

The Silken Knot

Standards for English for Schools in Bhutan



Centre for Educational Research and Development

December 2002

THE SILKEN KNOT
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Foreword

We are going through one of the most momentous periods in the history of our country. Thanks to the enlightened and visionary leadership of His Majesty, Our Beloved King, Bhutan has witnessed unprecedented development in all spheres of national life and continues to forge ahead with renewed vigour and confidence.

Education has been the critical instrument in unravelling the genius and creativity of the Bhutanese people and in providing much-needed human resource to man the different public and private sector responsibilities of our fast-developing, forward-looking country.

The Royal Government of Bhutan remains committed to providing the best education to the young men and women of our country. To this end, the Department of Education has initiated numerous programmes encompassing educational goals, curriculum planning, implementation and assessment, as well as the professional development of our teachers. The cumulative effect of all these initiatives has been a phenomenal increase in student enrolment and educational coverage.

While we have good reasons to be gratified with our success in the domain of educational provision, we are beginning to feel concerned about the quality of our output measured in terms of the performance of our students graduating from our schools and institutes. We are particularly concerned over the declining standard in languages especially English.

Given the comparative advantage we have enjoyed by exploiting the vast resources of the English language, it is in our interest to promote and improve the standard of English in our schools and institutes. It is important to spell out our expectation of student achievement in the different areas of English studies, as indeed in other disciplines. We need Standards to help us navigate our educational path as the mariners need the North Star.

The publication of *The Silken Knot: Standards for English for Schools in Bhutan* by the Centre for Educational Research and Development is a timely and welcome intervention to guide and direct our efforts in engaging and empowering our young men and women to achieve the best that they are capable of.

I would like to urge our schools and institutes and all the stake-holders in education to make every effort to implement the recommendations made in *The Silken Knot* as the national standards for English for schools in Bhutan.

Tashi Delek

Sangay Needup
Minister of Health and Education

Acknowledgement

The production of *The Silken Knot* has truly been a labour of love. Director General, Mr. Pema Thinley, was in Canada. One Professor George T Haley, long-time friend of Bhutan and the Bhutanese, had just retired from the University of New Brunswick's Department of English. They were on a walk through Fundy Park. The conversation centred around English. Professor Haley volunteered his services.

Back home, the Centre for Educational Research and Development was set up. Professor Haley arrived in early September 2001 and he and the Director of the Centre got into business rightaway: how to respond to the perception that the standard of English had declined in the country. Seven days a week, we worked. The result has been *The Silken Knot*.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to Professor Haley for offering his services and experience of many years, working in the cold of my old classroom-turned working space, for the many insightful discussions we had, and for the opportunities to explore themes and issues shared in common. It has been a personal education working and travelling with Professor Haley.

Our Director General, Mr. Pema Thinley, has been most supportive of our project, finding time to discuss issues, going through our drafts and giving very valuable suggestions and directions. He lent his own office computer when the Centre did not have one of its own. I would like to thank him for being our guiding spirit.

Dasho Sangay Thinley, our honourable Secretary has given his advice and encouragement in the course of our work for which I am very grateful.

Even in the face of the most busy schedules, His Excellency our honourable Minister, Loynpo Sangay Ngedup, found time to go through the document and give us critical and insightful suggestions and advice. I am most grateful to His Excellency for the light on our path.

I would like to thank Dr Jagar Dorji, Director, NIE, Paro, for providing timely and unfailing support and assistance through the course of our work. Dr Phub Rinchhen, Joint Director, CAPSD, gave us some valuable feedback on the document. I would like to thank him for his suggestions, and support at all times.

I am grateful to Mr.Graeme Withers and Mr Douglas McCurry, Australian Council for Educational Research, Dr Uri Trier, consultant, World Bank, Ms Marianne Frei, Zurich, for their highly professional and scholarly comments and feedback on the document.

Dasho Dzongdas, Dzongkhag Education Officers and heads of institutes and schools were exceptionally kind and caring whenever we were in their areas. I

would like to express my deep gratitude to them for their hospitality, support and cooperation which made our work so much easier, so much fulfilling.

My colleagues in the Department, fellow-teachers in the field, parents and government officials provided us with experiences from the coal-face and have enriched the document. So have our students. I would like to offer to them all my most sincere thanks.

My old students went out of their way to make us comfortable and our travels memorable in their many ingenious ways. This, their old teacher is grateful to and proud of them.

Many of the activities, including this project, would have found it difficult to see the light of day if it were not for the constant support of the Canadian Cooperation Office in Thimphu. I am most grateful to the Aum Nancy Strickland, Field Coordinator, and the CCO for all the support that the Centre has received right from its inception.

I would like to thank my friend, Mr. Yang Gyeltshen, for translating my shape to my wish and producing creating the silken knot on the cover. I am very grateful to Nima and Tashi for their critical support.

There are many other individuals who have helped us with our work. I would like to thank each of them for standing by us. All these individuals have contributed their mite in weaving the threads into the knot.

And, *The Silken Knot*, indeed. This is the best metaphor for the essence and nature of education.

The Silken Knot is the result of an extensive collaboration. It is our common property and responsibility. Let us together take it a step further: make it succeed. Let it challenge and bring out the best that our young men and young women are capable of. This will serve our society in good measure.

Thank you.

T S Powdyel
Director.

Preamble

- We believe that the people of a country are its greatest resource and that the character of a nation is defined by the content and character of its citizens.
- We believe that today's children are tomorrow's citizens and leaders.
- We believe all children have the potential to learn rigorous content and achieve high standards, and that a well-educated citizenry is essential for promoting the best interests and institutions of our country.
- We believe that our educational system should ensure a learning environment in which all our children can learn and achieve their own individually configured excellence- an environment that nurtures their unique talents and creativity.
- We believe that our educational efforts should inculcate in our children a personal commitment to enduring habits of life-long learning, and pride in the achievement of excellence.
- We believe that teachers are in the frontline of our educational standards and achievements, and that they embody the essence of the culture, the curriculum and the best that is thought and known in the world.
- We believe that we should establish standards and opportunities to enable our teachers to support the intellectual, emotional, moral, aesthetic, physical and social development of their students and engage them in effective and powerful ways of learning.
- We believe that teaching and learning comprise a holistic process that connects ideas and disciplines to the personal experiences, environments and communities of students.
- We believe that teaching should be dynamic and reciprocal, and that teachers should integrate their knowledge of subjects, students, the community and the curriculum to create a bridge between learning goals and learners' lives.
- We believe that professional teachers assume roles that extend beyond the classroom and include responsibilities connecting parents and other professionals, developing the school into a learning organization.
- We believe that building faith and character is as important as sharpening brains and skills, and that *real education* is a process of turning the human mind to *look for* and *to love* what is True and Good.

We believe that standards point the way forward for individual and collective endeavours and excellence.

The Silken Knot

Standards for English in Schools in Bhutan

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Introduction to the Document

This document sets out **Standards** and **Indicators of Levels of Achievement** which present what students, who leave school, can be expected to know and do in each of the major areas of English namely **Speaking** and **Listening, Language, Writing, and Reading & Literature**.

The Standards are statements of what the public can expect students to be able to know and do in English when they graduate from the school system. The Indicators of Levels of Achievement are used to show the progress that students have made towards those standards as they move through each of the class years PP-12.

The Standards were developed by the Centre for Educational Research and Development in response to a request from the Director of Education to examine the standards for High School English in the public schools in Bhutan.

In developing these Standards, CERD was informed by:

- first, a careful study of CAPSD documents, specifically those pertaining to public school curriculum in general and English curricula in particular, the English examinations set by BBE and those set by the Indian Council, a sample of the student booklets from those examinations and the accompanying marking rubrics and a study of the texts assigned in the syllabus;
- second, discussions about English and English teaching with educators and other professionals in Bhutan;
- third, a study of the statements of standards for English programmes in the curricular documents of the major English-speaking countries of the world;
- fourth, a study of the standards recommended by several of the international professional associations of English educators;
- fifth, a study of scholarly works and research on the nature of English and its teaching.
- Sixth, visits to schools and institutes, observations of classrooms, conduct of workshops and discussions with teachers and head teachers.

The Standards Frameworks were evaluated using criteria adapted from those developed by **Achieve** an organization dedicated to the improvement of standards in public schools, and published in the paper entitled *Criteria for Quality Standards*. In addition, CERD adapted the *Criteria for Judging English Language- Arts and Reading Standards*, developed by Sandra Stotsky and published by the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation. (See Appendix C for these documents.)

The adaptation that CERD has made of these criteria can be found in Appendix C of this report entitled *Criteria for Assessing the Quality of Standards in English Programmes*.

Underlying these Standards and Indicators of Levels of Achievement are some assumptions about literacy in language which are important to educators in Bhutan at this time.

First and foremost, it is assumed that language use is an *active process* of making meaning. It assumes that a classroom should provide an environment in which students will be actively engaged in linking their own experiences to what they are listening to, reading, and writing, to arrive, not only at a meaning of a text, but also to discover its significance in their own lives.

Second, it is assumed that language develops in a social context, and that students learn a language best when they share their ideas and understandings of the texts they are studying, speeches they are trying to prepare and essays they are trying to write.

Third is the assumption that language ability increases in complexity, if language is used in increasingly complex ways. This signals to teachers and to those who prepare syllabuses for English programmes that they must engage students with texts, and in conversations, that are rich in ideas and more and more complex in the patterns of language they display. They also must consider in their selection of texts to be read at the higher levels (classes 5-12), a range of literature that encompasses both classical and modern literature, fiction and non-fiction. Here in Bhutan, there is a noticeable absence of modern materials, written in the modern idiom. The situation calls for immediate attention.

Fourth, it is assumed that all readers at all levels need to be taught reading strategies that enable them to get at the meaning and significance of a text. This document presents Standards for Reading & Literature as one single area of study. It is meant to signal that these two activities should be learned together. The practice in Bhutan has been to separate reading and Literature, to make learning to read one thing and studying Literature another.

The result has been that, although the simple reading strategies - phonics, graphics, word recognition and contextual cueing - are taught at the earlier levels as students study simple texts, those reading strategies which students in the higher levels need to learn so they can read complex texts independent of the teacher, are not taught.

Reading is assumed to have been learned at earlier levels and that there is no need to teach reading strategies at the higher levels.

Change is necessary and that is why this document calls for the integration of the teaching of reading strategies at all levels with the study of literary texts - fiction and non-fiction - which are assigned in the literature syllabus.

The final assumption is that although the Standards define five areas of English study, the acquisition of language competency depends on the integration of these processes in acts of learning and knowing. The division of these areas into separate standards is meant to allow programme planners and teachers to highlight the special features of each area and to plan programmes that are developmentally appropriate for the students. They are meant to be the beacons

which guide and inform curriculum changes, programme revisions, examination development, and textbook selection.

This document sets out **Indicators of Levels of Achievement** for **each** of the **Standards**. They lay out in detail the type and range of performance that can be expected of students in each of these areas of English as they progress through the school system - PP-12. The Indicators for each Standard are presented in progressive terms and range from simple introductory performance tasks at Level One to sophisticated work at Level 8 and on to superior achievement as described in the Level for Exceptional Performance.

When deciding on the level of progress for any one student, teachers can judge which of these Level descriptions is most suitable to describe the performance of the student. For the majority of students, however, it is possible to cluster the Levels to describe the expected performance as follows:

- Levels 1- 4 to describe the work of the majority of students in Class years PP - 4
- Level 5 to describe the work of the majority of students in Class years 5-6
- Level 6 to describe the performance of the majority of students in Class years 7 -8
- and finally Levels 7- 8 to describe the work of the majority of students in Class years 9-12.

It must be stressed here that these are not neat groupings. Student performance will vary from student to student and from class to class. Some students in Class 4, for example, will perform at a higher level than their classmates. In those cases the teacher can use the indicators from the higher levels to describe that performance and adjust the program of study accordingly for that student. The reverse holds true for those students who perform below the expected level for their class year. As teachers use these Levels, they will learn to adjust the applications. Nonetheless, these Levels should serve to indicate how well students are doing in their progress to meet the Standards.

This document sets out statements of **Teacher Input** to accompany each of the statements of Indicators of Levels of Achievement. They set out the teacher's work for each of these Levels, suggesting the lessons which need to be planned, and the knowledge and skills that need to be learned, so that students can progress to the achievement of the Standards.

Finally, this document presents a statement of the **Provisions** that are necessary if the Standards are to be met. They set out, in general terms, the programme provisions, materials for study and allocation of time that curriculum builders should consider when preparing the syllabus of study.

Introduction to the Indicators of the Levels of Achievement.

The Indicators of the Levels of Achievement which follow, serve to specify the knowledge, skills and attitudes incorporated in the Standards and show how these can be structured so that they can be readily learned by the students. In that sense, the Levels are bridges between the Standards and the classroom.

- They are intended to be markers of student progress towards the Standards, and not to describe grade or class level performance, except in a general sense.
- As mentioned in the Introduction to this document, the Levels could be clustered to describe the performance expected in a general way from students at different levels of school, e.g. Classes PP-4 should be expected to meet the indicators listed in Levels 1-4, Classes 5 -6 those indicators shown in Level 5, Classes 6-8 those indicators in Level 6 and Classes 9-12 those indicators in Levels 7-8, and the Level for Exceptional Performance.

These are approximate clusters only. Many students will be able to do only what is described in the Level items, some will do more, some less and some will have trouble with even the simplest tasks. And that is the purpose of the Levels. They help the teacher assess the students' work against the Standards and to describe their progress accordingly.

- The Levels are built on the principles of growth and development which imply that knowing and learning is a process that takes the student, in a progressively more difficult programme, from the simple reception of information to a complex understanding of knowledge and ideas.
- The Levels set out the kinds of experiences which students will need to move to the achievement of the Standards.
- The Levels serve to show the teachers an effective sequence in which the teachers can present the material to the students.
- The Levels serve to help the teacher plan the work for students of all abilities to meet the Standards.

A Foreword to Speaking and Listening.

There is a need in humans to talk with one another, a need as basic to life as air and water are. We are moved to share what we have understood, and how we feel about our experiences, and we get back from others assurances that, first, they see what we mean, and then in response, they add what they have understood and felt about similar experiences. The effect is that we draw closer to one another, feel the warmth of other human beings and confirm that what we are thinking is shared by our fellows.

Sometimes the simple exchange of views is enough. We stop there. But, occasionally, we extend our conversations about our experiences to discover new significance, new levels of meaning, insights we could not have reached by ourselves. When that happens, we alter our original thinking, take on board what our neighbours have said, and construct a more comprehensive view of our experiences.

It is an active process - this business of constructing and reconstructing meaning through conversation and it goes on all our lives.

There is also a need for humans to speak with themselves, to hold internal conversations, to listen to their inner voice. Speaking this way allows us to discover what we mean.

Frequently, we arrive at an understanding of our own thinking about a problem only after we have had a chance to talk about it, to talk it out, as they say. We seem to need to go through a series of negotiations with ourselves about alternative solutions or explanations and then we arrive at a conclusion or a decision.

So speaking is more than a public final expression of our thinking, it is our very thinking made evident, our tentative conclusions which we form as we move on our way to something more final. A dress rehearsal, if you will.

Learning to do it well is, therefore, vital. The skills of listening for tone, intention and message, the skills of speaking in response with respect for the speaker and his ideas, the habit of negotiating with ourselves what we really mean, are essential for good mental and social health. The classrooms in which these skills are learned must by definition be active places.

Standards for Speaking and Listening

1. Graduates are able to listen to, understand, and participate in oral presentations and conversations conducted at normal speed.
2. Graduates speak in clear and grammatically correct English in personal and public situations.
3. Graduates are able to listen to others, distinguish their message, tone and intention and respond appropriately.
4. Graduates use the conventions of speech that show respect and sensitivity to others.
5. Graduates are able to explain their positions on, and understanding of, complex issues.
6. Graduates are able to speak in public at different kinds of functions using appropriate conventional forms of address.
7. Graduates know discourse structures and rhetorical devices used in good speeches and use them in their own speeches.
8. Graduates are able to take on formal roles in groups and conduct the business of the group appropriately.

Indicators of Levels of Achievement: Speaking and Listening

Level 1

Students are able to:

- speak about matters of their immediate interest- family, pets, events in their lives...
- pronounce simple words clearly.
- listen to and understand others when they speak about matters of their immediate interest.
- convey simple messages to a range of listeners.
- develop an expanding vocabulary that enables them to communicate with others.

Level 2

Students are able to:

- participate in simple, short routine conversations on familiar topics.
- communicate basic needs and personal experience.
- ask and respond to simple familiar questions.
- demonstrate control of basic grammar.
- demonstrate adequate vocabulary for routine communication.
- describe a simple situation, tell a simple story, or explain how to do something.
- demonstrate improved proficiency in pronunciation.

Level 3

Students are able to:

- talk and listen confidently in different contexts, exploring and communicating ideas.
- use a variety of simple structures and some complex ones.
- demonstrate improved control of pronunciation and grammar.
- demonstrate an expanding vocabulary.
- demonstrate an awareness of the listener by responding to the message, tone and intention.

Level 4

Students are able to:

- talk and listen in an increasing range of contexts adapting their talk to purpose.
- listen carefully and respond with relevant comments and questions.
- use a variety of structures which show an awareness of grammar.
- demonstrate a wide range of everyday vocabulary.
- pronounce words clearly.
- adapt message, tone and intention to the context.

Level 5

Students are able to:

- talk and listen confidently in a wide range of contexts- informal to formal.
- speak on familiar topics for extended lengths of time.
- use a wide variety of sentence structures including some use of the subjunctive mood.
- demonstrate an increasing inventory of concrete and abstract language.
- demonstrate an increased ability to respond to the formality levels of situations.

Level 6

Students are able to:

- communicate effectively in most practical and social situations.
- demonstrate control of common sentence structures.
- take an active part in discussions showing understanding of ideas and sensitivity to others.
- follow most formal and informal conversations at a normal rate of speech.
- demonstrate an expanding inventory of vocabulary.

Level 7

Students are able to:

- match their talk to the demands of different circumstances.
- use vocabulary precisely and organize their talk to communicate clearly.
- make significant contributions to the conversation.
- evaluate the ideas and opinions of others.

- take on formal and informal roles in groups.
- speak in public at different kinds of functions.
- use conventional patterns and forms of address in public speaking.

Level 8

Students are able to:

- explain their position on and understanding of complex issues.
- maintain and develop their talk purposely in a range of contexts.
- make a range of contributions which show that they have listened perceptively to the development of discussion.
- demonstrate an apt use of vocabulary.
- participate in a variety of contexts, public or otherwise, using appropriate intonation and emphasis.
- lead routine meetings and manage interactions in small groups.

Exceptional Achievement

Students are able to:

- select and use structures and styles appropriate to a range of contexts.
- use language that is complex and expresses attitudes, feelings and possibilities.
- explain complex ideas to diverse groups, debate arguments on complex matters, negotiate and resolve conflicts in a variety of situations.
- use language that is accurate in grammar and free from errors in pronunciation.
- present themselves confidently and elegantly.
- Explore imaginative, creative and complex lines of thought in dialogue with others, with confidence and power.

Teacher Input: Speaking and Listening

Level 1

Teachers will teach students:

- to sound the letters of the alphabet to listen to and identify initial and final sounds in words.
- to pronounce simple words related to their immediate environment.
- to listen to simple sentences.
- to listen to stories, rhymes, and explanations and begin to recount them.
- to use and reply to words of greeting.

Level 2

Teachers will:

- teach students to distinguish initial, middle and final sounds of words.
- teach students to listen for specific things when he/she reads names of characters, events.
- help students explain simple topics to classmates.
- help students to pronounce clearly more complex words.
- help students to read aloud alone and groups from simple texts.
- help students to ask and respond to questions on familiar matters.
- help students build a vocabulary of complex words.

Level 3

Teachers will:

- set aside time during the day for students to talk and listen to the teachers and to each other.
- practice with the students listening to the message of the speaker.
- teach the students to use simple and complex sentence structures, including asking questions.
- teach the students the things that a speaker says and does which indicate tone and intention.
- help students build a more complex vocabulary.
- practice pronunciation with the students.

Level 4

Teachers will:

- practise with the students talking and listening for different purposes.
- teach the students how to respond with relevant comments and questions to a speaker.

- practise with students how to adapt message, tone and intention to the context – audience and task.
- practise with the students how to listen for specific things in an oral presentation or conversation.
- Help the students build an expanding vocabulary.
- Teach the students how to pronounce the new words they are learning.

Level 5

Teachers will:

- set aside a time each day for speaking and listening.
- help students speak on familiar topics for a gradually lengthening period of time.
- practise with students the use of more complex sentence structures in their speech, to include the use of modal auxiliaries.
- read to students asking them to listen for specific items in the story.
- Ensure that the students understand the appropriate level of formality for different contexts.
- teach students both concrete and abstract language.
- practise with students the pronunciation of their vocabulary.

Level 6

Teachers will:

- create opportunities for students to speak in a variety of social and formal situations.
- practise with students common sentence structures – question, exclamations, standard responses to greetings, simple, complex and compound sentences.
- practise with students listening responding to conversations – formal and informal – conducted at normal rate of speed.
- practise with students listening for the message, tone and intention of the speaker.
- practise the pronunciation of new words as they expand their vocabulary.
- listen to and read for the students some famous speeches.

Level 7

Teachers will:

- help students to adapt their speech to different circumstances.
- practise precise use of words with the students.

- teach the students how to evaluate the ideas and opinions of others and how to present their evaluations.
- teach the students how to speak in public at different functions.
- teach the students how to conduct the business of a group and how to be a contributing member of the group.
- practise with students the pronunciation of the words they are learning.
- show the students how speeches are put together so that they can make their own.

Level 8

Teachers will:

- teach the students how to lead routine meetings and manage the work of small groups.
- teach the students how to manage their delivery of speeches in formal functions – conventions of address, introduction, timing, tone and closing.
- require of the students that they explain their understanding of and positions on familiar complex issues and ideas.
- practise with the students the pronunciation of the new words that they are learning.

Exceptional Achievement:

It is anticipated that teachers will meet some students who perform at a level of achievement superior to their groups. The teachers' task in these instances is to challenge those students with work that requires them to *stretch* – to reach beyond their grasp.

The items listed for *Exceptional Achievement* in the section entitled *Levels of Achievement: Standards for Speaking and Listening* will help teachers plan the work for these students.

Teachers should be ready to encounter students whose level of achievement is superior to their (teachers') own, in reach, facility and complexity.

Provisions for the Implementation of the Standards in Speaking and Listening

Speaking and Listening are two of the most important literacy skills which graduates of the school system will need if they are to find greater success and happiness in each role they take on as adults in society, namely, member of a family, participating citizen, member of a spiritual community, member of a workforce or profession, and as an individual in search of self- fulfillment. People with these literacy skills are the foundation upon which civil society rests. As civic responsibilities increase in Bhutan, there will be a demand for a citizenry which is able to listen to and hear each other clearly and without rancour.

Some of the provisions necessary to meet these Standards for Speaking and Listening are presented here. Students need:

- regular and consistent practice in the pronunciation of sounds, words and sentences.
- classrooms where purposeful conversation, dialogue, and informal debate happen regularly.
- opportunities to learn tolerance of others ,to try to understand their point of view and to respond respectfully to those who express views different to their own.
- practice in building on the talk of others and modifying ideas through conversation.
- ready access to examples of good oral presentations as they are delivered, either live or on tape, and which demonstrate a range of purpose and tone.
- opportunities to practice recounting and commenting on what has been listened to
- opportunities to practice speaking and listening regularly in small groups, first on simple topics and then gradually to undertake the discussion of more complex issues and themes.
- opportunities to listen for signals that indicate a speaker's tone, intent and message.
- opportunities to learn tone language and messages which are appropriate for different audiences and purposes.
- opportunities to participate as members of small task groups and then as leaders of those groups, to learn language and behaviour appropriate to these roles.
- time and materials that permit students to study with their teacher a range of speeches for public presentation and learn how they are constructed.
- help in building their own speeches for use in public.
- opportunities to speak in public for various purposes: debates, explanations, reports, advertisements, eulogies, introduction of visitors, toasts at parties, responses to questions from an audience.

Materials, Activities and Time

- It is clear that teachers and students will need some texts that are selected especially to assist in the development of Speaking and Listening Skills. They will need good examples of speeches that show how to construct talks for a variety of purposes. They will need materials that show how tone, intention and message are conveyed.. They will need assistance to learn the roles they will undertake as members of groups. Above all, they will need regular practice and regularly assigned time to practise listening and speaking.

A Foreword to Writing

Writing is an activity in which there is a pronounced public interface between the writer and the reader. Once the word is out, it becomes public property. The writer is judged both for the quality of the letter and the spirit of what is written.

Writing is an art. As such, it needs practice, in the different forms in which writing is done. Students' success in writing hinges on a careful and conscious planning of the curriculum, availability of time and resources for regular writing, good models and support provided by teachers and arrangements for assessing different kinds of writing abilities.

The *Standards for Writing* expressed below inform all stakeholders to encourage writing as a regular feature of the curriculum to challenge and empower students to achieve their best.

Standards for Writing

1. Graduates communicate in coherent and grammatically correct writing in a wide range of forms – personal, transactional, poetic.
2. Graduates use writing as a way of learning, taking time to explore, clarify and reflect on their thoughts, feelings and experiences.
3. Graduates use writing to develop critical thinking skills-review, analysis, hypothesis, recollection, summary.
4. Graduates plan, draft, redraft and edit their own work (the writing process).
5. Graduates have studied examples of excellent writing both from the literature that they are studying and other sources to use them as models for their own writing.
6. Graduates are able to take notes from meetings, their reading, and other sources and use their notes to construct an accurate report of proceedings or research findings.
7. Graduates respond clearly in writing to test items in school and other examinations.
8. Graduates have produced a portfolio of their own writing containing samples of their best work:
 - personal (letters to friends, diaries, autobiography, wishes, dreams...)
 - transactional (information, explanation, argument, narration, report, descriptions, persuasion, biographies, ...)
 - poetic (plays, skits, short stories, novels, poems...).

Indicators of Levels of Achievement: Writing

Level 1

Students are able to:

- shape letters clearly.
- write simple words and phrases.
- recognize capital and small letters.
- use full stops.
- compose simple stories for the teacher to write.
- make their own picture books.

Level 2

Students are able to:

- form letters accurately.
- spell common words correctly.
- communicate meaning in narrative and non-narrative forms.
- develop their ideas in a sequence of simple sentences using capital letters and full stops.
- read what they have written.

Level 3

Students are able to:

- handwrite properly and legibly.
- spell accurately common polysyllabic words
- use simple punctuations.
- write simple sentences which are grammatically correct.
- write a sequence of sentences which extend ideas logically.
- choose vocabulary for interest and appropriateness.
- begin to use a wider variety of simple forms – fiction and non-fiction.

Level 4

Students are able to:

- spell common simple and polysyllabic words accurately.
- use external punctuations and internal punctuations (within sentences).
- begin to write grammatically complex sentences.

- select vocabulary which is often adventurous, using a dictionary and a thesaurus.
- use simple paragraph structures.
- write in a wide range of forms - fiction and non-fiction.
- begin to use the process of writing- plan, draft, redraft, edit, publish.
- build a portfolio of their best writings.

Level 5

Students are able to:

- use a wide range of punctuations accurately.
- write simple and complex sentences correctly.
- use more complex paragraph structures.
- use more complex vocabulary.
- write in a wide range of forms – fiction and non-fiction.
- use the writing process regularly.
- continue to build their portfolio.

Level 6

Students are able to:

- use more sophisticated vocabulary and sentence structures.
- use a range of sentence structures and paragraph organization to create an effect (feeling of peace, sense of terror, suspense, persuasion...)
- write for a variety of purposes- personal, transactional, poetic expression- using appropriate vocabulary and voice- familiar, formal, creative.
- continue to use the writing process and building portfolio.
- use writing as a way of learning and thinking.
- begin to develop criteria to evaluate good writing.

Level 7

Students are able to:

- demonstrate fluency in spelling.
- use grammatical features and vocabulary correctly and effectively.
- use punctuation and paragraphing to make the sequence of events or ideas coherent and clear to the reader.
- use appropriate style in a range of forms.
- demonstrate general confidence and fluency in their writing.
- take notes and prepare reports from their notes.
- begin to apply criteria to evaluate good writing.
- continue building their portfolio and using the writing process.

Level 8

Students are able to:

- use vocabulary and grammar to make fine distinctions and achieve emphasis.
- show a clear grasp of the use of paragraphing and punctuation.
- write non-fiction that is coherent and gives clear points of view.
- write fiction that shows control of characters, events, settings and uses a variety of structures.
- write poetry that shows control of the different forms.
- take notes and prepare reports from their notes.
- use the writing process effectively and build their portfolio.
- demonstrate a clear understanding of the criteria for good writing.

Exceptional Achievement

In addition to the achievements described up to Level 8, students are able to:

- demonstrate confidence and facility with the use of a variety of grammatical constructions accurately.
- use the structures of the forms of fiction and poetry for a range of imaginative effects.
- use the features of the forms of non-fiction effectively.
- in general, demonstrate superior control of the elements of good writing.
- Take pride in publishing their best work for others.

Descriptors of Teacher Input: Writing

Level 1

Teachers will teach the students:

- to understand writing as a means of remembering, communicating, organizing and developing ideas and information.
- to understand writing as a means of enjoyment, a process where you can create for others and yourself.
- to use pencil and paper.
- to know their letters, to learn to shape them legibly and to use them in simple words .
- to compose simple sentences - noun- verb- object
- to make up stories and explanations for the teacher to write down.

Level 2

Teachers will teach the students:

- to write their own simple stories and explanations independently.
- to recognize and use simple spelling patterns.
- to learn how to spell commonly used words correctly.
- the word order of simple sentences - *article-subject-verb-object*.
- simple punctuation and capitalization...*use of capital letters at the beginning of simple sentences and full stops at the end.*

Level 3

The teacher will teach the students how:

- to write and to print by hand in legible fashion
- to recognize and use simple spelling strategies to learn how to spell commonly used words correctly.
- to build an inventory of words of which they know the spelling and meaning.
- to know and use conventions of grammar, punctuation and syntax...*noun-verb agreement; simple sentences, word order; simple tense forms and their correspondence*
- to organize imaginative and factual writing in different ways...*a cumulative pattern in a poem, a list of instructions for finding a place, a recipe for emadatsi.*

Level 4

Teachers will teach students:

- strategies to spell common simple and polysyllabic words accurately.
- more complex punctuation marks.
- how to write complex sentences.
- to select vocabulary which is adventurous, using dictionary.
- how to write simple paragraphs.
- to write for a range of purposes in a range of forms.. *invitations, observations, notices, instructions, personal letters, poems.*
- to begin to use the writing process – plan, draft, redraft, edit, publish.
- to build a portfolio of their own writing.

Level 5

Teachers will:

- teach students the use of a wide range of punctuations.
- support regular practice in the use of the writing process.
- teach students more complex paragraph structures.
- teach the use of more precise vocabulary.
- introduce students to a wider range of forms.
- encourage continued practice in building writing portfolio.

Level 6

Teachers will:

- help students acquire a more sophisticated vocabulary.
- assist students to use language and sentence structures to create an effect or mood.
- teach students how to write for a variety of purposes – personal, transactional, poetic.
- teach students to use writing as a way of learning and thinking.
- support students in the use of the writing process and the building of their writing portfolio.
- begin the development of a set of criteria for the evaluation of good writing by locating examples of good writing from their reading texts..

Level 7

Teachers will:

- help students learn how to make notes from their reading and other sources and prepare accurate reports.

- help students use appropriate style in a range of forms – argument, dialogue, commentary, narrative and reporting.
- extend students' ability to use paragraphing and punctuation to make their writing clear and coherent.
- help students to examine models of good writing – fiction and non-fiction – from their reading texts.
- help students with the application of criteria for the evaluation of their writing.
- help students to continue building their vocabulary and their portfolio.

Level 8

Teachers will:

- assist students to use vocabulary and grammar to make fine distinctions.
- help students to refine their use of paragraphing and punctuation.
- assist students to write non-fiction that is coherent and gives clear points of view.
- help students write fiction, including poetry and drama that shows control of character, events, settings and form.
- show students how to synthesize and apply a variety of criteria for the evaluation of good writing- both their own and the texts they are reading.
- help students continue building their vocabulary and their portfolio.

Exceptional Achievement:

It is expected that teachers will meet some students who perform at a level of achievement superior to that of their group. The teachers' task in these instances is to challenge those students with work that requires them to *stretch* – to reach beyond their grasp.

The items listed for *Exceptional Achievement* in the section *Levels of Achievement: Standards for Writing* will help the teacher plan the work for these students.

Teachers should be ready to encounter students whose level of achievement is superior to their (teachers') own, in range, facility and complexity.

Provisions for the Implementing of the Standards in Writing.

Students need to learn that much of their writing will be read by other people and therefore needs to be accurate, legible and set out so that the meaning is readily understood. To help them achieve accuracy, legibility and organization, it is important that they:

- have time to write regularly for a wide range of purposes, not only to answer questions posed by the teacher.
- discover that writing is learned through study and practice.
- see the teacher use *the writing process* and that they be helped to use it themselves.
- have available for study, with the teacher, examples of good writing selected from the *general categories of fiction and non-fiction*, which *illustrate* good models in each of - *personal, transactional and poetic writing* .
- see that the texts that they are reading in their literature classes can serve as models for their own writing, providing them with a range of options in a variety of structures, organizational patterns, themes and purposes to assist them in their compositions.
- have their writing read but be made responsible for their own redrafting and editing.
- have opportunities to present their writing publicly to a variety of audiences - classmates, schoolmates, parents, and other groups.
- be helped to build a *portfolio* of their best work in each of poetic, personal and transactional writing.
- learn the criteria for good writing so they can evaluate their own work and help with the editing of the work of their fellow students.
- be reminded consistently of the need to spell accurately and to write grammatically correctly.
- have fun as they create their own work to entertain, inform and delight others.

Materials, Activities and Time.

It follows from these provisions that materials for Writing and the writing activities should be selected with these needs in mind. Those responsible for the selection of the books and other materials, both for the Reading & Literature and Writing, need to have in front of them the list of provisions shown here. They should also have with them the list in the section entitled Provisions for the Implementing of the Standards in Reading & Literature.

The same holds true when the syllabus planners meet to select the activities in which the students will be engaged. Time to write and to practise is essential and those responsible for the allocation of class time for these literacy skills need to be sure that teachers and students have enough time to learn how to write.

A Foreword to the Standards for Reading & Literature

The implication of the Standards for Reading & Literature is that the classroom must be an active place where students learn to read independently by engaging with real literature in a community of readers. The teacher guides the students to participate in negotiations about the meaning of the text with her and with each other.

In this way, she will teach young students how to use simple reading strategies to get information from simple texts and talk about it with their teachers and each other. The teacher will teach the older students how to use more sophisticated reading strategies as they study some of the great literature of the world with her, strategies which will enable them to go beyond the simple retrieval of information they did as children, to an analysis of what is said in the text. They will be engaged in deciding on such things as the validity of the author's viewpoint, the possibility of alternative ways of resolving the same issues, and the evaluation of the work as good literature.

They will learn to think about the great themes of life and develop their own stances on them. They will learn about the acclaimed authors and their works. They will learn that they need to think rationally, hypothetically, inferentially or intuitively, depending on the kind of texts they are reading and the reading tasks they are asked to undertake.

They will learn to connect their reading and their writing, discovering that writing is a powerful way to find out what they are thinking about a text and a powerful way of saying it. They will learn that the readings which have been selected for them show them models of good writing which can help them in their own compositions.

They will learn to speak and to listen to each other and to adapt their thinking on the literature to accommodate the views of others. And they will do as active members of a community of readers.

Standards for Reading and Literature:

1. Graduates are able to read a wide range of texts – fiction and non-fiction - independently.
2. Graduates know the different forms of literature and the purposes they serve.
3. Graduates know and use appropriate reading strategies for making meaning with a variety of texts – fiction and non-fiction.
4. Graduates have read relevant major literary works from Bhutan and other countries.
5. Graduates have an interest in books and continue to read for enjoyment and learning.
6. Through their reading, graduates have studied and reflected on the different ways in which people discover meaning in their lives; different expressions of fundamental values like Truth, Goodness, and Beauty; the possibilities of human achievement; and have found directions and models for their own aspirations.
7. Through their reading, graduates have developed a heightened sense of beauty and harmony which informs their lives.

Indicators of Levels of Achievement: Reading & Literature

Level 1

Students are able to:

- recognize familiar words in simple texts.
- use their knowledge of letters and link sound and symbols to establish the meaning of unfamiliar words.
- listen to and read simple texts and say what they like about them.

Students need support in these activities.

Level 2

Students are able to:

- read simple texts with accuracy and understanding.
- use some simple strategies- phonic, graphic, syntactic (relationship between words in a sentence) and contextual cues - to establish meanings of unfamiliar words.
- follow the text and express their opinions on the major events and ideas in it.

Students may still need support in these activities.

Level 3

Students are able to:

- read a wide range of texts accurately.
- read independently using a variety of strategies to establish meaning.
- respond to fiction and non-fiction showing understanding of the main points and expressing their preferences.

Students need little or no support.

Level 4

Students are able to:

- read a range of texts and show understanding of the significant ideas, events, themes and characters.
- use the strategies of comparison and contrast to develop their responses to the literature they are reading.

- refer to the texts, when explaining their views, to locate relevant ideas and information to support their explanations.
- identify figures of speech and explain their function in the texts.

Level 5

Students are able to:

- read a range of texts using a variety of strategies to make meaning including an understanding of the key features of various forms.
- select essential points using inference and deduction where appropriate.
- respond to the text by identifying themes and characters and selecting sentences and relevant information from the text to support their views.
- locate information from other sources- similar texts that they have studied, newspaper reports, reference texts- to support their views.
- show a better understanding of the layers of meaning which figurative language brings to a text.
- find connections between their lives and the people and ideas they meet in the literature they are reading.

Level 6

Students are able to:

- read and discuss a range of texts identifying layers of meaning and commenting on their significance.
- respond to texts referring to aspects of language, themes and the structures of the various forms, in justifying their views.
- summarize a range of information from a variety of sources and use it in their arguments.
- begin identifying the elements which create a sense of beauty and harmony in a piece of literature – rhyme and rhythm, aptness of comparison, line arrangement, use of unifying images.
- discuss the profound ideas expressed in the literature texts- notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice, forgiveness and revenge, life and death.

Level 7

Students are able to:

- read a wide range of texts with fluency and confidence using a full complement of reading strategies.
- show an understanding of the ways in which meaning and information are conveyed in a range of texts.

- articulate personal and critical responses to the literature they are reading showing an understanding of thematic, structural and linguistic features.
- select and synthesize a range of appropriate information to support their views.
- demonstrate some knowledge of major writers and their works.
- understand the effects that the writer is striving to achieve when she/he alters the standard form, plays with points of view and builds image patterns.
- share the feelings of characters in a story or play, or the speaker in a poem or an essay as in " I know just how it feels..." or " She is expressing my feelings exactly".
- evaluate the great ideas expressed in the literature texts they are studying and draw inspiration from them.

Level 8

Students are able to:

- read with fluency and confidence.
- evaluate how authors achieve their effects by the use of linguistic, structural and presentational devices – point of view, figurative language, flashback, parallel argument, symbol and image patterns.
- select and analyze information from a variety of texts to support their responses.
- demonstrate an increased familiarity with major writers and their works.
- show genuine interest in reading.
- come to new understandings of the human condition – what it is like to be in love, struggle with notions of spirituality, the death of loved ones...
- show a deepened sense of justice and fair play.

Exceptional Achievement

Students are able to:

- read a demanding range of texts.
- develop ideas from the texts referring in detail to aspects of language, structure and presentation.
- make apt and careful comparisons between texts considering audience, purpose and form.
- identify and analyze arguments.
- evaluate alternative interpretations and opinions making cross-references where appropriate.
- demonstrate a superior level of familiarity with major writers and their works.
- show genuine interest in reading.
- recall and quote from favourite pieces of literature that they have read.

Teacher Input: Reading and Literature

Level 1

Teachers will teach students:

- how to hold a book and how the book is organized ..information on the cover, what pages are and how they are arranged and sequenced, top and bottom, pictures and text arrangement(left to right, up and down).
- that a book tells a story or gives information.
- to listen as she reads a narrative text and to follow the story ,learn the names of the characters and to say what they like about what she has read.
- how to use recognition of familiar words to get them started to read.
- how to use phonics to read new words.
- how to use contextual clues to help them with unfamiliar words and to predict what will happen next.
- to tell the story in their own words.
- to describe the setting.
- to listen to poetry and say what parts they like.
- to practise simple rhymes.
- to illustrate the parts of the stories and poems which they like.
- how to spell the new vocabulary.
- to have fun as they read.

Level 2

Teachers will teach students:

- simple distinctions between fiction and non-fiction.
- to learn the spelling and meanings of the new words they are encountering.
- to continue to use the simple reading strategies they learned in Level One as they read more complex texts.
- to break text into units of thought as a new strategy for reading with understanding.(chunking)
- to express their opinions in speech and in writing about the ideas and events in the texts they are reading .
- to have fun as they learn to read.

Level 3

Teachers will teach students:

- to practise in their reading the use of the strategies of phonics ,word recognition, and contextual cueing to make meaning .

- to continue to practice " chunking " text into units of thought as a strategy for reading with understanding.
- to find parallels with the text and their own lives.
- to recognize some simple differences between kinds of texts and how they are structured and use these as advance organizers to get themselves ready to learn what the text is about.
- to recognize the themes of a text and to say what they are.
- to learn the spelling and meaning of the new words which they are encountering
- to read aloud with expression and clarity
- to have fun as they read..

Level 4

Teachers will teach students:

- how to use inference and deduction as strategies to help them make meaning as they read.
- how to use these new strategies in combination with the simpler ones learned earlier to arrive at a basic understanding of the major ideas, events and characters encountered in their reading.
- to refer directly to parts of the text to support their views on the ideas ,events and characters in the text
- to use writing as a way of rehearsing what they want to say..
- to continue the practice of learning the spelling and meaning of new words.
- to read aloud with expression and clarity.
- to have fun as they read.

Level 5:

Teachers will teach students:

- to continue to practice the reading strategies learned earlier as they read a wider range of texts, both fiction and non-fiction.
- how to use the key features of the forms of simple texts as a strategy to help them read and make meaning. **See Appendix A: Teaching Reading Strategies.**
- to respond to the text ,identifying the main ideas and themes and their opinions of them, using specific references to support their views.
- to find comparisons with other texts that elaborate their understanding of what they are reading.
- to say which writers and their works they enjoy.
- to find connections between their lives and the people and ideas they meet.
- to continue to learn the meaning and spelling of the new words which they encounter.

- to read aloud with clarity and understanding.
- to have fun as they read..

Level 6

Teachers will teach students:

- to continue to develop the strategies of reading introduced at the earlier levels and to use comparisons between texts as a new strategy to help arrive at deeper insights into their reading.
- to recognize similes and metaphors and to understand how they function in a text to give it several layers of meaning.
- to interpret metaphor and simile in specific texts ,identifying meanings that they bring to the reader.
- to continue to locate specific parts of a text that support their views and understanding of the main ideas of the text they are reading.
- to collect and organize information from other texts and sources to elaborate their own ideas.
- to begin to identify the elements in a text that cause a sense of beauty and harmony in the reader
- to continue to build a list of their favourite writers and their works.
- to discuss the profound ideas found in their texts.
- to continue the practice of learning the meaning and spelling of the new words they encounter.
- to read aloud with clarity and understanding.
- to have fun as they read.

Level 7

The teacher will teach students:

- to continue to use the reading strategies learned at each of the earlier Levels as they .
- read a wide range of texts, fiction and non-fiction .
- articulate their critical and personal responses to the texts by using their knowledge of form ,themes ,image patterns and figurative language.
- to synthesize information which they collect from other sources to support their views
- about major writers and their works.
- how to evaluate the great ideas expressed in their texts.
- to continue the practice of learning the spelling and meaning of new words which they encounter.
- to understand the effects that a writer achieves by manipulating form ,line arrangement ,viewpoint or image patterns.
- share their feelings with the feelings expressed in the texts they are reading.
- to read aloud with clarity and understanding.

- to continue to build the canon of their favourite writers and their works
- to have fun as they read.

Level 8

The teacher will teach students:

- to continue to use the reading strategies which they have learned as they read a more demanding range of texts.
- evaluate how authors achieve their effects in their writing with the use of linguistic, presentational and structural devices....point of view, flashback, figurative language, parallel arguments, image and symbol patterns.
- to read aloud with clarity and understanding.
- about major writers and their works.
- to select, analyze, and synthesize information from a variety of sources to develop and support their responses to texts.
- the practice of discussion to come to new understandings of the human condition-love, spirituality, loss of loved ones.
- the importance of developing a deep sense of justice and fair play.
- to have fun as they read.

Exceptional Achievement:

It is anticipated that teachers will meet some students with exceptional abilities who perform at a level of achievement superior to that of their group. The teachers' task in these instances is to challenge those students with work that requires them to *stretch* – to reach beyond their grasp.

The items listed for *Exceptional Achievement* in the section entitled *Levels of Achievement: Standards for Reading* will help teachers plan the work for those students.

Teachers should be ready to encounter students whose level of achievement is superior to their (teachers') own, in range, facility and complexity. The key attribute that typifies an exceptional reader is the ability to see (recognize) that texts operate on several levels simultaneously (personal: social: political: philosophical,) and be able to explain convincingly how a particular text is doing just that, and what inferences may be drawn from the writing.

Provisions for the Implementation of the Standards for Reading & Literature

This section presents the kind of reading materials which should be provided to support teachers' and students' work towards achieving the standards for reading & literature. It also suggests some criteria which can be used to select texts. The materials should be selected to enable the students to extend their intellectual, moral and emotional development.

Generally, the following criteria may be used to guide the selection of materials:

- a selection of texts which encompasses the widest possible variety of literary forms.
- interesting subject matter and settings which may be related to students' own experience and culture.
- a clear viewpoint with accessible themes and ideas.
- clarity of expression and use of language that benefits from being read aloud and reread.
- language with recognizable repetitive patterns, rhymes and rhythms.
- straightforward characterization and plot.
- use of a variety of presentational and organizational techniques.
- for the younger readers, texts with illustrations which are visually stimulating and enhance the words of the text.
- for the older readers, texts which present treatments of major recurrent themes and issues confronting humanity.

For the lower levels, material selected should cover the following categories:

- poems and stories with familiar settings and those based on imaginary or fantasy worlds.
- books and poems written by significant children's authors.
- non-fiction texts that present explanations and information on natural phenomena... animals and insects...stars... moon...
- retellings of traditional folk and fairy tales.
- stories ,poems and chants containing patterned and predictable language.
- stories and poems and non-fiction texts that are challenging in terms of length and vocabulary.

For the higher levels, the materials should cover the following categories:

A. Fiction

B. Non-fiction

To assist in the selection of the materials, the following criteria may be helpful:

A. Fiction

a. Poetry:

- the selection should show an affirmation of life and a celebration of the essential goodness of humanity through the consideration of themes such as love, family values, patriotism and heroism, friendship and loyalty, hope and aspiration, tolerance and understanding, the relationship between humans and nature, notions of spirituality and religion.
- the poems should be selected from the work of established writers- both classic and contemporary.
- the selection should show a wide range of forms- both classic and contemporary.
- the poems should show language in the modern idiom used in imaginative and original ways.
- the selection of poems should demonstrate a variety of sound patterns, imagery and other literary devices.

b. Novels and Short Stories:

The selection should reflect the criteria for poetry and include:

- a range of forms, structures and styles within the genres – mystery, horror, romance, adventure, science fiction...
- oral and literary traditions from Bhutanese and other cultures.

C. Plays:

The selection should reflect the criteria for poetry and novels and short stories and include the following:

- the selection should extend the students' understanding of drama in performance... direction, production, portrayal and interpretation of character.
- the selection should show variety in structure and setting...tragedy, comedy, farce...
- some excellent examples of stories and poems written by students.

B. Non-fiction:

Students should be presented with a wide range of non-fiction texts to include:

- letters, journals, diaries, essays, biographies and autobiographies, newspapers, reports and other media texts.
- the biographies and autobiographies should introduce students to great people who have led exemplary lives and would serve as models for them.

- the essays should concern themselves with major issues confronting humanity.
- the selection of texts should demonstrate exemplary use of language and a variety of forms.

Teachers may wish to refer to the discussion of reading strategies in Appendix D: **Some Reading Strategies for Schools.**

STANDARDS for LANGUAGE:

1. Graduates demonstrate a sound knowledge of grammar and sentence structure.
2. Graduates use a rich vocabulary in their speech and writing.
3. Graduates know the basic features of the English language.
4. Graduates display a facility with the use of the various modes of speech – indicative, subjunctive, interrogative, imperative and conditional structures.
5. Graduates are able to discuss how humans acquire language.
6. Graduates are able to discuss the purposes that language serves in human interaction.

Indicators of the Levels of Achievement: Language

Level 1

Students are able to:

- use conventions of noun-verb agreement correctly.
- know and be able to use simple tenses- past, present, future.
- know and use gender indicators- he, she, it.
- identify parts of speech.
- write common sentence structures.
- use a dictionary to assist with vocabulary building.
- use punctuation and capitalization in simple sentences.

Level 2

Students are able to:

- use the grammatical conventions as in Level 1.
- know and use parts of speech with confidence.
- know and use more complex tense forms.
- begin to use compound and complex sentence structures.
- continue building vocabulary.
- use punctuation and capitalization correctly in their sentences.

Level 3

Students are able to:

- extend their use of grammatical conventions to include such items as pronoun substitution, auxiliary verbs, and further work on tenses.
- use more complex sentence structures- periodic sentences, interrogative sentences.
- continue building vocabulary.
- use punctuation and capitalization to indicate the organization of a sentence.

Level 4

Students are able to:

- extend their use of more sophisticated grammatical conventions such as possessive pronouns, adverbs of time and place.

- demonstrate improved use of articles and prepositions.
- know and use common word order.
- continue building vocabulary.

Level 5

Students are able to:

- extend their use of grammatical conventions to include the use of active and passive voice.
- show how the meanings of words are changed by the use of root words in combination with prefixes and suffixes.
- show how words and their functions are related to each other in simple sentences.
- continue to build vocabulary.

Level 6

Students are able to:

- use more complex grammatical conventions to include the use of modal auxiliaries – can, could, should, must, may, might – to indicate a shift from indicative to subjunctive mood.
- show how clauses are used to form more complex sentences.
- use the conditional forms correctly.
- continue to build vocabulary.

Level 7

Students are able to:

- use direct and indirect questions in their speech and writing.
- use imperative and exclamatory moods appropriately.
- use participial phrases to form complex sentences.
- know and use common idioms and adages.
- distinguish between literal and figurative language and use them in communication.
- discuss simple theories about how humans acquire language.

Level 8

Students are able to:

- use grammatical conventions with accuracy and confidence.
- use syntactical patterns with accuracy.

- select appropriate language to express concrete and abstract ideas.
- demonstrate the use of a sophisticated vocabulary and expression.
- discuss the purposes that language serves in human interaction.

Exceptional Achievement:

Students are able to:

- demonstrate control of all abilities outlined up to Level 8.
- show an awareness of the common theories of language acquisition and development – *language is innate* versus *language is acquired*.
- discuss some of the characteristic features of human language – that language is creative, that it has fixed word order and grammar, that language reflects the culture of the people, that language is thought...

N.B

Students in an English as a Second Language situation require sufficient time to establish some proficiency in the use of the language before they can undertake the study of English outlined in the Levels of Achievements for the Standards in Language.

Therefore, the Levels of Achievement for the Standards in Language developed by CERD are intended to be used to assess the progress of students beginning at Class V.

Descriptors of Teacher Input - Language

Level 1

Teachers will:

- introduce the concept of grammar.
- teach parts of speech and their functions: nouns, verbs, articles, adjectives.
- teach simple word order – article, subject, verb, object.
- teach pronunciation of commonly used words.
- teach simple past, present and future tenses.

Level 2

Teachers will:

- teach parts of speech - adverbs, conjunctions, pronouns and prepositions and gender indicators.
- teach more complex word order.
- introduce the progressive forms of simple tenses.
- introduce examples of complex sentences.
- teach the idea of clauses.
- teach pronunciation of commonly used words.

Level 3

Teachers will:

- introduce more complex tense forms.
- introduce examples of compound sentences.
- teach examples of commonly used clauses.
- teach pronunciation of more difficult words.
- introduce examples of more complex word order.
- help build vocabulary.

Level 4

Teachers will:

- teach the kinds of pronouns – personal, possessive, reflexive, demonstrative..
- introduce the concept of phrases – participial, prepositional..
- continue work on more complex tense forms and patterns.
- continue work on clauses – adverb, adjective, noun.
- help build vocabulary and practise pronunciation.

Level 5

Teachers will:

- teach active and passive voice.
- teach the relationship between the words and their functions in sentences.
- continue work on simple, complex and compound sentences.
- show how the meanings of root words are changed with the use of prefixes and suffixes.
- help build vocabulary and practise pronunciation.

Level 6

Teachers will:

- introduce the use of modal auxiliaries to change the mood.
- introduce the conditional forms.
- continue work on simple, complex and compound sentences.
- continue work on word formation (morphology)- formation of compound words.
- help build vocabulary and practise pronunciation.

Level 7

Teachers will:

- teach the concept and use of indicative, subjunctive, imperative, interrogative and exclamatory moods.
- continue work on active and passive voice.
- teach the notion and use of literal and figurative language.
- teach the use of idioms and adages.
- introduce the notion and use of direct and indirect speech.
- help build vocabulary and practise pronunciation.
- introduce simple theories about how humans acquire language.

Level 8

Teachers will:

- extend students' ability to control the use of the grammatical conventions and syntactical forms studied earlier.
- extend students' use of literal and figurative language.
- teach the purposes that language serves in human interaction.
- help build vocabulary and practise pronunciation.
- introduce the notion of language use in different contexts – science, politics, religion, sports, jokes....

Provisions for the Implementation of the Standards for Language.

Students in Bhutan will be expected to undertake the study of language only when they have acquired some fluency in spoken and written English at the elementary level. They can then be expected to begin the study of English grammar, syntax, word formation, vocabulary and pronunciation, and simple theories of language acquisition. The provisions presented here should assist both teachers and students to engage with a programme that will lead to a greater control of English.

Students should have:

- access to a good dictionary and a thesaurus for word study, especially as references to help their study of spellings, meanings, word formation and vocabulary building.
- opportunities each year to study and practise grammar, syntax and punctuation in a programme that takes them from very simple ideas on these subjects in the early years to more complex understandings in the final years of school. For example, external to internal punctuation, simple to compound and complex sentences to clauses and introductory phrases and periodic sentences and parallel sentence structure.
- time to learn the meanings and proper spelling of a vocabulary that continues to build from the early to the final years of school.
- opportunities to learn the kinds of nouns and verbs that are used commonly in English....for example collective nouns, nouns denoting gender, antonyms, homonyms, synonyms, nouns with two plural forms, transitive and intransitive verbs.
- opportunities to learn simple patterns of word formation and to practise changing the meanings of compound words by joining root words with different combinations of prefixes and suffixes.
- opportunities to listen to and read about the purposes that language serves in human interaction and how language changes to address these purposes.
- opportunities to practise using language for different purposes.
- opportunities to study and discuss simple theories of how humans acquire language, to look at theories on how language systems evolve to meet new challenges and to discuss the common features of human language.

Materials, Activities and Time

- The programme set forth in this document on Language is an active one. It relies on teachers who are knowledgeable about the mechanics, application and theories of language to be successful. Nonetheless, both the students and the teachers need the education community to provide support and ideas if this programme is to work and, of course, sufficient time in which to do it. As to materials, it is hoped that the planners of the syllabus for English studies in general, and Language in particular, will include in the selection of textbooks first, a good dictionary - at least several class copies; second, a good thesaurus - at least several class copies; and, third, a copy of R.P.Sinha's Current English Grammar and Usage with Composition, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, India, 2002. (ISBN 0-19-565809-4), or any other suitable book, for each teacher.

Appendix A: Recommendations for the Implementation of the Standards

The Director General had made the following observations on *The Silken Knot: Standards for English for Schools in Bhutan*, vide Memo dated May 30, 2002:

1. How do the recommendations in this document inform the preparation of the teachers in the pre-service programmes? B.Ed and BA (English) PGCE?
2. What is the current status of the teaching of English and the practice of study skills?
3. How should we move forward?
 - What should we do with the teachers that we have in the system?
 - How do we orient them to teach to the Standards prescribed in this document?
 - How should we organize the English timetable to cover the various areas that are suggested in this document?
4. A study report and a plan of action are necessary.

CERD's Response

Observation One:

How do the recommendations in this document inform the preparation of English teachers in the pre-service programme?

There is no doubt that the Standards, should they be adopted, will have a direct bearing on the preparation of English teachers in the pre-service programmes and the resources available at the Institutes – both human and material. A detailed study of the programmes in both the NIE's - Paro and Samtse - will be necessary to determine the effects the Standards will have on pre-service training.

For example, it is clear that the knowledge of English of the candidates in the B.Ed programmes will have to be improved. They enter the B.Ed programmes with a minimum qualification of a pass in Class 12 English.

During their stay at the institute, they take very few courses in the study of English. Most of the time is given over to pedagogy. As teachers, they will need to have a sound education in literature, both fiction and non-fiction, modern and classical, and be solidly grounded in studies in English grammar and syntax and theories of language.

Acquisition of books on English Literature and Language and the teaching of English is an urgent need.

CERD's recommendations:

Step 1

Establish a team consisting of members from the two training institutes to:

- study the Standards Frameworks for each of Reading & Literature, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language, in *The Silken Knot*.
- create a set of criteria using the Frameworks, namely the Standards for each area of English and its corresponding documents – Indicators of Levels of Achievement, Descriptors of Teacher Input, and Provisions.
- analyze the programmes in the light of the criteria. The components of the programmes to be studied should include curriculum statements, textbooks, faculty plans, course outlines, student work including assignments and examinations, faculty and student interviews, classroom observations, faculty members capacity to implement new courses. This should take some time to be done thoroughly and the findings of the team should be checked with the faculty members responsible for the English programme.
- prepare a report on their procedures, their findings and their recommendations for necessary changes.

Step 2

Establish a team of educators from outside the institutes whose mandate will be to:

- study *The Silken Knot* as per the directions for Team 1.
- carry out an independent study of the pre-service programmes using the criteria created by the team in Step 1 and looking at the same components.
- prepare a report on their findings and procedures including their recommendations for change.
- compare their report with the report of the team in Step 1.
- make recommendations for necessary changes.

The benefits of this process will be that the faculty members responsible for teaching English at the institutes:

- will learn more about the Standards and be able to orient the trainees to the Standards.
- adjust the programmes and resources to meet the Standards and take ownership of this national initiative.

This process will also ensure that:

- the programmes will have been validated by the community outside the institutes.

- teams will be in place to assist with the implementation of the Standards in other areas of education.

Observation Two

What is the current status of the teaching of English and the practice of study skills?

CERD considers that these are two different issues – the current status of the teaching of English, and the practice of study skills.

A. Status of English Teaching

CERD has observed about 150 plus classes in English teaching in some 20 Junior and Senior High schools during the past 7 months. Some findings in regard to the status of English teaching include the following:

In all the schools in which CERD observed, students:

- are able to read and understand texts;
- are able to participate in and understand normal conversations;
- are able to write to express their views and say what they have learned;
- understand some notions of the language as a subject of study.

They make mistakes as they perform these tasks and need more practice in Reading & Literature, Language, Writing, and Speaking and Listening.

It would appear that these students are relying on skills and information which they have developed in the lower grade levels where they were taught to read, write, spell and speak to a level appropriate to their age and development. They need to build on these and to do so need further direct instruction in the upper grade levels in each of the areas of English addressed by the Standards.

Some of the impediments to the implementation of a fuller programme in English in the Middle Secondary and Higher Secondary schools are:

- Teachers spend almost all of their time explaining texts to students and students spend almost all of their time writing down what the teacher says. As a result, teachers do not teach students how to read nor do they teach Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language on a regular basis. Teachers say they do not have time to do anything but explain texts because the literature syllabus must be *covered* so that students can pass the examinations.
- It is true that the examinations require that the students present accurately the approved information about the literature texts which are on the syllabus-information about authors, characters, plots, settings and word meanings. It is also true that both students and teachers are judged on the success of the students in the examinations.

- Given these conditions, the teachers and the students feel that students need only memorize the teachers' explanations of the texts to pass the examinations. And that is what they do.
- Over the years, this habit appears to have been entrenched in the system and now defines the teachers' role as the explicators of text and the students' role as recorders of the explanations, usually directly into the textbook.

The Primary Schools and the Junior High Schools up to Class VII do a better job of teaching a fuller range of English knowledge and skills.

Beyond that level, however, the teaching of English for the most part has been reduced to the transmission of approved information about assigned literature texts and the memorization of that information for the examinations, including the practice/send-up examinations.

B. The Practice of Study Skills

CERD considers that the broader issue of the practice of study skills in the schools needs to be addressed separately for different subject areas because the nature of each subject would call for adoption of different skills.

Observation Three

How do we move forward?

- What do we do with the teachers we have in the system?
- How do we orient them to the Standards prescribed in this document?
- How should we organize the English timetable to cover the various areas that are suggested in this study?

To decide what to do with the teachers we have in the system, some assessment of their professional capacity has to be undertaken first.

CERD has undertaken several initiatives in this direction:

- it has developed an **Inventory of High School English Teachers** to try to get a picture of their educational qualifications, teaching experience, training and other professional development.
- it has undertaken a **Needs Assessment** in which teachers have identified the areas in which they need help if they are to be able to teach to these Standards.
- CERD has also conducted twenty- three, 3 hour workshops with the staff in each of the schools visited, conducted interviews, observed in over 150 English classes to ascertain what is happening in the schools in relation to the standards and what needs to be done.

Based on the evidence gathered through these initiatives, CERD can report that many teachers have not taken any advanced courses in English. Of this large

group, some have not had any English course beyond Class X, while most have only Class XII English and the courses offered in the NIE's. On the positive side, smaller numbers have graduated from Sherubtse with Honours in English and gone on to take advanced degrees in English. Still some come from India and other countries with higher degrees.

It appears that the first intervention must be to enhance the knowledge of English of the teachers who are in the system.

In the course of the visits to the high schools and institutes, CERD carried out a simple survey of the needs of teachers which covered: one, knowledge of English, and, two, the teaching of English.

With regard to the knowledge of English, a majority of the teachers chose learning about the nature and purposes of different kinds of texts as their most urgent need. Additional study in English grammar and syntax was identified as the next urgent area followed by the study of the function and significance of figurative language.

With regard to the teaching of English, learning advanced reading strategies was selected as the most urgent need, followed by the need to do regular planning of the different teaching tasks on daily, weekly, monthly and yearly basis. They also indicated that knowing more about how to teach students to write various forms of composition, learning the criteria for evaluating writing and how to do reading assessments, were priorities. [Please see Appendix A for a complete list of the choices in the Needs Assessment].

There are several ways to orient the teachers to teach to the Standards prescribed in *The Silken Knot* and to enhance their knowledge of English.

CERD suggests the following:

- Sherubtse College develop and offer an advanced certificate/ diploma programme in the study of English designed to help teachers acquire the knowledge they will need to implement the Standards. Given the results of the Needs Assessment carried out with the teachers and other educators, this appears to be the most urgently needed intervention.
- Both of the teacher training institutes develop and offer advanced certificate/diploma programmes in the teaching of English. This is not so important as the knowledge level discussed for Sherubtse because most teachers have had pedagogical and methodological training. However, the teachers have said that they need urgent help with such items as Reading Strategies for Junior and Senior High Schools and Strategies for Teaching Writing.
- Teacher training institutes, in cooperation with CAPSD, undertake to offer regular seminars and workshops on site which assist teachers to develop materials and activities that will help with the implementation of the Standards.
- Principals and head teachers conduct regular seminars and workshops in their schools to help their teachers implement the Standards.

- Form and train teacher teams who are knowledgeable about the Standards and their classroom applications and assign them to schools for several weeks at a time to assist the teachers with the implementation on site.
- Collect and distribute best practices.
- Look at the examinations from BBE and be sure that they are asking students to perform the kinds of tasks that are required by the Standards.

The English Timetable

CERD has discovered that approximately 3.5 to 4 hours per week on average is allotted for the study of English. Some schools have periods as brief as 35 minutes while others have a schedule of 40 to 45 minutes per day. Given the need to take attendance and check homework and talk with the students, the teacher is left with 25 to 30 minutes to teach the subject.

This is not enough time to do what has to be done to meet the Standards. There is need to increase the time to allow regular practice in the different areas of English presented in *The Silken Knot*.

This completes the responses to the observations of the Direction General on the Standards.

CERD would like to suggest two other issues that need attention should the Standards be adopted. It is best to present them as questions.

- How do the Standards inform the preparation of the syllabus for English in the schools?
- How do the Standards inform the preparation of the English examinations for each school level?

How do the Standards inform the preparation of the Syllabus?

To address this question, it is important to describe the current practice as CERD has seen it in operation for the School Levels 9-12.

The members of the English Subject Committee met in a two -day workshop, one of two such workshops that are held each year, and were asked ,as part of a crowded agenda, to select the texts for the syllabus for each of the levels 9-12. What follows is a description of the conditions that prevailed when this task was undertaken by the members.

- The only books that they had were the textbooks in current use or those that were used prior to the current books. There were no other choices available.
- They had two hours in which to do the job.
- They had no criteria for selection.

- Many of the members had not read the current books, especially the poetry and prose .They said openly that they had done nothing to prepare for this task and offered the following reasons: the very short notice of the meeting; they had not received an agenda; they had no time to read and if they had had time, they had no books.
- There were no modern texts available from which to choose.
- There were no non-fiction texts available.
- There was no representative from CAPSD at the second meeting.
- There was no attempt to relate the texts selected to the scant description of the programme in “The Purpose of Education”.
- There was a sense that the textbooks were chosen before the syllabus was made.

Clearly this situation has to improve. To do so, CERD recommends that certain steps be put into place.

Step 1

- Decide at least one year in advance that the syllabus needs to be updated.
- Set a schedule for the work.
- Develop criteria for the selection of texts based on the Standards Frameworks and other relevant documents. Such criteria should include comprehensiveness, variety of forms and presentation of major themes and issues, rigour, balance between modern and classical literature, fiction and non-fiction pieces, variety of language use, presentation of major authors, relevance to the age groups for whom the texts are intended, accessibility of language, opportunities to practise skills and learn content, durability, teachability, and the beauty of presentation and selections.
- Write to publishers for samples of textbooks for each of the areas of English described in the Standards .Send them the criteria that the committee will use to select the textbooks and ask them to meet these as closely as possible.
- Assign the review of the textbooks which they send to CAPSD to teams of two, each team to include at least one member of the ESC. The reviews are to be written out in detail and should be rigorous.
- Set deadlines for the reviews and see that they are met.

Step 2

- Hold a workshop in which the reviews and the textbooks are presented by the teams to the members.
- Debate the choices long and hard.
- Make several appropriate choices for each Class level. Discard the others.
- Assign each of the choices to a different team for further study and review, based on the criteria, the findings of the first team which

reviewed the texts and the sense that the team members have of the appropriateness and relevance of the texts.

- Set deadlines for this second review and see that they are met.

Step 3

- Hold a workshop in which these reviews are presented in written form to be studied by the members.
- Debate them long and hard.
- Make final selections and send them to the Board for clearance.

Step 4

- Work out a plan to help the teachers use these texts
- Monitor their use.
- Keep the books for at least five years if they prove to be acceptable.

Step 5

- Repeat this process periodically with new textbooks from the publishers in order that the ESC will be ready for change.

How do the Standards inform the preparation of the examinations?

It is clear that the examinations have the most powerful influence on what is taught in the classrooms and what is considered important to be done.

As was mentioned earlier in this report in the section dealing with the Status of English Teaching, CERD discovered, after interviews with about 120 teachers of English and after observing in almost 150 classes of English in 21 schools that both the teachers and the students know that the current examinations will ask only for information on texts; therefore, other considerations take second place if they get any place at all.

If the work required to meet the Standards is to be undertaken by the teachers and the students then the items on the examinations prepared by BBE will have to be in conformity with the Standards Frameworks.

In summary, the answers to the questions raised by the Director-General and to those raised by CERD serve to define the changes that will be necessary if the situation is to improve. This project on Standards for English will take several years to implement. It will affect each of the major areas of school education and teacher- training and will need the cooperation of each sector of education. The changes will be difficult and will require consistent work to be completed. *The Silken Knot: Standards for English in Schools in Bhutan* marks the beginning step and should serve to guide the work of the major players in the Department of Education.

Appendix B: Report on School Visits: 20001-2002

CERD, in its work on Standards for English in the schools of Bhutan, collaborated widely with the education community to seek its assistance in the development of the Standards. In the course of six months, CERD visited 20 High Schools in Western, Central, Eastern and Southern Bhutan in 2001 and 2002. The team spoke with 120 teachers and principals in structured 2-3 hour interviews and observed in 160 English classes. In May-June 2002, it held eleven 4-hour seminars with the faculty of 9 High Schools and both of the English Departments of NIE Samtse and Sherubtse College in Kanglung. It has chaired the last two workshops - Fall of 2001 and Spring of 2002 - of the CAPSD English Subject Committee and advised the members of the work and sought their assistance. It has held regular meetings with the Director General and the Directors of CAPSD and NIE, Paro, to keep them updated on the work and to ask for their assistance and counsel.

The High schools which were visited are:

Drugyel, Punakaha, Zhemgang, Trongsa, Jakar, Chumey, Sonam Kuenphen, Bajo, YHS in Thimphu, Kelki, and Motithang, Tashiyangtse, Ranjung, Wamrong, Khaling, Mongar, Tangmachu, Gelpoishing, Phuntsholing and Samtse. Many of these schools were both Junior and Senior High schools and the team was able to observe in classes and to hold extensive interviews with the teachers at both levels.

In addition, CERD visited Sherubtse College in Kanglung and the National Institute of Education in Samtse and held a four- hour seminar with the English Departments of both institutions. The purpose of the visit to the College and to NIE, Samtse was to get reactions to the Standards Frameworks and to seek assistance if the need arises with the implementation of the Standards. In addition, CERD was able to speak with them about the implications of these Standards for their programmes. CERD made another presentation to the senior officials of the Education Department led by the Director General, staff and trainees of the NIE, Paro, officials of the CAPSD, and heads of schools in the Paro valley.

The report that follows pertains only to the High schools visited.

The visits were of one or two days' duration depending on the size and the location of the school. While there, CERD observed in the English classes, spoke with students and staff, and met with approximately 120 English teachers and their principals for at least three hours. As a result CERD

- was able to gather information on the teaching of English as it relates to the draft of the Standards from direct observation in 150 plus classes;
- was able to hear from teachers on the Standards and the performance of their students;
- was able to get some information as to what the teachers needed if their own capacity was to be improved in relation to the Standards;

What follows are the findings of the CERD team. They are grouped in categories related to the Standards.. It must be stressed that these are tentative and need further observations in schools to become more reliable.

A. Teacher-Student Activity

1. CERD found that almost all of the teachers followed the literature syllabus in detail. The bulk of the time in the class during observations was taken up with “getting through the texts.”

2. As the teacher talked and explained the text, the students recorded what she said in the margins of their textbooks. They used these as crib notes to help them get ready for the examinations.

There were no directions given to them as to what they were to do while the teacher paraphrased the texts.

B. Planning

1. There were no daily lesson plans available in any of the schools visited. When the team asked for them, they were told “we don’t actually make lesson plans. We just follow the text and use these notes.” Then the teachers showed their textbooks which had notes scribbled randomly in the margins. Without exception, this happened in each school.

As a result, each class was an ad-hoc performance, delivered extemporaneously, without any record of what was “covered” or what the students had learned

2. There was some evidence of long- range planning in the teacher books which each teacher had .The plans were for long blocks of time and repeated the Table of Contents in the textbooks or in the syllabus. The statements of what students were expected to learn were scant and general, usually like those in the syllabus.

As a result, few teachers could tell the team what the students had learned or what skills they had developed.

C. Teaching Methods

1. The teachers all did the same thing, with some rare and wonderful exceptions. By and large, the majority of the teachers began the class abruptly, without direction as to the business of the day, and then went to a paraphrase of whatever text they were working on. They spoke non-stop and randomly for 25 minutes, then halted and asked students to read. They would then resume their paraphrase without commenting on the student’s performance. The bell ended the class.

CERD has recorded the rare exceptions for further study.

D. Teaching of Writing and Speaking and Listening.

The team saw very little teaching of any kind that could be spoken of as teaching people *how* to do things like read, write or speak.

The transmission of information about texts so dominated the classes that the students were required to do little other than sit, listen and make notes. Almost all other activities were crowded out by the need to cover the texts.

When asked about this in the Fall, the teachers said that the team should come at another time when they were not preparing for examinations; however, when the team returned to the schools this Spring, when examinations were not in the immediate future, they found exactly the same kind of teaching going on.

E. Teaching of Language

Grammar was taught in each of the schools visited, sometimes taught very well, but usually only scheduled once per week. There was no evidence of Language being taught.

F. Teaching of Reading and Literature

- Reading and Literature are still considered two separate subjects. As a result, the team saw no reading strategies taught in the classes in either Junior or Senior High school. They did hear a lot of complaints that students from Class 9 did not know how to read the advanced literature they are assigned, but there was no attempt or willingness on the part of the teachers to teach them how to read. Instead, they took it as proof that the lower classes were failing in their responsibilities to the students and there was nothing to be done. So the teachers were reading the literature for the students and explaining it to them.
- There was some of what was called *comprehension reading* of one kind of texts in several of the classes which were getting students ready for the Language paper. This, however, did not deal with the kind of strategies students needed to be able to deal with the variety of texts found in their syllabus. It was just more explanations of the texts by the teacher.
- The syllabus requires students in Grades 9-12 to read very difficult texts, the majority of which are more than 100 years old. As a result, they are not reading in the modern idiom and many of the literature forms of the modern era are not in evidence. Why this should be so is a puzzle. When the English Subject Committee was asked about it, the members replied that they had no other sources to choose from except the old texts. There simply were no other books available to them. And, they added, even if there were, they would have no time to read them anyway. Two added that they had no time to read even the texts they were recommending, old as they were. Others said that their deadlines were so short and delivered without warning, and their meetings so infrequent, that they couldn't do anything else except rely on the old texts they had and those they remembered from school.

G. Teaching of Content

There were some good discussions of the issues raised by the literature but by and large the students were passive in the schools.

H. Teachers' Language

The level of English among the teachers was variable. The majority of the teachers who were observed spoke English well and would be considered good models for their students.

Some were experiencing difficulty to be understood and showed a weak if not ineffectual control of English.

I. Teachers' Knowledge of English Literature and Language

The teachers showed a real knowledge of the texts they were using, even some of the really obscure poems.

They are concerned that they do not know enough about English Literature and Language and said that they would need a lot of help to be able to do anything more than what they are doing. Certainly, CERD noticed that they did not exhibit as much confidence in the discussions about the writers and their epochs or in the extended discussions of the issues raised by the texts.

In conversation about modern authors or approaches to reading and criticism, they seemed to have little or no experience or information.

J. Students' Knowledge of English

The students demonstrate a working knowledge of English in Reading and in Writing.

They can speak to be understood, are capable of answering complex questions and can write, albeit, with errors in spelling, grammar and syntax.

K. Students' Capacity to Improve

Much has been said about the capacity of students in Bhutan to learn language. CERD found that indeed that is true.

It does mean, however, that to improve, to move past the plateau on which they find themselves they will have to be challenged with a more thorough programme. The question is not one of capacity but rather one of will.

L. Teachers' Capacity

Like the students, the teachers have the capacity to improve.

In the opinion of CERD, *the area that needs immediate attention if things are to improve is the knowledge which teachers have of English.*

There are several reasons for arriving at this conclusion.

1. As can be seen in the **Inventory of High School English Teachers** compiled by CERD this year,

- the majority of the English teachers have not taken advanced English courses at the post-secondary level. Some have not had an English course beyond class 10 while most of the others have taken only the English courses offered at NIE. Smaller numbers have graduated from Sherubtse College with Honours English and still some others have completed a BA or MA in English from universities outside Bhutan.
- many have not attended a workshop in English since graduation.
- most have indicated that they are not involved currently in any continuing education in English.
- some teachers are teaching English because there is no one else in the area available.
- Some teachers are teaching several subjects of which English is not their speciality.

2. Further evidence for the need for capacity building in English was found during the workshops which CERD presented to the staff members of 20 schools. Members were asked to choose the areas in which they needed help if they were to enhance their capacity. **Knowledge of English ranked first and Pedagogical matters second.**

3. The teachers' assessment of their needs is supported by the findings of CERD following observations in approximately 160 English classes in the 20 schools visited in 2001-2002.

Summary

CERD feels that it is time to make a decision to pursue the implementation of the Standards.

Appendix C: Criteria for Assessing the Quality of the Standards

This appendix contains two documents laying out criteria for the assessment of the quality of standards.

The first from *Achieve* is a general framework of criteria and questions that can be adapted to any area.

The second from the Thomas B Fordham Foundation is specific to English Language Arts.

Both have informed CERD in its deliberations as to the quality of the standards it has formulated.

The discussion of criteria for quality standards which follow is from an organization in the USA made up of business leaders, parents and educators whose purpose is to challenge the school system to set vigorous standards for the programmes in their high schools. The organization is called *Achieve* and was established following the National Education summit held in New York in 2000. It can be reached on any browser on the Internet at *achieve.org*

Criteria for Quality Standards (from Achieve)

Clarity and accessibility: Standards must be conveyed in a way that educators and parents can understand and use to improve student achievement. They should be written in clear prose, in a logical, understandable format. In addition, they must be specific enough about content to provide guidance to teachers as they develop lessons, to parents as they guide students' learning, and to curriculum and test developers who write standards-based materials and tests.

Questions to ask about your state's standards:

- Are the standards clearly written and easy to understand?
- Are the standards specific enough to provide clear guidance to teachers, students, parents and curriculum and test developers about what is most important for students to learn?

Measurability: To be useful, the standards must focus attention on the results of student learning, rather than the process of learning. Simply put, they must provide ample guidance to teachers as to how to recognize when students have mastered content knowledge and skills. For example, "Read for enjoyment" is virtually impossible to assess, while "Define a simile and analyze its impact on a selection" is much more clear and measurable.

Questions to ask about your state's standards:

- Do the standards focus on measurable content knowledge and skills?
- Is it clear from the standards how students, teachers, and parents will know that mastery of content knowledge and skills has been achieved?

Comprehensiveness and focus: Strong standards should strike a delicate balance between including the breadth of essential content at each grade level, while also allowing for in-depth treatment of the most important content knowledge.

Unfortunately some states' standards tend to suffer from the "mile wide, inch deep" phenomenon, trying to cover too much, with not enough attention to depth. It is essential that standards define a manageable core and make tough choices about what is most important for all students to learn, and then explore those topics thoroughly.

Questions to ask about your state's standards:

- Do the standards define a comprehensive, yet manageable academic core for all students?
- Do the standards convey both the breadth and depth of knowledge and skills expected of students? Or do they emphasize one at the expense of the other?
- Are there key concepts or skills missing in the standards?
- Have choices been made about what is most important for students to learn and when?

Balance: It is important that standards achieve a balance between what students should know (i.e., content knowledge) and what they should be able to do with that knowledge (i.e., skills). Content knowledge (e.g., the Pythagorean theorem) in and of itself is vitally important, but so too is being able to use that knowledge to solve problems (e.g., how to determine the length of the hypotenuse of a triangle).

Questions to ask about your state's standards:

- Do the standards define both what students should know and what they should be able to do with that knowledge?
Or is one overemphasized at the expense of the other?
- Do the standards ensure that skills are learned through the study of content, not in the abstract? Or are process standards separated from content standards?

Rigor: To be considered rigorous, state standards should introduce challenging content and expect mastery at the appropriate grade levels. This content should progress from year to year, with some new content being introduced and some

disappearing at each level as students master the content and more on to more challenging material. In order to gauge rigor, Achieve suggests comparing states' standards with the best examples from other states and nations (what Achieve calls "benchmark standards").

Questions to ask about your state's standards:

- Are the standards as rigorous as they should be? Do the expectations described by the state standards compare favorably to those of the "benchmark standards"?
- When compared to the benchmark standards, when is content introduced and at which grade levels is mastery expected?
- Is there is a clear progression of knowledge and skills? In other words, do the standards describe what students should know and be able to do with increasing depth and sophistication from grade to grade?

State English Standards

IV. Criteria for judging English Language-Arts and Reading Standards

A. Purpose, audience, expectations, and assumptions of the standards document(s):

1. The document is written in clear English prose, for the general public as well as educators.
2. It assumes that English is the language to be used in English language-arts classes, and the only language to be used.
3. It expects all students to demonstrate use of standard English, orally and in writing.
4. It acknowledges the existence of a corpus of literary works called literature, however diverse its origins and the social groups it portrays.
5. It expects students to become literate citizens.
6. It expects explicit and systematic instruction in decoding skills in the primary grades as well as the use of meaningful reading materials.

7. It expects students to do regular independent reading through the grades.
8. It expects the standards to serve as the basic for clear and reliable assessments.

B. Organization of the standards:

1. They are presented grade by grade or in clusters of no more than 3 to 4 grade levels.
2. They are grouped in categories reflecting coherent bodies of scholarship or research in the English language arts.
3. They distinguish higher-order knowledge and skills from lower-order skills, if lower-level skills are mentioned.

C Disciplinary coverage of the standards:

1. The standards clearly address listening and speaking. They include use of various discussion purposes and roles, how to participate in discussion, desirable qualities in formal speaking, and use of established as well as peer-generated or personal criteria for evaluating formal and informal speech.
2. The standards clearly address reading (and viewing) to understand and use information through the grades. They include progressive development of reading skills and a reading vocabulary, and knowledge and use of a variety of textual features, genres, and reading strategies for academic, occupational, and civic purposes.
3. The standards clearly address the reading (or viewing), interpretation, and critical evaluation of literature. They include knowledge of diverse literary elements and genres, different kinds of literary responses, and use of a variety of interpretive and critical lenses. They also specify those key authors, works, and literary tradition in American literature and in the literary and civic heritage of English-speaking people that all students should study because of their literary quality and cultural significance.
4. The standards clearly address writing for communication and personal expression. They require familiarity with writing processes, established as well as peer-generated or personal evaluation criteria, and various rhetorical elements, strategies, genres, and modes of organization.
5. The standards clearly address oral and written language conventions. They require the use of standards English

conventions for sentence structure, spelling, usage, penmanship, capitalization, and punctuation.

6. The standards clearly address the nature, dynamics, and history of the English language. They cover the nature of its vocabulary, its structure (grammar), the evolution of its oral forms and the relative permanence of its written form today.
7. The standards clearly address research processes, including developing questions and locating, understanding, evaluating, synthesizing, and using various sources of information for reading, writing, and speaking assignments. These sources include dictionaries, thesauruses, other reference materials, observations of empirical phenomena, interviews with informants, and computer data bases.

D. Quality of the standards:

1. They are clear.
2. They are specific.
3. They are measurable (i.e., they can lead to observable, comparable results across students and schools).
4. They are comprehensive.
5. They are demanding.
 - a. They are of increasing intellectual difficulty at each higher educational level and cover all important indices of learning in the area they address.
 - b. They index or illustrate growth through the grades for reading by referring to specific reading levels or to titles of specific literary or academic works as examples of a reading level.
 - c. They illustrate growth through the grades for writing with writing samples.
 - d. For other sub-disciplines, they provide examples of specific reading, writing, or oral language features, activities, or assignments that clarify what is expected for each standard or benchmark.

4. Their overall contents are sufficiently specific, comprehensive, and demanding to lead to a common core of high academic expectations for all students in the state, no matter what school they attend.

Appendix D: Some Reading Strategies for Schools

Some Reading Strategies for Schools

Reading for beginning readers is very different than it is for experienced readers. When young readers begin to read they need to learn simple strategies of decoding, the use of phonics, graphics and story schemas to help them get information from the text. Their task is generally to recount what they have read and then point to what they found most interesting.

Once beyond that, however, when they have become older and more experienced and are entering the higher grades, they need to learn new reading strategies to help them cope with the tasks of comprehension of more complex texts. These must be taught directly by the teacher in the context of good literature that supports practice in the use of these strategies.

They are far too young to learn these strategies when they are at the lower levels. There is no use in complaining that they arrive in year 7 or 8 or 9 and don't know how to read literature. Of course they do. But at the level of information retrieval. They can't yet read at the level demanded of them by more complex texts because they haven't learned how to do that. It is the business of their teachers at these levels - 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12... to teach them the strategies to handle more complex texts.

It is not the fault of the programme in Elementary school that they don't know. They couldn't be taught these strategies because they were too young. They need to mature cognitively and affectively before they can be taught these strategies. But a failure on the part of the junior and senior level teachers to teach the students how to read at a more complex level will result in their continuing to read texts only with the simple strategies they have and only at the level of information. They will not be able to read at the higher levels of comprehension, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and synthesis demanded of them as they become adults.

The contrast with what happens to these students in the programme for Mathematics studies helps to illustrate the point. Mathematics is organized so that students learn strategies to solve simple arithmetic problems in Elementary school. When they mature, they move to the study of more complex calculations like Algebra, Geometry, and Trigonometry. It is then, and only then, that they are taught the strategies they need to solve the more complex problems that they encounter in these studies. They are not asked to rely on the simple strategies which they learned at the earlier level of school nor are they asked to learn these strategies in a class separate from Mathematics. They learn the new skills and strategies they need in the context of the content of Mathematics and do so at an appropriate age.

In the same way then, the proper context for learning advanced reading strategies is in the Literature class that all students are required to take, and the proper time to learn them is when they have reached an age where they can think in the abstract. Then they can learn to read for different purposes, to read a variety of texts both fictional and non-fictional to become independent readers employing appropriate strategies for the accomplishment of different reading purposes and accommodating those strategies to the nature of the text. At the same time, they become familiar with the content and with the writers of the great literature in English.

Some of the strategies used for beginning readers follow under the heading **Elementary**, and for the advanced readers under the heading **Junior and Senior High School**.

Elementary:

- Phonics and sounding out
- Recognition of familiar words
- Contextual cueing
- Graphics
- Predicting what the book is about from the information in the pictures and on the cover
- Learning how to follow the sequence of ideas in a text that uses chronology as an organizational pattern.
- Learning how to do some simple comparisons and contrasts within the text - describing characters and their differences, setting changes for mood shift.
- Learning how to locate evidence in a text to show what the author is saying in an explanation of how things work - causes of volcanoes, glacier melting and river flow, the water cycle, or how plants get food.

Junior and Senior High School

It is expected that teachers will be knowledgeable about, and continue to help students use the simple reading strategies they learned in the earlier classes to gain information from the text. But it is also expected that teachers will help students at this level to progress to higher orders of thinking beyond information retrieval which enable them to make inferences from the information, to link other texts to the ones they are reading, to connect their reading with the *real* world and their own lives, to find patterns of ideas in the great works they are reading, to encounter major themes which deal with the human experience in complex ways, and to judge the validity of what they are reading. To do that, they need to be taught, directly, reading strategies which deal with texts at a more sophisticated level. Some of the strategies are listed below.

- Learning to be a critical reader which means not to accept printed text at face value, to be aware that this is one possible presentation of issues with one viewpoint. It means to look for the strengths in an argument

but also to look for the weaknesses. It means to look at the actions and speeches of a character and to see that they are good, contradictory or self-serving. It means to listen for the unintentional revelations as in *My Last Duchess* or the moments of awareness in *The Journey of the Magi*.

- Learning how to make a comparison of non-fictional texts, which treat the same theme. They will learn first to establish each writer's viewpoint and attitude, see his evidence and how it is organized and sense the cogency of his conclusions. Then they will move to a discussion of the differences and try to decide which is the better presentation. This practice develops the habit of inter-textual comparisons so that readers learn to use known texts to guide their understanding of new texts.
- Learning how to compare fictional texts like short stories and poems which treat the same themes but arrive at different interpretations or conclusions or arrive at the same conclusions about the themes. Dylan Thomas' *Fern Hill* and its treatment of childhood, nature and time as compared with Wordsworth's treatment of the same themes in *Lines Composed Above Tintern Abbey*.
- Learning how to read metaphor. Not just to identify the metaphor in a piece or to define it as *a comparison not using like or as*, but to understand how the metaphor works to bring several layers of meaning to a text and permits the reader to develop several patterns of interpretation.
- For example, the snake charmer and relationships between men and women in Plath's *Snake Charmer*, Excalibur and hope in Tennyson's *The Passing of Arthur*, the unique notions of birth and death in Eliot's *The Journey of the Magi*, the ship and the matters of state in Whitman's *O Captain, My Captain*, daffodils and the brevity of human life in Herrick's *To Daffodils*.
- Learning how to read other forms of figurative language and see how they suffuse the text with meaning that is suggested and require that the reader knows how to deal with inference. For example, Kamala Das' use of the sun imagery in the beginning of the poem *Punishment in Kindergarten* and the differences in that image at the end.
- Learning how to use the knowledge they have of the forms of literature to help them organize their expectations of what a piece is about and to keep track of what they are finding out as they read. This skill also allows them to adjust their expectations as they go, changing their understanding as they get new information.

Some examples of forms which help the student to develop this strategy:

- Essays intended to persuade readers to a particular point of view use patterns of organization and phrases which help the reader assemble the evidence he or she is getting as he or she reads.

- Dramatic monologues which are organized to reveal the character of the speaker even though it appears on the surface that the poem is about something else, as in Browning's *My Last Duchess* or the soliloquy of Lady Macbeth .
- Sonnet forms which present a problem or a meditation theme in the first part and then move to a resolution in the last part. This knowledge of how the sonnet works helps the reader to know what to do as he or she reads, i.e., locate the problem and then look for the evidence of a resolution. See Milton's *On His Blindness*.
- A writer of an essay which presents two possibilities of the truth of an issue, presents them side by side and then argues for one over the other, uses discourse shifters like *on the other hand, or, given that that is true* or *however, or despite that* or *in summary then* to link the pieces of her argument. Readers who know these discourse signs can use them to mark where the argument is changing and follow the intention of the piece with more facility.
- Lyric poems are structured to introduce a feeling towards an event in the speaker's life or an observation on some facet of humanity or nature. The poem then goes on to show how the speaker's knowledge of the event changed, or his feelings to the event have changed, or her awareness of the effects of the event on her have become more profound. For example, Kamala Das' beautiful rendering of the feelings of an adult to a traumatic event which happened to her in kindergarten in *Punishment in Kindergarten*; in Damchoe Lhendup's *Paeon to a Prayer Flag*, the speaker moves from a sense of despair and loss to some hope in the promise of the prayer flag; the speaker in Ezekiel's *The Night of the Scorpion* relates his mother's wish to take on the worst things in order that her children be spared.
- The classic design of the short story can serve to help the reader anticipate the events and results in a story, and keep the information he or she is receiving as she reads, organized. Modern writers deliberately alter the story format to achieve more impact on the reader, but those alterations too can serve as a kind of story syntax for the reader. The elements of the design are usually the introduction (mise en scene), conflict, rising action, resolution, and denouement.
For example, Bond's *The Eyes have It* and Liam Flaherty's *The Sniper* or Pem Namgyal's *The Brother's Return*.
- Learning how to make connections between what they are reading and their own lives, especially their triumphs, their fears, their disappointments, their values and their aspirations.
- Learning how literature is at times organized chronologically and at times analogically and that the manner of organization requires

them to adjust their thinking as they are reading. For example, lyric poetry uses analogy to suggest and imply meaning whereas stories use time and the logic of cause and effect to be fairly explicit as to meaning. On the other hand, essays will use reasoning and argument to convey meaning in an explicit manner.

- Learning how to make inferences from information and sense what is implied but not stated. For example, in Bhutan, there is a saying that "It always rains where there is water." It is not meant to be taken as literally true and can be demonstrated that it is not factual. It is meant to indicate that sometimes people who don't need more of anything get more while at the same time it implies that those who really need something never get it.
- Regular practice with the teacher in reading this way helps the student develop the habit of inferential learning. Literature has an abundance of examples. See Mark Antony's speech praising Caesar but implying judgement on the conspirators.
- Learning to locate evidence in the text to support an interpretation or to elaborate an argument for or against an issue like euthanasia.
- Learning to look at the writer's life for help in making meaning with his essays or his stories.
-and ad infinitum...