

Section 4. *Language, Elementary Syllabus 2003*



A message from the Secretary is on page iv. Paragraphs 5 and 6 contain ideas that apply only to this syllabus. Read these two paragraphs.

On pages 1-2 is the syllabus *Introduction*. Much of this is the same as in the other two syllabuses. Paragraphs 5-11 apply only to the *Language Syllabus*.



Read the whole *Introduction*, but especially these paragraphs 5 and 6. Answer these questions.

1. Why do some people say the *Elementary Language Syllabus* is so important in the education reform in Papua New Guinea?

Hint: There are structural and curriculum reforms that have been happening in PNG over the last 10 years.

2. Why is the Elementary School approach to language and instruction possibly unique in all the world?

Hint: This same characteristic brings with it the biggest challenge for PNG.

3. What do you understand by the top paragraph on page 2?

Hint: Look at pages 7-8 of this syllabus if you need some help.

4. Explain in your own words the ideas about learning ‘through’ and ‘about’ language.

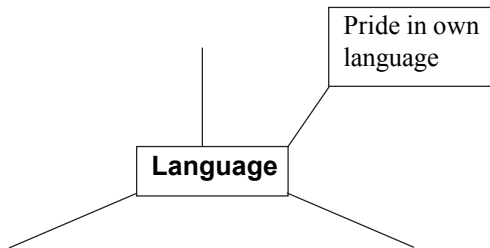
Hint: You may need to think outside this Language Syllabus for your answer.



The Rationale appears on page 3. When you read the rationale of a syllabus, you should get the main idea of why it is part of the curriculum. In this case it says why Language is important in the total curriculum, and especially why it is important in Elementary education. There is just so much that could possibly get included, and the body of knowledge in the world is changing rapidly. Curriculum writers have to make priorities about what to put into the school syllabus, and it has been decided that language studies must be included. This rationale explains why.



Create a mind-map to describe the rationale for the inclusion of Language in the Elementary curriculum.



Hint: If you need help with a mind map, look back at page 19 of Section 2 of this unit.



The term “*integration*” is used in the Introduction to this syllabus. Language is used in all aspects of life. Whether we are going fishing, shopping at the market, catching a PMV, applying for a job, living together as a family, language is used in some form. Language is what integrates life and makes many of its activities meaningful. Language has two roles in a school curriculum. Firstly language is developed as a separate syllabus. Secondly, an understanding of language and the use of language is essential, for work in any other syllabus. In this sense, it is perhaps the most important of the syllabuses.

It is also the subject syllabus which is most obvious to integrate with others. If we take fishing as a topic, it is obvious to introduce and discuss the language about fish, fishing and perhaps cooking of fish. To separate work in the syllabus of Culture and Community from Language is quite artificial.

Pages 6-8 of the Language Syllabus say more about the role of language in life and in the curriculum.



Read pages 6-8, especially the sections on
Teaching and Learning
Flexibility
Thematic teaching and integration
Relevance

Prepare a presentation to give to a group of colleagues. Describe for them the fundamental importance of language studies in the Elementary school. Explain how much it can, and should be integrated with everything else happening in the school.

Make sure your talk includes -

- **all that language involves, eg, speaking and listening, reading and writing,**
- **how important it is for all learning**
- **how important it is for problem solving**
- **how important it is for the continuation of traditions of PNG.**

Include key points under each of the headings.

Use the box below to make your notes.



There is a two paragraph discussion on the ‘whole language’ approach to teaching. This strategy is clearly very natural in thematic and integrated teaching. It is discussed on page 7 under the heading Thematic teaching and integration. It uses natural situations and natural links to language learning and is very student-centred in its teaching approach. Remember, the whole language approach:

- uses whole texts with real life language as the starting point for language study. From their theme work, students understand the meaning of the whole texts in real life
- uses learning activities that lead students to identify and study the parts that make up the whole texts
- is when students use learning activities to make up their own whole texts
- is when activities to develop grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and pronunciation focus on the whole language of the theme.

The second part of the discussion on page 7 advises teachers that they must add to the whole language approach by teaching language skills.

It lists some of the skills needed as:

- understanding rules
- vocabulary
- linking sounds and letters
- specific strategies to read and write different texts.

This is a blend of new thinking (whole language) and some older thinking that was perhaps around when we were students.



Think about how you teach language and the policies and practices in your school.

- **Do you use ‘whole language’?**
- **Do you teach skills?**
- **Do you know enough about the whole language approach?**
- **Where can you get help in language teaching if you need it?**
- **Do you know of, or use, other approaches to teaching language that are successful?**
- **Is language instruction an important part of the theme work you do?**
- **Does your teaching meet the school policy?**
- **Is the school policy the same as the syllabus policy?**

Write down your thoughts. Don’t answer each question separately. Just write down some important things that come to mind.

Hint: Be honest. If you are satisfied with what you are doing, then say so. If you are confused or in need of help, then admit it and find a way of getting help.



The *Aims* of the *Language Syllabus* are written on page 10. These aims describe a child who is learning language well and confidently. They show a child who is enjoying the wonder of knowing and using language successfully. It is a beautiful picture of a happy and well adjusted student.

But in many of our PNG communities, to be **literate in the language of the community** (top of page 10) may be different to this. Not all the languages in PNG are well documented and have a written form. Certainly they may not be as complete as English or Tok Pisin. It may not be possible to achieve all these aims, as wonderful as they are. Each community, in deciding the language of instruction for its Elementary school needs to think about these aims and perhaps make some adjustments. Not all languages in PNG have a written form. Therefore, the fourth aim, for example, may not be possible to achieve. Many local languages have very limited access to reading materials, other than what teachers create themselves. This too will have an impact on the achievement of these aims.



Think carefully about the school where you teach and the aims that are written in this *Language Syllabus*. Remember it is important that teachers in PNG try their hardest to help students achieve them through their work in classroom.

Write a short note here about the capacity of your school to achieve these aims. If there are difficulties, suggest ways you will try to solve them. If there are things that will make the achievement of these aims impossible, describe them.

Hint: This should be a critical review of what is happening in your school.



You should know the way that the content is organised and presented. It is in the same form as the two other Elementary syllabuses. The table on page 13 gives an overview of the strands and sub-strands of language. The pages before this describe what these terms mean.

Pages 14-15 list the language outcomes across all the strands and over the three grades. These are listed again on pages 16-27 with lists of indicators. Pages 28-29 contain some advice on assessment in language.

You should now be familiar enough with this format to see these content pages as a whole. When planning and programming, teachers will be thinking about the learning outcomes, learning activities, evidence of learning, assessment and reporting in an integrated way. You will get some more help with this if you complete Elementary Inservice Unit 3.



Skim read pages 16-29. (*Skim read means to read over the pages quickly looking for the main ideas. Don't get stuck on the details!*)

Look closely at page 16 and complete these questions and activities. Your responses may require you to consider things from across all the pages you've just read.

1. What does *production* mean in this syllabus?

Hint: It has a very specific meaning in this syllabus that may be different to how the term is used in other contexts.

2. Can you explain the significance of the number 2.1.1?

Hint: You have done this sort of activity before when studying the Culture and Community Syllabus.

3. What happens as you read across from P.1.1 to 1.1.1 and then to 2.1.1?

Hint: The outcomes are set out on the page like this for very deliberate reasons.

4. What is the function of the indicators listed under the Outcome P.1.1?

Hint: It is the outcome that is the essential part of the syllabus and not the indicators.

5. Is it enough that a student can *tell stories from their own culture* (the first indicator under P.1.1) for a teacher to be confident that Outcome P.1.1 is achieved?

Hint: Think carefully about all the words and ideas contained in the outcome.

6. Is it necessary for a student to be able to do everything listed in the indicators for a teacher to be confident that he or she has achieved the Outcome P.1.1?

Hint: The teacher is looking for evidence that the student can do what is included in the outcome.

7. How does the second last indicator under P.1.1 '*help to formulate class rules*' help teachers determine whether the outcome is achieved?

Hint: Think about all the words in the outcome and what they mean together.

8. How would you collect evidence that a child can *express feelings, needs and wants, likes and dislikes?* (an indicator under 1.1.1)

Hint: Think about the most natural way(s) you can collect evidence. You are usually with your students for four hours per day.

9. Describe a classroom activity you could organise to give an opportunity for students to achieve Outcome 2.1.1.

Hint: The outcomes and indicators are not your program. The long term and short term programs need to be developed by the teacher.

10. How appropriate are tests to decide whether outcomes P.1.1, 1.1.1 and 2.1.1 are achieved?

Hint: Comments about assessment strategies have been made in each of the Elementary syllabuses.

11. Suggest ways Outcome 1.1.1 could be integrated with work from the *Culture and Community Syllabus*.

Hint: It is recommended that teachers plan in themes.

12. Suggest a way that Language Outcome 2.1.1 could be integrated with Cultural Mathematics Outcome 2.5.1

Hint: Language is important in all areas of learning.



You have now come to the end of this unit and should be ready to understand and confidently use the Elementary syllabuses.

If you go back and complete the self assessment on pages 5 -7 at the end of the *Unit Introduction* you should get some idea of how much you have learnt.

Do you have any concerns?

How are you going to solve them?

Hint: Your response will be an indicator of your learning.



Section Summary. Make a list of the key ideas you have learned in this section. You may do this using a mind map or another structure of your choice.

Write your notes here

Additional space for your notes