whole process, the CP has collaborated with the key stakeholders (teachers, and other key people in local education) to design a curriculum that would meet the objectives of the stakeholders and the community at large.

From the beginning of its existence, CP has cultivated a close working relationship with the Post 10 programs. In 2001, CP started by conducting a comprehensive needs assessment in three Post 10 programs in three refugee camps. The needs assessment included multiple, mostly informal, interviews and workshops with teachers, both general and subject-specific, meetings with the local education department representatives, as well as conducting diagnostic student assessment to determine the level at which to pitch the new curriculum. Apart from this, the CP liaises with local organizations such as environment groups and local history committees with the purpose of developing teaching materials that reflect local expertise and are educationally sound.

A review of materials in use in the Post 10 programs, which was part of the needs assessment conducted by the Curriculum Project in 2001, and discussions with the teachers and local education department representatives have shown that off-the-shelf materials prove to be inadequate for the situation and the students both in content and language level. Most textbooks produced in western countries are focused on European or American history, culture, lifestyle, and politics. The English language level of high school and college textbooks is too high for the students, while pre-high-school books often lack in content that the students need to acquire (Curriculum, 2002).

1.3 The need for research

The objective the Curriculum Project started out with was to develop a framework for a community-focused content-based curriculum for post high school programs along the Thai-Burma border. Such a framework, when fully developed, would have broader implications than

just for the use of marginalized communities on the border. After the military regime in Burma is abolished and democracy is established, such a curriculum can be used as a base for national upper-secondary curriculum. In addition to that, it can benefit other comparable situations in the regions of political/ethnic unrest around the world where a generations-deep gap in education for ethnic minority groups has developed (Curriculum, 2002).

Between 2001 and 2004 the CP undertook the following two-fold task of designing the curriculum framework:

1. Establishing the exact criteria. This means finding out what are the specific skills that Post 10 graduates need to have in order to function successfully and meaningfully in the life of the community. In order to develop a well-grounded, community relevant, valid curriculum that is of use to the community at large, it is of critical importance to establish a close working relationship with the community (local organizations, education leadership, community leadership, parents, and students).

2. Before embarking on developing a completely new curriculum, a thorough research of what has already been developed for similar situations in other parts of the world was carried out. The specific parameters of the situation were identified as follows:

- The students often lack basic world knowledge and study/learning skills due to interrupted or inadequate primary and secondary schooling

- Students often lack the skills to demonstrate their critical thinking

- Most materials developed for western countries and western students are culturally inappropriate for the students.

- English is not the students' (nor the teachers') native language

- Students are young adults

- The programs operate in extremely basic conditions

Since 2002, the Curriculum Project has been developing curriculum frameworks and learning/teaching materials in four subjects (General English, Reading Skills, Writing Skills, Social Studies). As the new materials were being piloted in the Post 10 programs, the teachers had expressed the need for an evaluation and subsequent refinement of the curriculum and materials. Hence, this research was undertaken to evaluate and refine the introductory social studies course for the first year of Post 10 programs, comprising of an Introduction to Social Studies Module and an Introduction to Southeast Asian Studies Module

The Curriculum Project curriculum represents a departure from traditional educational practices in Burma that are deeply rooted in colonialism (Thein Lwin, 2000). The design process was a bottom up process that started with identifying the needs of the stakeholders and constructing the curriculum from there, as opposed to setting it in a top down approach. Such an approach is conducive to a situation where education is part of social change. In his "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" Paulo Freire argues: "No oppressive order could permit the oppressed to begin to question 'why'" (Freire, 1972, p. 59). The social context of this research is the one where the development of critical education is expected to bring about social change.

In this research I build on the work accomplished by the Curriculum Project under my coordination. However, during 2004-2006, as the research was in progress, I was only involved with the CP as an evaluation consultant, and this allowed me to focus on the social studies curriculum at much greater detail, while still working fully within the CP network.

1.4 The structure of the exegesis

After setting out the research question in the introduction, this exegesis goes on to explore the literature relevant to refugee education in Chapter 2. Research methodology is discussed in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 sets the scene for where and by whom this action research was carried out. This is where the participants are introduced and the sites of the case studies are

described. This chapter also describes how action research was implemented within the context of this research. Chapter 5 provides an in-depth discussion of the data. The key themes that came through during the curriculum evaluation are developed in this chapter. Chapter 6 discusses the findings that are based on the themes identified in Chapter 5 and offers recommendations which are based on the findings. Chapter 7 is the conclusion and provides a brief summary of the research, outlines the limitations, and suggests pathways for further research.

Throughout the exegesis I refer to myself as the researcher. Throughout the exegesis component of this PhD (Project) I refer to myself as the researcher. As part of the PhD (Project) process the exegesis is accompanied by a construction of a product - two course books and a curriculum guide, developed by me in the capacity of the Curriculum Project coordinator during 2002-2003 and evaluated and improved utilizing action research as part of this research project in 2004-2006.

2. Literature Review

2.0 Introduction.

This chapter starts by setting the context of the study – critical thinking education in the Post 10 programs in refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border - and reviewing the activities and strategies of the Curriculum Project which facilitated the development of the Post 10 curriculum in collaboration with the teachers. This is followed by the description of the immediate teaching and learning situation as well as of the physical environment of the participant programs.

The following contextual areas have been selected as relevant to this research and are explored in this chapter: a brief background to Burma and the implications for the education for ethnic minorities; an overview of the situation of the Karen people of Burma as refugees in Thailand and a review of the Karen educational policies as a part of nation building; a review of literature on refugee education in places of temporary asylum; a review of literature on curriculum development with a detailed discussion of such topics as curriculum models, curriculum innovation, education and development (specific to Third World environments), and curriculum development in the context of post-colonial Southeast Asia. Finally, the importance of this research is briefly summarized.

2.1 Context of study

This research investigated a social studies curriculum for young adults in the refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border in 2004-2005. The curriculum has been developed for an informal network of schools in the refugee camps known as Post 10 programs. The Post 10 programs target successful year 10 leavers and provide three years of English-medium continuing education in a range of subjects including social studies.

Social studies, one of the subjects taught in the Post 10 programs on the Thai-Burma border, represents a holistic approach to introducing such areas of knowledge as history,

geography, politics, economics, development, cultural studies, and others related to societies and people. The social studies curriculum attempts to introduce world and regional knowledge to the students in a format that is relevant and applicable to the local community and to the situation the students and the community are living in. The objective of the social studies curriculum is primarily to jump-start the students' thinking and understanding of the factors affecting all aspects of life of their community (Curriculum Project, 2002).

The Post 10 programs can be described as further education programs according to Rogers (1992). The terms 'continuing education' and 'further education' are used interchangeably throughout this exegesis to stand for voluntary education for the purpose of further training and development of those who have already completed their primary and some type of secondary schooling.

There is a Post 10 program in almost each of the nine refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border (Curriculum Project, 2003). The majority of the Post 10 programs are community-initiated and NGO-funded. The Post 10 programs under investigation in this study are funded by Burma Project Education Office (BPEO), a non-government organization (NGO) based in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

The purpose of the Post 10 programs is to equip successful year 10 graduates with the critical thinking and learning skills as well as some knowledge necessary to be able to understand the broader context of the political, social, and economic situation they find themselves in. In order to become responsible and proactive members of their communities and eventually take over future leadership roles, the Post 10 students need to be able to critically analyze their situation.

For the purpose of this research, critical thinking skills were defined as mainly learning skills, information processing skills that focus on understanding information in context, applying

information to a situation, applying their learning to real life, and developing an opinion. The following represents a brief list of the groups of skills targeted:

- developing and expressing opinions and arguments,

- analyzing and presenting information,

- organizing information,

- debating,

- making conclusions,

- language and writing skills,

- people and community oriented skills: team work, interviewing, reporting,

- communication and conflict resolution skills: understanding of bias, neutrality, stereotypes, negotiation and mediation, interdependence and problem solving (UNESCO, 2004 a).

2.2 Teaching and learning situation in the Post 10s

2.2.1 Geography and administration. This research focused on three Post 10 programs: one in Mae La refugee camp, the other in Umpiem Mai refugee camp, both located in Tak Province of Thailand, and the third one in Karenni Camp 1, in Mae Hong Son Province (see Appendix 10 for map). Karenni Camp 1 is a predominantly Karenni camp. Karenni is another minority ethnic group from Burma. Karenni people are the only ones apart from Karen who are allowed to set up refugee camps in Thailand. Similarly to Karen, Karenni also have their own government and an Education Department.

Mae La camp is located in a walking distance from the border with the Karen State of Burma where fighting still continues. The camp is approximately an hour and a half north of Mae Sot, a sprawling border town. Umpiem Mai refugee camp is also found in close proximity

to the border about two and a half hours south of Mae Sot. The two camps are accessible by a paved road. A local covered pick-up truck service is available, and NGO cars go in and out of camps every day. The third camp is about an hour's drive from the town of Mae Hong Son; however, it is not accessible by public transport or paved road, and only NGO cars are permitted beyond the end of the sealed road.

Thai towns such as Mae Sot or Mae Hong Son are out of bounds for refugees in the camp. Refugees lack any documents valid in Thailand and stand the risk of involuntary repatriation if identified by police outside of camp. All roads in the border areas of Thailand are very tightly controlled by police checkpoints.

The Post 10 programs in the Karen camps do not directly come under the authority of the Karen Education Department; however, there are information-sharing systems in place. The situation is very similar with the Karenni Post 10. The programs receive funding from an NGO (Burma Project Education Office) based in Chiang Mai and make most of their own decisions on budgeting, enrolment, staffing, and curriculum.

2.2.2 The students. The programs enroll anywhere between 80 and 120 students, with an average of 20 students per class. The students mostly come from the local camp, with some students applying from other camps. A small number of students come directly from Burma, sneaking across the border, as the Post 10 programs offer what the community believes to be the best educational opportunity available to young people from Burma in the border areas. The entrance requirements constitute a Year 10 certificate (issued by any authority) and an entrance test comprised of sections in a range of subjects selected by the school committee and an interview. These requirements are often waived for students coming directly from Burma, which often results in mixed-ability classes, especially in the first year of study.

2.2.3 The teachers. Each school employs between seven and 12 teachers. The teachers' qualifications vary from little more than a high school certificate to a university degree. Most teachers are refugees, while there are also some foreign teachers in most of the Post 10s. Usually, the number of foreigners in each camp depends on the tightness of control imposed by the local Thai commander - the less control, the more foreigners. The local teachers possess various degrees of English competency. Most English teachers and head teachers are quite fluent, while most other subject teachers speak at least some English. Some foreigners are native speakers while others have near-native or native-like competency.

2.2.4 Teaching. The programs use English as the medium of instruction. The decision was the communities', originally motivated by the hope that strong English skills would mean opportunities for further studies outside the camp for graduates and consequently better qualified teachers and community leaders for the refugee community.

Prior to 2000, there was no organized curriculum development happening for the Post 10 programs. The funders provided a small budget for a limited range of materials that the teachers were able to obtain. The local teachers at the Post 10 programs are the best-qualified teachers available in the refugee camps. The competitive salary (by refugee camp standards) offered guarantees this. That said, however, many Post 10 teachers have not had any or only minimal formal teacher-training. This factor will be discussed in detail in later chapters. Many of the teachers are members of the Karen Education Department or hold other important positions and enjoy respect in their communities. The preferred teaching style of most of the local teachers at the Post 10s is quite traditional and teacher-centered, while some teachers are trying to experiment with more student-centered approaches.

2.2.5 The physical environment. As mentioned earlier, the Post 10 schools are not technically allowed to exist by the Thai authorities and, therefore, have to keep a very low profile

in the camp. The classrooms are built with bamboo as most other buildings in the camps. The desks and benches inside are also mostly bamboo. The students coming from other camps or the ones who have just arrived from Burma and do not have families in the camp stay in the dormitory which is adjacent to the school. The students staying in the dormitory receive basic refugee rations and cook communally in the school kitchen. Some younger single teachers, who do not have families in the camp, and the foreign volunteer teachers also stay in the dormitory or have their own small bamboo houses built in the same area of the camp. They normally eat with the dormitory students.

2.3 Brief background to Burma

Burma is home to a diverse indigenous population, belonging to dozens of different minority ethnic groups (Kampe, 1997). More than 100 different languages are spoken in Burma (M. J. Smith, 1991). "The Burmese government has one of the worst human rights records in the world" (Bowles, 1998, p. 11). Burma has been ruled by a military dictatorship since 1962 (Fink, 2001). Civil and ethnic conflict have divided the country for over 50 years (Sheppard, 1997). Hundreds of thousands of people from all walks of life have fled Burma seeking refuge in Thailand, China, India, Bangladesh, Malaysia, and other countries in the region.

Today there are more than 140,000 refugees from Burma sheltering in sixteen camps along either side of the Thai-Burma border (Human Rights Documentation Unit, 2003). Refugees come from a range of political, ethnic groups, (ethnic minorities, as well as Burman majority) and religious backgrounds, including Buddhists, Christians and Muslims but not limited to these. Refugees from the ethnic states along the Thai-Burma border first began to cross into Thailand in the early 1980's (Human Rights Documentation Unit, 2003). They mainly come from the Shan, Karenni, Karen, and Mon ethnic minority groups from Burma. These are all distinct ethnic groups speaking different, mutually unintelligible languages.

The government of Thailand only recognizes Karen and Karenni refugee camps on its soil. For the purpose of this research, the education programs for young adults in Karen camps are examined; however, it is expected that the results of this project would be beneficial for education programs in other ethnic communities from Burma. In fact, this is already the case, as is discussed in the conclusion and postscript to this exegesis.

As a result of the political situation in Burma since the country's independence, virtually no representatives of minority ethnic groups have received either a good quality or a high level of education during this time (M. J. Smith, 1991). There is, therefore, little prospect that in the near future these communities will be able to recruit leaders from their ranks with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes required to participate effectively in central politics and to advocate on their behalf. If the voices and concerns of these groups and communities continue to be ignored in the future as they have been in the past, the prospects for peace would seem to be very remote. This constitutes a serious obstacle to the social, political, and economic development of the country (Burma Project Education Office, 2001). The aim of the curriculum under investigation in this research is to educate young people capable of taking on such leadership roles in the near future.

2.4 The Karen people of Burma

2.4.1 Karens as refugees in Thailand. Karen people are a nation, with a national organization, Karen National Union (KNU) that acts as a government, an army, a political party, an education department, and a very well organized community. They have been fighting for their right to self-determination for over 50 years (Sheppard, 1997). However, their situation as refugees in Thailand is that of disempowerment, oppression, and lack of recognition (M. J. Smith, 1991). As Jamal (2003) puts it: "…camps are not designed to enhance freedoms" (p.5).

Article 22 of Geneva Convention on Refugees of 1951 states that:

> 1. The Contracting States shall accord to refugees the same treatment as is accorded to nationals with respect to elementary education.   2. The Contracting States shall accord to refugees treatment as favourable as possible, … with respect to education other than elementary education. (UNHCR, 1951, p. 28)

However, Thailand is not a signatory to the 1951 Convention on Refugees and therefore does not comply with the above requirements of host countries. The Royal Thai Government (RTG) does not offer any provisions for the education of refugees. The Thai authorities do not encourage or officially allow the refugees to receive upper secondary or further education. As it happens, in practice, Thai officials often turn a blind eye on many activities of refugees and NGOs working with refugees, due to the controversial international position the RTG is taking (Battersby, 1989; Bowles, 1998; Human Rights Documentation Unit, 2003).

It is important to realize that the situation of the Karen people in Thailand as refugees is not unique among ethnic minorities from Burma. Many other ethnic minority groups from Burma share the fate of the Karen as recognized or unrecognized refugees in Thailand, India, China, Bangladesh, Malaysia, and other countries in the region (Human Rights Documentation Unit, 2006; Mirante, 2007; South Asia Human Rights Documentation Center, 1997).

The education situation of refugees in places of temporary asylum largely depends on the host government's policy on treatment of refugees and provision of education to refugees. Preston (1991) finds that host governments are often reluctant to provide anything but the bare minimum survival arrangements for refugees. In the case of Thailand, the reason for their reluctance in making any provisions in education is based on the RTG's desire to keep the refugees from becoming more settled in Thailand (Bowles, 1998). Similar lack of any provisions or friendly policies is observed by Kakkar (2000) in the case of Afghan refugees in Peshawar, Pakistan, as well as in Swaziland for Mozambican refugees, as discussed in detail by Wooldridge (1990). An exception to this trend seems to be the situation of Tibetan refugees in Nepal, where

their host state has created beneficial conditions for education initiative in the Tibetan refugee community (Ugen, 1985).

The situation of the Karen as refugees in Thailand is, therefore, a typical example of a protracted refugee situation in terms of lack of education support from the host country. It can therefore be expected, that the curriculum framework resulting from this research will prove useful in other protracted refugee situations (Burma Ethnic Research Group, 1998; Lang, 2002; UN News Service, 2007; UNHCR, 2006).

2.4.2 Religion and ethnicity in the Karen community and in the refugee camps. While the combined number of Buddhist and Animist Karen might be larger than that of Christian Karen, the educated elite and the Karen National Union (KNU) political leadership both in Karen State inside Burma and the refugee camps are overwhelmingly Christian (Rogers, 2004). This often puts non-Christian Karens in the refugee camps at a disadvantage in terms of representation and education opportunities. Whereas all schools in the refugee camps (apart from a minority of explicitly religious schools: Christian, Buddhist, or Muslim) are officially secular, non-denominational, and do not teach any religious subjects, or have any religion regulating policies, as a community institution, they strongly identify with the Christian community in the refugee camps. This would be represented for example in giving more importance to observing Christian holidays rather than the Buddhist ones; school assembly would often start with a Christian prayer, and generally the spirit of the school and the community is predominantly Christian. Hardly anything is written on these by any authors in the field, therefore the comments here are based on the researcher's personal experience while working in the refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border between 2001 and 2005.

When talking about the Karen people and Karen community in the refugee camps, it is important to realize, that the population of each camp is, in fact, diverse and includes

representatives from a variety of ethnic groups from Burma, including the Burman (majority ethnic group in Burma), and a large Muslim community. The Muslims in the refugee camps are for the most part descendants of migrants from India and Bangladesh, families and whole communities that have lived in central Burma for over 100 years (M. J. Smith, 1991). These people These people speak Burmese and identify as Burmese Muslims. They have been oppressed and persecuted, and displaced by the military regime, and eventually driven into the border areas and out of Burma by the fighting in the civil war zones (Selth, 2003). There is very poor representation of the Muslim population in the community life and refugee camp leadership. The Muslim community is marginalized even within the refugee camps, and its members often feel discouraged from taking advantage of the educational and other opportunities available to the Karen refugees (Burma Project Education Office, 2005). In 2005 there were only two Muslim students in all of the Burma Project Education Office-supported Post 10 programs.

Due to the history of Burman domination before the colonization of Burma by the British between 1885 and 1948, and fuelled by the last 50 plus years of ethnic struggle for the right to self-determination, there is a distrust and animosity between the Karens and the Burmans that affects every sphere of community life (Marshall, 1997; Po, 2001; Rogers, 2004). Certain disenchantment with the Burmese political opposition movement in the Karen community has also contributed to this lack of understanding. Hundreds of political activists have participated in the 1988 uprising in Burma and members of the All Burma Students Democratic Front insurgent army and other opposition political organizations have been forced into the ethnic minority and civil war areas and border regions by the government military in the years following the uprising. Numbers of them have ended up in the refugee camps alongside the ethnic minority people but they have not fully become part of the community and are often marginalized and mistrusted by the Karen majority in the camps (Yeni, 2006).

The ethnic and religious conditions discussed here are a strong factor that affects the atmosphere at the schools and the teacher-student and teacher-teacher relationships. Generally, teachers who belong to the majority Karen Christian population enjoy the most stable position and trust of the students and the community.

2.4.3 Some issues in Karen education – a colonial legacy. The history and current situation of Karen formal education is described at length by Scott O'Brien (2003) in his thesis on the Karen perspectives of schooling in their communities. The two key points that are strongly argued in his work are:

a. Missionary and colonial schooling, the first formal education models that Karen people of Burma came in contact with, are by definition assimilationist. Their objective is to devalue indigenous culture and traditional ways of knowing, and promote the belief in the indigenous people that Western ways of knowing are of higher value. Such models of education therefore serve the interests of the colonial masters rather than the colonized and are not conducive to self-determination and sustainability of an indigenous culture (O'Brien, 2003).

b. Historically, the current Karen National Union (KNU) schooling system and curriculum are rooted in the missionary/colonial education models. At the same time, KNU is the one Karen political organization that represents Karen people as a nation and whose objectives are self-determination and nation building for Karen people and by Karen people (Thein Lwin, 2000). Therefore, a contradiction: it is not possible to build a nation and promote self-determination using as a platform an education system that is grounded in a framework that runs counter to the interests of self-determination.

Such a contradiction points to a critical need for an innovative approach to curriculum development for Karen education, hence it once again indicates the importance of this research.

O'Brien's claims about the characteristics of colonial education are supported by

arguments presented by Altbach and Kelly (1978). In their discussion of colonial schooling vs.

non-colonial schooling they say:

> … in the colonial situation the school was detached from
> indigenous cultures in the languages and in the social values they
> taught. Colonial schools were set up as alternatives rather than as
> complements to the colonized's education practices. … neither did
> they prepare the colonized for leadership in their own society.
> (Altbach & Kelly, 1978, p. 3)

Altbach and Kelly (1978) describe colonial education as 'marginal' as it is equally

removed from the culture of the colonized and the colonizers.

Colonial education promotes obedience and an unquestioning acceptance of information

coming from the teacher. This type of education framework does not encourage critical approach

to learning or reflection and analysis by students of their situation and the world around them

(O'Brien, 2003). This approach to schooling can be compared to what Paul Freire (1995)

describes as the 'banking' education, where the teacher offers knowledge that is of no relevance

to the students' experience:

> … it turns them [the students] into 'containers' to be 'filled' by the
> teacher. The more completely she fills the receptacles, the better a
> teacher she is. The more meekly the receptacles permit themselves
> to be filled, the better students they are (Freire, 1995, p. 52).

Another vivid characteristic of 'banking' schooling approach suggested by Freire is

evident from the following quote: "They call themselves ignorant, and they say the 'professor' is

the one who has knowledge and to whom they should listen" (Freire, 1995, p. 45).

There is a clear match between the formal education rooted in colonial values that the

Karen National Union has picked as the foundation for the new Karen curriculum, and the

'banking' education described by Paul Freire. As a solution to 'banking' or 'narrative' education approach, Freire (1995) prioritizes solving the strictly top-down teacher-student relationship.

> The more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world. (Freire, 1995 p. 54)

In view of neocolonialism defined as

> … continuing domination, direct or indirect, of the industrialized nations over the Third World… replicated in the post-colonial context (Altbach & Kelly, 1984, p. 230).

Altbach and Kelly (1984) stress the importance for Third World and indigenous societies of strengthening their own centers of knowledge and creativity and means of its distribution in order to deflect the domination of the industrialized world. This research strives to offer ways to marginalized communities to both solve the top-down approach to education as a colonial legacy and to develop in their young people the skills necessary for self-determination.

2.5 Refugee education and approaches

"Throughout the world there are increasing numbers of students who are classified as refugees or displaced people due to economic crisis, civil war, or invasion by a foreign enemy" (Naumowicz, 1999). These young adult students are the ones whose needs the Curriculum Project is aiming to address by developing its curriculum for refugee youth in Thailand. The need for post-primary and further education in refugee or other crisis situations has been stressed by authors conducting research in such diverse parts of the world as Mozambique (Buckland, 2006), Ethiopia (Ahlen, 2006), Afghanistan (Spink, 2006), East Timor (Nicolai, 2006), and worldwide (Brown, 2005). In his article in Forced Migration Review, Brown argues: "When deprived of post-primary education during prolonged conflicts displaced communities are robbed of future leaders and of hope for better future" (p. 31).

However, there is a lack of research on post-primary or further education for refugees in places of temporary asylum. This is the gap this research has attempted to fill. The further studies curriculum under investigation in this research was developed by the Curriculum Project in consultation with the teachers in the Post 10 programs between 2002 and 2004.

Current research in refugee education clearly indicates that in order to create a sustainable learning environment in a refugee context it is of utmost importance to effectively consult about any programs with the local community and that the best and the most relevant programs to the learners' needs are the ones initiated by refugees themselves (Abuzeid, Lockwood, Mutalib, & Wrightson, 2003; Midttun & Skjetne, 2004; Preston, 1991). In addition, it is recommended that the curriculum be specifically developed or at least adjusted to suit the needs of the particular community and culture reflecting the situation of the learners (IRIN, 2003; UNESCO, 2004 a, 2004 b).

In agreement with these findings, throughout its existence, the Curriculum Project has worked closely with the teachers in the community-initiated Post 10 programs to identify the specific areas in each subject that need to be covered by the new curriculum focusing specifically on the topics relevant to the students' communities and the general situation of people from Burma.

The interests of the community, the local education departments, the Post 10 teachers, students, and parents, in other words, the stakeholders in the Post 10 education in the community, lie in building a comprehensive post high school skills-based curriculum and design materials that would enable the students to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary for their situation.

Through the needs assessment and the deliberation phases of curriculum development, the Curriculum Project has collaborated with the key stakeholders (teachers, and other key

people in local education) to design a curriculum that would meet the objectives of the stakeholders and the community at large.

The approach used in developing the curriculum under investigation is conducive to a situation where education is part of social change. In his "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" Paulo Freire argues: "No oppressive order could permit the oppressed to begin to question 'why'" (Freire, 1995). The social context of this research is one where the development of critical education is expected to bring about social change within the individual which in turn has the potential to facilitate change in broader community contexts.

2.6 Curriculum development

2.6.1 Definitions of curriculum. For the purpose of this study, two definitions of curriculum were chosen. One is a definition by Taba (1962) quoted by Connelly and Clandinin (1988): "Curriculum is a plan for learning"(Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, p. 5), and the other is a definition offered by Pinar (1975) as quoted by Smith and Lovat (2003): "Curriculum is educational experience, the educational journey" (D. L. Smith & Lovat, 2003, p.9). These relatively broad definitions of curriculum meet the needs of the Curriculum Project whose curriculum under evaluation in this study is worked out using the building blocks that are all part of the students' situations: the physical environment of the students and the school, the students' previous educational experiences and personal backgrounds.

Using the claim that curriculum is "teacher thinking and teacher doing" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, p. 4) as a guide, along with Taba's definition above, the Curriculum Project team started by approaching the teachers with a request to collaborate on devising a plan for the students' learning.

There is a tendency for societies to place increasing importance on curriculum and education as economic or political conditions deteriorate. The following questions are

emphasized as the key in selection criteria: *Whose cultural experience has been included in the curriculum? What are the consequences?* These questions are particularly relevant to the curriculum development process used by the Curriculum Project.

Another definition of curriculum that is extremely relevant in view of the emerging situation of the Karen community is from Pinar et al. (1995):

> Curriculum incorporates situational meaning… . It is what the older generation chooses to tell the younger generation… (it) is intensely historical, political, racial, gendered,… and international. Curriculum becomes the site on which the generations struggle to define themselves and the world. (pp. 847-848)

Of relevance is what is seen as a contradiction that traditional education in fact reinforces colonial values and/or obedience and uncritical acceptance of the values and opinions of the elders. At the same time, the new emerging education that attempts to be critical is grounded in Western values and is therefore at risk of being neo-colonial as authors such as O'Brien (2003) argues.

In the Western world, curriculum has become largely a formalized bureaucratic concept (Pinar et al., 1995). Through colonial and neo-colonial experience, this perception of curriculum was passed on to the countries and peoples of the South. As Pinar (2004) suggests, curriculum is a representation of the particular society's beliefs about the past, the present and the future. It is therefore important that communities get a chance to make their own decisions about such representations without external influence.

Young people in the marginalized communities in formerly colonized regions need to be empowered to develop critical consciousness enabling them to see their position in the world and analyze the situation with the purpose of making informed and independent decisions. In order to create the political and social conditions for this process, there is a need to bring curriculum and education itself back to the community and people and make it possible for them to participate in

a conversation. This exegesis reports on an action research process that constituted such a conversation.

2.6.2 Curriculum models. As suggested in "Curriculum Development and Design" by Murray Print (1987), a number of authors agree that teachers, as curriculum developers, don't often explicitly use specific models when engaged in designing a curriculum. A number of reasons are suggested for this, among them insufficient time for a thorough application of a curriculum model and a practitioner rather than a theorist approach that teachers are coming from, therefore relying more on practitioner's intuition rather than on theoretical models.

In a similar way, the Curriculum Project did not explicitly use any particular curriculum development model. Some of the reasons for this being that many of the Post 10 teachers, including the participants in this research are not formally trained teachers and would not be familiar with any curriculum models or the jargon associated with formal curriculum development. However, looking back on the history of the Curriculum Project, the pattern of the process comes out to closely match the Dynamic model, such as Walker's Deliberation model, as described by Print (1987) and McCutcheon (1995).

The deliberation model of developing a curriculum is oriented towards a solution, where a solution is a certain course of action decided on by a group or individually (McCutcheon, 1995). A number of characteristics identified by McCutcheon (1995) are relevant to the process of curriculum design for the curriculum under evaluation in this study: (1) Discussing the social and political context – in case of the CP this provided a platform for the curriculum and was conducted by the teachers and members of the Curriculum Project; (2) Considering alternatives – this was implemented by the CP through involving a team of teachers in the decision making process. The teachers participated in exercises such as identifying lists of topics and selecting and prioritizing them, and ultimately making decisions; (3) Envisioning potential actions - this

was represented by making up a plan of specific modules to be written as learning materials for the students; (4) Considering means and ends – this was undertaken as a social enterprise, with the teachers acting as community representatives and decision makers.

Walker's naturalistic model, as described by Brady and Kennedy (1999) stresses deliberation of curriculum which should operate within the socio-political context. In the deliberation model, values, beliefs, and perceptions of the primary stakeholders (community and teachers) in a curriculum are stressed as the selection criteria. This is where cultural values of an indigenous community come into contact with the curriculum.

Deliberation is developing a compromise between the cultural expectations, weaknesses of the existing curriculum, and demands of the changing society. This stage might be 'chaotic and confused', as a lot of contradictions come out that are embedded in the cultural and political situation of the community. The generation gap is another important factor in deliberation. Its importance is particularly pronounced in indigenous communities under the pressure of outside influences. In such communities there is often a contradiction between the older generation attempting to maintain the traditional status quo but using the colonial or neo-colonial style education to achieve this and the younger generation being more open to the outside influence, on the one hand, and being ready for more democratic education than that offered by the colonial tradition and the older generation, on the other hand. Such a generation gap and contradiction definitely exists in the Karen community and is addressed in this study through action research where participants were actively involved in deliberating a curriculum, as discussed in chapters 5 and 6.

2.6.3 Curriculum innovation. The curriculum under evaluation in this study is created primarily to suit the immediate needs of the students and the community in a refugee environment.

Further education is therefore something radically new for Karen people and something that so far can only happen in a refugee camp. One of the purposes of this research has been to open a debate of how to make the most of the current situation of the Karen refugee community in terms of young adult education and how to make it relevant to the needs of the community, critical, and potentially sustainable. To begin this debate it is necessary to explore relevant topics in educational innovation.

Sharan, Shachar, and Levine (1999) talk of curriculum innovation as of 'desired' curriculum. Important characteristics of such curriculum include focus on developing thinking and learning strategies, a non-linear format, and open-endedness. Open-endedness can be interpreted as confronting the students with open-ended questions that encourage independent thinking rather than finding a 'correct' answer. This agrees with a holistic conception of a curriculum, which emphasizes the interrelatedness of knowledge and thinking. In the 'desired' curriculum, the authors also stress the importance of a dialogue as an integral part of the learning process that encourages mental activity.

Sharan, Shachar and Levine (1999) describe an innovative school as an environment where objectives are deeply grounded in the community, while school strategies and action plans are circumscribed by the situation and needs of students, teachers, community, and availability of resources.

Post 10 curriculum in the context of Karen refugee camps in Thailand exists within the 'ever-changing historical moment' that Pinar (2004) speaks of. Therefore, it needs to take into account the social change that is occurring in the Karen community. While the subjects taught in the programs are no doubt important, and the teachers strongly believe in them, the objective of subject-teaching should not only focus on their relevance to the students' prospects for higher

education, but also on the lives of the students and their community, on the understanding of the world around them and their place in it and on critical reflection (Pinar, 2004).

Pinar (2004) stresses the bureaucratization and institutionalization of curriculum in the modern Western society. He refers to Freire's interpretation of education as an open-ended conversation and comments on how far such idea of education is from the institutionalized perception of curriculum. In small nations and crisis situations such as that of the Karen community affected by war, the lack of formal structures can be an advantage as there is more room for a more open-ended interpretation of education.

2.6.4 Education and development. The relationship between education and development, particularly in the context of South (or Third World), has been stressed by such authors as Gould (1993). It is claimed in this work that education is a driving force behind social modernization. Similarly, education is often seen as a means to redistribution of justice and socio-economic transformation (hooks, 1994). In view of this role of education, it is important to consider the controversy of the position of the South with regards to whether it is developing, or

> … 'underdeveloped' as a result of their participation in a world system dominated by Western capitalism … including schools … and creating the demand for formal education … which help(s) to sustain the unequal relationship. (Gould, 1993, p. 3).

In establishing a relationship between development and education, critical education targeted by the Post 10 programs on the Thai-Burma border and the Curriculum Project can be paralleled with the rights-based approach to development (Sandkull, 2005). In other words, young people who have benefited from a critical education would be better prepared to participate actively in rights-based development and to stand up for the rights of their communities.

In order to develop an informed view of the current education trends in the Third World it is important to examine education situation in these countries through a historical perspective.

2.6.5 Curriculum development in post-colonial nations in Southeast Asia. The lack of research in the curriculum development in Southeast Asia is identified in Marsh and Morris' *"Curriculum Development in East Asia"* (1991).

The five factors identified by Marsh and Morris (1991) as affecting curriculum can be summarized as follows: political (promoting nationalism and ideology of the current government), economic (orientation of curriculum towards the economic goals of a particular nation), religious and cultural (inculcating the students in the national religious and cultural values – often majority ones), and finally the beliefs about knowledge that the entity in charge of curriculum development holds.

In addition, two approaches to educational goals are described in this work. The first one can be defined as the maximum accumulation of the knowledge of content, where the function of the teacher is to convey the content as fully as possible and that of the student is to memorize it as accurately as possible. This is very similar to the 'banking' approach (Freire, 1995). The second approach is described as construction of knowledge by learners through exercising critical judgment. In this approach the main job of the teacher is to open a dialogue and encourage the learners to come to their own conclusions through "the use of logic and empirical investigation" (Marsh & Morris, 1991, p. 5).

In the same work, Marsh and Morris speak of tensions within societies with regard to what purpose education should serve in the first place: promoting unity and nationalism or fostering independent thinking. This controversy is strongly represented in the Karen society and the curriculum development scene.

Education in the South has always been associated with a hope for social mobility and better standards of living (Altbach & Kelly, 1984; Pinar et al., 1995). This might have some

bearing on the fact that in a refugee situation further education is particularly appealing to families as it offers a hope, if very remote, of a better life.

Authors such as Marsh and Morris (1991), Preston (Preston, 1991), Pinar (2003), and O'Brien (2003) all note that curriculum in many developing countries, particularly in the post-colonial nations in Southeast Asia, has historically followed Western models and the more conservative ones at that, such models that see the aim of education in maintaining the status quo and to "legitimize the socioeconomic status of the colony" (Marsh & Morris, 1991, p. 256).

Marsh and Morris (1991) identify the following problems in the post-independence curriculum that have emerged: a gap between the curriculum policies mostly designed by government officials, if not by overseas experts, and the actual conditions in the schools; low levels of teacher professionalism have often been blamed for deficiencies of implementation, ignoring the fact that highly centralized curriculum and the use of prescribed texts selected without consultation with the teachers contribute strongly to discouraging teachers from taking a pro-active role in interpreting the curriculum.

Marsh and Morris (1991) point to the necessity of involving practitioners in the process of curriculum development. There is a need for a closer relationship between the development of policies and the realities of implementation (resources, in-service teacher education, etc.). The goals selected for policies should not be divorced from the change in the approaches to teaching and learning used in these countries.

The various reasons for failure of educational innovation described in the literature (Adams & Chen, 1981; K. Lewin, 1985; K. M. Lewin & Stuart, 1991), particularly relevant to the context of the Third World, are mostly associated with the lack of teacher and community participation in the process of innovation. Innovation administered by bureaucracies (governmental agencies, well-established International NGOs, etc.) is often not well-received by

teachers since it undermines their authority as experts in what and how the students need to learn and makes them insecure and vulnerable by suggesting that their professionalism is not up to standards. Top-down innovation imposes change on teachers and schools that the teachers, the students, and the community do not necessarily understand; it also requires a lot of extra work on the part of the teachers, which they often do not see the value of. Such innovation also often works toward reinforcing the status quo rather than introducing change, for it is the government agencies or NGO officials who get to choose the values the innovation promotes, and it confirms the status of those who are already at an advantage over the less empowered teachers and members of the community (Adams & Chen, 1981).

The curriculum evaluation project described in this exegesis used action research to help find a model of innovation that encouraged the teachers to adopt critical education models in ways that are suitable to their situation and appropriate within their culture. It did so through closely involving the teachers in the process of curriculum development and evaluation and bringing the curriculum closer to the needs of the community and thus avoiding some of the pitfalls of the curriculum development experience of post-colonial nations in Southeast Asia.

2.7 Importance of research

Authors such as Preston (1991), Talbot (2005), Heninger (2005) and Layton (2000), agree that education for marginalized communities as well as communities that find themselves in political emergencies such as war or sever oppression is a developing area in research. "There is growing interest in education in emergencies … as a research field – and a pressing need for more research into some priority areas." (Talbot, 2005, p.5) Despite this growing interest, the literature points to the lack of research in post-secondary education in places of temporary asylum (Preston, 1991; Wright, 1988). This is due to the fact that host governments as well as International NGOs responsible for humanitarian assistance to refugees do not prioritize

education, particularly after primary level, for a variety of reasons from political to logistical (Layton, 2000; Preston, 1991). The same authors point to the drastic consequences that may result from ignoring the post-primary education needs in refugee communities especially in protracted refugee situations and from discouraging the communities themselves from taking the responsibility for educating their young people in their own hands.

The importance of refugee-initiated education programs over that of those imposed by International NGOs or host governments is stressed by such authors as O'Brian (2003) and Layton (2000). When applied to a refugee situation, this stresses the demand for educational programs that are based on community needs and are tailored to the specific requirements of the teachers and students (Bernabei, 1988; Layton, 2000; O'Brien, 2003).

The social purpose of this research has been to inform the academic community about how education can work and innovation (in the context-relevant sense of the term 'innovation') achieved under the conditions of extreme political sensitivity, dire resources, day-to-day lack of security, and physically hard conditions, not even to mention sever teacher shortages and lack of teacher training. This research is not about politics, but the political situation in the context of this field of research is the defining characteristic of it. The researcher cannot ignore this condition and cannot avoid being affected by it in the process of conducting this research.

Young people in the marginalized communities need to be empowered to develop critical consciousness enabling them to see their position in the world and analyze the causes and effects of their marginalization with the purpose of making informed and independent decisions aimed at overcoming it. In order to create the political and social conditions for this process, it is important to bring curriculum and education back to the community and people, and make it possible for them to participate in a conversation (Pinar et al., 1995). This research has hoped to open such a conversation.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Research question

The aim of this research is to reflect on the design, conduct an evaluation of, and refine a social studies curriculum built around the development of students' critical thinking strategies. The curriculum was implemented in a small number of further studies programs for young adults in refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border. The research question has been formulated as: *How was an innovative social studies curriculum designed, implemented, and refined through a collaboration between local educators and western curriculum developers in the refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border?*

The curriculum evaluated had been developed by the researcher and rest of the Curriculum Project team in close collaboration with the teachers and the community, specifically for the further studies programs in the camps.

3.2 Qualitative research paradigm

According to Guba and Lincoln (2000), a paradigm is a way of thinking about the world. The qualitative research paradigm has changed over the last 50 years. It has meant different things throughout its seven moments described by Denzin and Lincoln (2000b). Both Denzin and Lincoln (2000b) and Stake (1995) define research as an activity extremely dependent on its social context, an activity that places the researcher in the world within the frame of his or her research.

Definitions offered by authors like Denzin and Lincoln (2000b) and Stake (1995) place the researcher within the social context of his or her field of inquiry. This approach is particularly suitable to this research as the urgency of certain issues related to the socio-geographic context, and also the lack of research in refugee education (Preston, 1991) and the needs of a community in crisis are the driving force behind this research. The study clearly falls

within the realm of qualitative research paradigm as it observed the participants in their natural setting (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Denzin and Lincoln (2000b) describe qualitative research as a tool for focusing and targeting on specific populations. According to this definition, qualitative research has the capacity for describing the effect of a program on the target population and in this way inform the policy decisions in education (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000b).

Denzin and Lincoln (2000b) recommend qualitative research as suitable for program evaluation, while according to Kemmis and McTaggart (2000), action research in educational settings is typically performed within the qualitative paradigm.

Stake (1995) lists characteristics of qualitative research among others: constructivist and dependent on context (economic, cultural, political, and social). This research followed the constructivist interpretative framework as described by Denzin and Lincoln (2000b). It deconstructed and reconstructed the social studies curriculum under evaluation through close observations of its implementation, followed by reflection, planning, and enacting changes. The curriculum was interpreted through an evaluation of the way teachers and students interact with the planned activities and documents.

Classroom action research is based in qualitative theory, as it relies on practitioners gathering data of their own educational practice and using it to interpret and improve it (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). This raises the question of the role of the researcher in the action/reflection spiral and within each of the cases constituting the study. Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) argue that critical action research can be performed by curriculum consultants, while classroom action research is best done by teachers. As this research involves extensive input from both a curriculum consultant (the researcher) and teachers as participants, it was decided that action research would be a perfect fit. Somekh (1995) also advises us of advantages of using action

research in the context of teacher education and curriculum development. As this research project both attempts to improve a curriculum and has a professional development component for the participant teachers, it was deemed suitable to use Somekh's recommendation. According to Stringer,

> "community-based action research is a collaborative approach to inquiry or investigation that provides people with the means to take systematic action to resolve specific problems. This approach to research favours consensual and participatory procedures that enable people (a) to investigate systematically their problems and issues…" (Stringer, 1999, p.17)

This is definitely of relevance to this research, as it studies a community-based curriculum within a very participatory approach. In his other work, Stringer (2005) describes use of action research in an education policy planning project in East Timor. Action research is also recommended by researchers such as Guevara (1996) when working with communities in non-western cultural contexts, as described in his study of an environment project in the Philippines: "The participatory action research model helps a community gain understanding of its social reality, learn how to learn, initiate dialog, and discover new possibilities for addressing its situation." (Guevara, 1996, p.1)

In addition, a number of studies exploring issues in refugee education, such as O'Brien's (2003) and Cooper's (2005) studies have also been conducted employing action research methodology, therefore it was deemed appropriate to utilize action research here, since this research focuses on refugee education. Overall, action research has been repeatedly and successfully used in international and non-western contexts, as reported by such authors as Ahmed (2002), Chayanuvat & Lukkunaprasit (1997), Fosas (1997), Phaik-Lah (1997).

In view of the constructivist paradigm demanding that the study be contextually situated within the socio-political framework of the field of research, the broad research question can be divided into the following sub-sections:

a. *How have western curriculum developers and local educators identified the need for a social studies curriculum that facilitates development of critical thinking ability in Post 10 students?*

In this phase the researcher explores, reviews, and reflects on the history and background of the Curriculum Project, how the project has collaborated with the teachers, and local education officials, community organizations, and how it has placed itself within the Thai-Burma border social, cultural, and political network in order to ensure the development of a community-based curriculum, culturally relevant and suitable to the social and political context and the needs of the students and the community. Some ethnographic research strategies described by Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) were used in this part of the study.

b. *What strategies have been used in developing course materials to ensure that the teachers are comfortable with the new curriculum?*

This phase sets the context for exploring the actual process of the design of the curriculum and the learning materials and providing a rationale for the particular strategies, solutions, and the structure chosen for the course materials. As the researcher I argue why the resulting materials represent an innovation in the educational situation of the Post 10 programs in the refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border. This phase deals with the practitioner research aspect of the project reflecting on the researcher's journey as a curriculum developer with the Curriculum Project.

c. *What insights has the implementation of the new curriculum provided for the reflection on and evaluation of the relevance of the learning materials to the objectives of the curriculum?*

This phase of the research was the fieldwork stage. The researcher conducted participant observations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000a; Patton, 2002) working with the teachers and students in

and out of the classroom. Some activities included co-teaching, co-reflecting, and co-planning, as well as open-ended and informal interviewing and focus groups.

     d. How has the evaluation of the new curriculum informed the reflexive process of refinement of the curriculum?

Here, the researcher continued working closely with the teachers, students and the community to design a plan for and re-work the curriculum based on the evaluation and reflection within this research.

Overall, this research was organized according to the five basic research parameters described by Denzin and Lincoln (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000b) as shown in Table 1.

Triangulation was addressed through a number of methods, as shown in Table 1. Ethnographic methods such as document analysis and collection of artifacts (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995) were used to describe the history of the project and the researcher's experience with the project. The researcher thoroughly described the process and the strategies used by the Curriculum Project. For this purpose, curriculum development documents, reports, workshops and meeting minutes, and Curriculum Project newsletters were analyzed. This information was compared to Post 10 programs' reports and interview data.

Data was collected from a range of participants (teachers, students, Curriculum Project staff) and interviews were conducted with all of the participants. Comparative analysis of interview data from the different participants was performed. Particular attention was paid to the differences in data resulting from interviews with different types of participants (teachers, students, Curriculum Project staff, etc.), as well as to different patterns emerging with the different cases that were part of this case study research.

Table 1

Research Process

	Denzin and Lincoln, 2000	**My research**
Parameter **1**	Background to social, political, and cultural context of research	Described in sections 2.1-2.4 of the literature review (Chapter 2)
Parameter **2**	Constructivist paradigm	Deconstructed and reconstructed the social studies curriculum while involving the participants in their natural setting
Parameter **3**	Research methodology	Action research and case study approach used for the evaluation of curriculum conducted by the participants in three locations (case studies)
Parameter **4**	Research methods	Interviewing, observing, questionnaires, journals, document analysis
Parameter **5**	Triangulation of data, transferability, member checking, interpretation	Triangulation achieved through obtaining data from a number of sources (classroom observations, interviews with participants, student questionnaires, etc.) and member checking realized through checking the data with the participants at the professional development workshops (described in Chapter 4). Chapters 5 and 6 present the interpretation of the data.

Participant observation was conducted in the classroom, and a reflective journal was maintained to document reflection sessions between teacher-participants and the researcher. In these sessions the researcher recorded the participants' reflections in the reflective journal. The patterns developing from the reflective journal and participant observations were closely monitored, and any fluctuations that became apparent in the course of the fieldwork were examined.

Criteria of trustworthiness and authenticity were used according to the constructivist approach: triangulation of data and involvement of the voice of a variety of participants. In-depth study of cases and prolonged engagement in the field was undertaken (Denzin, 1997; Patton, 2002). In addition, member checking (Guba & Lincoln, 1997) was performed with the teachers and Curriculum Project staff in the later stages of research.

3.3 Action research

Qualitative research encompasses action research, since it is an activity that brings about change in the world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000a). The key feature of action research is producing change (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). This is why it was chosen as the methodology for this research study. The change involved in this research had to do with the evaluation and subsequent improvement of curriculum.

This research followed the action research framework described by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) according to the following definition:

> Action research aims to help practitioners investigate the connections between their own theories of education and their own day-to-day educational practices. It aims to integrate the research into educational setting so that research can play a direct an immediate role in the improvement of practice. (Kemmis, 1997, p. 173)

The objective of action research expressed in this quote matches the objective of this research where the researcher as participant examined her theories of education used in designing a set of learning materials in social studies in the context of the day-to-day practice of implementing these materials.

The collaborative aspect of action research according to Kemmis and McTaggart (1998) was represented in this research by involving the teachers as participants in evaluating the curriculum they use. The collaborativeness of this research also had a widening character. As the research developed its micro cycles, the participants involved were not limited to only teachers but started to include first the students, and then the Education Department representatives, and the broader community.

On a macro-scale, in terms of the whole research project, the action research spiral was enacted according to Figure 1 (Burns, 2000; Cherry, 1999; Fehring, 2002; Kemmis, Atweh, & Weeks, 1998; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; Stake, 1995; Sturman, 1997).

How have western curriculum developers and local educators identified the need for a social studies curriculum that facilitatas development of critical thinking ability in Post 10 students?

Background and history

Social context, process and circumstances, participants and stakeholders

Identifying need for action

Community context, developing hypothesis

What strategies have been used to ensure that the teachers are comfortable with the new curriculum?

Implement curriculum

Teachers and Students, participant observation, immersion in classroom culture, team-teaching, team-learning, training

Evaluate curriculum

Teachers, students, social environment, student assessment, analysis of teacher's voice, document analysis, persistent observation

What insights has the implementation of the new curriculum provided for the reflection on and evaluation of the relevance of the learning materials to the objectives of the curriculum?

How has the evaluation of the new curriculum informed the reflexive process of refinement of the curriculum

Data analysis

Triangulation of data, pattern matching, participant checking, member checking generalizability?

Action Planning

Learning from the case, linking action and knowledge, creating and sourcing knowledge learning challenges

Improve the curriculum

Facilitating and leading change, 2nd edition of teaching materials new teaching strategies

Figure 1.
Action Research Plan

The 'background and history' stage represents the history of the Curriculum Project and the context of the research as described in the introduction and the literature review chapters. 'Identifying need for action' stands for the collaboration between the CP and the Post 10 programs both before and after the beginning of this research that resulted in making the decision to start the action research process of evaluation of the social studies curriculum. 'Implement curriculum' stands for the researcher and the teachers working together in the classroom to implement the social studies curriculum through team-teaching and assessing the level of student engagement with the curriculum. 'Evaluate curriculum' describes the actual process of curriculum evaluation through extensive observations by the researcher and the participant teachers, interviews and the reflective journal.

The data analysis stage of this action research (Chapter 5) discusses the results of the evaluation and examines them through triangulation and the process of member checking. Member checking occurred during the two professional development workshops in November 2004 and May 2005 as reported in Chapter 4.

All of the above stages brought to the planning of the new curriculum and the 2nd edition of the learning materials that accompany this exegesis. Finally, the plan-act-reflect cycle of action research in the context of curriculum for Post 10 programs is expected to go on outside of this research as indicated in Figure 1.

Within the micro-cycles of this action research (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988), the researcher in collaboration with the participants identified the need for change, planned, and implemented the change in the curriculum. This in particular focused on the cultural suitability and local relevance of the curriculum and on the acquisition of critical thinking skills by the

students, which was demonstrated by the ability of the students to participate in and complete the activities and tasks suggested in the curriculum.

Kemmis (1997) describes participants as a group with a shared concern. These could be teachers and students, parents, community, etc. In this research, the participants were the immediate stakeholders in Post 10 education in the refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border. Stakeholders can be defined as teachers, students, parents, Karen Education Department (KED), curriculum developers, and the community (Curriculum Project, 2003).

The Kemmis (1997) model is particularly suitable for this research, since it is associated with participatory action research and lies within the socio-political context of developing countries (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000).

The researcher wore a number of hats in this project. McKernan (1991) describes the role of the teacher as a researcher; however, his model would not be suitable in this case, as, while the researcher did occasionally wear a teacher's hat, the role of the teacher was not to be the primary one. This research focused on evaluating a curriculum developed by the researcher as part of a team, and this makes the researcher eligible to be researcher-practitioner. Another hat worn by the researcher was that of a professional development practitioner. Within the framework of participant research, the researcher worked intensively with the teachers inside and outside the classroom to evaluate the curriculum but at the same time to assist the teachers with any new teaching strategies introduced in the teaching materials as well as team teach and reflect on the teaching practices.

3.4 Case study research

While action research methodology was a driving force behind this study, a case study approach as described by Stake (1995) was used as an organizing framework inside action

research. Denzin and Lincoln (2000b) define case study as being both a process and the product of inquiry. The Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) model of action research was applied to the curriculum evaluation project planned in this research. The process of inquiry was represented by the study of the case of a number of Post 10 schools where the curriculum was implemented. The product of inquiry is represented by the plan of action and the new improved curriculum resulting from this plan of action.

Stake (1995) recommends instrumental case studies when the purpose is to investigate a hypothesis or to achieve a general understanding of a question. Instrumental case studies were used in this research to construct an understanding of how a curriculum has been designed, implemented, and refined, as well as to inform the stakeholders in the Post 10 education in the refugee camps.

Since three schools in three refugee camps were selected as cases, a collective case study approach according to Stake (1995) was used. Stake recommends using this approach when two or more separate cases are studied in order to achieve the understanding of the same phenomenon. The study of the three schools was used to investigate the same research question:

How was an innovative social studies curriculum designed, implemented, and refined through a collaboration between local educators and western curriculum developers in the refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border?

The results of the study were used for the same purpose: evaluating and improving a curriculum. Throughout the study, there was coordination between the three cases and the data collected was compared in an interpretative fashion in order to achieve a better understanding of all three cases (Stake, 1995).

The three schools selected for this study were part of an informal network of Post 10 schools in the refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border. Curriculum Project provides a selection of materials in a number of subjects that the schools have a freedom to pick and choose from according to the needs of their particular school. The decisions in each particular subject are normally up to each individual subject teacher.

The schools have been selected on the basis of their history of cooperation with the Curriculum Project and the contribution that the teachers in these schools made to the development of the curriculum.

While the aim of this study was an evaluation of a curriculum, its focus was primarily on people. Patton (2002) recommends that case studies are particularly suitable for supporting participation and dialogue that can be used for a critical evaluation, placing the focus on the people in the programs, and honoring "the views of marginalized people" (p.186).

3.5 Sample selection

For sampling selection Patton (2002) recommends information rich cases that "offer in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalizations" (Patton, 2002, p. 230). Purposeful sampling was used in this study (Patton, 2002; Stake, 2000). Stake (2000) notes that purposeful sampling is useful when the whole phenomenon under investigation is limited to a small number of cases; therefore, samples need to be chosen to represent the phenomenon as fully as possible.

In this study, samples were chosen geographically (three refugee camps) as well as through the history of the three programs' collaborating with the researcher, at that time in the capacity of the Curriculum Project coordinator. The units of analysis inside the cases were people-focused. These were the three teachers piloting the curriculum and materials under evaluation and four sets of classes of students (approximately 20 students per class) studying the

materials. In addition, a range of community representatives and officials, such as a youth group members, local environment groups, women's organizations, Karen Department of Education representatives, and Curriculum Project workers were involved as participants (10 to 15 people). The timeframe for sampling was based on a school year (June 2004 to March 2005).

According to Patton (2002) and Goetz and LeCompte (1984), in criterion sampling, all cases meet some predefined criteria. In this study, criterion sampling was represented through selecting the three schools that have participated most actively in the process of curriculum development and are therefore most familiar with it and most interested in the results of the evaluation.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) warn against generalizations in case studies as a means of predictions for other situations. However, it is recommended in the same work, that some generalizations can be possible as long as they are exclusively context-specific. Any generalizations achieved as a result of this research are limited to specific strategies involved in the process of developing and evaluating the curriculum or use of specific strategies in the implementation of materials.

This is consistent with Stake's (1995) position on generalizations resulting from case studies:

> We cannot generalize, but we can suggest that this might be replicated in a 'similar' situation, where 'similar' is a list or criteria that was used to develop the curriculum. (p. 7)

The purpose of case studies is interpretation (Stake, 1995). As an instrumental collective case study this research focused on the interpretation of the interaction of the cases with the curriculum under evaluation. Some initial specific questions to focus on were set as

foreshadowing questions recommended by Stake (1995). Some questions focusing on the teachers:

- Do the teachers find the teaching approach suggested in the new curriculum usable?

- Which parts of the new curriculum pose a teaching challenge to the teachers? In terms of teaching strategies? In terms of skills? In terms of content?

- Do the teachers find the critical thinking skills practiced in the curriculum appropriate and/or sufficient according to their expectations?

- Some questions focusing on the students:

- How are the students reacting to the new teaching approach?

- How does the new curriculum affect student motivation?

- As a result of studying the curriculum, do the students demonstrate acquisition of the critical thinking skills to some extent?

Particular attention was paid to any representation of acquisition of the critical thinking skills and demonstration of independent thinking by the students. A range of data collection techniques was used to document and produce detailed descriptions of the students' engagement with the curriculum and with the skills practiced in it. Comparisons between and within cases and reflections were used to provide a basis for change implemented through action research techniques.

As much as possible, information must be collected in a case study in order to inform the researcher of all details and aspects of the case, providing thick descriptions particularly focusing on the issue of research but also providing sufficient background that would help locate the case in its social context. Some aspects of the context of the setting that are important to this research can be outlined as follows:

- The camps, the situation of the refugees in the camp and in Thailand, the political background of the refugee situation.

- The Karen people of Burma - cultural background (ethnographic approach according to Hammersley and Atlkinson (1995) is used here).

- Everything that relates to the process of developing the curriculum.

- Everything that relates to the schools and the teaching situation.

Thus, for the purpose of describing and interpreting the setting of the curriculum evaluation, the case study approach was used, while for the evaluation process leading to action and change, the action research methodology was employed.

3.6 Data gathering techniques

A range of data gathering techniques were used in association with both the case study and action research aspects of the study. The study was based on prolonged engagement in the field (Stake, 1995) represented by researcher's day-to-day presence at the selected schools for five to six months. In addition, depth of understanding and thick descriptions were made possible by the researcher's prior familiarity with the programs, the teachers, and the context of the cases through three years of working with the community in the role of the Curriculum Project coordinator.

The primary method of data collection was participant observation (Kemmis et al., 1998). The researcher observed the teachers piloting the curriculum under evaluation and the students engaging in the learning process. The teachers as participants observed the researcher as a participant teaching the same curriculum. These observations were followed by reflective sessions, which were recorded by the researcher in a reflective journal. In addition, document review (Stake, 1995) and artifact collection (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984) were undertaken to

analyze Curriculum Project documents, reports, and policy statements, as well as school reports

for the participant programs. The methods used in this research are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2

Data Gathering Techniques

Participants	Data gathering techniques planned
Teachers	Participant observation, informal interviews, team-planning and team-teaching, reflection sessions, reflective journal (recorded by researcher), member checking
Students	Participant observation, informal interviews, focus groups, reflective classroom activities
Community representatives	Informal interviews
Education Department officials	Structured interviews
Curriculum Project staff	Informal interviews, document analysis, member checking

Through participant observation the researcher gained insight into the way the students

engaged with the curriculum and the learning materials. The researcher observed specific

learning activities and the way the students were able to demonstrate critical thinking skills

practiced in the activities. Such data was supplemented by interviews and focus groups with

teachers and students where participants had a chance to reflect on their learning and teaching

experiences and any difficulties encountered.

In the process of student observation through the course of the school year, the researcher

paid particular attention to the development of the students' initiative, as demonstrated by active

classroom participation, confidence, and teamwork as part of the curriculum.

The researcher also monitored any patterns emerging in relation to the topics covered in

the curriculum. Again, participant observation was supplemented with interviews and reflections

that helped both the researcher and the participants to interpret the relevance of the topics included in the learning process and thus to evaluate the cultural relevancy of the curriculum.

The participants in this research come from a variety of linguistic backgrounds. Most of the participants are Karen, Karenni, Burmese, or English native speakers. While the researcher is not proficient in Karen, Karenni, or Burmese, this did not constitute a problem for this research for the following reasons:

The Post 10 programs, where most of data collection took place, use English as a medium of instruction. All the teachers who participated in this research are proficient in English. The students have at least a basic knowledge of English, since this is one of the entrance requirements for the schools. At least 50% of communication between the Curriculum Project and the Post 10 programs happens in English. All the Curriculum Project documentation as well as all the school records of the Post 10 programs is in English. The other participants in the research (Education Department officials, community representatives, NGO workers) all use English to a different extent and most of the communication with the Curriculum Project was carried out in English.

The researcher used English in working with all teacher participants. The help of an interpreter was enlisted for some of the data collection activities with the students.

The interpreter was recruited from the local staff of the Curriculum Project. This made sure that the interpreter was culturally sensitive as a member of the community and familiar with the confidentiality and security issues through his/her work. The researcher was familiar with the interpreter through prior work together and has built up trust and good working relationships.

3.7 Summary

Guided by qualitative research, this study incorporated both action research and case study approaches. It also involved elements of ethnographic research when analyzing the work that has been done by Curriculum Project before and during the study. A combination of methods were employed in the conduct of this study.

The fieldwork in this research was undertaken through the expanding cycles of action research, as described in Chapter 4, while data collection was organized through the case study approach as the researcher traveled between the three locations of research which were the three cases. The data is then presented (in Chapter 5) following the cycles of action research with themes emerging based on the action research methods employed: observations, journal entries, reflection sessions, and evaluation notes.

Chapter 4: Fieldwork and context

4.1 Introduction

This research investigated the question: *How was an innovative social studies curriculum designed, implemented, and refined through collaboration between local educators and western curriculum developers in the refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border?*

The study focused on evaluating and refining a curriculum and a set of course materials, as well as on following and describing the stages of the curriculum design process used by the participants with the purpose of establishing a framework that can be used in other comparable situations, such as refugee camps, conflict environments and with marginalized communities.

The curriculum under evaluation in this research is targeted at young adults and aims to foster the development and use of critical thinking skills and independent learning strategies by the students. The pilot version of the curriculum has been implemented at a range of Post 10 programs in the refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border. Three of these schools represent cases in the case study aspect of this research. The profiles of the schools and the refugee camps have been briefly introduced in the methodology chapter and are further discussed later in this chapter.

This chapter introduces the context of the fieldwork, the sites, the participants, the specifics of how action research was implemented. The data discussed in this chapter was collected during the fieldwork period from July to September, 2004, while the whole research involves four periods of fieldwork spread throughout the June 2004- March 2005 academic year (as detailed in Chapter 5), collecting data throughout the whole academic year. Each term covers one of the two textbooks that are parts of the curriculum under evaluation. This way, the first academic term-based cycle of evaluation (July – September plus the October workshop) focuses on the first part of the curriculum: Introduction to Social Studies, while the second term-based

cycle (December – February plus the May workshop) focuses on the second part of the curriculum: Background to Southeast Asia.

The fieldwork periods are relatively brief (the longest being no more than 3 months in duration). However, it was deemed sufficient for the curriculum evaluation that was at the heart of this research project for the following reasons: the researcher had previously worked with the participant schools and teachers in the capacity of curriculum developer and teacher trainer for a number of years, therefore, time could be saved on a lot of preliminary work with the stakeholders. The curriculum under evaluation has been developed by the researcher with a lot of input from the participants, therefore by the time of this research had started all involved were already intimately familiar with the curriculum in question. The participants were already very familiar with the researcher and have experienced working together, therefore there was already a certain level of trust established, which is essential for participatory action research.

The key participants during this period of data collection were three social studies teachers teaching the first year classes for which the curriculum under investigation was targeted. The data has been collected through participant observation, reflection journal and semi-structured interviews.

Section *4.2* of this chapter is written in the style of a journal and is based on the researcher's field journal. It is written mostly in first person. This style was chosen to emphasize the immersion of the researcher in the day-to-day life of the research and its participants and to enhance the presentation of the rich data describing the case study. The subsequent sections are written intermittently in first and third person, whichever way seemed more appropriate for a clear representation of the action research realities in the field.

Some sections in this chapter might seem to the reader to be showing a certain bias on the part of the researcher. Any such bias should be viewed within the framework of action research, where the researcher has been intimately involved in the realities of the participant community and could not help but develop a certain level of identification with it for the benefit of trust and understanding with the participants, which was essential if valuable data was to be obtained.

A data coding and abbreviations chart is to be found in Appendix 1. Appendixes 2 and 3 provide summaries of all data quoted in this exegesis.

4.2 The field and the sites

4.2.1 Introduction. In July of 2004, the Thai Burma border project started for me with the all-NGOs meeting in Bangkok, Coordination Committee for Services to the Displaced People in Thailand (CCSDPT). This is where the aid industry of the border comes together once a month to talk *about* the refugees and their situation but not *with* them. The meetings are held at a very glamorous venue, the British Club, the embodiment of a colonial presence. Teak furniture, mirrors and paintings, white tablecloths, uniformed attendants serving coffee. It is a far cry from the reality of refugee camps.

> The atmosphere feels somewhat incongruous with the agenda: a critical situation resulting from floods and land erosion due to deforestation in the new site of one of the border refugee camps. Mae La Oon is a newly relocated camp in Mae Hong Son province in Northern Thailand. This camp, housing more than 15,000 people, was relocated under the orders of the Thai authorities and against the wishes of the community half a year earlier, disrupting the school year and the normal course of refugee life. (RJ1 14/7/2004)

This is an excerpt from a field journal on my first day of fieldwork in Thailand. Re-reading it reminds me of the many contradictions of working on the border and of all the

controversies involved in and contributing to the marginalization and the invisibility of the community this research aims to benefit.

Later the same day, I tried to get in touch with my network of people, so I could begin forming my schedule for the next few weeks. My first contact that day was in Mae Hong Son province, where I would go to work with one of the teacher-participants at the Karenni Post 10 program in one of the Karenni refugee camps. I went through my lists of phone numbers, but either people have changed numbers over the past four months, or all my contacts have left town to go into the camp. This meant I would have to wait for days for someone to come out and get in touch with me, then take messages back into the camp to my participants, then come out again to inform me about the arrangement. This is a frustrating way to work, but this is the reality of working in and out of refugee camps.

Towards the end of the day, I miraculously discovered that the teacher I had been trying to arrange a meeting with had traveled to Chiang Mai for a three-day workshop. First success, so I took it as a good sign. The following day I was already in Chiang Mai, and in the evening, I was able to have my first interview with one teacher-participant. We touched base and made a plan to meet again in about a month at his school to start the evaluation of the curriculum he was teaching to his first year students in the social studies class.

Until then, I would go to Mae Sot, a sprawling border town of migrant workers, sweatshops, police, and gem merchants, from which I will be able to access the two camps where my other two key participants are located. After a six-hour bus ride, I arrived in Mae Sot, the town where I had spent almost three years and had already started missing, though it is a love-hate relationship. The next day I was on the 'line-car' and on my way to Mae La camp, the largest camp on the border which houses over 40,000 people belonging to Karen, Burman, and

Burmese Muslim ethnic groups. The Burmese Muslims have migrated from India, Bangladesh, and other neighboring countries over the course of the centuries and have been pushed across the country and into Thailand as a result of civil war and government policies. All those ethnic groups also come from a variety of religious backgrounds (Selth, 2003).

The following three sub-sections introduce the three refugee camps that were the sites of the research. A map of the area (Thailand – Burma border) and of the entire region is provided in Appendix 10. I traveled between the three camps extensively as the evaluation progressed.

4.2.2 Mae La. Mae La camp is located about 50 kilometers North of Mae Sot on the main Mae Sot – Mae Sariang road which runs along the Thai-Burma border from Tak province to Mae Hong Son province. The camp is stretched along the road and the adjoining narrow valleys and hill slopes. It stretches for kilometers along the road and is surrounded with a barbed wire fence. In fact there had been a simple bamboo fence in its place up until the beginning of September, 2004. However, when I came back in October, the new barbed wire fence with concrete poles was already completed.

The fence notwithstanding, the road was alive with people passing to and fro, carrying their loads of charcoal or rice, or fishing rods and some catch coming from a fishing expedition at a nearby pond, or some banana leaves cut down in the jungle across the road that can be put to this or that household use. It would be a different scene if a Thai VIP was expected to pass through on a particular day: the soldiers would be patrolling the road to make sure the refugees stay inside the fence and don't spoil the passing official's view out of his 4-wheel. This is where the Further Studies Program (FSP), one of the three case study schools in this study, is located.

It is half-way up the hill, behind a primary school. It was lunch hour when I arrived, and the teachers were having snacks in the office and chatting off-handedly. I haven't been back in

four months, but no one seems too surprised to see me, just a relaxed: "Oh, it's you, when did you come back? Will you teach any lessons today?" No, in fact I wouldn't teach any lessons on that particular day. The teacher I was planning to work with on that day was not actually at school – it was her daughter's first birthday and she was hosting a party. She even sent a special birthday lunch to the office for all the teachers. I went to visit her at her house, which required a trek up a slippery slope that had been cut into manageable steps. I made it just in time for the end of the party.

On the following day we had a better start and were able to have a good meeting and set up a plan for our evaluation work for the next few weeks.

4.2.3 Umpiem Mai. Umpiem Mai, 80 kilometers south of Mae Sot, is one of the newer camps established in 1998. People had been moved here from two smaller camps closer to the border because of the danger of the Burmese military attack. The camp is situated in a mountainous region of highland agriculture. The land around belongs mostly to the Hmong hill tribes. The road, a recently built basic but well-maintained paved track snakes through dizzying curves and up and down the steep slopes, and if one is not too car sick, there is a breath-taking view to be enjoyed from the back of the 'line-car,' a small pickup truck with a covered back and two rows of benches for seats. This form of transport is typical in this region and, in fact, throughout Thailand, and can sit anywhere from 10 to 20 people in the cabin next to the driver, in the back on the rows of seats, standing or hanging off the back of the truck, or riding up the top on the roof.

People who use this pickup truck service are either Thais traveling all the way to Umpang, a small mountain town where the road ends, Hmong youngsters traveling to school in Mae Sot or going back home to their villages in the hills, wearing their city clothes for the

occasion, refugee shop keepers sneaking out of camp to restock in town, or refugees slipping away from camp for daily work. It is also not unusual to see monks, Thai or Burmese, traveling from temple to temple.

Once off the 'line-car', I climbed the hill from the road all the way up for about 30 minutes to the school, Special English Program (SEP). The school is built near the top of the mountain, on the edge of a bamboo forest. The buildings: three classroom buildings, an office, boys' and girls' dorms, and three teachers' houses tower one over the other on the slope with a sweeping view of the whole camp, the road, and a glimpse of a Hmong village all the way down the valley (RJ1).

4.2.4 Karenni Camp 1 (official name: Karenni Site 1/Ban Kwai). This camp is located in Mae Hong Song province in Northern Thailand. It is one of the only three non-Karen camps on the Thai-Burma border. Most people here are from Karenni ethnic group, from Karenni State in Burma. Karenni is not a homogenous group but an umbrella term for a diversity of ethnic groups mostly coming from Karenni and Shan state in Burma and speaking a variety of ethnic languages. There is also a sizable Karen population in the camp.

This camp was recently relocated from a less isolated area where there was a sealed access road. Many Karenni people also lived in a nearby village which provided an extension of community. At the time this research took place, the new camp, including the school buildings, have only recently been built and in fact some of the students and teachers were still living on the old camp site which meant that they had an hour to an hour and a half walk to get to school in the morning. The move has definitely caused some major disruptions to the running of the school, including months taken out of the school year and whole sections of the school library and teacher resources being lost somewhere in the process of the move. Due to Thai authorities'

regulations it has also become very difficult to bring in foreign teachers into the camp. When this research started, the school was still undergoing adjustment to the new place.

4.3 Participants

4.3.1 Introduction. One of the key points of action research (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988) states the need to start with a small group of participants collaborating on the project and then broaden the scope by involving more participants. Consistent with this recommendation, during the first two months of fieldwork, only a small group of teacher-participants were actively involved in the curriculum evaluation. As stated in the methodology chapter, these three teachers have come to be engaged in this evaluation through their cooperation (or their programs cooperation) with the Curriculum Project throughout the process of curriculum development and were the first ones to pilot the new materials and the curriculum.

As the evaluation process progressed through July and August of 2004, a few additional stakeholders participated sparingly in semi-structured interviews, observations, or offering direct feedback on the curriculum. These stakeholders included Curriculum Project members and other teachers at the participant programs.

In the first two months of fieldwork three key participants were involved in the study – three teachers at three different locations: Further Studies Program (FSP) in Mae La camp, Special English Program (SEP) in Umpiem Mai refugee camp, and Karenni Post 10 (KPT) in Karenni Camp 1. The three social studies teachers I worked with belonged to a variety of linguistic, religious, and educational backgrounds, though culturally, they belong to somewhat similar communities. The importance of this is discussed in the literature review.

4.3.2 Lwin Lwin Oo. Lwin Lwin Oo is a Karen woman in her mid thirties. She comes from a city in Burma, rather than from a jungle village (as do many refugees including some of

the teachers) and has a degree from a university in Burma. She belongs to a Seventh Day Adventist religious community of Karen people from Burma. As a part of the assimilationist policies of the ruling regime in Burma, ethnic minority people living in Burma are forced to accept Burmese language, culture, and way of life as their own (Seekins, 2002). Due to these policies, no education in minority languages is permitted in the territories controlled by the military government in Burma. Communication in all spheres of life is conducted in Burmese, and ethnic minority families are discouraged from bringing up children speaking their native language. Like many other Karen people with similar background, Lwin Lwin Oo only speaks very basic Karen. Her first language is Burmese, and she is also fluent in English.

Lwin Lwin Oo's students, on the other hand, have for the most part grown up in a refugee camp, in a full-fledged Karen community, and have gone through a Karen education system. Those students who have come directly from Burma into the program, have come from the revolution areas or the so-called 'brown zone', where the Burmese military junta's control of community life does not stretch. Therefore, these Karen children would have grown up speaking Karen. They would have also been exposed to a reasonable amount of Burmese. So, the students are for the most part native speakers of Karen, while they also possess fluency in Burmese to a varying degree.

Therefore, Lwin Lwin Oo is not proficient in most of her students' first language. It is important to realize that Karen is not one uniform community of people. There are numerous diverse subgroups of Karen people speaking different dialects and languages that are often mutually unintelligible (Marshall, 1997; Po, 2001; Seekins, 2002). Quite often the lingua franca for them is the Burmese language. Lwin Lwin Oo's communication with her students is therefore perfectly acceptable to the students and the school administration. She is fully accepted as a

member of the community – the school community, and the broader camp community – as a Karen and a Christian.

Lwin Lwin Oo teaches in a mixture of Burmese and English, making sure that the combination of languages she uses provides sufficient opportunities for all the students to understand and participate in the lessons:

> 'What are human activities?' in English, then repeat in Burmese. In her explanations, Lwin Lwin Oo often seems to translate a lot between English and Burmese. She would say a sentence in English, then repeat in Burmese for clarity. (LPLS1 p. 2)

The students respond in a similar mix of languages, with more Burmese than English.

4.3.3 Saw Doe. Saw Doe is a young Karen man in his early 20's and is new to teaching. He has grown up in a refugee camp, is himself a graduate of one of the Post 10 programs, Further Studies Program in Mae La, and has gone on to complete a post-Post 10 course for refugees and exiles from Burma run by an international NGO in Chiang Mai. He has then returned to his community to teach at the Special English Program in Umpiem Mai. Culturally, linguistically, and by religious affiliation, Saw Doe's students can identify with their teacher.

Saw Doe's background contributes to a lot of trust in the student-teacher relationship. This teacher is also very close to his students in age (there might actually be a few students older than him), which might, on the one hand, enhance the mutual understanding between the students and the teacher, and on the other hand, hinder Saw Doe's authority as a full-fledged teacher.

4.3.4 Tun Soe. Similar to Saw Doe, Tun Soe left the border in his early 20s for further studies and then came back to become a teacher. Tun Soe had received a scholarship to study at a university in Bangkok and has completed a BA.

Tun Soe, in his late 20's or early 30's, comes from a Western Pwo Karen group in Ayerwaddy Division, in the delta of the Irrawaddy River in South Western Burma. Western Pwo Karen is a sub-group of Pwo Karen, which is in its turn a sub-group of Karen. Western Pwo Karen dialect is not shared by any of the other Karen sub-groups, but Tun Soe, for reasons similar to Lwin Lwin Oo's background, is a Burmese speaker. He joined the 1988 uprising in Burma that swept through the country and was violently repressed by the government that killed thousands of people and threw thousands more in jail (Fink, 2001). Tun Soe ended up on the Thai-Burma border in the early 1990's. While not ethnically Burman, he identifies as a Buddhist, and is perceived as culturally Burmanized by the local Karen community.

Most of his students at the Karenni Post 10 school belong to a Karenni ethnic minority, which is historically, culturally, and linguistically related to the Karen people. The first language of the majority of the students is one of the numerous dialects of Karenni or Karen. The common language of choice in the classroom is Burmese. Tun Soe often feels that he is not a part of the community and, therefore, feels the need to exercise particular sensitivity in his teaching and especially in his treatment of political topics: "If the teacher is not from the community, how will they teach history of Burma?" (MRI1 p. 1)

In view of the linguistic, ethnic and political issues mentioned in the sections above affecting the teaching and learning situation in the Post 10 programs, it is important to consider some historical and political aspects of the refugee community, particularly as they influence the relationships of trust between the teachers and the students. Critical education is not possible without this relationship of trust (Freire, 1995; hooks, 1994); therefore, this issue acquires dramatic importance.

One of the defining characteristics of the Thai-Burma border and refugee camp communities is its decades-old (and in some cases centuries-old) history of ethnic and religious conflict and isolation, which has fostered persistent feelings of distrust between people and communities with differences that to an outsider might seem as negligible (Marshall, 1997; Po, 2001). Since a truly critical and conscientisation-focused education cannot happen without establishing a learning environment that is based on trust (hooks, 1994), it is extremely important to examine any issues of trust or lack of it that might be relevant in the education programs participating in this study.

4.4 Action research cycle

4.4.1 The broadening cycle of action research. This research follows the action research framework described by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988). The overall planning, action, observation, and reflection stages of the action research cycle are followed according to the diagram in Figure 1, which is described in detail in the methodology chapter.

Kemmis (1988) describes action research as a spiral of broadening cycles of planning and self-reflection. A key feature of action research suggests that action research starts small in terms of cycles, as well as in terms of participants. The following sections describe these initial cycles of this research which include weekly and academic term-based cycles.

4.4.2 Weekly cycles.

> Action research starts with small cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting which can help to define issues, ideas, and assumptions … so that those involved can define powerful questions … as their work progresses. (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988, p. 25)

The aspect of action research described in the quote above is what provides the methodological justification for the weekly cycles of the curriculum evaluation process. The

fieldwork stage of this research consisted of recurring *plan-act-observe-reflect-plan* sequences

recommended by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988). A sample reiteration of this sequence is

demonstrated in Figure 2. It reflects the variety of activities the key participants have been

simultaneously involved in while I, as the researcher, was traveling between the three locations

and playing the teacher's counterpart in planning lessons, teaching, observing, reflecting, and

planning changes and new lessons. The data collected as a result of these mini-cycles of

evaluation consists of lesson plans and lesson scripts and observation notes collected by the

teachers and the researcher, scripts of semi-structured interviews with the participant-teachers

and some Curriculum Project members, and some samples of student work.
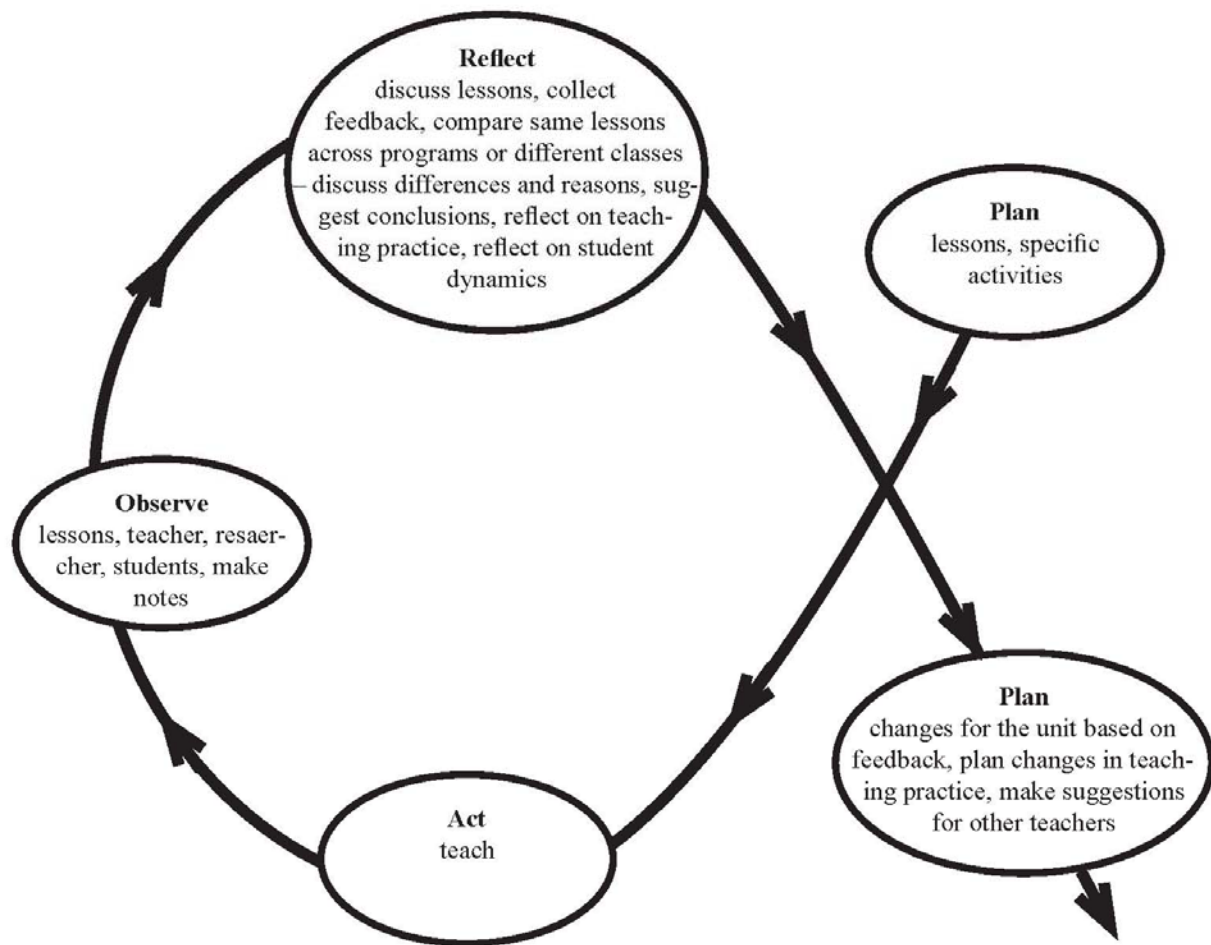
Figure 2. Weekly cycle of action research

Plan (1): Figure 2 represents lesson planning by the teacher or the researcher as the

teacher's counterpart. At this stage either the teacher and the researcher would each plan their

own lessons and then confirm their plans with each other before teaching, or the participant

teacher would request me to prepare certain specific activities for a lesson, or activities would be

planned in a teacher-researcher team. Sometimes, when planning lessons separately, the

researcher and the teacher would actually plan quite similar activities based on the module and

the teachers' guide, as is suggested by the excerpt from the researcher's field journal: "We ended up planning the same slight variation of the TG activity (group work p.37)" (LPLS1, p. 32).

Scheduling decisions would also be made as part of this mini-cycle: An excerpt from the journal demonstrates a typical pattern of planning. A teacher from a different program had demonstrated a game to teach the law of supply and demand for the economics chapter. I had mentioned this game to Lwin Lwin Oo and she has asked me to do it in her class. The researcher and the teacher then had to resolve a scheduling issue, as recorded in the researcher's field journal:

> "A minor dilemma – according to schedule, Lwin Lwin Oo takes 3B first, and then I am going to try out Mike's game. Is it worth it to swap the schedule to give her a chance to watch the game and then try it herself is she likes it, or would this just be an unnecessary disturbance?" (LPLS1, p. 18)

In this particular case, the teacher decided not to rearrange the schedule, as she was not planning to try out the new activity with her other class on the same day.

Through the initial periods of fieldwork, a pattern of planning emerged in working with Lwin Lwin Oo where she preferred the researcher and herself to teach separate classes throughout the week. For example, if I started teaching class A on a Monday, she'd have me teach the same class throughout the week, and take class B herself: "It's better to follow lessons with the same teacher, rather than disturbing students with different teacher every lesson" (LPLS1, p. 28).

This pattern would be adjusted and refined on Lwin Lwin Oo's initiative later on in the fieldwork and will be discussed in the next chapter.

Act (2): action stage of the mini-cycle consisted of teaching the lessons. About two thirds of lessons throughout the evaluation were taught by each participant teacher in their respective

programs, while one third of the lessons in each program were taught by the researcher, as the teacher's counterpart, on the teacher's request.

Observe (3): observation stage involves the researcher and the teacher taking turns observing each other's lessons and recording their feedback. In case of the researcher observing, comprehensive scripts of lessons were recorded. Later on in the evaluation, a system of lesson checklists was introduced for the observer (teacher or researcher) to complete during the lessons. All the information collected was later be used in the reflection sessions between the teacher and the researcher. The checklist was developed by the researcher. All checklists can be viewed in appendix 6.

Reflect (4): reflection stage of the cycle discussed here provided the space for consolidating and processing all the data collected in the three stages discussed above and new data would then be generated through semi-structured interviews and free discussion and reflection sessions.

This brief interview with Saw Doe shows the range of aspects of the lessons focused on during the evaluation, and suggests the implications for the second planning stage of the cycle:

> Question 1: What didn't really work? Why?
> Answer: Time management wasn't very good. Too much new material (pictures) students get out of focus (overwhelmed?) Need to give a clear task before giving out the pictures. This way students can stay focused throughout the activity. State goal of the activity.
>
> Question 2: Did the module provide enough activities/exercises and other opportunities for the students to practice the material and the skills targeted?
>
> Answer: Not enough exercises and pictures in the module for focusing on skills.
>
> Question 3: Did the students demonstrate the use of skills targeted?
> Answer: Yes, more or less

Question 4: What would you change next time?
Answer: First, find out the meaning… not sure… vocabulary work, globe work… find out differences in local area (within the camp)

Question 4: Would the lesson work better in 1st language?
Answer: Good, but not better. Best to combine. (MRI1, p. 4)

The teacher and the researcher would discuss the lessons for the day or for the whole week, focusing on constructive feedback that could be used to improve the coursebook under evaluation, for example, as demonstrated in this after-the-lesson brief reflection with Saw Doe: "Need to add an introduction to maps and globes and why we need to learn about them. Also need to introduce different types of maps in the module, such as topo maps, population maps, etc." (MRI1, p. 6).

Future lessons on the specific topics taught at that particular time would also be discussed:

> During the 3rd period, Saw Doe reminded me about the team game for goods and services, like we did last week with 3A: 'How about that game that we did last week? I think we should do it with 3B now. I want to try it, but I want to change; I will whisper the 'goods or services word into the volunteer's ear…, and then they will demonstrate to their team'. (LPLS1, p. 21)

At this time, comments would be made as well on the whole process of the evaluation from the point of view of each participant-teacher, and plans to make adjustments would be discussed:

> This week Saw Doe chose to leave me in the classroom with the students. His theory is that the students concentrate better if there is one teacher – when he is not there if I am teaching: 'They just look at me to explain or translate, if I am not there, they will have to focus.' I found that he was right – I seem to have a better rapport with the students when their teacher is not around. (LPLS1, p. 14)

Other particular aspects focused on in these daily and weekly reflection sessions were student participation and skills acquisition, general understanding of the lesson by the students,

as well as teachability of particular learning points in the curriculum. One example of issues

discussed within the reflection aspect of the cycle is this journal entry based on Lwin Lwin Oo's

lesson: "Girls seem to be as outspoken as boys in providing answers" (LPLS1, p. 1). As became

apparent later, this might depend on the gender of the teacher, or at least on the teacher's attitude

towards encouraging girls' participation: "This is just an obvious thing to notice, while many

teachers comment that some students are just naturally outspoken, whether girls or boys, while

others are naturally shy" (LPLS1, p. 1).

Another example is this brief exchange between the researcher and the teacher to reflect

on a lesson: "Did the students demonstrate the use of skills targeted in the lesson?" "Yes, more

or less" (MRI1, p. 4). And an opinion by a teacher: "Politics is best for practicing skills" (MRI1,

p. 12).

Same lessons in different classes within the program were compared (mostly by the

teacher): "The level of the students in two classes is slightly different, B is lower than in A, but

we don't want to make them feel lower by using a different book, so we just spend more time

explaining" (MRI1, p. 3).

"We didn't get to cover 'interaction' concept as much as with 3A" (LPLS1, p. 2).

This was followed by a recommendation: "'interact' is a very difficult concept, needs examples"

(LPLS1 p. 2). And then in the lesson plan for the next day: "Review 'interaction'" (LPLS1, p. 3).

The researcher would also share notes from the same lessons in other participating

programs and comments made by other participating teachers. Differences would be pointed out,

and this would generate more discussion about particular learning points or aspects of the

curriculum: "Students throughout the programs seem to want to focus on English. What are the

implications for the module from this?" (ISSF1, p. 2)

These reflection sessions happened in a variety of settings and differed in length, as they were built around the teachers' working week to accommodate their convenience and diverse commitments ranging from teaching and other school-related duties and religious commitments to childcare, looking after livestock, to other community activities or other jobs.

In other words, the reflection sessions on-the-run could be anything from a quick word of encouragement on the way to the classroom, confirmation of a teaching plan, or a one-minute de-brief on the way from one classroom to the other or back to the office to a relaxed chat over lunch in the school office, or a one or two-hour session at the office or in the teacher's house on a morning or afternoon free of classes. An example of a very brief reflection: "Lwin Lwin Oo has met me at the [little tea] shop in front of the school office. She has just given her previous class assignment for the next 10-15 minutes. She was busy teaching all morning and we didn't have a chance to talk" (LPLS1 p. 2).

Wadsworth (1997) refers to such a range of reflection activities as allowing to see "… the trees *and* the forest, … the remarkable individual instances as well as seeing the unremarkable patterns… (p. 60)"

As a researcher, I feel that all of these different settings served their own purposes. The lengthy sit-down conversations provided thoughtful deeper insights and allowed for detailed semi-structured interviews where the researcher would start by producing a list of questions prepared in advance, and the teacher and the researcher together would go through the list selecting the questions relevant to the particular situation of the week or of a specific class, or a teaching unit. Some time would be spent discussing the selected questions and any other issues that would come up.

The spontaneous, on-the-run, reflective comments, on the other hand, offered the value of the on-the-spot, first immediate reaction that could otherwise get edited out in later discussions or just forgotten.

Plan (5): The outcomes of the reflection stage of the cycle feed into the *Plan (5)* stage demonstrated in Figure 2. The feedback collected through reflection stage, as well as the first three stages of the daily/weekly cycle of action research was used to plan the specific changes to the curriculum unit for the material covered in the particular teaching period, for example: "Introduce a game with two teams to act out goods and services (like 'vocabulary on board' game)" (ISSF1 p. 3) in the economics section. Plans were also discussed for any changes proposed for the teaching practice: "For workshop we should discuss what kinds of text activities would be useful to move away from reading aloud" (LPLS1 p. 6).

4.4.3 Academic term-based cycle. In the same way as the weekly cycle described in the previous section is based on starting with small cycle key point of action research (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988), the cycle based on the academic terms of the participant programs builds on the broadening character of action research described in the same work. The term-based cycles of the curriculum evaluation process consist of recurring *plan-act-observe-reflect-plan* sequences recommended by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988). It has similar a structure to the weekly cycle discussed above. The term-based cycle differs from the weekly cycle in its time-frame – spanning a few months of a school year – as well as in its scope – it concerns the whole curriculum, rather than individual lessons or weekly lesson plans. The term-based cycle is illustrated in Figure 3.
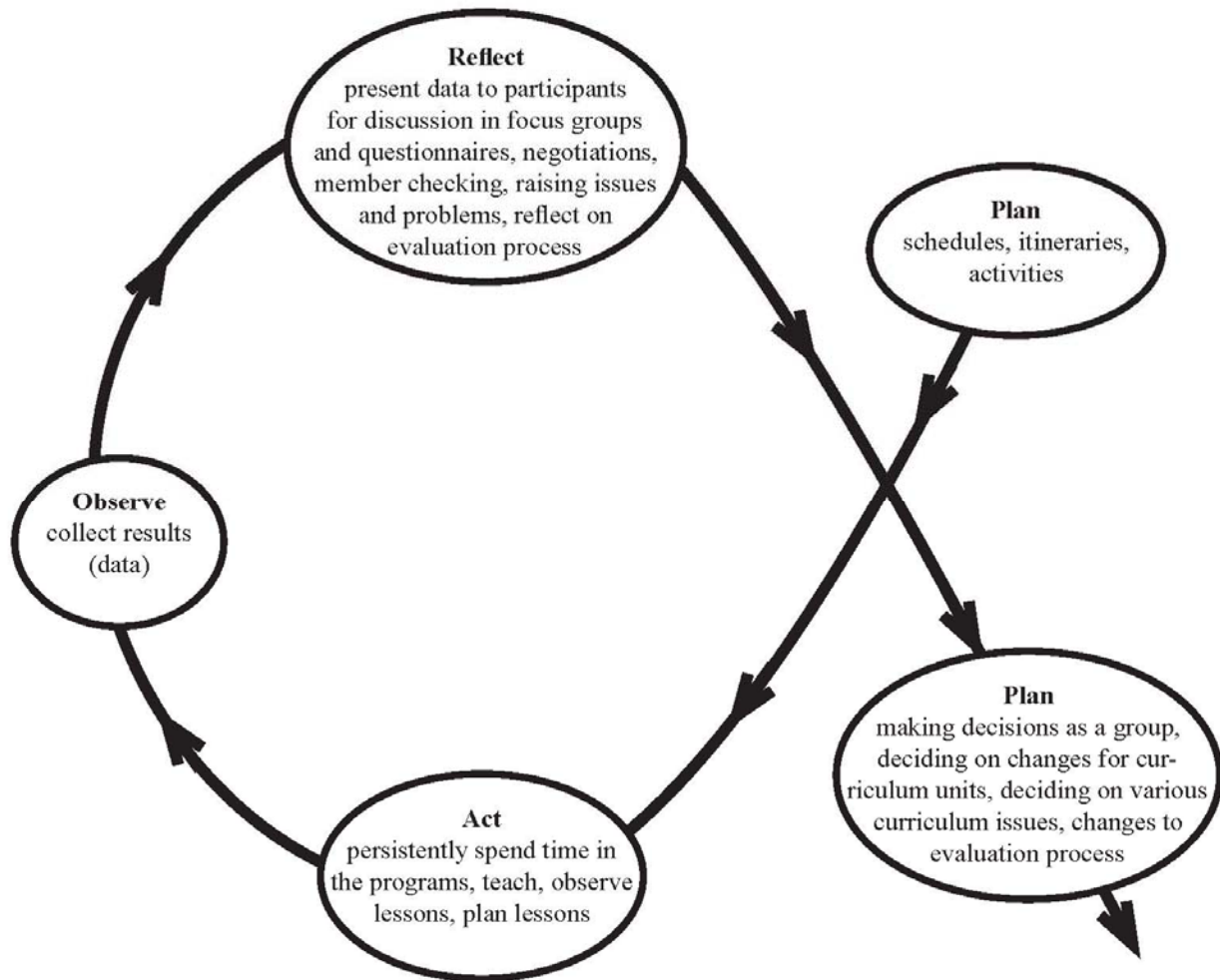
Figure 3. Academic term based cycle

Plan (1) stage in this cycle relates to making arrangements and solving logistics for all the evaluation-related activities for the term, as well as setting objectives with the participants. This includes coming to agreements with the teachers as to what their specific expectations are for the evaluation of particular sections or particular aspects of the curriculum, i.e. "Purpose: come out with better modules adapted to the situation" (MRI1, p. 1), as well as discussing time-commitments and solving schedules for team-teaching, meetings, and solving travel itineraries between the participating programs for the researcher. At this stage the participants and the

researcher discussed what types of activities they would be involved in for the evaluation for the duration of the term: "How to evaluate? Plan lessons, team-teach, reflect on what's working and what's not." (MRI1, p. 2)

Act (2) stage of the term-based evaluation cycle accounts for all the time spent in the participating programs by the researcher while being involved in a range of activities that are for the most part described in the weekly-cycle section. The researcher's persistent presence in the schools and in the classroom is aimed at producing rich descriptions of the cases, as recommended by Stake (1995), that account for the case study aspect of this research. The central purpose of the researcher's presence in the programs was teaching, observing, and planning lessons, and interviewing the key participants. Alongside these action research exercises, the researcher also participated in the formal and informal daily activities of the school and interacted with the students, other teachers and staff members:

> On Friday afternoon attended a student concert. Students are putting on the same performances they had prepared for the Army Day earlier in the week. Students seem to be having great fun. (RJ1, p. 5)

> Had a conversation with the Level 1 social studies teacher about module formatting economics modules, and supply-demand and role-play he has suggested. Discussed same fine tuning of the activity and the possibility of including it in either Intro or economics module. (RJ1, p. 4)

Observe (3) stage refers to all the data collected while in the programs. These are lesson observations (similar to the weekly cycle), as well as observation of the general atmosphere in the school, i.e.

"School atmosphere is noticeably different compared to last year. Everyone is friendly, and there's no tension in the air. At least on the outside it looks like people are getting along." (RJ1, p. 2)

Reflect (4) stage in the term-based reiteration covers a range of activities that the

participants engaged in during professional development and curriculum workshops that for the

duration of this research project were dedicated primarily to curriculum evaluation. These

workshops are the only opportunities to bring all the key participants together, since they are

based in different refugee camps and their movements are extremely restricted. The workshop

activities start with preliminary questionnaires aimed at involving the participants in building up

the agenda for the workshop: "How to set test questions? Discuss test standardization. Skills –

make clear what they are." (MRI1, p. 7)

For the workshop, the researcher prepared documents that summarized the data collected

throughout the term. A sample of such a document/questionnaire can be seen in Appendix 9.

Once the workshop was in progress, the participants met in focus groups to negotiate the

feedback collected in these summaries. Issues and problems relevant to the curriculum were

raised and discussed, i.e. language of instruction and assessment, or critical thinking skills

(SSWR1). Another aspect of the workshops was to invite the participants to reflect as a group on

the overall process of the evaluation.

The workshops also provided opportunities for member checking, as the participants

reviewed the evaluation data and feedback collected by the researcher and they are able to

confirm or offer other opinions on the data.

Plan (5) of the term-based cycle accounts for the curriculum workshops. First, the

participants reflected on and discussed the curriculum under evaluation, the feedback collected

up to date, and other general issues related to the process. Following that they engaged in making

decisions on what actions should be taken based on the information collected. These actions

included specific changes to the curriculum unit (ISSF2) in terms of content, organization of

material and teachers' manual, with particular focus on developing the students' thinking skills, and any changes to the actual process of the evaluation.

"Action research is … systematic and collaborative in collecting evidence on which to base rigorous group reflection" (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988, p. 21)

4.5 Data summary

Starting small, through daily observation, the weekly cycle of evaluation and then the academic term based cycle targeted such key issues in curriculum and classroom practice as lesson planning, teaching style, and student learning outcomes, particularly focusing on critical thinking skills. This resulted in producing data that contributed to planning constructive change on lesson scale as well as revealing any information leading to the evaluation of the general objectives of the Post 10 education and building a critical thinking curriculum, also leading to "work(ing) towards extensive changes – even critiques of institutions which … lead to more general reforms of classroom, school or system-wide policies and practices." (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988, p. 24)

Chapter 5: Data Analysis

5.1 Introduction

The data examined in this chapter comes from four periods of fieldwork: two observation periods, one in the first and one in the second academic term of the 2004-2005 academic year at the participant Post 10 programs on the Thai-Burma border, and two professional development workshops, one at the end of each academic term. The data in this chapter are organized by themes that emerged from the journal entries, reflection sessions, and evaluation notes. The data from the two professional development workshops is reported in Chapter 4. Table 3 provides a timeline for the fieldwork which represented the evaluation of the social studies curriculum.

5.2 Students' thinking skills and participation

5.2.1 What are critical thinking skills? For the purpose of this research, critical thinking skills were defined as mainly learning and information processing skills that focus on understanding information in context, applying information to a situation, and developing an opinion. The literature review contains a more detailed discussion of critical thinking skills as relevant to this research. Based on data collected and discussed here, students were better able to demonstrate some critical thinking and skills when they were faced with well-structured activities that took the students through the task step-by-step. In other words, the students in this research needed a lot of scaffolding to be able to perform exercises that require information processing skills.

5.2.2 What helps the acquisition of critical thinking skills? One example of students being successful with a thinking-based activity included a lesson on differences between local maps and regional or world maps in terms of features depicted on them. The lesson took place at the Further Studies Program (FSP) on June 7, 2004. The teacher asked the students to list all the features depicted for Burma first on a world map and then on a country map (LPLS1 p. 12).

Table 3

Curriculum Evaluation Timeline

Task	Location	2003	Jul 04			Aug 04				Sep 04		Oct 04	Dec 04		Jan 05				Feb 05		May 05
			2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	4	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3
Preliminaries: implementation of the first edition of the social studies course materials *(modules)*, needs assessment for the evaluation: informal planning, informal discussions with the potential participants *(not a formal part of this study)*	Mae Sot, Thailand; Refugee camps: Mae La, Umpiem Mai, Karenni Camp 1, 2003	■																			
First academic term-based curriculum evaluation																					
Observations, interviews, reflection sessions, journal entries, student questionnaires	ML(3 days a week)					■	■	■	■		■										
Observations, interviews, reflection sessions, journal entries, student questionnaires	UP(2 days a week)					■	■	■	■		■										
Observations, interviews, reflection sessions, journal entries, student questionnaires	K1(4 days a week)		■						■	■	■										
Professional development workshop: in-depth discussions, participant focus groups, negotiating, planning changes to the modules, member checking; participants from all participant programs attend	Mae La											■									
Second academic term-based curriculum evaluation																					
Observations, interviews, reflection sessions, journal entries, student questionnaires	Mae La (3 days a week)															■	■		■		
Observations, interviews, reflection sessions, journal entries, student questionnaires	Umpiem Mai (2 days a week)															■	■		■		
Observations, interviews, reflection sessions, journal entries, student questionnaires	Karenni Camp 1 (4 days a week)												■					■	■		
Professional development workshop: in-depth discussions, participant focus groups, negotiating, planning changes to the modules, member checking; participants from all participant programs attend	Umpiem Mai																				■

The students found no difficulty with this task, and after completing it, they were able to discuss the various features in the two maps and the differences between the way Burma was depicted on the two different maps.

This activity was particularly good at supporting the students through a thinking task because it started with a very tangible specific question accompanied by a visual that the students could relate to. Then, from a familiar, specific example, the students were able to move to a more generalized view of maps and list types of features regardless of the specifics of the location. From the critical thinking skills perspective, this activity broke down the task of identifying information on different types of maps through comparing and contrasting map features into easy steps: starting with a simple listing exercise, then comparing lists, and finally generalizing the list to other maps.

This interpretation of the students' performance was supported by the teacher's opinion that "any examples should be simple and clear and relate to our life" (LPLS1, p. 15) and "link the concepts and examples in the module more to the Burma situation" (ISSF, p. 1), as well as a need for clear visuals: "there are not enough… pictures in the module…" (ISSF1, p. 1). These quotes express that the teachers are placing a lot of trust in the teaching and learning process being influenced by the use of simple, very specific examples that are close to home, and particularly in the ones that are supported by a clear graphic.

Another example of a successful thinking skills activity was demonstrated in Lwin Lwin Oo's economics lesson. After the teacher's presentation, the students were required to work in small groups to prepare diagrams representing their understanding of the interaction of people's life and economy/economics (LPLS1, p. 17). If asked to present verbally, the concept of 'interaction' would be likely to pose a difficulty for the students. However, the clearly stated task

of making a diagram apparently provided the necessary scaffolding for the students to tackle the concept. This is an entry made in the researcher's reflection journal during the lesson: "Presentations demonstrate ability to use diagrams and tracking processes in a logical sequence, also understanding of basic principles of the importance of how our life interacts with economy" (LPLS1, p. 17).

The teacher often used diagrams and drawings in class to present new material and explain new concepts, so this is something her students have come to expect and feel is within their comfort zone. This is a learning technique they are used to; therefore, it is effective in supporting them through a thinking exercise.

On the other hand, a lesson involving the same concept of 'interaction', but earlier in the term, was not as successful: "The students know about landscape and climate, but they didn't think about how they affect each other" (MRI1, p. 5). This demonstrated the students' inability to take initiative for their thinking, for taking the leap from looking at landscape and climate, to considering the interaction between the two, while the lesson (and the module) did not provide a structured activity and enough examples relevant to the students' every day lives to help them see the relationship. It seems that an effective strategy of presenting information in a way that would encourage the students' thinking as well as understanding of the concept is to use visuals as well as break the tasks down into manageable steps.

Teachers, like Lwin Lwin Oo, demonstrated they realize the importance of the students having enough support to be able to process new information: "Some students forget easily, so it is good to get the students to put what they have learned in their own words" (LPLS1, p. 3). And this requires a lot of time. Often, when students are overwhelmed with information, there is no opportunity for such processing. For example, the lesson that is described above was not very

successful as it was rushed. The teacher commented in the reflective journal that "students didn't get a chance to speak up" (MRI1, p. 6).

Teachers have commented that clearly stated expected learning outcomes or exercise/activity outcomes and clear instructions for activities helped students to concentrate. When students saw a clear outcome at the end of the activity or lesson, it was easier for them to organize their thinking. Such insights from teachers are particularly important since none of the key participants are trained teachers. Their insights came from their immediate experience with the students rather than from any theoretical knowledge.

Another important factor in student participation that should not be ignored is tailoring the lessons and learning materials to the students' level of knowledge and experience. Lwin Lwin Oo had a practice of asking the students before she starts teaching each topic about their prior knowledge. The students' prior experiences are something that can explain their ability or inability to demonstrate critical thinking in certain learning encounters: "Some students might only apply their new knowledge in a limited way, but others might be able to generalize" (MRI1, p.6). After teaching an introductory lesson on society and leaders, Lwin Lwin Oo commented that "… some students have done some leadership trainings, so they have some idea about roles of leaders" (LPLS1, p. 28).

5.2.3 The teachers' perceptions. During the second observation period, participant teachers seemed to express more of both positive and negative perceptions of the students' critical thinking performance than in the first observational period:

Negative perceptions:

> When I make students think, they can't do [think] clearly. (LPLS3, p. 12)
> They talk in class – we think they understand, but when we check, they don't get at all. (LPLS3, p. 15)

All the students want is to hear the answer, listen to the teacher's lecturing. (Checklist 6)
When I taught Chapter I, I was satisfied, but if we ask now, they don't know. (LPLS3)

Positive perceptions:

I feel students try harder. (LPLS3, p. 3)
Free writing elicited a lot of student ideas about nationalism which are all based on their own situation. This exercise lead them to naturally relate the topic in the module to their own life. (Checklist 12)
They bring up issues that are relevant in their own communities. (Checklist 13)

The difference in perceptions could be due to a number of factors. First, as the evaluation progressed, it seemed that the teachers subconsciously raised their expectations of students, at the same time, as they became more aware of the importance of critical thinking skills, and of how they could be integrated into the curriculum: "After the workshop, I started teaching and brought the students' attention to the skill markers in the module, so they know what the point is" (LPLS2, p. 4). The teachers also became more aware of how critical thinking affects the students becoming conscious of their socio-politico-historical environment: "We, Karen people think we reached Burma first, so when they read about Mon, they get upset. But they need to open (their) eyes, despite what we are taught by elders." (LPLS2, p. 3)

Second, as the teachers became more involved in the evaluation, they developed more explicit judgments of student performance as well as of the curriculum, which is supported by some of the teachers' comments above. By this stage in the evaluation, the participants have also become more comfortable with the researcher and simply more confident in expressing their opinions.

5.2.4 Challenges. In the second observation period observer checklists were used to elicit feedback on the lessons. These were completed by the teachers or the researcher, depending on

whose turn it happened to be observing on that particular day. The checklists were structured to analyze the students' critical thinking performance through their participation in activities by asking questions and by observing the students' abilities to relate the material covered in the lessons to real life situations. The result was to highlight the importance of these outcomes as part of the learning process and to allow the teachers to target them more explicitly: "How could we make the students see the relevance of what they study to their lives?" (Checklist 5)

The questionnaire responses were mixed, with many positive comments in the "Can the students relate this topic to their own lives?" item: "Yes, they can. Whenever they reflect, they refer to their own conditions." While the "Do they ask any questions" item drew many negative responses: "They didn't ask any questions, even though they answer the teacher's questions" (Checklist 4) and "Not too actively, they can't really ask questions" (Checklist 5).

It seems that the ability to ask questions is one of the more advanced critical thinking skills because it takes the learner's initiative beyond just completing the requirements of the lesson. After all, questioning is at the core of critical thinking (SSRW2, p. 7). A successful tactic during this observation period was developed through analyzing the questionnaire responses and observation notes. One of the teachers commented that "students don't have the skill to ask questions. Maybe should practice questions as skill in the module?" (Checklist 2) As a result a strategy of structuring question-making into an activity within the lesson was introduced by the teachers and the researcher: "Students asked questions about reforestation. This is when we started using the 'question activity'. This worked much better than just encouraging the students to ask questions … direct elicitation." (LPLS3, p. 10) And: "This should help the students become more independent learners. They rely on the teachers too much." (LPLS3, p. 13)

The students' abilities or motivation to ask questions also had a lot to do with language. They were much more prepared to ask questions in their own language, and as a consequence, they asked many more questions in lessons taught by their teachers, as opposed to the ones taught by the researcher. The teachers commented on this phenomenon a lot: "They ask me a lot of questions in Karen, but it's hard for them in English." (LPLS3, p. 3) And: "They contribute in Burmese. I think they even ask questions." (Checklist 12) However, language does not seem to be the only obstacle for students in terms of their readiness to ask questions: "They also hardly ask questions with regular teacher." (Checklist 2)

The main issues in enabling the students to relate the material in the lesson to their lives seem to be explicitly bringing the importance of doing so to their attention: "They should be able to if brought to their attention. This should be included in the task" (Checklist 12), "Yes, they can. Whenever they reflect, they refer to their own conditions." and another issues is the students' level of general knowledge on the topic: "…they can't relate the topic with their lesson a lot because they need to think or know … a lot about that event." (Checklist 2).

Other language-related issues noted by the participants and bearing importance for the learning process and the acquisition of critical thinking skills are to do with instruction in the students' first language as well as with the teacher's first language: "Teacher thinks they will participate better with their own people" (LPLS2, p. 3), "in their own language they come up with more" (Checklist 1), "…this has to do with confidence and language also foreigner vs. Karen. Even if they understand, they still wait before answer." (LPLS3, p. 3) However, not all participants agreed that a local teacher and the students' native language were the key to optimal students' participation: "They are excited with a new teacher, especially foreigner" (LPLS3, p. 3).

Over the second observation period, the participants also focused on the difficulty in acquisition of critical thinking skills experienced by students as a result of the 'newness' of the experience. Teachers have commented that the teaching style used at Post 10 level being so radically different from the traditional educational experience that the students have been exposed to through high school actually affected the students' performance negatively at least in the first year, creating a culture shock of a kind: "Students feel a bit overwhelmed, didn't want to learn more… this way of learning is very new and different" (LPLS2, p. 1). "It comes out pretty clear now from various comments from teachers that the most stress for students is the new teaching style, where they are requested to be much more active." (LPLS2, p. 8)

5.3 The teachers' background in the subject matter and critical approach

When evaluating a curriculum, it is of critical importance to consider the position of the teachers, their background and attitude, and their knowledge of the subject matter. These factors all have a strong influence on how teachers approach teaching the curriculum. I have observed that these teacher qualities have demonstrated themselves during lessons, as well as in interviews and reflection sessions.

Two of the key participant teachers, differed strongly in their approach to presenting a critical view of society both within the refugee camp and outside of it to the students. Whether consciously or subconsciously, Lwin Lwin Oo did not seem to challenge the status quo of society; she preferred to stay within the comfort zone of complicity when teaching about Karen as well as Thai society. This attitude is demonstrated by the teacher both passively: by not teaching about some ideas or concepts, as well as actively: by structuring her lesson in such a way as to divert the students' attention away from any potentially controversial issues.

For example, in teaching about leadership and power, Lwin Lwin Oo gave the example of the Thai PM Thaksin Sinawatra. She says: "Thaksin – he has power and authority; how did he become PM? – Elected. He gave money to the poor, so people voted for him." (LPLS1, p. 29) However, she does not analyze the situation and discuss with the students the circumstances of these donations and whether it was, in fact, a legitimate election campaign practice, and how it portrayed Thaksin as a democratic leader. In the same lesson, Lwin Lwin Oo said, when explaining the position of the King with the government in Thailand: "Who runs the country's economy? It is PM rather than King." (LPLS1, p. 29) Again, she did not qualify this statement with any opinion on what are the implications of the government exercising strong control over the economy. The assumption the students were likely to come out with from her lesson would be that economy always is and should be run by the government.

In contrast to this approach to teaching about Thailand and Thai leadership and economy, Tun Soe complemented the teaching unit with a lesson on the development situation in Thailand that analyzed and criticized a lot of economic and environmental policies of the Thaksin government (LPLS1, p. 26). This lesson was an effort to offer the students a broader and more critical view of the situation than that provided in Lwin Lwin Oo's lesson.

The two teachers also differed in their approaches to teaching about the situation in the students' own communities and the concerns they have expressed about teaching these topics. Lwin Lwin Oo's lesson on power and authority was structured to instill conformity in students, with quotes from the teacher such as "leaders have better opinions than other people," "we need law to control everyone in the society," and "The law tells you – you must do! If you don't do, you get warning/punishment." (LPLS1, p. 27) There was nothing in the lesson about people participating in leadership, and the whole focus was on authority rather than on people. The

closing line of the lesson was "What did you learn today? Authority, law, harmony." (LPLS1, p. 27) The students were likely to assume from this lesson that that the only way to harmony is authoritarian rule. Halfway through the lesson, the teacher started focusing on vocabulary. This could be seen as desire to get away from a possible controversial discussion and challenge to a status quo.

I chose not to question Lwin Lwin Oo's teaching style. I was keen to avoid anything that could be seen as criticism of the teacher's practice, as well as wanting to avoid politically sensitive issues that Lwin Lwin Oo might not have been prepared to talk about.

Tun Soe's approach was yet again very different. As quoted earlier, during an interview about critical thinking skills he had prioritized teaching politics as means of opening the students' minds to a challenge of thinking (MRI1, p. 12). This teacher takes criticalization and concscientization of students very seriously. He is worried that he would not be able to offer his students a deep enough educational experience, as:

> Older people persuade the students, but the teacher should present a balanced view to the students, stay neutral. Young people have open ideas, but older people and politicians are hardliners. As a good teacher, we should give the truth, or at least point to it. (MRI1, p. 1)

Tun Soe's expectation of the curriculum was that it should provide a comprehensive view, so that he could refer the students to it as to an unbiased source: "…if the module is inadequate, teacher needs to add information, we might be biased" (MRI1, p. 1). Tun Soe did not always trust himself with a totally unbiased view, possibly since he did not fully identify with the community where he is teaching, as described in the earlier sections of this chapter. His other worry was that the students might not have complete trust in him, especially when talking about

such controversial topics as the politics within the community and history of Burma: "If the teacher is not from the community, how will he or she teach history of Burma?" (MRI1, p. 1)

An implication for the curriculum that this data provided is that the modules should offer a comprehensive, balanced but critical approach so that all teachers are confident to handle potentially sensitive issues. There should also be reference material provided as support for teachers.

Saw Doe's approach to teaching about political issues related to the life of his community demonstrated parts of both the approaches discussed above. He spent a lesson building up a diagram of the system of leadership in the refugee camp and the participation of grassroots refugees in it (LPLS1, p. 30). The students were already familiar with the system, and the teacher and the students discussed openly the fact that refugees are only able to participate at the camp committee level of leadership, while the Thai military had the overriding power in the camps over any decisions by the community.

The differences in the practice of teaching of controversial and politicized topics described in this section might be due to the teachers' diverse personal, educational and cultural backgrounds. Lwin Lwin Oo received her degree in Burma in the worst years of the dictatorship, which is not famous for its democratic approach to education or for encouraging independent thinking. Tun Soe, on the other hand, has been to university in Thailand, which, while not being the model of liberatory education, is a big step forward from the claustrophobic atmosphere in Burma. Tun Soe has also benefited from a range of NGO-administered short courses on the Thai-Burma border and has therefore been able to expand his world view and develop his own political opinions as well as confidence. It would therefore be easier for him to have a strong position on open-mindedness and criticalization of teaching than for Lwin Lwin Oo who has for

most of her life stayed inside either an extremely authoritarian country with no access to outside information or in a refugee camp.

Saw Doe, who does not have a college education and has grown up in a refugee camp, did, however, have a chance to complete a year-long NGO course in Thailand (outside of camp) where he would on the one hand have been encouraged to practice independent thinking, and on the other hand was exposed to outside sources of information, such as media and westerners as teachers.

Another factor that contributes to the difference, is the teachers' identification with the community. Lwin Lwin Oo as well as Saw Doe are insiders. On the one hand, this means security for them in terms of trust from the students and colleagues, but on the other hand, a lack of perspective that might not allow them to consider their society in critical terms. In the meantime, Tun Soe's position as an outsider, affords him a broader view; he would in a way have nothing to lose from critically analyzing the society he lives in. Of course, it would be dangerous for him to speak out openly and express his opinions. That is why he expressed concerns quoted earlier in this section. However, his critical approach might help him find a way to open the minds of his students without having to directly confront them.

As already mentioned in this section, the researcher avoided directly confronting the participants on controversial or sensitive issues so the aspects of teaching discussed in the paragraphs above were not always explicitly discussed between the researcher and the participants. Rather, the researcher relied on comments the teachers happened to contribute unsolicited.

The teachers' level of identification with the community and their political views were not the only factors relating to their cultural background that affected their practice. As

demonstrated in the following quote, "… the students … need a challenge, they ask very difficult questions, and I don't feel confident because I don't know the answers, I need extra reference materials about the topic" (MRI1, p. 3), and as explicitly discussed and agreed on by all the participant-teachers, another factor was the lack of wide knowledge in the subject, not aided by the lack of access to outside information in a refugee camp. The teachers felt that "if we don't know, we don't want to do anything" (MRI1, p. 3). One of the ways they tried to deal with this issue was to ask the researcher to bring in from the outside supplementary reading and reference materials on a range of topics for their use (RJ1).

The teachers saw this as a significant difficulty in their work and a factor that takes away their confidence and adds to feelings of insecurity and inadequacy. They often felt disempowered whenever they felt they lacked background knowledge on the topic they were about to teach.

5.4 Direct module feedback

Throughout the July-September 2004 fieldwork period, all teachers' suggestions that could be directly implemented as changes in the teaching units were compiled into a working document Introduction to Social Studies Feedback I. (ISSF1) This information is summarized in Appendix 4. The recommendations collected were negotiated between the participant-teachers in a focus group format during the professional development workshop in October, 2004.

The direct module feedback assembled through the second observation period is briefly summarized in Appendix 5.

The following is a condensed summary of direct module feedback collected from participants:

- More diagrams to demonstrate activities
- Include a teaching point for the teacher and student for each lesson
- Extra question material and texts for tests
- More exercises to practice the concepts and the new information

- There is often not enough time in class to practice all the ideas introduced in the module, it would be a good idea to have independent work assignments for students to practice.
- Introduce research skills: students find information in outside sources and then write reports in their own words.
- Need information on current situation, varied situation vs. traditional situation
- Short projects that can be done within one lesson or half a lesson
- More free-writing activities
- Maps
- More information and additional readings in supplementary pack
- More exercises that help the students relate past events to the present

5.5 Student assessment and language

During the first observation period, the researcher began to target assessment as an aspect of professional development work with the participant teachers. It would prove a complicated and many-faceted issue, and during this first part of the first by-term cycle, only some preliminary exploration into the topic was undertaken.

The first issue to be addressed was 'who makes the tests?' At the discussion stage, the optimal solution from all participants' perspectives was a team effort. This agreed perfectly with the researcher's agenda of collaboration with the teachers by providing maximum feasible support while leaving all the decision-making power with them. According to this plan, the researcher and the teachers reviewed the teaching for the term and brainstormed a list of topic items to be included on the test. The researcher then developed a draft and presented it to the teachers for further amendments or changes. It would then be up to the teachers to select any, all, or none of the test items developed through this process to use for their test.

All the participant teachers admitted that they lacked the technical know-how of test-making and considered it an extremely demanding and time-consuming job and were therefore happy to have a negotiated draft as a springboard.

However, later the researcher found out that most of the teachers did not use any of the items from the negotiated draft for their tests. The teachers substituted most of the skills-focused items with memory-based ones, and most of the open-ended thinking questions with multiple-choice items. This was the teachers' choice made without any pressure from the researcher or the Curriculum Project. The researcher was surprised at this, since her understanding was that the teachers wanted to avoid the laborious task of making up the whole test themselves; however, this is what the teachers opted for. It was now up to the researcher to explore what were the reasons for the teachers' reluctance to use the jointly developed (but facilitated and strongly influenced by the researcher) draft tests.

The teachers were quite open about their decision and were happy to share their final drafts with the researcher. In response, the researcher opted not to confront the teachers at this stage demanding reasons for their choice in order to save everybody face, but decided to 'wait and see' and give the evaluation process a bit more time and hope that the underlying reasons or problems with the original test drafts would somehow become apparent.

Some of the criteria prioritized by the teachers in developing tests did, in fact, come out through very informal discussions. The teachers seemed to choose more supported exercises, where the structure of the question would be familiar to the students and cause the least stress and 'culture shock'. They prioritized clarity and maximum 'scaffolding' in the instructions and questions in order to maintain the comfort zone for the students. For example, one of the exercises included by the researcher asked the students to plot some of the important events in the life of their people on a timeline. This test item targeted timeline skills. Saw Doe, one of the participant teachers, suggested that a way to improve this exercise and make it more clear for the students would be to write a paragraph mentioning some dates and ask the students to plot the

dates from the paragraph on the timeline (MRI1, p. 14). The teacher was worried that not all the students would be able to complete the very open-ended exercise suggested by the researcher.

The researcher felt that the initial set back, when the teachers seemed to have rejected the negotiated draft test facilitated by the researcher, would in the long run prove beneficial to the whole evaluation process and would allow for more genuine negotiation and collaboration to take place between the teachers and the researcher. This would in turn facilitate the development of a more appropriate curriculum and assessment system reflecting the broader perspective of the researcher, on the one hand, and a much more intimate understanding of the students' needs on the part of the teachers, in a significantly more balanced way.

An interim decision made by the researcher at this stage was to plan a test session for the upcoming professional development workshop that would allow an open discussion among all the participants of the most appropriate format for social studies tests as well as discuss the advantages and disadvantages of skills-based vs. memory-based assessment.

Another controversial issue related to student assessment that would continue to be discussed at different stages of the evaluation with varied results was language. Post 10 programs are considered to be English-medium, and all the learning materials used are in English (mainly through lack of any appropriate materials in either Burmese or any of the ethnic minority languages of Burma). However, this did not mean that every function of the instructional process was carried out in English. This has been discussed in some detail in the 'language of instruction' section, but for purposes of assessment, the question was raised between the researcher and the teachers whether it would be appropriate to carry out any assessment in the students' first language.

The reactions were varied. On the one hand, including assessment components in the students' first language would clearly allow the students to perform better. However, many teachers were reluctant to do so mentioning the importance of giving the students a chance to practice English as one of the motivations for English-based assessment (LPLS, p. 13). Similarly, to the first test-related issue discussed in this section, the researcher adopted the 'wait and see' attitude at least until the October workshop, where a more participatory discussion would be possible.

Thus, a range of themes and controversies relevant to student assessment and language of instruction began to emerge during this first observation period:

- The test items developed primarily by the researcher proved not to be highly usable in the teachers' opinion. Teachers seem to prefer more memory-based testing while in their teaching they are striving towards a more open and skills-focused style.

- While teachers used a combination of languages in their teaching, and argued that the objective of the social studies curriculum is not teaching of English (for example they commented that the modules should only include a minimum of vocabulary and language focused exercises, as they want to only focus on social studies rather than on English), they advocate the use of English on tests as a chance for the students to practice English.

These themes were continuously revisited and discussed in greater and greater detail as the evaluation progressed.

During the second observation period, December 2004 – January 2005, according to the action plan developed in the October 2004 workshop, the researcher and Curriculum Project started developing a 'mix-and-match' set of test exercises for modules by chapter for the teachers

to use as the need arose: for quizzes, monthly tests, final tests, review exercises or extra homework. This was a change of strategy compared to Curriculum Project old practice of providing set module tests. The teachers believed that the system of providing a range of exercises at different difficulty levels and different learning/teaching styles would give them more flexibility in their practice depending on the students' progress.

The lesson observations the researcher participated in during this period proved to be extremely useful in fine-tuning the assessment system. For example, one day Lwin Lwin Oo prepared a quiz for her students which consisted of a series of well-structured review questions and exercises that the students could work on collaboratively and accompanied by simple illustrations to kick-start the students' thinking and answers (LPLS3, p. 4-5). It was a really enjoyable lesson, meticulously planned and well adjusted to the students' level. Such a quiz exercise was great as an example for some possible test exercises at easy to medium difficulty level.

Some of the participant teachers, particularly Saw Doe, began to feel strongly about the introduction of native languages into assessment. Encouraged by the discussion at the October workshop, Saw Doe raised this topic with his headmistress. She, however, was more cautious about this, but being a democratically-minded leader, she encouraged the young teacher to make his own decision. In an interview with the researcher, she said: "Saw Doe wants native language but I suggested only English. He said he wanted my decision, but I said I only have suggestion." (LPLS3, p. 12) The headmistress' concerns included the linguistic diversity among the students (not all the students in any given class share the same first language), as well as student motivation to improve their English.

In this vein, the language of assessment debate continued informally throughout the second observation period in preparation for the final workshop at the end of the school year where some decisions could be made.

5.6 Language of instruction

The initial observation of language use in the classroom by teachers and students has shown that even though the Post 10 schools are considered to be English-medium, English is by far not the only or the most used language of the teaching and learning process. The learning materials available to teachers and students are all in English, but the language used for presentation, discussion, and group work mostly depends on mutually negotiated choice (often implicit) between the teacher and the students. The factors that come into this choice usually have to do with the first language of the teacher and the students, the teachers' confidence in and attitude towards English, and the discourse within the lesson. English is much more likely to be used in formal parts of the lesson, such as presentation of new material, tests, or on the blackboard. Factors affecting language choice within the lesson are discussed in some detail later on in this chapter.

The participants in this study come from diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. The students in the two Karen programs, Special English Program (SEP) and Further Studies Program (FSP), are mostly Karen native speakers. Most of them would also speak Burmese to some degree of fluency but not all. Some students, on the other hand, might come from other ethnic groups from Burma, and their shared language with the rest of the students would be Burmese. They might, or might not, as well have some limited fluency in Karen. Karen language has two main sub-groups: Skaw Karen and Pwo Karen. The majority of the Karen students belong to the Skaw Karen, and that is the dominant Karen language (at least among Karen

refugees in Thailand). However, the Pwo Karen students might not speak Skaw Karen and are more likely to be fluent in Burmese. Some Pwo Karen students would also have a functional use of Skaw Karen, but usually not vice versa.

The teachers are representative of this diversity. Saw Doe, the SEP social studies teacher, is a Skaw Karen speaker who is also fluent in Burmese. Lwin Lwin Oo, the FSP social studies teacher, is a Burmese native speaker, and only has a very limited use of Skaw Karen. Both teachers are also fluent in English.

The Karenni Post 10 Program (KPT) has even more linguistic diversity among its students and staff. Most of the students come from one of the many Karenni sub-groups which each speak their own language. Some students are Karen, or come from other ethnic groups from Burma. Because of this linguistic diversity, the common language in the community for all formal events is Burmese. All students and teachers at KPT can speak, read, and write Burmese.

Tun Soe, the KPT social studies teacher, while belonging to a sub-group of Pwo Karen (Western Pwo Karen), is a native speaker of Burmese.

All this diversity clearly has a strong effect on the language choice for the learning process. Saw Doe for example, knowing that he shares his first language with all of the students and preferring it to English, mostly used Karen in class, except for writing on the board and quoting from the module or using terms that don't have equivalents in either Karen or Burmese. While mostly teaching in Karen, he also freely mixes in Burmese to explain concepts that lack the necessary vocabulary in Karen or just for variety purposes. Students mostly respond in Karen and also use it in group work and discussion, while mixing in Burmese.

Both Tun Soe and Lwin Lwin Oo seem to be using more English in class than Saw Doe, but a lot of the lesson still happens in Burmese. Students mostly respond in Burmese or

sometimes in English, and use Burmese, or their language of choice (other than English) in group work, depending who are their group partners are.

Lwin Lwin Oo, aware of the fact that not all of her students might be fluent in Burmese, uses a strategy of repeating most of her instruction both in English and in Burmese to make sure that everyone understands at least one of the versions. "Teacher uses both languages in the classroom. Students prefer speaking English, then explain in Burmese." (LPLS1, p. 2)

Some of the teachers, like Saw Doe, commented that he preferred to stay away from class whenever I was teaching, as his presence would discourage the students from trying to understand the lesson in English; they would keep looking to him for translation and explanations even when they didn't really need it. I still encouraged him to stay in the classroom as much as possible because this was extremely important for the evaluation.

Throughout the second observation period, the teachers continued their varied uses of languages for classroom purposes, but some patterns begun to emerge:

- The use of language in class strongly depends on the teacher, as discussed in the sections dealing with the first observation period, as well as the presence of the researcher.

- Many teachers comment that student participation and confidence levels depend on the language used in class, while they don't necessarily claim that the level of English in the modules is too high (LPLS3, pp. 3,6,13).

- One of the teachers started developing an opinion that social studies learning materials should be developed in the students' first language/s; most other participant teachers, however, did not seem to share this opinion at least at the time this evaluation was in progress. As a result of this difference of opinion, an informal discussion has started at

SEP, and that's more than has ever happened previously on the topic of language of instruction (LPLS3, p. 11, MRI3, p. 2).

- Seemingly contradictory to one of the points mentioned above, teachers also believe that English is an extra source of motivation for the students, and they are prepared to make the extra effort just in order to understand and participate in English: "In Burmese they won't enjoy. They want to try learning English." (LPLS3, p. 13)

5.7 Evaluation process.

Not all participant teachers started the evaluation with similar apparent attitudes. Some, like Lwin Lwin Oo, expressed enthusiasm and were explicitly positive from the start and identified easily with their role in the evaluation:

"I feel I got a chance to participate since we are working together because project [Curriculum Project] makes us part of the team; we are the 'middle person' between Curriculum Project and the students, like a bridge." (MRI1, p. 9)

In the meantime, some teachers like Saw Doe, were more cautious, and while granting their agreement to participate did not really express much enthusiasm over the researcher's presence in their classroom at the start of the evaluation. Both of these types of attitudes were subject to change and readjustment throughout the evaluation. Already after the first few weeks of the first observation period, Saw Doe started showing some interest in some of the lesson activities suggested or demonstrated by the researcher: "Saw Doe reminded me about the team games for 'goods and services,' the one I did with 3A class" (MRI1, p. 21).

This change in Saw Doe's attitude might be partly due to the flexibility with which the evaluation is structured. Early on, the researcher noted: "Saw Doe doesn't like structured reflection questions, but he is good at providing opinions and feedback in a free conversation." It

seems like the key was to find the right approach for new teachers who were less familiar with the work of Curriculum Project and did not know what to expect of a curriculum evaluation and therefore might be weary at first.

Later on, Saw Doe grew to become one of the most pro-active and involved participants, contributing to the whole evaluation process and individual lessons taught by the researcher. His clearly stated opinions on language of instruction (discussed in the *language of instruction* sections) have helped to start a very important debate. Later in the first observation period the researcher noted: "Saw Doe's presence was very valuable in clarifying things both ways. We also took turns teaching and explaining to each other. Saw Doe added to my lesson." (MRI1, p. 31)

At the same time, other participant teachers, like Lwin Lwin Oo, who were already familiar with the Curriculum Project from previous years, were ready to acknowledge their commitment and thus approached the researcher with more trust: "You work with us and come back to discuss so we can comment…" (MRI1, p. 3).

During the first observation period, some patterns of teamwork between the teachers and the researcher began to emerge. Team teaching started with some experimentation particularly to do with how to share the teaching load – by class, by lesson, by topic, by level or in any other way. To begin with, there wasn't any particular structure to this; the teacher and the researcher just experimented with a bit of this and a bit of that informally or just divided up the teaching hours depending on the schedule and each other's convenience. The teachers mostly preferred to either take a whole lesson or let the researcher take it, as opposed to team-teaching within one lesson, however, in reality, both the researcher and the teacher would often participate in a lesson spontaneously complementing each other's teaching by adding extra activities or explanations.

Soon, some teachers, like Lwin Lwin Oo started preferring to divide the teaching by class or by level, having the researcher teaching most of the lessons in one of the classes involved in the evaluation. The concern seemed to be to create a sense of consistency for the students and avoid confusing them with different teachers and teaching styles. The teacher would still be present in the classroom and participate in the lesson whenever he or she felt the need to (LPLS1, p. 28).

Such flexibility in the approach to team work and readiness to change practice on an almost daily basis represented the characteristic of action research where the participants were constantly involved in small cycles of observing, reflecting, and acting based on these observations and reflections.

According to the broadening character of action research, the evaluation process began to slowly involve more participants: teachers outside the number of the key participants (LPLS1, p. 18). Some activities were also planned to involve the students more actively in the evaluation (MRI1, p. 6). The existing curriculum was also used to enhance the students' awareness of the meaning of an evaluation: the Introduction to Social Studies Module teaches evaluation skills as part of a review activity for the Geography topic. In a lesson it was brought to the students' attention that the same process of 'observe-examine-make conclusions' is being used on their curriculum as they are learning it.

The researcher's presence in the classroom required certain adjustments on the part of the teachers, as well as on the part of the researcher herself. It could not be ignored that a regular presence of an outsider in the classroom had its effect on the teachers' practices as well as on the students' learning. Therefore, it is important to address explicitly the influence that the presence of the researcher had on the teaching and learning process. The earlier sections discuss some of

the factors involved in terms of language use. The attempts the researcher made, particularly in the beginning, to 'tread lightly' and interfere as little as possible are also mentioned (LPLS1, p. 16).

Teachers often disagreed about the effect a foreign teacher had on the students' ability to actively participate in class. Some felt foreigners inhibited students' participation because of communication difficulties, while others felt it offered excitement for the students and encouraged them to keep trying. However, they all agreed that the lesson dynamics are always different with a regular teacher, who is a local, than with a visiting foreigner whether through encouraging more active participation or through causing the students to be shy.

As I visited three different programs that were using the same curriculum to alternately teach and observe, I had the benefit of experimenting with a range of different ways to teach the same lessons and reflect on them with a range of teachers. This was another example of using small cycles of action research in day-to-day practice as a tool for fine-tuning the curriculum.

According to Mills (2003), "the first step in making action research a part of daily practice is to … recognize how much action research is already a part of daily life as a classroom teacher" (p. 14). This is what the participants in this evaluation realized early on, and it helped maintain their commitment throughout the project since they recognized the evaluation as something that is already part of their daily practices and, therefore, something familiar and important:

> After my class I ask my students, it means I evaluate what I have done. I want to find out what they learned what they know already at this level. If they know already, how can I modify, what extra information can I find for next class. (MRI1, p. 3)

Part of the motivation for the teachers to participate in the evaluation was the belief that as a result, the curriculum and the modules would be more reflective of their views and needs: "[At the moment] modules partly reflect my request. As a result of this evaluation the modules will reflect my requests more." (MRI1, p. 7) The participants repeatedly stressed to the researcher their expectations that any feedback collected through this evaluation would be used for action, i.e. to improve the existing curriculum and the modules:

"Saw Doe wants to make sure feedback is used for action, not just sit on the shelf. Need to modify and rewrite. If the module is not going to be re-written, it is not useful!" (MRI1, p. 9)

Teachers have also started to be more critical and inquisitive of other aspects of the Curriculum Project policies and strategies in curriculum and materials development: "What's the plan for other subjects? What are the arrangements with the module writers (criteria for selection)?" (MRI1, p. 9) This renewed interest on the part of the teachers helped encourage them to be more active in the whole curriculum development process.

5.8 Classroom practice and teaching style

The range of experiences of the participant teachers in this evaluation was varied. Some, like Lwin Lwin Oo, were experienced teachers with a clearly developed teaching style and their own philosophy: "I don't know the educational word, but my teaching style is, how should I explain… open… I let the students ask anything they want." (MRI1, p. 3) This statement of her teaching philosophy by Lwin Lwin Oo was supported in her classroom by very student-oriented lessons that prioritized rapport building and feeling of trust between the teacher and the students. During a lesson observation the researcher noted: "Students and teacher look very comfortable together" (LPLS1, p. 10).

Lwin Lwin Oo favored informal activities, such as brainstorming, that focus on meaning and getting the students to think rather than giving correct answers. Whenever calling on individual students, she used non-threatening techniques such as saying "the lucky person will be…" and doing so with a smile and providing lots of praise for good answers (LPLS1 p. 2,3).

In her teaching, Lwin Lwin Oo prioritized making sure that the students clearly understand the teaching point, and a lot of her suggestions for the modules are to do with clarity (LPLS1, p. 4).

Another important aspect of Lwin Lwin Oo's teaching style was flexibility and readiness to change her plan at the last minute and improvise if she found it useful: "Teacher improvised this activity on the spot since I brought out the pictures" (LPLS1, p. 6). This proved particularly useful for action research and the evaluation as Lwin Lwin Oo was ready to experiment and learn from her practice.

At the same time, Lwin Lwin Oo still held on to some old-fashioned teaching techniques, such as rote-reading and assigning homework involving students copying chunks of texts from textbooks. This quality of Lwin Lwin Oo's teaching also strongly affected her assessment strategies and will be explored in more detail in later sections.

Another participant teacher, Saw Doe, was very new to teaching at the beginning of the evaluation and had not had any teacher training apart from a two-week pre-service intensive run by Curriculum Project. Through lack of confidence, he started out with mostly lecture style teaching, yet trying to involve the students with informal question-answer exchanges. Throughout the evaluation, Saw Doe proved to be an enthusiastic learner actively seeking advice on teaching strategies, such as group work, that he felt he was having difficulties with. He explicitly stated his expectations to learn at the first professional development and evaluation

workshop in October 2004. Saw Doe's attitude helped in including the important issues on the workshop agenda so that he was able to learn from his peers' experiences.

The third key participant's teaching practice focused on challenging the students to stimulate their independent thinking. During the observations, the researcher noted that Tun Soe had "… excellent facilitation skills and classroom management skills" (LPLS1, p. 26) which he used to involve the students in debates and presentations that focused on developing and expressing opinion skills. Tun Soe favored active lessons and demonstrated excellent lesson planning where "students have an active task as they are listening to other students presenting" (LPLS1, p. 24). Such practice by the teacher contributed to the evaluation and plans to improve the teaching materials by identifying ways to suggest more active lessons in the teacher's guide.

In their teaching practice, all teachers are concerned with finding ways to make lessons more interesting in order to encourage student participation and learning.

Many of the issues discussed above were addressed in the professional development workshop in October, 2004 in a collaborative fashion according to the agenda worked out in collaboration with the participant teachers based on the fieldwork data from July-September 2004.

5.9 From observation to negotiation

Each of the two observation periods was followed by a professional development workshop so that one observation period together with one workshop constituted a cycle of action research based on an academic term, as shown in Figure 3. During the workshops the participants summarized the results of the half-year evaluation of the social studies curriculum. The objective of the workshops was to negotiate the results of the evaluation between the participants in a focus group format and develop an action plan for the improved curriculum. The

workshops were where the decision making happened for what changes would be included in the second edition of the social studies modules. This is demonstrated in appendices 4 and 5.

The workshops represent the 'reflect' and 'plan' stages of the cycle, as described in Chapter 4. As the professional development workshops were each based on a term-long evaluation period, the issues raised at the workshops closely match the themes that had emerged during the evaluation periods. This is can be observed in Table 4.

5.10 Professional development workshop 1

5.10.1 Students' critical thinking skills. The workshop set out to discuss how effective the Introduction to Social Studies Module is in developing thinking skills in students. The following questions were proposed to the participants in order to facilitate the discussion:

- How do the social studies modules encourage the students to think on their own?

- What are the major problems that prevent this?

- Why are the students sometimes not able to demonstrate thinking skills?

- What contributes to the students' motivation in the lessons?

- What particular approaches to teaching are effective in encouraging students thinking?

These discussion questions were developed from the reflections on the observation period preceding the workshop. In the course of lesson observations, a range of examples were collected demonstrating the students' abilities as well as lack of success at demonstrating critical thinking in the lessons. The discussion of the first observation period reports a variety of opinions expressed by the participant teacher on this issue based on the students' performances in the lessons.

Table 4

Matching Themes

Themes emerging from the two observation periods	Issues discussed at workshop 1	Issues discussed at workshop 2
Students' thinking skills and participation	Students' thinking skills	Students' thinking skills
The teachers' background in the subject matter and critical approach	*This theme is solely based on the researcher's observations and reflection, it was not addressed at the workshops as it is too confronting*	
Direct module feedback	Module feedback	Module feedback
Student assessment and language	Students assessment	Student assessment
Language of instructions	*It was decided to wait until the final workshop to discuss this topic due to teacher participation issues*	Language of instruction
Evaluation process	Evaluation process	Evaluation process
Classroom practice and teaching style	Classroom practice and teaching style	*Not addressed at this workshop due to time constraints*
This theme only emerged at the second workshop		Supplementary materials

The objective of the workshop was to give the teachers a chance to share these opinions

with each other in order to compare them and develop a more generalized and comprehensive

view of the students' performances in critical thinking. An added benefit of the workshop

discussion was to demonstrate to the teachers that whatever problems they are encountering with

teaching critical thinking skills to the students, they are not alone – as the observations and the

workshop discussion proved, issues related to acquisition of critical thinking skills were quite

similar across the participant programs. For example, teachers agreed on the lack of confidence being an obstacle to acquiring and demonstrating critical thinking. Saw Doe comments: "Often students have their opinion, but they don't express. They think their opinion is wrong." (MRI 2) Tun Soe shows a similar insight: "When we ask the students, they have very little information. Also not confident" (MRI 2).

The workshop, following the expanding nature of action research (Kemmis, 1997), involved more teachers from more programs than the initial observation period. These newly involved teachers were also able to share their experience of how classroom practices affect students' critical thinking skills: "Group work will encourage them to think and discuss about Burma…" (MRI 2) which was supported by Tun Soe: "When we go beyond the instruction, students infer why our environment is like this, why we are made to do like this; they question themselves even if they can't answer completely" (MRI 2).

Overall, the difficulties on the way to acquiring critical thinking skills faced by students were summarized by teachers as follows:

- **Motivation** – some students are lacking in motivation

- **New teaching style** – if the teaching style used by the teacher or in the materials is something they have never experienced, it will take them some time to adjust. Students need a lot of support while adjusting to the new style of teaching and materials.

- **Lack of confidence** – students are not confident; they don't trust their own opinions.

- **Lack of experience** – students don't have experience expressing their own opinions or doing much thinking as part of learning.

- **Staying focused** - As a result of lack of motivation and/or 'culture shock' due to very new teaching style, students get tired easily and find it difficult to stay focused.

- **Lack of information** – students often have very little if any prior knowledge on the topics in the modules. This makes it difficult for them to develop and express their own opinions.

- **Language difficulties** – if students have to discuss or participate in activities in English, it is more difficult for them to demonstrate their thinking skills.

5.10.2 Module feedback. In the course of the workshop, the participants reviewed the feedback for the Introduction to Social Studies Module assembled through the observations and team-teaching that happened in the programs during July-September. Through negotiations in focus groups, participant teachers considered and negotiated the feedback with the result of developing an action plan according to which the revised edition of the modules was designed. The negotiated module feedback for Introduction to Social Studies module is demonstrated in Appendix 4.

5.10.3 Student assessment. As is evident from the data discussed in this section, the area of student assessment seems to be lagging behind other aspects of the education process in the Post 10s in terms of learner-centered teaching. As part of curriculum evaluation and refinement process in this research, as well as part of the professional development process described in this chapter, it would seem logical to support the participant teachers through moving towards a more process-based rather than test-based assessment that would be more appropriate for testing the critical thinking skills. However, it was judged premature, and decided that first, it is necessary to work on improving test-making strategies and approaches that currently seem to be deeply rooted in very traditional education practices, before embarking on a whole-sale overhaul of the student assessment system.

The participants listed the following questions as expectations for the assessment discussion within the workshop:

- How to space tests based on what we have already taught?

- How to make a test that will give accurate information about students' progress?

- Find out what the skills are involved in making tests?

- How to make tests that are suitable for different learning types and levels?

In the course of discussions in focus groups, the following general difficulty areas were identified by the participants:

- How much to cover on a test?

- How often to test?

- Timing; how many questions should be included per chapter

- Test values – what do we test? Skills vs. memorization

- Test motivation

- Students can't come up with quality productive answers in test time, therefore memory tests are easier

- Curriculum Project tests are new and strange for the students

- How should we use language in preparing tests?

- What level of language?

- What language to test in?

Participants also agreed on the following test objectives:

- Find out the students' progress

- To place the students in the appropriate level/s

- For teacher to adjust his/her teaching

- For students to focus on what they need to learn (for independent learning)

- On-going assessment (weekly quiz) to monitor students' learning

- To see if our teaching objectives match what the students have learned.

Discussion focused on comparing two types of test tasks: memory-based tasks and skills-based tasks. It was noticed that most of the teacher-made tests preferred memory-based tasks over skills-based tasks and there seemed to be a need to analyze the rationale for this. Particularly so, since most participants recognized the importance of encouraging independent thinking and development of independent opinions in their students: "I don't judge the student's opinion; I let other students judge him or her" (MRI2).

Table 5

Advantages and Disadvantages of Testing Memory vs. Testing Skills

	Testing memory	**Testing skills**
Advantages	Easy to give, make and mark Students are familiar with this type of test Language is easy	Challenge for students Helps students develop as individuals Opportunity for students to express their understanding freely Helps connect the learning to real life Improves motivation Provides opportunity for different learning types
Disadvantages	Forget easily Easy to guess without real understanding Easy to cheat No chance to practice skills No thinking involved for students Does not prepare sufficiently for the future (but at least they will have knowledge) Discourage creativity and stronger students	Difficult to mark More effort for everyone Weak students might give up Teacher needs to be experienced Language difficulties Subjective marking Students are not familiar with this type of test

In their teaching practice, most participant teachers target a move toward more learner-centered and communicative approach: "Should combine teacher-centered and student-centered" (MRI2). However, this move towards a more critical education did not seem to have reached the area of student assessment yet. During the workshop, a debate was held to identify the advantages and disadvantages of memory-based vs. skills-based assessment for the particular environment of the Post 10 programs. Table 5 provides a summary of this debate.

As outlined in Table 5, most advantages of memory-based testing according to the teachers, are to do with convenience and time-saving, while they realized that, from the point of view of learning value for the students, skills-based testing has all the advantages. In addition, there was a concern that skills-based assessment would be too much of a shock for new students just coming out of high school: "At first, students will be in culture shock in comparison to high school, but I explain why we do this, I encourage…" (MRI2). Due to an extremely traditional approach to teaching in Burma, high school graduates in the camps would have hardly encountered anything other than a purely memorization approach in their schooling. Participants felt, therefore, that there needed to be a smooth transition in order to give the students a chance to adjust gradually.

The following strategies for the development of a social studies assessment system were agreed on:

- Provide a selection of exercises from easy to difficult to reflect a range of student ability

- Introduce 'skills testing' slowly – provide a range of exercises for each test from more familiar to the students to newer style

- Make sure all instructions are simple and clear both to teachers and students

- Provide clear marking guides for teachers

- Provide a range of test exercises for teachers to choose from for each chapter of the module

- Curriculum Project will develop a set of test exercises for each chapter of the module, so that the teachers will be able to compile their own tests without major time-commitments. This is believed to offer more flexibility as to the timing and difficulty of tests as well as allow to adjust the tests better to the particular needs of each teacher (and student).

An important aspect of the assessment section of the workshop was the discussion of the choice of language/s appropriate for tests. There was a general agreement among the participants that the test exercises should be in English, as a rule. They have cited student motivation, as well as learning materials being in English as a rationale for this decision.

However, most teachers agreed that it could be potentially possible to offer language options to students in test answers. For example, when writing long answers, students should be able to choose their language of preference. This should not be necessary in the case of multiple choice or short answer questions.

Availability of such choice would solve some of the difficulties associated with long answers and skills-based questions mentioned in Table 5. This would move the assessment system further towards skills-based assessment.

Whatever the decision, both teachers and students needed to participate in the discussion. Some teachers have expressed an opinion that a lot of students would be motivated to try and write their answers in English. In this case, their answers would not be marked for grammar or spelling. In case of Burmese or Karen, teachers agreed that it would be appropriate to expect accuracy in students' answers.

5.10.4 Evaluation process. During the second observation period the checklists system was introduced for the teachers and the researcher to collect detailed feedback from lessons on the daily basis. The teacher and the researcher took turns filling out the checklists as the other taught the class. After the lesson the checklists were briefly discussed.

As the evaluation progressed, some of the participants, primarily Lwin Lwin Oo, markedly lost a lot of enthusiasm for it. Though still maintaining a positive attitude to the process as an important part of the curriculum work: participating in workshops, anticipating the new edition of the modules, and making references to the possibility of continuation of the evaluation next year: "If I participate in evaluation next year…" (LPLS3, p. 13), she became less forthcoming with detailed feedback and less involved in team-teaching exchanges, often leaving the classroom (or just not showing up) whenever the researcher was scheduled to teach her classes.

By the time of the second observation period, all the participant teachers had completed teaching the Introduction to Social Studies Module and were using the Introduction to Southeast Asia Module (revised title: Background to Southeast Asia) in their social studies classes. When asked to compare the two modules, Lwin Lwin Oo said, "I already forgot" (LPLS2, p. 2). Some of the more constructive comments from Lwin Lwin Oo during this period referred to her not finding the checklists a useful strategy for collecting feedback: "She finds it stressful to have to use it each lesson – repetitive, nothing new to say" (LPLS3, p. 12). These comments helped the researcher and the teacher to re-establish the line of communication and revert to the previously used informal reflection sessions strategy instead of the checklists. Lwin Lwin Oo also acknowledged the importance of collaboration and of the evaluation process itself: "To get a good module, we have to work together" (LPLS3, p. 13).

Overall, Lwin Lwin Oo's suggestions for further evaluations (which she felt were important) was not to have the researcher in the program on the daily basis, but rather to have bi-weekly or so meetings "… but not less…" (LPLS2, p. 13) so that the teacher would have enough feedback ideas for each meeting but not enough time to forget them. A few other teachers seemed less active in the daily reflection sessions at this stage in the evaluation. It seemed like a saturation point was reached and there was not much more to be said on the daily basis (LPLS3, p. 6).

In the meantime, other teachers, like Saw Doe, were able to use the evaluation process and the workshop to benefit their practice: "After the workshop I started teaching and brought the students' attention to the skills markers in the module, so they know what the point is" (LPLS2, p. 4).

During the second observation period the action research network kept broadening to include opinions from more participants: student feedback questionnaires were administered to incorporate the students' feedback into the evaluation (FSPSQ, SEPSQ, KPTSQ). Interviews were also conducted with the principals in the three programs involved. All of the head-teachers were given introductory letters in the beginning of the evaluation, but some of them needed their memory to be refreshed on what the evaluation was all about. One of the principals commented, "I know you were talking about social studies but not in detail" (MRI3 p. 3). Some positive feedback from the teachers also filtered through this way, which showed that the participant teachers have discussed the evaluation with the principals at least to some extent: "Saw Doe said he enjoyed teaching together. I think he is waiting for you…" (MRI3, p. 3).

5.10.5 Classroom practice and teaching style. In the second observation period, some cultural attitudes towards learning showed more clearly in Lwin Lwin Oo's teaching. Her

teaching practice presented an interesting mix of learner-centered and project-based teaching and at the same time rote-learning and word-for-word copying (LPLS2, p. 2,3; LPLS3, p. 1). It is interesting to explore the inner workings of such a mix and its impact on curriculum change.

Being an experienced teacher and knowing her students well, Lwin Lwin Oo knew that they learn best when given clear instructions and when they have a chance to ask questions and internalize the material presented to them: "Some students forget easily, so it is good to get the students to put what they have learned in their own words" (MRI1, p. 3). She also sees the need for her students to become independent learners and always looks for opportunities to find independent learning projects for them and take the learning outside the classroom.

Throughout the school year, she has been giving the students independent research assignments using the school library and taking them on field trips to places around the community (LPLS2, p. 2). In the meantime, her innate traditional understanding of learning was memorizing some or other authority's words and recounting them exactly. Lwin Lwin Oo has had no experience of using textual sources critically. For her, if one is to use a text, it is best to copy it word-for-word; that way, you will get the information accurately and will be able to learn from it. When confronted with the Western notion of plagiarism (defined as using another author's words exactly without giving proper reference), she wondered: "But how can we use books then?" (LPLS2, p. 2)

As a result of this mixed perception of what learning should be like, Lwin Lwin Oo sent her students off to the library to copy articles from an encyclopedia on an assigned topic and had them hand in their copied out reports for assessment. The students were not prepared to approach the sources critically, an added difficulty being the extremely complex language used in the encyclopedia. As a result, the students did not pay attention to the fact that the books they were

copying from were published in the early 1970's, and a lot of the information they obtained was dated and inaccurate. This problem was never addressed by the teacher following the students' reports.

Once the students have completed their reports, the teacher reverted to her more progressive learner-centered teaching style putting the students in groups to discuss and 'teach each other' the information they'd obtained from the library. The difficulty the students faced in these activities, however, was that the texts they had copied were way above the students' level of English, so they could hardly understand what they had copied! Obviously, this significantly diminished the learning value of the activity.

There are two lessons to be learned from this as far as the curriculum is concerned. One is to include basic research skills, such as using outside sources and recounting the information in the students' own words, differentiating opinions from facts and checking dates, in the curriculum. This should enable the students to approach the sources critically and process the information contained in them. The other implication for the curriculum is that more appropriate, comprehensible, and updated sources should be provided for the students' independent learning activities.

During this second observation period and as facilitated by his participation in the October 2004 workshop, Saw Doe was able to sharpen his lesson planning skills. His lessons became more structured and active, yet still relying a lot on teacher-talk.

Around this time, a new participant teacher joined the evaluation. A new teacher took on some of the social studies hours in the Karenni Post 10 program. He was a local Karen young man who recently came back from studying in the Philippines with a degree in Education. He proved to be an extremely well trained teacher aware of the current methodologies and with all

the technical know-how of the day-to-day practice. His lessons were always active, well structured, included plenty of student activities, presentations, debates and exercises. The students seemed to be engaged in the lesson, participating in the activities and answering the teacher's questions. The lessons always had a clear learning point and included a brief summary/review at the end of the lesson (LPLS3, p. 7). However, this new teacher's lessons often seemed to be very formal and over-structured, and he did not prioritize developing rapport and trust with the students. The students often complained of him being too harsh and no treating the students with respect.

5.11 Professional Development Workshop II

5.11.1 Students' critical thinking skills. The May workshop prioritized a detailed discussion of issues related to critical thinking skills in the social studies curriculum. This discussion represented the fourth reiteration of the critical thinking skills within the scope of the entire evaluation, the first three being: the first observation period, the October workshop, and the second observation period. This last workshop built on the previous discussions of the theme and this allowed for a fairly in-depth analysis of the teachers' perspectives on critical thinking skills in the curriculum.

The discussion opened with a review of why the teachers believed critical thinking skills were important. The following points were outlined as key:

- The more the students think, the more they learn, the more they will want to know
- Without critical thinking they can memorize – they can't use
- Encourage students to become independent learners and develop own ideas and opinions.

In further discussion, the teachers stressed the importance of motivation for the development of critical thinking skills and the general interrelatedness of these concepts in

education. Some implications for this evaluation relevant to motivation would be to target the curriculum more closely to the students' needs and interests through involving the students in the decision making process. Some other motivation-related factors, such as further study and work opportunities as well as the general political situation of the students as refugees were unfortunately beyond the scope of the curriculum evaluation or any action it might result in.

In the course of the discussion, the participants offered some extremely interesting personal insights into critical thinking:

> It is very important to encourage students' critical thinking. Through this way, they will not only memorize the lesson but improve their understanding regarding the topic. Memorization is a big obstacle to open up our mind. Burmese students are trained to memorize since they were young. This is rooted in our mind, and we no longer want to think. Sometimes we feel as if we can't think but just know things that have been taught to us through our memory. We need to practice to be critical in whatever we read or heard from others. In this way we can improve our critical thinking skills. (SSWR2)

> Critical thinking implies thinking critically. When one has to think about or decide on something, he/she needs to collect all available information related to it. He/she must weigh the form implications of each. Think about them separately and mix them to think about it together later on. Weigh each action before a clear decision. (SSWR2)

Building on what was previously identified as difficulties on the way to successful acquisition of critical thinking skills, the participants in this workshop formulated the following implications for how the curriculum could be improved through this evaluation in Table 6.

Table 6
Difficulties in Acquiring Critical Thinking Skills

Difficulty	**What could be done**
New teaching style	Go slowly
Students lack confidence	Teacher should encourage students' opinion, give enough time for student responses and thinking time. Student confidence depends on the whole class – how supportive they are of each other
Due to lack of variety of experiences and exposure, it is difficult for students to relate learning to their own lives	Provide clear examples to bridge the gap between the concept and their real experiences
Culturally, politically, socially sensitive issues are difficult to approach in teaching and can stand in the way of students acquiring critical thinking skills.	Some ways to approach sensitive issues include: this depends on the individual teacher's confidence, background, teaching style; building trust with the students, changing name and place to remove sensitivity and encourage open discussion; giving students an opportunity to express their opinion privately
Students do not relate easily to abstract or theoretical concepts.	Learning by doing, students get a chance to participate in practical tasks – the new material becomes part of their own experience
Lack of experience and general knowledge on the part of the students:	Let students describe their real experiences (economics – talk about selling-buying; history: talk about their own past) in order for them to be able to relate their learning to life, include extra readings (but make sure they are not dated), go into the community.

5.11.2 Module feedback. The negotiated module feedback to Background to Southeast Asia module (revised title) can be seen in Appendix 5.

5.11.3 Students assessment. The discussions that have happened with individual participants throughout the evaluation were summarized at this final workshop with the outcome that the participants reiterated their interest in receiving tests prepared by the Curriculum Project/researcher. They preferred to receive sets of test exercises for each module, organized by chapters that they could pick and choose from. They claimed they would use the Curriculum Project test exercises in combination with ones they will prepare themselves. Some teachers expressed a preference to use Curriculum Project tests only as review exercises or pre-tests,

rather than the final tests. They also expressed that it would be useful for them to get soft copies of the tests from Curriculum Project along with a hard copy.

All teachers have stressed the importance of providing enough easy exercises for tests as well as balancing 'new teaching style' and 'old teaching style' exercises to keep the students in their comfort zone.

As commented above, the teachers might not actually be using the test exercises provided by Curriculum Project for student assessment. This means they would still be making their own tests that are not necessarily very effective assessment tools. As exhibited in the 2004-2005 school year tests, teachers were still heavily relying on testing memory skills and setting ambiguous or subjective questions, questions where answers don't exist, or multiple choice questions with multiple correct choices. However, some of the participants were able to improve their test-making skills throughout the school year. Since teachers were still likely to be making their own tests, CP would need to provide on-going assessment training.

5.11.4 Language of Instruction. Similarly to the discussion on student critical thinking skills, and most other discussions that took place during this workshop, the language of instruction theme built strongly on the previous stages of the evaluation. It helped develop deeper insights into the issue and the various factors involved in it and finally facilitated the organization of all relevant information to provide recommendations for the curriculum based on the analysis of the teaching and learning situation in the participant programs.

As discussed in the earlier sections, participant teachers disagreed in their attitudes towards what an appropriate language of instruction should be. Teachers could be arranged on a continuum according to the amount of English vs. other languages they used in the classroom, ranging from some teachers teaching almost exclusively in the students' first language, to the

exclusion of quoting from the textbook or module and blackboard work, to relying almost entirely on English for all learning situations, only reverting to Burmese or other languages when translation is necessary.

At the start of the language of instruction discussion at the workshop, the participants were asked to brainstorm and compare the difficulties they associate with using English as the primary language of instruction and using other languages. The teachers were asked to consider the language used for teacher-talk, student-talk, and the language of learning materials.

The difficulties associated with predominantly English-based teaching were mostly to do with difficulties in explanations and vocabulary, confidence level of both teachers and students, and the necessity of focusing on language rather than on the subject. The concerns mentioned in relation to avoiding English for instructional purposes included such factors as lack of prestige of local languages in educational contexts, therefore, possible lack of motivation on the part of the students, not preparing students sufficiently for any opportunities of international further education, going against national (Karen) education policy, as well as potential difficulties in choosing a language other than English, due to linguistic diversity of the community and possible reluctance of minority ethnic groups from Burma to use Burmese as lingua franca.

After discussing the difficulties, the participants in turn were asked to discuss the desirability of using either English or other languages in the classroom. The responses are summarized in Table 7.

Clearly, there are advantages and disadvantages to both choices. The perfect choice probably lies with creating a negotiated balance for each learning situation that agrees with both teachers and students.

Table 7

Using English vs. Using Other Languages in the Classroom

Burmese or other language	English only
Language promotion	Easy to find information
More information	Prepare for international further study
Confidence for teachers and students	Exciting
Save time	If no other choice, students will be less
Better education – focus on subject rather	embarrassed to use it (accent)
than language	IT age, globalization, easy communication
Get more information from students, more	with outside world
discussion	No feeling of isolation
Contribution from community	Can translate difficult vocabulary into our
Higher scores on tests	languages
Local knowledge included	Make the world aware of us - contribute to
Ethnic minorities will get more used to	the struggle of the people of Burma
Burmese	Use example of some other SEA countries
Ethnic reconciliation for the future: Burmese	Get jobs
official language	Tolerance to western culture

In fact, most participant teachers were already using a combination of languages for the various instruction functions. While they varied in percentages of languages used and opinions on what functions should be preformed in what languages, none of them are teaching completely monolingually.

If the different lesson functions were roughly labeled as *presentation, instructions, discussion*, and *group work*, thus moving from the more formal to more informal parts of the lesson, teachers tended to use more English for the more formal purposes and more local languages for the less formal ones. In other words, all participants were likely to have a much higher percent of English use in the presentation part of the lesson than in an informal discussion with students. Each participant teacher has worked out his/her own ratio of language use for his/her own specific situation and students and appeared more or less happy with it.

Only one participant teacher argued for the introduction of mainstream teaching materials

(modules) in languages other than English (Karen and Burmese). Other teachers agreed that it was appropriate to limit the modules to English only, while they also agreed that it would be beneficial to add occasional supplementary and/or library materials in other languages for independent study by the students.

5.11.5 Evaluation process. Participants reviewed the records and notes from the November 2004 – February 2005 evaluation of the Introduction to Southeast Asia Module. Additions and changes were negotiated between the participants. The changes summarized in Appendix 5 represent the negotiated plan of action by the participants for the development of the second edition of Introduction to Southeast Asia Module.

5.11.6 Supplementary materials. The main issues discussed in relation to any supplementary materials for the modules can be summarized as follows:

- There is a general lack of any resources in the camps available to teachers and students; therefore, Curriculum Project needs to provide a range of supplementary materials on the topics covered in the curriculum to provide extra sources of information for both teachers and students.

- Teachers often lack detailed knowledge on some of the topics in the curriculum and require reference materials in order to be better prepared for students' questions and to plan more stimulating lessons.

- Most of the current information available on-line or in the media is beyond the students' level of English. This constitutes a problem, as it significantly limits any current supplementary materials that can be used by the students. Ideally, Curriculum Project would try to locate easy-English resources for students' extra reading

- In order for the students to practice their independent learning skills, they need to have access to learning materials in their own time. Therefore, some of the supplementary materials provided by Curriculum Project should be placed in the schools' libraries for easy student access. In this way, students would be able to complete independent assignments using a variety of information sources.

- More maps and visuals are needed.

5.12 Summary

This chapter has reported the development and the themes that emerged through lesson observation and reflection with the teacher participants. The analysis from the two professional development workshops formed the basis of the decision making and plans were then finalized for the specific changes and improvements of the curriculum and the study modules.

The next chapter deals with findings and recommendations that resulted from the data analyzed here.

Chapter 6: Findings and Recommendations

6.0 Introduction

This action research study investigated the question: *How was an innovative social studies curriculum designed, implemented, and refined through a collaboration between local educators and western curriculum developers in the refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border?* The findings and recommendations of this study address the educational needs of young adults in marginalized communities or protracted refugee situations.

This chapter illustrates how the teaching and learning environment in a place of temporary asylum (refugee camps in Thailand), as well as curriculum, affects students' learning, as perceived by teachers. The chapter starts with presenting the findings and follows with the recommendations this research makes for curriculum development in marginalized communities. The findings have a correlation with the parameters of the situation of the learners' marginalization identified in section 1.3 in Chapter 1, while the recommendations are based on the findings. Table 8 demonstrates how the parameters of the context of refugee/marginalized communities are realized in the findings of this study and are further interpreted in the recommendations.

6.1 Findings

6.1.1 Critical thinking skills and motivation – how do these affect one another? This study found a strong relationship between learner motivation and the development of critical thinking skills in Post 10 students in the refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border. Within the context, two sets of factors have been identified to affect student motivation. One set is related to opportunities for further studies upon completion of Post 10 and/or work outside the refugee camps. Making recommendations on these is unfortunately outside the scope of this research.

Table 8

Findings and Recommendations

Parameters stated in Chapter 1	Findings categories	Recommendations
Lack of critical thinking skills	Relationship between *critical thinking skills* and motivation	Prioritizing *critical thinking skills* in the curriculum with the purpose of promoting liberatory education and community development
Lack of world knowledge and learning skills	*Lack of exposure* and experience	Ensuring the curriculum is *holistic, providing links* with other subjects Providing 'scaffolding' support for teachers and students
Western materials are *culturally* inappropriate	Lack of *exposure and experience*	*Contextualizing* curriculum
English is not the students' or the teachers' native *language*	*Language* of instruction	Promoting a *multi-lingual* learning process
Students are young *adults*	Young *adult* students	Treating students with *respect* while offering *support*
Basic conditions	*Isolated* communities	everything *paper-based*

The other set of factors is to do with the students' prior learning experiences and overall

exposure to information and life experience. A common trait for most students participating in

this research is their lack of exposure to any outside information or experiences due to the fact

that most of them grew up in a refugee camp and have hardly ever been outside of one.

Experiences for young people inside a refugee camp are extremely limited; therefore,

they are likely to find most learning materials difficult to relate to as these often refer to

situations entirely unfamiliar to the students.

Such estrangement from learning materials and/or curriculum adversely affects student

motivation. This claim is in agreement with research presented by IRIN (2003) and UNESCO

(2004 a). Participant teachers in this research have noted that whenever students are not

motivated by a task, they do not easily engage in the lesson. Since lessons are structured around students' acquiring critical thinking skills, lack of student active participation results in failure to acquire these skills. Another way in which lack of motivation affects critical thinking in students is the students' abilities to ask questions. It has been established that questioning is one of the most effective ways to practice critical thinking. The students in this research come from an education tradition where students do not question the teacher (Thein Lwin, 2000). However, one of the tasks of the Post 10 programs is to break this tradition and encourage a questioning attitude in the students. Students often find it a challenge to acquire the skill of asking meaningful questions. Whenever students are motivated or when they find the topic of the lesson interesting and relevant to their lives, they feel encouraged to ask questions, engage in a lesson, and in this way actively practice their critical thinking.

There has been noted a reciprocal relationship between critical thinking and motivation: once the students' critical thinking skills improve, they become more active and independent learners and better engage in lessons; their motivation also improves as they feel more confident in their learning.

6.1.2 Lack of exposure and experience – what difficulties does the limited environment of a refugee camp cause for learning? As mentioned earlier, most students in this study have grown up in a refugee camp and, therefore, have a lack of variety of experiences and exposure to the wider world. This causes a range of difficulties in their learning. Their visual experience is limited to the landscape of a refugee camp in Thailand; therefore they have trouble visualizing any other environment. The information the students have access to is limited by the lack of TV, libraries, newspapers, or internet; consequently, the students know hardly anything about the way of life or history of other countries, or current events in the world. This limits the students'

abilities to consider abstract concepts and to generalize. This situation impedes learning as there are only such limited experiences to build on, which is accompanied by the lack of critical thinking skills. All this makes it extremely difficult for students to relate learning to their own lives.

One way the teachers see of facilitating learning is to always provide very clear examples to bridge the gap between the concepts or topic and the students' real experiences to give the students something to hold on to.

6.1.3 Language of instruction – the range of languages used for a range of instructional purposes within a lesson. The results of this study demonstrate that even though the Post 10 schools are considered to be English-medium, English is not the only, or the most used language of the teaching and learning process. The learning materials available to teachers and students are all in English, but the language used for presentation, discussion, and group work mostly depends on mutually negotiated choice between the teacher and the students. A pattern has been discovered showing that English was likely to be used in formal parts of the lesson, such as presentation of new material, tests, or on the blackboard. As a lesson progresses from presentation to discussion and group-work, local languages predominate.

Many teachers comment that student participation and confidence levels depend on the language used in class, meaning that students can be expected to be more confident in their native language. However, English can be an extra source of motivation for the students, and they are prepared to make the extra effort just in order to understand and participate in English.

6.1.4 Young adult learners. This research has found that the relationship between the teacher and the students and the teacher's cultural identity in relation to the rest of the community and the students is extremely important in the teacher's ability to introduce the students to critical

thinking. Since the students in this study are young adults, some of the participant teachers felt that their authority depended to a certain degree on their ability to identify with the community the students came from. The teachers commented that it was important to develop a relationship of trust with the adult students in order to facilitate the teaching of critical thinking.

6.1.5 Isolated communities - the difficulties associated with the lack of teacher-to-teacher interaction. Another aspect contributing to challenges of teaching in the context of refugee camps is the isolation of the separate communities or refugee camps from each other. The refugee teachers, participants in this research, teaching in the different Post 10 programs are confined each to his/her own camp and are unable to travel outside the camp to meet with their colleagues from Post 10 programs in other camps. Professional development workshops organized by the Curriculum Project can happen at most twice a year. Thus, teachers are deprived of the ability to regularly share their experiences and partake of teamwork. New teachers are not able to learn from their more experienced colleagues.

The participant teachers found that they particularly miss opportunities to compare their students' progress as well as comparing results of some innovative approaches some of the teachers are trying out.

Participants in this research often comment that teacher-to-teacher interaction is extremely important so that teachers can exchange ideas and support each other, especially since many of the Post 10 teachers have never had formal teacher training and do not have access to any of the outside teacher resources.

Another finding related to the isolation of the communities in the refugee camps is the preference of the teachers for paper-based, all-in-one teaching materials. Innovative curriculum in a western context pre-supposes the use of modern technologies and/or multimedia. However,

it was obvious to the participants and the researcher that any ICT components for students or teachers would be inappropriate and unusable. The reason for this is the situation of isolation of the target communities: the refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border do not have internet access, and most of the Post 10 schools are at best equipped with one or two computers in the office. The teachers and students would simply not be able to use any ICT resources were they provided. Keeping this in mind, the study modules accompanying this exegesis (as all the other Curriculum Project materials) are designed as stand-alone paper-based resources for maximum usability.

6.2 Recommendations

This research makes the following recommendations for developing a curriculum for further studies for young adults in places of temporary asylum or other marginalized communities.

6.2.1 Prioritizing critical thinking skills in the curriculum with the purpose of promoting liberatory education and community development. The rationale behind organizing the Post 10 curriculum around critical thinking skills is to oppose the colonial tradition of education which teaches compliance and unquestioning acceptance of authority instead of freeing up the intellectual potential of the students. Unless the teaching of marginalized youth successfully introduces them to independent thinking, they will never go beyond mechanical memorization of facts dictated by a teacher, which is the only learning style they have ever been exposed to. This is why the purpose of curriculum in the education of marginalized populations should always be liberatory (hooks, 1994).

A truly critical thinking-based curriculum should use local content as a means of liberating the students and empowering them to believe that their way of life is important. Once they start feeling proud of their way of life and confident in their abilities, they will be more

motivated and better prepared to work with their communities and use an open and democratic approach in their work.

However, in order to begin implementing such liberating curriculum, it is first necessary to create an environment where students would feel safe to open their minds and speak up. A drastic change of teaching style that students might experience in switching from colonial style education to critical thinking-based might cause an emotional shock that can obstruct their ability to process information. The students might feel lost in a new learning environment where they cannot rely on their familiar strategies like memorization and copying the words of some authority such as a textbook or the teacher. When first faced with such new teaching practices as open discussion or participating in making decisions about the learning process, students are often confused, as they don't know what is expected of them. It is, therefore, extremely important to first build up trust with the students, create a community where the students feel safe and comfortable with each other and the teacher. The key to building up this kind of learning environment is to proceed slowly and involve the students in the process at every step of the way.

6.2.2 Ensuring the curriculum is holistic, providing links with other subjects. An effective curriculum for marginalized communities has to be a holistic one with clearly established links between the subjects. Students need to be aware of these links, crossovers, and overlaps in order to make better sense of how to apply their learning in life. While most curricula are more effective when they are holistic, this is particularly important to a situation of marginalization, where students' access to information is extremely limited and classroom learning is almost the only source of knowledge about the outside world.

Curriculum Project implements a holistic curriculum with the structure represented in Figure 4
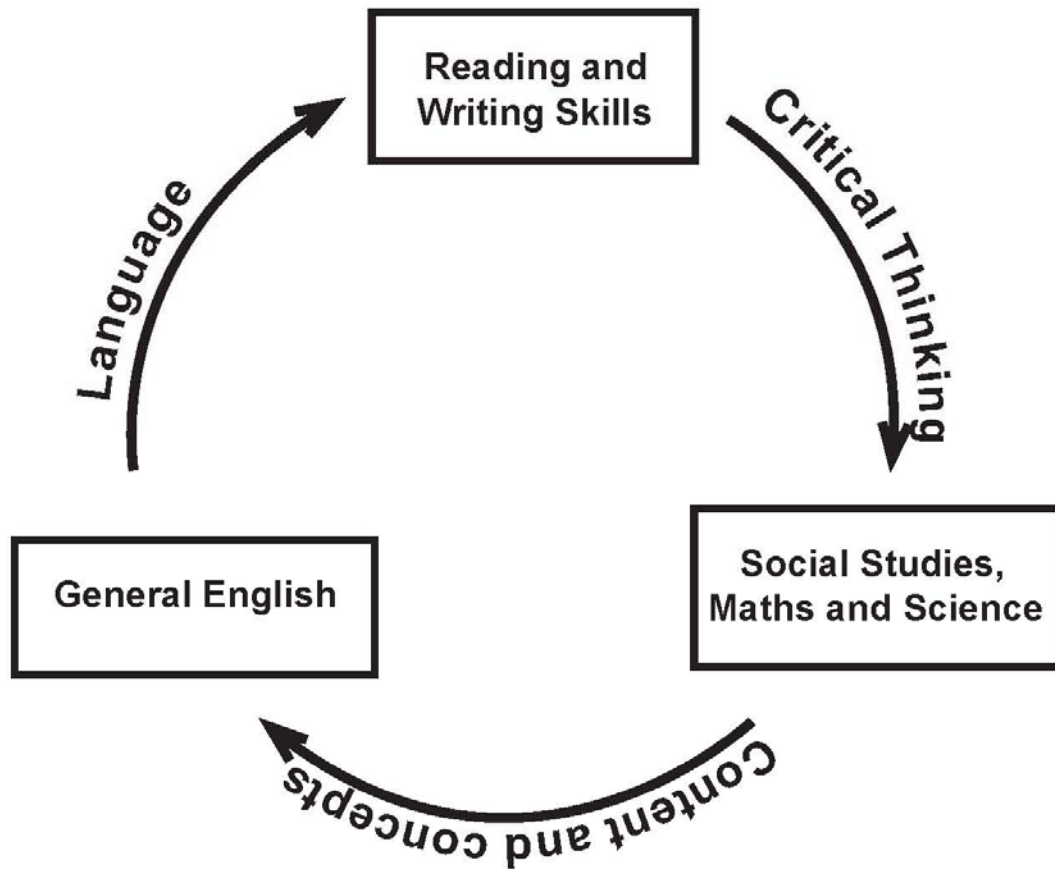
Figure 4.

Holistic curriculum

In the General English subject, explicit instruction is focused on language – vocabulary,

listening, and speaking. Reading and Writing Skills subjects integrate critical thinking skills in

explicit reading and writing instruction while utilizing the language taught in General English

classes. The other subjects such as Social Studies, Maths, and Science introduce concepts while

practicing and reinforcing critical thinking skills. And finally, the topics and concepts from Social Studies are used in both General English and Reading and Writing skills thematic units.

 6.2.3 Providing 'scaffolding' support for teachers and students. The educational experience of the Curriculum Project curriculum at the Post 10 programs is a new experience for the students as well as for the teachers. This might result in a sort of traumatic experience both for students and teachers. This comes from the 'newness' factor, as the participant teachers have referred to it. This newness is demonstrated both in the teaching style, which strives to be participatory, student-centered, and thought-inspiring, as well as in the actual topics selected for the curriculum. Some of these topics might be politically sensitive or at least offering a critical perspective on contemporary and historical issues rather than just reinforcing the status quo.

 Neither students, nor most teachers, have had experience with student-centered learning. This is one of the key factors taken into consideration by CP when designing the teaching and learning materials. This is also a factor that came up again and again through the evaluation that was the focus of this study. According to the participants, the most successful learning and teaching experiences happened where enough support had been provided by the curriculum developers both for the students and the teachers.

 From a western curriculum developer's, or educator's, perspective such support might seem prescriptive. However, in the education situation of marginalization, such as in a refugee camp, teacher and students support is the key to innovation that will bring about liberatory education. The idea of such intense curriculum support for the teacher can perhaps be best appreciated within the context of lack of formal teacher-training and in an environment where teachers might have very limited background in the subject knowledge.

This support involves providing very clear step-by-step instructions for all student exercises and activities, even to the point where it might seem repetitive. All the CP materials include very detailed teachers' guides that not only provide explicit instructions to all activities suggested in the students' book but guide the teacher step-by-step through each lesson, offering options for many of the exercises, discussing the rationale for the activities, including sample answers, and suggesting ways to simplify or make more challenging some of the activities in the student book.

The CP modules develop the student-centered teaching/learning style gradually, building up from more basic, teacher-directed activities in the beginning of each module and each lesson within the module to more open and challenging ones as the lessons and modules develop. Many activity types and instructions repeat themselves to give both the teachers and students a chance to get used to the new style. All modules include a lot of choice both for the teacher and for the students in order to better adjust the difficulty level and to encourage independent decision-making.

Another way in which the CP offers support to participating teachers is to offer professional development workshops and teaching demonstrations in order to pilot materials more effectively and build up teachers' confidence in using them. Professional development workshops also offer a way for the teachers to participate more actively in the curriculum development process by offering their feedback and sharing their experiences with other teachers.

Teachers in isolated and marginalized communities, while being experienced and committed, are often not formally trained as teachers. What makes them ideal educators in their

communities is their belonging to and knowledge of the local culture, and, most importantly, understanding of the students' situation, needs, and motivation.

Since they are often unfamiliar with educational theory and the jargon of the methodology, and are often non-native speakers of English, it is not helpful to offer them conventional sources such as textbooks, journal articles and curriculum guides on innovative teaching methods for purposes of professional development.

Instead, what the teachers in this study responded well to was the regular presence of the curriculum developers in the programs. This ensured that the teachers' voice was heard and realized in the resulting curriculum. The teachers also appreciated on-going support with piloting the curriculum, particularly wherever innovative approach was concerned.

Apart from the lack of formal teacher-training, teachers in marginalized communities sometimes have not had much training or background in the subject matter. In the case of the Curriculum Project curriculum, the approach that was successfully utilized was to provide detailed teachers' guides that included suggested answers to student exercises and additional background materials on lesson topics for the teachers' reference. Extensive and clear examples of how to lead the suggested innovative activities in the modules are also included for the teachers' benefit. While it might seem like handholding and prescriptive to a Western educational innovation practitioner, teachers in refugee camps, in fact, relied on such scaffolding in order to build up their confidence and begin feeling secure in moving towards a more student-centered approach.

6.2.4 Contextualizing curriculum. It is of utmost importance that any curriculum intended for young adults in a situation of such marginalization as a refugee camp, where the students

have never been exposed to any other environment, should prioritize specific contextualization to the students' situation.

Such curriculum would take into account the students' past and present experiences, their culture, language, and most importantly, select topics that are relevant to the students' background and present them in such a fashion that demonstrates clear links to the students' every day experiences.

A contextualized social studies curriculum should start where the students are at in their world knowledge and build on it in the direction identified by a thorough assessment of the students' learning needs, motivation, and goals. Such assessment should be on-going and involve all stakeholders (students, teachers, parents, community leaders and organizations, etc.). The curriculum should continuously stay in close connection with the students' day-to-day lives providing clear links for the students to relate their learning to their experiences. Apart from making the learning meaningful and comprehensible, this suggests to the students ways they can utilize their learning as opposed to just storing the knowledge acquired through lessons in the sense of banking education described by Freire (1995).

A contextualized curriculum for youth in marginalized communities should be based on teaching practices that at once recognize the limits of the students' experiences and learning difficulties associated with it, and respect the students' needs and help them to build on whatever experiences and knowledge they have to construct a meaningful and negotiated picture of the outside world however different it might be from anything the students have ever encountered.

6.2.5 Promoting a multi-lingual learning process The question of what language a curriculum should be delivered in is not an easy one. There are an endless number of factors affecting the decision as well as a range of stakeholders engaged in making it. Whatever

language gets selected, it is important not to take it for granted. The process of curriculum evaluation with the view of instigating innovation should include an analysis of the rationale behind the choice of language of instruction.

In this study, the language of instruction for the CP curriculum was assumed to be English, until the evaluation revealed that in fact there was a complex combination of languages used for the various lesson functions and stages negotiated between the teachers and students. Participants in this research found that the learning materials being in English did not hinder student achievement as the teachers were free to use their (and the students') language(s) of choice in class as necessary. For example, many teachers found it a successful strategy to use English in the more formal parts of a lesson, such as presentation, and then move to local languages as the lesson progressed to discussion and group-work. This strategy is particularly beneficial in multi-lingual classes where students can use their own language choices when working in groups.

Another advantage of such multi-lingual instruction is that the students get a balance between using their own language to fully engage in the lesson and maintaining a motivation based on being able to practice their English while studying a subject such as, for example, Social Studies at the same time.

6.2.6 Treating learners with respect while offering support. While developing educational programs and curriculum for young adults in marginalized communities, it is important to remember that although young, the students are nevertheless adults, having completed (or not) their secondary education and coming to the further studies programs by choice. Therefore, it is important to build the curriculum in a way that encourages the students to take responsibility for their own learning. Given the colonial-style education tradition that many

such students come from, this is no easy task. The key to achieving good results is, on the one hand, to treat these young people as adults with respect, and, on the other, to provide enough support for a smooth transition to a critical teaching/learning style. Such support should include prioritizing the development of independent study skills and critical thinking skills over content and taking the learning process slowly so as to allow the students to adjust to the new learning style without overwhelming them. Once students get overwhelmed, they tend to lose their concentration and motivation. It is particularly important to maintain the students' motivation, for it is imperative in helping students develop as independent and thoughtful learners.

In addition to ensuring a gradual learning style adjustment, it is equally important to involve the young adult students in making choices about their learning process as well as respecting their opinions. The CP curriculum advises the teachers through the teachers' guide to offer students' choice whenever possible and keep them informed with regards to the objectives of the curriculum. Another aspect of treating the students as adults is to encourage them to express their opinions in class whether they agree with the teacher and/or the text or not. A constructive way of achieving this is to create a safe atmosphere in class where the students can feel secure to speak their minds.

6.2.7 Assessment of technological capabilities. This research recommends that before providing any curriculum and/or teaching materials to marginalized communities, it is important to assess the community's technological capacity. Is there internet access at the school? Is there a photocopier? Are students or teachers able to access libraries for reference materials? Are they able to use videos? It is counter-productive to provide expensive ICT resources for a community which does not have reliable source of electricity! Therefore, it is important to build any teaching materials to the specific requirements of the specific community.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This research investigated the evaluation and refinement of a social studies curriculum fostering the development of critical thinking strategies in young adults in the refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border. It offers a detailed study of how to design a culturally relevant, community focused curriculum model for young adult refugees in places of temporary asylum. The social studies curriculum under investigation in this research was conducted in three separate Post 10 refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border.

The research asked the question: *How was an innovative social studies curriculum designed, implemented, and refined through collaboration between local educators and western curriculum developers in the refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border?*

In order to address this question, a year-long cycle of action research was undertaken by the researcher and the teachers in the refugee camps. The initial purpose of the action research was to evaluate the curriculum being piloted in the Post 10 programs. However, what has emerged is a framework for how to build and improve on a relevant curriculum for an isolated and marginalized community and a set of categories (i.e. motivation, critical thinking skills, community isolation, exposure and experience, language of instruction, etc.) that identify the specifics of the situation for the students, the teachers, and the community on the whole.

As proposed in the introduction to this exegesis, this research offers two outcomes:

1) An improved social studies curriculum for the Post 10 programs in the refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border offered by the Curriculum Project in 2006. The set of modules that are part of the submission in this research project constitute the improved teaching materials. By

2007, the teachers who were the participants in the action research evaluation project have started using the resulting materials in the classroom.

2) A set of recommendations for building up locally relevant curriculum for young adults in places of temporary asylum, or in other marginalized communities, has been developed. These recommendations (discussed in Chapter 6) can be used to either adjust the existing modules to any local situation where a marginalized community is in need of critical education for its young people, or to build up a completely new set of teaching materials.

It is hoped that the information in this exegesis, the findings and the set of recommendations, will prove useful for other educators developing education programs for young adults in other marginalized communities.

In November 2006, the social studies component of the CP curriculum that has been reworked as part of this study was requested by a range of formal as well as non-formal educational institutions in Burma.

7.2 Limitations

One of the limitations of this study can be identified as the researcher's limited language skills in the multiple languages spoken in the refugee camps. As discussed in the earlier sections, the researcher does not speak any of the languages spoken by the participants as their first or second languages (Karen, Burmese, Karenni, etc.). The research was conducted in English, apart from a set of student surveys that were translated into the students' first language. While the key participants were entirely fluent in English, the researcher's ability to converse in the participants' language/s could have allowed for the direct involvement of more participants, students in particular, in the evaluation process.

Another limitation identified is the lack of time that the participants spent as a group discussing the social studies curriculum and sharing their experiences of piloting it. While the researcher had spent extended amounts of time working one-on-one with each of the key participants (the teachers) and in each of their classrooms, there were only two occasions when the participant teachers from the three participating programs came together for focus groups throughout this research. This was due to the participants' lack of freedom of movement stemming from their marginalized position as refugees. This marginalization of course is in its turn one of the parameters that this research has identified as an important factor to be taken into consideration for curriculum development.

7.3 Recommendations for further research

As the literature review chapter suggests, refugee education is a relatively new and less than comprehensively covered area of research. As far as the Thai-Burma border area is concerned, the latest research in curriculum development is represented by O'Brien (2003) Metro (2006), and Haikin (2006).

Worldwide, research in refugee education focuses mainly on primary education, with limited discussion of secondary. Yet, there has been hardly any research into academic programs for young adults and any post-secondary education in places of temporary asylum. This is mainly explained by the lack of such programs. While such programs exist on the Thai-Burma border, research does not point to the existence of any similar programs in other parts of the world in situations of temporary asylum. However, when refugee situations become protracted, it is of utmost importance that young people in these communities get access to quality critical education beyond primary level that would equip them to build capacity in their communities.

Research is needed to identify situations where such curriculum development is needed and further research then would be useful to compare a variety of curriculum development projects have been undertaken in communities with protracted refugee situations and/or other marginalized communities. More research is also needed to study curriculum development in a variety of areas whereas the present research only covers social studies.

Postscript

This study was started in 2004, and the sections in Chapters 2 and 4 describing the background, the context, and the field are based on the situation in 2004. However, while all the findings and recommendations are still highly relevant and/or transferable, a lot has changed in the past three years, mostly due to the political situation in Thailand and internationally. Some of these changes have somewhat affected the learning and teaching environment in the refugee camps on the Thai – Burma border and it is, therefore, appropriate to mention them here even though they do not change either the findings or the recommendations.

One of the more important changes that have occurred in the past two-three years is the opening of resettlement opportunities to camp refugees. A lot of teachers and community leaders have resettled to third countries, causing sever teacher shortages in the camps. In some cases up to 40 to 50 percent of skilled labor-force and up to 100% teachers in some camps (CCSDPT Minutes, CP/ZOA Report). In addition, students are now also resettling with their families in great numbers (CCSDPT Minutes) which is creating an atmosphere of transience in the Post 10 programs. Since lots of senior and more experienced teachers have resettled, teacher quality is declining and new teachers are recruited from young graduates.

In the meantime, Post 10 programs are burgeoning and the network of Post 10 education is developing in and outside the refugee camps, since the out-of-camp refugee populations are not subject to resettlement in third countries. Also, ties are building up with a range of education programs inside Burma. These processes are contributing to extending Post 10 education opportunities to a broader range of ethnic groups from Burma. In addition, the Karen Education Department (KED) has now officially taken a mandate over Post 10 education for Karen refugees in Thailand and is attempting to instigate a standardization process (FSP Diaries). This opens an opportunity to introduce the social studies curriculum under evaluation in this research as part of the standardized Karen Education Department curriculum for Post 10 education inside the refugee camps, outside the camps in Thailand, as well as in Karen areas inside Burma.

In 2006, the Royal Thai Government (RTG) has granted official permission to Post 10 programs for refugees. This is greatly facilitating the cooperation between the different Post 10 programs in different locations and between the programs and education NGOs, as it is now possible to request permission for teachers to travel for professional development purposes, and for foreign trainers/consultants/teachers to visit refugee camps more easily and on a more regular basis.

Since the beginning of this study, the Curriculum Project has expanded its operations to more Post 10 programs on the Thai – Burma border as well as inside Burma and there are many more staff and volunteers involved. As far as the curriculum under evaluation is concerned, it gains access to a variety of educational institutions both inside and outside Burma for a variety of ethnic groups. The CP collaborates with the Post 10 programs to facilitate the development of curriculum for new subjects, such as Community Development, to name just one, in addition to

the original set of subjects referred to in this exegesis, while the Reading Skills and Writing Skills have been combined into one subject.

In 2007, the two textbooks, Introduction to Social Studies and Background to Southeast Asia, that constitute the curriculum under evaluation here were approved as the core of a social studies course for a BA in Community Development at the Myanmar Institute of Theology, in Yangon.

This postscript is only a summary of the more important recent changes in the Post 10 education scene on the Thai – Burma border and acts as an update to certain information in the earlier chapters of this exegesis.

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Document	Code
1. Lesson Plans and Lesson Scripts 1 *July 14 – September 14, 2004*	*LPLS1*
2. Meetings, Reflections, Interviews 1 *July 14 – September 14, 2004*	*MRI1*
3. Introduction to Social Studies Module Feedback 1 *September, 2004*	*ISSF1*
4. Researcher's Journal 1 *July 14 – September 14, 2004*	*RJ1*
5. Tun Soe Letter 1 *July 10, 2004*	*TSL1*
6. Tun Soe Letter 2 *September 23, 2004*	*TSL2*
7. Tun Soe Letter 3 *September 23, 2004*	*TSL3*
8. Introduction to Social Studies Module Feedback 2 *October, 2004*	*ISSF2*
9. Meetings, Reflections, Interviews 2 *October, 2004*	*MRI2*
10. Social Studies Workshop Report *November 14, 2004*	*SSWR1*
11. Post X Stakeholders' Social Studies Session Report *November 10, 2004*	*PXSS*
12. Meetings, Reflections, Interviews 3 *December 2004-January 2005*	*MRI3*
13. Introduction to Southeast Asia Module Feedback 1 *March, 2005*	*ISEAF1*
14. Lesson Plans and Lesson Scripts 2 *December, 2004*	*LPLS2*
15. Lesson Plans and Lesson Scripts 3 *January-February, 2005*	*LPLS3*
16. FSP Student Questionnaire	*FSP SQ*
17. SEP Student Questionnaire	*SEP SQ*
18. KPT Student Questionnaire	*KPT SQ*
19. Introduction to Southeast Asia Feedback 2 *June, 2005*	*ISEAF2*
20. Social Studies Workshop Report 2 June, 2005	*SSWR2*
21. CCSDPT meeting December 2006 Minutes	*CCSDPT Minutes*
22. Quarterly Report July - September 2006 Curriculum Project / ZOA Refugee Care Co-operation	*CP/ZOA Report*
23. FSP Program Diaries December 2006	*FSP Diaries*

▪ **Students: engagement in lessons, motivation, acquisition of skills and content**

From lesson plans and scripts (LPLS 1)

p.1   Students seem comfortable to participate (somewhat)
Girls seem to be as outspoken as boys in providing answers. As became apparent later, this might depend on the gender of the teacher, or at least on the teachers' attitude on encouraging girls' participation. Still, this is just an obvious thing to notice, while many teachers comment that some students are just naturally outspoken, whether girls or boys, while others are naturally shy.

p.2   Students seem able to complete activities

p.6   The picture activity fits into the original lesson plan, as teacher was just planning
to use the globe to discuss different landscapes and climates around the world so the pic-s were a welcome supplement that allowed fro more student participation rather than a lecture-style lesson.

p.9   Students seem to catch on – they already know about religions in SEA

p.10   Looks like the students are not that clear. Must be due to the confusing explanations in the module p. 22

p.11   Plan how to involve the students next week…

p.13   G-work: Find out the differences between the picture of Burma on the map of the Burma and on the map of the world.
Students list the different features shown on the map of Burma.
Very good activity for skills practice.

p.14   Students suggested asking about topics, activities, etc. as part of evaluation.

p.15   "We can't say fully if they understand or not.
But seems like they understand when I give them a cue in Karen. It's hard for them to ask questions in English. I could briefly go over in first language"

p.17   Presentations demonstrate ability to use diagrams and tracking processes in a logical sequence, also understanding of basic principles of the importance of how our life interacts with economy.
The next group is not as confident. Some negotiation at the board about language before starting.

p.20   Ask Saw Paw what students' answers were for group work questions.

p.21   Have they discussed examples of barter in their own community?

p.22   Students seem to be focused on representing two different points in time – two different years – I wonder if they see some meaning behind this – like a change – different harvest or something or just two randomly different situations?
Does this actually practice critical thinking (apply info to real life) or just copy an example from the module.

p.24   [3A is definitely more outspoken]
Teacher encourages each group member to participate in presentation, but it is mostly group leaders (boys) who present.
All student maps are quite detailed and include scale and legends – shows basic understanding

p.28   T-r: "Some students have done some leadership trainings, so they have some idea about roles of leaders"

From meetings and interviews (MRI)

p.1   Involving the students:
'How do you feel after you have studied? What kinds of issues do you want to study?'
Researcher can teach and interview students, the teacher can see what the developer had in mind.
Ask the students' opinion for upcoming modules.

p.2   It's better for the students to participate!

p.3   Some students forget easily, so it is good to get the students to put what they have learned in their own words.

p.4   Did the students demonstrate the use of skills targeted?
Yes, more or less

p.5   The students know about climate and landscape but they didn't think about how they affect each other. Compare contrast cause-effect

Students can show skills in clearly structured activities

p.6   Some students might only apply their new knowledge in a limited way, but others might be able to generalize.

p.12   Politics is best for practicing critical thinking skills.

St-s don't show they can apply information they have learned!

p.13   Also depends on students – how much they can pay attention. [how about some strategies for making sure students pay attention (from TUN SOE!)] some students want to share opinion, but not all!

Discuss the value of re-negotiating in bigger and bigger group. Students don't understand the importance.

6. First time for students to work in group, so it is useful, but sometimes students don't really participate, so it's a waste of time. (Saw Doe compared with his own experience at SEP with group work)

p.14   Students asked: "What's mind map?" [is this the first time? Then need to introduce!]

Students have a hypnotized look and have no idea of major events in recent Burmese history!

- **Teachers and their background knowledge in the subject**

From lesson plans and scripts

p.8   Researcher: 'He also mentioned something about Muslim.. so not sure if the symbol he showed on board was a Muslim or a Buddhist temple. It is interesting to note that Saw Doe acknowledges religious diversity in his community.'

p.29   [So is the assumption here that economy should be run by the gov't?]

What kinds of ideas influence your leaders and society? (do you think…) [consider this question in light of Tun Soe's comments on discussing community leadership with the students – awkward, or course KnPP leadership is a bit different from the Karen leadership, though the KNU is not a champion of democracy either…]

p.30   Teacher's explanation: In Karen gov't, military does not have a role in ruling people

p.32   "Many cultures- many diseases"

From meetings and interviews

p.1   If the teacher is not from the community, how will they teach history of Burma?

p.3   'I don't know the educational word, but my teaching style is, how should I explain… open… I let the students ask anything they want. Some of the students have already passed this knowledge (in the modules) so they need a challenge. They ask very difficult questions, and I don't feel confident because I don't know the answers. I need extra reference materials about the topic.'

'If we don't know, we don't want to do anything'

- **Assessment and language of assessment**

From lesson plans and scripts

p.13   [on-going assessment?]

p.31   Discussed tests over lunch – achieved a sort of compromise. T-r worried about language difficulties but reluctant to let st-s write in 1st language as he wants them to practice English, I find this a bit contradictory.

From meetings and interviews

p.3   Are open book tests and option?

p.9   LLO needs extra question material for test! All questions are already included in the SB, need more for tests

p.12   Review term test that Lwin Lwin Oo has given the week before – I had provided a draft that we have planned together (but under my facilitation) but she has entirely changed (see attached samples). On the one hand, this is definitely good that she has reviewed and used her own opinion for the test, on the other hand – the test is crap… Will do a test session at the 3-day workshop.

p.14   [Discussed L2 test with Saw Doe – he has prepared all memory questions and multiple choice to check memorization. I suggested adding some 'skills application' tasks/questions. He sulked.] SD suggested providing a paragraph with dates to practice timelines, rather than leaving it entirely up to the st-s]

- **Language of instruction**

From lesson plans and scripts

p.3   Some students answer in Burmese

p.7   Saw Doe doesn't seem overly excited to have me in his class, but doesn't object explicitly. Lesson in Karen and Burmese

p.8   Teacher asked students if they' like to use English in class today for my benefit. Students agree, but conversation continues in any number of languages. Not that I mind!

p.16   The first group presents in English, I wonder if this is form my benefit, or not.

p.23   Today teacher speaks more English

p.24   One student said (with despise in his voice) to researcher: do you understand Burmese?

From meetings and interviews

p.2   Mostly Burmese – teachers and students prefer

Teacher uses both languages in the classroom. Students prefer speaking English, then explain in Burmese.

Intro to Social Studies module:

Last year we needed to go slowly, as it was the first time.

This year we can go faster. Students want to focus on English.

p.4   [LLO] Would the lesson work better in 1ˢᵗ language?

Good, but not better. Best to combine

p.8   Students are not used to foreign teachers.

Much more difficult to explain without translation.

p.14   This mini-lesson was in English, clearly aimed at the researcher. This created an interesting dynamics that I enjoyed.

- **Teaching aims and outcomes**

From lesson plans and scripts

p.23   ACCS helping young people find their own path through community work and study to develop their community.

p.24   [touchy-feely – but not sure what the point is]

p.27   This is a recall exercise rather than on practicing any skills.

What did you learn today?

Authority, law, harmony [???] [Lesson focused on vocab rather than concepts]

From meetings and interviews

p.10   Objectives of Post 10 Education?

Each school is different. i.e. FSP – when we discuss with teachers or observe the materials they use, they are not very… because they try to teach… the students use education in their community. If any students want to continue their education, yes, they are OK – further studies.

50% community

50% further studies

KPT, SEP – more motivated for further studies, about 70%

Why is this difference?

Mostly depended on teachers' who have responsibility for school, their ideology.

Nu Poh, ZOA Post 10 – their aim is different.

p.13   1. Useful, we don't need to make our won plan. But need to state the target more clear for teacher. Also depends on students – how much they can pay attention. [how about some strategies for making sure students pay attention (from TUN SOE!)] some students want to share opinion, but not all!

Discuss the value of re-negotiating in bigger and bigger group. Students don't' understand the importance. [this probably means that the activity is not made clear enough - not step-by-step enough. Also, it is

probably a good idea to introduce activity reflections, like what this particular activity teaches us. At least introduce this in the TG, teachers can later explain to students if they find it useful]

Change – make clear the teaching point to students before they start: eg discuss aims of pyramid discussion, also definitions.

- **Evaluation process, collaboration, planning and further evaluations**
  From lesson plans and scripts

p.2   The teacher has met me at the shop in front of the school office. She has just given her previous class assignment for the next 10-15 minutes before the class, as she was busy teaching all morning and we didn't have a chance to talk.

p.5   Reflection session hasn't happened after the lesson, as the teacher had to rush off to talk to her adopted son's teacher about his behavior, at the other end of the camp.

p.6   [Should discuss with teacher – what kinds of text activities would be useful to move away from reading out loud.]

Repeat FSP lesson, using Lwin Lwin Oo's suggestions to improve it (small cycles of action research!)

p.7   Saw Doe doesn't seem overly excited to have me in his class, but doesn't object explicitly.

p.9   Teacher has an annoying habit of calling on me in the middle of his Karen-speaking to explain something to the students.

p.13   Reflections

Compare lessons??

Ask about yesterday's scale lesson. Any suggestions?

Plan how to involve the students next week…

p.14   Asked the students to b-storm about CP
1. Find out the level of the students
2. ----------------------------teachers
3. Discuss with teachers
4. Make a plan
5. Write textbooks

What is evaluation? Review p.25

Explained to students based on the 'observe-examine-make conclusions' sequence

This worked well combined with the lesson in the module.

p.15   Should we add more instructions for teachers in the TG? Not sure.

p.16   I try to stay away from interfering in group work, as students might become self conscious that they are discussing in first language.

Just watch from my corner. All I can say that all heads are turned into their groups and busy discussing.

The first group presents in English, I wonder if this is form my benefit, or not.

p.17   Presentations demonstrate ability to use diagrams and tracking processes in a logical sequence, also understanding of basic principles of the importance of how our life interacts with economy.

p.18   A minor dilemma – according to schedule, Lwin Lwin Oo takes 3B first, and then I am going to try out Dave's game. It is worth it to swap the schedule, to give her a chance to watch the game and then try it herself is she likes it, or would this just be an unnecessary disturbance?

p.19   Teacher said a student expressed on behalf of the class, that they haven't understood last time (that was my lesson – I was covering for Lwin Lwin Oo while she was sick), so she changed her plan to introduce supply and demand and decided to continue with goods and services.

p.20   After about 4 times of teaching goods vs. services, I am finally getting the hang of it. It's good to say that goods involve only things, while services must involve people.

Plan to do the Supply – Demand game for 2nd period. This time I prepared money per person in advance. Will use chalk instead of books – more of it – to demonstrate over supply.

Ask Saw Doe what students' answers were for group work questions.

p.21   After the game: the idea about supply and demand came across, but on one made any profit, as they set the prices too low.

Need to discuss minimum prices first, before starting the game.

Saw Doe reminded me about the team game for goods and services, like we did last week with 3A. This time he will lead the game. He wants to change the game – he will whisper the 'goods or services word into the volunteer's ear…'   [should start doing lesson reflections with students after lessons that I teach]

p.22   Students seem to be focused on representing two different points in time – two different years – I wonder if they see some meaning behind this – like a change – different harvest or something or just two randomly different situations?

Does this actually practice critical thinking (apply info to real life) or just copy an example from the module.

(forgot my notebook and taught without a plan) It was a bit confusing, as Lwin Lwin Oo seemed to have already taught the lesson, so I felt quite dumb, but maybe it's not a bad idea to pre-teach stuff beforehand, especially in a local - foreigner team. Should structure this concept into some interview questions. Saw Doe also does something similar sometimes, like that dumb case when the lost their presentations. I remember that Baby used to do the same whenever she wanted me to teach her L3 GE class.

p.23   It is hard to communicate, with the level of English. The concepts are difficult, and the students' eyes glaze over. But simple clear examples seem to bring them back.

p.24   One student said (with despise in his voice) to researcher: do you understand Burmese?

p.26   Supply and demand game – better yet, but still it doesn't really show the real situation…

[Should get Tun Soe to prepare a mini-workshop on effective group work strategies]

p.28   Teacher preferred to follow lessons with same teacher, rather than disturbing students with different teacher every lesson.

Lwin Lwin Oo seems to be using what I have just taught in 3B: "How did Than Shwe get his power?" Was his father a dictator?

p.31   Had an interesting discussion about 'don't change religion' rule and 'don't marry foreigners' rule. I challenged the st-s a bit on the religion changing. But both of these rules go back 100s of years and make sense in terms of a minority culture and ethnic survival. If there's no threat – these rules are not so strict. Saw Doe's presence was very valuable in clarifying things both ways. We also took turns teaching and explaining to each other. Saw Doe added to my lesson.

p.32   Teacher asked me if I had any ideas for the lesson, but we ended up planning the same slight variation of TG activity (group work p.37) [this means… what?]

From meetings and interviews

p.1   Involving the students:

'How do you feel after you have studied? What kinds of issues do you want to study?'

Researcher can teach and interview students, the teacher can see what the developer had in mind.

Ask the students' opinion for upcoming modules.

p.2   Questions suggested by Lwin Lwin Oo:

Do they enjoy teaching the module? Does it give enough information, is it clear to explain to the students? Enough information for students? For teachers? Does the information enrich the students' knowledge?

p.3   Purpose of evaluation:

LLO: "After my class – I ask my students: it means I evaluate what I have done. I want to find out what they learned what they know already at this level. If they know already, how can I modify, what extra information can I find for next class."

3A-3B same curriculum: The level of the students in two classes is slightly different, B is lower than A, but we don't want to make them feel lower by using a different book, so we just spend more time explaining.

"You work with us and you come back to discuss so we can comment but with Systems of Democracy, he is gone, and we don't know him"

p.4   Did the students demonstrate the use of skills targeted?

Not enough

p.5   Saw Doe doesn't like following structured reflection questions, but he is good at providing opinions and feedback in a free conversation.

p.6   Should we include this in the module or leave up to the teachers?

Depends on the teacher.

Teachers ask what's going to happen with feedback – are the modules going to change?

Saw Doe – asks how CP chooses people to write modules, what is the criteria.

General questions:

9. "I feel I got a chance to participate since we are working together because project makes us part of the team, we are the 'middle person' between CP and the students, like a bridge"

7. No, 'cos I enjoy. If I don't, I will complain.

p.7   Who should benefit - teachers and students

Who needs to participate: all!

CP, teachers, students, then we can find out the flaws, feedback, etc.

11. Confusing questions: we need to have contact with developers, unlike System of Democracy.

I don't find this a waste of time, just on one module.

Curriculum dev't should include training for the teachers.

Social studies workshop ideas: if 3 day focus on SEA module, then should focus on teaching activities in the classroom.

How to set test questions?

Discuss test standardization?

Skills – make clear what they are.

Process: "Modules partly reflect my request"

As a result of this evaluation the modules will reflect my requests more.

[For social studies workshop: Work out with teachers what are the skills targeted in the module and how to assess them.]

Plan for next week: introductions for students – letters and discussion about research.

3B research intro

Students really seem more confident with me when Saw Doe is out, just like he has said. Saw Doe continued explaining in Karen but students still look puzzled.

p.8   Plan reflection activities for students.

1.   Focus groups:

Review the module and select your favorite lesson for each chapter.

Explain why you particularly liked it.

(Can write in any language, I can get translated)

2.   Individually (or focus groups): What did you learn to do (skills!) in each chapter.

Taught a highly successful lesson on effective group work p.26

But took the whole hour instead of 30 minutes – hijacked Saw Doe's lesson but he seemed OK. Should I include examples in the TG?

Also might include group roles, background information on goods such as fuel and where it comes from.

Students are not used to foreign teachers.

Much more difficult to explain without translation.

DD (summary of what teachers said) T-rs suggest going through modules page by page to collect feedback to improve the modules in a workshop format.

Lwin Lwin Oo, Saw Doe

p.9   Link more to Karen situation (situation in Burma)

Lwin Lwin Oo: even if she and I teach the same lesson, students' react differently.

Saw Doe wants to make sure feedback is used for action, not just sit on the shelf.

What's the plan for other subjects?

What are the arrangements with the module writers? (criteria for selection)

[Possible activity for workshop – match activities with skills – to include this system in new edition of I to Soc. st. Talk about independent leaning strategies and how to structure effective group work]

p.11   Need to modify and rewrite. If the module is not going to be re-written, it is not as useful! Modules save teachers' time. Need to be clear when modules are coming.

p.12   Touch base meeting with Lwin Lwin Oo after returning from Karenni.

Talked about:

- general review of evaluation process (no particular insights gained)
- review term test that Lwin Lwin Oo has given the week before – I had provided a draft that we have planned together (but under my facilitation) but she has entirely changed (see attached samples). On the one hand, this is definitely good that she has reviewed and used her own opinion for the test, on the other hand – the test is crap… Will do a test session at the 3-day workshop.
- Discussed plans for the next month, plus October (schedules)
- Vaguely discussed plans for the workshop

p.13   4. Depends whether I know the answer or not. If 'suggested answer' then I don't make students exactly follow the TG answer[I suppose this means this strategy works then!]

p.14   Students asked: "What's mind map?" [is this the first time? Then need to introduce!]

This mini-lesson was in English, clearly aimed at the researcher. This created an interesting dynamics that I enjoyed.

- **Classroom practice and teaching style**
  From lesson plans and scripts

p.1   If students can't answer, teacher asks to work in groups

p.2   Teacher uses non-threatening techniques of calling on students, such as emphasizing that she is randomly selecting names from the class roster. 'The lucky person'

p.3   Teacher encourages to brainstorm, rather then worry about accuracy.
Teacher uses 'random' method of calling on students to give answers without looking at the notes. But in an unthreatening way with a smile.
Focus on learning the concepts [or is it?]
Volunteers: how do you understand interaction?
Teacher provides lots of praise for student answers
Some students answer in Burmese.

p.4   Reading together (this still happens!)
Teacher pays particular attention to having clear lesson outcomes, making sure students get the point.

p.6   Teacher improvised this activity on the spot since I brought out the pictures in place of the missing sup pack.
The picture activity fits into the original lesson plan, as teacher was just planning to use the globe to discuss different landscapes and climates around the world so the pic-s were a welcome supplement that allowed fro more student participation rather than a lecture-style lesson.
Teacher makes friendly jokes to point out students' mistakes
A bit rushed, students don't get a chance to speak up, t-r is moving along quickly to move to the next stage of the lesson.
Saw Doe teaching style – mostly lecture, but involving students with questions.

p.10   Good use of b-board!
Sylvie talked to this class about Aceh. Teacher gives homework based on that.
Teacher asks the students to assign roles in groups. Students and teacher look very comfortable together.

p.15   Reflection with Saw Doe
"We can't say fully if they understand or not.
But seems like they understand when I give them a cue in Karen. It's hard for them to ask questions in English. I could briefly go over in first language"
"I worry that they will get confused with too may examples."
"I need to improve activities. I am hesitant to have students work in groups, because they don't really participate, but there is a lot to gain from group work."
Discuss ways of structuring groupwork
Group leader, Secretary, Presenter, Artist

p.16   I try to stay away from interfering in group work, as students might become self conscious that they are discussing in first language.
Just watch from my corner. All I can say that all heads are turned into their groups and busy discussing.

p.24   This demonstrate excellent lesson planning – students have an active task as they are listening to other students presenting. (is this in TG?)

p.25   Presentation tips from teachers: pay attention to your audience, speak facing the audience.
[generally, t-r tries to stay on top of time – gives time limits to all activities and exercises.]
Teacher encourages students to stick to their own ideas, if they really believe it!

p.26   T-r has excellent facilitation skills and classroom management skills!
[both lessons appear utterly unplanned]

p.27   This is a recall exercise rather than on practicing any skills.

p.28   Teacher preferred to follow lessons with same teacher, rather than disturbing students with different teacher every lesson.
Lwin Lwin Oo seems to be using what I have just taught in 3B: "How did Than Shwe get his power?" Was his father a dictator?

p.29   Ask Saw Doe what strategy he used to get students to concentrate on their group work.

From meetings and interviews

p.1   Older people persuade the students, but the teacher should present a balanced view to the students, stay neutral, but if the module is inadequate, teacher needs to add information.

We might be biased.

Young people have open ideas, but older people and politicians are hardliners.

As a good teacher, we should give the truth, or at least point it out.

p.3   'I don't know the educational word, but my teaching style is, how should I explain… open… I let the students ask anything they want. Some of the students have already passed this knowledge (in the modules) so they need a challenge. They ask very difficult questions, and I don't feel confident because I don't know the answers. I need extra reference materials about the topic.'

'If we don't know, we don't want to do anything'

p.4   1. What didn't really work? Why?

Time management wasn't very good. Too much new material (pictures) students get out of focus (overwhelmed?) Need to give a clear task before giving out the pictures. This way students can stay focused throughout the activity. State goal of the activity.

1.   What would you change next time?

First, find out the meaning… not sure… vocabulary work, globe work… find out differences in local area (within the camp)

1.   What would you change next time?

Use more time to introduce vocabulary

Ask students imagination/role play questions:

If you were a business person, what would you sell in this area?

If you were a researcher, what diseases would you study in this area?

Problem solving questions…

p.6   ... teachers will develop their own activity to practice the skills, step by step.

Should we include this in the module or leave up to the teachers?

Depends on the teacher.

▪   **Curriculum Project and the community of teachers - collaboration**

From meetings and interviews

p.6   General questions:

9. "I feel I got a chance to participate since we are working together because project makes us part of the team, we are the 'middle person' between CP and the students, like a bridge"

p.7   I don't find this a waste of time, just on one module.

Objectives of CP:

For the students – to know and review of social studies.

Process: If we have a module, we don't need other books, we have some foundation for teaching.

"Modules partly reflect my request"

As a result of this evaluation the modules will reflect my requests more.

CP did not neglect, they try the best but sometimes not on time.

Time management!

p.9   People who wrote the module should stick around for re-write it.

What's the system CP uses for recruiting module writers?

Discuss with teachers who is writing modules…

p.10   For me, I don't know before I came here, but now I learn, establish, because who has worked on the border, they learn teachers' needs, materials needs, books, resources.

Their aim is to create the school materials, even if they are not perfect, they can be useful for teachers. As we learn, teachers don't have curriculum. They might be busy to prepare their lessons or extract information from big books, that's why CP.

As we learn, first OSI/BPEO work for FSP/SEP/KPT, later they learn about others, situation is the same – lack of materials. First they used GED, later they learned, need to change their materials. The students will obtain knowledge, education appropriate level for community. Can be useful for further studies or their community.

4. Now that we learn teachers' opinion, the people who wrote the modules (I don't know very well) some will rely on the teachers…

Maybe we use very educated people but here the teachers are instead of the educated people.

We discuss with them.

If there is a controversy, bring the teachers together to negotiate when we are going to re-write again. When they agree fully, they are happy to use.

I learn something from them. Every teacher has a different background. Some have studied in Burma, some on the border. If we do like this it would be better.

Need a clear system – module writers – are they volunteers or paid? Are they going to re-write based on teachers' feedback? After teachers teach (pilot). After teachers meet, they will decide on changes.

Are they (writers) committed to make changes?

p.11   1. Go to schools and talk with teacher. At first I was not very open with the teacher, as I didn't know what was the relation ship between teachers and CP. But after 3 months, we became more friendly and talk about their opinions and needs. Talk more openly, informal. Distribute materials collect feedback.

CP teachers: some teachers are not very open, so we need more understanding more clear. We should sue more local people and flexible and enjoy to talk.

The more we talk, the closer we are, the better.

Need to modify and rewrite. If the module is not going to be re-written, it is not as useful! Modules save teachers' time. Need to be clear when modules are coming.

APPENDIX 3
Data Summary by Category
December 2004 - January 2005

- **Students: engagement in lessons, motivation, acquisition of skills and content**
  From lesson plans and scripts 2 (LPLS 2)

p.1   LLO L2 – Environment module "Students find too easy and nothing special' But did field trip (to organizations in the camp)

p.1   Reading reports, posted on the wall (FSP L3)

p.1   Students feel a bit overwhelmed, didn't want to learn more before the test, just review. This way of learning is very new and different.

p.1   p.28 – some students couldn't find

p.1   students asked about languages in China,

p.1   p.7 students had difficulties with the US – Russia text (FSP L3)

p.2   [however, they just copied from the encyclopedia anyway, so what's the difference?] (FSP L3)

p.2   Students prepare reports on variety of topics but all copied from book (FSP L3)

p.3   'We, Karen people, think we reached Burma first, so when they read about Mon, they get upset. But they need to open eyes, despite what we are taught by elders. (FSP)

p.3   Teacher brought my attention to how the students' reports were 'made to look pretty' to stress that the students are taking pride in their work which is definitely a good sign of motivation. But still, the problem is this practice reinforces really bad learning strategies. (FSP)

p.3   I've been reading the reports students have done. All copied with mistakes and unfinished sentences from encyclopedia from 1979! (FSP)

p.3   Student presentation on Indonesia:
Indonesia is a Muslim country… Student said about 4 sentences and tried to sit down.
But teacher stopped him with more questions: 'How did Muslims come to Indonesia?' 'From where?' and why? Another student presents in Burmese, about Thailand (FSP)

p.3   3. Philippines – 4 sentences… Teacher suggests more questions…Why Indonesia Muslim, Philippines – Christian? Not sure what the answer was (colonial influence) (FSP)

p.3   Nobody mentioned that all of these are multiethnic, religiously diverse countries.

p.4   p.30 Students had difficulty answering comp. Questions

p.4   p.27 Difficult to brainstorm as they don't know anything about the topic

p.4   Students like about Melaka. Ancient history is useful as intro as students learn, they become more interested. (all above FSP)

p.4   SD: "After the workshop I started teaching and brought the students' attention to the skills markers in the module, so they know what the point is."…(SEP)

p.4   Students want extra information but its hard to find. (SEP)

  From lesson plans and scripts 3 (LPLS 3)

p.1   They are definitely much higher than 3Bs! The class is also very small, I wonder if it's absentees or just few students. (FSP)

p.1   Students suggested good ideas. (FSP)

p.2   Students appear to be involved and participating in groups, but really it's hard to tell. (SEP)

p.3   (3B checklist) Seems to be an interesting topic, when immediate relevance to their lives is brought to their attention.
Relevance to students' lives: Yes, but teacher needs to talk about it, students were immediately able to recognize the relevance of borders.

p.3   Teacher thinks students will participate better with their own people. (SEP)

p.3   Anyway, this has to do with confidence and language also foreigner vs. Karen. Even if they understand, they still wait before answer.
Hm, didn't SH actually say (or someone else?) that students participate better with me – they are excited with a new teacher, especially foreigner.

p.3   "Students know about colonialism, but they didn't think about effect. With this exercise they came to know what the relevance to life is. So exercise was effective. I don't want to rush in my teaching" (SEP)

p.3	I feel students try harder.
	They ask me a lot of questions in Karen but it's hard for them in English [Compare with LLO!] (SEP)
p.3	Question 5: They need more info in order to match the topic in lesson to reality. Also, they forget to think holistically. If we talk in discussion, they can match better, we need to bring their attention.
	Even if they have info, they forget at the moment, they don't pay attention.
p.3	6. Enough info, if we give too much, they'll be discouraged, they won't think on their own. (SEP)
p.6	Activities: I have to be patient, give more time, most activities they can do by themselves but students have different levels so need to spend time explaining. (SH)
p.6	p.6 Students took much time, and were interested! (SH)
p.8	It comes out pretty clear now from various comments from teachers that the most stress for students is the new teaching style, where they are requested to be much more active.
p.10	… "This is the only group with a girl presenting" (KPT Zembla presentations)
p.10	This activity showed that the students are pretty clear on their political agenda for independence, while they are a bit confused on the economic. They come up with more or less colonial model of development as their economic plan for the new country. Either they haven't understood the disadvantages of the colonial style economies, or they haven't understood which one is which at all, or they just didn't have any other ideas.
p.10	Students asked questions about reforestation.
p.10	[This is when I started using the 'question activity'. This worked much better than just encouraging the students to ask questions. Direct elicitation. Some questions are quality questions, some are pretty meaningless. Refer to specific questions]
p.10	MT things, free writing is very useful as a starter – gets students going. …
p.11	3B – not very good on filling out chart skills – they couldn't match the info (didn't pay attention to what was already there) Actually, the same happened in 3A…later
p.11	Some students can ask questions, but not too much. (SEP)
p.12	Students answers in chart show they remembered what they studied last month about colonialism, 'challenges to the new nations' (FSP)
p.12	Students did well with Nationalism, can relate to Karen, Burmese, Indian history,
p.12	"When I make students think, they can't do clearly" (LLO)
p.13	Students do individually, did well. Before they said they didn't understand.
p.13	Use students questions to prepare extensive supplementary readings. Include in supplementary pack next year.
p.13	She also feels 3B questions are better than 3A, more genuine. Most questions students just make up, not what they really want to find out. "This should help students become more independent learners. They rely on teachers too much."
p.14	First students put various irrelevant answers, but then we discussed in more details and adjusted them. Basically, students weren't able to do this exercise on their own. T-r thought this was because they didn't really know what was culture. ??? hm…
	I would've expected this to be a very easy exercise. Maybe this needed more brainstorming together first.
p.15	Students sometimes get confused, as our ideas are different.
	They talk in class – we think they understand, but when we check, they don't get at all. If we give leading questions, they can follow, but give blank question – they can't do. They couldn't even define culture. We need to give more examples – learn from our mistakes. Sometimes they give answers just bla-bla-bla.
p.15	When I taught Ch1, I was satisfied, but if we ask now, they don't know.
p.15	Some students complain: "even we read we didn't understand" There's no point listening to them. Maybe we should include more text even if difficult.
p.15	Not always satisfied. When we ask students, they can't imagine anything, only if they see with their eyes. But when students don't understand, we can use this to improve the module. When they ask challenging questions I have useful resources.

From meetings reflections and interviews 3 (MRI 3)

p.1	Critical thinking skills MT: problem solving approach questions
	Students look bored, they don't want to answer, some do, and some asked more – varied. Example: cast system … compare with Burma, own situation
p.1	Students realize that there's more to know

We should encourage the students to learn more beyond the curriculum. This module should encourage students to do this. This is a good springboard.

p.1 The skills will help the students learn the content – topics are short, a lot of activities and illustrations – not boring. (KPT)

p.1 Group work – 1st year students seem to be more interested to participate in group work than 2nd year.

p.1 Students always compare to their own life: " I should do like this, … leaders shouldn't do like that…"

Lesson Checklists (LCQT)

Question		1. Can the students understand?
Checklist	1	They seem to be confused (maybe the keywords)
	2	They seem confused too. Especially when they answer your question.
	3	Sure, as presentation is extremely clear.
	4	Yes.
	5	Yes
	6	Yes
	7	Yes.
	8	Yes.
	9	I guess so.
	10	They understand quite well.
	11	I assume they can.
	12	I suppose so, sometimes the teacher give some explanations in Burmese.
	13	I am sure, lesson is in Karen. I, however, don't understand anything. I think this is a review lesson for
	15	Chapter 2.
		Very well

Question		2. Can the students participate in activities? How well?
Checklist	1	Yes, but it depends on how well they understand the topic, if they understand well, their participation in their activities will be well. In their own language they come up with more.
	2	They try to participate, but they worry that their answer will not match your question, so it seems that their participation doesn't go well.
	3	They write the answers. It is easy for students to participate as they can easily relate to the pictures. But they could not guess 'profit'. But generally, a bit passive, though I don't know what they are writing.
	4	Yes, as usual.
	5	Yes, they can answer questions, but they are not very active. They couldn't say why Indo-China has this name
	6	Yes, quite active.
	7	Yes, to some reasonable extent, they can participate in the activities, with the exception of overrunning the time.
	8	Yes, quite well.
	9	They seem to, but they don't look to excited – a bit sleepy. They are able to answer questions though.
	10	They can participate in the activity very well. Though some complained they couldn't draw well, they still try to draw and attentively follow the teacher's instructions.
	11	They contribute in Burmese. I think they even ask questions. This all has to do with how comfortable they feel with the teacher.
	12	They contribute answers. (we'll see how they present, but at the moment they don't look too excited). In fact the presentations were more or less inspired and spurred a lot of arguments (in Burmese) but only small number of students participated. I think they are a bit confused with the task, maybe need to brainstorm together the first one. They are busy preparing presentations.
	14	Teacher encourages participation from the whole group (all students).
	15	Yes, they've done for homework.
		Yes, they can, they follow the instructions, and also actively.

Question		3. Do the students already know anything about the topic of the lesson? How?
Checklist	1	Think so, maybe from their high school and some maybe from when they learn from here.
	2	Yes, from this lesson and from their high school.
	3	They should know something, at least from the module. The 'profit' part also reviews the economics lesson from ISS,
	4	I wonder if they remember.
	5	Some students already learned this topic in their early high school.
	7	This is review, but also they would've studied some basics of colonialism in high school history of Burma.

		Yes. A few students have already known about the topic. From high school, trainings, general reading, radio and newspapers, etc.
	8	Yes. A few students.
	9	??? somewhat, based on earlier lessons.
	10	They know some already because they could answer the teacher's guide questions.
	11	Whatever they would've heard from the air…
	13	Supposedly, as this is a review.
	14	They know something about the country but are not very well related to what you ask. They can't catch your idea, is only the reason.
	15	Yes, they are able to answer the teachers' questions quite well.

Question		4. Do the students show any interest in the topic? Do they ask any questions?
Checklist	1	They do, but sorry that they didn't come up with questions.
	2	As usual, they ask no questions, but they show their interest by deeply listening to what you say. They also hardly ask questions with regular teacher. Students don't have a skill to ask questions. Maybe should practice questions as skill in the module?
	3	I think they really like the presentation with pictures.
	4	Yes. They didn't ask any questions, even though they answer teacher's questions.
	5	Not too actively, they can't really ask questions.
	6	No, but if the teacher gives some clues or hints, it seems they like to ask.
	7	At first, the students responded cautiously and unconfidently. As time passed, they became interested in the lesson. I think they didn't ask questions, it might be because of time constraint.
	8	Yes. Yes, they asked questions.
	9	Somewhat, at least they participate.
	10	At the beginning they didn't show that much interest in their lesson. However, they gradually gave more and more of their interest to the lesson along with the drawing session.
	12	? They ask each other questions based on their presentations. (Ask MT what q-s they ask each other) They ask a lot of questions, there's a lot of arguing in Burmese, but it's the same 4-5 students speaking up, and all only boys. Everyone else looks really bored. G3 has slightly better participation from group members, also 1 girl spoke up.
	13	Yes, they do. No question, but their expression trying to answer your question.
	14	They ask some questions but I don't know what. Different situations: exploration and trade vs. conquest and settlement, development impact of colonialism. How did nationalism appear, colonial rule
	15	Yes, they ask some questions too.

Question		5. Can the students relate this topic to their own lives or to other subjects they are studying? How?
Checklist	1	Yes, but they can't relate the topic with their lesson a lot because they need to think or know thing a lot about that events.
	2	Same as 3B (Yes, but they can't relate the topic with their lesson a lot because they need to think or know thing a lot about that events.)
	3	Not sure. Yes, a bit when talking about market – too many sellers will result in fighting.
	5	How could we make the students see the relevance of what they study to their lives?
	7	No idea. I wonder if they got the idea when the teacher said a gov't that kills a lot of people must be a dictatorship.
	8	Yes. They can learn why the ethnic conflict in Burma take hold, resulting in civil war, their hopes fulfilled by their past colonizers.
	10	I would say 50-50. Many terms and situations in the text cannot be related to their own lives easily. Nevertheless, they are very useful to them, for they can always refer them to their future lessons.
	12	They should be able to if brought to their attention. This should be included in the task.
		Free writing (p.38), elicited a lot of student ideas about nationalism which are all based on their own situation (being proud of their own people, army, culture, etc.) This exercise lead them to naturally relate the topic in the module to their own life.
	13	SD is not sure, but I think they definitely can, based on their questions in free writing activity…They bring up issues that are relevant in their own community.
	15	Yes, they can. Whenever they reflect, they refer to their own conditions.

Question		6. What skills did the students practice in this lesson?
Checklist	2	Some thinking about colonial rule, cause – effect (why), adv.-disadv.
	3	Writing, imagination, guessing, review, reasoning, reading for specific information.
	5	They have learned the USSR and USA helped the Third World or their allied countries with

		purposes. They have learned what might be USA and USSR's foreign policies towards those countries.
	7	They have to some extent related their brainstormed list of the superpowers' policies to their real foreign relations towards other countries.
	8	Recording, analyzing, comprehension
	9	Reading comprehension, map work, brainstorm
	10	Identifying information and reading skills.
	12	Presentation skills, discussion, planning, reading, imagination, group work, free writing, mind-mapping (this is a good, easy, specific skill that students are becoming very aware of, they try to use it for organizing information whenever they can, but not in the most efficient way ☺
	13	Look for answers and reasons, and put them in the correct places, even though if they don't catch up your ideas at all.
	15	Comprehension, reasoning, and group work

- **Teachers and their background knowledge in the subject**

From lessons, plans and scripts 2 (LPLS 2)

p.2   Asked teacher to compare modules but she said "I already forgot'…
        Teacher asked to share teaching equally in Jan-Feb… (LLO)

p.3   According to Karen history, Pyu could be Paw Karen. We discussed about Pyu

From lessons, plans and scripts 3 (LPLS 3)

p.1   Talk to TT about politics, his health, KNU, ceasefire, etc.

p.3   p.36 SD suggested changing 'economic' to 'social' vs. political in the chart to give students a chance to focus more on the details of the text they've just read.

p.3   I feel like social and political are hard to separate, but it is still useful for the students to think about it anyway.

p.6   TT's feedback: KNU aim: self-determination, federalism, equality

- **Assessment and language of assessment**

From lessons, plans and scripts 2 (LPLS 2)

p.1   Test should be harmoniously designed, for different styles of learners

p.2   The problem is that she uses the copied out reports as part of ass.

p.3   Students are preparing their reading reports. Volunteer presentations.

p.4   For LLO's test:

1.   SEA – map outline, no names
Asia – with name
31 copies – L3
1 map – Asian countries marked, but not SEA (# them)

2.   Timeline with some events
BCE/CE in a passage. Students read and fill in the dates into the timeline.
Review key words, map, SEA, China, India

From lessons, plans and scripts 3 (LPLS 3)

p.4   Today will be quiz for 3B [The quiz was a very well-structured exercise, participatory and tailored to the students' level, involving pictures and discussion. I think students enjoyed it.]

p.5   [should use this style of questions for the easier end of test questions]

p.11   SD said my test exercises were too easy, he will use his own.

p.12   SD wants native language but I suggested only E. He said he wanted my decision, but I said, I only have suggestion.

p.12   She will use my exercises for pretest (review), and her own ones for test.

p.13   Prepared a mix-and-match set of test exercises for Chapters I and II of SEA. This is based on the results of the October workshop. Teachers can choose any exercises from the set and use them for quizzes, final tests,

review, homework, etc. Mie Tha said he was going to finish teaching up to Chapter IV, so I prepared extra exercises for these chapters as well.

▪ Language of instruction

From lessons, plans and scripts 2 and 3 (LPLS 2; LPLS 3)

p.2   [I can't really do a checklist on SD's lesson, as it's all in Karen.]
p.3   3B checklist: Eventually they did, when given time but its' hard for them to discuss in English (SEP)
p.3   Anyway, this has to do with confidence and language also foreigner vs. Karen. Even if they understand, they still wait before answer.
p.6   Language: for some students OK, but not for some (difficult). KPT
p.6   Some vocabulary difficulties
       Teacher needs to give precise Burmese translation for key words.
p.7   Y1 social studies (MT) p.30 SEA Lesson in English.
p.7   Lesson 100% in English
p.8   It comes out pretty clear now from various comments from teachers that the most stress for students is the new teaching style, where they are requested to be much more active. In addition to language difficulties and new content.
p.8   Alternatively, we can start a process of translating the modules into a selection of languages, expanding the content to suit teachers' requests (as they keep repeating that they'd like much more information on each topic). This is up to CP though.
p.9   Student presentations. Most presentations are in Burmese.
p.11   7/2 SEP SD – should have module in all languages
       He said this to Dave, but to me he said he is still thinking, he needs to discuss w/headmistress. She will give him more ideas.
       In first language not possible, everyone has different language.
       Also, translation problems, need experienced translators.
       But if we use our language, we can save a lot of time.
       But too many languages to translate into.
p.12   18/2 3B LLO back. Last review lesson, just talk in Burmese
p.13   Some students complain: "even we read we didn't understand" There's no point listening to them. Maybe we should include more text even if difficult.
p.13   In Burmese they won't enjoy. They want to try learning E.

From meetings, reflections and interviews 3 (MRI 3)

p.2   Interview with Tm Baby: Social studies modules – your opinion "I didn't read the modules" I didn't hear anybody complain, but we discussed the language issue with SD. In Burmese, would be more difficult than in English for Karen students. St-s never mentioned that modules are difficult for them, but new

▪ Teaching aims and outcomes

From lessons, plans and scripts 3 (LPLS 3)

p.13   2/27
       In evaluation period I did not discuss objectives with the main participants as much as in July-September, since we have already discussed them. However, I did discuss them in interviews with some principles and other teachers and participants.

From meetings, reflections and interviews 3 (MRI 3)

p.1   1. Objectives. CP – develop curriculum, resources for PX along the border, with BPEO. They want to standardize PX curriculum
p.2   II. Interview with Baby, February 7
       Interview with Tm Baby
       1.   What do you know about CP?
       CP prepares a suitable syllabus for the needs of the subjects here, especially GE, R, W, and social studies. I know all of them. Also they do trainings.

2. Objectives

To draw curriculum suitable for the community, including people, language (the language that is the most suitable – English). Because students understand/speak different languages, but they will all try in English, (half Burmese, half Karen, also other, but English is equal for everybody). After using the curriculum, student can work in the community and use their subject skills.

p.3   III. 17/2 Interview with Per Kaw

1. To develop curriculum, specific for BPEO schools, relevant to situation.

Standardize across BPEO. Other Post X – according to their objectives, but there are few academic programs.

From Lesson Checklists (LCQT)

Question		7. What is the outcome of this lesson?
Checklist	**1**	They learn not only what happened, in their skills they learn summarize, comparison, etc.
	2	They'll think "That's why…" relate to their own life: missionaries and Karen people. Where do many things in their culture come from. Missionaries adapted Karen language and writing system.
	3	Same as 3B. (They learn not only what happened, in their skills they learn summarize, comparison, etc.)
	5	Review processes of colonialism, stages of colonialism.
	7	Which countries in SEA have been colonized by which Western or Asian powers.
		No, only by providing more content and more information (in depth). More information means facts and opinions in the form of articles or writing extracts for further reading, for the purpose of research.
	8	They have learned the effects of colonialism. They have been able to distinguish between what had been before and what was after colonialism in their country.
	9	Clarify the impact of colonial rule on countries.
	10	Through drawing, the students show their understanding of the lesson. They also compare and contrast 'exploration and trade' with 'conquest and settlement.'
	13	The students can understand why Portugal want to leave, why Indonesia want to rule and don't want to give ET freedom and why the ET struggle for their freedom.
	15	Advantages and disadvantages of colonial economic mentality.

- **Evaluation process, collaboration, planning and further evaluations**

   From lesson plans and scripts 2 (LPLS 2)

p.2   p.7 [I would have never imagined that this would cause any difficulties, on the contrary, I'd thought that this is almost too easy!]

p.2   Asked teacher to compare modules but she said "I already forgot'…

Teacher asked to share teaching equally in Jan-Feb…

p.3   'We, Karen people, think we reached Burma first, so when they read about Mon, they get upset. But they need to open eyes, despite what we are taught by elders.

p.4   Compare modules 1 and 2:

Mod 1 – basic topics

Mod 2 – focus on more specific history, religion, countries, culture. Realize the influence of China and India on SEA cultures, people, introduce map skills – new

p.4   SD: "After the workshop I started teaching and brought the students' attention to the skills markers in the module, so they know what the point is."…

   From lesson plans and scripts 3 (LPLS 3)

p.1   What LLO said disagreed with what students said about where they are up to in the module. Surprisingly, st-s thought they were on p.25, while LLO thought they were further up. [this is surprising, because in my experience these disagreements usually mean that the teacher wants me to teach something she's already taught again, either to prevent me from doing damage (confusing the students) or to see how I'll teach the same material, or just to give the students a chance to review, so usually, the teacher says they haven't studied what the students claim they've already done.]

p.1   LLO is expressing less and less enthusiasm about teaching and her job in general. She is scheming to get me to do as much teaching as possible and avoids coming to work at the least excuse.

p.2	She also pays no attention when I am teaching, just does her paperwork. When I asked her if she thinks the students understood anything of what I taught, she said "I have no idea"
	I just try to be patient with her.
p.2	When I teach, I need to try and stick to the lessons in module, otherwise I can't evaluate.
p.2	Maybe should make a questionnaire for students… Consult with SD. Write in K, B, E.
p.3	Teacher thinks students will participate better with their own people. However, I didn't hear them talking much in his lessons. And besides, what's this about always being so excited about foreigners coming to teach and always harassing me so I would teach everyone's classes… or am I just being bitchy?
p.3	6. Enough info, if we give too much, they'll be discouraged, they won't think on their own. [refer this to MT's comment, that we should remind the students that this is only a very brief introduction, that there's much more to know about these topics.]
p.6	[in this second evaluation period teachers seem less motivated to have daily discussion sessions about their teaching, I think it seems a bit repetitive to them. They don't feel there's much new they can say. I also feel a bit silly asking people the same questions again and again. I still try to collect module feedback, but mostly drop the touchy feely stuff. The checklists seem like a good idea at this point, but as it came out later, LLO was not finding them very useful either. I think she just went off the whole evaluation thing a bit.]
p.7	Ask SH if he thinks the students can do group work and other activities better now than in the first term. How can he describe students' progress throughout the school year? What has been achieved? What hasn't? Why?
	[plan this discussion for workshop]
p.8	It comes out pretty clear now from various comments from teachers that the most stress for students is the new teaching style, where they are requested to be much more active. In addition to language difficulties and new content. So, to cope with these difficulties, activities have to be structured with clear instructions and new types of activities have to be introduced bit by bit, slowly.
p.8	SH: "Globalization is a very difficult topic." He wants me to present the text in TG to the students. I refused, as it would be me standing and lecturing the students on stuff they would not understand at all and SH translating it. Intensely frustrating. I'd feel like I was used as a TV.
	Then I felt bad as SH said "we would cooperate" and I shouldn't refuse that .But this is not really cooperation.
	Then I pointed out to him that the text in TG is not really for presentation to st-s!
	This module is a real challenge to SH.
p.10	[This is when I started using the 'question activity'. This worked much better than just
p.11	Workshop: look at module, step by step, use suggestions from previous workshop
p.11	She didn't want to do checklist any more, felt that it was the same thing over and over again. Gave feedback sheet to 3B
p.11	LLO- summer workshop – only talk about L3 modules, is she can…
p.12	LLO is not going to class, she refused even to come and observe my teaching, just stayed in the office.
p.12	LLO finds the checklists not very useful. She finds it stressful to have to use it each lesson –repetitive, nothing new to say. But sometimes, she doesn't mind. She will make notes whenever something occurs to her.
p.12	Students sometimes get confused, as our ideas are different.
p.13	When I taught Ch1, I was satisfied, but if we ask now, they don't know. I will know how to change for next year. I will have to plan. Module is not enough we need more material (information).
p.13	Everything we do, doesn't go smoothly, but if we keep trying and practicing, it will go more smoothly.
p.13	We have some info to improve but we never know how it will go with new students.
	How can we get more info?
	I can only know when we actually do.
	To get a good module, we have to work together.
	If I participate in evaluation next year … This year we meet very often, I don't have comments every day, only sometimes. Better once a week, or a few times a month. But not less.

From meetings, reflections and interviews (MRI 3)

p.2   To improve: should ask the students' opinion, also what is suitable for the community, before we make more modules. Give the students a questionnaire.

Who should benefit: the teachers and students, the CP, CP will know how to improve, when the curriculum is improved, teachers and students will benefit, the students will have better skills and the community will benefit.

"I know you were talking about social studies but not in detail"

p.3   SD said he enjoyed teaching together. She also joked in the morning: "I think he is waiting for you…"

Possibility of his wife teaching next year…

B. does not remember any prior info about evaluation.

Suggestions: ask the students' opinion

Share results with head and subject teachers, with students (make a summary).

p.3   Continue evaluation of the other modules already produced. Should have a 'regional crisis and conflict' module. What about refugees module?

1.   Who is going to evaluate maths and science? What about other subject

evaluations?

We need to know the timing, when the modules are due to come out, and if there are any delays.

It is difficult to organize all the teachers to come together for enough time to prepare a module… how can we do?

- **Classroom practice and teaching style**

  From lesson plans and scripts 2 (LPLS 2)

p.2   Either way, teacher will always add extra activities depending on situation

Students prepare reports on variety of topics but all copied from book

Discussed with LLO relative value of students copying text out of books. She didn't seem to see anything the least wrong with it!

I suggested summarizing instead, she said summarizing is a writing task, not appropriate for social studies lesson.

Conversation about Australia and Aus education…

But once they've copied the info, there's a range of activities she organized to discuss the info, so that not so bad.

The problem is that she uses the copied out reports as part of ass.

Teacher completely oblivious of the idea of plagiarism… 'But how can we use books then?'

[Yet, I haven't actually seen any clear confirmation that student use their copied material in any critical or communicative way, so it might actually not be happening, for all I know, and just LLO humoring me.

True, she said in the lesson that they were 'teaching' each other in groups about what they have read, but I don't know what they were actually talking about in Burmese/Karen. Besides, judging from what they wrote, as it had chunks of sentences missing and dropped off in mid-air, how could they possibly make head or tail of it???]

p.3   Teacher brought my attention to how the students' reports were 'made to look pretty' to stress that the students are taking pride in their work which is definitely a good sign of motivation. But still, the problem is this practice reinforces really bad learning strategies.

p.4   SD: "After the workshop I started teaching and brought the students' attention to the skills markers in the module, so they know what the point is."…

From lesson plans and scripts 3 (LPLS 3)

p.1   LLO gave students homework to copy from encyclopedia again and gave them marks for it!

What can I do? Probably nothing. She is leaving end of year anyway.

Should discuss whether she's given notice!

p.1   She also continues with her practice of assigning 'handwriting improving' homework from severely dated encyclopedias. I don't really feel like pushing her, she is leaving, anyway.

p.2   Pretty intense detailed lesson, well-structured, (as much as I can tell without understanding), good use of b-board, but at least 80% teacher-talk.

p.3   This term I go a bit faster, I didn't explain every sentence. I told them, now we have to move faster, you need to be more independent. But at first with new teaching style, they didn't work very well.

p.7   Lesson in English.

Teachers encourage students to use their own words, rather than reading from the text.

Lesson is well-structured.
Teacher discusses in detail, students seem to understand and answer the questions.
Good classroom management skills, t-r encourages the students to ask questions.
End of lesson review with closed notes

p.9   Teacher provides a lot of discussion, explanation on the topic of the lesson in the module.

p.12   15/2 FSP
LLO is not going to class, she refused even to come and observe my teaching, just stayed in the office. She is also busy marking students' reports (L2) from field trip. I had a look at them – complete crap, same stuff repeated again and again, about being loyal to their country. This must be notes from what they were lectured on. Students who didn't go on field trips had to write something about Karen history. Some mostly irrelevant crap about Mongolia 2000 BC with exact dates and years, all presented as accurate historical information.

From meetings, reflections and interviews (MRI 3)

p.1   Talk with MT:
Students don't show any indolence, also it is quite challenging, students are excited about quiz, they want to know more, ask more questions, key words are useful.

p.1   Focus on specific areas
Group work, reflection, inference, movies, general knowledge, motivation.

p.1   Should try to not give an impression to the students that the module is all there is to know.

- **Background issues and context**

From lesson plans and scripts 2 (LPLS 2)

p.3   'We, Karen people, think we reached Burma first, so when they read about Mon, they get upset. But they need to open eyes, despite what we are taught by elders.
LPLS 3

p.1   PK at KUSG meeting, EKN had an accident after drinking with TT.
New teacher still waiting for camp pass, L1 has no teacher for social studies in the meantime.
LLO didn't show up to teach – Clammay said she had to go for reg. as head of household, but nobody else in the office new or any substitute was arranged – students didn't know either, no work for students left.

p.1   They are definitely much higher than 3Bs! The class is also very small, I wonder if it's absentees or just few students.

p.2   January 14
Today was a complete waste! The 'running training' got cancelled yesterday, so was today instead. No school. Came back, leaving LLO a note about my proposed teaching plan, will continue next week.

p.6   Taught a lesson at KnLMC
Internships, employment, and Burma economic situation…

p.8   Politics
KnPP base was attacked with SPDC shells and KnPLF troops. When KnPLF troops retreated, they were shot by SPDC, some troops still remain stranded between KnPP and SPDC (this is unchecked info from MT though)

p.8   1/2
Cheri Lyn and SH have gone to meet with Shna-Jenny-Augustino-Kho Oo Reh about plans to cooperate between BPEO-KPT-KnED
MT didn't go, but neither hi nor J are at school. I think MT is still in open conflict with Augustino.
This is 2nd period – library hour. No teacher in view, students are playing table tennis and sunbathing.

p.11   They had many disturbances while I was away for 2 weeks.

- **Curriculum Project and the community of teachers - collaboration**
  From lesson plans and scripts 3 (LPLS 3)

p.8   Met with Augustino and Khoo Oo Reh about H of B.
From meetings, reflections and interviews (MRI 3)

p.1   3. Have done research, needs assessment in programs, then get people and write curriculum, in the meantime keep in touch with teachers, head teachers, providing needs for the teachers.

3. p.2 CP process
Come to camp, ask their needs, then all programs meet and discuss, share ideas and activities. When everything is ready, make 'trial module' then collect feedback. Frequent workshops and trainings again.
4. Suggestions: have a workshop specifically on activities…
CP has done many things

p.3   Community based, interviewed everybody, consulting local teachers themselves. Trying to get feedback from teachers. Teachers are quite free to organize activities themselves (i.e.science). I am not sure if there's a link between original plan and now. Of course teachers are involved throughout the process.

2. When it started, we gave guidelines, I was consulted and gave guidelines.
After each module, we are asked to give feedback. Now my involvement is mostly for my subject. Also H of B module involvement. Limited involvement

3. Should've started subject specific workshops earlier. … Either teachers don't
give feedback or it doesn't get acted on… I am not sure. We expected that we'd have entirely separate modules, not attached to any coursebook, like L in U. Teachers are confused with time planning between L in U and module. The modules are relevant to our situation and they support the coursebook, but difficult to adjust the time. Writing modules are good, but need to focus more on writing sentences. Social studies – previously we didn't have anything, but now they just follow the module, going well.

7. I know very little. I didn't even read the newsletter. But I know its going on.
8. Re-write the module revising. Suggestions: involve Tham Hin.
2. Social studies teachers. TH teachers should also be involved.
3. PK would like to get more feedback from teachers. In the future maybe we should have curriculum feedback time in the staff meetings. But at the moment there's no time.
4. Have new ISS ready for next school year. Final draft.

APPENDIX 4
Introduction to Social Studies Feedback

The following suggestions have been made by the teachers who have participated in the evaluation.

Pilot evaluation results (June – September, 2004)	Evaluation workshop results (October, 2004)	
	Ac-cept	**Comment**
General suggestions throughout the module		
Things to add:		
1. A contents page in the beginning of the module	*yes*	
2. More diagrams to demonstrate activities (like activity on p.3)	*yes*	*As in SEA module*
3. Include a teaching point for the teacher and student for each lesson (or section)	*yes*	
4. *Extra question material and text for tests*	*yes*	
5. More examples of the concepts introduced in the modules	*yes*	
6. More exercises to practice the concepts and the new information	*yes*	
7. There is often not enough time in class to practice all the ideas introduced in the module, it would be a good idea to have independent work assignments for students to practice.	*yes*	*Not very clear, maybe in some cases...*
8. More case studies	*?*	
9. More homework assignments		*More exercises, so teachers can select to assign as h/w*
10. Introduce research skills: students find information in outside sources and then write reports in their own words. *[Does this mean including a lot of extra resources in the s.pack? How will the students be able to read difficult texts? We can't rely on library materials. What's the most practical solution here?]*	*yes*	*Include more s.materials for the teacher. The teacher can use as students research material or for own background information*
11. There are not enough exercises and pictures in the module for focusing on skills: Need more skill-focused exercises: imagination/role-play, problem solving	*yes*	
12. Use same topics, but add extra information		
13. Need information on current situation, varied situation vs. traditional situation	*yes*	*Clarify*
14. Short projects that can be done within one lesson or half a lesson		*As group work, e.g. map work*
15. Add more text throughout	*X*	
16. More 'quick' (?) questions to help students think of their own examples	*X*	*In TG and for quiz/test questions*
Things to change:		
17. Make all the graphics clear	*yes*	*For some topics*
18. Some teachers are concerned that too many examples will make students confused. *[Does this mean do not include examples???]* All examples should be simple and clear *[identify the ones that are not clear]*	*X*	
19. Link the concepts and examples in the module more to	*yes*	*OK as is*

the situation in Burma *[LLO said Karen, how should we generalize this for everyone – our materials are used by various ethnic groups? Identify the examples that should be made more Burma-relevant]* **Comments and questions** **20.** *Students want to focus on English* [What are the implications for the module from this? Language of the module, assignments, group work, test, etc.] **21.** Receptive activities are easy, productive – difficult *[Should we add more productive activities? Make them easier?]* **22.** Focus of the module should be to raise awareness about their environment *[Should this go in the objectives or teaching aims?]* **23.** Should we include a lesson on effective group work strategies in the module?	*yes* *yes* - *X* - *yes*	*Include more guidelines for productive activities both for teacher and student* *In TG*
Introduction **Things to add** *p.1* Include more areas of knowledge for this exercise, e.g. Environment, Sociology, etc. *[But these are not part of this module, is that a problem?]*	yes	
Development **Things to change** *p.6* Update the Development Indicators chart, possibly select more relevant indicators **Comments and questions** *p.2* It is difficult for the students to imagine their grandparents' life, but this is a good exercise, as it makes them think. *[Should this exercise be kept?]*	*yes* yes	*p.3 provide world map in s-pack, simplify 'new seeds' text in s-pack* *p.5 use color or pattern* *Include foreign dept, update all figures* *p.7 homework ex. Needs more instructions for t-r and s-t* *OK, but include some examples, stress that they just have to think in general terms, not "how many buffaloes did your grandfather have"*

History			
Things to change			
p.12	Group work: these examples cover everything that students can think of – consider moving most of the examples to the TG	*yes*	p.9 more history text, the questions are too early
p.10	"The job of historian" activity was confusing – change *[How could we make it clearer?]*	*?*	add a supplementary text to clarify
			p.13 add more exercises
Comments and questions			
p.12	Is it a good idea to have occasional language exercises?	*X*	*Include more "controversial" examples, but not too controversial. Karen don't have a tradition of records, that's a weak point*
p.12	Originally students thought that all historians are right, so now they will be aware! *[What else can we do here to make them more aware?]*		*p.14 difficult but interesting*
Geography			
Things to add			
p.19	Introduce climate types [LLO said they already studied climate types in high school, but SH said it is still useful to review – they haven't studied in high school very wel	*yes*	*Brief review would be good*
p.21	Introduce maps background, globes (concepts: image of the Earth), types of maps: Political, physical, topo, etc.; use of maps	*?*	
p.22	More exercises to practice calculating scales	*yes*	
p.25	Add mind-map activity for skills practice	*yes*	*Or use a book like "Map Attack", use map with scale*
Things to change			
p.17	Change 'physical environment' to 'built environment'	*yes*	*Check out the USGS website on scales, bigger football field, also more exercises relevant to students' life to practice scales*
p. 19	'interact' is a very difficult abstract concept, needs examples	*yes*	
p.22	Scale explanations confusing – rewrite, use a clear picture to demonstrate	*yes*	*Explain as 'change each other', use local situations as examples*
p.24	Organize maps in order of increasing scope: from small to large, from local to world	*yes*	
p.25	Discussion activity is not very challenging.		*Include exercise where students order maps*
Comments and questions			
p.19	Paragraph 1: this is not always true, as there are development reasons as well as geographical!		*Include a real life example for each step. This is OK, as an easy exercise, since it was decided that more easy exercises are needed*
p.19-24 Climate and maps – students have studied this in high school, but it is still useful to teach again			
Economics			
Things to add			
p. 26	Introduce a game with two teams to act out goods and services (like 'vocabulary on board' game)	*yes*	*Include 'supply and demand' game*
p.29	Exercise: organize in categories all the services that you can buy with money?	*X*	
p.26	Include more specific and simple examples in the module and exercises where students have to distinguish between goods and services		*But more exercises for st-s*
p.26-30 More information on the topic for teacher is needed	*X*	*Only in TG*

p.26-30 Connect Geography section with the Environment module	*yes*	
Things to change		
p.28 Barter- repetitive	*X*	
Comments and questions		
p.26 Might use this group work activity to introduce effective group work strategies	*yes*	*SD: 'The more we introduce, the better'*
p.27 Teachers should make sure that value and price are the same in the context	*yes*	*Make distinction clear, maybe not introduce value?*
p.27 Teacher should be prepared for students' questions as; - low supply & low demand-----ordinary price? High supply and high demand-----ordinary price? *[Is there anything we should include in the TG to prepare the teacher?]*	*yes*	*Need enough examples for each*
p. 28 When discussing why barter systems today are becoming uncommon, it took them more time than in other steps or activities of equal length. *[When I taught this lesson in FSP, the students were able to contribute quite a lot to the discussion of differences between barter and money trade. We should ask the teacher at SEP how his lesson on this topic went]*	*yes*	
p.28 Drawing activities were quite interesting for the students (for barter system) *[Do you feel their drawings actually show understanding of the concept, or did they just 'copy' the drawings in the module?]*	*yes*	
p.28 Students found difficulty with determining how many times they have used barter. Part of the reason might be they hadn't barter. *[have you tried giving them examples, such as exchanging some cooking oil for some salt with your neighbors or such?]*	*yes*	
p.28 Students enjoyed drawing diagrams for a teacher depicting the services and good he/she produces and those he/she consumes or uses. *[probably because this is a very concrete task]*	*yes*	
p. 30 Students could not do well the Advantages and disadvantages of using BARTER and MONEY activity. *[I see that the barter topic did not go down very well here, maybe at the workshop we could discuss with Tm Lwin Lwin Oo about this – how did she teach this topic, maybe she would have some helpful suggestions.]*	yes	*p.31 more text or examples to explain the concept*

Politics			
Things to add			
p.33	Include pictures of leaders	*yes*	
p.33	Discussion: provide answers for teachers	*yes*	*Include some guides for st-s*
p.33	Give case studies of different political theories and more examples	*yes*	*Very brief intro and case studies in s-pack*
p.35	Need more activities here	*yes*	
p.35	Include a text about rules and laws. Rules can change more easily than laws, also 'formal – laws, informal – rules', formal vs. informal, with examples in TG	*yes*	*A brief text, just to explain, more examples. [SH wants study guides here, but they come in SEA]*
Things to change			
p.32	Discussion: use some other exercise style, as students are already familiar with this one – boring *[But isn't this a good idea to recycle activity types, so that students get familiar with instructions and there's no need to re- teach it, also students become more active and comfortable with familiar activities]*	*yes*	*Yes, but this is not the key, good to have more graphics, and charts, etc. Include example to get st-s and t-r started on the activity* *p.35 more text to explain rules and laws, include a homework task or a group work activity*
p.36	The difference between influence and authority is not clear	*yes*	
Comments and questions			
p.32	When I got the students to do a brainstorming for mind-map of SOCIETY, I led to a mind-map of a school before I facilitated for society. But still some of them could not put ideas in proper places. TG recommends not to correct students' ideas, but put to the mind-map. Therefore, when making up sentences from the idea from the mind-map, they were confused with how to order them properly or how to make an explanation for the ideas by connecting them. *[Yes, I see the difficulty here. So how did you solve this problem? How could we make this more usable for next time? Should we suggest to the teacher to correct if the students' answers don't make sense?]*		*Try in Burmese* *Introduce examples and sentences, step by step* *Include mind-map step by step introduction, level by level*
p.34	It is awkward and uncomfortable for some students, I think, to respond to who governs their society?, how do they govern it? And how do the leaders get their authority? I think it is commonplace on our borderline. *[Sure, I can see this problem easily as well! How should we approach the issue of teaching about this? Or should we not touch it at all?]*		*Give more info in text, so students have more examples to think of their own experiences* Depends on the community situation and students' background *p.38 too many topics in one, better to separate*
TG			
Things to add			
p.12	Include more ideas to support the activity	*yes*	*G-work: include clear objectives for teacher and more instructions*
p.21	Include a map with all the details – distances	*yes*	
p.28	Exercise: discuss why certain transaction involved money while others used barter.	*yes*	*Make sure students are familiar with the area*
p.24	Review features to be included in the students map, make atlases available	*yes*	
p.30	Group work: make more diagrams for other professions/trades	*yes*	*Police, artist, monk/pastor, NGO worker*
p.33	Include pictures and short stories	*yes*	

p.33	Exercise: include pictures of different members of society/professions, police, monk, leaders, farmer, medic, teacher, student, Students divide them into leaders and not leaders. What are responsibilities of leaders? Citizens? Match faces with responsibilities.	*yes*	
Things to change			
p.25	Discussion: put the diagram from s-book in TG with example answers, make into group work, complete a sample mind map	yes	
Comments and questions			*Only difficult answers should be included in the TG (???), SD: 'As a new teacher, TG is already very helpful to me'*
p.21	Exercise: should this info be included in st-s' book? At first, students find this exercise difficult, but the examples in the TG help!	yes	*Chubby: 'enough'*
p.29	If students offer examples of specific goods, encourage them to organize them in categories		*Include comprehension answers in TG; SH: Use bulleted summaries of large texts from SB*

Introduction to Southeast Asia Module Feedback

The following is a list of suggestions made by the teachers who have participated in the evaluation workshop in May, 2005.

Pilot evaluation results (December, 2004 – February, 2005)	Evaluation workshop results (May, 2005)	
	Accept	**Comment**
General suggestions throughout the module		
Things to add:		
• More free-writing activities	*yes*	
• Maps	*yes*	SEA, Asia, SEA sea, Pacific, SEA Political, Salween and Mekong basins, trade routes: past and modern
• More information and additional readings in supplementary pack (SH)	*yes*	
• More exercises that help the students relate past events to the present	*yes*	How civilization developed and got to where we are today
		More challenging comprehension questions;
		Optional sections on ancient history, possibly for independent study…
		Language family tree, more background generally on all topics in spack
		Provide sup. Books for library (One World)
Things to change:	*X*	A section on ASEAN and some other regional issues
• 'Erudite's Corner' is confusing	*yes*	
• Improve map quality throughout		
Comments and questions		
• Mie Tha commented that most instructions for activities should only appear in the TG, but then took it back, as he realized, it is useful for the students to see instructions and be able to learn more independently.	*X*	
• Teacher will always add extra activities depending on situation (LLO)		*General questions raised at workshop: how much, if any ancient history is needed/useful?*
• Skills boxes are useful		*How much content to add until the module becomes too big? (limit 100 pages)*
• Outlines in beginning of chapter are also useful		*What modern history to add?*
• SEA has more activities, etc. than ISS, better than the 1st one, more interesting for students – they like discussion		
• SEA – much better than ISS – more activities, more point of views on topics included. (SH)		
• Language: for some students OK, but not for some (difficult). (SH)		
• Activities: I have to be patient, give more time, most activities they can do by themselves but students have different levels so need to spend time		

explaining. (SH) • Use famous personalities, pictures on module covers (SD) • Should have module in all languages (SD) • Giving too much information will discourage the students' thinking (SD) • What would be a usable convenient way to structure the supplementary pack [ask people if they actually ever use it also discuss how it could be used for student research, discuss possibility of using student questions from lessons to select materials for s packs] • Module is easy to use (MT) • Activities are enjoyable, we can also add more if we want. (MT) • "I am impressed with separation of activities into the different types." (MT) • Many terms and situations in the text cannot be related to their own lives easily. (MT)	*yes*	See notes for language of instruction session See supplementary pack session notes

Chapter I			
Things to add			
p.8 Include more info about people from India, Mesopotamia, and Egypt (LLO)		yes	And China…, important for students' understanding of the world – include Egypt, Mesopotamia (relate to Iraq) in s.pack
p.12 'New jobs emerge' – make more clear examples. What happened before – what after. Explain more clear about emergence of ruling class. Teacher added about caste – should add. Students need to know about caste. (LLO)		yes	*More clear explanations and examples, new jobs and other stuff Caste system: the teachers will find difficult to explain about class. Include more examples. Religious beliefs – class results from. Indian philosophy of society as a human body – castes, vs. a western approach to society – a mechanism (therefore parts can be interchanged and taken out). Caste and class system – Hinduism ideology – case study of how it affects life today. How did it affect SEA? Relate class system to growing nationalism 'why do we have different classes?*
p.15 Make an activity where students have to make maps.		yes	
p.15 Add information about Khmer empire.		yes	
p.18 Add more information on each group, i.e. where did people come from and how, etc. (LLO)		yes	*Also impact of trade in SEA*
p.20 More information on China (LLO)		yes	
p.21 Add pictures of different face types: Aryan, Dravidian, etc. (LLO)		X	And India, are the students interested in ancient history?
			Some are, some have trouble relating – difficult vocabulary
p.22 Need more info on China, students asked about languages in China, include more background (LLO)		yes	*Ancestry of people in the region, Add more info in s. pack*
p.24 Add more arrows for each category to suggest to students that there's a lot of words for each one.		yes	*China – add map, write down pronunciation for Chinese and Indian names/words. Chinese religion (Mahayana Buddhism, Tao, Confucianism), languages China – Confucianism, rice cultivation, hierarchy (check Singapore books) Minority peoples*
General suggestions throughout the module			
Things to change			
p.5 Make distance between lines on the map bigger, to leave room to write in the answer. Also consider making the map bigger.		yes	
p.7 Use bigger font for case study (SH)		yes	*Use simple font*
p. 8 Use more clear map (SH)		yes	
p.14 Need clear map, show scale		yes	
p.15 Move Erudite's Corner on Buddhist calendar to ISS module (chapter on counting time). Move Erudite's Corner on Mehrgarh to the chapter on farming and land. Improve map quality.		yes	
p.18 Organize Vietnamese colonial history information with bullet points. (LLO)		yes	

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p.22 Typo: change Yangshao to Longshan	yes	
Comments and questions *p.7* Students had difficulties with the case studies. Before teaching t-r gave students some background info to read on US and Russia, set the context, then read the text and draw pictures (LLO). Was this difficult for other students/teachers? (*Maybe include more about Russia (in spack), students are interested as a former superpower*)		*Just brainstorm, st-s already know some*
p.22 LLO found it confusing. Need to clarify		*If vocabulary is difficult, read again and discuss*

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Chapter II			
Things to add			
p.28	Include more information, so they can connect with what they've learned before about SEA, include info about what grows there and why (spices, coconut, etc.) info about soil, maybe in the activity (LLO).	yes	*Relate to map, depends on l-ge*
p.28	More information about Melaka (SD): who controlled it, how and when; include a map and standardize the spelling. This should make it more clear why it is relevant to study Melaka in the beginning of the Colonialism section. This is repeated by a number of teachers a few times.	yes	
p.28	or so… introduce some activity to discuss why colonizing other countries was appealing …	yes	
p.32	Paragraphs A and B are too brief, add more information (LLO). [this is repeated in lesson checklist by LLO. More details are needed about the settlement stage]	yes	*add more information more about Russian colonialism* *more details about others as well*
p.33	Make a more detailed and comprehensive outline of the colonizers and the colonized, include a map (SD)	yes	
p.33	Information about Brunei (MT)	X	
p.33	Include a map of Japan, as relevant to SEA	yes	*What is the impact of colonial rule? As b-storm before lesson*
p.34			
p.35	More pictures to depict differences in life before and after colonialism	yes	*More examples, maybe a case-study*
p.35	*More information on how industries in the colonies were discouraged and people made more poor, land taken away.*	yes	add 'social' in the chart, also add religion to text on 'social'.
p.36	Add more exercises to practice social and political impact and their interrelatedness. (SD)	yes	
p.37	Add more exercises to practice these skills (SD)	yes	
p.37	'making outlines' skills box.	yes	
p.37	Cause – effect chain exercise on the process of colonialism (like the one used in the test?)	yes	
p.38	Include more case studies of nationalist movements (Laos, Cambodia, Thailand) (LLO)	yes	Mention Burma and Japan
p.38	*They should be able to if brought to their attention (relating to their own lives) (researcher). This should be included in the task.*	yes	
p.39			
p.40	Include Vietnam's relationships with neighboring countries, also what happened in Vietnam before colonialism (LLO), refer to review in chapter 1 p.18	yes	
p.40	Explain the importance of the city named Ho Chi Minh, at least in the TG.	yes	Make examples and explain the questions better
p.42	Add more examples of newly independent nations, like East Timor. (SD)	yes	Simplify the text, text source, clarify, include China, Japan, Cambodia, SU, UN but brief
p.43	More background on East Timor	yes	
			only add if we can find easy examples of on-going independence struggle.
			History, colonialism, independence, relationships w/other countries,

p.44	Include some answers here, in case students (and/or teachers) have no idea.	yes	difficulties, Why ET got independence, but not West Timor, explain in module. Current situation. SH is against adding more on ET. Decision: put in s. pack
p.44	Put into a chart events and dates in different SEA countries. (LLO)	yes	Independence, revolutions, etc. up to 3 per country
Things to change			
p.30	In paragraph B 'cheaply', check other instances where the goods are said to be 'expensive'. Make consistent.	yes	
p.32	Make the questions more challenging, but in this style (SD)	yes	
p.32	Give option of writing instead of drawing, some students are not fond of drawing (SD)	yes	
p.36	Show the interdependence of social and political impact of colonialism more clearly. Show that they could not be completely separate, while that's what is the task of group work 2. Add more exercises to practice this.	yes	
p.36	Change 'economic' to 'social' in group work 2 chart	yes	
p.39	For class project, start with a brainstorm of what could be included in a party platform. Possibly use a mind-map to get the students started in groups. Maybe review KNU/KnPP, etc. party platforms first, this should make it easier for them to relate the material in the module to their own lives. [this is also repeated in the lesson checklist]		
p.42	Mix up the exercise answers!		
	Comments and questions	yes	*Add information*
p.27	Difficult to brainstorm as they don't know anything about the topic (SD)	yes	*Add info, include map*
p.28	LLO's students had trouble with the group work	yes	*Info on different countries that controlled Melaka, how they controlled the trade*
p.28	Students like about learning about Melaka. Ancient history is useful as intro as students learn, they become more interested. LLO		
p.30	Students had difficulty answering comp. Questions (SD).	yes	
p.32	Here, as in many other instances, should more information be added? Will the module grow out of proportion?	yes	Give options
p.32	Students really like this style of exercise (group work) (SD).	yes	
p.36	Should we add something about religion as part of social impact?	yes	
p.39	Ideally, there would be a video with a demonstration of a party platform presentation for the students to view first.		

APPENDIX 6
Social Studies Lesson Checklists 1-15

Checklist 1
Date:_ January 17, 2005   *School/Class*SEP/L3B_____
Social Studies Lesson Checklist   Teacher:_ Marina__
Lesson: p.36 'social impact of colonialism'   Observer: Saw Doe

    1. Can the students understand?
They seem to be confused (maybe the keywords)
    2. Can the students participate in activities? How well?
Yes, but it depends on how well they understand they topic, if they understand well, their participation in their activities will be well. In their own language they come up with more.
    3. Do the students already know anything about the topic of the lesson? How?
Think so, maybe from their high school and some maybe from when they learn from here.
    4. Do the students show any interest in the topic? Do they ask any questions?
They do, but sorry that they didn't come up with questions.
    5. Can the students relate this topic to their own lives or to other subjects they are studying? How?
Yes, but they can't relate the topic with their lesson a lot because they need to think or know thing a lot about that events.
    6. What skills did the students practice in this lesson?
    7. What is the outcome of this lesson?
They learn not only what happened, in their skills they learn summarize, comparison, etc.
They'll think "That's why…" relate to their own life: missionaries and Karen people. Where do many things in their culture come from. Missionaries adapted Karen language and writing system.
    8. Does the module provide enough information on the topic? What can be improved?
I think, yes, because if we give a lot and more, it will seem like we will not encourage them to think.

Checklist 2
Date:_ January 18, 2005   *School/Class: SEP/L3A*
Social Studies Lesson Checklist   Teacher:_ Marina
Lesson: p.36 social impact of colonialism   Observer: Saw Doe

    1. Can the students understand?
They seem confused too. Especially when they answer your question.
    2. Can the students participate in activities? How well?
They try to participate, but they worry that their answer will not match your

question, so it seems that their participation doesn't go well.

    3. Do the students already know anything about the topic of the lesson? How?

Yes, from this lesson and from their high school.

    4. Do the students show any interest in the topic? Do they ask any questions?

As usual, they ask no questions, but they show their interest by deeply listening to what you say. They also hardly ask questions with regular teacher. Students don't have a skill to ask questions. Maybe should practice questions as skill in the module?

    5. Can the students relate this topic to their own lives or to other subjects they are studying? How?

Same as 3B (Yes, but they can't relate the topic with their lesson a lot because they need to think or know thing a lot about that events.)

    6. What skills did the students practice in this lesson?

Some thinking about colonial rule, cause – effect (why), adv.-disadv.

    7. What is the outcome of this lesson?

Same as 3B. (They learn not only what happened, in their skills they learn summarize, comparison, etc.)

    8. Does the module provide enough information on the topic? What can be improved?

Checklist 3
Date: January 19, 2005   *School/Class: FSP/L3B*
Social Studies Lesson Checklist   *Teacher: Lwin Lwin Oo*
Lesson: stages and process of colonialism   Observer: Marina

    1. Can the students understand?

    Sure, as presentation is extremely clear.

    2. Can the students participate in activities? How well?

They write the answers. It is easy for students to participate as they can easily relate to the pictures. But they could not guess 'profit'. But generally, a bit passive, though I don't know what they are writing.

    3. Do the students already know anything about the topic of the lesson? How?

They should know something, at least from the module. The 'profit' part also reviews the economics lesson from ISS, I wonder if they remember.

    4. Do the students show any interest in the topic? Do they ask any questions?

I think they really like the presentation with pictures.

    5. Can the students relate this topic to their own lives or to other subjects they are studying? How?

Not sure. Yes, a bit when talking about market – too many sellers will result in fighting.

    6. What skills did the students practice in this lesson?

Writing, imagination, guessing, review, reasoning

    7. What is the outcome of this lesson?

Review processes of colonialism, stages of colonialism.
8. Does the module provide enough information on the topic? What can be improved?

Checklist 4

Date: January 20, 2005   *School/Class: FSP/L3A*
Social Studies Lesson Checklist   Teacher:_ Marina
Lesson: process and stages of colonialism   Observer: Lwin Lwin Oo

1. Can the students understand?

Yes.

2. Can the students participate in activities? How well?

Yes, as usual.

3. Do the students already know anything about the topic of the lesson? How?

Some students already learned this topic in their early high school.

4. Do the students show any interest in the topic? Do they ask any questions?

Yes. They didn't ask any questions, even though they answer teacher's questions.

5. Can the students relate this topic to their own lives or to other subjects they are studying? How?
6. What skills did the students practice in this lesson?
7. What is the outcome of this lesson?
8. Does the module provide enough information on the topic? What can be improved?

Checklist 5

Date: January 21, 2005   *School/Class: FSP/L3B*
Social Studies Lesson Checklist   Teacher:_ Lwin Lwin Oo_
Lesson: p.33   Observer: Marina

1. Can the students understand?

Yes

2. Can the students participate in activities? How well?

Yes, they can answer questions, but they are not very active. Students couldn't
    answer why Indo-China has this name.

3. Do the students already know anything about the topic of the lesson? How?

This is review, but also they would've studied some basics of colonialism in high
school history of Burma.

4. Do the students show any interest in the topic? Do they ask any questions?

Not too actively, they can't really ask questions.

5. Can the students relate this topic to their own lives or to other subjects they are studying?
    How?

How could we make the students see the relevance of what they study to their
lives?

6. What skills did the students practice in this lesson?

Reading for specific information.

7. What is the outcome of this lesson?

Which countries in SEA have been colonized by which Western or Asian powers.

8. Does the module provide enough information on the topic? What can be improved?

Checklist 6
Date: January 21, 2005   *School/Class: FSP/L3B*
Social Studies Lesson Checklist   Teacher: Marina_
Lesson: p.32   Observer: Lwin Lwin Oo

1. Can the students understand?

Yes

2. Can the students participate in activities? How well?

Yes, quite active.

3. Do the students already know anything about the topic of the lesson? How?
4. Do the students show any interest in the topic? Do they ask any questions?

No, but if the teacher gives some clues or hints, it seems they like to ask.

5. Can the students relate this topic to their own lives or to other subjects they are studying? How?
6. What skills did the students practice in this lesson?
7. What is the outcome of this lesson?
8. Does the module provide enough information on the topic? What can be improved?

No, example: p. 32, paragraph B stands for 'settlement' stage, but it does not mention any features of settlements. It does not convey specific information – too brief.

9. Comments

All the students want is to hear the answer, listen to the teacher's lecturing. I think we should not have big expectations from the students to ask the questions. They would ask if they were interested.

Checklist 7
Date: January 26, 2005   *School/Class: KPT/Y 2*
Social Studies Lesson Checklist   Teacher: Marina__
Lesson: ICC Cold War   Observer: Tun Soe

1. Can the students understand?

Yes.

2. Can the students participate in activities? How well?

Yes, to some reasonable extent, they can participate in the activities, with the exception of overrunning the time allowed.

3. Do the students already know anything about the topic of the lesson? How?

Yes. A few students have already known about the topic. From high school, trainings, general reading, radio and newspapers, etc.

4. Do the students show any interest in the topic? Do they ask any questions?

At first, the students responded cautiously and unconfidently. As time passed, they became interested in the lesson. I think they didn't ask questions, it might be because of time constraint.

> 5. Can the students relate this topic to their own lives or to other subjects they are studying? How?

No idea. I wonder if they got the idea when the teacher said a gov't that kills a lot of people must be a dictatorship.

> 6. What is the outcome of this lesson?

They have learned the USSR and USA helped the Third World or their allied countries with purposes …

They have learned what might be USA and USSR's foreign policies towards those countries. They have to some extent related their brainstormed list of the superpowers' policies to their real foreign relations towards other countries.

> 7. Does the module provide enough information on the topic? What can be improved?

No, only by providing more content and more information (in depth). More information means facts and opinions in the form of articles or writing extracts for further reading, for the purpose of research.

> 8. Comments

If some topics in the module are supposed to be used for writing practice, fulfilling question 7 would be helpful and useful.

Checklist 8
Date:_ January 27, 2005   *School/Class: KPT/Y 2*
Social Studies Lesson Checklist   Teacher:_ Marina
Lesson: ICC Cold War   Observer: Tun Soe

> 1. Can the students understand?

Yes.

> 2. Can the students participate in activities? How well?

Yes, quite well.

> 3. Do the students already know anything about the topic of the lesson? How?

Yes. A few students.

> 4. Do the students show any interest in the topic? Do they ask any questions?

Yes. Yes, they asked questions.

> 5. Can the students relate this topic to their own lives or to other subjects they are studying? How?

Yes. They can learn why the ethnic conflict in Burma take hold, resulting in civil war, their hopes fulfilled by their past colonizers.

> 6. What skills did the students practice in this lesson?

Recording, analyzing, comprehension

> 7. What is the outcome of this lesson?

They have learned the effects of colonialism. They have been able to distinguish between what had been before and what was after colonialism in their country.

8. Does the module provide enough information on the topic? What can be improved?

No, more information for them to read further, in the form of further reading/additional reading.

Checklist 9
Date: January 28, 2005   *School/Class: KPT/Y1*
Social Studies Lesson Checklist   Teacher: Tha Tha
Lesson: Impact of colonial rule   Observer: Marina

1. Can the students understand?

I guess so.

2. Can the students participate in activities? How well?

They seem to, but they don't look to excited – a bit sleepy. They are able to answer questions though.

3. Do the students already know anything about the topic of the lesson? How?

??? somewhat, based on earlier lessons.

4. Do the students show any interest in the topic? Do they ask any questions?

Somewhat, at least they participate.

5. Can the students relate this topic to their own lives or to other subjects they are studying? How?

???

6. What skills did the students practice in this lesson?

Reading comprehension, map work, brainstorm

7. What is the outcome of this lesson?

Clarify the impact of colonial rule on countries.

8. Does the module provide enough information on the topic? What can be improved?

Include basic facts about Brunei (colonialism)! Also, p. 35 says factory goods were cheap, but p. 37 says they were expensive! Maybe should finish up with a chain of events, cause-effect in colonialism. More information on how industries in the colonies were discouraged and people made more poor, land taken away.

Checklist 10
Date: January 28, 2005   *School/Class: KPT/Y 1*
Social Studies Lesson Checklist   Teacher: Marina
Lesson: Impact of colonial rule   Observer: Tha Tha

1. Can the students understand?

They understand quite well.

2. Can the students participate in activities? How well?

They can participate in the activity very well. Though some complained they

couldn't draw well, they still try to draw and attentively follow the teacher's instructions.

3. Do the students already know anything about the topic of the lesson? How?

They know some already because they could answer the teacher's guide questions.

4. Do the students show any interest in the topic? Do they ask any questions?

At the beginning they didn't show that much interest in their lesson. However, they gradually gave more and more of their interest to the lesson along with the drawing session.

5. Can the students relate this topic to their own lives or to other subjects they are studying? How?

I would say 50-50. Many terms and situations in the text cannot be related to their own lives easily. Nevertheless, they are very useful to them, for they can always refer them to their future lessons.

6. What skills did the students practice in this lesson?

Identifying information and reading skills.

7. What is the outcome of this lesson?

Through drawing, the students show their understanding of the lesson. They also compare and contrast 'exploration and trade' with 'conquest and settlement.'

8. Does the module provide enough information on the topic? What can be improved?

Simply the best!!!

Checklist 11
Date:_February 2, 2005   *School/Class: KPT/Y 2*
Social Studies Lesson Checklist   Teacher:_ Tun Soe_
Lesson: ICC   Observer: Marina

1. Can the students understand?

I assume they can.

2. Can the students participate in activities? How well?

They contribute in Burmese. I think they even ask questions. This all has to do with how comfortable they feel with the teacher.

3. Do the students already know anything about the topic of the lesson? How?

Whatever they would've heard from the air…

4. Do the students show any interest in the topic? Do they ask any questions?
5. Can the students relate this topic to their own lives or to other subjects they are studying? How?
6. What skills did the students practice in this lesson?
7. What is the outcome of this lesson?
8. Does the module provide enough information on the topic? What can be improved?

Checklist 12
Date: _February 4, 2005_   _School/Class: KPT/Y 1_
Social Studies Lesson Checklist   Teacher:_Tha Tha_
Lesson: Nationalism   Observer: Marina

1. Can the students understand?

I suppose so, sometimes the teacher give some explanations in Burmese.

2. Can the students participate in activities? How well?

They contribute answers. (we'll see how they present, but at the moment they don't look too excited). In fact the presentations were more or less inspired and spurred a lot of arguments (in Burmese) but only small number of students participated. I think they are a bit confused with the task, maybe need to brainstorm together the first one. They are busy preparing presentations. Teacher encourages participation from the whole group (all students).

3. Do the students already know anything about the topic of the lesson? How?

???

4. Do the students show any interest in the topic? Do they ask any questions?

They ask each other questions based on their presentations. (Ask MT what q-s they ask each other) They ask a lot of questions, there's a lot of arguing in Burmese, but it's the same 4-5 students speaking up, and all only boys. Everyone else looks really bored. G3 has slightly better participation from group members, also 1 girl spoke up.

5. Can the students relate this topic to their own lives or to other subjects they are studying? How?

They should be able to if brought to their attention. This should be included in the task. Free writing (p.38), elicited a lot of student ideas about nationalism which are all based on their own situation (being proud of their own people, army, culture, etc.) This exercise lead them to naturally relate the topic in the module to their own life.

6. What skills did the students practice in this lesson?

Presentation skills, discussion, planning, reading, imagination, group work, free writing, mind-mapping (this is a good, easy, specific skill that students are becoming very aware of, they try to use it for organizing information whenever they can, but not in the most efficient way ☺

7. What is the outcome of this lesson?

8. Does the module provide enough information on the topic? What can be improved?
   See 2 and 5.

Checklist 13
Date:_February 7, 2005   School/Program: _SEP/L3_
Social Studies Lesson Checklist   Teacher:_Marina
Lesson: East Timor   Observer: Saw Doe

1. Can the students understand?

I am sure, lesson is in Karen. I, however, don't understand anything. I think this is a review lesson for Chapter 2.

2. Can the students participate in activities? How well?

No activities today.

3. Do the students already know anything about the topic of the lesson? How?

Supposedly, as this is a review.

4. Do the students show any interest in the topic? Do they ask any questions?

Yes, they do. No question, but their expression trying to answer your question.

5. Can the students relate this topic to their own lives or to other subjects they are studying? How?

SD is not sure, but I think they definitely can, based on their questions in free writing activity… They bring up issues that are relevant in their own community.

6. What skills did the students practice in this lesson?

Look for answers and reasons, and put them in the correct places, even though if they don't catch up your ideas at all.

7. What is the outcome of this lesson?

They students can understand why Portugal want to leave, why Indonesia want to rule and don't want to give ET freedom and why the ET struggle for their freedom.

8. Does the module provide enough information on the topic? What can be improved?

Checklist 14
Date:_February 8, 2005   School/Class: _SEP/L3_
Social Studies Lesson Checklist   Teacher:_Saw Doe
Lesson: review chapter 2   Observer: Marina

1. Can the students understand?
2. Can the students participate in activities? How well?

Yes, they've done for homework.

3. Do the students already know anything about the topic of the lesson? How?

They know something about the country but are not very well related to what you ask. They can't catch your idea, is only the reason.

4. Do the students show any interest in the topic? Do they ask any questions?

They ask some questions but I don't know what. Different situations: exploration and trade vs. conquest and settlement, development impact of colonialism.
How did nationalism appear, colonial rule

5. Can the students relate this topic to their own lives or to other subjects they are studying? How?

6. What skills did the students practice in this lesson?
7. What is the outcome of this lesson?
8. Does the module provide enough information on the topic? What can be improved?

Checklist 15

Date: February 13, 2005   *School/Class: FSP/L3A*
Social Studies Lesson Checklist   Teacher: Marina
Lesson: review chapter 2   Observer: Lwin Lwin Oo

1. Can the students understand?

Very well

2. Can the students participate in activities? How well?

Yes, they can, they follow the instructions, and also actively.

3. Do the students already know anything about the topic of the lesson? How?

Yes, they are able to answer the teachers' questions quite well.

4. Do the students show any interest in the topic? Do they ask any questions?

Yes, they ask some questions too.

5. Can the students relate this topic to their own lives or to other subjects they are studying? How?

Yes, they can. Whenever they reflect, they refer to their own conditions.

6. What skills did the students practice in this lesson?

Comprehension, reasoning, and group work

7. What is the outcome of this lesson?

Advantages and disadvantages of colonial economic mentality.

8. Does the module provide enough information on the topic? What can be improved?

So far so good

Social Studies Workshop
October 2004
Report and Outcomes

Participants:
Thra Tun Soe (KPT)
Thra Saw Doe (SEP)
Thra Aron (KEDC)
Thra Soe Soe (FEC)
Thra Michael Rubinstein (SEP)

Workshop expectations:

1. Make a plan for improving the Introduction to Social Studies module, consider all feedback and the July – September evaluation results
2. Formulate plans for social studies assessment
3. Identify teaching aims for the Introduction to Social Studies module
4. Time activities in the module
5. Discuss supplementary materials for social studies modules (purpose and format)

Part I
Modules Feedback

1. Chapter-by-chapter module review in a focus group
2. Consider the pilot module evaluation outcome form July-September, 2004 and combine with the results of (1). Negotiate planned changes – decision making in a focus group

The following chart presents a summary of the negotiated changes planned for the ISS module. Complete page-by-page charts available upon request.

Pilot evaluation results (July – September, 2004)	Evaluation workshop results	
	Ac-cept	**Comment**
General suggestions throughout the module		
Things to add:		
1. A contents page in the beginning of the module	*V*	
2. More diagrams to demonstrate activities (like activity on p.3)	*V*	
3. Include a teaching point for the teacher and student for each lesson (or section)	*V*	*As in SEA module*
4. Extra question material and text for tests	*V*	
5. More examples of the concepts introduced in the modules	*V*	
6. More exercises to practice the concepts and the new information	*V*	

7. There is often not enough time in class to practice all the ideas introduced in the module, it would be a good idea to have independent work assignments for students to practice.	*?*	*Not very clear, maybe in some cases…*
8. More case studies	*V*	
9. More homework assignments	*X*	*More exercises, so teachers can select to assign as h/w*
10. Introduce research skills: students find information in outside sources and then write reports in their own words.	*V*	*Include more s.materials for the teacher. The teacher can use as students research material or for own background information*
11. There are not enough exercises and pictures in the module for focusing on skills: Need more skill-focused exercises: imagination/role-play, problem solving	*V*	
12. Use same topics, but add extra information	*X*	
13. Need information on current situation, varied situation vs. traditional situation	*X*	*Clarify*
14. Short projects that can be done within one lesson or half a lesson	*V*	*As group work, e.g. map work*
15. Add more text throughout	*X*	
16. More 'quick' (?) questions to help students think of their own examples	*V*	*In TG and for quiz/test questions*
Things to change:	*V*	*For some topics*
24. Make all the graphics clear	*V*	
25. Some teachers are concerned that too many examples will make students confused. All examples should be simple and clear *[identify the ones that are not clear]*	*-*	*OK as is*
26. Link the concepts and examples in the module more to the situation in Burma	*X*	
Comments and questions	*-*	*Include more guidelines for productive activities both for teacher and student*
27. **Students want to focus on English**		*In TG*
28. Receptive activities are easy, productive – difficult Focus of the module should be to raise awareness about their environment	*V*	
29. Should we include a lesson on effective group work strategies in the module?		

Teaching aims and outcomes draft for Introduction to Social Studies Module
As identified by a focus group of participant teachers

I. Development

Content:	*Skills practiced:*
▪ Definition, and concept of Development ▪ Aspects of Development ▪ Development terminology and its use and meaning	▪ Categorizing, classifying, and prioritizing ▪ Compare and contrast ▪ Guessing, ▪ Free writing

▪ Division of the world into Rich and poor ▪ Development indicators	▪ Identifying change ▪ Understanding charts ▪ Finding solutions

After studying this chapter, students will be able to:
- Identify development in basic terms
- Identify basic aspects of development (social, political, economic, etc.)
- Understand basic terminology used in the study of development
- Identify how the world is divided into rich and poor countries, and where most of these countries are located
- Understand the use of basic development indicators
- Read simple charts
- Make some development-related examples from their own situation
- Begin thinking about possible solutions in problem situations

II. History

Content:	Skills practiced:
▪ Definition of History ▪ Historical sources ▪ What studying History involves ▪ Dividing and counting time in History ▪ Timelines	▪ Comprehension ▪ Mind-maps ▪ Time-lines ▪ Making a plan

After studying this chapter, students will be able to:
- Identify history in basic terms
- Understand basic importance of looking at historical sources for evidence and explanations of what has happened
- Identify basic aspects in studying history (looking at sources, evaluating, interpreting) and what they mean
- Tell the difference between AD (CE) and BC (BCE)
- Count years in both eras and recognize century numbering before and after AD (CE)
- Read and make time-lines
- Use mind-maps

III. Geography

Content:	Skills practiced:
▪ Definition of Geography ▪ Physical and built environments (what they consist of and how they differ) ▪ Landscapes and climates (how people adapt to their climate	▪ Identifying differences ▪ Compare and contrast ▪ Advantages and disadvantages ▪ Cause and effect ▪ Observation ▪ Making examples from your own

type) ■ Introduction to maps and scales ■ What study of Geography involves	environment ■ Map skills: reading maps making maps using scale estimating distances

After studying this chapter, students will be able to:
■ Identify geography in basic terms
■ Identify differences between physical and built environments and find examples in their own environment
■ List components of environments
■ Explain in basic terms how environments interact
■ Know climate types and how they affect other aspects of life
■ Know types of maps
■ Read maps
■ Draw basic maps of familiar areas
■ Read scale, calculate scale
■ Estimate distances on maps
■ Identify steps in studying geography of an area and make examples from their own environment

IV. Economics

Content: ■ Definition of Economics ■ Goods and services, and differences between them ■ The law of supply and demand ■ Barter ■ Money	*Skills practices:* ■ Applying information to real situation ■ Cause and effect ■ Making examples ■ Advantages and disadvantages ■ Memorizing

After studying this chapter, students will be able to:
■ Define economics in basic terms
■ Give examples of goods and services and explain differences between them
■ Understand the law of supply and demand and give examples of it in their community
■ Explain barter and give examples of its use
■ Explain differences between money and barter exchanges and discuss advantages and disadvantages
■ Explain the use of money

V. Politics

Content:	Skills practiced:
▪ Definition of Politics ▪ Power and government ▪ Rules and laws ▪ Introduction to types of governments ▪ Society: what makes them up and types ▪ Problems in societies	▪ Mind maps ▪ Categorizing information ▪ Identifying examples of concepts in own situation ▪ Advantages and disadvantages ▪ Identifying problems ▪ Organizing information in charts

After studying this chapter, students will be able to:
- Define politics in basic terms
- Identify types of leaders and governments
- Identify sources of power
- Identify basic types of societies, identify their own type
- Analyze rules and laws: who makes them and who follows them
- Discuss some problems in societies and make examples from own community
- Organize information in charts

Supplementary materials: purpose and format:
The following suggestions have been made by the participants:

- Supplementary materials to social studies modules should provide extra background information on the topics covered in the module for the teacher's reference
- Teachers can choose to use supplementary materials as research resources for students' independent assignments
- It would be useful to have accompanying CD-Roms with extra information on the topics in the modules for the teacher's use

Part II
Skills
The following list of skills was drawn up by the participants for the Introduction to Social Studies module:

- matching
- classifying
- comparing situations
- categorizing
- compare and contrast
- guessing,
- free writing
- finding sources and evidence

- comprehension
- mind-map,
- brainstorm
- time-line
- advantages and disadvantages
- cause and effect
- map reading and map making
- listing information

- applying information	- memorizing
- making examples	

These skills have been incorporated into the teaching aims, skills, and learning outcomes outlines above.

During the focus group discussions, the following general suggestions have been offered by the participants:

- It is good to have more practical tasks so the students don't have to look at the book all the time.
- Useful group work strategies: group the students quiet with quiet, loud with loud; give time limit to keep students on track
- Matching exercises are good because students like them. It is easy for them, and good for memorizing.
- Time-line activities were also very useful, as they are very practical.
- It is important to give step by step instructions for activities that might be new to both teachers and students
- It is important to include a range of exercises in module, from easy to difficult
- When students come straight out of high school, this 'new' style of teaching causes a lot of stress for the students. Teacher needs to spend a reasonable amount of time explaining new style of teaching and activities and the reasons for introducing them. Eventually students get used to it.
- It is important to combine student-centered with teacher-centered styles, as both teachers and students are very familiar with teacher-centered approach and need to incorporate the new approach slowly. There are advantages and disadvantages to both, so we can adapt a style that will be most effective for our situation.

Major difficulties related to the students' ability to acquire and demonstrate critical thinking skills, as identified by the participants, are summarized below:

- **Motivation** – some students are lacking in motivation
- **New teaching style** – if the teaching style used by teacher or in the materials is something they have never experienced, it will take them some time to adjust. Students need a lot of support while adjusting to the new style of teaching and materials.
- **Lack of confidence** – students are not confident, they don't trust their own opinion.
- **Lack of experience** – students don't have experience expressing their own opinion or doing much thinking as part of learning.
- **Staying focused** - As a result of lack of motivation and/or 'culture shock' due to very new teaching style, students get tired easily and find it difficult to stay focused.
- **Lack of information** – students often have very little if any prior knowledge on the topics in the modules. This makes it difficult for them to develop and express their own opinions.
- **Language difficulties** – if students' have to discuss or participate in activities in English, it would be more difficult for them to demonstrate their thinking skills

Part III
Assessment

Everything I always wanted to know about tests
but was afraid to ask...

Discussion expectations:

- How to do take home or open book tests, or independent assignments?
- How to space tests based on what we already taught?
- How to make a test that will give accurate information about students' progress?
- Find out what the skills are involved in making tests?
- How to make tests that are suitable for different learning types and levels?

Participants identified the following areas of difficulties and questions

relevant to social studies assessment:

- How much to cover on a test?
- How often to test?
- Timing/include questions per chapter
- Test values – what do we test? Skills vs. memorization
- Test motivation
- Students can't come up with quality productive answers in test time, therefore memory tests are easier
- CP tests are new and strange for the students
- How should we use language in preparing tests?
- What level of language?
- What language to test in?

Participants agreed on the following test objectives:

- Find out the students' progress
- To place the students in the appropriate level
- For teacher to adjust his/her teaching
- For students to focus on what they need to learn (for independent learning)
- On-going assessment (weekly quiz) to monitor students' learning
- To see if our teaching objectives match what the students have learnt

Then, participants considered examples of the following types of test activities/exercises:

> ❑ multiple choice for recall
> ❑ multiple choice for skills
> ❑ short answer for recall
> ❑ short answer for information processing
> ❑ skills practice
> ❑ skills application in real life situation (giving examples)
> ❑ decision making
> ❑ apply information

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And discussed their respective value in achieving the test objectives identified above
What do we test?

	Information	**Skills**
Advantages	Easy to give, make and mark Students are familiar Language is easy	Challenge for students helps students develop as individuals Opportunity for students to express their understanding freely helps connect the learning to real life Improve motivation Provide opportunity for different learning types
Disadvantages	Forget easily Easy to guess without real understanding Easy to cheat No chance to practice skills No thinking involved for students Does not prepare sufficiently for the future (but at least they will have knowledge) Discourage creativity and stronger students	Difficult to mark More effort for everyone Weak students might give up Teacher needs to be experienced Language difficulties Subjective marking Students are not familiar

Following this, participants practiced making up their own test items based on the discussion

Topic selection for tests
- Depends on timing and scope of test
- Every topic
- Focus according to students interests and understanding
- Final test will include all chapters (most important topics covered) – comprehensive exam
- Each term test includes only topics covered this term
- Ensure balance between test and teaching – what you teach more you test more
- Exclude very difficult or confusing topics, or topics that have not been taught properly
- Exclude the last topic taught
- Specifically include topics that student did not pay attention to

Some suggested solutions:

- Provide a selection of exercises from easy to difficult to show a range of student ability

- Introduce 'skills testing' slowly – provide a range of exercises for each test from more familiar to the students, to newer style
- Make sure all instructions are simple and clear both to teachers and students
- Provide clear marking guides for teachers
- Provide a range of test exercises for teachers to choose from for each chapter of the module
- Curriculum Project will develop a set of test exercises for each chapter of the module, so that the teachers will be able to compile their own tests without major time-commitments. This is believed to offer more flexibility as to the timing and difficulty of tests, as well as allow to adjust the tests better to the particular needs of each teacher (and students).

Language of test discussion summary

There was a general agreement among the participants that the test exercises should be in nglish, as a rule. They have cited student motivation, as well as learning materials being in English as a rational for this decision.

However, most teachers agreed that there could be options offered to students in test answers. For example, when writing long answers, students should be able to choose their language of preference. This should not be necessary in the case of multiple choice or short answer questions.

Availability of such choice would solve some of the difficulties associated with long answers and skills-based questions as described in the chart above.

Whatever the decision, both teachers and students need to participate in the discussion.

Some teachers have expressed an opinion that a lot of students would be motivated to try and write their answers in English. In this case, their answers would not be marked for grammar or spelling. In case of Burmese or Karen, teachers agreed that it would be appropriate to expect accuracy in student answers.

Workshop Outcomes Summary

Part I
- ❑ Reached decisions reached about changes to the ISS module to be implement: chapter-by-chapter, teachers guide, and supplementary pack
- ❑ Identified learning aims and outcomes chapter-by-chapter

Part II
- ❑ Identified a list of skills for the ISS module
- ❑ Identified a list of difficulties students experience in developing their critical thinking ability
- ❑ Compiled a list of suggested solutions for these difficulties

Part II
- ❑ Identified difficulties teachers experience with social studies assessment
- ❑ Considered advantages and disadvantages of memory/information-based tests vs. skills-based tests and decided on a strategy, how best to compromise between the two
- ❑ Reached decisions on the Curriculum Project test-writing strategy

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APPENDIX 8
Curriculum Project
Social Studies Workshop
April 25 and 28, 2005

I. Evaluation

Participants reviewed the records and notes from the November – February evaluation of the Introduction to Southeast Asia Module. Additions and changes were negotiated between participants.

Summary of changes:

p.12 More explanations and examples – more specific

China – add map, write down

p.36 add 'social' in the chart, also a pronunciation for Chinese and Indian names/words. Chinese religion (Mahayana Buddhism, Tao, Confucianism), languages

Why ET got independence, but not West Timor, explain in module. Current situation. SH is against adding more on ET. Decision: put in s. pack

p.38 More information about Japanese invasion, Asia for the Asians, example of Burma (but this is already in mod.)

p.42 only add if we can find easy examples of on-going independence struggle.

p.38 Will be more clear if example of Burma is brought up, also add some specific questions.dd religion to text on 'social'.

p.39 make examples and explain the questions better

General: make more challenging comprehension questions

p.15 the impact of trade in SEA

p.34 what is the impact of colonial rule (as b-storm before lesson)

p.12 class system (relate to growing nationalism) "Why do we have different classes?"

SH: vocab very hard for 1st year (where?)

WP Indus Valley topic is not useful – too specific

p.17 Include more in SEA people

Caste system: the teachers will find difficult to explain about class. Include more examples. Religious beliefs – class results from. Indian philosophy of society as a human body – castes, vs. a western approach to society – a mechanism (therefore parts can be interchanged and taken out)

Issues: how much content to add?

How big should the module be?

How useful is ancient history?

What modern history should we add?

LLO's suggestions:

p.8 important for students understanding of the world – include Egypt, Mesopotamia in s. pack;

SH: should have world history module

Asian civilization

WWI + WWII

China + India

Are the students interested in ancient history?

Some are, some have trouble relating – difficult vocabulary

Ancestry of people in the region

Add more info in s. pack

Caste and class system – Hinduism ideology – case study of how it affects life today. How did it affect SEA?

Ancient history – do we need it?

Optional sections?

Maybe for independent study

100 pages should be maximum for module

(people have real trouble prioritizing)

Language family tree

More background in s. pack

Minority peoples
Providing more books???
Provide 2 copies for libraries
Beginnings of SEA???
p.7 Russia – USA students ask many questions and argue generally, students are interested in Russia as a former superpower
p.32 add more information, more about Russian colonialism, more details about others as well
p.38 Nationalist movements.
Burma, Cambodia, Malaysia, Philippines, case studies to distinguish between nationalist movements and dictatorships
Ne Win, Pol Pot, vs. Aung San, Ho Chi Minh, What they did, how many supporters did they have, objectives
Explain the difference between the two categories, then ask them to give examples
China – Confucianism, rice cultivation, hierarchy (check Singapore books)
p.40 Simplify text? Check source, clarify some
Include One World in library
p.44 What events and dates should be included?
Independence, revolutions, etc. up to 3 per country
ASEAN – introduce a section on ASEAN, Any other regional issues

The changes are further outlined in ISEAF 1

Outcomes:

The changes summarized above and outlines in ISEAF#1 represent the core feedback for the development of the second edition of Introduction to Southeast Asia Module for CP.

II. Assessment

Participants expressed interest to use the CP tests in the future. They will be able to use CP exercises with their own ones. Some teachers expressed a preference to use CP tests only as review exercises or pre-tests, rather than the final tests. It would be useful to get soft copies.
Concerns expressed by the participants:
- Providing enough easy exercises for tests
- Balance 'new teaching style' and 'old teaching style' exercises to keep the students in their comfort zone

Researcher's concerns:
- It seems like teachers might not actually be using the tests provided by CP. Why do they keep requesting them? They might be using them as review exercises or 'pre-test', or just as extra exercises and homework. This should not be a problem, except for this means the teachers are still making their own tests that are not necessarily very effective assessment tools. As exhibited in the 2004-2005 school year tests, teachers are still heavily relying on testing memory skills and setting ambiguous or subjective questions, questions where answers don't exist, or multiple choice questions with multiple correct choices. However, some of the participants were able to improve their test-making skills throughout the school year.
- Since teachers are still likely to be making their own tests, CP will need to provide on-going assessment training.
- CP-made tests should attempt to address the participants' concerns above, as much as possible, to make these tests more usable for the teachers.

Assessment questionnaire results:
Did you get and use any CP test exercises?

> *SH:* received but don't remember
> *SD:* received, but already tested that
> *SH:* has already used them for mid-term

What are the difficulties associated with making tests

For the teacher:
- Time for preparation and marking
- Lack of materials (extra or supplementary materials on the same topic or similar)
- Lack of special expertise or experience
- Lack of understanding of teaching materials (shouldn't be a problem with CP modules)
- Inappropriate materials
- Language

For the students:
- Insufficient instruction in class
- Unclear instructions
- Quality of printing/photocopying
- Format and layout
- Language
- Time

What are the different ways of assessing students' progress?
- Quiz
- Test (final, monthly)
- Assignment
- Participation

Suggestions for the Southeast Asia test:
- Ancient civilizations comparison – cut out – not enough information in module
- Impact of colonialism on SEA
- What is nationalism? How did it start? make questions more specific, split into 2

Do's and Don'ts of testing brainstorming:

Do's:
- Make very clear instructions
- Only test what you have taught
- Sue clear wording in questions
- Test the right subject
- Give varied difficulty level of questions
- Answer your test yourself before giving it to the students

Don'ts:
- Ambiguous instructions
- Use difficult vocabulary
- Multiple choice questions with more than 1 correct choice

- Ask questions that don't have any correct answer or when you don't know the answer

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Outcomes:

The difficulties and recommendations outlined in this discussion will be analyzed for the implementation of the tests accompanying the learning unit.

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1. Participants' brainstorming about critical thinking:
- something that comes out of our mind
- matching, guessing, topic, testing students thinking
- important, not only memorize, but understand, habit of memorization is an obstacle to real learning,
- consider all available and related information, reason carefully, use prior knowledge, choose the best solution, maybe more than one, prioritize, application of option, form opinion
- Free thinking
- To cope with the problem
- Find solutions

2. Why are critical thinking skills important? What are the objectives of teaching critical thinking skills?
- The more they think, the more they learn, the more they will want to know
- Without critical thinking they can memorize – they can't use or remember
- Encourage students to become independent learners and develop own ideas and opinions

3. How can the students apply critical thinking in real life
- political situation – reasons of why they are refugees
- cause-effect of historical process
- improve present situation with democratic ideas
- if you have critical thinking skills your mind is independent – open minded – you are open to more solutions
- It is important for students to learn to question themselves, to practice their thinking: "why am I in this class"
- "If you only rely on memory, you are just a clever monkey."

4. Some examples of learning situations where students (or teachers) were exposed to/got to practice their critical thinking and what difficulties they encountered:
- *WP*: Gender issues: how have women been oppressed? Students couldn't think until teacher gave examples, finally they were able to give some examples. They said it had to do with culture, not oppression. First, we must give clear examples, then students can relate

- *SH*: formal vs. informal authority: students didn't want to talk about it. Maybe students have idea in their mind, but they are not ready to speak up. Also, bias, so people (students) are not prepared to share their ideas.

- Elections – they've never thought about it before

- Discussion about leaders in their community/culture: How did these people get authority? Students never considered if leaders got their authority legally. Students come from the culture of compliance – this is a significant hindrance to acquiring critical thinking skills. This came out very clearly in all participants' responses.

- Economics – supply and demand: students used info they've just learned, and related to real life. Using a game – practical task. "Feelings of dead-end"

- "how were the section leaders elected? Students participated in voting"

- *SD*'s only experience of voting when he had to go in place of his father who was sick. He saw that there were only a few people selected by the section leaders to go and vote - mostly older men, prominent in the community. He never thought about this before.

5. *Motivation as part of critical thinking*

This has a lot to do with the motivation the students have for learning generally.
If the students are not motivated to study a particular subject, they would not put any effort into acquiring critical thinking skills

KPT situation: there is a problem with student selection – students' motivation and objectives in coming to KPT are quite different from that of teachers' and the community. Therefore the students are not motivated to learn subjects such as social studies, maths, and science. Many students are only interested in learning English, and particularly grammar. The students' motivation for coming to KPT includes such factors as: the school is 'famous', there are foreign teachers, instruction is in English

This has not been noticed to be a problem in other PXs. In SEP, for example, some students might not be interested in a particular topic, such as environment, but not in entire subjects.

Questions raised to approach the problem of disagreement between school objectives an student objectives: Are the students informed about the school objectives before they come?

The policy that KnED has adopted seems to be that students who are 'not good' stay and work for CBO, while 'clever' students apply for further study. This does not seem to be a constructive way to encourage students motivation in studying community-related subjects.

In addition to this, KnED has introduced PX school ranking. This sets KPT up as the top ranking school with the first pick of students with highest test scores, while these are not necessarily the best-motivated students. This also affects the prestige of other PXs in the community, as 'left over' schools and therefore negatively affects the motivation of teachers and students in these schools.

Some possible ways of changing admissions criteria to attract more similarly motivated students:
- Introduce a contract for community work upon graduation
- Find students from organizations (KSU)
- Students from inside

- Students who have work experience
- Include questions like 'do you like group work or to cooperate with others?' on interviews'

Inform the students that:
- In order to gain entrance to further study, they need to learn more subjects than just English.
- Their chances of getting into further studies is only 10-15 %, therefore they should set realistic community-oriented goals for themselves.

Other motivation issues:
- Specific topics
- Tired
- Teaching style
- Personal problem/health
- Students are very young

Motivation can be also somewhat encouraged by external factors, such as prizes for end of year or other recognition of special achievements by students

Other difficulties and some recommendations include:
- New teaching style: go slowly
- Before I teach any topics, I explain and show advantages to the students
- Make students explicitly aware of different teaching styles
- Student confidence: teacher should encourage students' opinion, give enough time for student responses and thinking time. Student confidence depends on the whole class – how supportive they are of each other
- When one student is speaking, others might not listen – this is discourageing. Teacher should control the situation: give students meaningful tasks while one student is speaking
- Students can't relate unless they get clear examples to bridge the gab between the concept and their real experience
- Cultural aspects/issues
- Sensitive issues: students don't' have a clear understanding, they might not be interested, they might have an opinion but are afraid to express it openly, they might be confused
- Culturally, politically, socially sensitive issues are difficult to approach in teaching and can stand in the way of students acquiring critical thinking skills. Some ways to approach sensitive issues include: this depends on the individual teacher's confidence, background, teaching style; building trust with the students, changing name and place to remove sensitivity *(this is actually done in the ISS 2nd edition based on t-r feedback)* and encourage open discussion; giving students an opportunity to express their opinion privately;
- Students do not relate easily to abstract or theoretical concepts. Learning by doing, students get a chance to participate in practical tasks – the new material become part of their own experience *(an example here could be the 'development as change' exercise in*

Development chapter of ISS2, where students have to imagine the life of their grandparents and how it has changed now).

- Lack of experience and general knowledge on the part of the students: let students describe their real experience (economics – talk about selling-buying; history: talk about their own past) in order for them to be able to relate their learning to life, include extra readings (but make sure they are not dated), go into the community *(what are the examples in the module…?)*

6. The participants' personal experiences with acquiring critical thinking skills

- *SD*: in high school, we had no discussion time, in PX teaching style is different
- *WP*: presentation about ethnic conflict – read article, do more research, read and talk to older people – this drew my attention
- *SH*: reading "Who killed Aung San?" Colonial experience, challenged his beliefs, opened his mind
- *LLO*: traditional beliefs challenged: Karen people come from Israel I was forced to think about it

7. What seems to be important for becoming a critical thinker:
- Getting to know someone or something more closely, in more detail
- Questioning
- Realizing that many questions have more than one answer!
- It is important for the students to realize that it is OK for them to express their own opinion even if it is different from the teacher's. Their mark will not depend on this, whether in a class discussion or on a test

Note: how could these needs be (or is already?) represented in the module?

Participants' free writing on critical thinking:

'I think it's kind of free thinking and idea which is able to cope with the problem in all corners. Maybe or maybe not follow theories but able to find suitable or appropriate solutions.'

'It is very important to encourage students' critical thinking. Through this way they will not only memorize the lesson but improve their understanding regarding the topic. Memorization is a big obstacle to open up our mind. Burmese students are trained to memorize since they were young. This is rooted in our mind and we no longer want to think. Sometimes we feel as if we can't think but just know things that have been taught to use through our memory. We need to practice to be critical in whatever we read or heard from others. In this way we can improve our critical thinking skills.'

'In my thinking, critical thinking means something that come up from our mind, even though if we don't see the answers or images clearly. Guessing but true or … with the topic or questions we are learning or answering. This is kind of teachers testing their students thinking skills based on what they know.'

'Critical thinking implies thinking (smth) critically. When one has to think about or decide on something, he/she needs to collect all available information related to it. He/she must weigh the form implications of each. Think about them separately and mix them to think about it together later on. Weigh each action before a clear decision.'

Outcomes:

This in-depth discussion showed and summarized a lot of difficulties, needs, and opinions relevant to the curriculum of how critical thinking affects motivation and learning and visa versa. The findings of this discussion should be analyzed and implemented in the curriculum. They also represent the specific needs of the population of learners that could be further discussed and generalized to the broader needs of learners from marginalized communities in acquiring critical thinking skills.

IV. Supplementary materials

Questionnaire results:
SH:
1. How many times did you use the supplementary pack this year?
Every time, especially with ISS
The language was often difficult for the students
Sometimes I didn't' find it useful

3. Would you like to use the supplementary pack more next year?
yes

4. How could it be made more useful to you and your students?
Easier English
Put 'reserve' copies in the library

SD
1. How many times did you use the supplementary pack this year?
Hard for me to remember, but I think I usually used them when needed and if I have extra time.

2. If you never or hardly used, it was because:
   a. It didn't match the module
   b. The language was too difficult for the students
   c. you couldn't make copies
   d. you didn't have time

3. Would you like to use the *supplementary pack* more next year?

Not sure
4. How could it be made more useful to you and your students?
Simple language, color pictures
WP
2. If you never or hardly used, it was because:
The language was too difficult for the students

3. Would you like to use the *supplementary pack* more next year?

sure
4. How could it be made more useful to you and your students?
Put more information for teachers, then they can get ideas from their teaching

LLO
1. How many times did you use the *supplementary pack* this year?
Not many
2. If you never or hardly used, it was because:
It didn't match the module
The language was too difficult for the students

3. Would you like to use the *supplementary pack* more next year?
Not sure, will use when I need it
'I will use, if I need, only pictures'
[this was a very non-committal response: "I don't use much" "I will use if I need" "Only if there are any pictures" "I change my activities every year" "I am not sure" "If you add more information"

4. How could it be made more useful to you and your students?
Common problems with supplementary packs:

- Language and photocopying issues seem to be a problem for everyone.
- Language is geared towards teachers rather than students
- Often unable to make copies
- Historical sources – include 2 copies of each (3 for SH, as he has 35 students),

Suggestions:
- Include a photo of Saddam Hussein
- Include Dalai Lama and environmentalist woman from Kenya who won a Nobel Prize, Gagarin
- What can we do with famous personalities: put in the library – students can access in their own time, in groups, students prepare presentations, take home presentations
- GM – any pictures?
- Find a better intro for GM
- Teacher explains after reading

LLO wants to borrow a book on Third World Debt

Outcomes:

The suggestions feedback expressed in this discussion will be used in organizing supplementary materials for the learning unit.

V. Language of instruction
   1. Difficulties associated with the use of English for instruction
   For the teacher:
- Explanation
- Vocabulary and grammar

- Only focus on language, leave out important point
- Confidence

For students:
- Misunderstanding
- Language skills are low
- Difficult to express their opinion
- Get discouraged
- Encourages memorization
- Critical thinking is not encouraged
- Confidence
- Time
- Afraid of teasing

2. Difficulties associated with instruction and/or materials in other languages
- People will think we are going backwards: prestige issues
- Teachers will disregard anything in English
- Students will not value the information in their own languages
- Contradict national education policy
- Accessing international further education
- Reluctance to use Burmese as the only common language

Advantages of both

Burmese or other language	*English only*
Language promotion	Easy to find information
More information	Prepare for international further study
Confidence for teachers and students	Exciting
Save time	If no other choice, students will be less
Better education – focus on subject rather	embarrassed to use it (accent)
than language	IT age, globalization, easy communication
Get more information from students, more	with outside world
discussion	No feeling of isolation
Contribution from community	Can translate difficult vocabulary into our
Higher scores on tests	languages
Local knowledge included	Make the world aware of us - contribute to
Ethnic minorities will get more sued to	the struggle of the people of Burma
Burmese	Use example of some other SEA countries
Ethnic reconciliation for the future:	Get jobs
Burmese official language	Tolerance to western culture

3. What percent of instruction is in English?

SH: presentation in English
          Instructions 50-50 – Burmese and English
          Discussion, mostly Burmese

SD: presentation, instructions and discussion mostly in Karen

mix with Burmese when necessary (if there is no vocabulary on the topic available in Karen). Choice also depends on the students' language proficiencies Motivation: teacher not confident with his English; this is not English class, therefore there is no need to use English

WP: write notes in English
explanation in B, (see her notes)

LLO: 60% English – according to students' requests
but later in the year, use more Burmese, as students might have understanding problems
teacher tries to use some Karen for explanation when needed, her own proficiency in Karen is limited

4. Student language use
LLO: test English
Speaking and writing – mix Karen and Burmese
WP: Burmese for speaking
writing and tests – more Burmese, some English
SD: speaking – Karen and Burmese
writing notes – English
exam – students' choice, some questions students have to use English (short questions)
SH: mostly Burmese in speaking some English, some Karen/Karenni (for group work)
writing – mostly English
test – mostly English, except difficult vocabulary – Burmese
5. Materials in Burmese or Karen available to students or teachers:
SD: a country profile book in Burmese, some Burmese publications available in the library, some limited use in class (based on what the t-r read)
Others might have access to more materials informally or out of class, but he is not certain
6. What languages do the students speak?
SH: B or Kayah
SD: hardly any students don't speak any K, even for non-K students
LLO: many Poe Karen, so some S-K and P K won't be able to communicate P Karen from inside, Sgaw Karen from camp
By second year they usually learn S Karen.
Common language – B or K P Karen is low prestige
7. Materials in languages other than English
SH: maybe Burmese? But no need
WP: no need
SD: would be good B and K, especially for high level (E) materials
LLO: same, would be useful for independent learning also good for specific topics
8. Bi/Tri language curriculum:
WP: include s. materials in other languages
SH: talk to KnED, but personal opinion – don't need

SH: feels E. is an incentive
Difficulties – Karenni script

LLO:	would be difficult to use different language modules in one class, but also difficult to make a choice for everyone.
SD:	Make copies in other languages available in the library
LLO:	good to have s. materials in B/K
SH:	students should be able to cope with reading in E.
	Students are used to studying in E.
WP:	Already enough that we have module in E and discussion in B/K
SD:	English causes stress for students
LLO:	let students attempt on their own, only then help them to challenge them.

Discuss with other teachers
NGOs, community institutions
PX committee???
School committee

Outcomes:
Most participant teachers are already using a combination of languages for the various instruction functions. While they vary in percentages of languages used and opinions on what functions should be preformed in what languages, none of them are teaching completely monolingually. Only one participant teacher argued for introduction of mainstream teaching materials (modules) in languages other than English (Karen and Burmese). Other teachers agreed that it is appropriate to limit the modules to English only, while they also agreed that it would be beneficial to add occasional supplementary and/or library materials in other languages for independent study by the students.

Evaluation focus group:

1. Opportunity to learn and share experience, encounters, success, and failure of the programs
2. The workshop covered most of the expectations of the participants.
3. English is not the only language for learning and other languages can be used especially for critical thinking.
4. Teachers are aware of what skills they are teaching every activity/lesson
5. It is good to put more supplementary materials for the teachers.
6. Before you get students to do the test, you must do it yourself!
7. We found our that it is the best way to remain the present balance of the mix of languages in instruction.

Evaluation Survey results

SD, WP, SH

1. How much time did you spend on curriculum evaluation this year?
Since teaching this and till now.

2 days as I am a new teacher
Throughout the teaching term with the module

2. Next year, would you like to spend more time? Less time? The same? Explain
As usual.
Have no idea yet

The same, because it has already improved so much, or less

3. For you, as a teacher, what was the result of this evaluation? Give an example

　　Good, but not every teacher participated this time.

　　Have a clear understanding towards the subject, learn how to explain clearly to students, since this is flexible we can add or cut information from the text

　　Good. A comprehensive module comes out

4. What did you like most?

　　Try to put all opinions at the same place (negotiate?)

　　Open discussion, learn from each other's experience

　　Expanding the module

5. What did you like least?

　　Don't think I have

　　Try to organize more in order to have full participants, we can then learn from each other's experience

6. How can you do evaluations better in the future? Give example

　　With every teacher if possible

　　By writing teaching notes after the lesson

7. Any other comments:

Outcomes:

One of the key participants did not answer the questionnaire. Results are otherwise inconclusive. There's a need for further exchange of feedback on the evaluation process, which will have to happen by distance. One recurring comment though is the appreciations of sharing experience with other teachers on the part of the participants, and disappointment that more teachers could not participate in the workshop.

APPENDIX 9
Social Studies Workshop
October 2004
Draft Plan, September 10, 2004

This plan has been compiled based on the discussions with teachers in the programs. Please read and make lots of suggestions!

Day 1
Modules Feedback

> Modules to be discussed:
> > Introduction to Social Studies
> > Southeast Asian Studies
> > Environment
> > History of Burma (draft)

1. **Review feedback summary from June-October evaluations –** *we will look at all the information we have managed to collect from teaching since the beginning of the school year.*

2. **Chapter-by-chapter module focus groups –** *teachers will have a chance to discuss feedback on the modules in detail, chapter-by-chapter, working in small groups*

3. **Plan changes to be implemented in the new editions –** *at the end of the day we will summarize our feedback and make decisions about the changes that should be made in the modules for the next school year.*

4. **Teacher's Guides –** *we will discuss how useful/well organized the teacher's guides to the modules are and decide on the changes to be made.*

5. **Supplementary materials –** *we will discuss the purpose and use of supplementary packs and other supplementary materials (for teachers? for students?) and what type of information would it be useful to include in the future.*

6. **Developing teaching aims –** *many teachers have commented that it is useful to have teaching aims stated in the module for each chapter/section. We will brainstorm in small groups to identify these aims.*

7. **Suggestions for further evaluations -** *this Social Studies modules evaluation has been running since July. It will continue throughout this school year. How can we improve it?*

Please answer these questions to help us better plan the workshop!

What language should the workshop be facilitated in?

_____

What other topics related to module feedback can we include on the first day of the workshop?

_____

_____

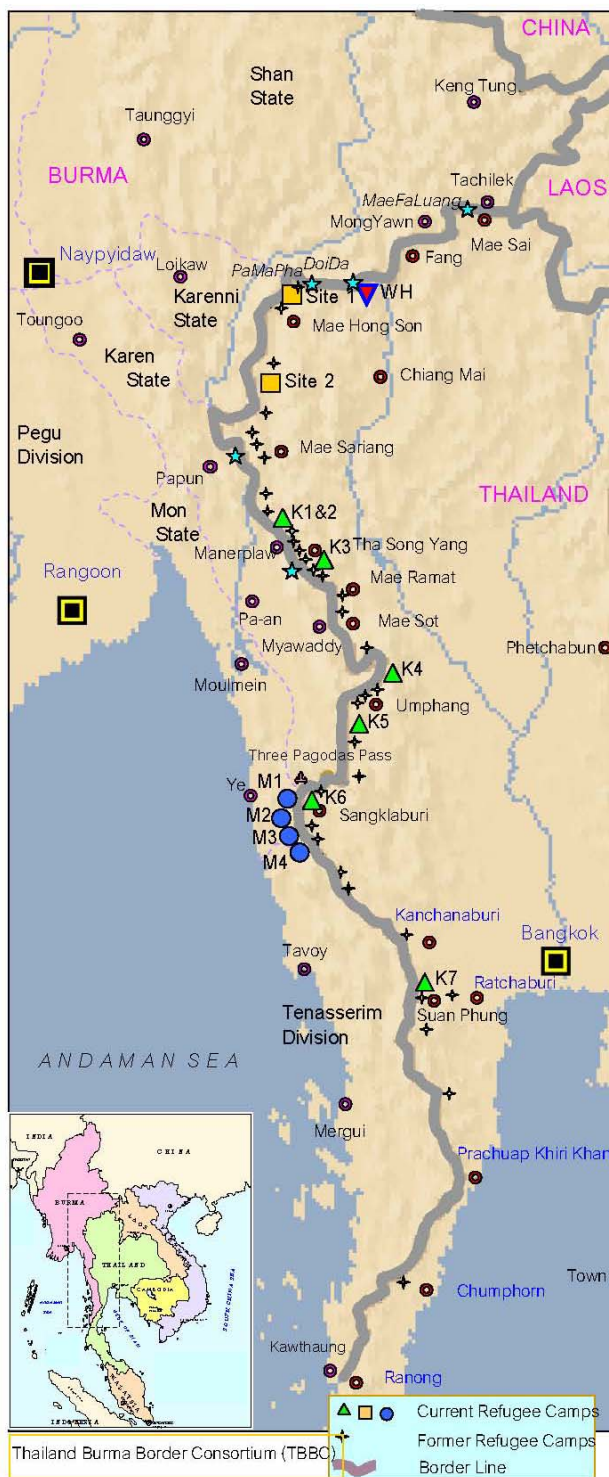How much time should we spend in small groups? How much time should we spend in the large group?

_____

_____

Burmese border refugee sites with population figures: February 2007

		TBBC[1] Feb-07			+/(-)[2]
		Female	Male	Total	Jan-07
Chiengmai Province					
WH	Wieng Heng (Shan Refugees)	317	287	**604**	-
Mae Hong Son Province					
Site 1	Ban Kwai/Nai Soi	9,479	10,260	**19,739**	66
Site 2	Ban Mae Surin	1,767	1,890	**3,657**	25
K1	Mae La Oon (Site 3)	7,456	8,248	**15,704**	(115)
K2	Mae Ra Ma Luang (Site 4)	7,817	8,128	**15,945**	329
	Subtotal:	26,519	28,526	**55,045**	305
Tak Province					
K3	Mae La	24,180	25,296	**49,476**	113
K4	Umpiem Mai	9,440	10,161	**19,601**	18
K5	Nu Po	7,421	7,979	**15,400**	70
	Subtotal:	41,041	43,436	**84,477**	201
Kanchanaburi Province					
K6	Ban Don Yang	2,323	2,268	**4,591**	(75)
Ratchaburi Province					
K7	Tham Hin	4,794	5,056	**9,850**	168
	Total for sites in Thailand:	**74,994**	**79,573**	**154,567**	**599**

State of Origin of Registered Population

62%	**Karen**	5%	**Pegu**
13%	**Karenni**	4%	**Unknown**
9%	**Tenasserim**	2%	**Other** (Chin, Kachin, Irrawaddy, Magwe, Mandalay,
5%	**Mon**		Rakhine, Rangoon, Sagaing, Shan)

☆ IDP Site

🔻 Wieng Heng: Camp Committee

🟨 Sites 1 & 2: Karenni Refugee Committee (KnRC)

🔺 Camps K1-K7: Karen Refugee Committee (KRC)

🔵 **MON - Resettlement Sites[3]**

		Female	Male	Total	+/(-)
M1	Halochanee	1,982	2,134	**4,116**	(64)
M2	Che-daik	553	501	**1,054**	-
M3	Bee Ree	1,892	1,912	**3,804**	(13)
M4	Tavoy	1,374	1,599	**2,973**	7
	Subtotal Mon sites:	**5,801**	**6,146**	**11,947**	**(70)**
	Grand total all sites:	**80,795**	**85,719**	**166,514**	**529**

Notes: 1. TBBC figures include new arrivals, births & deaths since MOI/UNHCR registration.   2. Change in population since previous   3. MRDC February 2007 population.

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