

TRANSFORMING EDUCATION, TRANSFORMING SRI LANKA

From Teaching to Learning: Understanding the New
Educational Transformation

From Content-Based Education (CBE)
to Outcome-Based Education (OBE)
and the Role of Modular Learning
in a Student-Centered Approach

TRAINING OF TRAINERS

National Institute of Education • Sri Lanka
Curriculum Development
Centre (CDC)



01 • ORIENTATION

Awareness Programme Outcomes

By the end of the session, participants will be able to...

DESCRIBE

the philosophy and direction of the revised curriculum

EXPLAIN

the shift from content coverage to learning achievement

ALIGN

outcomes, activities, assessment and evidence

SUPPORT

teachers and schools during implementation

MONITOR

implementation and use evidence for improvement

2-HOUR LEARNING JOURNEY

Why the reform?

The OBE shift

Modular learning

Implementation

Practice & action

Why Transformation Is Needed?

CURRENT PRESSURES

- Overloaded curriculum
- Examination-oriented learning
- Limited competency development
- Poor integration
- Teacher-centred classrooms
- Weak practical learning
- Mismatch with future employment

REFORM DIRECTION

- Learner-centred education
- Outcome-based learning
- Competencies, skills and values
- Integrated learning
- Flexible pathways
- Meaningful assessment

IMPLEMENTATION LENS

- Instructional time
- Teacher availability
- Infrastructure
- Timetable feasibility
- Financial sustainability
- Student well-being

Feasibility matters: instructional time, workload, teacher availability, infrastructure, timetable management, assessment workload and financial sustainability must be balanced with educational ambition.

The Government's Policy Stance

Free and equitable access to education	A common national framework, inclusive approaches and attention to equitable learning opportunities.
Relevance to human development and employment	Competencies, practical learning, career guidance and pathways connecting general, vocational and tertiary education.
Acceptability for all	Learner-centred approaches, inclusion, diverse learning needs and flexible pathways.
Responsible citizens accountable to society	Values, ethics, social harmony, citizenship, environmental responsibility and community participation.
Sustainability and innovation	Critical/innovative thinking, technology, entrepreneurship, inquiry and sustainable development.
Lifelong learning	Self-directed learning, learning-to-learn, communication, digital/media literacy and continuing development.

- ❖ National Education Policy Framework of NEC, 2020 & 2023
- ❖ General Education Concept Paper of NEC, 2026

Purpose and How to Read the Curriculum

Policy / implementation level	What it answers	Implementation question
Concept paper / NEPF/NCF	Why and what kind of learner?	What should every learner become able to know, do and value?
Curriculum	What is the overall learning architecture?	How are stages, learning areas, subjects and modules organized?
Syllabus / content grid	What is learned and how does it progress?	How do outcomes and content build from Grade 1 to 13?

Purpose and How to Read the Curriculum

Policy / implementation level	What it answers	Implementation question
Teacher Guide	How can learning be facilitated?	What learning experiences, resources and assessment approaches support the outcomes?
Modular / activity book	What does the learner do?	What structured activities help learners practise and demonstrate learning?
Assessment	What evidence shows learning?	How do we identify progress, achievement and support needs?
School improvement	What must improve?	What evidence should leaders and administrators act on?

What Changes in the Learner Experience

BEFORE: DOMINANT TRADITIONAL PATTERN

- What content must be covered?
- Textbook/chapter sequence drives the lesson.
- Teacher is the main source and pace-setter.
- Learners mainly listen, copy and recall.

NEW DIRECTION: TRANSFORMATION

- What learning outcomes must learners achieve?
- Modularity, activity resources and learning experiences support outcomes.
- Teacher is facilitator, guide and resource person.
- Learners investigate, discuss, create, practice and apply.

What Changes in the Learner Experience

BEFORE: DOMINANT TRADITIONAL PATTERN

- Assessment often follows teaching.
- Paper-and-pencil tests dominate evidence.
- Success = completing content.
- School learning can be separated from life.

NEW DIRECTION: TRANSFORMATION

- Assessment is embedded in learning and provides evidence and feedback.
- Evidence can include performance, projects, portfolios, presentations, practical work and other suitable methods.
- Success = demonstrating intended learning outcomes and competencies.
- Authentic and community-linked contexts connect learning with life and work.

Four Learning Levels in General Education

Progression matters: each level has a distinct purpose and outcomes

PRIMARY

- Grades 1–5
- Basic life skills

JUNIOR SECONDARY

- Grades 6–9
- Foundation for life

SENIOR SECONDARY I

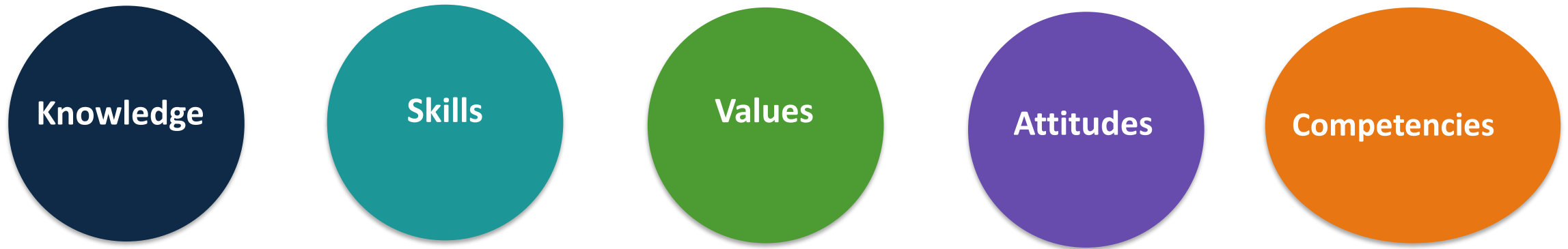
- Grades 10–11
- Foundation for career readiness

SENIOR SECONDARY II

- Grades 12–13
- Foundation for academic & professional life

OUTCOMES SHOULD PROGRESS ACROSS THE FOUR LEVELS

General Attributes: What will the students be like after completing 13 years of education?



→ **Life • Higher Education • Employment • Citizenship**

A future-ready, ethical, innovative and responsible citizen

Upon completion of 13 years of education, there shall be a **Total Holistic Person—who has been nurtured in their cognitive, emotional, social, physical, and ethical dimensions in a balanced manner to be a knowledgeable, skilled, value-rich, ethical, and competent citizen.**

Eight Visible Shifts in the Classroom

Shift	From	To
1. Purpose	Cover content	Achieve intended learning outcomes
2. Learning resources	Textbook-led sequence	Modules, activity resources, guides and varied resources
3. Classroom	Teacher-centred	Learner-centred
4. Learning experience	Listening and recall	Activity, inquiry, problem-solving, collaboration and authentic application

Eight Visible Shifts in the Classroom

Shift	From	To
5. Assessment	Mainly tests after teaching	Assessment for/as/of learning, feedback and evidence throughout learning
6. Teacher	Lecturer/deliverer	Facilitator, guide and resource person
7. Pedagogy	Mainly direct instruction	Constructivist, collaborative, inquiry, project/problem-based and blended approaches as appropriate
8. Learner	Knowledge receiver / rote learner	Competent, ethical, creative, self-directed and future-ready citizen

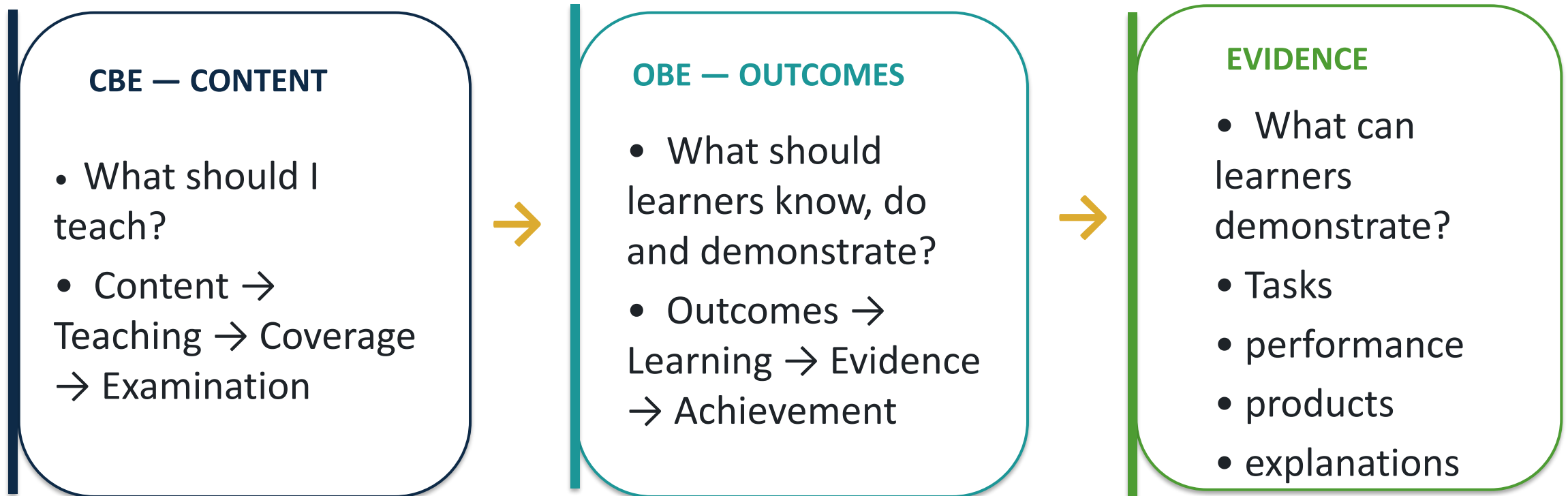
CBE and OBE: The Paradigm Shift

ASPECT	CONTENT-BASED EDUCATION	OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION
Main focus	Content coverage	Learning outcomes
Starting point	Textbook / subject content	Expected outcomes
Teacher	Knowledge provider	Facilitator / guide
Learner	Receives & reproduces knowledge	Applies & demonstrates learning
Teaching	Lecture • notes • memorization	• Inquiry • activity • practice • application
Assessment	Mainly examinations & quizzes	• Performance • tasks • projects • portfolios • rubrics
Success	Syllabus completion	Evidence of achievement

CBE → OBE is not “knowledge → no knowledge”. It is “content as the destination” → “content as a means to achieve meaningful outcomes”.

The Core Shift: From Coverage to Achievement

The central question changes — from what is taught to what learners achieve



Content remains important — its purpose changes.

OBE Cyclic Framework: Alignment Across the Whole System



1 START WITH OUTCOMES

Define what learners are expected to know, understand and do.

2 ALIGN TEACHING

Select content and learning experiences that serve the intended outcomes.

3 GATHER EVIDENCE

Assess performance against the intended outcomes — then use the evidence to improve.

The cycle closes when evidence informs improvement.

Learning Outcomes: From National Direction to Classroom Action

Outcomes should be developed in a progression and mapped across levels

National / General Outcomes (Upon completion of 13 years of education)

Level Learning Outcomes (At 5, 9, 11, and 13)

Subject / Module Intended Learning Outcomes

Lesson / Activity Learning Outcomes

Evidence of Achievement (Assessments)

Progression + alignment = coherence

The Teacher's New Role

From delivering content to facilitating learning

CBE — TEACHER

- Explain
- Lecture
- Give notes
- Control pace
- Test recall



OBE — TEACHER

- Facilitate
- Question
- Guide
- Observe
- Give feedback

Key question: “What should learners achieve today?”

The Learner's New Role

The learner moves from receiver to active participant

ACTIVE LEARNER

Learners apply, question, create and reflect.

PROBLEM SOLVER

Learners apply, question, create and reflect.

CRITICAL THINKER

Learners apply, question, create and reflect.

COLLABORATOR

Learners apply, question, create and reflect.

INNOVATOR

Learners apply, question, create and reflect.

RESPONSIBLE CITIZEN

Learners apply, question, create and reflect.

Teaching Methodologies That Make Outcomes Visible

APPROACH	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE
Inquiry-based learning	Learners ask questions, gather evidence, investigate and explain.
Problem-based learning	Learners work from a meaningful problem and apply knowledge to develop a solution.
Project-based learning	Learners complete a purposeful product/process over a period of time, often collaboratively.
Activity / experiential learning	Learners learn by doing, observing, practicing, testing and reflecting.

Teacher's new question: "What will learners do that gives evidence of the outcome?"

Teaching Methodologies That Make Outcomes Visible

APPROACH	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE
Collaborative learning	Learners communicate, divide roles, support one another and co-construct understanding.
Blended / digital learning	Face-to-face learning is strengthened with appropriate digital resources, media and independent learning.
Authentic / community-linked learning	Learning connects to real contexts, local resources, community needs, work and life.

Teacher's new question: "What will learners do that gives evidence of the outcome?"

Familiar Examples: Science /Mathematics/English

Knowledge → application → demonstration

CBE

Science

- Define photosynthesis.
- Teacher explains the process.
- Assessment checks recall.

Mathematics

- calculate 15% of 800
- Find the answer

English

- complete a grammar exercise.
- Fill in the blanks

OBE

Science

- Conduct an investigation.
- Explain how photosynthesis supports plant growth.
- Present evidence from the investigation.

Mathematics

- compare real-life discounts
- justify the better value

English

- communicate effectively in a real-life conversation

The content is still there — but the learner must use it.

Trainer question: Can the learner answer — or use the learning meaningfully?

Assessment: From Recall to Evidence

Assessment should show what learners can demonstrate

CONTENT-BASED ASSESSMENT

- Written examinations
- Quizzes
- Definitions
- Recall
- Reproduction of knowledge

OUTCOME-BASED ASSESSMENT

- Performance tasks
- Practical activities
- Projects
- Presentations
- Portfolios
- Observation
- Rubrics

Key question: “What evidence will show achievement?”

Three Assessment Purposes

Balance assessment to support learning, learner agency and reporting

ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

- Teacher gathers evidence
- Feedback improves the next step
- Formative and continuous

ASSESSMENT AS LEARNING

- Learner monitors learning
- Self-assessment and reflection
- Learner agency

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING

- Evidence supports reporting
- Achievement is judged against criteria
- Summative decisions

Evidence Toolbox

Use more than one way to make learning visible

Observation

Assignments

Performance

Projects

**Practical
work**

Portfolios

Presentations

Rubrics

**Evidence must be aligned to the intended
outcome.**

From Textbook to Modular

A module is not simply a smaller textbook chapter

TEXTBOOK-RELATED MODEL

- Chapter
- Teaching
- Exercises
- Completion
- Pace follows calendar / chapter sequence



MODULAR-BASED MODEL

- Learning outcome
- Activities + resources
- Practice / application
- Evidence of achievement
- Feedback

WHY SUBJECTS + MODULES?

KNOWLEDGE

Concepts • principles

APPLICATION

Activities • practice

COMPETENCY

Performance • evidence

Textbook vs Modular-Based Model

The unit of organization changes — and so does teacher planning

ASPECT	TEXTBOOK-RELATED	MODULAR-BASED
Primary material	Single, year-long textbook	Outcome-driven learning unit + resources
Pace (Teaching Progress)	Calendar / chapter completion	Achievement of defined outcomes
Classroom	More reading and note-copying	Activity, inquiry, practice and problem-solving

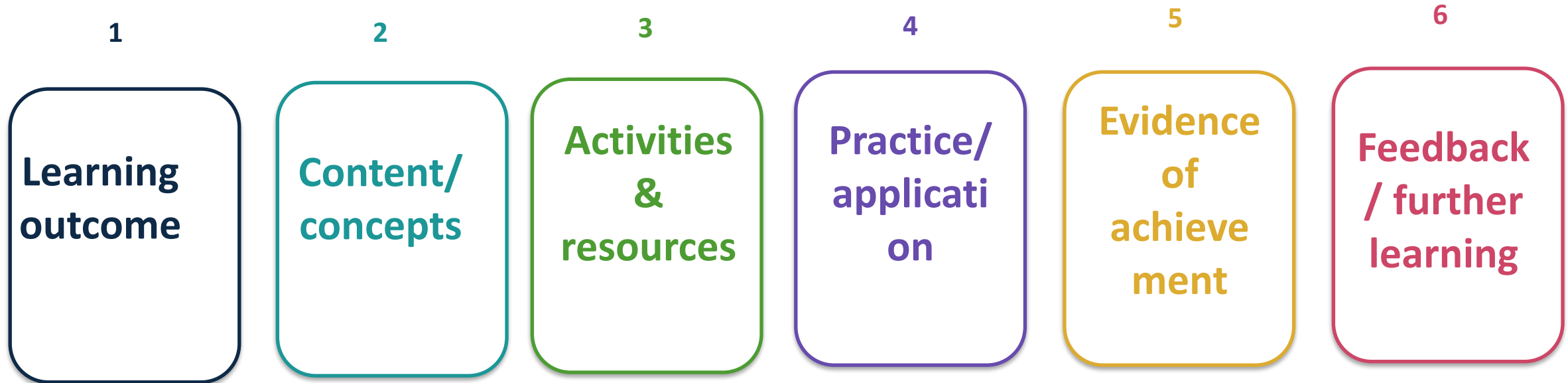
Textbook vs Modular-Based Model

The unit of organization changes — and so does teacher planning

ASPECT	TEXTBOOK-RELATED	MODULAR-BASED
Integration	Subjects often taught separately	Vertical + horizontal links
Learner independence	Mainly textbook exercises	Self-learning resources + guided practice
Teacher planning	“Which chapter next?”	“Which outcome next — and what evidence?”

Anatomy of an Outcome-Driven Modular

A practical design sequence for curriculum writers and teacher educators



OUTCOME → ACTIVITY → EVIDENCE → FEEDBACK

IMPLEMENTATION OF GRADE 2 & 6 2027

Primary Education: Grades 1–5

Three Key Stages in primary Education

Key Stage	Grades	Core learning emphasis	School time
Key Stage 1	1–2	Mother tongue; activity-based oral English; numeracy; science/environment; religion/values; aesthetics; health/PE; co-curricular learning.	7:30–11:45
Key Stage 2	3–4	Strengthen literacy, English, numeracy, science/environment, values, aesthetics, health and physical education.	7:30–13:00
Key Stage 3	5	Consolidate foundational competencies and prepare learners for secondary education.	7:30–13:30

Primary Education: Grades 1–5

Three Key Stages in primary Education

- **Primary learning should promote outcome-based, activity-based, and problem-solving pedagogy supported by authentic experiences through the Activity Books for each grade**
- **The NCF emphasizes more activities and less desk work, with a learner-friendly, learning-centred environment.**
- **Multi-level teaching can respond to learner differences.**
- **Key outcomes include literacy, numeracy, social/cultural skills, basic life skills, financial literacy and social-emotional development.**

Primary Education (Grades 1–5)

Proposed Time Allocation per Week across Key Stages

Learning Area	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2	Key Stage 3
Mother Tongue	05:00	05:00	05:00
Activity-Based Oral English ¹	00:40	—	—
English Language	—	03:00	03:30
Second National Language	00:15	01:00	01:00
Mathematics	03:20	04:40	04:40
Religious Studies	01:00	02:00	02:00
Elementary Science and Environmental Related Activities	04:30	04:40	06:40
Aesthetic Activities	01:00	01:20	01:20
Health & Physical Education	01:30	02:00	02:00
Interval	02:30	02:30	02:30
Other (Assembly, Co-Curricular Activities) ¹	01:50	01:20	01:20
TOTAL	21:15	27:30	30:00

New vocabulary and its implementation meaning.

Term	Plain-language meaning	Implementation implication
Subject	A broad academic discipline studied over a longer period, e.g., Mathematics or Science.	Provides sustained disciplinary knowledge and progression.
Module	A compact, self-contained instructional unit focused on a targeted topic, skill or competency.	Supports term-based, practical and outcome-oriented learning.
Essential subject/module	Core learning all learners are expected to undertake.	Builds common foundations and essential outcomes.

New vocabulary and its implementation meaning.

Term	Plain-language meaning	Implementation implication
Elective subject/module	A choice offered according to interests, abilities and future aspirations, within school capacity.	Increases learner choice and pathways.
Credit	A measure of learning volume; in secondary curriculum, 1 credit $\approx$ 10 hours / 600 minutes. (including the notional hours)	Helps plan workload, progression and feasible timetables.
Instructional materials	Materials that organize learning activities and support achievement of outcomes.	Modules, activity books and Teacher Guides reduce unnecessary planning burden.

Learning, Credits and Assessment

Element	Key direction
Credit	1 credit $\approx$ 10 hours / 600 minutes of structured learning (notional hours).
Annual progression	Students normally complete three terms; successful completion supports promotion to the next grade.
Formative assessment	Tasks aligned with outcomes: quizzes, portfolios, projects, presentations and practical activities.

Learning, Credits and Assessment

Element	Key direction
Summative assessment	One end-of-term summative assessment per subject; aligned with learning outcomes.
Evidence	Rubrics and predetermined criteria should capture critical thinking, communication, creativity, collaboration and life skills where relevant.
Grade 9	Psychometric and skills-based assessment supports guidance and pathway decisions; not intended as selection/exclusion.

Flexible Pathways and Learner Choice

Modules can support interests, abilities, aptitudes and future pathways



Choice is meaningful only when schools have the capacity to offer it.

Junior Secondary (Grades 6)

30 Credits / Term teachmore.lk

Essential Subjects	Credits	Elective Modules / Optional	Credits
Mother Tongue & Literature (S/T)	3	One elective module is selected each term	
English Language	3	Mathematics	1
Mathematics	3	Science	
Science	3	ICT	
Health & Physical Education	2	History	
Religion	2	Language Appreciation (S/T/E)	
ICT	2	Global Studies	
Technology for Life	2	Applied Technology	
Social Studies (History, Geography, Civic Education)	3	• Aquatic • Coconut • Electrical Electronic	
Second National Language	1	• Gem & Jewelry • Tea	
Aesthetic Education	2		
Entrepreneurship and Financial Literacy	1		
Sports, Club and Society / Social Services/ Career Readiness & Life Skills (from Grade 7)	2		
TOTAL	29		1

The Proposed Time Table for Grades 6–9 (40 Periods)

Subject	Periods / Week
Mother Tongue and Literature (S/T)	5
English	4
Mathematics	5
Science	5
Social Studies	4
Information Communication Technology (ICT)	2
Technology for Life	3
Religion	2
Second National Language (S/T)	1
Aesthetic Education	3
Entrepreneurship and Financial Literacy	1
Health & Physical Education	2
Elective Subject	1
Library / Reading	1
Sports, Clubs & Societies / Social Services/Career Readiness & Life Skills (from Grade 7)	1
TOTAL	40

Junior Secondary Assessment:

Assessment Element	Detail
Purpose	Rewards the learning process, not just outcomes.
Focus areas	Student engagement, exploration, analysis and judgement.
Skills assessed	Critical thinking, communication, creativity, collaboration and life skills (via rubrics).
Affective domain	Given prominence in formative assessment.
Weighting	50% Formative (continuous) + 50% Summative.

Final Assessment Framework shall be determined and notified by the Ministry of Education, Higher Education, and Vocational Education

Junior Secondary Assessment:

Assessment Element	Detail
Summative format	Not limited to paper-and-pencil tests.
Number of formative assessments	Equal to the credit value; e.g., a 2-credit subject has exactly 2 assessments.
Types	Quizzes/MCQs; portfolios; projects; presentations or practical activities; other suitable methods.
Grading	Every assessment scaled out of 100 marks.
Final mark	Subject/Module Final Mark = $(50\% \times \text{FAM})(\text{CAM}) + (50\% \times \text{SAM})$.

Final Assessment Framework shall be determined and notified by the Ministry of Education, Higher Education, and Vocational Education

Grading & Teaching Time

☐ Letter grades and broad achievement descriptors

Marks	Grade	Performance descriptor
85 – 100	A	Outstanding
70 – 84	B	High Achievement
55 – 69	C	Satisfactory
40 – 54	S	Basic Achievement
Below 40	W	Needs Improvement

SCHOOL DAY/ TEACHING HOURS

- 7:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
- 8 lessons × 40 minutes
- 30 hours of school time per week
- Instructional time is lower after other school activities

Teacher–student contact (teaching) hours shall be determined and notified by the Ministry of Education, Higher Education and Vocational Education

School Leadership: Principal + Teacher Advisor

Implementation becomes real through instructional leadership and coaching

PRINCIPAL

- Instructional leadership
- Monitoring
- Teacher support
- School planning
- Resource allocation
- Parent awareness
- Quality assurance

TEACHER ADVISOR

- Teacher coaching
- Classroom observation
- Monitoring
- Professional guidance
- Data collection
- Problem solving
- Reporting

Roles Across the System

Every level has a responsibility — and every level needs evidence

MoE

- Policy direction • Policy implementation • Regulating • Coordination • Capacity building • Monitoring • Evaluation • Reporting • Quality Assurance, and more

NIE

- Curriculum • Teacher Guides • Training • Research
- Evaluation • Revision • Professional support • Educator empowerment

DoE

- National evaluations • Assessment • Certification
- Standards • Results • Reporting, etc..

EPD

- Modules • Printing and distribution
- Resource support for curriculum implementation

Roles Across the System

Every level has a responsibility — and every level needs evidence

Province

- Policy implementation • Coordination • Capacity building
- Evaluation • Reporting, etc...

Zone

- Coordination • Resource management • Training • Monitoring
- Reporting • School support etc...

Division

- Implementation • School planning • Resources • Quality assurance
- Teacher support • Monitoring etc...

School

- Implementation • School planning • Resources • Quality assurance
- Parent/community engagement etc...

Teacher

- Teaching • Guiding • Facilitating • Assessment • Evidence • Feedback • Professional development etc...

Quick Reference for School-Level Implementation

If you are...	Ask yourself
A teacher	What is the intended outcome? What will learners do? What evidence will I collect? What feedback will I give?
A Teacher Adviser	What evidence shows progress? What support does the teacher need? What good practice can be shared?
A principal	Is the school culture supporting learner-centred learning? Are timetable, resources and teacher deployment enabling the outcomes?
An administrator	Are schools receiving time, people, resources, training and problem-solving support? Are inequalities being addressed?
A parent	Am I valuing skills, curiosity, character and wellbeing—not only marks?
A learner	What can I now explain, create, solve, demonstrate or improve?

OUTCOMES • LEARNING • EVIDENCE

The final subject/module distribution, assessment framework and standards, and other relevant details/regulations are notified by the Ministry of Education, Higher Education, and Vocational Education through the Circulars.

Together We Transform Education

THANK YOU