Summary of the Teaching of Philosophy in the Cook Islands

Philosophy in the National goals of Education
To provide a sustainable future for the Cook Islands' language and culture, and economic growth, education will develop skills, knowledge, attitudes and values of Cook Islands citizens. Education will also enable individuals to use their capabilities in all areas of life, integrate into society as valued members and being able to successfully adapt to modern society. All people in the Cook Islands will have equal access to quality learning opportunities across the full spectrum of human endeavour from birth.

Primary Education
The Cook Islands' Curriculum Framework (July, 2002) identifies eight learning areas and eight groups of skills. The learning areas are: languages, mathematics, social sciences (study of history, geography, economics and social studies), science (biology, physics, chemistry, general science), health and physical well-being, the arts (visual arts, drama, music and dance), technology, and enterprise. The eight groups of essential skills include: communication, numeracy, artistic and creative, self-management, work and study, physical, social and co-operative, information, and problem-solving skills. The eight categories represent the full range of skills that are considered essential to enable Cook Islands students to achieve their potential and to participate fully in society; both within the Cook Islands and outside of it. The groups of skills are will be developed through the essential learning areas and in different contexts across the curriculum.

Population: 20,000 (2006)
Gross Enrolment Ratio
Primary: 106 % (2005)
Secondary: N/A
Percentage of GDP invested in education:
5.45 % (2004/05);
5.21 % (2005/06);
6.81 % (2006/07);
10.1 % (2007/08);
11.81 % (2008/09)
Percentage of government expenditure invested in education:
N/A
Compulsory Education: 5-15

6 http://www.ibe.unesco.org/
7 Cook Islands Education Master Plan 2008-2023: Learning for Life
8 Curriculum statements for technology and enterprise are yet to be completed. Elements and aspects of these curriculum areas are incorporated in learning & teaching programmes where appropriate through integration.
In the primary school the adoption of a more holistic approach to delivery of learning and teaching programmes through the implementation of thematic, topic or unit centred activities and integration across curriculum has increasingly become the preferred mode which ensures that all students receive quality balanced curriculum.

The teacher’s first responsibility is to meet the needs of the students in their classroom, in accordance with curriculum requirements and the school’s strategic plan. The Essential Learning Area Time Allocation guidelines\(^9\) provided by the Ministry help schools plan their learning and teaching programmes and in accordance with curriculum requirements.

**Primary Schools**

**G1-3/Year 1-3**

Delivery Time = 270 minutes per day (N.B.) for some G1/2 it is 240 minutes per day
First Language: 75-90 minutes
Second Language: 30-40 minutes
Maths = 50-60 minutes
Topic Study (Science, Health, Social Science & the Arts) = 50-60 minutes (3-4 times per week)

**Total: 225-270 minutes**

**G4-Form 2 /Year 4 - 8 (primary schools with Year 7 & 8)**

Delivery Time: 270 minutes per day
First Language: 50-60 minutes; Second Language: 50-60 minutes
Mathematics: 50-60 minutes
Topic Study (Science, Health, Social Science & The Arts): 50-60 minutes (3-4 times per week)
Physical Activity: 45 minutes (min 2 sessions per week + school sport)

**Total: 245-285 Minutes**

These data result in the following weekly time allocation for primary education presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First language</td>
<td>375-450</td>
<td>375-450</td>
<td>375-450</td>
<td>250-300</td>
<td>250-300</td>
<td>250-300</td>
<td>250-300</td>
<td>250-300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second language</td>
<td>150-200</td>
<td>150-200</td>
<td>150-200</td>
<td>250-300</td>
<td>250-300</td>
<td>250-300</td>
<td>250-300</td>
<td>250-300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>250-300</td>
<td>250-300</td>
<td>250-300</td>
<td>250-300</td>
<td>250-300</td>
<td>250-300</td>
<td>250-300</td>
<td>250-300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical activity</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Min. 90</td>
<td>Min. 90</td>
<td>Min. 90</td>
<td>Min. 90</td>
<td>Min. 90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assessment**

Achievement based assessment (ABA) has been progressively introduced to all primary schools since early 2000’s. Students are assessed against learning outcomes (and hence the achievement objectives of the national curriculum statements from which the learning outcomes are derived) utilising either 3 or 4 level ABA. The broad interpretation of the levels is:

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\(^9\) Cook Islands Ministry of Education School Manual - updated 2005
\(^{10}\) Cook Islands Ministry of Education School Manual - updated 2005
Level 1 achieving well below the standard  
Level 2 achieving below the standard  
Level 3 achieving at the standard  
Level 4 achieving above the standard

The standard is the curriculum level that is appropriate for the age level of the student. National standards have been set for literacy (reading comprehension) in both CI Maori and English and in numeracy for all levels of primary schooling. Standards in other curriculum areas are currently set by the school (based on the curriculum level for the class) and the Ministry’s CAU division is now starting to assist schools refine their standards through the collection and publication of exemplars of student work and developing criteria boundaries. Schools are also required to collect and retain samples of student’s work in individual portfolios as evidence of the student’s level of achievement.

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  
Philosophy is not taught specifically as a subject in the Cook Islands. However, there are aspects of philosophy that are being covered in the social science curriculum. Social Science is structured around four main knowledge strands and four skills strands extrapolated from the essential skills of the Cook Islands Curriculum Framework.

Aspects of philosophy are taught within the knowledge strands in the following ways (see next page):
- **Social Organisation and Identity**: the teaching of; ethics and how a person ought to act within communities and society; students’ own individual rights, roles and responsibilities as well as those of people within the community and nation; political philosophies of justice, law and how government is structured and works. Students are also able to identify, describe, compare and explain their own cultural identity, the identity of others and other communities by investigating beliefs, values, viewpoints and perspectives, ways of doing and attitudes.

- **Cultural Development and Change**: the teaching of; language and culture - its origins, usage of language, history and development; history and philosophy – students cover many aspects of cultural development – philosophy, on the other hand relates to the study of historical patterns, progress and impact – the essential understanding of why and how things have happened.

- **People, Place and the Environment**: the teaching of; human interaction and the environment; the different values and beliefs that have been placed on places and environments because of past experiences; the use of critical thinking in relation to present day use of important or significant places; expressing one’s viewpoint and describing the viewpoints of others.

**Resources and Economic Organisation**: the teaching of; access, management and use of resources; participation in economic activities; the physical world (to a degree, as this is covered in the Science curriculum); economic activity in the Cook Islands related to decision making of choice, value and risk. Although these concepts would suit secondary school students through the intensive study of NCEA economics, many of these philosophical concepts would also be covered in mathematics.

Philosophy related teaching would also be covered in the wide range of skills and techniques used to deliver classroom programmes or the ‘how’ component of teaching such as:

- Introduction of logic through social decision making skills
- Critical thinking skills
- Access to a wide range of views and perspectives that are balanced-gender perspectives/cultural perspectives/national perspectives/environmental perspective and future perspectives
- Innovative teaching methods – wide use of literacy and scaffolding skills
- Development of reasoning and argument
- Introduction and use of ethics or ethical procedures, especially in research or inquiry

**Secondary education**
Secondary education consists of four years of lower secondary education (Form 1-4/Years 7-10) and 3 years of senior secondary education (Form 5-7/Years 11-13). Goals and strategic objectives are the same as for primary education and therefore include the eight learning areas and eight groups of skills. At the senior secondary level, learning and teaching programmes follow the New Zealand curriculum and all assessments are based on the NCEA qualifications framework.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form 1 &amp; 2/Year 7 &amp; 8</th>
<th>Essential Learning Area</th>
<th>Time allocation</th>
<th>Essential Learning Area</th>
<th>Time allocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maori Language</td>
<td>4 sessions per week</td>
<td>Maori Language</td>
<td>4 sessions per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English Language</td>
<td>4 sessions per week</td>
<td>English Language</td>
<td>4 sessions per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>4 sessions per week</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>4 sessions per week</td>
</tr>
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</table>

This draft country briefing was prepared for comment by RUSHAP, UNESCO Bangkok. Comments are welcome to rushap@unescobkk.org
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Science</th>
<th>3 sessions per week</th>
<th>Social Science</th>
<th>3 sessions per week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>3 sessions per week</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>3 sessions per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>2 sessions per week</td>
<td>Health</td>
<td>2 sessions per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Arts</td>
<td>2 sessions per week</td>
<td>The Arts</td>
<td>2 sessions per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>2 sessions per week</td>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>2 sessions per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option Lines</td>
<td>2 sessions per week</td>
<td>Option Lines</td>
<td>2 sessions per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>1 session per week</td>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>1 session per week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assessment**

According to the UNESCO-IBE report from June 2007, achievement-based assessment has been introduced. Achievement objectives combined with descriptors and criteria for levels of achievement assess the students’ learning.

The current system is best described as a “standards-based” system – whereby students are assessed against a pre-determined standard (the relevant curriculum level in the primary and junior secondary sectors) and unit and achievement standards in the senior secondary sector.

For years 11 to 13 (senior secondary), students are assessed against NZQA standards (registered unit or achievement standards) as they work towards gaining internationally-recognised qualifications on the New Zealand Qualification Authority Framework such as NCEA Levels 1, 2 or 3.

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**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**
Not available at this moment.

**Identified programmes to provide teaching materials in philosophy**
Not available at this moment.
Te Peu Maori I Roto I te Akapaanga Kura Apli
-Culture in the Cook Islands Curriculum Framework.

A nation's culture gives individuality to a nation's curriculum. This has been formalised in 'The Cook Islands Curriculum Framework' document which states the school curriculum will acknowledge and value the special place that is the Cook Islands and will give students the opportunity to learn about Cook Islands culture and language. It will ensure that Cook Islands cultural traditions, spiritual beliefs, histories and events are recognised and respected.

The Social Science Curriculum aims to fulfill this principle by stressing the importance of the student learning primarily about Cook Islands culture and society before exploring that of other societies. Within the Cook Islands there will also be a diversity of culture reflecting the unique nature of each of the islands.

Students will be expected to draw on their own and the community's knowledge of Cook Islands culture to better understand the broader concepts that are common to all people. They will be asked to reflect on their own values and traditions in the context of their history and environment, in order to fully appreciate the uniqueness of their society within a global context. Students will be expected to learn about their present democratic society and the role they will play in its socially, politically, economically and environmentally as responsible citizens.

As many of the world's cultures undergo dramatic change schools have an obligation to ensure that the young have knowledge of their heritage, beliefs and lifestyle which identifies them as Cook Islanders. Secure in this knowledge the student will have the ability to 'stand firm, stand tall and be aware' and make an effective contribution to an ever changing Cook Islands society.

Kare te au peu e ko tei tapa’a ki muri,
Mari ca ko te rave ‘ia nei
Toa t’i’anga e te ka nave ‘ia i te au
Tuatau ki mua
Ko te perepere, ko te tatau i mua
ana, ‘i tisani, e te au tu,
Ta tatou e umununa nei.

Culture is not just the past.
It is the present and the future.
It is what we once were.
But it is also what we hope to be.

Geoffrey Aiona Henry

Links

Cook Islands Education Master Plan 2008-2023: Learning for Life
Cook Islands Ministry of Education School Manual-updated 2005


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


**Acknowledgements**

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