

# Relationship among the national syllabus, the schemes of work and the lesson plan...

[Education](#)



The national syllabus for secondary school subjects is usually designed and developed centrally at national level by a government department but implemented in the schools. In Zimbabwe the government department responsible for secondary school national syllabus is the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU). These syllabi are the official and legal documents teachers are required to use when teaching their specialised subjects. This paper looks at the relationship among the national syllabus, the schemes of work and the lesson plan.

### National Syllabus

According to Okai (2010) the term syllabus generally refers to a list of topics or a collection or outline of what pupils or students should study in a given year or specified period of teaching. It is a brief outline of lessons or lectures, or simply that aspect of the curriculum that lists topics to be taught in a given course or programme. The outline of the syllabus tends to guide the teachers on the extent of work involved in a particular class. It must be pointed out, however, that the term syllabus can only be discussed meaningfully in terms of content consideration in the curriculum. It is part of the curriculum and not the curriculum itself.

In planning the national syllabus, the planners have to consider a number of factors: Among these are:

- \* the philosophy of the nations;
- \* the age ability of the learner;
- \* learning materials;
- \* resource persons (teachers);
- and \* sequential arrangement (Okai, 2010).

After these considerations, the topics should proceed from known to unknown. For instance in history, begin with local history before embarking on topics that are external to the pupils' immediate environment.

Syllabi contain the aims and assessment objectives of the subject (say history) at a particular level of education, the sequence of the content knowledge to be taught, and the assessment procedures to be adopted.

Sometimes the national syllabus is too broad that it can not be completed in a period of two years as is the case with the Zimbabwean A Level Literature in English or History syllabi. Heads of departments and subject teachers should then prepare and develop their own school syllabus derived from this broader national syllabus. Even when the syllabus can be completed within the course time frame, it is still important that teachers make their own school syllabus as derived from the national syllabus so that they have a simpler school based document. This school syllabus serves as the point of reference for the schemes of work (Taruvunga and Moyo (2000)).

**Schemes of Work** Looking at the meaning of syllabus, the class teacher does not contribute very much in its preparation (Okai, 2010). The teacher is only involved at the level of the scheme of work, unit and lesson planning. When the syllabus is sent to Schools by the authorities concerned, there is the need to divide the yearly content of the syllabus into definite amount of work that may be covered per term. If, for instance, there were thirty topics to be covered for the O Level history for the two years, there would be about fifteen topics per year. When the history teacher splits the year's work into portion that may be studied every term, month or week, we have what is called schemes of work.

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A scheme of work, therefore, describes the content and learning experiences that should be treated every term of the academic year (Okai, 2010). The scheme of work is very important to the teacher. It guides him in planning the unit of instruction and consequently the daily lessons in line with the time available for each topic in the term. It also guides supervisors of schools in determining the efforts of the schools and teachers towards meeting the societal demands on them. The scheme of work is aimed at serving the following purposes:

\* as a guide to the teacher; \* for organisational convenience; and \* for keeping records of what is taught and what ought to be taught (Okai, 2010).

The scheme of work is further broken into unit plan for month or week. A unit plan breaks down further the scheme of work into smaller portions that can be treated within a period of week. The unit plan can therefore, be described as the organised sequence of content and learning experience derived from an analysis of the scheme of work designed to be covered by the class within a period of a week (Okai, 2010).

**Lesson plan** The lesson plan is the lowest or most specific level of instructional plans. It is derived from the analysis of the scheme of work / unit plan. Thus, when the unit plan is broken down into smaller topics and sub-topics, we have the lesson topics, which can be used to plan a lesson (Okai, 2010). A lesson plan could therefore, be described as a planned organised amount of subject -matter and learning experiences that the teacher will communicate to the learners with details of how instruction will take place within a lesson period. Lesson planning is an important activity for a teacher. It supplies guidance and feelings of confidence to the teacher in <https://assignbuster.com/relationship-among-the-national-syllabus-the-schemes-of-work-and-the-lesson-plan/>

the art of teaching. If lessons are planned, both learning and teaching becomes simplified (Taruvunga and Moyo (2000).

A lesson plan is useful for the following reasons:

- \* the teacher follows correct steps and procedures in teaching; \* time is not wasted in the class since the period of one lesson must be used to cover the day's lesson topic; \* meaningful objectives are pursued in the lesson;
- \* activities are related to the content and objective; \* instructional materials are adequately selected and utilised; \* proper evaluation procedures and tools are used; \* a substitute teacher can use the lesson plan to hold on the class; and \* the most important content is identified for learners (Okai, 2010).

## Conclusion

From the foregoing we can see that syllabus refers to a list of topics to be taught and learned for a specific period or programme, while scheme of work is drawn from the syllabus and broken into pieces to be taken on a termly basis. The lesson plan is a further breaking down of work to be done.

Thus the national syllabus is a broad and general statement of what is to be learned during the course study period; the scheme of work is derived from the syllabi and therefore more specific and detailed; while a lesson plan is derived from a scheme of work and also more detailed and specific than the scheme of work. Syllabus, scheme of work and lesson plan are documents necessary for any meaningful teaching to take place at any level of our educational system. While the syllabus is usually prepared by the authorities

in national government offices, the scheme of work and lesson plan are prepared by the teacher.