

# Examining the Dynamics of General and Specific Didactics: Case Study the Use of Conflict Resolution Approach in the Teaching of Citizenship Education

Dr. Mbonteh Vivian Mbole Nkong

**Abstract**— The secondary school system of Cameroon has suffered a lot of critic from parents and general public especially at the domain of implementing the curriculum for effective skills acquisition and competence of the learner, so this study seek to examines the Dynamics of General and Specific Didactics, Case Study: The Use of Conflict Resolution Approach in the Teaching of Citizenship Education in Cameroon. The study was carried out through descriptive survey. The study population included Citizenship teachers in Secondary Schools in Cameroon. From this population, a sample of 50 Citizenship secondary schools teachers were drawn using purposive sampling. The instruments used for data collection were: questionnaire, document analysis and classroom observation checklist. Descriptive statistics namely: frequencies and percentages were used to analyze the data. The findings of the study showed that, majority of the secondary schools and teachers teaching citizenship in Cameroon secondary schools lack the competency of teaching conflict resolutions as a result neglect that aspect of the affective domain in the citizenship curriculum. Secondly Conflict Resolution in the current Secondary schools curriculum is a matter of core topic that cut crossed many other subjects, is not a subject on its own, when the society rely on morality, peace and integrity to sustained, which is currently lacking. The teachers also lacked sufficient didactics for effective teaching of Conflict Resolution and other related topics, there is much more use of general didactics than specific didactics in secondary schools curriculum of Cameroon especially the Citizenship curriculum. Conclusively, the study was that curriculum developers in Cameroon are currently realizing the needs and relevance of the topic conflict resolution in Cameroon and should focused their curriculum more to the affective domain.

**Index Terms**— Examining, Dynamics, General, Specific, Didactics, Conflict, Resolution, Citizenship, Teaching Cameroon.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Educational systems in various countries and regions of the world differ in their organization, structure and content. They differ firstly because the societies providing the education

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differ in their cultures and secondly because they have different goals for education. However, for most countries these goals tend to fall under four major categories: utilitarian, social, cultural as well as personal goals. [1]. Utilitarian goals are at two levels, that is., those of the state and those of the individual. As far as the state is concerned, it is its duty to invest in the education of her people to produce manpower for national development. It is, therefore, concerned with the type of education her citizens receive, for it expects returns. From the individual point of view, the benefits of education should be the ability to read and write, seen as a government's effort to eradicate illiteracy.

The use of instructional didactics in the classroom has the potential to help the teacher explain new concepts clearly, resulting in better student understanding of the concepts being taught. However, they are not ends in themselves but they are means to an end. This has been emphasized by a number of scholars. [2]. Similar sentiments are shared by [3] who asserts that Relevant instructional didactics enable the learners to have a Clear understanding of a lesson. Special didactics allow learners to have practical experiences which help them to develop skills and concepts and to work in a variety of ways. The work of [4] graphically explain that people learn more through the senses of sight and hearing compared to other senses

## II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The term didactics originates from the Greek *didaskhein* which means to teach, to educate. But the term can also mean having the ability to teach the people who have the ability to be taught using teaching aids, the content in the curriculum is usually divided into various subjects but there are also other kind of content that may be common to all subjects or is, for example, psychological by nature [5]. To interpret the dynamics of general and specific didactics there are various possibilities [6]. Usually we put them opposite to each other with their respective background disciplines. Every school subject has its own base, some of them have it in an academic discipline. In the area of education general education forms the background, [7] has described the development of the relation between general didactics and subject or specific didactics in Germany.

He states that the dialogue between general didactics and subject didactics began in the early 1950s gradually diminished and got special subject didactics emphases. [8] Claims that certain special questions in subject didactics became important and left the theme of the relation between general didactics and subject didactics in the

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background. Questions like selection of the themes, the position of a subject among other subjects, and the hierarchy between subjects came important in the discussion. This trend was in close connection to the reform of teacher's education in Cameroon, in 1993 and the representatives of subject didactics considered themselves belonging more to the realm of their subject than in general pedagogy. Similarly, [9] on teacher trainers and trainees' attitudes towards the implementation of Social Studies curriculum in Kenya's Teacher education institutions, noted that the materials that trainees use in preparation for teaching practice in primary schools are inadequate and of low quality. Most of these studies on the teaching of Social Studies were carried out before the introduction of the new Social Studies Syllabus in 2002. Since after the main reform in 1993 in Cameroon and the April 1998 Law of Education in Cameroon, many other policies have been changing in the aspect of education and curriculum innovations but little or nothing on the aspect of the affective domain in the curriculum is taking in to consideration. The soft skills such as love, peace, empathy, and patriotism are some of the qualities that Cameroonian students are lacking because of the inadequate implementation of some of these topics in our general curriculum. That is the reason behind the article sought to find out the dynamics of general and specific didactics in Cameroon secondary schools using Conflict Resolution as a case study in citizenship education.

### III. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### Relationship between General and Specific Didactics

[10] Has made a summary of the relation between general didactics and subject didactics:

- The relation of general didactics and specific subject didactics is not hierarchical by nature. Their relation is rather reciprocal. It means that it is not possible to deduce subject didactics from general didactics. They deal both with same problems, that is to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning, naturally a certain subject brings its typical characteristics to the discussion but their difference is predominantly in the possibility to generalize their solutions and decisions.

- Reduction of the Specific subject didactics to general didactics is not possible and general didactics has no immediate consequences in Specific subject didactics. That is the teacher or instructor rely more on specific didactics than general subject didactics, while many teachers in Cameroon turned to rely more on the general than the specific.

- The relation of general subject didactics and specific subject didactics is based on equality and constructive co-operation.

- The role of subject didactics between the discipline and education is not only a mediatory one, it must be seen as more independent with its own contributions to the common area of education and the subject.

- General didactics aim at as comprehensive model as possible but it does not mean that those models could include the instructional process in its entire totality. The models in subject didactics may, however, be done in more [11] claims that the separate-subject approach derives from Western-style humanism and it is deeply rooted in our thinking and in the academic knowledge system. The position of subject didactics as a special area in didactics is not a simple one. The

tradition and the cultural context is there, however, totally different. [12] has introduced his term pedagogical content knowledge and it has been noted to resemble the general and specific didactics in the world. The purpose, aims and goals are defined in the curriculum. The relation of the participants, the teacher and the students, are fairly often described with the didactic triangle according to [13] what is content in the teaching-studying-learning process is a very complicated thing. The triangle below indicate the study of general and specific didactics in teaching and learning process.

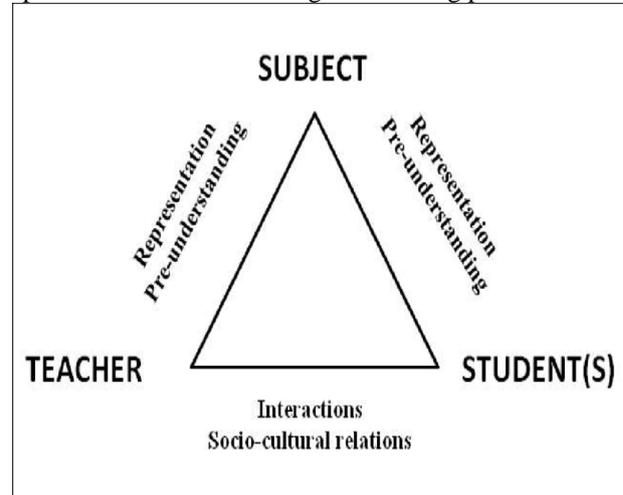


Figure 1. Didactic Triangle for Instruction

That is why it is usually analyzed in pairs. The most usual approach is to take the relation between the teacher and the students as a starting point. When this relation is seen as a pedagogical relation it brings with it certain special meanings. The grown-ups as students are of age but the pedagogical relation between the teacher and the student is, however, Asymmetrical. In the pedagogical relation the teacher has something that the student not yet has. In other respects this relation may be democratic. When the students are children the asymmetric quality of the relation is emphasized.

#### Teachers' didactical choices: Teaching as didactical practice

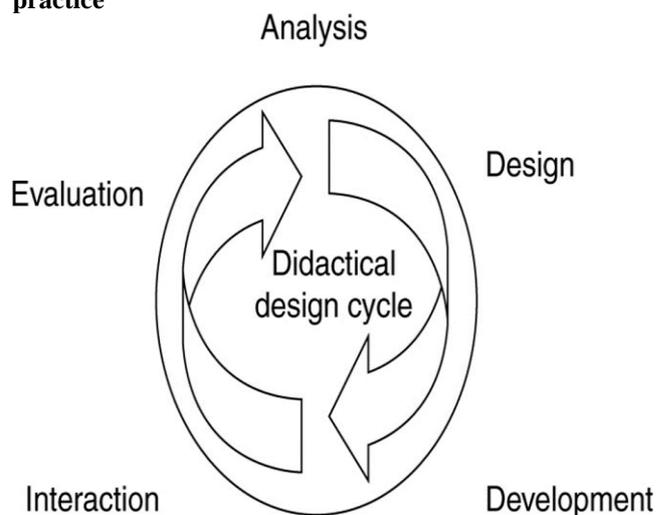


Figure 2: Teacher Didactical Design Cycle

Teachers' didactical choices: Teaching as didactical practice in his discussion of curriculum thinking and curriculum making as the practical fusion of curriculum and pedagogy, [14] points to the importance of reflective and professional

teachers as central actor in forming a knowledge-led school, this suggest that, teachers are having a pivotal role in the developmental and cognitive building of learners, which must be done with a lot of specific didactics in other to have a holistic mind.

Teaching might be framed as an activity that creates situations for learning. Teaching as a didactic practice indicates that the teacher must design and establish a knowledge practice and make it function as a learning practice for the pupils (see Figure 2). This is a knowledge practice that also involves the aspect of doing, and also means that pupils must perceive the situation as functional and motivational, and accept the rules of the game in line with the didactic contract between pupil and teacher. The teacher needs to create knowledge practices that combine and relate different forms of knowledge to the specific content knowledge and learning object. Here curriculum thinking formed as didactic analysis can make important contributions.

#### Curriculum theory meets Didaktik

Researchers labelled 'social realists' have been the major actors [15] in providing a 'knowledge turn' in curriculum theory and educational research over the last decade. Here, 'knowledge about knowledge' in education [16] and, especially, the Importance of specialized and differentiated forms of knowledge are central themes. The dominant tradition of curriculum theory has been primarily concerned with curriculum development at the institutional and programmatic level, while didactics is centered upon curriculum making at the classroom level. However, although these differences can be made ideal-typical [17], we regard Lilliedahl who argues that the selection of educational content and its organization is a matter of decontextualizing principles, and that curriculum and didactics may be understood as interrelated stages of such reconceptualization.

#### IV. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The failure of Africa development has been blamed to their inadequate quality of Education taught to their learners, this has been the same complained in Cameroon since independence in 1960 and 1961 respectively. The high level of unemployment, corruption and increasing socio-political unrest and violence in Cameroon secondary schools has been attributed to lack or inadequate moral ethics of students and school goers, which majority of the learners have seen or learned some of the concepts, but find it difficult to implement the concepts because teaching was poorly or partially implemented. The 1993 reform of education in Cameroon gave room for quality access and materials in the educational system, but in the contrary many of these secondary schoolteachers poorly implement general and specific didactics for the effective growth of the students.[18] Observes that instructional materials are inadequate and at the same time, teachers are not adequately prepared to use didactics during instruction. Majority of the secondary schools in Cameroon avoid the use of specific didactics

which could have a better quality on the instruction. This is the reason why the researcher is interested on the dynamics between general and specific didactics in teaching and learning.

#### V. RESEARCH QUESTION

Does the implementation of General and specific didactics influence the quality of instruction of citizenship education in Cameroon secondary schools?

#### VI. METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in all secondary schools in the North west and South west of Cameroon, Cameroon is a rich cultural and agricultural region where crops like maize, potatoes and vegetables are grown. Dairy farming is also widely practiced. It covers an area of 475,442 km<sup>2</sup>. The country has ten different regions with two sub-systems of Education one from the French speaking region and the other from the English speaking sub region Cameroon is a culturally and environmentally diverse coastal country located in Central Africa, which lies on the western side of Central Africa on the Bight of Biafra, which is a bay of the Eastern Atlantic Ocean. Cameroon is bordered by Chad, Nigeria, the Central African Republic, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, and the Republic of the Congo. Cameroon's 2019 population is estimated at 25.88 million, up substantially from the 2002 census population of 17.4 million. This makes Cameroon the 52nd most populous country in the world and the 17th most populous in Africa itself. The urbanization rate is currently 3.63%; 56.2% of the country having been urbanized to date according to the World Fact book. The research design adopted for the study was a descriptive survey. This kind of research was chosen because it would help reveal answers to questions concerning the current status of the teaching of Conflict Resolution in Citizenship Education using General didactics and Specific Didactics. The target population consisted of 50 secondary school teachers in the two speaking regions of Cameroon, the proportionate distribution sampling technique was use to select the teachers involved in using both General and Specific didactics, the purposive sampling technic was used to select the schools involved for the study. The instruments used for data collection in the study were: a questionnaire, document analysis and classroom observation checklist. The analyzed data was presented by use of tables and discussed in relation to the research questions and the reviewed literature so as to draw conclusions and make recommendations. Information from the teachers' guides was entered into a document analysis checklist. These were computed to get frequencies and percentages and the results presented in tables. Information from classroom observation checklists was coded and the data was analyze where frequencies and percentage.

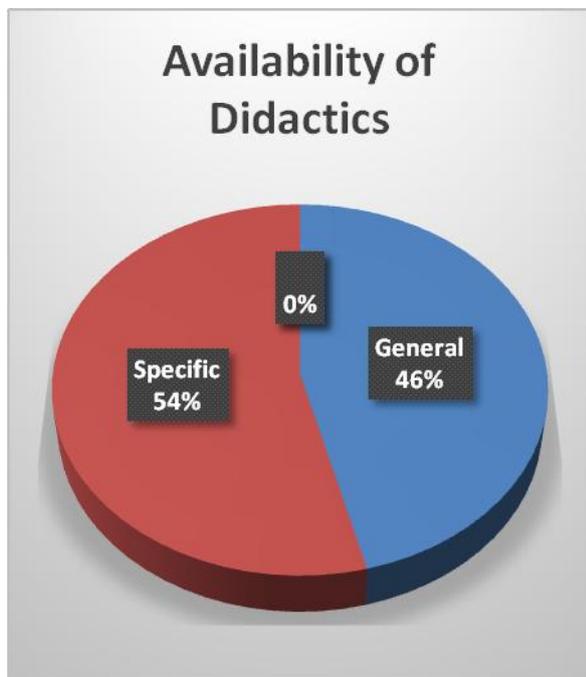
#### VII. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table-1. Availability of General Didactics use during Instruction of Conflict Resolution**

	Available (%)	Not AvaF (%)	Total F (%)
Pupils' Textbook	48(96)	2(4)	50(100)
Teachers' reference	40(90)	10(10)	50(100)
Chalkboard	50(100)	0(0)	50(100)
Wall maps	50(100)	0(0)	50(100)

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Atlases	50(100)	0(0)	50(100)
Newspapers	25(50)	25(50)	50(100)
Charts	36(72)	14(28)	50(100)
Audio Tapes	2(4)	48(96)	50(100)
School Radio	8(16)	42(84)	50(100)
Pictures	25(50)	25(50)	50(100)
Magazines	6(12)	44(88)	50(100)
Television	2(4)	48(96)	50(100)
Notice board	0(00)	50(100)	50(100)
Resource Persons	26(52)	24(48)	50(100)
Computers	2(4)	48(96)	50(100)
Local environment	25(50)	25(50)	50(100)
Real objects	8(16)	42(84)	50(100)
Teacher-made notes	48(96)	2(4)	50(100)



**Figure 3: Availability of General Didactics use during Instruction of Conflict Resolution (Checklist Observation)**

Table 1 above presents the teachers' responses on the availability of general didactics use during instruction of conflict resolution. All of the teachers, 50(100%), agreed to the fact that teachers' and student' used textbooks and is available during instruction as general didactics, the chalkboard, wall maps, atlases and teacher-made notes were available and used during instruction of conflict resolution in Citizenship Education. The findings further revealed that newspapers were available and used during the instruction of conflict resolution, according to an average percentage of respondents; 23(46%) agreed and 32(54%) disagreed on this same aspect. Inadequate availability of the specific didactics hinders effective preparation and teaching of Conflict Resolution in Citizenship Education.

Teachers and students rely on what News agencies and media houses publishes and broadcast respectively to helped them during the process of teaching and learning of conflict resolution in citizenship education., 36(72%) of the respondents indicates interest in newspaper and media during

instruction that are available and use during class instruction while 14(28%) said they were not available and during instruction.

The absence of these resources could be attributed to the lack of electricity in most rural schools and the inadequate general didactics in majority of the rural and urban schools. This may have made the learners miss out on the development of listening skills as well bringing reality into the lesson thus making the content applicable to their lives. [18] assert that audio tapes bring reality into the classroom and add interest and enjoyment to the lesson.

The findings also revealed that the television and the computer were available to only a handful 2(4%) while 48(96%) had no access to them. This may be explained by the fact that because of the rural setting, there was no electricity in most schools as earlier stated thus these gadgets could not be used. The teachers seemed to be keen on preparation for their lessons as 48(96%) agreed to teacher made-notes. A small percentage, 2(4%), did not have teacher-made notes and thus may have depended on textbooks only. Schools were generally ill-equipped with general didactics needed for effective teaching of Conflict Resolution is some of the selected schools used that is the inadequate implementation of the general didactics results to the ineffective quality of instructions of most secondary and higher institutions in Cameroon.

All the respondents, 50(100%), indicated that they always used students' textbooks and the chalkboard. This implied that the teachers made use of materials that were available as earlier indicated in Table 1, Regarding teachers' references, 48(96%) indicated that they always used them while 2(4%) used them occasionally. On wall maps, 25(50%) indicated they used them always, 25(50%) indicated that they used them occasionally while 0(0%) never used them. With regard to Atlases, 14(28%) indicated they used them always, 34(68%) said frequently and 2(4%) never use them. As the results in Table 2 show, 22(44%) indicated that they used newspapers always 28(56%) said they used it frequently. This implies that though newspapers may not have been available to some of them, 22(44%), as earlier shown in Table 2, they made an effort to access them for purposes of teaching Conflict Resolution. Newspapers should be made available to all teachers in the secondary schools because from these newspapers they could link what they are teaching to everyday life. The findings further indicated that 8(16%) of the respondents always used charts, 30(60%) used them frequently and 2(4%) never used charts.

Majority, 48(96%), of the respondents indicated that they never used audio tapes while 2(4%) frequently used audio tapes. Regarding the school radio, none of them used it always, 6(12%) used it frequently and 44(88%) never used it. With regard to pictures, 30(60%) indicated that they use them always, 18(36%) frequently used while 2(4%) never used pictures at all. This is in responses to the fact that majority of the learners will easily learner through pictures and sound than other forms and pattern of learning.

### VIII. CONCLUSION

Teachers should be in-serviced on the teaching of conflict and conflict resolution so as to adequately prepare them to handle the topic. Specifically, newspapers and other specific didactics materials should be made available to all teachers in secondary schools because from these newspapers and other specific didactics they could link what they are teaching to everyday life. Moreover, teachers should be encouraged to use the local environment in the teaching of conflict and conflict resolution; only then can the learners see the connection between what they are learning and the reality. Teachers should also be guided on the uses of the school radio to enhance learning in Social Studies classrooms.

Instructional materials should be varied and not limited to textbooks and atlases only as indicated in the list of approved books by educational administrators that can enable teachers to handle emerging issues in the present curriculum.

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