

South Africa's democratic government inherited a divided and unequal system of education. Under apartheid, South Africa had nineteen different educational departments separated by race, geography and ideology. This education system prepared children in different ways for the positions they were expected to occupy in social, economic and political life under apartheid. In each department, the curriculum played a powerful role in reinforcing inequality. What, how and whether children were taught differed according to the roles they were expected to play in the wider society.

Curriculum change in post-apartheid South Africa started immediately after the election in 1994 when the National Education and Training Forum began a process of syllabus revision and subject rationalisation. The purpose of this process was mainly to lay the foundations for a single national core syllabus. In addition to the rationalisation and consolidation of existing syllabi, the National Education and Training Forum curriculum developers removed overtly racist and other insensitive language from existing syllabi. For the first time curriculum decisions were made in a participatory and representative manner. But this process was not, nor did it intend to be, a curriculum development process.

The *Lifelong Learning through a National Curriculum Framework* document (1996) was the first major curriculum statement of a democratic South Africa. It was informed by principles derived from the White Paper on Education and Training (1995), the South African Qualifications Act (No 58 of 1995) and the National Education Policy Act (No 27 of 1996). In terms of the White Paper, it emphasised the need for major changes in education and training in South Africa in order to normalise and transform teaching and learning in South Africa. It also stressed the need for a shift from the traditional aims-and-objectives approach to outcomes-based education. It promoted a vision of:

A prosperous, truly united, democratic and internationally competitive country with literate, creative and critical citizens leading productive, self-fulfilled lives in a country free of violence, discrimination and prejudice.

The National Education Policy Act (No 27 of 1996) provided for the development of the following curriculum design tools to support an outcomes-based approach:

- ▶ Critical Cross-Field Outcomes (later to be known as the critical and developmental outcomes, and first formulated in the South African Qualifications Authority Act of 1995)

- ▶ Specific Outcomes
- ▶ Range Statements
- ▶ Assessment Criteria
- ▶ Performance Indicators
- ▶ Notional Time and Flexi-Time
- ▶ Continuous Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Additional curriculum design tools were formulated in succeeding years and included:

- ▶ Phase Organisers
- ▶ Programme Organisers
- ▶ Expected Levels of Performance
- ▶ Learning Programmes

In October 1997, the Statement of the National Curriculum for Grades R-9 was published in terms of Government Notice 1445. The Assessment Policy in the General Education and Training band for Grades R-9 and Adult Basic Education and Training, was introduced in December 1998 (Regulation 19640). Introduced into schools in 1998, Curriculum 2005 and its implementation were reviewed by a Ministerial Committee in 2000. The brief of the review was the structure and design of the curriculum, teacher orientation, training and development, learning support materials, provincial support to teachers in schools and implementation time-frames. The Ministerial Review Committee presented its report on 31 May 2000.

The Review Committee recommended that strengthening the curriculum required streamlining its design features and simplifying its language through the production of an amended National Curriculum Statement. It further recommended that this Revised National Curriculum Statement should reduce the curriculum design features from eight to three: critical and developmental outcomes, learning outcomes and assessment standards. It should also align curriculum and assessment. In addition, it recommended that implementation needed to be strengthened by improving teacher orientation and training, learning support materials and provincial support. It also recommended the relaxation of time-frames for implementation.

In June 2000, the Council of Education Ministers accepted the curriculum recommendations of the Review Committee. In July 2000, Cabinet resolved that:

The development of a National Curriculum Statement, which must deal in clear and simple language with what the curriculum requirements are at various levels and phases, must begin immediately. Such a Statement must also address the concerns around curriculum overload and must give a clear description of the kind of learner in terms of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes - that is expected at the end of the General Education and Training band.

The revision of Curriculum 2005 resulted in a Draft Revised National Curriculum Statement for Grades R-9 (Schools). This Draft Revised National Curriculum Statement for Grades R-9 (Schools) was made available for public comment on 30 July 2001. It was subsequently revised in the light of public comment during 2001/2002. The revised National Curriculum Statement is thus not a new curriculum but a streamlining and strengthening of Curriculum 2005. It keeps intact the principles, purposes and thrust of Curriculum 2005 and affirms the commitment to outcomes-based education.

As this curriculum revision process has proceeded, the practice in schools from Grade R-9 has continued in terms of previous policy. When the Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools) becomes policy, it will replace the Statement of the National Curriculum for Grades R-9 approved in 1997. Introduction of the Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools) in the Foundation Phase is planned for 2004.

This document introduces and provides background to the eight Learning Area Statements that form the foundation of the Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools) in the General Education and Training band.

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## The Constitution, Values, Nation-building and the Curriculum

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*The Constitution, Values, Nation-building  
and the Curriculum*

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No 108 of 1996) provides the basis for curriculum transformation and development in contemporary South Africa. The preamble to the Constitution states that the aims of the Constitution are to:

- ▶ Heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights.
- ▶ Improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person.
- ▶ Lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which Government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law.
- ▶ Build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.

The Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (Department of Education, 2001) identifies ten fundamental values of the Constitution. These are:

- ▶ Democracy
- ▶ Social Justice and Equity
- ▶ Non-Racism and Non-Sexism
- ▶ Ubuntu (Human Dignity)
- ▶ An Open Society
- ▶ Accountability (Responsibility)
- ▶ Respect
- ▶ The Rule of Law
- ▶ Reconciliation

The Manifesto further identifies 16 strategies for familiarising young South Africans with the values of the Constitution. These strategies find expression in the Revised National Curriculum Statement and include:

- ▶ Nurturing a culture of communication and participation in school.
- ▶ Role-modelling: promoting commitment as well as competence amongst educators.
- ▶ Ensuring that every South African is able to read, write, count and think.
- ▶ Infusing the classroom with a culture of human rights.
- ▶ Making Arts and Culture part of the curriculum.
- ▶ Putting history back into the curriculum.
- ▶ Learning about the rich diversity of cultures, beliefs and world views within which the unity of South Africa is manifested.
- ▶ Making multilingualism happen.
- ▶ Using sport to shape social bonds and nurture nation-building at schools.
- ▶ Ensuring equal access to education.
- ▶ Promoting anti-racism in schools.

- ▶ Freeing the potential of girls as well as boys.
- ▶ Dealing with HIV/AIDS and nurturing a culture of sexual and social responsibility.
- ▶ Making schools safe to learn and teach in and ensuring the rule of law.
- ▶ Promoting ethics and the environment.
- ▶ Nurturing the new patriotism, or affirming a common citizenship.

The Constitution expresses the nation's social values and its expectations of the roles, rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democratic South Africa. The Bill of Rights places pre-eminent value on equality, human dignity, life, and freedom and security of persons. These and other rights to freedom of religion and belief, expression and association, exist side-by-side with socio-economic rights. Each person has a right to freedom from poverty, homelessness, poor health and hunger.

The Revised National Curriculum Statement seeks to embody these values in the knowledge and skills it develops. It encourages amongst all learners an awareness and understanding of the rich diversity of cultures, beliefs and world views within which the unity of South Africa is manifested.

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## The Kind of Learner that is Envisaged

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*The Kind of Learner that is Envisaged*

The challenge for the Revised National Curriculum Statement is how the goals and values of social justice, equity and democracy can be interwoven across the curriculum. The promotion of values is important not only for the sake of personal development, but also to ensure that a national South African identity is built on values different from those that underpinned apartheid education. The kind of learner envisaged is one who will be imbued with the values and act in the interests of a society based on respect for democracy, equality, human dignity, life and social justice.

The curriculum aims to develop the full potential of each learner as a citizen of a democratic South Africa. It seeks to create a lifelong learner who is confident and independent, literate, numerate and multi-skilled, compassionate, with a respect for the environment and the ability to participate in society as a critical and active citizen.

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# The Kind of Teacher that is Envisaged

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*The Kind of Teacher that is Envisaged*

Educators at all levels are key contributors to the transformation of education in South Africa. Teachers have a particularly important role to play. The National Curriculum Statement envisions teachers who are qualified, competent, dedicated and caring and who will be able to fulfil the various roles outlined in the Norms and Standards for Educators of 2000 (Government Gazette No 20844). These see teachers as mediators of learning, interpreters and designers of Learning Programmes and materials, leaders, administrators and managers, scholars, researchers and lifelong learners, community members, citizens and pastors, assessors and learning area/phase specialists.

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## Structure of the Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools)

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*Structure of the Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools)*

The Revised National Curriculum Statement consists of this overview document and eight Learning Area Statements.

There are eight Learning Areas in the National Curriculum Statement. A Learning Area is a field of knowledge, skills and values which has unique features as well as connections with other fields of knowledge and Learning Areas. In this Revised National Curriculum Statement, the Learning Areas are:

- ▶ Languages
- ▶ Mathematics
- ▶ Natural Sciences
- ▶ Technology
- ▶ Social Sciences
- ▶ Arts and Culture
- ▶ Life Orientation
- ▶ Economic and Management Sciences

The relationship between human rights, a healthy environment and social justice is addressed in each Learning Area Statement.

The Learning Area Statements provide a guideline of requirements and expectations from Grade R to 9 for schools in the General Education and Training band.

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## Principles of the Revised National Curriculum Statement

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*Principles of the Revised National Curriculum Statement*

The Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools) builds on the vision and values of the Constitution and Curriculum 2005. These principles include:

### Social Justice, a Healthy Environment, Human Rights and Inclusivity

*Social Justice, a Healthy Environment, Human Rights and Inclusivity*

The curriculum can play a vital role in creating awareness of the relationship between human rights, a healthy environment, social justice and inclusivity. In some countries this is done through subjects such as civics. The Revised National Curriculum Statement has tried to ensure that all Learning Area Statements reflect the principles and practices of social justice, respect for the environment and human rights as defined in the Constitution. In particular, the curriculum attempts to be sensitive to issues of poverty, inequality, race, gender, age, disability, and such challenges as HIV/AIDS.

The Revised National Curriculum Statement adopts an inclusive approach by specifying minimum requirements for all learners. The special educational, social, emotional and physical needs of learners will be addressed in the design and development of appropriate Learning Programmes.

### Outcomes-based Education

*Outcomes-based Education*

Outcomes-based education considers the process of learning as important as the content. Both the process and the content of education are emphasised by

spelling out the outcomes to be achieved at the end of the process. In the Revised National Curriculum Statement learning outcomes and assessment standards were designed down from the critical and developmental outcomes.

The critical and developmental outcomes are a list of outcomes that are derived from the Constitution and are contained in the South African Qualifications Act (1995). They describe the kind of citizen the education and training system should aim to create. 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, organisation and community.
- ▶ Organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively.
- ▶ Collect, analyse, organise 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 recognising that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation.

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.

The Revised National Curriculum Statement attempts to embody and uphold a democratic vision of the society and the citizens that should emerge from our school system.

By means of the Learning Area Statements, the Revised National Curriculum Statement identifies the goals, expectations and outcomes to be achieved

through related learning outcomes and assessment standards. The learning outcomes for each Learning Area are provided later in this document. The assessment standards are in the actual Learning Area Statements that are published as Addenda to the document.

The outcomes and assessment standards emphasise participatory, learner-centred and activity-based education. They leave considerable room for creativity and innovation on the part of teachers in interpreting what and how to teach.

The South African version of outcomes-based education is aimed at stimulating the minds of young people so that they are able to participate fully in economic and social life. It is intended to ensure that all learners are able to develop and achieve to their maximum ability and are equipped for lifelong learning.

## **A High Level of Skills and Knowledge for All**

*A High Level of Skills and Knowledge for All*

The Revised National Curriculum Statement aims at the development of a high level of knowledge and skills for all. It sets and holds up high expectations of what South African learners can achieve. Social justice requires that those sections of the population previously disempowered by the lack of knowledge and skills should now be empowered. The Revised National Curriculum Statement aims to provide for a stronger base from which to enable the development of a high level of skills and knowledge by all. It does so by specifying the combination of minimum knowledge and skills to be achieved by learners in each grade and setting high, achievable standards in all the Learning Areas.

## **Clarity and Accessibility**

*Clarity and Accessibility*

The Revised National Curriculum Statement aims at clarity and accessibility both in its design and language. Two design features - learning outcomes and assessment standards - clearly define for all learners the goals and outcomes necessary to proceed to each successive level of the system. In addition, the Revised National Curriculum Statement will be available in all official languages and braille.

## Progression and Integration

*Progression and Integration*

The principle of integrated learning is integral to outcomes-based education. Integration ensures that learners experience the Learning Areas as linked and related. It supports and expands their opportunities to attain skills, acquire knowledge and develop attitudes and values encompassed across the curriculum.

It is important that the curriculum sets out progressively more complex, deeper and broader expectations of learners. Conceptual progression is a term used to describe this feature of a curriculum. In the Revised National Curriculum Statement, the assessment standards in each Learning Area Statement provide the conceptual progression in each Learning Area from grade to grade.

At the same time, learners should not deal with assessment standards in isolation. Links must be made within and across learning outcomes and Learning Areas. The achievement of an optimal relationship between integration across learning areas and conceptual progression from grade to grade are central to this curriculum.

The ongoing development of teachers, school management teams and departmental support personnel is an important facet of this goal.

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## Structure and Concepts Used in the Learning Area Statements

*Structure and Concepts Used in the Learning Area Statements*

Each Learning Area Statement consists of three sections:

**An introduction:** This section introduces the National Curriculum Statement and the particular Learning Area - its goals and unique features.

**A section on learning outcomes and assessment standards:** These express the requirements and expectations of learners by grade at the Foundation (Grades R-3), Intermediate (Grades 4-6) and Senior (Grades 7-9) Phases. The Foundation Phase focuses on the primary skills, knowledge and values to ensure the development of further learning. The learning outcomes and assessment

standards should be seen as minimum or essential knowledge, values and skills to be covered but should not be all that is taught. They indicate what is essential for progression through the system and are designed in relation to the Grade 9 requirements.

**A section on assessment:** This section outlines principles and guidelines for assessment and makes suggestions for recording and reporting assessment.

**Reference lists:** This section usually includes abbreviations, acronyms and a glossary.

## **What is a Learning Outcome?**

*What is a Learning Outcome?*

A learning outcome is derived from the critical and developmental outcomes. It is a description of what (knowledge, skills and values) learners should know, demonstrate and be able to do at the end of the General Education and Training band. A set of learning outcomes should ensure integration and progression in the development of concepts, skills and values through the assessment standards. Learning outcomes do not prescribe content or method.

## **What is an Assessment Standard?**

*What is an Assessment Standard?*

Assessment standards describe the level at which learners should demonstrate their achievement of the learning outcome(s) and the ways (depth and breadth) of demonstrating their achievement. They are grade specific and show how conceptual progression will occur in a Learning Area. They embody the knowledge, skills and values required to achieve learning outcomes. They do not prescribe method.

## **How different is an Assessment Standard from a Learning Outcome?**

*How different is an Assessment Standard from a Learning Outcome?*

The learning outcomes describe what learners should know and be able to do. Assessment standards describe the minimum level, depth and breadth of what is to be learnt. In practical terms this means that learning outcomes can and will, in most cases, remain the same from grade to grade while assessment standards change from grade to grade.

The assessment standards also contribute towards the qualification. In the case of the General Education and Training band, this means the General Education

and Training Certificate.

Learning support materials and teacher development programmes will play an important role in interpreting and giving expression to the learning outcomes and assessment standards.

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## Learning Programmes

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### *Learning Programmes*

The Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools) will be implemented in schools by means of Learning Programmes. Learning Programmes are structured and systematic arrangements of activities that promote the attainment of learning outcomes and assessment standards for the phase.

Whereas the Revised National Curriculum Statement stipulates the concepts, skills and values on a grade-by-grade basis, Learning Programmes specify the scope of learning and assessment activities per phase. Learning Programmes also contain work schedules that provide the pace and the sequencing of these activities each year as well as exemplars of lesson plans to be implemented in any given period. The underlying principles and values of the Revised National Curriculum Statement also underpin the Learning Programmes.

Learning Programmes must ensure that all learning outcomes and assessment standards are effectively pursued and that each learning area is allocated its prescribed time and emphasis. Learning Programmes will be based on relationships amongst learning outcomes and assessment standards, without compromising the integrity of Learning Areas.

### Learning Programmes Per Phase

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#### *Learning Programmes Per Phase*

In the Foundation Phase, there are three Learning Programmes: Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills.

In the Intermediate Phase, Languages and Mathematics are distinct Learning Programmes. Learning Programmes must ensure that the prescribed outcomes for each learning area are covered effectively and comprehensively. Schools may decide on the number and nature of other Learning Programmes based on the organisational imperatives of the school, provided that the national priori-

ties and developmental needs of learners in a phase are taken into account.

In the Senior Phase, there are eight Learning Programmes based on the Learning Area Statements.

Teachers will be responsible for the development of Learning Programmes. The Department of Education will provide policy guidelines for the development of Learning Programmes in order to support this process. Provinces will develop further guidelines where necessary in order to accommodate diversity.

Teacher education programmes will build the capacity of teachers, school management teams and departmental support personnel to develop, implement, manage and support the development of Learning Programmes.

## Learning Programme Guidelines

*Learning Programme Guidelines*

To ensure achievement of national standards set by the Revised National Curriculum Statement, policy guidelines for relevant and appropriate Learning Programmes will be developed at national level in collaboration with provinces. These guidelines will emphasise the principle of integrated learning and the achievement of an optimal relationship between integration across learning areas and conceptual progression from grade to grade. The National Education Policy Act (1996, section 3, paragraph 4) empowers the Minister of Education to determine, among other things, such a national policy guideline for the development of Learning Programmes.

These policy guidelines will provide information and guidance on:

- ▶ Integration within and across learning areas
- ▶ Clustering of assessment standards
- ▶ Relationships between learning outcomes
- ▶ Time allocation
- ▶ Assessment
- ▶ Barriers to learning
- ▶ Designing a Learning Programme
- ▶ Policy and legislation
- ▶ Training, development and delivery
- ▶ Resourcing and support
- ▶ Planning and organisation

These guidelines will be applied within the context of existing policy and legislative frameworks such as the six White Papers on Education, the National Education Policy Act (1996), the South African Schools Act (1996) and the Employment of Educators Act (1998). Learning Programme guidelines will offer a framework to address specific learner and contextual needs.

## **Time Allocations**

*Time Allocations*

In terms of Section 4 of the Employment of Educators Act, (1998), the formal school day for teachers will be seven hours. In terms of the National Education Policy Act, (1996), the formal teaching time per school week is 35 hours. This is

Phase	Grade	Time	
Foundation Phase	R, 1 and 2	22 hrs	30 mins
	3	25 hrs	
Intermediate Phase	4, 5 and 6	26 hrs	30 mins
Senior Phase	7	26 hrs	30 mins
	8 and 9	27 hrs	30 mins

The formal teaching time allocations for the Foundation Phase are presented below as percentages of the times in the table above:

Learning Programme	Time (%)
Literacy	40%
Numeracy	35%
Life Skills	25%