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FREE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

CURRICULUM SERVICES JUNE 2003

DRAFT LANGUAGE POLICY - FOUNDATION PHASE

1. RATIONALE FOR TEACHING LANGUAGES

1.1 Critical and developmental outcomes

Languages are the major component of the Literacy Learning Programme in the Foundation Phase and the main objective of language teaching is to enable learners to communicate effectively. This is achieved when learners are able to:

- Process information
- Communicate ideas and information
- Establish relationships between self and society
- Access information
- Express themselves creatively
- Present effectively

Furthermore, the teaching of languages facilitates all other learning and allows progress towards the **critical and developmental outcomes**. This is a list of outcomes that are derived from the Constitution and are contained in the South African Qualifications Authority Act (1995). They describe the kind of citizen the education and training system should aim to create. Learners should demonstrate these outcomes at the appropriate level at Grades 9 and 12. They are the vision around which our education is built and as such should form the starting point for all planning of teaching as well as the final destination for all assessment. Learners will continue to progress against them along the path of life-long learning.

The critical outcomes envisage learners who will be able to:

- *Identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking*
- *Work effectively with others as members of a team, group, organization and community*
- *Organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively*
- *Collect, analyse, organize and critically evaluate information*
- *Communicate effectively using visual, symbolic and/or language skills in various modes*
- Use Science and Technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others
- Demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognizing that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation.

Although all the critical outcomes above are dependent on language, those in italics are the main foci of language teaching.

The developmental outcomes envisage learners who are also able to:

- *Reflect on and explore a variety of strategies to learn more effectively*
- *Participate as responsible citizens in the life of local, national and global communities*
- *Be culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts*
- *Explore education and career opportunities*
- *Develop entrepreneurial opportunities*

All of the developmental outcomes rely heavily on language proficiency.

1.2 The Life Roles

For the critical and developmental outcomes to become a reality, it is necessary to consider how they will be applied in real-life and authentic situations. For practical realization of the critical and developmental outcomes, 6 Life Roles have been identified. These are:

- **The Communicator**
- **The Problem Solver**
- **The Learner / Researcher**
- **The Manager / Entrepreneur**
- **The Contributing Citizen**
- **The Team Player**

These life roles cover all critical and developmental outcomes as well as the content of all learning areas. They can be used both for planning and as a focus for assessment. This will ensure that the learning outcomes and the critical and developmental outcomes are addressed. Again it is clear that the Life Roles could not be realized without language.

2. LANGUAGES AND LEVELS OF LANGUAGE COVERED BY THE LITERACY PROGRAMME IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE

The Literacy Programme covers all 11 official languages as both Home Languages (HL) and First Additional Languages (FAL) for the Foundation Phase.

It is necessary to distinguish between home and additional languages to ensure that the relevant assessment standards are achieved in each language. However, in practice it is not necessary to have a rigid division between the teaching of home and additional languages, but the learners should be assessed against the assessment standards relevant to the respective language requirements, **but always taking into account the needs of the individual learner.**

The **Home Language (HL) Assessment Standards** support the development of competence with regard to various types of literacy (reading, writing, visual and critical literacies). Thus a strong curriculum is supplied to support the language of learning and teaching.

The **First Additional Language (FAL)** assumes that learners do not necessarily have any knowledge of the language when they arrive at school. The curriculum starts by developing learners' ability to understand and speak the language. On this foundation, it builds literacy. Learners are able to transfer the literacies they have acquired in their home language to their first additional language. **However, this curriculum should also prepare learners to use the first additional language as a language of learning.**

3 LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR LANGUAGES

Although the critical and developmental outcomes are the vision of the whole system, each learning area has more detailed learning outcomes which embody the essential Skills, Knowledge, Attitudes and Values that need to be demonstrated for the learner to be considered competent in that learning area.

The Languages Learning Outcomes are:

Learning Outcome 1: Listening

The learner will be able to listen for information and enjoyment, and respond appropriately and critically in a wide range of situations.

Learning Outcome 2: Speaking

The learner will be able to communicate confidently and effectively in spoken language in a wide range of situations.

Learning Outcome 3: Reading and Viewing

The learner will be able to read and view for information and enjoyment, and respond critically to the aesthetic, cultural and emotional values in texts.

Learning Outcome 4: Writing

The learner will be able to write different kinds of factual and imaginative texts for a wide range of purposes.

Learning Outcome 5: Thinking and Reasoning

The learner will be able to use language to think and reason, as well as to access, process and use information for learning.

Learning Outcome 6: Language Structure and Use

The learner will know and be able to use the sounds, words and grammar of the language to create and interpret texts. (*The word "texts" is used very broadly to cover a range of print and non-print media. This is meant to include experiences in the world at large that may result in some kind of print or non-print text, for example the landscape or environment in which the learner finds him- or herself.*)

These six outcomes are supported by **assessment standards**, which are the stepping-stones, required to demonstrate the outcomes.

4 LITERACY AND THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE

4.1 The national language policy of additive multilingualism

The Department of Education's Language in Education Policy promotes **additive multilingualism**. This approach involves the following:

- Wherever possible, learners' home language(s) should be used for learning and teaching. This is **particularly important in the Foundation Phase** where children learn to listen, speak, read and view, write, think and reason, and practise to apply the use of sounds, words and grammar of the language, and to create and interpret texts.
- All learners learn their **home language** and **two other additional official languages** by the end of Grade 9. Additive multilingualism makes it possible for learners to acquire complex skills such as reading and writing in their strongest language. They are then able to transfer these skills to their additional languages.
- Learners become competent in their first additional language and later in their second additional language, while their **home language is maintained and developed**.
- The maintenance of Home Language is a **non-negotiable principle** of the policy of additive multilingualism.
- **All learners learn an African Language** for a minimum of three years towards the end of the General Education and Training Band. In some circumstances, it may be learned as a second additional language and then the emphasis will be on spoken communication.

The policy gives School Governing Bodies the responsibility of selecting school language policies that are appropriate for their circumstances and their client base and **in line with the national policy of additive multilingualism**. The Language Learning Area Statement provides a curriculum that is supportive of whatever decision a school makes, within the parameters of the policy.

Pursuant to the above, the following should be noted:

- When learners enter a school where the LoLT is not their home language, the teachers and the school should provide support and supplementary learning in the additional language until such time as learners are able to learn effectively in that language. It is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that the LoLT does not become a barrier to learning. Let it be emphasised again: **Even if the parents have chosen the school in the mistaken belief that it is better for the learner to be taught in English, the school has the responsibility towards the learner to make sure that he or she is not disadvantaged.**
- The Foundation Phase teacher should be capable of at least code-switching when necessary.
- If this is not the case, another teacher on the staff should be available to assist, or assistance may be sought from parents.
- When a First Additional Language is started in cases where the LoLT is not the same as the Home Language, the First Additional Language chosen should be the Home Language of the majority of learners.
- Where possible, languages should be taught by Home Language speakers.
- The practice of changing LoLT from Home Language in Foundation Phase to English in all learning areas at the start of Grade 4 is not in the interests of learners and must not happen. If schools wish to change the LoLT, the new LoLT should be phased in over a period of years.

4.2 Time allocation for Literacy in the Foundation Phase

The Languages Learning Area also underlies all other learning areas, as it is the foundation of all teaching and the medium through which all learning takes place. Thus without language no other learning can exist. The Foundation Phase teacher has a serious responsibility to ensure that languages operate fully across the curriculum. Thus 40% of the total time is allocated for this programme.

Please note: Sufficient time and attention need to be given to the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) across **all three learning programmes (Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills)**.

5. DEALING WITH TYPICAL FREE STATE LANGUAGE SCENARIOS

There are various language combinations found in Free State schools. Appropriate responses are suggested for the following more common scenarios:

- 5.1 **Scenario:** The Home Language (HL) of the learner, the LoLT in the Foundation Phase and the LoLT from Grade 4 on are the same.
- Suggested approach:**
- The additional language should be introduced gradually from Gr. R on, depending on the level(s) of development of the learners.
 - Because the additional language is not the LoLT, learners only need to master it gradually - not interfering in the building of competence in the LoLT, which is also their Home Language.
 - The time allocated to the additional language could gradually be increased from $\pm 5\%$ in Grade R to $\pm 25\%$ of the Literacy time at the end of Grade 3.
- 5.2 **Scenario:** The Home Language (HL) of the learners differs from the LoLT in the Foundation Phase. The same LoLT continues from Grade 4 on (e.g.: All Sesotho speaking learners being taught in English from the start of the Foundation Phase)
- Suggested approach:**
- The LoLT, which was the choice of the parents, should be offered in such a way that the learners become competent in the language as this will remain their LoLT.
 - Parents must assist in order to build the basic language skills in the learner's home language and it is also the responsibility of the school to develop strategies to support the learners' home language.
 - The LoLT, which is the learners' first additional language, **will receive maximum attention at school.**
 - The other language offered at this level must be the home language of the learners at the highest level the learner can manage, at home language level where possible.
- 5.3 **Scenario:** The Home Languages (HL) of the learners in a class is varied and also different to the LoLT. The LoLT in the Foundation Phase and the LoLT from Grade 4 on is the same e.g. English.
(e.g.: Sesotho / English / Afrikaans speaking learners in one class who all go on to English LoLT)
- Suggested approach:**
- The LoLT, which was the choice of the parents, should be offered in such a way that the learners can become competent in the language as this will remain their LoLT.
 - Parents must assist in order to build the basic language skills in their home language and it is also the responsibility of the school to develop strategies to support the learners' home language.
 - The LoLT, which is the learners' first additional language, **will receive maximum attention at school.**
 - The other language offered at this level must be **the African language of the Region** as this will be applicable to the majority of learners in the class. The levels at which this is offered will be from beginner to home language level as the learners are diverse in their home language.
- 5.4 **Scenario:** The Home Language (HL) of the learners in the Foundation Phase and the LoLT in the Foundation Phase is the same as the home language of the learners but changes to another LoLT from Grade 4. (e.g.: Sesotho speaking learners who change to English LoLT)
- Suggested approach:**
- The learners have to master the basic skills in their home language and simultaneously, or shortly after the mastery of the home language they should master another language to such an extent that they can switch to the additional language as language of learning.
 - The additional language could be introduced with an initial focus on listening, speaking and viewing.
 - As soon as reading and the basic writing skills have been mastered well in the Home Language (LoLT for the Foundation Phase), the learner should gradually be introduced to the additional language, which will become the LoLT in the Intermediate Phase.
 - The practice of everyone switching to English at the start of grade 4 is not in the interests of the learners. If English is to be used as LoLT, it should be phased in gradually

6. WEIGHTING OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Oracy skills (listening and speaking) are important foundational literacy skills and therefore require focused attention during the development of emergent literacy.
- As the child progresses through the phase the focus gradually widens to include functioning at higher levels in all the literacy skills.
- **No specific weighting is attached to any of the learning outcomes.** The relevance of listening and speaking needs to be highlighted, as they should receive special attention in Grades R and 1 in the home language, and even more so in the additional languages.
- **Reading and writing is phased in gradually** as the learners learn to read and write, usually from Grade 1 onward. Because of the difference in the assessment standards for the home and additional language, it is obvious that reading and writing will be phased in later and this will occur at a slower pace in the additional language.

7 LEARNING AND TEACHING LITERACY

7.1 Progression and choice of texts

Suitable types of text are set out as part of the introduction to each phase in the Languages Learning Area Statement. The same types of text (e.g. poems) may appear in every grade. However, it is important that the level of the vocabulary and the ideas in the texts should be appropriate for each grade. The level should be such that it is understandable, but also challenges learners both in terms of vocabulary and ideas. Reading will then become a means of developing language and a vehicle for experience of a wider world than that in which the learner finds him- or herself. Important social issues can be encountered and explored from early on in the language learning process.

7.2 Communicative approach to language teaching

This is a method of teaching language based on the idea that language is a means of communication.

Some of the most important of these principles are:

- Language is *acquired* in a gradual and mainly subconscious process; it cannot be quickly and consciously 'learned', e.g. through teaching grammar structures (however, this should not be misunderstood to imply that grammar structures may or should not be taught).
- Language acquisition is sustained by experiencing *large* amounts of *input* (listening, reading) and developed by *output when using / producing* language (speaking, writing).
- The *level* of the language used in the input is important: it should be familiar enough for the learner to make meaning of it, but have enough new elements (vocabulary / structures) to promote development (according to research, roughly 80% familiar and 20% new)
- An *additional language* learnt and developed in much the same way as the home language is learnt (the 'mother tongue'): Firstly we hear it, we make sense of what we hear, and then we try it out for ourselves when we communicate.
- All languages are acquired in much the same way, but the home language is further advanced in the developmental process than additional languages are.
- *Mistakes* are an expected part of the acquisition process. For a language to be acquired, mistakes must be made.
- Language is acquired *holistically* in all learning, not only in the language class.
- The ideal conditions for language learning to take place are conditions in which the learner is *relaxed* and enjoys the process.

Research has shown that the most effective way to teach languages is to combine a communicative approach with some teaching of language structure

The structure of the language should be taught in context and with attention to meaning as well as form.

7.2.1 How young learners learn language and literacy communicatively

Learners develop their home language or languages spontaneously, by listening to and interacting with others in their environment. They practise, develop and perfect their language skills through play, stories, and varied opportunities to interact with the world. They begin their literacy development from their first interactions with reading, writing, print and audio-visual media in the environment in which they grow up.

The principle guiding the teaching and learning of literacy, is that development involves a gradual process of improving various language-related skills. Mistakes should be viewed as a natural part of a learning process. Learners' literacy skills will become increasingly accomplished when they are given the opportunities to use and develop them.

7.2.2 Spoken and Written Language as components of communicative language teaching

There are two types of spoken language that people learn and use: social and transactional:

- *Social* language is used in building and maintaining social relationships. Children learn to use social language from very young, and continue to learn it throughout their lives.
- *Transactional* language is information-related, and it usually has a specific purpose, for example following directions. In transactional language the focus is on conveying information clearly, concisely and explicitly, while using conventions that are commonly understood by all.

The structure and patterns of spoken language are different from those of written language. Spoken language is interactive, and makes use of a variety of non-verbal strategies that add to the meaning. A speaker does not usually speak in complete sentences, especially in a situation where interruption is both accepted and expected. Since most children speak before they learn to write, teachers need to give special attention to developing learners' writing skills and to make explicit the differences between written and spoken language.

7.3 Management and Assessment of Languages

The following should be noted:

- Languages lend themselves admirably to the full range of teaching methodologies. Varied approaches will depend on the needs and learning styles of the learners.
- Each language engaged with should be taught, assessed, recorded and reported on separately, but any Literacy programme produced should link Home and First Additional Languages where relevant.
- Assessment must be continuous.
- Recording should take place at planned intervals.
- Reporting to parents should take place at least once a term.
- Languages lend themselves to the full range of assessment styles, methods, tools and strategies and these should all be used in the language class, depending on the needs of the learners.
- In the Foundation Phase, observation plays a particularly important role.
- Traditional tests should play only a minimal role in the teaching of languages.
- Evidence of progress and achievement should be gathered in a Literacy portfolio. This portfolio must accompany the learner throughout his / her GET schooling.

8. Integration within the Literacy Learning Programme

The Literacy Learning Programme must provide opportunities to integrate and include Learning Outcomes of all the other Learning Areas with particular emphasis on the following Learning Areas: Arts and Culture, Social Sciences and Economic and Management Sciences. However, the Languages Learning Outcomes form the core focus or backbone of the Literacy Learning Programme.

REMEMBER TO CONTACT 0832981119 OR 051 - 4055077 FOR ANY FURTHER OBE OR CURRICULUM INFORMATION

DON'T FORGET TO PHONE 083298119 OR 4055077 FOR INFORMATION

