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## Content analysis of the LGCSE Geography and Sesotho syllabi for alignment with the Lesotho Curriculum and Assessment Policy

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The purpose of the study was to examine the alignment or misalignment between the Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education (LGCSE) programme and the Lesotho Curriculum and Assessment Policy (CAP), with a focus on Geography and Sesotho syllabi. The study employed content analysis of the two syllabi to identify areas of alignment with the aims of secondary education and the idea of curriculum integration as conceived in the policy document. The content analysis revealed that, while there are some areas of alignment, especially between the syllabus aims of the two subjects and the aims of secondary education as stated in CAP, the syllabi offer limited opportunities for promoting political values and integrated approach to teaching and learning as envisaged in the policy. To this end, it is argued that the teaching of the two LGCSE syllabi is unlikely to change classroom practice as was intended in the policy.

**Keywords:** curriculum alignment; Geography; integration; policy; Sesotho

### Introduction

The need for a contextually relevant and aligned curriculum has been a long standing issue in Lesotho, dating back to the early 1960s when the idea of localising the O'Level curriculum was mooted. This search for a localised relevant curriculum continued in the post-independence era after 1966, with the localisation activities gaining momentum in the late 1980s, when the marking of the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC) was localised. However, the process was not well coordinated, because there was no clear policy framework to guide the process of curriculum and assessment reform. In 2009, the Lesotho government, through the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), published a comprehensive curriculum and assessment policy framework, which marked the departure from a content-driven teacher-centred curriculum to a more skills-based learner-centred curriculum. Subsequent to the publication of this policy, the new Lesotho General Certificate for Secondary Education (LGCSE) syllabi were developed for some secondary school subjects, as part of the localisation policy, which was intended to replace the COSC. The question of whether or not the new LGCSE syllabi are aligned with the new policy framework and locally relevant remains unanswered. This paper analyses the LGCSE Geography and Sesotho examination syllabi, with the purpose of identifying areas of alignment or misalignment with the Lesotho Curriculum and Assessment Policy.

As Taylor (2009) correctly observes, a curriculum policy is considered a key factor in determining the direction for, and providing coherence in, teaching and learning. As such, examining alignment between the LGCSE syllabi and the curriculum and assessment policy can potentially generate insights into an understanding of the relevance of the content of school subjects to national goals. Furthermore, given that in Lesotho, and elsewhere, syllabi provide guidelines for teachers and textbook writers, analysing a subject syllabus may provide indicative findings on what is taught at the level of classroom practice.

The paper first provides background to the curriculum and assessment policy and flags the key curriculum, pedagogic and assessment guidelines contained in the document. The second section of the paper outlines the process of developing and implementing the LGCSE syllabi. This is followed by a discussion of theoretical concepts underpinning the study. The issues of methodology are then discussed, after which the findings of the content analysis are presented.

### Background to Curriculum and Assessment Policy

As already highlighted, the curriculum and assessment policy was developed and published in 2009 as a response to national concerns about the relevance of school curriculum and the validity of public examinations, which placed little emphasis on Lesotho context and practical skills (Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, 1982). The policy is thus intended to, among other aspects, enhance the quality of education and make it relevant to development challenges, which include increasing rates of unemployment, poverty, environmental degradation, HIV/AIDS (Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) and globalisation (Ministry of Education and Training, Kingdom of Lesotho, 2009). To address these challenges, learners are expected to acquire the following core competences, reflecting the type of learner envisaged in the policy: effective and functional communication; problem-solving; scientific, technological and creative skills; critical thinking skills; collaboration and co-operation; functional numeracy; and learning to learn.

The policy framework further aims to propose a “fully localised secondary education curriculum and assessment” (Ministry of Education and Training, Kingdom of Lesotho, 2009:2), but without downplaying the importance of a global dimension. It is benchmarked with international trends in education, as it adopts global

education discourses such as integrated curriculum, learner-centred pedagogy, economic competitiveness, lifelong learning and production of work-related competences. The policy is built on the progressive principle of integration, introducing a change from subject-oriented curriculum to an integrated one, organised into five learning areas, reflecting real life challenges and the expected competences as stated in the foregoing paragraph. The designated learning areas for both basic and secondary education are: Linguistic and Literary; Numeral and Mathematical; Personal, Spiritual and Social; Scientific and Technological; and Creativity and Entrepreneurial. As explained in the policy document, learning areas are seen as chunks, which are “used as filtering mechanisms meant to select concepts and principles derived from subject areas that address real issues and challenges” (Ministry of Education and Training, Kingdom of Lesotho, 2009:18).

This kind of integration is clearly visible in the curriculum of lower grades of basic education, where subject boundaries are blurred, but emerge in the last three years of the basic education. Although disciplinary boundaries are visible in the upper grades of basic education, which lays a foundation for secondary education (grades 11 and 12), curriculum at this level as stated earlier in this section is still organised into learning areas. This suggests that subjects are valuable only to the extent they contribute to a meaningful understanding of real life challenges facing learners on daily basis (Beane, 1997). The emphasis on integration of subjects within learning areas in the upper grades of basic and secondary education reflects also the desire to ensure continuity and progression, in pursuit of the goal of further education (Raselimo & Mahao, 2015), which is part of the overall goal of secondary education in Lesotho (Ministry of Education and Training, Kingdom of Lesotho, 2009).

With regard to assessment, the policy advocates, among other aspects, for continuous assessment, which is not necessarily a new concept on the education scene of Lesotho. As described in the document, this form of assessment will be used for diagnoses of students’ difficulties and to monitor their performance (Ministry of Education and Training, Kingdom of Lesotho, 2009). Notwithstanding its potential implementation challenges as outlined by Sebataane (1985), emphasis on continuous assessment is seen as creating an opportunity for assessment of practical skills (Raselimo & Mahao, 2015), which were neglected in the previous subject-oriented curriculum and assessment policy.

The new curriculum and assessment policy is being progressively implemented across grade level, and the process is now in Grade Nine of basic education. However, in the secondary

education band (grades 11 and 12), the policy has been hurriedly implemented to fast track the process of localising the COSC curriculum, which had been criticised for being aloof from the local context (Ministry of Education, 1995). As mentioned earlier in this paper, the localisation process resulted in the development of new LGCSE syllabi in most secondary school subjects, including Geography and Sesotho.

**Rationale for Introduction of the LGCSE programme**  
The LGCSE is a two-year programme leading to a certificate enabling secondary school leavers to access tertiary education. The process of developing LGCSE syllabi was spearheaded by the Examination Council of Lesotho (ECOL) working jointly with the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) and relevant stakeholders, including representatives of practising teachers, who worked in their respective subject groups. The subject groups were trained on how to design a curriculum that would be aligned to local needs by, ironically, external experts from the Cambridge International Examinations (CIE). The process began in 2011 with development of syllabi in six subjects: English Language, Mathematics, Geography, Development Studies, History and Physical Science. The localised LGCSE syllabi of these subjects were disseminated in 2012 and were first examined in 2014.

As part of the justification for introducing LGCSE programme, the registrar of ECOL noted that Lesotho was now the only country in Southern Africa that did not have its qualification at senior secondary level. Hence, she opines that the country “would not be in the position to change its curriculum and assessment strategies to suite Lesotho’s political and social-economic environment” (LGCSE Documentation, n.d.:2). This suggests that the introduction of the LGCSE curriculum was not only a cost containment move, but it was also a response to the need to align secondary education with national development goals. Indeed, as stated in LGCSE Documentation, the programme was introduced as part of education reform, which aimed at, among other goals, producing better qualified graduates than its predecessor. Furthermore, the LGCSE is reported to be internationally recognised as it is benchmarked with regional standards, and accredited by CIE.

However, there are concerns about the quality and relevance of the LGCSE curriculum with some critics arguing that the curriculum is of low standard and promotes the legacy of colonial education, mimicking the features of the British General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), which is meant for Basic Education in the UK (LGCSE: A neo-colonialism initiative?, 2013). A similar perception is reflected in the admission

criteria of Faculty of Science and Technology at the National University of Lesotho (NUL), which now requires at least a Grade C in English language for applicants to be admitted into the B.Sc programme (NUL, 2016). All these concerns point to issues of quality and relevance in the LGCSE curriculum. It is against this backdrop that the paper analyses LGCSE syllabi of selected subjects to examine the extent of alignment with the *Lesotho Curriculum and Assessment Policy*, which provides policy direction for curriculum reforms in the country. As literature shows, the lack of alignment between subject curriculum and national curriculum policy framework is a cause of failure of policies to change educational practice (Penuel, Fishman, Gallagher, Korbak & Lopez-Prado, 2009). To this end, it is hoped that the findings of this study will generate an understanding of the extent to which the new LGCSE programme is likely to bring about desired change at the level of classroom practice.

#### Curriculum Alignment and Integration

The notion of curriculum alignment is not new in curriculum development discourses both in Lesotho and internationally. It can be traced back to the work of Tyler (1949), who argued for coherence between curriculum objectives, content, methods, and assessment. Although his approach is technical in the sense that curriculum is seen as a technical exercise driven by behavioural objectives, Tyler's model of curriculum design has informed much of curriculum work even among those scholars who hold a constructivist view of curriculum. For example, building on the work of Tyler (1949), Biggs (1999) developed a model of constructive curriculum alignment, linking the intended learning outcomes with curriculum content and assessment. The model is based on the principle that learners construct their knowledge through active involvement in activities that are relevant to pre-determined learning outcomes. Thus, while emphasising an active role of the learner in knowledge construction, curriculum needs to be structured through well-defined learning outcomes to ensure relevance. Within this framework, learning outcomes stipulate both declarative knowledge and functional knowledge, which respectively specify content knowledge, as well as how that knowledge can be applied to new contexts to solve problems (Biggs & Tang, 2011).

By foregrounding learning outcomes in curriculum design, the model reflects features of an outcome-based curriculum, which combines constructivist learning theories with ideas of alignment between curriculum components (Reath Warren, 2013). As applied in other national contexts such as South Africa and Australia, outcome-based approaches to curriculum change emphasise, among other aspects, skills and competences that are aligned to the needs of society and economy

(Malcolm, 2001). Given that curriculum development is preceded by a situational analysis that informs selection of appropriate learning outcomes, constructive alignment can be seen as a strategy to ensure alignment of curriculum aspects with national goals. As Watermeyer (2012) suggests, curriculum needs to be aligned beyond formal school setting to reflect real world contexts and clearly articulate the skills required by industry or workplace. Such an aligned curriculum pursues the vision of social efficiency ideology, in terms of which schools function through curriculum as learning centres responsible for preparing students for a meaningful life in society (Reath Warren, 2013; Schiro, 2008).

The broader literature identifies two types of alignment, namely external alignment and internal alignment, which can be likened to external and internal consistency, respectively. The former refers to alignment of, for example, the written curriculum, with concepts and skills prescribed in the national standards (Drake & Burns, 2004), such as those stated in curriculum and assessment policy frameworks. It emphasises a cross-curricular approach in organising curricular content, allowing learners to transfer knowledge and skills learned in one subject to the study of the other (Watermeyer, 2012). Internal alignment emphasises a clear thread that runs from learning outcomes through the other three elements of curriculum (content, teaching and learning activities and assessment). This study focuses on external alignment, as it seeks to establish the extent to which the intended LGCSE curriculum is coherent with the key curriculum messages of CAP.

Associated with curriculum alignment is the concept of curriculum integration, in terms of which real life problems and issues of personal and social significance are considered to be key sources of curriculum content (Beane, 1997). The concept emerged out of criticisms of traditional education, emphasising disciplinary knowledge, with little regard to practical life problems and challenges. The work of American philosophers such as John Dewey, who advocated a link between curriculum and real life (Dewey, 1916, cited in Jackson, 1992), is noteworthy in the conceptualisation of integrated curriculum. Similarly, Bernstein (2000), like other critical curriculum theorists, is interested in the relations between formal school curriculum and real life in society. He makes a distinction between an integrated curriculum and a collection curriculum, which are classified weakly and strongly, respectively.

As described by Bernstein (2000), an integrated curriculum is characterised by loose boundaries between school subjects, allowing a greater integration of themes across disciplines. Such a curriculum also makes use of everyday knowledge of the learner, situated in their practical

life experience (Taylor, 2009). This definition resonates with the curriculum vision of CAP, which recognises that “the learner is part of a community and that learning should take into account everyday experiences of learners” (Ministry of Education and Training, Kingdom of Lesotho, 2009:12).

Another important feature of integrated curriculum is progression, which is widely recognised, as an indicator of desirable quality in curriculum materials (Beets & Le Grange, 2008; Bennetts, 2002; Chambers & Donert, 1996). Progression refers to sequencing of curriculum content in a manner that will allow learners to build their current learning on previous experience and also prepare for future learning (Chambers & Donert, 1996). This concept can be associated with internal coherence, which as previously stated, is a characteristic feature of a constructively aligned curriculum (Biggs, 1999). Thus, integrated curriculum, as in the case of a constructively aligned curriculum, displays clear relations among aspects of curriculum content, teaching strategies and assessment, and encourages a gradual advancement of knowledge.

A collection curriculum lies in tension with integrated curriculum, in the sense that it emphasises disciplinary knowledge. To ensure deep learning, a collection curriculum is organised around discrete subjects (Bernstein, 2000), as opposed to learning areas. In this type of curriculum, school subjects maintain their disciplinary boundaries, making it difficult for teachers to integrate knowledge from other subjects and daily life experiences of the learners.

Central to Bernstein’s theory of curriculum are the concepts of classification and framing, which can be used to illuminate issues of power and control relations in a syllabus. According to Bernstein, classification refers to strength of boundaries between and within school categories. Strong classification (C+) indicates a lack of relationship between categories, whereas weak classification (C-) represents integration (relationship between categories). This paper makes use of the theoretical concept of classification to analyse knowledge integration in the Geography and Sesotho LGCSE syllabi, in order to determine the extent to which they are aligned with the ideals of *Curriculum and Assessment Policy* pertinent to curriculum content. As mentioned earlier, the policy is guided by the principle of integration advocating relations between subjects and a connection between school knowledge and everyday knowledge. The former type of integration is referred to by Bernstein as inter-disciplinary relations, while the latter is referred to as inter-discursive relations. In the context of this study, weak classification (C-) in these types of relations represents alignment between the LGCSE syllabi and the policy, whereas a strong

classification (C+) indicates that there is no alignment between policy statements and the syllabi.

Oscillating between the theoretical concepts of curriculum alignment and integration, the paper seeks answers to the following research questions:

- In what ways are the aims of LGCSE Geography and Sesotho syllabi aligned with the general aims of secondary education as stated in CAP?
- What is the extent of knowledge integration in the syllabi of the two subjects with regards to interdisciplinary and inter-discursive relations?

### Methodology

This is a case study of two subjects offered as part of the LGCSE programme. These subjects are Geography and Sesotho, which have been purposefully selected because they represent areas of specialisation of the authors of this paper. As a strategy for data collection, the study employs content analysis of the syllabi of the two subjects to identify areas of alignment with the key thrusts of the curriculum and assessment policy, relating to curriculum content. As defined by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), content analysis is the process of summarising and reporting data, the main contents of data and their messages. This method involves examination of artifact of social communication, such as written documents, to provide an in-depth understanding of the content of the syllabi (Berg, 2007; Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2014).

The LGCSE syllabi of the two subjects were subjected to content analysis focusing on syllabus aims for teaching the subjects and curricular content, with a view to determining their alignment with the general aims of secondary education, the principle of integration, as outlined in the curriculum and assessment policy. The approach was generally deductive, as we commenced by comparing syllabus aims with relevant aims of secondary education. However, the process involved making qualitative decisions on how syllabus statements could be coded.

For a deeper analysis of the extent of knowledge integration, we classified statements extracted from the syllabi according to analytical categories developed using Bernstein’s (2000) theoretical concept of classification, as discussed in the previous section. In terms of the analytical framework used, statements that were closely aligned to the curriculum and assessment policy were coded C- – (very weak classification), whereas those that were implicitly aligned were coded C-. In the case where there is misalignment with CAP, and yet there is a potential for alignment such statements were coded C+ C++, depending on the degree of misalignment. We then counted all the statements that were, in our opinion, supportive of integration to form an opinion about the extent

of alignment between the two LGCSE syllabi and CAP.

### Findings

#### The Salient Features of the LGCSE Geography and Sesotho Syllabi *Geography syllabus*

As stated earlier in this paper, this syllabus is designed as a two-year course of study intended to meet the needs of the learners studying Geography. It is organised into fragmented four broad sections addressing topics in Physical, Economic and Human Geography. Interestingly, basic geography techniques and skills are covered in the last section (Section D), denying learners the opportunity to apply the skills in the study of the Geography content in the previous sections. The content in each section is presented as general and specific objectives stated in behavioural terms, reflecting objective view of knowledge. The objectives are delineated from specific syllabus topics adapted from the previous syllabus. The syllabus, however, introduces HIV/AIDS (C3) and Enquiry and Presentation Skills (D2) as new topics to the content of the Geography syllabus. Of particular relevance to this study is the claim made in the syllabus that: "To a large extent, the syllabus is linked to [Lesotho] national development priorities, especially those relating to sustainable development" (ECOL, 2015a:3). The syllabus goes further to purport that it adopts an integrated approach reflecting three pillars of sustainable development (environment, society and economy).

In explaining the rationale for teaching and learning Geography, the syllabus uses progressive concepts such as 'multi-disciplinary' and 'cross-curricular' to describe the nature and scope of the subject. More importantly, it makes a bold statement that it exposes learners to emerging issues such as climate change, population dynamics, gender issues and effects of HIV/AIDS.

#### *The Sesotho LGCSE syllabus*

The LGCSE Sesotho syllabus, which is also a two year programme, is intended to provide a basis for further education, and to provide job opportunities for learners studying Sesotho. The subject is composed of three genres, namely Sesotho grammar, modern literature, and traditional literature. Modern literature refers to prescribed textbooks, while traditional literature refers to cultural beliefs and practices. Three separate examination papers are set on these genres.

The Sesotho content is organised into four sections, sequentially reflecting the following core language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, with the first two skills being carried on from Basic Education level. More importantly, the LGCSE Sesotho syllabus content includes the Sesotho culture, which the previous Sesotho syllabus ignored (ECOL, 2015b:6).

As mentioned previously, the focus of this content analysis is to ascertain the alignment of the two syllabi, described in the forgoing paragraphs, with national development priorities and needs in Lesotho. The paper first presents data on the alignment between Geography and Sesotho content and relevant aims of secondary education as articulated in the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy*. The next section of data analysis will explore the degree of knowledge integration in the two syllabi, using theoretical lens of classification as conceptualised by Bernstein (2000).

#### *Alignment between LGCSE content and secondary education aims*

Table 1 shows the congruence between the content of LGCSE Geography syllabus and the general aims of secondary education, as stated in CAP.

#### *Geography*

Out of 187 specific objectives designed for teaching Geography, 25 are aligned with the general aims of secondary education. A glance at the data presented in Table 1 suggests that the secondary education aim on environmental exploration is well represented in the Geography syllabus when compared with the other two aims. For the purpose of this analysis, this aim was interpreted to imply policy expectation to promote knowledge and skills relating to environmental issues, through school curriculum. Not surprisingly, the content in many topics is explicit about environment and environmental issues relating to environment, society, and economy. Geography, by nature has a strong environmental dimension. The environmental aspect of Geography is more visible in topics dealing with elements of Physical Geography, a finding also reported in the previous analysis of the Lesotho Junior secondary curriculum (Raselimo, Irwin & Wilmot, 2013). The data further indicates that the syllabus provides opportunities for development of scientific and technological skills, as illustrated by the nine specific objectives that lay a foundation for meteorological skills and modern technologies such as geographical information systems (GIS) and remote sensing.

The LGCSE Geography syllabus is, however, very weak on "providing opportunities for learners to participate in activities promoting democratic principles, human rights and emerging issues in society," as envisaged in the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy* (Ministry of Education and Training, Kingdom of Lesotho, 2009:10). There is only one specific objective that requires action-orientated learning in community. This is the case despite the coverage of emerging issues such as climate change and HIV/AIDS, which could be effectively addressed through direct participation in relevant community activities.

**Table 1** Relationship between the aims of secondary education and the syllabus content of Geography and Sesotho

Geography		Sesotho	
Relevant aims of secondary education	Corresponding objectives for teaching Geography	Relevant aims of secondary education	Corresponding objectives for teaching Sesotho
Providing opportunities for environmental exploration to promote socio-economic development	<p>Section A: Elements of Physical Geography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the socio-economic importance of river landforms;</li> <li>• Describe and explain causes and effects of river flooding;</li> <li>• Explain the importance of coral reefs, threats to their existence and how they can be conserved;</li> <li>• Describe modifications caused by human interference of [sic] natural vegetation ...;</li> <li>• Assess strategies for conservation of equatorial forests;</li> <li>• Describe and explain the human causes and impact of global climate changes on physical environment, society and economy at local and national levels;</li> <li>• Suggest ways in which local communities can reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and describe how communities can adapt to the negative effects of climate change;</li> <li>• Analyse government policies related to climate change.</li> </ul> <p>Section B: Economic Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outline causes of soil erosion in Lesotho;</li> <li>• Describe effects of soil erosion on environment and economy of Lesotho;</li> <li>• Suggest appropriate methods of reducing soil erosion in Lesotho;</li> <li>• Assess the impact of mining and quarrying on the environment;</li> </ul> <p>Section C: Settlement, Population and Migration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the effects of urbanisation on the environment;</li> <li>• Explain how population distribution and density is [sic] influenced by the interaction of physical, social and economic factors;</li> <li>• Suggest impact of population on the economy, environment and society in Lesotho.</li> </ul>	Equipping learners with knowledge, attitudes and skills which enable them to respond to socio-economic and technological changes	Develop awareness of the nature of language and skills, along with skills of a more general application. For example, summarising , analysing, criticising, evaluating, drawing inferences etc.
Providing opportunities for learners to participate in activities promoting democratic principles, human rights and emerging issues in society	<p>Section A: Elements of Physical Geography</p> <p>Suggest ways in which local communities can reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and describe how communities can adapt to the negative effects of climate change</p>	Building on basic education for preparing learners for higher learning locally and outside the country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the structure of the Sesotho language;</li> <li>• Communicate accurately, appropriately and effectively in writing in order to achieve a level of practical communication which can form the basis for further, more in-depth language study</li> </ul>
Promoting scientific and technological skills in	<p>Section A: Elements of Physical Geography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe and explain the use and sitting of weather instruments;</li> </ul>	Providing students with moral and religious education for the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop personally and understand themselves and others, as well as their own environment</li> </ul>

Geography		Sesotho	
Relevant aims of secondary education responding to socio-economic challenges	<p>Corresponding objectives for teaching Geography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyse and interpret weather statistics and simple weather maps showing information in pressure, frontal and wind systems;</li> <li>Analyse and interpret climate graphs ...;</li> </ul> <p>Section D: Basic Techniques and Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Locate places of features using four and six figure grid references;</li> <li>Calculate area and gradient;</li> <li>Identify land forms on maps using contour maps and conventional signs;</li> <li>Interpret information in photographs, maps, diagrams etc.;</li> <li>Draw sketch maps, labeled diagrammes and annotated sketches to illustrate the geography of an area;</li> <li>Analyse and interpret data in appropriate forms using maps, photographs and graphs.</li> </ul>	Relevant aims of secondary education	<p>Corresponding objectives for teaching Sesotho</p> <p>through the study of Sesotho literature and culture;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand and develop a critical appreciation of culture of the Basotho as well as other people's culture reflected in literary texts;</li> <li>Evaluate and present a personal response to cultural beliefs;</li> <li>Detecting flaws and falsehoods, etc. in cultural beliefs and making valid judgements</li> </ul>

### Sesotho

Unlike the Geography syllabus, which has a long list of specific objectives, the Sesotho syllabus has 22 objectives, of which only seven are clearly aligned with the aims of secondary education as articulated in CAP. The data illustrates that there is greater alignment in traditional literature, where topics on culture and personal development of the learners are dealt with. As part of culture, the syllabus requires learners to “assess, evaluate, describe, examine etc. cultural practices covering development of a child and practices involved from birth to adulthood” (p. 6). This statement reflects cultural practices associated with upbringing of a Mosotho child, such that they might develop a culturally acceptable character.

However, while there is some evidence of alignment between the Sesotho syllabus and aims of secondary education, there are no opportunities for learners to participate in community activities. The *Curriculum and Assessment Policy*, on the contrary, prescribes that secondary education ought to provide opportunities for learners to participate in activities promoting democratic principles, human rights and emerging issues in society. On the topic on knowledge of customs and cultural practices, there is no mention of participation in

community activities such as matsema, loosely translated to (working together) and lesokoana (rain praying game). Given that these activities are taught at the junior secondary level, one would have expected that there is continuity at this level of education where students would make meaningful contribution in addressing community issues through direct participation.

### The Degree of Knowledge Integration

The second question that frames this study is seeking the degree of knowledge integration in the syllabus with regards to inter-disciplinary and inter-discursive relations. In this section we analyse the data on the degree of knowledge integration in LGCSE Geography and Sesotho syllabi using Bernstein’s concept of classification.

### Interdisciplinary relations

As highlighted earlier, the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy* framework advocates for connecting knowledge among various school subjects, especially within the same learning areas. Table 2 summarises the findings of the analysis of both Geography and Sesotho syllabi to determine the extent of interdisciplinary relations.

**Table 2** Knowledge integration

	# of statements reflecting Inter-disciplinary relations	# of statements reflecting Inter-discursive relations
Geography syllabus	6 = C–	C– = 2
	10 = C– –	C– – = 3
Sesotho syllabus	1 = C–	C– = 0
	C– – = 0	C– – = 6

As can be seen from the summary of the findings as presented in Table 2, there are a few statements in the two syllabi that create a context for integrated teaching and learning. A comparison between the two syllabi suggests that the Geography syllabus is stronger on inter-disciplinary relations than the Sesotho syllabus, which has only one statement coded C–. The Geography syllabus has 16 statements reflecting knowledge from other subjects. Out of these statements, 10 were coded C– –, which reflects a high degree of integration of content from other subjects. The interdisciplinary approach is more obvious in Section B on Economic Geography, where overlaps between Geography and Development Studies exist. For example, on the topic on tourism, which is an economic system, the syllabus prescribes as follows: “Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the tourist industry on areas that receive tourists” (ECOL, 2015a:17). This statement was coded C– – as the same content can be covered in other subjects such as Tourism and Development Studies.

### Inter-discursive relations

Table 2 further indicates that both syllabi, though to a limited extent, encourage teachers to link formal school knowledge with daily experiences of the learners, with Sesotho syllabus having more statements coded C– –. Table 3 below shows of statements which are explicit about everyday knowledge and how the statements were coded accordingly to illustrate the degree of knowledge integration.

All the above statements were coded at least C–, for they represent loose boundaries between school knowledge and everyday knowledge. In Geography, inter-discursive relations are particularly visible in statements of human/economic geography. This is to be expected, given that, unlike Physical Geography which is a specialised scientific branch of school Geography with strong classification (C+), Human Geography emphasises understanding of human systems that are within the immediate experiences of the learners.

**Table 3** Syllabus statements encouraging inter-discursive relations

Geography	Code	Sesotho	Code
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suggest ways in which local communities can reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and describe how local communities can adapt to the negative effects of climate change.</li> </ul>	C–	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction of the baby to the environment;</li> </ul>	C– –
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suggest and evaluate social problems resulting from poverty in urban areas.</li> </ul>	C–	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lessons and skills a child learns at home from those of his/her age-group and also from elders;</li> </ul>	C– –
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the use of diamonds.</li> </ul>	C–	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Taboos: related to food, places;</li> </ul>	C– –
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the importance of sandstone and other rocks quarried in Lesotho.</li> </ul>	C– –	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The manner of informing the father about the first born baby;</li> </ul>	C– –
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe efforts taken by the Lesotho government and other stakeholders to address the problems caused by HIV/AIDS.</li> </ul>	C– –	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to evaluate and present and considered personal response to cultural beliefs;</li> </ul>	C– –
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to detect flaws, falsehoods, in cultural beliefs ...</li> </ul>	C– –

Similarly, statements on inter-discursive relations in Sesotho syllabus are found only in one theme. As can be seen from Table 3, all sample statements C– – reflect the content of traditional literature, which suggests that it is only this theme that is exposed to the inter-discursive relations. The content and competences contained in the statements listed in the table comprise what may be described as informal knowledge that learners acquire through observation as they interact with elders and peers in their communities.

### Conclusion

This paper set out to analyse alignment between LGCSE programme and the *Lesotho Curriculum and Assessment Policy*, using Geography and Sesotho syllabi as case studies. Although there are some variations between the two subjects, the study has highlighted some areas of alignment between the content of the syllabi and some aims of secondary education, as listed in CAP. The alignment is more noticeable between the aims of secondary education relating to environmental exploration and culture, and Geography topics dealing with the physical environmental aspect and the Sesotho traditional literature, respectively. Furthermore, the Geography syllabus affords learners the opportunity to develop technological skills as envisaged in CAP.

However, both syllabi provide limited opportunities for promotion of political values such as democracy and citizenship, which denies the students an opportunity to understand human processes and political systems at community level. Moreover, contrary to the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy's* expectations for using integrated approach in organising curriculum content, the two syllabi generally emphasise disciplinary knowledge. Integration is only visible in isolated topics of the two syllabi, with the Sesotho syllabus having only one statement reflecting inter-disciplinary relations. Based on the findings of this study, we conclude that the teaching or learning of the two syllabi, offered as part of the LGCSE programme, is unlikely to change educational

practice as envisaged in CAP. Further research on how teachers translate the syllabi into practice would generate useful insights.

### Note

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