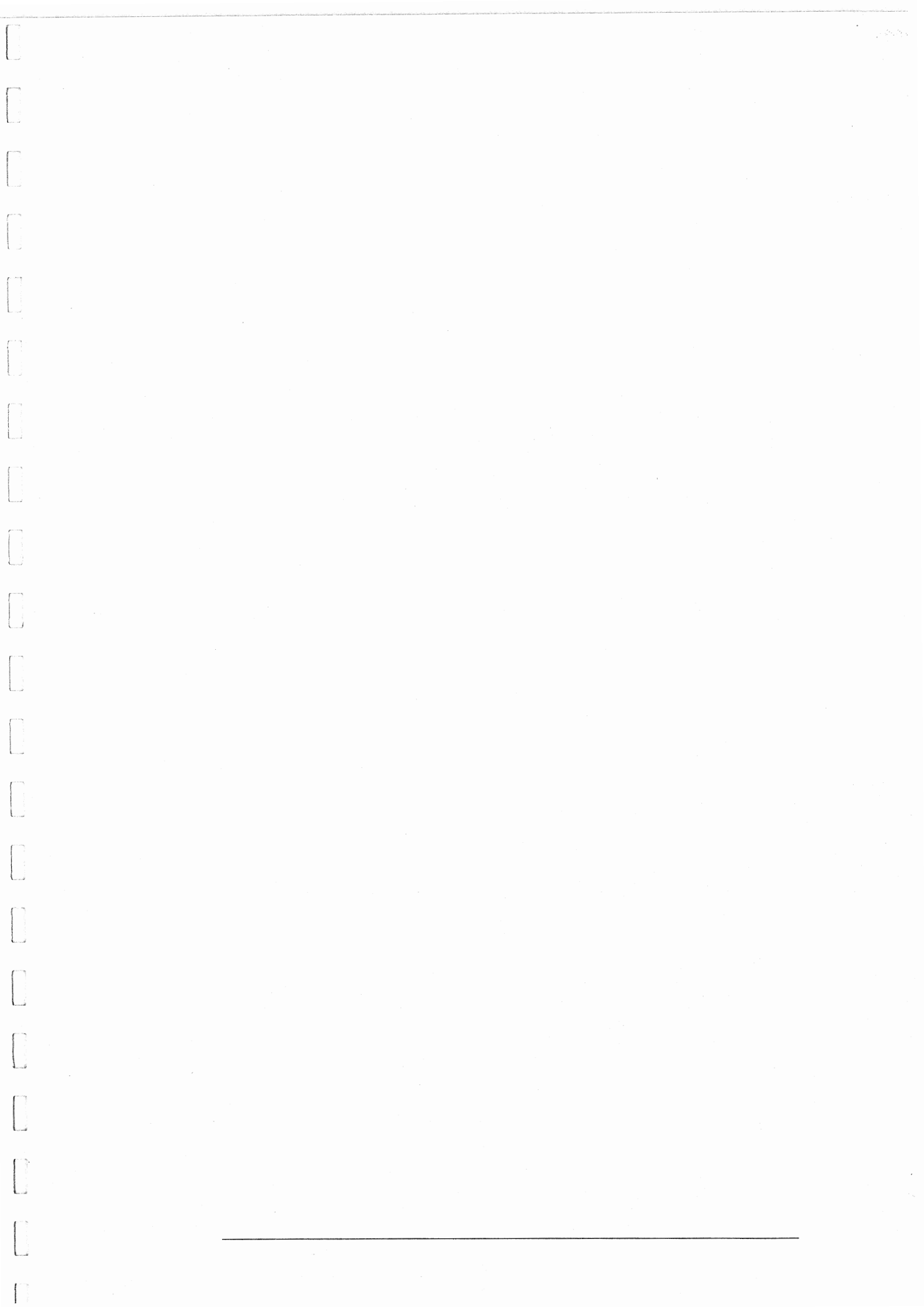


The Fiji Islands National Curriculum Framework

Education for a better future

Approved
26 January 2007



**The Fiji Islands
National Curriculum Framework**

Education for a better future



Issued free to schools by the Ministry for Education
Published in 2007 by the
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ISBN xxxx xxxx—xxx—xx—xx

Acknowledgements

Curriculum developers within the Ministry of Education have produced *The Fiji Islands National Curriculum Framework* (NCF) with assistance and advice from a reference group that was broadly representative of the many stakeholders in education, including Corpus Christie Teachers College; Fiji College of Advanced Education; Fiji Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Fiji Council of Churches; Fiji Council of Social Services; Fiji Head Teachers Association; Fiji Hindu Society; Fiji Muslim League; Fiji Teachers Association; Fiji Teachers Union; Lautoka Teachers College; Training and Productivity Authority of Fiji; and University of the South Pacific.

The Ministry of Education acknowledges the co-operation, support and advice of these groups, as well as that of early childhood, special education, and teacher training institutions. We also acknowledge the input of Ministry of Education officers from the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU), Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Unit, and the Examinations Unit.

The NCF is the result of consultation with many stakeholders in school settings including head teachers, principals, executive teachers, divisional officers and teachers, and with the wider community including parents, students, school management and employer representatives.

The Ministry of Education acknowledges the support of the Australian Government's AusAID funded Fiji Education Sector Programme (FESP) that has, since its inception in 2005, supported and funded the development of the NCF. The European Union is also acknowledged for funding of awareness and consultation workshops conducted throughout the Fiji Islands and for their support through the PRIDE project of the early childhood education component of this framework.

Foreword

The *Fiji Islands National Curriculum Framework (NCF)* sets out the philosophy and structure for curriculum from early childhood to Form 7. It provides information to assist all those with a responsibility for the provision and quality of the curriculum and education in the Fiji Islands.

The framework will be of use to and will inform:

- religious and other authorities responsible for schools, and
- all stakeholders in education including school communities.

It is an essential reference for the officers of the Ministry of Education including:

- education divisions
- curriculum developers and writers
- examination and assessment officers, and
- head teachers, principals, and teachers responsible for preschools.

The NCF is also of interest to:

- further education providers particularly teacher education and training institutions
- non-government organisations
- political representatives
- school boards, managers, leaders, and most importantly
- teachers, parents and students.

It will benefit all children and students by providing clear directions about the school curriculum. This process will lead to improvements in the quality of education in our country.

The NCF has its roots in the recommendations of the 2005 Education Summit and the subsequent *Suva Declaration – 2005*. During this Summit, consultations were held with stakeholders from a wide spectrum of our communities, including education professionals, politicians, employers, parents and school children.

Through the process of consultations on education during the last few years, it has become evident that there is a need for change. Changes in the curriculum are necessary because expectations of students, society and the job market have changed. The current curriculum is overcrowded in some subjects, too difficult for a good number of our children, exam-oriented and teacher-centred.

The development of the NCF has been a collaborative effort from sectors in the Ministry of Education including the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU), Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), Early Childhood Education, and the Examinations Unit.

Many stakeholders provided support and advice during the development of this framework including:

- religious and community representatives of various organisations, and
- members of the wider community including parents and students.

In 2003, the CDU carried out an extensive curriculum mapping exercise. A number of issues were identified:

- subjects were too heavily content-based
- a number of subjects repeated content at different levels and across subjects, and

- there were gaps and, for some subject disciplines, inadequate sequencing and scoping of content from the lower to higher levels.

Furthermore, school visits and consultations conducted by CDU with head teachers, principals and teachers revealed that:

- there was heavy reliance on textbooks even to the extent where whole passages were rewritten in students' books
- the process of education was teacher-centred, and
- some children and students were finding it hard to read and write, even at higher primary and lower secondary levels.

Teachers are doing excellent work in our schools. However, there is a need to properly design and develop a curriculum framework and support materials that will better support them in their work, and better prepare our children for the future. What is needed is a curriculum that addresses the needs of the young people of the Fiji islands. This is why we have conducted wide consultations and these have resulted in the formulation of this *Fiji Islands National Curriculum Framework*, already commonly referred to as the NCF.

The NCF provides the foundation for future curriculum development and curriculum policy development. It gives direction to our curriculum for the next ten years. The NCF:

- makes statements about the purposes of education in the Fiji Islands. These purposes have not previously been articulated in this way
- spells out the Major Learning Outcomes (MLOs) that our children and students are expected to achieve in the process of their education
- identifies six Foundation Areas of Learning and Development (FALD) for the preschool years and seven Key Learning Areas (KLAs) for the primary and secondary years of schooling each of which contains the KLA subjects. All of the FALD are new and some of the KLA subjects are also new, such as technology in the primary years, while others have been reorganised to form a more coherent curriculum
- provides a clear map or pathways for children and students wishing to pursue their study of subjects relevant to their intended job market and lead productive lives
- identifies eleven principles about teaching and learning that will inform and guide teaching and learning practices
- includes a set of curriculum perspectives that will be integrated into all areas of the curriculum.

The NCF is a broad statement about what will constitute education in Fiji. The NCF provides a guide for curriculum developers and teachers on what is to be taught, how and why this content will be taught. It also provides the opportunity for teachers, students and the community to contribute to and make relevant decisions about the whole curriculum process.

I commend the *Fiji Islands National Curriculum Framework* to you.

Mrs. Alumita Taganesia
Chief Executive Officer – Education, Youth and Sport

Our Vision

Educating the child holistically for a peaceful and prosperous Fiji.

Our Mission

To provide a challenging teaching and learning environment, in partnership with stakeholders, that will nurture and empower the child to become a competent member of society.

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Section 1

Introduction

Purposes of Education in the Fiji Islands

Educational values

Introduction

Background

Early interest in curriculum renewal in Fiji was associated with concerns about national identity and consciousness at the time of political independence in 1970. The major educational issue during that period was the lack of relevant curriculum and examinations to replace overseas examinations and curriculum that had dominated the colonial examination system.

In 1968, the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) of the Ministry of Education was established. In 1970, the United Nations Development Programme/ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNDP/UNESCO) Curriculum Development Project was launched. These sectors worked together to develop curricula for Forms 1 to 4. The major influence on Fiji's school curriculum at the Junior Secondary level (Forms 1 to 4) came from the UNDP's South Pacific Regional Secondary School Curriculum Development Project. This project produced extensive resource materials which were developed by the Ministry and had to be used by schools.

The UNDP left in 1974 and the responsibility for development of the school curriculum rested with CDU. The content of the current curriculum remains centrally developed, and exam-oriented. In some subject areas, the content overlaps other areas, and lacks relevance and flexibility.

The Education Commission Report 2000 spearheaded the first National Education Summit in 2004, which resulted in the *Suva Declaration – 2005*. This declaration maps the major directions for education in the Fiji Islands for the next decade 2006 – 2016.

School curriculum and its delivery were prominent concerns in submissions made to the *Fiji Islands Education Commission Report 2000*. Changes were needed in the curriculum approach, design, content and assessment.

Why change the curriculum?

There are several reasons why changes to the curriculum are necessary.

Firstly, there is documented evidence supporting the need for change. This evidence includes international conventions and regional educational goals as outlined in the *Conventions of the Rights of the Child* and the *Millennium Development Goals*. The Fiji Islands is committed to these.

The Report of the Fiji Islands Education Commission 2000 also outlines a number of recommendations for changes in the curriculum, for example:

...The curriculum in Fiji be redesigned to produce learning experiences that would encourage creative activities and lead to the all-round physical, emotional and intellectual development of pupils. (Government of Fiji 2000: 287)

This report further states:

...Although curriculum content has been localised, it is still perceived to be removed from real life. Curricula are overcrowded with factual content and still rigidly prescribed for all schools across all levels. For teachers, coverage of the curriculum detail becomes their key task rather than the development of conceptual understanding using methods of enquiry and problem solving.

[Government of Fiji 2000:78]

The Fiji Government's *National Strategic Development Plan* (NSDP) and the historic *Suva Declaration 2005* have goals that include the development of a national curriculum framework for Fiji.

Secondly, the changes in the curriculum are necessary because expectations of students, society and the job market have changed.

Thirdly, the current curriculum is overcrowded, too difficult, exam-oriented and teacher-centred.

The Fiji Islands thus needs a curriculum that is relevant to the needs of its young people. The NCF will address this need. The NCF is for children¹ and students² from preschool³ to Form 7 and gives direction to our curriculum for the next ten years. A constructivist approach to teaching and learning is advocated in our national curriculum.⁴

The revised curriculum

The Ministry of Education's Strategic Plan 2006-2008 clearly states that early childhood is a priority for the Government of Fiji.

The Fiji Islands early childhood development and education has come a long way since the early 1930s and many partners have contributed to its expansion, growth and recognition. The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) played a pivotal role in the provision of developmentally appropriate programmes, teacher training and advocacy. In 1966, the Ministry of Education responded to the concerns expressed by YWCA staff and parents, as well as committed and concerned women's groups who requested that action be taken to formalize the establishment of kindergartens in Fiji. At present there are many early childhood programmes, including kindergartens, playgroups, day/childcare centres, preschools and 'groups of nine'. With an increase in the number of qualified teachers and recognised centres, there is now a great demand for policy and curriculum guidelines to provide clear directions for early childhood programmes in Fiji. The *Early Childhood Curriculum Guidelines* (to be published in 2007) will support school communities and teachers in the provision of quality programmes for children 0-8 years, the universally recognised early childhood years.

The NCF is organised using six Foundation Areas of Learning and Development (FALD) for early childhood, and seven Key Learning Areas (KLAs) for the primary and secondary levels of schooling. The curriculum is grouped into these areas and is described using essential learning outcomes for all students.

¹ The National Curriculum Framework refers to 'children' when they are in preschool, and when they are in Class 1 and Class 2.

² The National Curriculum Framework refers to 'students' when they are in the Primary, Secondary and TVET levels of Education from Class 3 to Form 7.

³ Preschool refers to children attending a centre from the age of 3 years to 6 years.

⁴ Refer to the section about Guiding Principles Page 13.

The outcomes are broad statements about what students should understand, value and be able to do as a result of the teaching and learning in early childhood programmes and schools. An outcomes approach promotes relevance in the curriculum, flexibility in teaching and learning styles, teaching for learning, and assessment for learning.

The outcomes support learning experiences at increasing levels of understanding, skills, complexity and depth. They provide a clear focus for teaching, learning and assessment.

An important aspect of the NCF is its 'inclusivity'. It is inclusive of all children and students from preschool (3-6 years) to Form 7 (≥ 18 years), including those with special needs. It is culturally inclusive and takes into account the multicultural and multilingual contexts in which the curriculum is implemented.

Students spend, on average, twelve to fourteen years of their lives in school. It is essential for the system to prepare them to deal effectively with the opportunities and challenges presented to them as young people and later as adults in a rapidly changing society. All students need to have the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to participate in a changing world. They need to be equipped to:

- communicate effectively
- handle change
- make wise decisions
- be innovative and enterprising
- learn how to learn
- solve problems
- investigate and research, and
- realise that learning is lifelong.

The NCF sets out the groundwork and relevant information for the Ministry of Education, NGOs, schools, teachers, students and other stakeholders. It acknowledges the multicultural society in which we live and supports young people as they develop an understanding for and an appreciation of their own culture and that of others.

Figure 1: The National Curriculum Framework

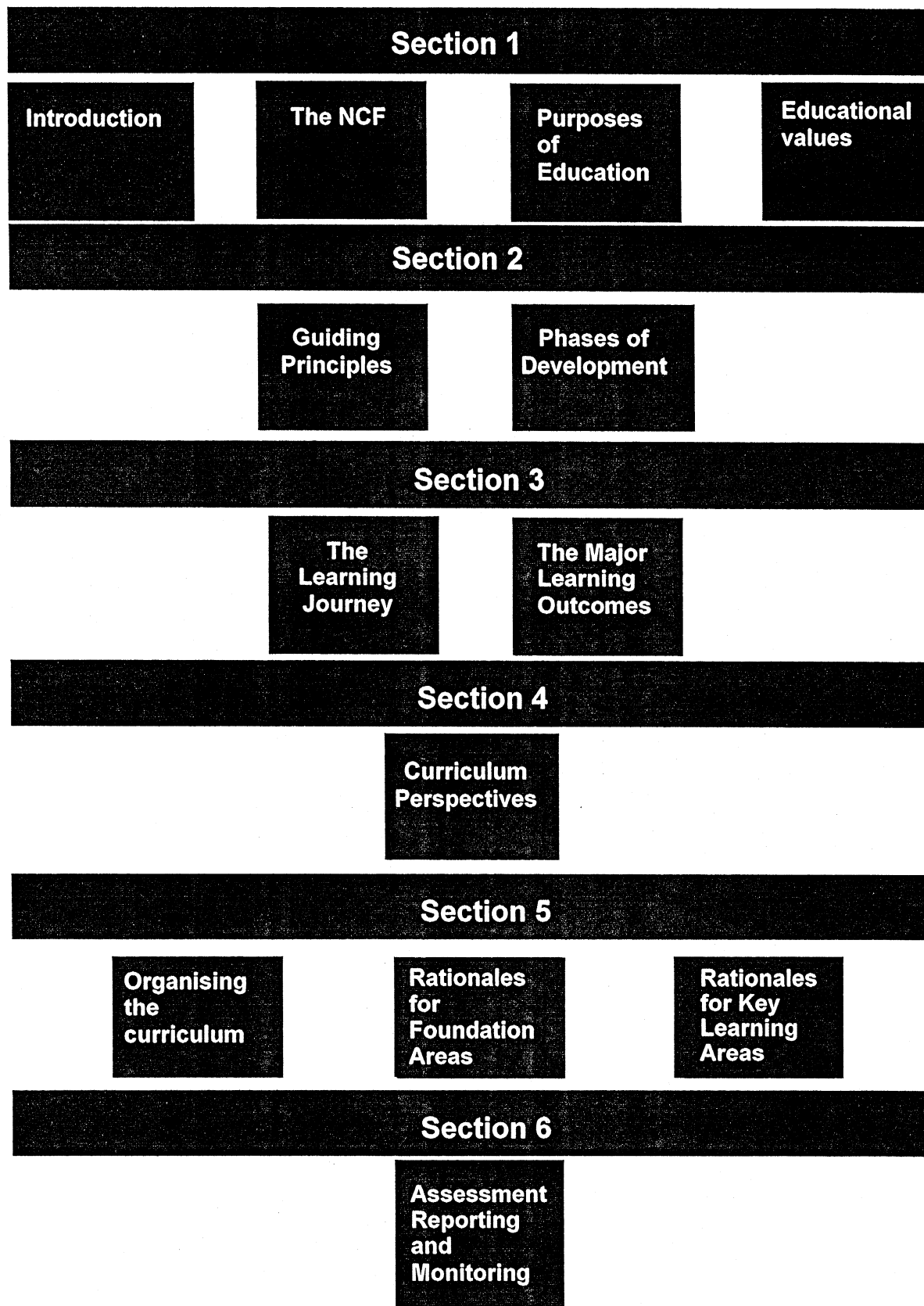


Figure 2: The Structure of the National Curriculum

<p>Foundation and Key Learning Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FALD are dimensions of learning and development in the early years. KLAs are groups of subjects that are placed together because they use similar ways of viewing and knowing the world. At primary and secondary and TVET each Class and Form has a syllabus for each subject within a KLA. 	<p>Purpose of Education and Purposes of Early Childhood, Primary, Secondary, Technical, Vocational Education and Training, Special Education</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>FOUNDATION AREAS OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT</td> <td>Aesthetics, creativity and the arts</td> <td>Language, literacy and communication</td> <td>Learning to know</td> <td>Learning and living together</td> <td>Physical development, health and well-being</td> <td>Spiritual and moral</td> </tr> </table>	FOUNDATION AREAS OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT	Aesthetics, creativity and the arts	Language, literacy and communication	Learning to know	Learning and living together	Physical development, health and well-being	Spiritual and moral	<p>Purpose statements give direction to education in Fiji. The purposes should be reflected in the culture and practices of early childhood programmes and schools.</p>
FOUNDATION AREAS OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT	Aesthetics, creativity and the arts	Language, literacy and communication	Learning to know	Learning and living together	Physical development, health and well-being	Spiritual and moral			
<p>KEY LEARNING AREAS</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Expressive and creative arts</td> <td>Healthy living and physical education</td> <td>Languages</td> <td>Mathematics</td> <td>Science</td> <td>Studies of society & economic development</td> <td>Technology</td> </tr> </table>	Expressive and creative arts	Healthy living and physical education	Languages	Mathematics	Science	Studies of society & economic development	Technology	
Expressive and creative arts	Healthy living and physical education	Languages	Mathematics	Science	Studies of society & economic development	Technology			
<p>MAJOR LEARNING OUTCOMES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be Empowered learners Communicate effectively Conduct investigations Make decisions Select and use information Show enterprise Understand change, balance and relationships 	<p>Subjects grouped according to their relationship with the Key Learning areas</p> <p>[Refer to Table 2 page 40 for details of these subjects]</p>	<p>CURRICULUM PERSPECTIVES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Careers Environmental Sustainable Education Literacy Numeracy Citizenship Religious Education Special Needs Education <p>GENERAL PRINCIPLES</p>							
<p>Major Learning Outcomes (MLOs) of schooling for all children (ECE to Form 7).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MLOs are expressed as a progression and are measurable. Schools/teachers need to take them into account in all their learning and teaching programmes. MLOs need to be reflected in the culture of the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum perspectives should be evident in all FALD and KLAs. Some will be more evident in particular FALD and KLAs. 								

Purpose of Education in the Fiji Islands

The following statement articulates the philosophy behind schooling in the Fiji Islands. This statement describes a holistic view of schooling. It gives direction to schools, and will be reflected in their culture, organisation and curriculum.

Education in schools in Fiji will support the learning and development of positive attitudes in all children and students and empower them with a firm foundation of knowledge, skills and values to maximise their potential to meet the challenges of living in a dynamic Fiji and in the global society.

Education in schools will contribute to the spiritual, intellectual, cultural, social, emotional, aesthetic and physical development of students who will have reverence for God. They will grow into healthy, happy and caring citizens. They will be committed to:

- cultural, multicultural, and religious understanding and tolerance
- harmonious living
- global co-existence, and
- the promotion of environmental sustainability.

Students will be informed, creative, responsible and productive citizens contributing to a peaceful, prosperous and just society.

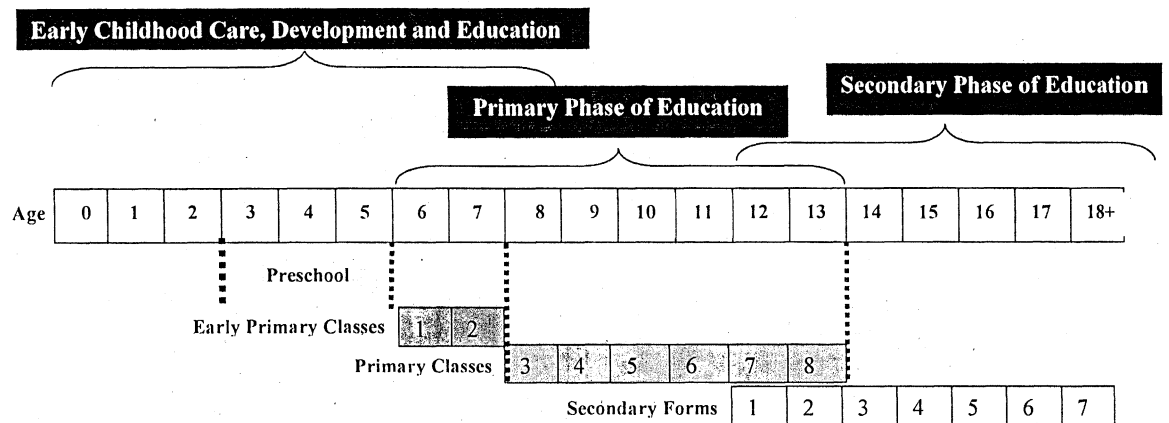
Education in Fiji will reflect the UNESCO four pillars of learning⁵: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be [UNESCO, 1996].

The NCF sets out what children and students will develop and learn from the ages of 3 to 19. It is organised in three phases of learning for children and students of different ages:

- Early Childhood Care, Development and Education – the foundation stage
- Primary Education – the basic education stage
- Secondary Education and Vocational Education and Training – pathways to future work stage.

⁵ See page 17.

Figure 3: Phases of Learning and Levels of Schooling in Fiji



Early Childhood Education

Early childhood care, development and education programmes enhance and extend early learning and development significantly when they support and affirm family roles. This perspective underpins the early childhood curriculum, which cannot be seen in isolation from children's prior learning and their ongoing learning from home and in the community. Children with disabilities need early intervention, so that they benefit to the greatest extent possible from early education and future educational experiences.

The purpose of these programmes is to provide children with an environment that will promote their optimum development. This means providing a variety of experiences that will foster the child's:

- cultural, aesthetic and creative development
- intellectual or cognitive development
- language development (promoting the child's mother tongue or own language first)
- moral and spiritual development
- physical development, health and well-being, and
- social and emotional development.

Primary Education

The purpose of primary education is to develop all children to their full potential by offering them the essential basic skills, knowledge and attitudes they will need in society. The support of parents and guardians is essential. Primary education will build on the education provided at early childhood level, and will continue to address the emotional, cultural, intellectual, physical and spiritual needs of all students. It will prepare students for life in the Fiji Islands and ensure that they begin to understand their place in the world as members of a global community. It will also prepare students for education at the secondary level, encouraging them to develop their individual abilities, interests and skills. Children and students with disabilities may need special educational intervention in order that they benefit from all that education has to offer.

Primary education will promote a love for learning, and of the values, virtues and moral dispositions we as a nation advocate and strive to uphold.

Secondary Education

Secondary education in Fiji will continue to provide all young people with basic skills, knowledge and values. It should enable them to engage in productive and satisfying employment and/or be prepared to enter tertiary education immediately after completion of secondary schooling. Secondary education will ensure that all students have the opportunity to develop essential knowledge, skills and attitudes in a broad range of subjects of their choice that will enable them to become productive citizens. In choosing subjects students will give careful consideration to possible career pathways. Students such as those with disabilities or special gifts will need particular educational interventions.

Secondary education will assist young people to be enterprising, creative, productive and law-abiding citizens of Fiji.

Secondary education will seek to fulfil the expectations of parents/guardians and the community by ensuring students have a firm grounding in moral and spiritual values which will in turn help define their role as good citizens of Fiji.

Technical Vocational Education and Training

...since education is considered the key to effective development strategies, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) must be the master key that can alleviate poverty, promote peace, conserve the environment, improve the quality of life for all and help achieve sustainable development.

[UNESCO. The Bonn Declaration 2004:1]

TVET aims to facilitate sustainable economic and social development by providing students with the knowledge, values and attitudes necessary to perform technological skills in both the formal and informal sectors of the economy. Students with disabilities will benefit from TVET and it can help them to lead regular lives.

TVET is designed to deliver a holistic, enhanced, student-centred approach to learning by applying the most effective, flexible and appropriate teaching and learning modes and technologies. It aims to encourage independence, innovation, creativity and problem-solving skills through flexible approaches to learning, and thus prepare students for the future.

TVET seeks to promote a sound work ethic and to raise learner-awareness of the importance and dignity of technical and vocational education in both the social and economic development of the nation. It offers a pathway to higher education, and provides students and early school leavers with transferable skills needed for employment in a wide range of employment opportunities.

Special Education ⁶

Special education is not a separate stage of education. It refers to organised services and learning for those children and students with disabilities, learning difficulties, communication or behaviour difficulties, and sensory or physical impairments. The degree of disability varies considerably and is not always obvious to the untrained eye.

⁶ The term '*Special Education*' refers to children and students with disabilities. However, the term '*Special Needs Education*' is inclusive of children and students with disabilities and those that are gifted and talented (see page 39). Children and students with disabilities may well have particular gifts and talents.

Special education does not have its own curriculum. It aims to enable students with disabilities to gain access to the curriculum in a range of settings in the educational system. Special education allows all children and students with disabilities to develop their individual educational potential. Some of these children and students need to attend special schools because they require specialist teaching and sometimes special facilities. Provision is also made for these young people to receive an education in mainstream regular schools when they are ready and able.

Special education also provides specific services, instructional strategies, resources and learning for children and students so that they can participate in the general curriculum and develop the skills/competencies needed for participation in the general curriculum. After receiving specialist support for their disabilities, children and students can transfer to mainstream schools and enjoy living and working together with their peers as they do in real life.

The purpose of special education is similar to the purpose of elementary and secondary education: to prepare children and students to lead productive independent lives as citizens and members of the community.

Educational values

The education system is committed to nurturing in children and students a set of values that will guide them through their lives. These values are fundamental to shaping and directing the curriculum. Values reflect the standards, criteria or guidelines that determine how we act upon available choices. They publicly affirm what we believe and provide the criteria that determine our behaviour in our daily lives. Schools and training institutions will address these values in their teaching and learning programmes and they will be evident in the general organisation of these institutions.

As a nation, we are creating a society in keeping with democratic principles. We recognise that tolerant and responsible relationships are based on sound values. These include the ethics, morals and values of the extended families of Fiji, respect for others, and a willingness to conserve and promote those aspects of our traditions that are consistent with living in harmony in our families, in our villages, in our communities, with our regional neighbours, and with other nations. As a nation we have incorporated into our way of life the values of other ethnic groups recognising the interdependence of individuals, societies, and nations in the modern world. We understand that our society's members need to be able to participate peacefully and productively with members of our immediate family, school, religious groups, community, and the world beyond.

The NCF reflects the importance of providing children and students with an education informed by a clear set of ethics, morals, and values. These are ideas shared by the citizens of the Fiji Islands about what is good, right and desirable⁷. Through consultation and consensus, a set of values was identified during the development of the Ministry of Education's *Strategic Plan (2006 – 2010)*. These were considered to be shared by a wide cross section of our multicultural society.

The following educational values have informed the national curriculum of the Fiji Islands. During the implementation of the NCF these values will be addressed:

- Civic Pride
- Compassion
- Creativity
- Cultural understanding, empathy and tolerance
- Environmental sustainability
- Faith
- Flexibility
- Honesty, fairness and respect for truth and justice
- Human rights, human dignity and responsibility
- Integrity
- Lifelong learning
- Peace and prosperity
- Safety and security for all citizens (especially the child)
- Sense of family and community.

⁷ Refer to the section on curriculum perspectives on page 38 for further information about values, attitudes and behaviours

Section 2

Guiding principles
Phases of development

Guiding Principles

Why have Guiding Principles?

Guiding principles provide the philosophical and theoretical foundation to the NCF. They indicate the broad approach on which the details of outcomes and ways of achieving these outcomes are based.

These principles also influenced the early childhood curriculum guidelines and subject syllabuses and will inform other support documents as they are developed. They will also influence

- what teachers teach
- how they teach, and
- how children and students learn and apply their learning throughout their lives.

The NCF addresses 'what' children and students should learn. Teachers will use this curriculum and devise ways to teach children and students in the most effective ways. Our national curriculum is described using learning outcomes which focus on what a child or student will demonstrate having studied the content.

It should be noted though that the outcomes do not identify the many pathways that children and students may take on their learning journey. It is the teacher's responsibility to provide appropriate pathways for learning journeys. Teachers will need to incorporate new teaching methods and maintain those that are effective in supporting learners and consistent with these principles.

What are the Guiding Principles?

The Fiji Islands NCF is based on two sets of guiding principles: social constructivism and Delors' four pillars of education. These principles have informed and guided the development of the NCF, and will also guide its implementation in the classroom.

Guiding Principle 1: Social Constructivism

Our national curriculum takes into account the following constructivist principles, which will guide teachers when implementing the curriculum. Applying the principles of constructivism supports effective teaching and learning. Constructivism has three fundamental aspects. First, it regards learning as an active process rather than the passive receipt of knowledge and understanding. Second, it regards learning as a social process whereby individuals construct meaning about the world around them in dialogue with others. Thirdly, constructivism holds that learners create or recreate knowledge, reshaping and internalizing knowledge in ways that change their view of the world around them. (Phillips, 1995)

In the past, theorists have advocated each of the following principles. They are not new. What makes a constructivist approach different is that it requires **all** of these principles (Doolittle, 1999).

1. Learning should take place in real-world environments

'Real world' learning experiences are essential because the learner needs to construct a representation of the 'real' world, not an artificial world. Through using real world experiences individuals construct mental 'pictures' that work. The curriculum reflects the real world and it encourages teachers to draw upon and provide learning experiences that are relevant to life in the Fiji Islands.

2. Learning should involve social negotiation and mediation

Teachers will encourage the development of socially relevant skills and knowledge. These will reflect the social traditions of the Fiji Islands as well as those that will enable participation in the global community. Teachers, children, and students learn together. Parents, guardians and the community have a supportive role as partners in the education process.

An effective way to develop this knowledge and these skills is by encouraging children and students to learn together in small groups and to negotiate, mediate and share their experiences. Wherever possible the community and its members should be welcomed as a resource. In these situations, language is used to construct knowledge and understanding. The vernacular languages of the Fiji Islands embody many social values and conventions and their use will be encouraged.

Learning is a social process; children and students do not usually learn in isolation but learn with and through others. Group work allows children and students to work together so that they can discuss; debate; explain; justify their thinking; and present their conclusions to the wider group. It includes working together to construct models, to solve problems, and investigate and research new information. It also reflects the world of work where teamwork and problem solving are valued. Through group work children and students become independent and responsible learners, develop higher order thinking skills and thereby begin the journey to becoming lifelong learners.

3. Children and students should become independent and collaborative learners

Learners actively construct knowledge and meaning. They increasingly know how to learn. As they become independent learners they become confident and aware about what they know; know what they are capable of doing; and know what to do and when to do it. Independent learners plan, monitor, and evaluate their own learning and understanding. Independent learners understand learning styles and know their learning style strengths and weaknesses. Because they understand these matters, independent learners work effectively in groups using collaborative methods.

4. The content and skills should be relevant to the learner

For individuals to adapt and function they need knowledge of content and skills relevant to their lives in the Fiji Islands and as members of the global community. Experience shows that relevant tasks lead to enhanced understanding in leading productive lives in homes, villages, communities and at the national level.

5. The content and skills should take account of the learner's prior knowledge

New learning starts by building on the knowledge that is present. By first determining the prior knowledge of a child or student, the teacher can provide experiences that will more effectively guide the next steps in learning. No learner is an 'empty vessel'. Prior knowledge and skills influence learners' responses to new knowledge and skills.

The local environment and the learners' experiences contribute to their prior knowledge, skills, values and their perspective about new knowledge, skills and attitudes. Teachers will determine what children and students can already do and know, and then use the curriculum guidelines and syllabuses for future planning.

In real life, connections between concepts, processes, skills and attitudes are made. In the classroom learners need to learn as in the real world. They should be encouraged to see the

connections between their prior learning and the new learning. In the early years, integrating the curriculum content is the norm and this will continue in the early years of primary through to Classes 7 and 8.

Transfer of learning from one learning situation to another is related to the degree to which the subject matter shares common elements. When designing activities and lessons teachers will consider how children and students could best make these connections, and use teaching strategies that will enable this to happen.

6. Teachers should make assessments to inform children and students as they learn and to inform future learning

The knowledge and understanding children and students have is inferred from observing them in action. A teacher will continually assess the individual's learning and development to plan the next learning experiences. This is formative assessment. (See Assessment for Learning, page 53)

7. Teachers are guides and facilitators of learning, which is centred on the child or student

Teachers were traditionally viewed as transmitters of knowledge while the learner was a vessel for knowledge 'poured in' by the teacher. Research and experience have both shown that the complex knowledge and skills required to survive and adapt to life in the 21st century cannot be taught or learned effectively in this way.

In a constructivist approach, the teacher is a guide or facilitator. The teaching is learner-centred. In a learner-centred classroom the teacher's job is to design learning experiences so that learners can develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and ways of learning to learn.

Teachers who are facilitators of learning recognise that their main role is to motivate and to ensure learners are actively engaged in learning, asking questions, conducting investigations, seeking information to find solutions, and making decisions. In this situation teachers have a vital role to play, using their knowledge, experience and enthusiasm to encourage and assist learners and guide them in their learning.

Young people learn at different rates and in different ways, and bring different perceptions of learning to the classroom. Each learner needs to be acknowledged for what she or he can do, and given time to take on new learning, building on previous experiences. Individual differences should be taken into account. Appropriate strategies and activities should support each individual.

8. Teachers should provide multiple perspectives and representations of content

Children and students will be encouraged to examine experiences from different perspectives so that they are better able to think about and represent these experiences in different ways. Representing experiences in a variety of ways provides children and students with further ways of connecting to this knowledge, and enables future thinking that is more complex. The curriculum provides many opportunities for learning using multiple perspectives and representations.

Teachers need to continue their own development throughout their professional life to ensure that they understand current perspectives and apply them accordingly.

Teachers make a difference. Teachers guide children and students using the curriculum learning outcomes and prepare learning experiences that relate to these outcomes.

9. All children and students can learn

The Fiji Islands is proud of its diversity and recognises that we have a rich history that has embraced the cultures of Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia and more recently those of India, New Zealand, China and other areas. These cultures have enriched our lives. Inclusivity is about valuing such diversity and recognising that children and students bring to the classroom experiences, knowledge and abilities influenced by such diversity.

Children and students from different cultural backgrounds have different needs, which must be catered for by the curriculum and teaching methods. For instance, the linguistic backgrounds of our children and students vary and these differences need to be taken into account so that they are all provided with the opportunity to learn and succeed.

The NCF is inclusive of all children and students from early childhood to form 7. The curriculum acknowledges the fundamental principle that all children and students can learn. This includes those children and students who may have special educational needs. In addition, all learning and teaching programmes must be inclusive of gender, race, culture, physical and or intellectual ability, socio-economic background, and geographic location. Teachers need to be familiar with ways of identifying children and students with special needs and take these into account.

Where possible, children and students with special needs will be supported in the regular classroom setting. For example, children and students with a physical impairment need to learn in a wheelchair-friendly environment whilst others may need aids such as canes or Braille learning materials. A significant number of children are unable to communicate using the spoken word. They need to be supported within a school by a teacher or assistant who can use sign language and be provided with assistive devices such as hearing aids.

About 2 percent of the children and student population are gifted and their special abilities need to be realised, nurtured and enhanced.

10. Learning can occur at different levels within the same class

Multigrade teaching is where a class contains two or more grades; it is a very important means of catering for the needs of all students. While multigrade classrooms are a feature of small, rural and isolated schools, increasingly they are being adopted in urban and suburban schools. Research reviews have indicated that there is no significant difference between academic achievement in single grade and multigrade classrooms.

Like teachers in all countries, our teachers have much to learn about teaching in these situations. The multigrade classroom is very challenging for teachers who have been trained in single grade teaching. Multigrade teaching requires approaches that are learner-centred. Classroom organisation, classroom management, discipline, instructional organisation, and the grouping of students need to be modified to reflect a learner-centred approach. (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2005)

The curriculum syllabuses are structured so that the strand outcomes are the same for each level but the content outcomes are written to reflect appropriate concepts, processes, skills and attitudes for a particular class or form. In the same class, learners may be working towards the achievement of the same outcome but at a level of sophistication appropriate for their level of achievement.

11. A safe and supportive environment is needed for learning to take place

Children and students must feel safe in the school environment free from harassment such as bullying, peer group pressure, and racial discrimination. Children and students must be supported and able to take risks in their learning in a conducive environment. A safe environment is one in which respect is shown for each other. Children and students need to feel confident that they will be able to work in an atmosphere in which they are not threatened physically, mentally or emotionally, and where a responsible adult is at hand to support them in their learning.

Children and students with special needs need to be understood and respected as individuals learning alongside their peers as equals. They need to feel at home in their learning environment. The learning environment needs to maximise the learning outcomes for all students.

A safe supportive environment is one in which children and students can discuss their problems and concerns without fear or prejudice. The curriculum encourages children and students to work together, to share experiences, and to appreciate that each has unique qualities and that each can use these to contribute to the betterment of all. This will occur in an environment that has an atmosphere of trust and is protected from harassment of all kinds.

Guiding Principle 2: Four Pillars of Education

The second set of principles underpinning the NCF emerges from the work of the UNESCO International Commission on Education for the 21st Century which produced the now famous document entitled *Learning: the Treasure Within (1996)*. This document identifies four pillars of learning: Learning to know, Learning to do, Learning to live together and Learning to be.

Learning to know has always been emphasised in our curriculum. Children and students have been encouraged to broaden their general knowledge and have been provided with the opportunity to work in depth in a small range of subjects. Increasingly, more children and students are benefiting from the opportunity to learn how to learn. These benefits will impact in positive ways, not only at an individual level, but also in terms of a more dynamic workforce and citizenry for the Fiji Islands.

The second pillar, **Learning to do** is recognised as a way forward for our students and our nation. There will be an increasing emphasis on vocational education and technology. This will ensure our children and students will have the opportunity to acquire processes and skills that ensure a more productive future for themselves, their communities and our nation. Children and students are encouraged to learn and demonstrate various practical competencies, to deal with real life situations, and to work collaboratively in teams.

The third pillar, **Learning to live together** is critical to our future welfare as a nation. Learning to understand each other's differences and appreciate our interdependence while maintaining our cultural integrity is a challenge. This is as true for the citizens of Fiji as it is for other nations in a global community increasingly characterised by diverse cultures and traditions. While children and students need to value their particular cultural identity they also need to learn to manage conflicts in "... a spirit of respect for the values of pluralism, mutual understanding and peace" (UNESCO 1996:97).

The fourth pillar, **Learning to be** is an aspect of education that encourages the individual to develop her or his own personality, to act independently taking personal responsibility for their learning. This pillar of education supports the need to provide holistic education. We ... must not disregard any aspect of a person's potential: memory, reasoning, aesthetic sense, physical capacities and communication skills. (UNESCO 1996:97).

The diagram below highlights these guiding principles of the NCF:

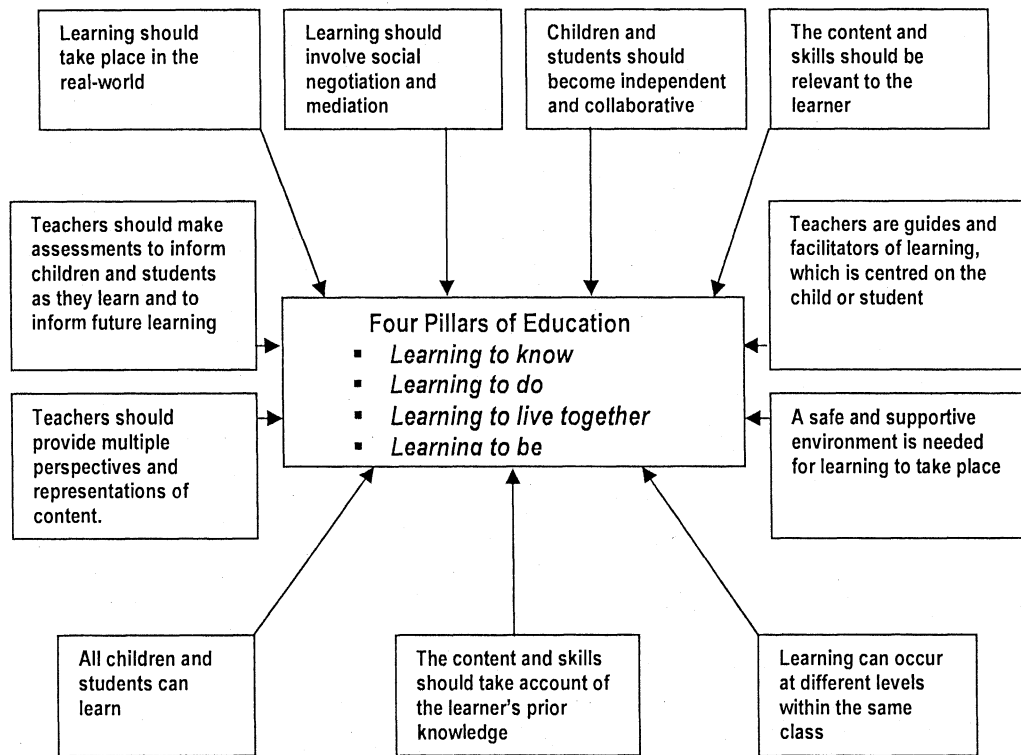


Figure 4: Summary of Guiding Principles

Phases of Development

Introduction

The passage from childhood to adulthood is accompanied by unmistakable changes in growth and the physical appearance of young people. These changes go together with intellectual, emotional and social changes that reflect who they are and affect how they respond to their physical and social environment and how effectively they learn. The curriculum needs to recognise that young people typically pass through three phases of development: early childhood, puberty and adolescence. Each of these phases is usually characterised by changes that impact on what interests young people, how they behave and how they are likely to respond to learning experiences. Teachers need to consider these changes as they have a noticeable effect on how well young people will respond and learn.

The Early Childhood Phase of Development

Early childhood development refers to the child's physical, mental, social and emotional development. The early childhood years cover the prenatal stage to 8 years of age. The years 0 to 3 are the most critical for rapid brain development when children need to be nurtured in a caring, safe and stimulating environment. The early years of life are important because they construct the foundation for later development of children.

Children at this stage:

- acquire culturally relevant skills and behaviours which allow them to function effectively in their current context
- adapt successfully when their current context changes.

The following statements consider three broad stages of early development: 0-3 years, 3-6 years and 6-8 years of age.

0 to 3 years

Children learn through all their senses, responding to movement of people, objects, colour and sound. They begin to vocalise and to develop a sense of self. They require protection, adequate nutrition and health care, attachment to an adult and to be held and sung to.

Children at this stage begin to imitate adult actions and speech actions; understand fundamental speech; move steadily; recognise ownership of objects; develop friendships; show pride in their achievements; and pretend play. These children now require support in new motor skills, language and thinking skills, and a chance to develop independence. They need to be provided with opportunities to learn to care for themselves, play with other children, and read and hear stories.

3 to 6 years

At this stage children have developed a longer attention span; are boisterous; talk a lot; question ceaselessly; imitate; and want adult things. They stretch their physical skills and courage; enjoy drama and playing with their friends; want only to win; and will share and take turns. They need opportunities to develop motor skills; language through talking, reading, singing; learning to cooperate; experiment with pre-writing and pre-reading skills and hands-on exploration. Children at this stage need to be encouraged to develop self-control, cooperation, persistence in completing projects. They need support for their sense of self-worth and pride in accomplishments, creativity, rhythmic movement and listening to music.

6 to 10 years

At this early primary stage of their lives children show an increasing interest in literacy and numeracy, and use words to express emotion and as a coping mechanism. They are more curious, emulate grown-up activities, and play cooperatively.

Children at this stage need more support and opportunities in literacy and numeracy skills development; life skills; learning to cooperate; taking responsibility for the choices they make; decision making; questioning; self-control and self-worth; and last but not least attend primary education.

At this stage, children generally do not challenge the authority of parents, guardians and teachers. They do make judgments about themselves and consider their self-worth, and their competence. As they mature, they begin to better understand their own abilities. Their experiences at school, in the home and in the community verify for them who they are and what they are capable of doing. At this stage, children and students are vulnerable to social comparison, which can affect their self-concept and their motivation. Adults have a tendency to make comparisons, which can weaken children's optimism. Children's self-esteem influences their behaviour.

Puberty and Adolescent Phases of Development

Stages 9 -16 years

Puberty refers to sexual maturation, a time when a child experiences physical, hormonal and sexual changes and becomes capable of reproduction. These changes are triggered by the production of hormones from the pituitary gland. Somewhere between 9 and 16 years, a child reaches puberty. Factors such as heredity, nutrition and sex of the child determine the exact age when puberty starts. Generally, boys enter puberty 2 years later than girls do. The new hormones that begin to be produced trigger the changes of puberty. This means that for girls the onset of puberty brings menstruation, genital and breast development, and body hair. For boys, body and facial hair, genital development, semen production and the lowering of the voice are important changes.

Both boys and girls experience sudden gains in weight and height. The production of these hormones not only causes secondary sex characteristics but also an interest in sex and in extending the realm of their relationships. This can be a time of experimentation and a time when young people may appear to be distracted by happenings outside of school and the family.

Stages 14 – 18 years +

Adolescence is a period of life from puberty to adulthood. It is a time when a teenager changes into an adult. This period is a time of important changes. The body continues to develop primary and secondary sex characteristics, endocrine changes and changes in physical appearance. These changes may bring pride if it happens early or, if it happens later than their peers, the changes may bring feelings of insecurity. This is the time when teenagers experience more physical changes than any other time in their development. They must therefore learn to accept and live with these changes and adapt to their new body image. All these changes can create

mood swings. The adolescent years bring psychological changes where teenagers may start to question the value system that has guided them in the early years. This may include questioning moral and cultural values, and raising ethical issues.

The adolescent may have questions about self-concept, personality development and emotional experiences. This is a time when personal experiences contribute to the development of their unique identity.

Adolescents experience social changes because they are so dependent upon their relationships with others. Peers rather than their family often influence values, behaviour and attitudes. In spite of this influence, adolescents enjoy their family not only because of the provision of basic needs but also because the family provides them with emotional security and affection. Adolescence also brings about changes in intellect and prepares the mind and body for future survival and fulfilment such as choices about career paths.

The search for an adult identity begins in puberty and the young person gradually develops emotional independence from parents and teachers. This is a difficult period for young people, teachers and parents or guardians in the adult-adolescent relationship, and both sometimes experience anger or rejection.

Adolescent attitudes towards parents, guardians and teachers are generally positive but there is an inclination for young people to question authority at this stage. The adolescent tests the limits of their new adolescent-adult roles. This is a time when adolescents, parents, guardians and teachers need to be aware of the changes brought about by puberty, and learn to adapt emotionally.

Cultural influences

According to the WHO definition of adolescence, it is the time between 10 – 20 years. However, the period of adolescence differs from one cultural group to another. In Fiji, the transition from childhood to adulthood is not merely a time of physiological or psychological changes or a time marked by age. It is a passage of time also regulated or defined by cultural practices. These practices vary within and between cultures and teachers should be aware of these differences.

Section 3

**The Learning Journey
Major Learning Outcomes**

The Learning Journey

When setting out on a journey, you usually know where you want to end up and you usually know or find out how you will get there. Learning is a journey that begins from birth. Children and students continue this journey at school and their teachers and parents support them on their way. Without a clear end-point or outcome for learning in school, it is difficult for teachers, children, and students to know how to travel and whether they have succeeded in arriving at a destination. Teachers, children and students need to know the learning destinations or outcomes. Teachers support children and students to reach these destinations.

The NCF describes what children and students should know, do and value as a result of attending early childhood programmes and school. The steps children and students take on these journeys in particular areas of learning are often described using objectives which mark the steps taken to achieve the outcomes. Objectives are not ends in themselves. Using outcomes, teachers plan learning experiences and identify objectives related to particular outcomes and support children and students to assist them to reach the agreed destinations.

There is an expectation that when children and students attend early childhood programmes and school they will 'learn to know, learn to do, learn to live together and learn to be' ⁸ (UNESCO, 1996) in ways that are valuable throughout their lives.

The NCF includes a broad set of outcomes called the Major Learning Outcomes (MLOs) ⁹.

These are the most significant learning destinations that all children and students in the Fiji Islands will aim to achieve. They identify what children and students need in order to learn throughout life and be productive citizens.

The Fiji Islands has adopted and adapted an Outcomes Based Approach in response to a call for changes to old practices to meet emerging educational needs. The NCF has developed outcomes at three levels:

- Major Learning Outcomes (MLOs)
- Foundation Learning Areas, and Key Learning Areas and Subject Outcomes
- Strand and Content Learning Outcomes.

These outcomes are the focus of all teaching, learning and assessment. The seven MLOs provide the overall vital focus for education in the Fiji Islands. The outcomes at the other levels contribute to the achievement of these MLOs.

⁸ Refer to Four Pillars of Education on page 17.

⁹ Refer to Page 25 for further information about the MLOs.

An outcomes approach links the curriculum with what is taught and what is assessed in the classroom. In the Fiji Islands curriculum, this approach focuses on outcomes that are grounded in our understanding of how children and students learn and develop, and in established subject content.

The new curriculum encourages an integrated and interdisciplinary approach particularly at early childhood and the primary levels of schooling.

Many reports, policies and frameworks have informed the NCF. *The Curriculum Guidelines for Early Childhood* and the new syllabuses for early primary, primary, secondary and TVET will build upon existing syllabuses and will address the principles of the new curriculum and some aspects of the old prescription documents. The new guidelines and syllabuses identify learning outcomes for all stages of schooling for **all** students.

Major Learning Outcomes (MLOs)

Introduction

The following seven major learning outcomes apply to all children and students from preschool to Form 7 and throughout life. Our understanding of these MLOs can improve throughout our lives. As children and students progress through the school system, they encounter these outcomes at increasing levels of sophistication. The seven MLOs are:

- Be empowered learners
- Communicate effectively
- Conduct investigations
- Make decisions
- Select and use information
- Show enterprise
- Understand change, balance and relationships.

The learning outcomes in six Foundation Learning Areas¹⁰ and seven Key Learning Areas¹¹ contribute to the achievement of the MLOs.

To achieve these major learning outcomes during life, children will begin their learning journey in the six Foundation Areas of Learning and Development (FALD) and then have the opportunity to study subjects associated with seven Key Learning Areas (KLAs) in the later years of schooling.

Each FALD contains significant learning and development outcomes for children, and the KLAs have their own particular subjects and strand outcomes as well as content described as learning outcomes for students. Together these outcomes comprise the essential learning areas for all children and students in the Fiji Islands.

The following elaborates each of the MLOs and highlights the behaviours that children and students will demonstrate if they are achieving these outcomes.

Be empowered learners

Independent, reflective, responsible lifelong learners

When children and students are empowered learners, they... know that learning is a lifelong process. They are self-motivated and confident to direct and take responsibility for their own learning when working independently and collaboratively. They utilise critical thinking and problem solving skills; have positive attitudes; exhibit initiative and creativity; and are willing to take risks.

¹⁰ Refer to Foundation Area of Learning and Development Rationales page 43

¹¹ Refer to Key Learning Areas Rationales page 46

They have a wide and varied range of learning strategies and processes to draw upon, and know when and how to use them. They reflect on their learning and learning style, analysing strengths and weaknesses. They effectively manage their learning through goal setting, and by organising their time and resources.

Communicate effectively

Communicate effectively and critically

When children and students communicate effectively and critically they...listen, speak, read, write and view with an awareness of and responsiveness to different conventions and interpretations. They communicate through expressing ideas and information clearly in many different ways, using different languages, technologies and media for a variety of audiences, purposes and contexts. Language learning begins with the earliest interactions between babies and their families, and develops through play in the early childhood years.

Conduct investigations

Investigate in order to address challenges and build knowledge, understanding and skills

When children and students conduct investigations, they....identify problems and issues; consult, read and research; think critically; make predictions and develop hypotheses; select resources; know how best to collect information/data; sort, organise and analyse data; evaluate and recognise limitations; draw inferences, conclusions and make recommendations; and take action while working individually and collaboratively. They are naturally curious so they learn when they ask questions; explore and play; involve their senses; manipulate real objects; work together with adults and children; make meaningful plans and decisions; see the results of their actions; and build upon what they already know.

Make decisions

Think critically and make reliable, informed, wise and ethical decisions

When children and students make reliable, informed, wise and ethical decisions, they...know they have choices; apply information; problem solve; critically analyse factors and predict consequences in order to make informed, reliable and wise decisions. They make decisions individually and collectively and have the confidence to participate in decision making for their benefit and for that of the community and the environment in which they live.

Select and use information

Locate, select and use information from a variety of sources

When children and students locate, select and use information they...demonstrate the skills to locate and critically select appropriate information from a range of sources for a specified purpose. They analyse information to evaluate its reliability, validity and point of view; organise the information and choose the best method of using and sharing it, taking into account audience and purpose; find solutions by seeking and reflecting on information from first-hand experiences and other resources, mostly working collaboratively with other children and adults; and become critical thinkers. Students understand the necessity of behaving ethically in their selection and use of information.

Show enterprise

Develop enterprising solutions to meet the needs of individuals and their communities

When children and students are enterprising, they...identify a need and generate solutions individually and/or collaboratively. They collect ideas and information; pursue and access opportunities; generate and use creative ideas and processes; are innovative and flexible in

finding solutions; and communicate ideas and information. Children and students, individually or as a group can be accountable for their actions; identify, assess and manage risks; and monitor, reflect and evaluate continuously. This means that they work individually as well as in a group; are creative and communicate their ideas clearly to others; take responsibility for their actions; identify and take risks; and identify problems and find creative solutions.

Understand change, balance and relationships

Know about change, its effect on balance, patterns and relationships

When children and students understand the causes and effects of change, they... identify the reasons for and consequences of change and constancy in relationships that result in balanced or unbalanced systems.

They understand that knowledge of change, patterns and relationships helps them appreciate the past and the present and to predict future implications. They make sense of change in the world by critically analysing similarities, differences and connections between events, objects and ideas. They think globally and act locally.

They describe and reason about structures, relationships and patterns to understand, explain, and make predictions about changes in order to appreciate why things happen in the way they do or do not happen. This means beginning to test relationships before gradually becoming aware of cause and effect.

Section 4

Curriculum Perspectives

Curriculum Perspectives

Introduction

The curriculum perspectives that underpin the NCF emerge from the following areas crucial to any educational framework: careers, citizenship, environmental sustainability, literacy, numeracy, religion, special needs, and values, attitudes and behaviour. These important perspectives are usually best integrated across the curriculum.

The foundations of these perspectives are laid down in the early years, although the teaching of them at this level may be largely informal. As such, the learning process is more often the result of good practices being modelled by adults.

All teachers will consider these perspectives in all FALD and KLAs. However, sometimes these perspectives need to be covered specifically and at particular times. For instance, aspects of religious education may be addressed specifically at particular religious festivals or by inviting a religious leader to educate children and students about their particular religion. Teachers should always be sensitive to the particular needs and requirements of religions other than their own.

Sometimes, these curriculum perspectives need to be covered when the need arises. For instance, children and students can consider particular values and virtues when the opportunity to learn about a particular value, such as honesty, is apparent.

At other times, teachers, children and students will address perspectives incidentally as they interact in the classroom or with the community. For instance, children and students may participate in local community celebrations and learn much from working with and talking with members of the community and their families.

Careers Education

Careers education is learning about earning a living, work opportunities, and leading a productive life. It is learning how various jobs have different educational requirements, about fulfilling job aspirations and developing positive attitudes to work. Choosing a career needs to be given serious consideration because these decisions can affect future happiness and fulfilment in life.

Careers education as a part of general education

Careers education starts from the early years of primary education. At this level, learning within the context of all KLA is focused on why and how people go about making a living. Teachers will ensure that learning experiences are relevant to the real world including the world of work. They will encourage students to have long-term and short-term goals; to set realistic goals for themselves; and explore ways of achieving them.

Secondary students

As students reach the secondary years of education, they will become more aware of the kinds of work they might do, and how certain subjects may be required for them to realise their aspirations. They will realise that the occupation they choose to pursue can be an important determinant of their future lifestyle. Head teachers, principals, counsellors, careers teachers, parents and guardians should assist students in making choices; planning a career; undertaking the necessary training; obtaining scholarships; and entering the world of work. Decision making is an important skill for students choosing careers. When choosing courses, they should be careful that the choices are sensible and achievable. It is important to make realistic decisions to suit the demands of labour in the Fiji Islands.

Teachers have an important role in discussing career possibilities, recognising that social problems may arise if students' aspirations are not realised. Students need to be prepared for the difficulties they may encounter in obtaining work and finding a satisfying career.

Choosing a career

Careers teachers and counsellors usually provide one or more of the following services to students and stakeholders:

- provide effective career counselling to students, parents and teachers
- teach job-search skills
- assist in administering aptitude tests to gauge abilities, interests, values, and personality-type to help students to make informed decisions about their future career path
- provide updated careers information about the changing global market and the technological market
- assist in resolving both family and personal conflicts
- teach decision making skills and outline pathways to achieve students' chosen options
- create awareness in parents and the community regarding careers education
- emphasise non-traditional jobs and the entry requirements in the job market
- use the internet to access employment opportunities, and email resumes and application letters
- liaise with private and public sectors for job placement and holiday jobs.

The role of careers teachers and counsellors is important in the school system. Students need to be guided to make realistic choices and choose careers that suit their aptitudes, interests, abilities

and aspirations. Moreover, it is important that students choose a career with care while maximising their options so that, where necessary, they are able to adjust to whatever jobs are available to them. Finally, it is crucial for parents, head teachers, principals, careers teachers, and other teachers to discuss career choices with students before a decision is reached.

Citizenship Education

The Ministry of Education's Strategic Plan (2003-2005) captures the essence of an effective citizenship programme:

...To develop students who respect others, appreciate Fiji's multicultural heritage and are responsible, informed and involved citizens of both Fiji and the world.

As the citizens of Fiji come to terms with the reality and challenges of their social, political and economic well-being in the 21st century, the Government, and in particular the Ministry of Education, has the important task of developing an informed, effective and responsible citizenry. Democracies are sustained by citizens who have the requisite knowledge, skills and dispositions towards its philosophy. The teaching of citizenship education in schools plays a major role in this, and is part of the broader framework of the Good Governance Programme in Fiji. As such, efforts in schools must be complemented by parallel effort in the wider community.

Formal instruction in citizenship education will provide a basic and realistic understanding of civic responsibilities, democratic responsibilities, politics and government. It will familiarise students with the constitution of Fiji, and enable citizens to understand the workings of their social and political systems. The inclusion of citizenship concepts and topics provides a basis for understanding the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy, and a framework for competent and responsible participation.

The intention is to be holistic in the implementation of this programme where citizenship education is not limited to a simple understanding of relevant concepts but encompasses training towards informed and appropriate practices and attitudinal changes in our young people as they proceed through the school system. Of importance is the ability of the citizenship curriculum to inform and develop in students the skills to promote and be involved in the process of peace building, democracy, human rights and responsibilities and development. It will complement the existing Values and Virtues Programme that is already part of the school curriculum.

An important dimension in the citizenship education project is the recognition of the role of traditional and social structures, and norms and practices that have played significant roles in Fiji's political and social life. Students will be encouraged to draw on their traditional ethics, beliefs and philosophies to enhance their role as good and productive citizens of communities in the local, national and international arenas.

The primary intention of this project is to integrate citizenship education into the formal curriculum to ensure its inclusion in core teaching and learning processes, as well as assessment practices. Equally important is the ability of schools to develop school-based activities or projects that will provide first-hand experience of the skills and appropriate attitudes to be developed to make good citizens of the people of Fiji.

Environmental Education for Sustainability

The United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution to establish the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014). This resolution highlights the importance of concerted action to ensure that development processes that we allow to occur today do not impede the livelihoods and quality of life of future generations.

What is Environmental Education for Sustainability?

One of the pillars of sustainable development that gives shape and content to sustainable learning is environment. Environmental education for sustainability promotes awareness of the fragility of the physical environment affected by human activity. Environmental education for sustainability envisions that education will empower students to assume responsibility for creating a sustainable future. That is, after schooling students will have an understanding of, concern for and an ethic of caring towards the natural world. This means students need to have developed the knowledge, critical thinking skills, and appropriate values to participate in decision-making about environmental and developmental issues.

The guiding principles of environmental education emphasise a holistic approach. These principles view the environment in its totality – natural and cultural, technological and social. Consequently, environmental problems will need to be addressed through economic, social and political policies and technological change.

Teaching for environmental sustainability

Teaching and learning strategies for environmental education need to emphasise not only knowledge and understanding, but also and more importantly critical thinking skills and development of environmental attitudes and commitment. Students need to learn how to work collaboratively to improve human and environment well-being. Effective environmental education for sustainability will not only focus on what we learn but also on how we learn.

The implementation of an effective programme of environmental education for sustainability requires a whole school approach and purposeful learning experiences in all FALD. It begins with the development of a shared school vision, a mission statement, and clear learning outcomes. This vision will define how schools are organised, and identify the roles that administrators, teachers, students and families will assume in this structure. Teaching and learning experiences will integrate goals for conservation, social justice, cultural diversity and appropriate development. These learning experiences will ensure that young people develop civic values and skills that will help them to become responsible citizens.

Environmental education for sustainability will be a core cultural feature of early childhood and school programmes. All groups that make up a school community will be involved in supporting this important facet of contemporary education.

Literacy Education

A simplistic view of literacy sees it as merely the ability to read and write. However, this definition tends to ignore the role of social context, and social functions of language. A UNICEF study found that, because language is the means for social development, the importance of literacy in dealing with daily life situations needs to be included in any definition of literacy education (UNICEF 2000). In other words, the context is critical to the promotion of reading and writing skills. The following definition of literacy captures this social dimension.

A definition of literacy

Literacy is defined as the ability to understand, use and reflect on language so as to

- read and write
- achieve one's goals
- develop one's knowledge and potential, and
- participate effectively in society.

Other forms of literacy

The term 'literacy' also applies to many matters other than language. It is now used to refer to forms such as computer literacy, mathematical literacy (numeracy), scientific literacy, health literacy, and social literacy. As such, computer literacy is the ability to understand, use and reflect on computers to achieve one's goals, develop one's knowledge and potential, and fruitfully participate in society. The other types of literacy can be similarly defined. The curriculum perspective discussed in this section is about the literacy of language, which itself is the means of achieving other forms of literacy.

The need for literacy

Young people need a reasonable level of language ability if they are to be productive members of society. To be able to read, write, speak, and actively listen is essential for intellectual, social and emotional development in all FALD and KLAs. Children and students need to become literate in all areas of the curriculum as language is used differently in different areas. As children and students achieve greater levels of literacy, they are able to better communicate their thoughts and feelings, knowledge and understandings, and more effectively participate in community activities.

Research shows that developing literacy cannot be divorced from content, and that the learning context impacts on the development of literacy skills (Furniss & Green, 1993). All learning areas provide meaningful contexts for literacy development. Specific subjects have different language features such as vocabulary and genre, and these features must be explicitly taught. Therefore, it is imperative that all teachers take responsibility for developing the literacy skills of the young people in their care.

The importance of vernacular

Learning in a second language in which they have limited proficiency can limit young people's conceptual understanding and social development. Research suggests that children and students who continue to learn in their first language become confident in thinking, reasoning, problem solving and decision making, and are better able to master another language such as English. It is essential to develop and enhance young people's competence in using their vernacular languages both in and out of the classroom. Research has shown that developing literacy in one's vernacular also leads to stronger intellectual development. Therefore, having a high level of literacy in one's own language enables children and students to achieve at higher levels and to be better prepared

for life outside school. Encouraging high levels of proficiency in our many vernacular languages ensures that our country's rich inherited cultures are appreciated and transferred from one generation to the next. By continuing to use and value their vernacular languages, children and students learn to value and maintain important features of our many diverse cultures. In this way, our vernacular languages will continue to contribute to the rich cultural diversity of the Fiji Islands.

Numeracy education

What is numeracy?

...Numeracy is the effective use of mathematics to meet the general demands of life at home, in paid work, and for participation in community and civic life.

(Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers (AAMT) Inc 1997: 39)

This definition is useful because it places numeracy in the context of everyday life, emphasising its practical value. Numeracy represents the ability to use a range of mathematical skills (including the use of local mathematical concepts, processes and skills) in a variety of contexts. These understandings give people more control in day-to-day life in both traditional and contemporary settings. Numeracy skills will allow our young people to carry out a variety of tasks such as measuring using hand span and arm length, counting fish and coconuts using traditional forms of measurement, and managing home finances or small businesses.

Furthermore, citizens need to understand financial information such as interest rates and other mathematical information including simple statistical information because concepts such as these impact on our daily lives in significant ways. Highly numerate individuals will be better able to make informed contributions to Fiji's social, economic and political arena, so it is evident that numeracy is not simply a skill important at the individual level. In fact it is a set of skills and concepts that has far ranging influence, and should therefore be carefully integrated into our education framework.

Like literacy, numeracy enables the individual to achieve their goals and participate as a productive member of society. Children and students need to be involved in the wider aspects of numeracy and not just the skills of adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing.

Many mathematics educators believe that numeracy is best integrated rather than taught as an isolated subject in a mathematics course. Like literacy, numeracy is the responsibility of all teachers and the various cross-curricular contexts in which numeracy will be addressed will serve to strengthen young people's understanding and application of mathematical knowledge and skills.

In the preschool, numeracy learning occurs largely through play and informal learning experiences. Early childhood teachers support children's learning of concepts and related language through observing and talking to children, and by providing a variety of interesting, challenging and purposeful experiences.

Religious Education

The NCF does not promote or favour a particular religion or belief. Our national curriculum promotes religious and spiritual understanding, effectively challenging prejudice and stereotyping. In this way, the NCF supports the constitution of our nation when it states:

...Every person has the right, either individually or in community with others, and both in public and in private, to manifest his or her religion or belief in worship, observance, practice or teaching.

(The Constitution of the Republic of the Fiji Island Chapter 4, 35(2))

Our constitution also states that this right ...

... extends to the right of religious communities or denominations to provide religious instruction as part of any education provided by them, whether or not they are in receipt of any financial assistance from the State.

(The Constitution of the Republic of the Fiji Island Chapter 4, 35(3))

Furthermore, the Constitution also gives young people under the age of 18, who are attending a place of education, the right, with the consent of a parent or guardian, not to...

... receive religious instruction or take part in or attend a religious ceremony or observance if the instruction, ceremony or observance relates to a religion that is not his or her own or if he or she does not hold any religious belief.

(The Constitution of the Republic of the Fiji Island Chapter 4, 35(5))

Our vision for the child is that he or she be educated holistically. The religious and spiritual dimension is an important aspect of a child's holistic education. The NCF acknowledges that particular values and virtues associated with religious beliefs influence what children, students, teachers and members of the community do, say and think. The community recognises and supports the important contribution religious and spiritual understanding can make to children and students' lives irrespective of their particular religious persuasions or if they choose not to identify with a religious organisation. At the early childhood level, the Moral and Spiritual Foundation FALD is an important basis for developing values, virtues and beliefs. At other levels of schooling, aspects of spiritual and moral development are dealt with in subjects such as Healthy Living, and Social Science.

Learning about and from religion

Children and students will develop knowledge and understanding of the principal religions practised in the Fiji Islands. They gain knowledge of the fundamental influence of religion and carefully consider issues of beliefs and truth in religious practice. Consideration of religious and spiritual understanding assists children and students to share their own beliefs, viewpoints and ideas, and to address important spiritual, moral and social questions.

Children and students will consider how religions relate to each other, recognising both similarities and differences within and between religions. They will be encouraged to consider the contribution religion makes to social unity so as to oppose religious prejudice and discrimination. Learning about and from religion will promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, enabling children and students to appreciate their own and others' beliefs and cultures, and how these influence individuals, communities, societies and cultures.

Values, attitudes and behaviours

What is a value?

A value is a particular ideal that we believe is desirable or important. As a society, we have many values that we share such as honesty, compassion, love, peace, charity, and humility, but we also bring different understandings to these values. Indeed what some individuals or groups value least may be highly regarded by others. Values are the things about which individuals have some view and these views may be positive or negative.

What is an attitude?

Having a view about a particular value is called an attitude. For instance, a parent might value honesty and have an attitude or view about honesty that conflicts with that of others including her or his children. Both may recognise the value of honesty but each person may have different attitudes with respect to this value. Once children and students are aware of values, they form attitudes towards them; some of them may be negative and others positive. Our understandings of values are formed in our early years, and evidence suggests that it is difficult to change values and attitudes that we develop in these formative years. This is a challenge for teachers.

What is behaviour?

The response we make to a particular value is evidenced by our actions, that is, our behaviour. We demonstrate our values in what we say and do. For instance, our body language can reveal our attitudes to particular values. This also applies to teachers: another challenge for teachers is for them to be aware of their own values and attitudes. They need to be good role models for their children or students, and exhibit behaviour that society would regard as exemplary.

The role of the teacher

Our values and attitudes are often hidden. Teachers can only infer whether a child or student has particular values and attitudes from his or her behaviour and responses to questions and learning situations.

For example, before trusting a child or student with a particular responsibility the teacher will look for value-oriented behaviour that would indicate the student could be trusted to manage this responsibility. Observation and experience of young people's behaviour is thus an important way teachers take into account their values and attitudes.

Taking opportunities to teach about values, attitudes and behaviours as they arise is a significant role for teachers. Teaching and learning situations that encourage children and students to reflect on their values, attitudes and behaviour is also an important part of the curriculum and these will be found in all FALD and KLAs. Children should consider the implications of their behaviour while older students will also consider the personal and social implications of particular knowledge and attitudes. This is an important curriculum perspective as our values, attitudes and behaviours affect all facets of our way of life.

Special Needs Education

Special needs education is for children and students with disabilities of an intellectual, physical, sensory, emotional, or behavioural nature, a learning disability, or exceptional gifts or talents. The needs of these children and students need to be addressed in all learning areas from preschool to Form 7.

The Fiji Islands nation supports the empowerment of persons with disabilities and with special gifts for a better quality of life by promoting and building a peaceful, barrier-free and inclusive society for all people. Our society aspires to be an inclusive society. A young person's sense of belonging, self-worth, and role value needs to be well established in our society. This reflects a caring and compassionate society.

Who are children and students with special needs?

First and foremost, these children and students are of our nation; ten percent of the population in mainstream and special schools have physical, intellectual or learning impairments. The degree of disability varies considerably. Some children may not display obvious signs of a disability. While all children have gifts, and their gifts take many forms, a further two percent of our school population are exceptionally gifted and talented and they too require special attention and have special needs.

Children and students need to use their gifts in an environment where these are appreciated by others. They need to be taught by teachers who understand how to develop their gifts. A child or student that is athletically gifted needs to be among other athletically gifted children or be encouraged to physically achieve as much as he or she can. Similarly, academically gifted children and students can quickly become bored and lose motivation if their particular needs are not attended to. Supporting gifted children has the potential to result in economic, professional, and technological rewards that are worth many times the original cost of the education.

Why do we need to provide an inclusive education for children with special needs?

We sometimes forget that children and students with special needs are like us; they have mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, grandparents, uncles and aunts or guardians. They belong to a family where they take part in the day-to-day patterns and rhythms of life. They get up in the morning like everyone else; they wash, get dressed, have breakfast, go to the local schools, catch a school bus or walk to school on school days. They attend a place of worship with their families and they go shopping, attend birthdays, weddings, sports and recreational activities and other events in towns, villages and settlements using various means of transport.

We need to use inclusive terms as we embrace and celebrate the dignity and respect for the human person, not only for children with special needs, but for all children. Language that discriminates is exclusive because it discriminates against a person's human right to learn, to know, to do, to live with other people and to be confident, to make decisions, and be empowered.

An inclusive Fiji ensures that young people with special needs are provided with friendly learning environments. Culturally inclusive language is used, and celebration of diversity is evidenced. Provision for teacher training, assistive devices, and transport is provided to ensure access and achievement for our children with special needs. In turn, these persons will also contribute to the social, cultural and economic development of the Fiji Islands.

Section 5

Organising the Curriculum

FALD Rationale

Key Learning Areas: Rationale

Organising the Curriculum

The early childhood curriculum is organised into six Foundation Areas of Learning and Development (FALD). The early primary, primary and secondary stages of education of the curriculum have been organised into seven Key Learning Areas (KLAs).

Foundation Areas of Learning and Development

The FALD are used to organise the curriculum for early childhood education. These are broad areas that encompass fundamental aspects of early childhood education, and provide the foundation for future learning and living. The areas are:

- Aesthetics, Creativity and the Arts
- Learning to Know
- Language, Literacy and Communication
- Living and Learning Together
- Physical Development, Health and Well-being
- Spiritual and Moral.

Key Learning Areas

Grouping subjects with closely interconnected concepts, skills and attitudes is a useful way of arranging the curriculum in the primary and secondary years. Seven KLAs have been identified which accommodate all of the traditional subjects in the curriculum. Each KLA subject has sets of learning outcomes that show a progression from simple to increasing levels of complexity as students' progress through school.

The KLA subjects are supported by syllabuses that provide a picture of the total span of the students' schooling, and allow for continuity and consistency. The seven KLAs are as follows:

- Expressive and Creative Arts
- Healthy Living and Physical Education
- Language
- Mathematics
- Science
- Studies of Society and Economic Development
- Technology.

Table 1: Levels of schooling, Key Learning Areas and their Subjects

Levels of Schooling	Expressive and Creative Arts	Healthy Living and Physical Education	Language	Mathematics	Science	Studies of Society and Economic Development	Technology
Class 1	The Arts	Health Living and Physical Education	Fijian Hindi English Rotuman Urdu Mandarin French Tamil Punjabi	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies	Technology
Class 2							
Class 3							
Class 4							
Class 5							
Class 6							
Class 7/ Form 1		Family Life PE Sport					
Class 8/ Form 2		Health					
Form 3	Art Craft Music Dance Drama					Commercial Studies Social Science	Agricultural Sc Graphic Arts - TD or Woodwork - TD or Metal Work - TD Home Economics Office Technology Vocational Education
Form 4							
Form 5					Biology Chemistry Physics	History Geography Accounting Economics	Agricultural Science Adv. Home Economics Wood Technology: Engineering Technology Technical Drawing Computer Studies Office Technology Vocational Education
Form 6							
Form 7							Agricultural Science Textiles Technology Food Sc. & Technology Intro. to Technology Tech. Drawing & Design Information Technology Business Administration

FALD: Rationale

Introduction

The FALD organise the curriculum for early childhood into an integrated and holistic entity. Within this framework, the teacher considers the child's creative, emotional, intellectual, physical, social and spiritual needs, and ensures that they are nurtured and developed. These aspects of child development are the basis for the following six FALD around which the early childhood curriculum is organised.

Aesthetics, creativity and the arts

Aesthetic experiences emphasise doing things for the pure joy of the activity, and creativity involves using existing skills and resources to create something new using one's imagination.

Aesthetic and creative expression comes naturally to most children in Fiji. They create different sounds and music; stop to admire beautiful and colourful flowers on the way home from kindergarten; dress up in traditional costumes using 'saris', bangles, beads, and 'sulus'; recite chants and may also express their thoughts through drawing in the sand. In order to nurture and promote these spontaneous feelings in children to imagine, explore, appreciate, create and express, early childhood settings need to provide appropriate learning experiences and opportunities. Such opportunities would enable children to develop their aesthetic and creative expressions through activities such as: painting and drawing; threading frangipani flowers; collage; modelling with clay; moving to the beats of the 'lali' or 'dholak'; pretend/dramatic play; taking nature walks; and chasing butterflies during outdoor play.

Language, Literacy and Communication

Communication happens between people when they exchange information through verbal and non-verbal means. Early language is the means by which young children can share their feelings, ideas, needs and concerns. Language and communication development is an integral part of all activities and experiences in the early childhood environment, and builds on the home language and literacy practices of the child's village, settlement, town or city. Therefore, early childhood environments in Fiji need to include materials that support children growing up in a multicultural and multilingual world. They need multiple opportunities that emphasise interrelated skills of speaking, listening, viewing, reading and writing, information processing, and critical thinking.

Early language and communication will focus on the acquisition of the child's first and other languages in the early years. It encourages parents and caregivers/adults, teachers and families to provide experiences and resources built on home language and literacy practices in their early childhood programmes and in their villages or communities.

Learning to know

Learning to know involves internal thought processes that support knowing, understanding and awareness. Young children begin to develop their understanding early through touch, hearing, sight, taste, smell and feeling. Early experiences and stimulation in the home, school and community settings provide the basis for further affirmation and development of their perception of the environment. Examples of these are discovery/observation, discrimination, socialization, identity, language, communication, eye-hand coordination, fine/ gross motor movements and self-help skills.

These skills form the basis for decision making, prediction, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, critical thinking, divergent thinking, problem solving, solution finding, strategic thinking and indigenous and cultural knowledge development. These skills are essential for lifelong learning.

Living and learning together

Children learn who they are and what life is about from the people they are with. For most children this is the family. This is the most important influence on the child's perception of themselves and others. Working closely with families is therefore the most important role of the early childhood teacher. In this curriculum area, we focus on the child's developing sense of self, building trusting relationships with others, and developing understanding of themselves as members of a community.

Learning experiences in the social and emotional area encourage children to become independent learners and responsible citizens. Children develop pride and understanding in their culture, develop positive attitudes, and respect for other cultures. Within a safe and inclusive environment, children develop the confidence and ability to identify and express their emotions. They learn the limits and boundaries of acceptable behaviour, and become able to tolerate change and adapt to an ever-widening world.

Physical development, health and well-being

Physically active children have greater chances of being healthy for a lifetime. Healthy development begins from the time they are conceived, with the early years being a critical period. Their bodies change in size, their skeletons and nervous systems mature, and they gain more control over their movements. During this time growth is continuous. However, growth does not always take place at the same rate.

The child has the right to the highest attainable standard of health and the right of access to health care services. This can only happen if the teachers, families, communities and health care services work together. Within their programmes, teachers support children's health and physical development through modelling good practices and offering learning experiences that support children's gross and fine motor skills.

Spiritual and moral

This is a significant area of development, which requires that children need to be explicitly taught the social rules and expectations of preschool and school. The child must first see him or herself as separate from others before he or she can begin to form some idea of right and wrong. This usually happens around the age of 2 years.

Spiritual and moral development is an integral part of the early childhood education curriculum in Fiji where children of different religious background are provided with opportunities to learn and demonstrate their own religious beliefs after which they can also share with others in the

preschools. Moral development of young children is very crucial. It is essential that they are able to observe good role models from caregivers such as parents and family members, teachers and other adults in their communities.

Concepts of love, trust, tolerance, sharing and joy are integrated into the preschool programme through the different activities the children do. A challenge for those working with young children is to recognise when children know right from wrong and when they can be responsible for their actions.

Such knowledge and understanding of children's development affects the way teachers and parents handle situations where there is a moral difference of opinion. The children in Fiji preschools and schools come from families of many cultures and so it is to be expected that early behaviour patterns will vary.

KLAs: Rationale

Expressive and creative arts

Expressive and creative arts provide the opportunity to develop the inherent creativity in each individual. Aesthetic understanding and skills are developed through visual art, craft, music, dance, drama and cultural activities. These could be experienced singularly or in combination, though each is unique in its language, techniques and conventions.

Children and students develop creative ways of expressing themselves and develop a critical appreciation of their own work and that of others. They use their senses, perceptions, feelings, values and knowledge to communicate through the arts.

Aesthetic understanding helps children and students to appreciate and critically respond to various art forms with enjoyment. Through their arts experiences, children and students come to understand broader questions about the values and attitudes held by individuals and communities.

Arts practice involves the exploration and development of ideas and feelings through the use of a range of skills and knowledge of art techniques and processes. The arts provide a powerful means of expression and communication of life experiences and imagination.

Healthy living and physical education

Health is the total well-being of a person in the physical, emotional, social, mental and spiritual areas of life. It is not merely the absence of disease but relates to the quality of life for each individual. The study of health will enhance the development of appropriate behaviour for a healthy lifestyle.

Health is experienced everywhere, everyday and in all areas of life including the environment the individual lives in. The formal and informal curriculum will develop in children and students appropriate knowledge, understanding, values, attitudes and skills to support the maintenance of health.

Maintaining the positive health status of children and students is particularly important, as it is vital in allowing them to reach their full potential. It also influences their ability to learn effectively and to take part in the daily activities of the family, the school and the wider community. Children and students will engage in learning experiences appropriate to their developmental level that will foster lifelong health related fitness, prevent illness, injuries and disease, and promote healthy relationships.

The community needs to be familiar with healthy attitudes, behaviours and practices, engaging in physical activities and making wise decisions about personal health and lifestyle.

Language

Language is the essence of human existence. It is what makes us unique. It is a tool for communication, interaction, gathering and using information for creative responses to changes and global possibilities. It consists of all the linguistic features that make communication effective, and relationships successful.

Language provides children and students with opportunities to participate actively in society to gain insights into other cultures, have access to knowledge, and construct new knowledge. It is imperative that children and students have the ability to listen, speak, read, write and view with ease and competence in order to make meaning of the world around them.

The demand on language skills in this era requires high levels of literacy including an understanding of language conventions. These include registers; differences in written and oral conventions associated with different purposes; audience and contexts; handwriting; spelling; grammar; and punctuation. To interact with others in diverse circumstances, children and students need to be able to use these language conventions to express ideas, feelings and opinions. This will help them to be competent, reflective, adaptable and critical users of language.

New technologies and new forms of communication place great demands on language skills. Children and students need to understand that good language skills provide them with opportunities to empower, control and influence their behaviour and that of others. They will then become analytical, creative and confident users of language, engaging the necessary skills to pursue knowledge and achieve their potential. Children and students' understanding and command of languages will enable them to accept challenges in a multilingual, dynamic and diverse Fiji, as well as the global community.

Mathematics

Mathematics is a growing body of concepts and knowledge that makes use of specific language and skills to analyse and interpret the world. It is a powerful means of communication requiring accuracy and precision.

Mathematics will provide children and students with opportunities to be creative, to discover patterns of numbers and shapes, perceive relationships, represent ideas through models, represent data and communicate ideas and concepts. It will further develop in children and students the skills, knowledge and attitudes that will enable them to cope confidently with mathematics in everyday life.

Children and students will use the processes of problem solving, logical reasoning, mathematical tools, communication and estimation. Mathematics is integral to everyday living. An activity-oriented approach, which values learner participation and ways of thinking, will be used so that mathematics can be appreciated and enjoyed by everyone. Children and students will develop confidence in their mathematical ability and see mathematics as useful to them and the wider community. They will also appreciate aspects of ethno-mathematics, which includes the wider use of mathematics in different cultures.

Science

Science empowers children and students to know and understand themselves and the world around them. Through science, they are able to make effective use of all five senses through self-discovery to collect information and investigate problems in a scientific manner.

Children and students use the scientific research and investigation process to help them to question, understand, appreciate and respond to changes and interactions as they develop physically, spiritually, mentally and socially. As part of this process, they develop an understanding that all living things are interdependent, and they will appreciate that they are part of the living and non-living systems.

Science enables children and students to think, understand, and therefore value the beauty and importance of all living and non-living things. With an understanding of biological, physical and chemical processes that cause natural phenomena and events, they can recognise and predict the reaction to natural, self-determined and other man-made actions. They develop an understanding and appreciation of the importance of natural resources, interrelationships in systems and how to utilise these efficiently in sustainable ways. They understand the need to adapt and to enjoy living in their surroundings. They will also appreciate the traditional use of science in their cultures.

Science is experienced everywhere, every day, by everyone. With an interest in an ongoing learning of science, children and students will become more informed individuals and citizens who can confidently communicate scientific ideas and apply them in an enterprising manner. They will be able to use technology safely, interpret information based on science, and make critical judgments regarding its accuracy and validity. They will use reasoning and decision making skills that contribute towards co-existing peacefully in society with concern for other disciplines, their culture and the environment.

Studies of Society and Economic Development (SSED)

SSED provides children and students with the opportunity to investigate peoples and events in relation to their culture, resources and environment, enabling them to gain a better understanding of how individuals and groups interact with each other and their environment. Its concepts, skills and attitudes are drawn from many disciplines such as accounting; geography; history; law; politics; and sociology, and from multidisciplinary studies such as business studies, environmental studies, and multicultural studies.

SSED enables children and students to develop knowledge of: the Fiji Islands and its place in the global community; the diversity of its land and people; their cultural and environmental heritage; and their political, legal and economic systems. SSED aims at assisting young people with the development of a cultural ethic in which respect for different cultures and societies is valued.

To promote the value of their own culture and respect for other cultures, children and students will be equipped with the knowledge, skills and values necessary to view the world with an awareness of and esteem for different cultural and economic conventions and interpretations.

In empowering young people with the tools to understand their role in culture, society and heritage, the SSED component of the NCF will help our young people to gain useful knowledge of their national and global identity.

For children and students to gain the skills needed to value the world and cultures around them, and feel empowered to promote positive development, it is necessary for SSED to utilise many different approaches to learning. Through the inquiry approach learners will investigate issues, select useful and relevant information and communicate their findings critically and effectively.

Young people will also gain the ability to develop enterprising skills and apply them to social, historical, political, geographical and economic concepts to create solutions to current challenges.

Young people will be able to appreciate change and its effect on balance, patterns and relationships. The collective grasp of the different disciplines contributes to an understanding of

the interrelationships of human activities and their environment over time thus enabling children and students to make informed and thoughtful decisions.

Technology

Technology is a creative and purposeful area of learning aimed at meeting needs and utilising opportunities through the development of products, systems or environments. It will empower children and students to become independent and responsible learners contributing to their holistic development.

In this area of learning, children and students develop knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that will assist them to realise their full potential and prepare them for lifelong learning as well as creating opportunities for employment and further education. The acquisition of knowledge and skills as well as the utilisation of resources will help solve practical problems. Technology provides information and learning experiences where young people acquire and develop skills to manage resources and apply them in the design of solutions to problems. Through this process, they learn to make decisions, be responsible for their actions, and become innovative, adaptable and reflective. This will enable them to select and use appropriate technology to achieve worthwhile results that are compatible with local and global demands. Technology influences all aspects of our lives from the home, to the school and to the wider society.

Technology provides opportunities for all children and students to develop their knowledge and skills, and consequently extend their ideas to explore creative solutions to practical problems. Technology will help learners develop an understanding of, and be competent in designing, producing and using technology products and systems.

Section 6

Assessment, Reporting and Monitoring

Assessment, Reporting and Monitoring

Introduction

The syllabuses in the curriculum identify the content and processes that will be assessed, reported on, and monitored. Teachers develop teaching programmes or schemes of work using the syllabuses. These schemes of work identify the content teachers will assess and indicate how it is to be assessed.

The national syllabuses for all subjects identify learning outcomes that are relevant to individuals in their communities. The learning outcomes in all FALD and KLA subjects describe the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that children and students should achieve for each year of schooling from the early childhood level to Form 7. The learning outcomes identify what teachers need to assess, and the information gained assists teachers to monitor learning and to plan teaching programmes.

What is Assessment?

Assessment is the process of identifying, gathering, analysing and interpreting data to gain information about learner progress towards achieving intended learning outcomes.

Assessment provides:

- evidence about what children and students have achieved
- feedback to teachers, parents, guardians about how well children and students have achieved, and
- diagnostic information about where children and students need to make improvements and where modifications may need to be made to teaching programmes.

Assessment describes many ways of obtaining data about learner achievement. Some ways of obtaining data use specially designed quantitative instruments such as examinations, tests and standardised tasks. Most authorities would recognise that these kinds of instruments are not usually appropriate for young children. However, specially trained professionals can use special diagnostic tests with young children to assess their growth and development. Other ways rely on qualitative strategies such as observation, portfolios and projects. These ways of assessing are appropriate for all children and students.

Purposes of assessment

The major purposes for assessing children and students' achievements and competencies are to:

1. inform and to improve their learning and development
2. inform decision making in order to improve teaching and teaching methods
3. select and rank students and
4. provide certification.

The National Policy for Assessment, Reporting and Monitoring 2007 gives guidance about the role and purpose of these important aspects of this NCF. This policy unifies existing policies about assessment, reporting and monitoring. In the Fiji Islands, the most important purpose of assessment is to support child and student learning. However, the third purpose of assessment has received considerable emphasis. Examination results are used to rank and select students at several transition points such as between Form 6 and Form 7. As more places become available in secondary schools, more students will have the opportunity to proceed to the next stage of education. As this happens, the need for selection will diminish as will the need for some of the examinations.

Instead, other types of assessment will become more evident and focus more strongly on the first and second purpose for assessment, namely to improve learning and to provide information about the quality of education.

What is Reporting?

Reporting is communicating to children, students, parents/guardians, teachers and others, the knowledge gained from assessing children and students' learning.

Information gained from using the assessment of children and students is shared; sometimes with children and students; sometimes with other teachers; sometimes with other professionals, institutions, employers; and most importantly with parents.

Certification is a special reporting process when students' achievements in examinations and internal assessments are included on a document officially authorised by the Ministry of Education in order to provide legal proof of students' achievements.

Reporting will provide children, students, and parents/guardians with information about children and students' progress towards achieving the intended outcomes. This information must be timely, clear, accurate and fair. The information will be used to improve teaching, learning and assessment programmes.

What is Monitoring?

Monitoring is the gathering of data from assessments in systematic ways and using the data to inform decision making at the system, school and classroom levels in order to improve education delivery, teaching, and learning.

Education systems exist to promote and support child and student learning. It is important for governments and educational administrators to know how well children and students are learning, as they are responsible for the funding and provision of education and training. Monitoring achievements over time is a useful way of providing data in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum, teaching and learning, and the support systems provided by a school or training institution.

Assessment for learning

The major purpose of assessment is assessment for learning. This form of assessment is formative assessment because it informs the teacher during the teaching programme while children and students are learning. Assessment for learning gives information about how well children and students are learning as they learn, and presents information about their learning and developmental needs.

In the early childhood years, teachers monitor the child's learning and development by using a variety of observation techniques and other qualitative approaches.

The responsibility for this type of assessment is internal to the early childhood centre or school and is known as Internal Assessment. However, in Fiji this term has also been used to describe particular tasks that are externally set and moderated for certification purposes. In this instance, internal assessment (IA) uses standardised tasks to gather information about student achievement during the course of their learning and not just at the end of a programme. IA, when used for certification purposes, is subject to the *Fiji Junior Certificate Internal Assessment Policy 2007*.

These tasks provide teachers with reliable and valid information about students' learning as they learn. Although externally set and moderated, this type of assessment is assessment for learning because it provides information to the student and the teacher about learning as it takes place. If properly standardised, these tasks can be used for external assessment purposes and for certification.

The National Policy for Assessment, Reporting and Monitoring 2007 provides information about the strategies teachers can use for this type of assessment.

Assessment procedures will be systematic and ongoing. Classroom and school-based/ internal assessment will be emphasised up to Class 8/Form 2. From Form 3 to Form 7, teachers use a combination of internal and external assessment (examinations and internal assessment tasks). Both internal and external assessments will assess achievement of the learning outcomes as described in the syllabuses.

The reliability and validity of internal assessments improve as teachers conducting them gain knowledge and experience. Standardised tasks, benchmarking and moderation enhance reliability. When these processes relate very closely to the course content and student needs and interests, they have high validity.

Students, parents/guardians and members of the community and various stakeholders have responsibilities to ensure that assessment for learning is undertaken appropriately and in ways that meet the needs of students, schools, communities and the nation.

New approaches to examinations and tests such as the Fiji Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (FILNA) are designed to provide information to the system, teachers, children and parents/guardians about learner achievements. Information from these new tests is used by the system to monitor learner achievements over time and to support improvements in their learning.

The National Policy for Assessment, Reporting and Monitoring, 2007 is applicable at all levels of schooling.

Assessment of learning

Examinations and tests, usually given at the end of a course of study or at the end of a stage of schooling, are called summative assessment. This form of assessment is assessment of learning.

Examinations and tests play a significant role in the assessment of student achievement in the Fiji Islands. Examinations are used for selecting students for the next level of schooling, training or tertiary education and for certification.

They can also be used to improve teaching and learning if the results are thoroughly analysed and, over time, comparisons are made about student performance. Many stakeholders regard examinations and tests as the most reliable and valid form of assessment.

However, examinations and tests focus primarily on content that is readily assessed in these ways. Important concepts, skills, processes and attitudes that are not so easily assessed in these ways have tended to be regarded as not so important. Content traditionally assessed using examinations and tests is seen to be more appropriate for academically inclined students. Consequently, subjects that appeal to these students are often given higher status by the community. This is unfortunate, as many learning areas are equally demanding of students with different technical abilities that are important to the nation's future economic well-being. Learning areas such as Technology and the Expressive and Creative Arts are such examples.

Examinations and tests have a significant impact on the selection of content actually taught and the time allocated to teach it. Teachers often emphasise content that is more likely to be assessed by the examinations, sometimes at the expense of other important aspects of subjects not included in the examinations.

External examinations and assessment are subject to the Examinations Act and *The Policy on External Examinations and Assessment* (2006). The design of examinations and tests has improved considerably, as have statistical methods used to interpret and identify the reliability of these data. Examination authorities always take great care to design fair and reliable examinations and tests. In the senior secondary years, examinations are a particularly important means of assessing students.

Examinations such as written or oral tests should not be used to assess children in the preschool or early years of primary school. Teachers are advised to use a range of observation strategies and other qualitative processes for monitoring learning and development in these years. At times, other properly trained professionals may use specially designed tests to assess children's growth and development in some of the foundation areas of learning and development such as in Physical Development, Health and Well-being.

Balanced Assessment

Students with important skills and other abilities that are not readily assessed by examinations and tests may be disadvantaged by assessment of learning. They may find it difficult to demonstrate their considerable achievements in KLA's that are culturally significant and of economic benefit to our nation such as the Expressive and Creative Arts.

While there is still a need for reliable and valid examinations and tests, there is also a need to balance these forms of assessment with assessment for learning, that is, the ongoing teacher assessment of children and students' learning as they learn.

At whatever level of schooling, the methods of assessment will be:

- compatible with the curriculum approaches at each level of schooling
- aligned with the curriculum learning outcomes
- appropriate for different subjects, and
- integral to teaching and learning activities.

Section 7

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