In our last session we discussed how educational philosophy influences curriculum;

Today we will examine two factors that influence a curriculum, namely, society and history;

Specifically, we will attempt to answer the following questions:

- What are some of the demands of society with regards to curriculum?
- How have the needs of society been considered when developing curriculum?
- What are some of these needs?
- What historical events have influenced curriculum?
Schools are part and parcel of society and exist for society.

Society influences society through its curriculum. Schools, through their teaching of the curriculum, can shape and mould society and society in turn can impact the curriculum.

There is rarely a curriculum that is developed without reflecting society in some way.

People today are vocal in expressing their views and are eager in seeing their opinions influence what is going on in school.
With advancements in information and communication technology, people are talking and sharing views across the globe.

They are seeing things happening in other school systems and would like to see some of these practices in their own schools.
Society and Curriculum:

- Education systems are closely tied to the institutional network of society.
- To understand how the content of schooling is shaped in any society, we must understand the relationship between education and other institutions in society.
- In other words, to understand what is taught, how it is taught and why it is taught, we need to look at the social forces that shape the curriculum.
What are the social forces that shape the curriculum?

How do these social forces combine with philosophies of education to shape educational purposes?

When designing curriculum, the following questions must be addressed:
- To what extent should curriculum consider the world outside of school?
- How do changes in society affect curriculum?
Knowing the social foundations of curriculum is crucial in making decisions about what should be included in the curriculum and eventually what happens in the classroom.

Schools exist within the context of society and influence culture which in turn shapes curriculum.

A curriculum should be able to prepare students for the present and the future. In other words, a curriculum should address the wants and needs of learners by responding to social conditions locally, nationally and globally (McNeil, 1995).
Students might ask, “Why do I need to study algebra? I do not intend to be a mathematician, computer scientist or engineer”.

The utility of certain subjects in a curriculum may not be obvious to learners but teachers know that solving problems in algebra involve thinking skills which may not seem immediately relevant but will serve students indirectly in many professions and jobs later in their lives.
According to Burks (1998) content is useful;

- if it relates to the general body of knowledge needed by average human beings for conducting daily life (eg. reading, writing);
- when it is related to the specific present or future situation of the student (eg. to be a journalist one needs good language skills);
- if it develops thinking skills that probably increases the student’s success in other subject areas or in general life-decisions (eg. geography develops spatial thinking, art develops design skills);
- if it fulfils unavoidable requirements imposed by society as entry qualifications to certain vocational and professional programmes (eg. mathematics as requirement for technical jobs).
Economy and Curriculum:

- Few would disagree that the main function of education is to produce people with appropriate skills and knowledge and to enable them to participate in the nation’s economy;
- The nature of schooling tends to reflect the nature of the society in which it is found;
- For example, in the latter part of the 19th century, life in the US and the Caribbean was farm-based and schools mirrored that lifestyle.
- The one-room school house was sufficient to meet the needs of such a society.
- School started late and ended early in the day to allow time for students to help their families with farm work.
School dismissed entirely during the summer so that children could help their parents the fields.

Education was primarily didactic and learning was less book-based that it is today.

Controlled largely by the teacher, education focused predominantly on basic skills.

Teachers taught reading, writing and arithmetic to complement the skill students learn outside school.

Since relatively few students progressed further than grade 6 or 7 (Std 5), the need for higher levels of education was minimal.
By the beginning of the 20th century, the industrial revolution brought about drastic changes in the economy of many countries.

More people moved to live in cities and working in factories. As a consequence new skills were needed in an industrial society.

It was then that a great change took pace in education: the model of schools as a factory emerged.

Students were taught the facts and skills they needed for industrial jobs, which they were likely to hold their entire lives.

One-room schools were eventually replaced by large buildings.
Students were sorted by grades and sat in straight rows, with a teacher at the front of the classroom in control of learning.

The curriculum was compartmentalised and taught in separated bits and pieces – similar to the way that work is completed on an assembly line.

Schools became efficient social institutions with the goal of turning out identical products.

The appearance in the early 70s of the microprocessor and the explosive growth of networking and information technologies in the 80s and 90s witnessed the growth of the knowledge economy.
Multimedia innovations and the growth of the internet have transformed our ability to access information.

Despite all these changes, we are still educating students in factory-model schools.

Many of the skills being taught currently are intended for jobs that either no longer exist or will be radically different by the time a student graduates.

While being aware of the trend, educators are still unsure as to what the curriculum of the post-industrial-style classroom should be.
Without doubt, in the post-industrial or information society, a new curriculum will be needed.

It is envisioned that in the new model, education will be more personalised.

In other words, education will be more differentiated to meet each student’s learning requirements.

Students will be challenged with higher expectations of learning, and encouraged to think critically and creatively as they solve problems.

They will spend more time using information technology and learn independently.

The knowledge gained and skills acquired and attitudes nurtured will support them throughout life.
The Home, Family & the Curriculum:
The Church and Curriculum:
Cultural Diversity and Curriculum:
Special Interest Groups and Curriculum:
How has the school curriculum in T&T responded to different societal demands?

When you were in school, were the concerns of society regarding the curriculum similar or different from the concerns today?

What was schooling like during the 1960’s? Has it changed or in many respects still the same today?
Historical Evolution of the Curriculum

Some questions to consider:

- Why is it important to know the historical foundation of curriculum?

- Who do you think, the Europeans or the Americans, have the most influence on our curriculum in the Caribbean? Why?

- What are some of the “Europeans” and some of the “Americans” influences we can identify within the modern curriculum today?
What do you think are some of the unique features of a Caribbean curriculum for secondary and primary schools?

- What impact was played by the denominational bodies in curriculum development.

- What value do you give to having a historical sense of curriculum?
Running through the whole panorama of education from colonial times to the present, there appear several trends in the evolution of the curriculum:

- In the past, ideas have often been developed in private schools, and public schools have then adopted them.
- Schools and school systems everywhere have frankly copied plans, procedures, and curriculum content from other schools and school systems.
- New institutions, such as the early academy and the much more recent middle school, have been established to satisfy unmet needs.
• Educational principles, such as that of schooling for everyone, have been adopted in substance and modified in detail whenever they have struck a popular chord.
• Experimentation has occurred, but it has usually been informal, and its results have remained largely untested.
• National committees have determined general objectives, policies, and programs.
• Psychological and social theories and revelations have turned the efforts of curriculum planners in new directions.
American educators have been susceptible to the use of the plans, some of them delusive, for making the difficult processes of teaching and learning easier.

However, some important educational ideas that have been based on the soundest evidence have been adopted very slowly by practitioners.

The schools, as an instrument of American society, have been subjected to numerous public pressures, the nature of which tends to change from generation to generation, depending in part on the interests and concerns of individual groups within the society.

Though curriculum improvement has obviously been occurring for generations, conscious efforts to make the process more effective have been expended only during the past half century. 

The history of curriculum planning can scarcely be written in sequential order. For one thing, it has too little content to form a valid sequence; 

The process of curriculum improvement was made manifest only when it was first reported in the literature. Prior to 1920, practically nothing concerning this process was written in professional journals; 

The actual authority for curriculum planning centered strongly in superintendents and their immediate staffs, with teachers, parents, and pupils taking minor parts
Curriculum decisions were made on the basis of individual opinion and consensus of groups, inasmuch as experimentation, research, and evaluation were relatively unknown.

Today, teachers are being involved in curriculum study in various ways;

Changes are being planned both in the environments within which people operate and in the individuals who occupy these environments;

Curriculum planning is being regarded as a necessary, continuing activity;
Curriculum planners are now demonstrating need for renewed concern about the objectives of education. Many curriculum ideas, new and old, need to be assessed in light of their contribution to achievement of accepted objectives of the school;

Whereas pupils were once involved very little in curriculum planning, they are now consulted at least informally in classrooms and school activities as well as in certain minor matters of curriculum design;

Curriculum planning is not thought of as constituting a series of distinct and fixed steps. No single pattern, beginning, for instance, with stating objectives, will suffice in solving all curriculum problems
1900 to 1920

- The junior high school was invented;
- vocational education received federal aid; and
- a psychology of individual differences began to develop.
- Also, the Progressive Movement was given its initial impetus.

1911

- The Committee on the Economy of Time in Education advocated child centeredness in learning. Partly as a consequence of the work of this committee, art, music, handicrafts, and health education became recognized subjects in the elementary and secondary schools.
The 1920s and 1930s

- The Committee on the Reorganization of Secondary Education enunciated the famous Seven Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education, thereby stating objectives that received wide though nominal acceptance;
  - 1. Health
  - 2. Command Of Fundamental Processes
  - 3. Worthy Home Membership
  - 4. Vocation
  - 5. Civic Education
  - 6. Worthy Use Of Leisure
  - 7. Ethical Character
The 1940s and 1950s

- helped to create assurance that education necessarily led to the good life. Little money was being spent for curriculum study as opposed to the funds being expended for school building construction, pupil transportation, bonding and insurance costs;

- Work experience consumed a portion of the school day for some pupils who had little hope of attending college;

- A redefinition of morality was beginning to occur, the family as an institution was declining, and complaints about alleged mathematical and scientific illiteracy in the general population were growing.
The 1960s

- Attention to the secondary schools;
- Teachers in both elementary and secondary schools were beginning to realize that they had almost no curriculum documents on which to rely except textbooks, which might be satisfactory for skill development and for imparting basic knowledge but were deficient for educating children for change in attitudes, cultivation of appreciations, and the making of critical judgments.
- The quantity of subject matter had grown so rapidly that the teacher could no longer "cover" any subject.
The 1970s

- The purposes of schools as unique institutions within the entire context of education were reexamined.

- Objectives of teaching and learning received new attention, and performance criteria and other standards of accountability were sought and applied.

- Very early childhood education was deemed to deserve particular attention because of the facility with which young children profit from certain kinds of educational experiences.

- More sophisticated educational planning, using new technology and improved planning procedures, was just over the horizon.
The 1980s

- Dominant trend / movement toward conservatism in elementary and secondary education. While differing and sometimes competing groups are proposing additional subject matter content for the schools;
- Teachers have increased their efforts, through drill and use of new insights, to improve reading, writing, and arithmetic skills;
- Affective education has been concentrated largely in moral and ethical education and the related development of improved citizenship attitudes;
What are some of the unique features of the curriculum of the 1990’s and early 2000’s?