

# HISTORY EDUCATION AT THE CROSSROADS: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS IN A LESOTHO CONTEXT

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## ***Abstract***

*The status of History education within a Social Science education framework of the Lesotho educational system is a cause for concern. In an attempt to foster the development goals of the Kingdom of Lesotho, education and especially Social Science education were identified as a major role player. In spite of this realisation, History education, and to a lesser extent Geography education was identified as liabilities that could be substituted with other disciplines such as Development Studies. Geography had, however, gradually regained a position as a major Social Science discipline while History education is still considered unimportant in relation to national needs. The evidence is that many schools in Lesotho do not offer History as a subject and both students and teachers of history are not taken seriously as academics. Against this backdrop, this article explores the situation from historical and pedagogic perspectives. I draw considerable examples from contexts such as Cameroon and South Africa, where I have had the opportunity to experience the fragile nature and status of History education both as student and teacher/lecturer. I then suggest why any consideration of Social Sciences with the exclusion of History education will not lead to the desired national goals, thereby justifying the need for a turnaround strategy that favours the teaching and learning of History in Lesotho. The article concludes with recommendations and the prospects for the future, based on the issues raised and discussed.*

**Keywords:** History; Teaching and learning; History education; Lesotho; Heritage.

## **Introduction**

Any academic discipline needs justification. Its advocates have a responsibility to explain why it is worthy of attention and to clarify the merits of its place in any syllabus or curriculum. History education is no exception to this expectation. One would even think that prevailing international and local trends as well as increasing discourses questioning the relevance of History education puts the task of justification more on the doorsteps of its stakeholders

than those of other academic disciplines. If the words of Peter Stearns (1998) are anything to go by, then the need for such justification even becomes a matter of extreme pedagogic and/or social necessity. His submission is that: “historians do not perform heart transplants, improve highway design, or arrest criminals. In a society that quite correctly expects education to serve useful purposes, the functions of history can seem more difficult to define than those of engineering and medicine...” (Stearns, 1998:1). Even though Stearns was writing for an American audience and society, there is no denying the fact that his observations are justifiably generalisable as they highlight a major educational concern across many nations around the world on the place of history in the curriculum and its role thereof. Apart from Stearns, other historians of repute such as Edward Hallett Carr (2008) have engaged debates on perspectives relating to history’s role and importance in society. Therefore, these observations on the practical value of History, beget such questions as: why bother with what has been, given that people live in the present, thereby making them to worry more about the now as well as the anticipations of what is yet to come?

It is against this backdrop that I acknowledge in this article that the products of historical study are less tangible and sometimes less immediate than those that stem from other disciplines. However, in spite of this acknowledgement, my stance in this article is in favour of a view that History is in fact very valuable, useful and really indispensable. As I unpack the arguments supporting this position in the course of this article, it becomes evident that societies in general, but most importantly Lesotho, as the context of this article, will benefit substantially from giving more attention and support to the teaching and learning of History in schools. I start off this article by explaining my personal observations on the challenges facing discipline History in different contexts and reviewing international and local literature on the same theme. Through this review and the establishment of trends and patterns in several contexts, I am able to position the discipline as being at the ‘crossroads’ as I have suggested in my title. The article proceeds with an explanation of the uses and values of History and the reasons why the discipline should be taken more seriously in Lesotho. I then conclude the article with suggestions on measures that could be adopted by the government of the Kingdom of Lesotho through the Ministry of Education and other relevant stakeholders concerned with education in Lesotho to turn around the present History education predicament.

As a starting point, it is important to clarify the inferences made in this article on History education and not simply on History throughout. The relevance of this distinction stems from the fact that as much as both concepts are highly related and are most often used interchangeably, they are but two sides of the same coin. Once quizzed on the subject, Jonathan Even-Zohar, who is the Director of EUROCLIO – the European Association of History Educators noted that History is a very wide discipline which seeks from today’s vantage point to amass a comprehensive recollection of events, processes and mechanisms of societies, on many different levels (Banu, 2014). Consequently, History embodies the efforts undertaken to gain deeper understanding of how the world around us came to be. But the teaching and learning of History – History education – is an even more complicated affair than explained above. This complication arises from the complexity of concerns linked with History education, such as: Which History should be taught? How should it be taught? Do we need more, or rather less of it in schools? Do children learn History as a story of the nation or as a variety of inquiry-based interpretations? Does the state include the History of minorities? Does the national story fill the young hearts with pride and collective pain, or does it problematize complex layers of dealing with past crimes? (Banu, 2014). Therefore, unlike most other school subjects with most probable exceptions of language and religion, History education is a hotly debated public good. Nevertheless, this very fine line of divide is not a serious element in the discussions of this article. Rather, the focus of this article is on the state of History as an academic discipline in selected contexts and a justification of its place in the Lesotho education framework through an examination of its uses and values.

### **The state of History education in different contexts – from personal experiences and observations to research literature**

From my experience teaching History in secondary and high schools<sup>1</sup> in Cameroon and then as a university lecturer in South Africa and presently Lesotho over a period spanning ten years, I have realised that History education is given far less attention in the perking order of academic subjects in these different countries. I have observed a very significant level of stigma towards students who major in History and even more towards their teachers because they are considered to be not good enough for other more “challenging” or

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<sup>1</sup> In Cameroon, secondary education is different from the high school. They are both distinguished by the GCE Ordinary and Advanced level exams respectively and while the former qualifies the candidate for the High school, the latter qualifies them for further studies at university.

“meaningful” subjects.

A glaring testament to this situation is the unfavourable position of History in the timetables of most schools. It is common knowledge from a teacher’s perspective that afternoon classrooms are more challenging to manage than classes that are delivered before the lunch break. It is more of a herculean task trying to get the full attention of students during the afternoon hours as they are visibly exhausted with the only thing on their minds being the jingling of the final school bell for them to go home. Empirical evidence supporting this claim can be sought from a study conducted to this effect in the Government Medical College in India. The study in question evaluated the retention of anatomy lectures conducted in the morning hours against those conducted in the afternoon hours and founded that 7% of the participants were totally inattentive for morning lectures in contrast to the 20% during the afternoon lecture; and that all aspects of memory tested including retention was better for morning lectures than afternoon lectures (Rokade & Bahette, 2013). Even though the above study was conducted in the context of an anatomy lesson and not History in particular, it is still apparent that most aspects of student’s memory are adversely affected in afternoon lectures resulting to the kind of lessons where students “... sit mute and glassy eyed, a few scribbling notes but most yawning in boredom” (Wineburg, 2001:217). Such sessions are obviously less productive in an educational sense and all the pedagogic skills, efforts and experience of the teacher can at best reduce the level of the implications of the situation without solving it completely. Unfortunately, it is such periods that are most often than not allocated to History lessons by school management. For all my History teaching years in Cameroon (and I taught in three different schools), I do not remember having a timetable that allocated my History lessons in the early hours of a school day. This is also a major observation I have made in the process of observing and assessing student teachers on teaching practice in South African and Lesotho schools. As a result of unfavourable allocation of time slots for History, the subject has gained a reputation of being dull and boring.

Another important observation is the fact that schools that have constraints on staff capacity most times find it easier to allocate History teaching to non-specialist History teachers. This is usually done under the incorrect assumption that History is merely the accumulation of facts or stories about the past and therefore can be taught by every other teacher. This is a very unfortunate assumption considering that facts about the past constitute only one form of

historical knowledge which is the substantive knowledge with the other part being the procedural knowledge of History. It is a mastery of this latter level of historical knowledge that gives History, its specialised discipline credential and distinguishes charlatan History teachers from specialists because as Slater (1989) cited in Kitson, Pendry, & Husbands (2003) puts it, content can never be objective and value-free but the procedures of History can. This procedural knowledge of History, also known as second order concepts refers to such skills as historical significance, causation, empathy, historical interpretation, change and continuity, historical time, historical conceptual understanding, similarities/differences, and historical interpretations (Kitson *et al.*, 2003). According to Brooks, Aris & Perry (1993), a focus on substantive knowledge of history (a preoccupation of non-specialist history teachers) leads to the kind of history that is restricted to dictating notes, reading and copying from textbooks and rote learning. This makes most students to be afraid of history as the discipline becomes reduced to assimilation and retention of facts through memorisation – facts which the students don't see the purpose of knowing. Celebrated historian RG Collingwood sums this succinctly in the following statement:

*A man who taught history badly, when he was at school, and has never worked at it since, may think there is nothing in it except events and dates and places: so that wherever he can find events and dates and places, he will fancy himself in the presence of history. But anyone who has ever worked intelligently at history knows that it is never about mere events, but about actions that express the thoughts of their agents; and that the framework of dates and places is of value to the historian only because, helping to place each action in its context, it helps him to realize what the thoughts of an agent operating in that context must have been like (cited in Pattiz, 2004:239).*

Therefore, the contribution of capable History teachers to the collective feeling of students towards History education is very imperative and cannot be over emphasised. The idea here is that it is the teacher rather than the subject itself that is the cause for concern in most cases. Consequently, as Brooks *et al.* (1993) put it, the more capable the teacher of History, the better the chances of learners choosing to do History and enjoying it. Engaging non-specialist History teachers to dispense History courses is tantamount to undermining the procedural component of historical knowledge and accordingly promoting a very simplistic view of History education that focuses on historical content knowledge only.

In South Africa like in Lesotho, most secondary schools have phased out History completely. This fact is substantiated in greater detail by Van Eeden

(2012) whose work explores the status of History teaching in 20th century South African schools with a particular focus on the Further Education and Training (FET) band. My experience is, however, first hand as I have had the opportunity to visit many schools in these two countries, while observing and mentoring student teachers on their teaching practices.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, while still working with a University in South Africa, I had my History education students walk up to me at the beginning of the academic year of 2013 to complain that they had been denied a renewal of funding and were not allowed to register for the reason that they were majoring in History. They were presented with the options of replacing history as their major or self-fund their studies. Needless to say, most of these students that came from very disadvantaged backgrounds and were unable to feed themselves, not to talk of paying for their tuition and accommodation, were forced to swap history in order to continue benefiting from the university's financial aid program or the Department of Education's *Funza Lushaka* bursary. Ironically, the History courses at that university were amongst the most crowded with a steady approximate enrollment of 250 students in the first year's courses that I taught between the academic years 2010 and 2013. Similar in Lesotho, in spite of my observations on the dwindling nature of History education in the secondary schools as explained earlier, my History courses with the Faculty of Education of the National University of Lesotho are amongst the most crowded of all the courses in the Department of Languages and Social Education – LASED (statistics for the 2014/15 academic year). The question here is why do more students continue to take history education at a tertiary institution such as the National University of Lesotho even as the society continues to show contempt for the discipline? As much as this paradox is of great concern, it is certainly a gap that can only be explored in a different research endeavor as it does not fall within the scope and focus of this particular article.

This article has up to this point focused almost exclusively on my experiences and observations on the state of History education in the different geographical contexts I have had the privilege of exploring over my 10 years career of History teaching/lecturing and mentoring. At this juncture, it is important to find out what other scholars have to say on the same theme. This is done through a review of some research and empirical literature.

The work of Ntabeni (2010) is the closest attempt to unpack the nature of History education in the Lesotho school system. Her area of concern though

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<sup>2</sup> Though a history lecturer, my job description requires that I also observe non-history student teachers on Teaching Practice in schools, hence my realisation that most schools don't offer history as a discipline.

is on the primary schools sector where she observes that since 1967, History education has been dispensed as an integral part of a social studies programme and not as an independent and alone standing subject. This had however not always been the case because prior to being subsumed in 1967, History was more relevant to the extent that it was taught as a full-fledged subject. This relevance was also demonstrated by the fact that the denominational Teacher Training Colleges engaged in primary training programmes, taught History in accordance with the requirement of the primary syllabi between 1907 and 1974 (Ntabeni, 2010). However, with the 1967 shift from History education to broader social studies, the National Teacher Training College (NTTC) created in 1975 (now known as the Lesotho College of Education – LCE) (Lefoka, 2000), took a decision to teach Social and Development Studies at the expense of History. Along the same trend, Ntabeni (2010) notes that the B.Ed primary programme at the National University of Lesotho's Faculty of Education, accommodate student teachers in Social Studies who only do Geography and Development Studies but no History education. Even though this study focused on primary education, there is every reason to think that its findings should rightly be generalised to include the situation in secondary and high schools especially when one considers my observations as narrated earlier. The implication is therefore that it is the future of History education in Lesotho in general, not only at the primary level, that is bleak and except drastic measures are taken, the situation can only get worse. As mentioned in the introduction, the last phase of this article will address the issue of why it is imperative that the boat of History education should not be allowed to sink into Lesotho waters.

In the context of South Africa, the nature of History education in contemporary times cannot be comprehensively understood without a corresponding understanding of the links to the apartheid ideology. Education in the apartheid era was used as a weapon to divide society through a construction of different identities amongst learners (Fru, 2012). History education in particular was largely used as a propaganda machinery to suppress the aspirations of especially the black majority population (Polokow-Suransky, 2002). Both whites and people of colour<sup>3</sup> were required to study the History of white pioneers and heroes. Other race groups of South Africa did not appear to have any History, but were rather portrayed as hindrances in the efforts of the white heroes to survive. Under such circumstances, it is not surprising that History education was not very popular during the apartheid

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<sup>3</sup> Term used to refer to Black, Indian, and Coloured race groups of South Africa.

era as the non-whites population resisted an adulterated kind of History whose aim was to propagate Afrikaner nationalism, white racial superiority and the subjugation and alienation of the History of people of colour. As a result, many black South Africans came to see History as a type of knowledge with which they could not identify.

With the demise of apartheid in 1994, the hope was that the status of the discipline was going to change favourably. This has unfortunately not been the case. Under a democratic dispensation, Nuttal and Wright (2000) observe that many South Africans across races have developed negative attitudes towards History as they feel that it is potentially a source of discomfort and embarrassment because it points directly to apartheid bullying, oppression, degradation and humiliation of blacks. History education has therefore become irrelevant to the needs of many of the post-apartheid generation of students who would rather forget the “bloody past” and focus on other specialisations that they claim are more likely to give them opportunities in a tight labour market (Nuttal & Wright, 2000). Not surprising therefore that most South Africans turned their backs on history during deliberations on a new curriculum (Schoeman, 2006).

In an effort to redress the educational imbalances of the past, the newly elected ANC government introduced a new curriculum, known as Curriculum 2005 in all schools from 1 January 1998 (DoE, 2002). For various reasons this curriculum was revised in 2000 (Chisholm, *et al.*, 2000). Rooted in the Revised National Curriculum, History formed part of the Learning Area Social Sciences in the General Education and Training (GET) Band where its standing in relationship to Geography was described as “separate but link” (DoE, 2002:4). In the present Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) that was introduced in 2012, History keeps its independent status as subject in the GET and Further Education and Training (FET) Band (DoBE, 2011a; 2011b). An indication of further hope for History to play an important role as an independent discipline, is the Department of Basic Education’s intension to consider the notion of making History a compulsory subject grades 10-12 (Phakathi, 2015).

Despite the fact that History is enjoying status in own right, the research of Mhlongo (2013) yet shows various reasons why learners in rural schools of KwaZulu-Natal<sup>4</sup> still choose not to take History as a subject. The following factors were listed by the participants: unhappiness about the nature of

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4 KwaZulu-Natal popularly known as KZN is one of nine provinces of the Republic of South Africa.

historical content where they do not want to study the past, particularly apartheid; the way History is taught and learnt. Being influenced by other people has also influenced some learners, especially if people they trust told them negative things about History. Finally, the feeling that after passing History they might not be able to secure decent jobs to which they aspire (Mhlongo, 2013).

### **Rationale for a turnaround strategy towards History education in Lesotho**

The picture presented above is regrettable when one considers the expected contribution history education is supposed to play in any society. There is therefore need for a turnaround attitude towards the teaching and learning of History in Lesotho schools. This turn around can take the forms of government policy initiatives through the Ministry of Education and Training, individual schools reconsidering their lackluster positions vis-à-vis History education, parents and students oriented to understand the hitherto misconstrued values of discipline History in relation to national development goals and personal empowerment. However, for any desired turnaround of the status quo to be achieved and convincingly so, History education will have to justify its merits. Hence, this section will provide such rationale through an examination of the uses and values of History in Lesotho schools.

As a starting point, History education will introduce Basotho students to their heritage by teaching them about their society – what it is, how it grows, the way it works, and what it has achieved. The Collins English Dictionary (2006:737) defines heritage simply as “... the evidence of the past such as historical sites, buildings and the unspoiled natural environment, considered collectively as the inheritance of present day society”. This implies that heritage can appear in both tangible (such as monuments, artifacts, statues) and intangible forms (such as songs, indigenous knowledge, oral History and memory, performing arts or rituals). Promoting pride in heritage through History education will create a sense of identity (Fru, 2010) and culture that is prerequisite for nation building (Wasserman, 2010). This need is more imperative in a politically and religiously diverse society like Lesotho where the need for a common thread that can create harmony and cohesion is paramount. For example, *Taba Busui* is a very significant historical space that speaks to the collective memory of all Basotho. The very foundation and roots of the Basotho Nation rests on an understanding of this historic/ heritage site. By emphasising the significance of this site together with others

of similar significance, history education ensures that such sites are conserved and preserved so that they can be bequeathed to future generations. Through a narrative of the national story and an emphasis on distinctive features of the national experience, History education drives home and understanding of national values that brings with it a commitment to national loyalty (Stearns, 1998). According to Deacon (2004), learners who are aware of their heritage, can understand their role in its conservation.

Furthermore, History education develops in students the ability to think critically through the weighing of evidence, discerning facts from fancy, and by being less susceptible to propaganda (Carr, 2008; Giliomee, 2010; Van Eeden, 2012). In the process, students will become responsible, reflective, and active citizens who can make informed and reasoned decisions about issues confronting their societies from local to global levels. Through engaging in historical scenarios, students are able and expected to act upon societal problems of different sorts for individual and common good. Students' attainment of those expectations depends, to a large extent, on the historical skill of critically evaluating not only information but also the logical and evidential basis of an argument. This historical wisdom also includes the ability to make right use of knowledge through introduction to past controversies and the realization that truth is seldom on one side alone (Adejunmobi, 1975). Therefore, a study of History acquaints students with the historical methodology to help facilitate the effective decision making skills needed in life outside the classroom walls. Once students' historical thinking skills which are applicable and transferable to everyday affairs and problems are developed and enhanced, students are likely to recognize when they are exploited and manipulated by certain interest groups of society. It is factual knowledge that in 1986, Lesotho witnessed a military coup d'état. Close to three decades later, precisely in 2014, the country was on the verge of another coup. The point here is that a lack of analysis and understanding of the circumstances surrounding the 1986 coup and its national repercussions, created conditions favourable for that historical event to repeat itself. Consequently, a continuous ignoring of the formal study of History in Lesotho is not only preventing students from acquiring critical historical awareness of themselves and their society (Schoeman, 2006) but is also tantamount to robbing the future generations of Lesotho of the knowledge and skills that are essential to contribute to sustaining an open, equitable and tolerant society.

Moreover, History education will promote moral values so that students can develop good character when they hear or read about the great personalities of the past. Studying the stories of individuals and situations in the past allows a student of History to test his or her own moral sense and to hone it against some of the real complexities individuals have faced in difficult settings. Such examples of historical figures that have weathered adversity in real life can be an immense source of inspiration to students. Carr (2008), Giliomee (2010) and Stearns (1998) submit that these inspirational figures go beyond 'certifiable' heroes who successfully worked through moral dilemmas, to include ordinary men and women of the past who provide lessons in courage, diligence or constructive protest. If the identification of historical role models is accepted as an indispensable recipe for nation building, then History education provides that possibility through the mitigation of the activities and character traits of historical figures.

Again, in the process of promoting heritage and identity as indicated earlier, the study of History becomes essential for encouraging the advancement of responsible citizenship. This is made possible through teaching of local History and by developing a sense of active participation in the progressive activities of the society. For instance, historical developments such as the efforts of King Moshoeshoe I to protect the integrity of the Basotho Nation from the persistent invasion of the Boers and the British evoke a sense of pride and love for the nation. Such patriotic sentiments leads to students being ready to defend the interest of the nation as well as promote habits of mind that are vital for responsible public behaviour, whether as a national, a community leader, an informed voter, a petitioner, or a simple observer. Along a similar line, the nature of discipline History makes it the only significant storehouse of data on aspects concerning the nation such as national institutions, problems, and values (Giliomee, 2010). Such storehouse therefore becomes a springboard for evidence on how the nation has interacted with other societies and facilitate the understanding of how changes that today affect the lives of citizens have emerged. Therefore, History as a school subject will promote social understanding and civic efficacy on the part of students who are going to take the office of citizenship.

The promotion of teaching and learning of History in Lesotho will also go a long way to promote international understanding by emphasizing the essential oneness of the human race in spite of our differences, and through the growing realization of the interdependence of nations and peoples. No

nation can exist in isolation. Moreover, the History of migration reveals how push and pull factors contributed to the movement of people in time and space. These migrations had the effect of separating clans and tribes while creating others in the process. A case in point is the waves of Bantu migration from central Africa towards the eastern and southern parts of Africa. An understanding of these dynamics will enhance the notion that accidents of History are responsible for the settlement of populations in any given place. Such understanding will promote international cooperation amongst nations and tolerance towards people from other nations based on concept that humanity is in effect a family and contemporary national borders are human creations. This will also mean tendencies such as xenophobia, racism and tribalism will be strongly curbed. At the national level, tolerance will also be developed through being sympathetic to other individuals or groups who may belong to different ethnic groups or whose opinions may differ from theirs.

Finally, the promotion of History education in Lesotho will open up possibilities in the world of work to students. This is in contrast to concerns advanced by critics of History education. However, such concerns depict clear ignorance of the boundless opportunities that exist in relation to History. From a professional perspective, professional historians can become teachers at various levels, can work in museums and media centres, do historical research for businesses or public agencies, or be active members in historical consultancies (Giliomee, 2010). In spite of this considerable number of professional jobs available for historians, the skills and capacities that History education promotes are also very instrumental in many other work situations. For instance the ability to find and evaluate sources of information and the means to find and evaluate diverse interpretations are very enticing skills for most employers. As I have explained in the first section of this article, many people who are drawn into History education in Lesotho and in other places worry about its relevance. In a society that has a low employment rate, the concern of job futures is valid for most areas of study not just History education. However, as I have demonstrated, history education or historical training in general is not an indulgence; it leads directly to many professional careers and can clearly help its recipients in their working lives.

### **Recommendations and prospects**

After examining the rationale for the promotion of History education in Lesotho through an exploration of the uses and values or importance of

history, this section will reveal certain measures that should be considered to make the turnaround more feasible.

Firstly, History should be offered in all schools in the territory of the Kingdom of Lesotho. This will imply that students will be orientated at a very early stage on the nature of the subject and given the opportunity to pursue it because it is offered at their school. A very practical way of enforcing this measure will be to start with the state run schools. After which mission and other lay private schools can be forced to comply through a bargain on government subsidy to these schools. This move has to be followed by a clear articulation of the goals of history teaching in Lesotho because as Adejunmobi (1975) notes, without properly defined goals, teaching becomes confused and results are usually disappointing.

Secondly, schools must be discouraged from employing non-specialist history staff to dispense history lessons in schools. The shortcomings of this practice have been sufficiently highlighted in the first part of this article. My view is that the National University of Lesotho has trained and is still training enough skilled personnel to occupy any history teaching vacancy in Lesotho. Shortage of qualified manpower is as a result, no excuse for filling History positions with charlatan or non-specialist History teachers.

Thirdly, History teaching should change students' conceptions of History by encouraging them to identify and act upon the most important historical questions about the past. In other words, History instruction should not treat historical knowledge as an end in itself, but as a means to increase students' ability to understand complex human experiences across time and space. The ultimate goal of teaching History should be to help students enlarge their understanding of the increasingly interdependent social world and their place in it. History should not be used as a means to socialise students of different ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds into the mainstream, or the dominant group's world view and culture by transmitting that privileged group's cultural norms and values to students (i.e., History as a tool for cultural transmission). Rather, History should be used to help students not only recognize their own cultural roots, identity, and heritage, but also gain insight into other people's cultures and world views. School History should instill in learners' recognition of cultural pluralism and tolerant attitudes toward different ethnic groups (Yilmaz, 2008/09). In this light, school History should be aimed at developing students' historical thinking and reasoning skills by providing them with historical knowledge, procedures, and skills, by means of

which they as young citizens can distinguish facts from opinions; detect bias, prejudices, and unwarranted claims; weigh contrasting evidence; recognize the core of one's argument and its logic along with the strength of evidence; and critically evaluate other's positions and perspectives. It is these suggestions that will take away the 'boredom' from history and make it the kind of social scientific discipline that it should be. The implications of these suggestions are that refresher courses will have to be organized with in-service history teachers in order to familiarise them with these ambitions.

Fourthly, research into the teaching aims, content and methods of teaching History should be encouraged. One way of doing this can be through the provision of incentives and other research grants to History and History education researchers from Lesotho. This will ensure that there is continued availability of empirical information, latest trends, challenges, and possibilities for the discipline.

## **Conclusion**

This article has explored the challenges facing History education in Lesotho. In exploring these challenges, I have argued that the situation is not unique to Lesotho but rather a global trend whereby History as an academic discipline is not viewed as important in meeting the needs of this era. To substantiate this claim, this article has incorporated the contexts in Cameroon and South Africa through a discussion of my personal experiences as a History student and then a teacher and lecturer but also through a review of research literature. Based on the issues raised, this article has then provided reasons why History should be given more attention in Lesotho and I have concluded the article with some recommendations to the different stakeholders on how to achieve this turnaround.

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