

Language

Upper primary

Syllabus 2003

Section 1

Curriculum Information



Papua New Guinea
Department of Education

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The Language Subject Advisory Committee as well as community members, teachers, inspectors, educators and representatives from government and non-government organisations have developed this syllabus through meetings, workshops and trialing.

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Secretary's Message

The current reforms in education have been in progress since 1992. The Education Reform has emphasised community - based schooling, the use of vernacular language in schools, the introduction of Elementary schools and the expansion of Primary schooling to grade 8 and increased access to Grades 9 and 10.

The syllabus is to be used by Upper Primary (Grades 6, 7 and 8) students in Primary schools throughout Papua New Guinea. This syllabus develops, extends, links and builds upon concepts, skills and attitudes flowing from Lower Primary (Grades 3, 4 and 5). This syllabus provides a sound foundation for further learning in the reformed school system.

Students' language abilities already gained in their home environments and during the previous years of formal education must be respected, built on and extended. Indigenous language has a large part to play in our students' formative years and their first language should be used to promote a deeper understanding of difficult concepts when this is appropriate.

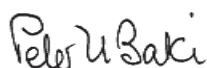
The Upper Primary Language Syllabus is designed to assist teachers while preparing language programs that will create secure and stimulating learning environments for young people still building their bilingual confidence and abilities.

Our students are entitled to a range of opportunities that will enable them to acquire the values and attitudes of a progressing nation. We need young people with the capacity to solve problems through reading and discussing widely. They should be able to contribute their ideas thoughtfully to help decisions to be made and to do so with full understanding and sensitivity.

Our villages and industries of the future will require young people with imagination and creativity. Their ideas and opinions will need to be conveyed accurately and appropriately whether it be humbly, persuasively or argumentatively. Literacy enables us to research, analyse, think critically, develop ideas and form opinions for our country, our province, our wantoks and for ourselves.

This Language syllabus encourages links with other curriculum areas to provide a language learning context. It respects our cultural diversity and traditions whilst moving forward into our rightful place amongst a global family at the start of a new millennium.

I commend and approve this syllabus as the official curriculum for Language to be used in all Upper Primary schools throughout Papua New Guinea.



Peter M. Baki
Secretary for Education

Introduction

This syllabus makes explicit the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that students should achieve for Grade 6, 7 and 8 in Language. These are expressed as learning outcomes and indicators.

The learning outcomes are student centred and written in terms that enable them to be demonstrated, assessed or measured. The outcomes are written to show a progression from one grade to the next.

Each learning outcome is illustrated with a list of examples of the kinds of things students should be able to do, know and understand if they are achieving an outcome. These are called indicators.

The learning outcomes and indicators will:

- give teachers individually or collaboratively, the flexibility to write programs and units of work—these can be developed to suit local conditions and individual student needs,
- help teachers assess and report students' achievements in relation to the learning outcomes,
- allow student achievement of the outcomes to be described in consistent ways,
- help teachers monitor student learning,
- help teachers plan their future teaching programs.

In Language, a manageable number of outcomes are identified for each grade from grade 6 to 8. They are:

- organised to show progression from one grade to the next,
- organised into strands which contain a family of separate outcomes that are related to a particular theme, such as, speaking and listening or writing,
- numbered to help in tracking similar outcomes linked to the strands from one grade to the next,
- written to include all the essential knowledge, skills and understanding a student should achieve in the language course,
- created using an active verb to ensure students actively participate in the learning.

In this Language syllabus all outcomes are presented in an integrated way giving the teacher clear guidance of how this course is to be organised and taught.

Schools need to be aware that although language is a means to communication and understanding of other subjects (learning **through** language), language lessons must also be used to learn **about** language and, in particular at the Upper Primary stage, the language of instruction (English). It is important that all students will gain a level of competency at the end of grade 8 in English that will meet the needs of their future aspirations for further study, employment and greater independence in their lives.

Language is to be timetabled for 180 minutes per week in all Upper Primary schools.

Rationale

Young people should acquire as high a level of language competency as possible to enable them to play a full part in society. They should enjoy and extend their language use, as it is essential to their intellectual, social and emotional development. Language skills and confidence have an essential role in student progression in key learning areas. To achieve their full potential, each young person needs to develop competency across the full range of language use: from expressive and artistic to information research and knowledge acquisition.

The curriculum will aim to develop language skills in all four modes: speaking and listening, reading and writing, whilst encouraging and extending students' capacities to be active thinkers and communicators of meaning.

Through programs based on this syllabus, students should gain a strong foundation of knowledge, skills and understanding in order to communicate their thoughts and feelings, participate in society and make decisions about personal and social issues. They will analyse information and viewpoints in order to develop well-formed opinions. Their imaginations will be stimulated and creativity released.

Curriculum Principles

Our Way of Life

Culture

The course provides for the continuing growth of our cultural identity through the expansion and enhancement of vernacular skills and activities. It is through language that important aspects of our country's many cultures are transferred from one generation to the next and between people who live and work together but who originate from different cultures.

Bilingual education

Bilingual education will enable students to:

- develop effective communication skills in English,
- acquire better comprehension of English,
- make use of their vernacular language as a tool for learning and understanding about and through English, the language of instruction at Upper Primary level.

Multiculturalism

Melanesian values will be promoted and language and literacy knowledge will enable students to share understanding of these with the rest of the world. In the same way, students will learn to exchange understanding from stories and knowledge from the past relating to their own communities and environments. In this way multiculturalism will be maintained and enjoyed whilst learning experiences will be enriched.

Ethics, morals and values

Papua New Guinea's National Curriculum Statement emphasises the process of socialisation and interaction. Students will play a large role in communicating their knowledge, skills, attitudes and spiritual and moral values. They will learn how to communicate for different audiences, purposes and situations building on traditional observations and community interaction and support. Within the Upper Primary Language course, they will work towards being able to articulate confidently, and with meaning, new ideas learnt in other subject areas that can help their villages in areas such as agriculture, fishing and community development projects, whilst respecting the traditional ethics conserved by the community.

Integral Human Development

The right to healthy living

In the same way, language and literacy knowledge will enable students to read, research, critically analyse and inform others of the implications of malnutrition and a range of illnesses applicable to their communities. Information about traditional medicines already known by these communities can be extended and application of more modern medicines understood in order that informed choices can be made. There is no doubt that literacy is an important factor in the fight to help every Papua New Guinean be aware of issues that can aid healthy and hygienic lifestyles.

Citizenship

Whilst working individually, in pairs or in small and large groups, students will be guided to be tolerant of the opinions of others and respectful of each other's talents, traditions and beliefs. Language used will always be **inclusive** and resources, materials, accommodation and teacher-time all equally distributed to all students. There will be no bias in teaching, learning nor assessment methods. Students will know that each citizen of Papua New Guinea has a role in the growth of their country and that Papua New Guinea belongs to a much larger global family.

Sustainability

Conservation of our environment, population expansion, misuse of resources and sustainability of our traditions are only a few of the many issues confronted by all countries of the world. The Language syllabus will play its part in promoting discussion and debate of such concerns whilst motivating students to research and extend their knowledge of new information, when available, in order to be aware of exploitation and the positive and negative aspects of commercialism.

Teaching and Learning

In Primary schools, generalist teachers often prefer to use an integrated approach to teaching and learning. The teacher creates a program that is meaningful, appropriate, engaging and motivating to the students. The use of learning outcomes provides opportunities to integrate the curriculum.

Teachers should map out the learning outcomes for those parts of the syllabus that they are intending to teach in the coming term or year. Where there is more than one teacher across a grade, this should be done as a small team.

Teachers in the school with leadership responsibilities should be invited to attend and support this planning process. While carrying out this process, links between learning outcomes for different subjects should be noted, as there is scope for combining and using these outcomes in an integrated approach to teaching.

For example, a Language learning outcome might refer to the use of questionnaires and holding discussions with community members and the Making a Living learning outcome may also do this. In this way evidence of the achievement of these outcomes can be provided in more than one subject.

Teachers should be encouraged to develop activities using a range of teaching methods, materials and other support resources that are relevant and appropriate to students' cultural and language needs.

Students, beginning this course after six years of education, are from many different social and economic backgrounds. Learning a second language takes time. It is more challenging for some than others especially if there is little, or no reinforcement in their life outside school. Many factors must be considered in planning: language acquisition issues such as the amount of exposure to the second language, individual characteristics of learners, their aptitude for language and cognitive style, their motivation and confidence.

Teachers will guide their students from what is familiar to them drawing upon their experiences of their known world to extend their learning to the unfamiliar.

Teachers will need to support all their students' progress and multigrade levels of attainment will emerge over a period of time. Different approaches and activities should be created and implemented. Teachers will need to become skilful observers of individual students' learning progress and concerns and plan accordingly for their needs.

Inclusive curriculum

The course must offer equal opportunities to participants and class activities and methods of assessment must be targeted fairly at both female and male students. To meet the ideals of our National Constitution, there should be **no bias** in teaching, learning or assessment methods. These should be designed to meet the needs of all students irrespective of their abilities, geographical location, cultural, socio-economic background or special needs.

"Everyone to be involved in our endeavours to achieve integral human development of the person for every person and to seek fulfilment through his or her contributions to the common good "

(PNG National Legislation; Interim Version 4, 1 March 2000, p.2)

Student-centred learning

Student-centred learning is the preferred teaching approach for the course. This means that students themselves will be encouraged to develop the ability and skills to organise and advance their own learning according to their particular needs. They will be encouraged to learn through active involvement in an environment which feels safe enough to ask questions, to respond and to participate. Activities should focus on strategies that support students' enquiry and thinking skills. They will work individually, in pairs and small groups.

Language comes within a socially constructed system. Our use of language is very situational and culturally determined. What we say and do adapts to the situations we find ourselves in. Through language, we make private meanings and public communication. Making this public depends on there being a shared set of linguistic features in the communicating group. The form through which this communication takes place and its meaning will be different according to whom and how we are communicating.

The language teacher will, therefore, need to create a range of opportunities for language learning in meaningful and purposeful contexts, so that students can use and practise the language and literacy skills they are acquiring. It is important to encourage students to make their language fit the context. Teachers will need to challenge and extend understanding of that use and, in purposeful contexts, encourage students in their learning of the language of instruction. For example, drama is central in developing all major aspects of language. As well as a creative art form and, as such is included in the Arts Syllabus, it is a means of communication and an instrument of learning. Drama helps students to make sense of different situations and different points of view. It allows them to practise language in different contexts and to different listeners. A range of linguistic registers can be observed and experienced whilst providing purpose, context and audience for writing and reading. These are central to the aims of good language teaching.

For students to progress to an intelligent understanding of meaning made in Standard English, any of the underlying individual difficulties of learning an additional language will need to be addressed whilst using a range of approaches.

Integration

Language is the students' primary means for learning and is involved in all curriculum areas. In Upper Primary they will need to learn to use language, learning through language and about language.

To teach this syllabus, teachers will use an integrated approach to language and literacy learning. **There are, therefore, no given topics.** The teacher has the responsibility to create a whole program for his or her students that is meaningful, appropriate, engaging and motivating.

Learning outcomes help the teacher in the task of **planning** the whole curriculum for a class of students. This is because the outcomes focus upon the essential targets for students' learning, leaving the teacher and students with some freedom to devise the detailed methods of achieving the outcomes. These methods can, therefore, be developed to suit local conditions and individual needs. An outcomes-based syllabus is relatively uncluttered with detail, leaving the main targets easy to focus upon by teachers and students.

While mapping and sequencing the whole curriculum for the coming term or year, by looking carefully at the outcomes for each subject, the class teachers will see areas of connection and common or related purposes between the outcomes. There is scope for combining the learning outcomes within a common integrated assignment which will provide evidence of achievement in more than one subject and in more than one outcome. Reinforcement of **subject-specific language** can be achieved at the same time.

When the teacher sees these **connections**, they should highlight these and start to piece together an **integrated** learning unit. This means that the students' learning time will be used more efficiently, overlap and repetition in learning tasks will be reduced and the whole curriculum will begin to reflect how **life is lived** beyond school. These qualities of learning are likely to engage students more fully, encouraging participation and determination to work hard at their school work.

Standard English comprises vocabulary as found in dictionaries and agreed conventions of spelling and grammar. It develops and changes over time.

Written and spoken standard English are not the same. Written Standard English keeps to accepted rules and conventions except when non-standard forms are used for effect or technical reasons. Spoken Standard English closely follows the written form but differs in a small number of grammatical and lexical ways, such as changes of direction or emphasis may result in unfinished or recast sentences which would be avoided by a writer in a finished piece. Speech varies according to the degree of formality.

Core grammatical features of Standard English include subject verb agreement, correct and consistent use of verb tenses, correct use of pronouns, adverbs and adjectives. In spoken Standard English, significant features are standard forms of irregular verbs: agreement between person, case and number, especially with the verb 'to be' and the correct use of pronouns.

Vernacular can be introduced whenever the need arises to ensure that this is done. Indeed Non Government Organizations have taken an active role in promoting language as well as culture in many of our villages. The School Administration has the prerogative to invite NGO groups in and involve them in school programs when relevant.

Indicators can, and should, be developed to promote an integrated

approach to learning across the curriculum and skills learnt in Lower Primary through the use of a vernacular will continue to be a strong foundation to the understanding of concepts. Skills learned in English and a vernacular should be transferable with the latter being used as a tool for learning and understanding about and through English, the language of instruction at Upper Primary.

In our Secretary's Message, he has emphasised how our students' language abilities already gained in their home environment and during the previous years of formal education, must be respected, built on and extended. Indigenous language has a large part to play in our students' formative years and their first language should be used to promote a deeper understanding of difficult concepts when this is appropriate. Teaching of the Language syllabus should generally and mostly be in English. Vernacular should be used to explain processes when necessary. Any use of the vernacular should always challenge the children in order to extend further their ideas such as critical literacy strands.

Integration of subjects will ensure the provision of opportunities to further develop and maintain vernacular skills. Many indicators for Language and Making a Living can equally be undertaken orally with the local community and backed up by the informative leaflets. These may be written in the vernacular or undertaken with peers or other schools with materials and demonstrated in English.

Aims

To be **literate and bilingual** students:

- read, write and speak with confidence, fluency and understanding in both vernacular and English,
- understand letter and word sounds (phonics) and, together with knowledge of spelling systems, use these to read and spell accurately,
- have fluent and legible handwriting,
- plan, draft, revise and edit their own writing,
- show interest in books, read with enjoyment and be critically aware of the qualities of different types of written texts,
- use a range of non-fiction texts in all their school subjects and, through a suitable technical vocabulary, show appropriate understanding of their content,
- participate effectively in oral discussion and the exchange of ideas and opinions in all their school subjects and the issues that arise in their local communities,
- use literacy as a key means of extending their intellectual, social and emotional development, including an appreciation of the importance of literacy as an integral part of any culture,
- have the basic skills and attitude required for further study or employment using English as the medium,
- enjoy and explore linguistic and cultural diversity through creative and collaborative language-based arts activities such as poetry, song, storytelling and especially drama.

Content Overview

The content for this syllabus is organised into four Strands and four Sub-strands. A Strand such as *Speaking and Listening* is a useful and convenient way of organising the learning outcomes for a subject. Each Strand identifies a particular aspect of a subject or a particular theme such as a set of processes. Each Strand displays a typical progression of learning from one grade to the next. Sometimes the Strand is further organised into Sub-strands to allow the content to be specified and described as learning outcomes.

Language has the following Strands and Sub-strands.

This course, as shown in the tables below, is organised in a sequence of broad learning outcomes from grades 6 to 8 in four key strands: Speaking and Listening, Reading and Writing, and four Sub-strands: Production, Skills and Strategies, Context and Text and Critical Literacy.

Production

This first sub-strand is sequenced to remind the learner that the first target is the Use, Making or the Production of language; in other words, working out and practising the components that help us produce and use convincingly the content of our talk and writing, as well as analysing how someone else has affected our emotions, interest or opinions when reading.

A dictionary definition of the word 'production' would indicate the noun to mean the making or bringing into existence of something as well as what it yields – in this instance, for example, this something might be the 'making' and 'delivery' of an argument **orally**, the 'making' of an argumentative piece of **writing** for a particular purpose or the 'making' of an opinion after **reading** different views on a specific problem.

Skills and Strategies

In order to use or produce effective communication by means of languages, we all have to acquire skills and develop ways: **strategies** to help us. If we wish to improve our use of languages without these necessary skills and strategies, our progress is likely to be slow and we will lose our enjoyment of this aspect of being a human.

Sounds: phonics, or alphabet, were combined in Lower Primary to make oral or written words which label things, ideas and feelings. These words mean what individuals and different groupings of young people or adults have decided they mean. These meanings must be accepted or known if these words are to work. More than sounds, graphics and words are needed. We have to have a system to organise them into sentences, as well as order and rules to plan, produce and comprehend. Grammar is that system which includes rules necessary to produce the specific language so that it is understood by its communicators. Much of grammar's word order and intonation in tokples is learnt automatically before school by the feeling provoked in or inferred by the student.

These skills and strategies should always be used and thought about in context. Teachers will need to build up a bank of stimulating ideas as a resource to aiding their learning and understanding.

By Grade 6, students should have learnt some of the early skills of language use and also begun to develop strongly as users of at least two languages. This is the springboard that the Upper Primary school teacher should recognise. The outcomes in this Sub-strand will particularly focus on an increased level of interaction with other language users. By arranging the learning in this way, as well as observing and adapting those used by others, students' skills and strategies will be extended through use and reflection.

Context and Text

Languages become really useful and interesting to us all when they are used in a situation or context where two or more people want to share knowledge, understandings and feelings. What we listen to, speak about, write or read when sharing with others depends significantly on our purposes and appreciation of the circumstances. These form the context which can influence the language, the text, used. By having skills in more than one language multiplies the range of contexts possible, as well as providing more textual opportunities in different situations, with different people or audiences.

The target of Context and Text is to lead students through a rigorous exploration of how language is used, created and presented in different contexts. The outcome is that students can analyse language use and then choose, with understanding, the most appropriate text to help them enjoy and succeed in their communication.

Critical Literacy

In addition to helping students feel some confidence and pleasure in using languages for all day-to-day purposes, they should also be extended towards the critical literacy stage. This learning should start from Grade 6 level as the abilities need to be built up over time.

Critical Literacy encourages students to select and evaluate ideas and information researched in order to make informed choices and opinions. Their critical thinking must be effective enough to move beyond the literal and to recognise the implications of what might be inferred. Without this ability, significant social, cultural and political issues can be misunderstood by our young people; from the wrong interpretation of instructions or even the possibilities of corruption and exploitation.

Students also need to think critically about language itself from the production stage through to evaluation and reflection on completion. Teachers should reflect on the fact that a critical literacy ability has an important extra dimension when the learner has at least two languages they can use. Interpretations, bias and inferences can often be shown up more clearly when comparing ideas produced in different languages. Once students reach this realisation they will see a significant extension of their whole language skills.

Table of Strands and Sub-strands for Language

Strand	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Speaking and Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • production • skills and strategies • context and text • critical literacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • production • skills and strategies • context and text • critical literacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • production • skills and strategies • context and text • critical literacy
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • production • skills and strategies • context and text • critical literacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • production • skills and strategies • context and text • critical literacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • production • skills and strategies • context and text • critical literacy
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • production • skills and strategies • context and text • critical literacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • production • skills and strategies • context and text • critical literacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • production • skills and strategies • context and text • critical literacy

Assessment and Reporting

Assessment and reporting practices described here are detailed further in *The Assessment and Reporting Policy for Papua New Guinea* and in other support materials produced by the Department of Education.

Assessment

Assessment is the ongoing process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about students' progress towards achievement of the learning outcomes described in the subject syllabuses.

Teachers record evidence of students' learning and use it to make judgements about students' achievements of the learning outcomes. To ensure that assessment is fair and balanced, teachers should use a range of assessment methods including:

- observing and recording details of students' demonstration of process skills and/or their performance on particular tasks,
- setting written assignments, projects and practical work,
- setting and marking written tests and/or examinations,
- keeping portfolios of students' work.

Teachers should provide opportunities for students to assess their own learning (self-assessment) and the learning of others (peer assessment) according to set negotiated criteria. The purpose of assessment is to improve student learning.

Assessments should be based on the course outcomes and arise from the everyday learning experiences of students. A variety of strategies and contexts should be used to give students opportunities to demonstrate, if these course outcomes have been achieved. The continuous assessment of student progress should include the monitoring, checking and recording of what:

- they know and can do,
- they need to know and should be able to do,
- future learning experiences, materials and programming would best suit students' learning needs.

Teachers should provide students with feedback from continuous assessment in order to encourage them to take charge of their own learning.

Continuous assessment is done through:

- systematic observation of students during activities,
- interaction with students to gain a deeper knowledge of what they know, understand and can do,
- analysing their work samples using indicators.

As well, continuous assessment should *analyse* and *evaluate* the effectiveness of the teaching program, and should further develop lesson plans to meet the identified learning needs more effectively.

Students play an important role in assessing their own progress. Teachers should encourage their students to identify skill and knowledge areas needing more attention. Teachers will need to revise, extend and teach their students a variety of ways to record their achievement and identify areas needing more attention, such as checklists, reflective diaries, student folios.

Teachers are expected to provide accurate information to parents. This information will tell them what their children have achieved. It will also tell them how future teaching will assist their students' curriculum learning. Reporting to parents should provide opportunities for them to share information about their students and discuss future learning and curriculum goals. Regular communication with parents is desirable. At home, students should be encouraged to share their published work and discuss their achievements.

Course assessment will be mainly **formative**. Formative assessment is the most valuable tool to plan and select effective and appropriate classroom teaching processes, strategies and materials. You should frequently use formative assessment items to monitor student progress and make informed changes to the teaching program. Formative assessment should count for the largest part of your total assessment. It should take place daily and should be used to guide what the teacher should be looking for to assess student learning.

In any assessment, teachers must be sensitive to different geographical, cultural, economical issues, gender and special needs of their students. While assessment may also include more formal assessment procedures, formative assessment provides a broader profile of the student than formal testing may provide. It is a valid and valuable part of overall assessment.

Summative assessment is used to check whether students' learning of a complete outcome or a number of outcomes has been achieved eg. an integrated project that requires each student to demonstrate that they are competent in all aspects of a learning outcome.

Reporting

Teachers must keep accurate records of students' achievement of the learning outcomes and report these achievements in fair and accurate ways to parents and guardians, teachers, students and others. Recording methods will include the following:

- journal, diary or anecdotal notes,
- portfolios,
- progressive records,
- checklists,
- work samples with comments written by the teacher.

Student reports should be based on assessment information collected from ongoing assessments and, where appropriate, from external examinations (Grade 8). Schools will decide on how reports will be presented to best suit the needs of their communities.

Evaluation

Teachers will use assessment information to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching, learning and assessment programs and to make improvements to their teaching practice in order to improve student learning.

Schools may use whole school assessment data to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning in a particular subject or at particular grade levels and make decisions on how to improve student learning.