Summary of the Teaching of Philosophy in Sri Lanka

Philosophy in the National goals of Education

The general goals of education in Sri Lanka are:

- develop and understand the cultural and religious heritage and the democratic traditions of the country, as well as an appreciation of the contributions made by the different ethnic groups to the national culture;
- develop a basic understanding of the environment and skills relevant to the needs of life and society;
- cultivate an appreciation of the arts, literature and science, and develop attitudes conducive to harmonious relations among the different ethnic groups;
- promote moral, spiritual and physical development and inculcate a sense of commitment to national development;
- develop and promote a system for the acquisition of technical knowledge and vocational skills to meet the manpower needs of the country;
- promote lifelong education and knowledge renewal through programmes of formal and non-formal education;
- promote the democratization of education

Primary education

Pre-primary education is not part of compulsory education but a national policy on Early Childhood care and Education has been formulated setting out the following goals:

- Provision of an environment, which is favorable, fruitful and safe for obtaining sensory

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3 http://www.ibe.unesco.org/
4 Ibid.

This draft country briefing was prepared for comment by RUSHAP, UNESCO Bangkok. Comments are welcome to rushap.bgt@unesco.org
experiences
- Provision of opportunities to develop a good, courteous behavioral pattern through day-to-day activities
- Guidance to get used to good health habits
- Provision of a favorable environment for development of good habits
- Provision of opportunities for physical development and skills development
- Development of intellectual and creative abilities
- Development of skills to attend to routine work and to complete them
- Guidance to love, to appreciate, evaluate and to safeguard the environment
- Provision of abilities to face challenging situations
- Build up a favorable atmosphere for getting used to work with cohabitation.
- Make arrangements to the child to live a happy a joyous life

Primary education consists of a five-year programme. It consists of 5 years of education, which are divided into stage I (year 1 and 2), stage II (year 3 and 4) and stage III (year 5). There are five categories of competencies, which are:

- Communication
- The environment
- Ethics and religion
- Play and leisure
- Learning to learn

The weekly timetable is presented below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Stage I</th>
<th>Stage II</th>
<th>Stage III</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Language (Sinhala/Tamil)</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second National Language (Tamil/Sinhala)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental-related Activities*</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional Curriculum **</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-curriculum ***</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Environmental-related activities is an integrated subject including social studies, science, health and physical education, and aesthetic subjects (art, music dancing).
**Grade 5 students can choose some optional subjects according to their interests and capabilities and depending on the facilities available. Some primary schools offer dancing arts and agriculture.
***Co-curricular activities aim at nurturing good attitudes, physical growth and aesthetic capacities, they can include participation in religious festivals or cultural events, meditation, etc.

http://www.ibe.unesco.org/
Assessment
Not available at this moment.

Case studies of philosophy teaching in primary schools: Identified courses called “philosophy” in schools
Not available at this moment.

Case studies of philosophy teaching in primary schools: Philosophy related teaching in schools
Not available at this moment.

Secondary education
Secondary education consists of lower (3 years) and upper secondary (3 years) education.

The weekly timetable is presented below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Upper</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Language (Sinhala/Tamil)</td>
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<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>English Language</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second National Language (Tamil/Sinhala)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>240</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental-related Activities*</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Physical Education</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetic Subjects**</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
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<td>120</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Science and Technology</td>
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<td>240</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies and History</td>
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<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Competencies/Practical Skills</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Subject</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>160</td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional Subject I</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional Subject II***</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Activities</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Environmental-related activities is an integrated subject including social studies, science, health and physical education, and aesthetic subjects (art, music dancing).
**Aesthetic subjects include art, music (Oriental and Western) and dancing (Sri Lankan and Karnatic).
***Students are expected to choose two additional subjects from the following history, geography, development studies, Sinhala/Tamil as a second language, literature (Sinhala, Tamil, English or Arabic), a modern or classical language, health and physical education.

http://www.ibe.unesco.org/
Assessment

After completing primary and secondary education students take the GCE O-level examination.

Case studies of philosophy teaching in secondary schools: Identified courses called “philosophy” in schools

Not available at this moment.

Case studies of philosophy teaching in secondary schools: Philosophy related teaching in schools

The subject *Life Competencies/Practical Skills* includes various relevant units. Two examples, which are dealt with during grade 6 are presented below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency Level</th>
<th>No. of Periods 03</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Builds up healthy interpersonal relationships through effective communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Subject Content**

- Need of effective communication to build interpersonal relationships
- People exhibit misunderstanding in the absence of effective communication
- Effective communication builds cooperation and that it develops further

**Proposed Learning and Teaching activities**

- Plan activities and games to show dangerous and disadvantageous situations that can occur due to ineffective communication
- Discuss through activities how effective communication helps to lead any activity towards success

**Quality inputs**

- Demy Papers
- Felt Pens
- Pictures/ Drawings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency Level</th>
<th>No. of Periods 04</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Responds positively seeing needs of others as needs of one’s own needs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Subject Content**

- To be sensitive to needs of others and their feelings
- Works sensitively regarding certain matters within the family and in school
- Works kindly towards the differently able persons

**Proposed Learning and Teaching activities**

- Identifying the importance of being sensitive through events, opportunities
- Qualities that should be developed for being sensitive to be presented through simulations
- Engage students in field work and practical activities to develop sensitivity

**Quality Inputs**

- Various documents, pictures, Photo graphs that depict difference events
- Regiforms
- Demy Papers
- Felt Pens

The subject *Civics and Governance*, taught in grade 11 includes units on the concept of Human Rights. An example form the teachers’ instruction manual is included here.

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Rights are not confined to human beings. All connected with the environment have rights.

Rights concerned with human beings are human rights.

Human rights can be classified as follows:

1. Civil and political rights
2. Cultural, Economic and Social Rights

Broadly, human rights can be classified under 5 categories.

1. Civil Rights
2. Political Rights
3. Cultural Rights
4. Economic Rights
5. Social Rights

In general, every one has a right "to live and to have dignity."

Important stages of winning human rights:

- 1215 A.D. Magna Carta Agreement
- 1679 A.D. Writ of habeas corpus
- 1689 A.D. Enactment on Rights
- 1776 A.D. Declaration of American Independence
- 1789 A.D. French Declaration on Humanity and Citizens
- 1791 A.D. Enactment on Rights
- 1917 A.D. Russians Revolution
- 1949 A.D. Chinese Revolution

Factors that highly affected to have discussions on rights at higher level:

- Disasters brought about by the 1st World War
- Disasters brought about by the 2nd World War (1939 - 1945 A.D)
- The fate of millions of innocent people including children and women who had no connection with the war but died at the war.
- The desire of the nations to have some means to avoid countries in the world from involving in war and to secure the rights of all the nations.

As a result of the need that arose among nations who suffered from war to have peace in the world, the United Nations Organization (UNO) was established. In accordance with a proposal brought by that organization, "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" was issued by the U.N.O, which is a great attempt in securing human rights.

It is expected form this lesson unit to make pupils knowledgeable about international agreements on human rights and the development of laws in Sri Lanka on human rights and develop competencies of working so as to protect human rights of the other people while enjoying one's own human rights.

**Human Rights and Duties**

**Competency:** Acts as a citizen with love for mankind

**Competency levels:**
1. Defines the concept of "human rights"
2. Analyses the measures taken in Sri Lanka to protect human rights.
4. Applies human rights correctly at different situations

**Subject Content**

11.8.1 Definition of "Human Rights"

- Rights of the man to live in the society as a person with dignity.
  - Right for the life
  - Right to live with dignity

**Concept imbedded in the "Human Rights"**

**Virtual Rights**

Rights of the person gained as a result of being born as a human being which secure the dignity of humanity and which can not be dispossessed by any means.

- Right to life

**Legal Rights**

Rights confirmed by national and international law.

- Freedom to express ideas

**Classification of rights**

Rights are classified in different ways. See the note given

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**Annex 11.8.1.1**

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**Activity 11.8.1**

**Competency Level:** Explains the definitions and concepts of "Human Rights"

**Activity:** "Let us protect the rights"

**Time:** 40 minutes

**Quality Inputs:**
- The picture as given in Annex 11.8.1.1
- Activity sheets as given in Annex 11.8.1.2
- Writing papers and ink pens

**Teaching-learning Process:**

**Step 11.8.1.1**

- Display the picture given in Annex 11.8.1.1
- Get pupils to observe it
- Ask question from pupils
  
  Eg. 1 What is illustrated in the picture?
  
  Eg. 2 What were the rights that the human being did not possess as illustrated through the picture?
- Carry out a discussion getting answers to the above question and highlighting the following:
  - Every person should have human rights
  - Human rights have been violated in the world in different ages in different ways.
  - Due to the difficulties faced by people, they had to struggle to win human rights and as a result of those struggles, they could win human rights gradually.

**Step 11.8.1.2**

- Divide the class into groups appropriately.
- Distribute the Activity Sheet as given in Annex 11.8.1.2 to each group.
- Get pupils in groups to collect data and prepare a report.
- Give sufficient time for that.

**Step 11.8.1.3**

- Get each group to present the report.
- Discuss the group report in the class.
Finally, the use of concept maps is stimulated to as can be seen in the following five excerpts from a unit on human activities and the environment.

Activity 11.9.3

Competency Level: Evaluates the importance of protecting the environment.

Activity: “Let us protect our environment”

Time: 80 minutes

Quality Inputs:
- Picture as given in Annex 11.9.3.1.
- Concept maps as given in Annex 11.9.3.2.
- Activity sheets as given in Annex 11.9.3.3.
- Demy papers
- A4 papers
- Branded Boards
- Marker pens

Teaching-learning Process:

Step 11.5.3.1:
- Display the picture showing the beauty of the environment and the decay of the environment as given in Annex 11.9.3.1.
- Get pupils to observe the picture.
- Conduct a discussion highlighting the following:
  - Unorganised human activities bring harm to the environment.
  - Such human activities cause pollution of water, air and land.

(05 minutes)

Step 11.5.3.2:
- Divide the class into groups appropriately.
- Display the concept map given in Annex 11.9.3.2.
- Distribute Activity Sheets given in Annex 11.9.3.3.
- Give necessary instructions to the groups.
- Announce the time at which group work has to be completed.

(25 minutes)

Step 11.5.3.3:
- Get each group to present the report.
- Discuss on each group report pointing out its strengths and weaknesses.
- Conduct review highlighting the following:
  - The environment consists of sectors as physical, biological and social.
  - All such components of environment get damaged as a result of unorganised human activities.
  - Such environmental damages bring much harm to the environment.

Assessment and Evaluation:
- Names the different sectors of the environment.
- Accepts that the environmental equilibrium will be damaged as a result of human activities.
- Presents the environmental damages caused by human activities.
- Presents information clearly and orderly.
- Involves in group activities.

Follow up work:
Develop a concept map based on the concept map that you observed and the information you have collected.

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### Activity Sheets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Do a presentation on geographical influences of human activities after observing the concept map.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Do a presentation on influences of human activities on soil after observing the concept map.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Do a presentation on influences of human activities on water after observing the concept map.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Do a presentation on the influences of human activities on climate after observing the concept map.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Do a presentation on the influences of human activities on biological environment after observing the concept map.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Do a presentation on the influences of human activities on social environment after observing the concept map.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Identified programmes to provide teaching materials in philosophy

Not available at this moment.

### Links

- [http://www.nie.lk/page/syllabus.html](http://www.nie.lk/page/syllabus.html)
- [http://www.nie.sch.lk/ebook/e6sy113.pdf](http://www.nie.sch.lk/ebook/e6sy113.pdf)

### Acknowledgements

This summary was prepared by Arthur Wolf, and comments on initial drafts were made by several experts.