

CURRO in the classroom

ISSUE 1 2017

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ACROSS THE
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Curro in the classroom



Message from André

Growth brings about change. As Curro consistently expands, a need for more of an intentional focus on the management and delivery of the curriculum was identified. As a unit, the CCMD (Curro Curriculum Management and Delivery), was established to support schools at all levels, in order that: the curriculum is managed in such a way that learners can achieve their best possible results; the capacity of Curro educators to be relevant in the 21st century, and the delivery of the curriculum remains globally competitive.

As we are inspired by global innovations in learning, our most important role is to work alongside curriculum leaders to achieve our goal of consistency of quality across the brand. By offering guidance and training, teaching in each classroom provides opportunities for deep learning, meaningful assessment and effective feedback to our learners.

Educators also need to be lifelong learners in order to ensure that our learners become lifelong and competent learners. In fact, lifelong learning is recognised by educators and employers as one of the most valuable competencies someone can possess. Full-day training sessions for primary school educators and professional learning communities for high school educators will spur them on to greater heights.

Project-based Learning (PBL) is also a powerful teaching tool throughout the world to create a deeper learning environment for our learners. It will be a focus area of future training sessions to equip our educators with the skills to implement PBL in our schools.

It's indeed a privilege and a huge responsibility to mould young minds in the classroom and beyond. With a top-notch curriculum and educators willing to walk the extra mile, we are on track to meet the demands of the 21st century.

'TELL ME AND I FORGET, TEACH ME AND I REMEMBER, INVOLVE ME AND I LEARN' - BENJAMIN FRANKLIN



WHAT'S BEHIND CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT AT OUR SCHOOLS?

The CCMD consists out of a preschool, a primary school as well as a high school unit. Effectively, the CCMD leads our schools in the management of the curriculum to bring consistency across our brand. To reach this goal it is important to ensure that CAPS, Curro curricula and IEB SAGs where applicable, are implemented in all schools, within a Curro context. The importance of research and innovation remains central to CCMD in order to remain nationally and globally competitive.

During 2016, the primary and high school unit worked together to ensure that all academic policies were in place and provided schools with instruments to manage their curricula according to these policies. An academic vision and mission statement was developed to ensure that all Curro educators strive towards the same goal.

Although the CCMD is there to support all Curro schools, the implementation of the Curro curricula is the main responsibility of the schools. The person leading the implementation of the curricula is the executive head. The executive head is supported by the operational-, phase- and subject heads and together they form the curriculum management team. Executive heads will report on curriculum implementation to the head of the CCMD.



The preschool CCMD process and strategies for 2017

During 2016 Curro revised their Nursery School Curriculum to align with the South African National Curriculum Framework for Children from 0 – 4, which was released for the first time in 2015. We also used this opportunity to assimilate the latest international research on Early Childhood Development, so as to produce a highly current guide for our nursery school educators.

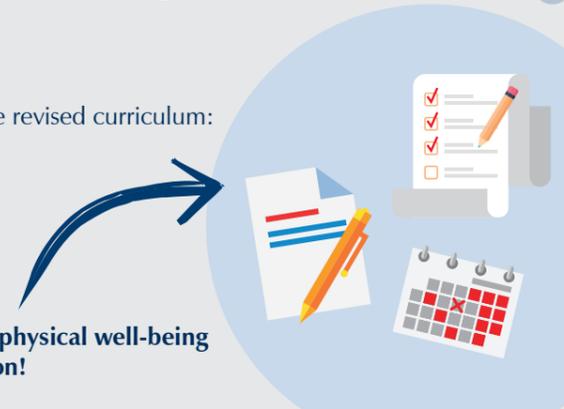
The guiding principles of our curriculum are:

- Curro's core values: child-friendliness, a Christian ethos, creativity and positive discipline form the basis of our programme.
- Young children need loving relationships with their caregivers.
- 21st century skills can be developed from birth: communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, character, citizenship, motivation and meta-cognition.
- The programme must cater for holistic development of young children with multiple intelligences (Howard Gardner).
- The most rapid brain development takes place in the first two years of life.
- Children learn best by PLAYING in a well-structured environment.

All educators have been provided with the following documents based on the revised curriculum:

- a group-specific curriculum, which includes a guide for the educator;
- quarterly teaching and observation plans for the whole year;
- age-specific observation journals for recording purposes, and
- standardised, comments-based progress reports for Term 2 and Term 4.

The focus of our educator training this year is: Planning and assessment, physical well-being and executive functions – the latter being the latest buzz word in education!



The primary school CCMD process and strategies for 2017



From 2017 a process of standardisation has been implemented, to ensure quality assurance across all Curro schools. Educators received all the planning to be implemented across the curriculum in the following subjects:

Subjects	Planning: 2017
Home language (English and Afrikaans)	1. Assessment plans 2. Year planning 3. Term planning and/or work schedules 4. Learner's portfolios
First additional language (English and Afrikaans)	
Mathematics	
Natural Sciences, Technology and Robotics	
Social Sciences	
Economic and Management Sciences (EMS)	

Although all schools received the same planning, each educator has the freedom to adapt the planning so that it fits into his/her teaching style. Our educators therefore still have freedom to be creative and enjoy their teaching.

Through the standardisation process the primary school CCMD would like to reach the following goals in all our Curro schools:

- have all the necessary academic policies in place;
- evaluate the curriculum to ensure it is still relevant;
- manage the curriculum properly;
- implement the Curro- and the CAPS curricula;
- ensure quality and consistency in learning and teaching;
- provide standardised planning to all Curro schools from Grades 1 to 7 to simplify the process should learners move between Curro schools;
- standardise some formal assessments;
- analyse the results and data of the standardised assessments as well as the school's own results;
- moderate learner's and educator's portfolios regularly (through internal and external moderation);
- support learners and educators where and when necessary, and
- ensure regular and effective training of Curro educators.



The foundation phase

The **foundation phase** approach to teaching needs to reflect an emphasis on the individual needs and development of learners, be problem-centred and lead to the development of thinking skills. Methodology and teaching strategies used in our classrooms need to lead to cognitive development and the achievement of 21st century skills. This will ensure that our learners at Grade 3 level will have:

- the ability to read fluently and with understanding;
- reasoning ability in Mathematics, have reached at least level three of number concept development and have fluency in the manipulation of numbers, and
- an understanding of the world in which we live and have the problem-solving ability to think through the science and technology processes.

The intermediate phase

The management of the curriculum in the **intermediate phase and Grade 7** seems to pose a challenge all over the world. Learners need to retain their acquired skills in reading, writing and Mathematics and also become independent in their functioning as young school learners. Once again in Mathematics, languages and Technology, Curro has adapted curricula which forms the basis for learners to be seen as individuals with very specific needs. They need to learn in their proximal zone of development and be stimulated to communicate, think critically and in problem-solving ways, and learn from their peers as well as the many other sources of information that are available.

The high school CCMD process and strategies for 2017



The high school CCMD has a mandate to **guide curriculum leaders** to **manage processes** and **lead people** for **consistency of quality** across our Curro brand. This implies that our key role is to work alongside these curriculum leaders in order to achieve this. In other words, offering support, guidance and training, so that the teaching in each of our classrooms provides opportunities for deep learning, meaningful assessment and effective feedback for every learner.

Senior phase: Grades 8 and 9

Most of our schools use tablets and/or 2-in-1 devices in this phase and the challenge during 2017 will be to ensure that real 21st century teaching and learning takes place in our classrooms. Our implementation of policies and academic improvement plans demand that:

- classes are learner-centred classrooms;
- explicit learning goals are given to learners;
- group work and collaboration between peers are utilised;
- technology is creatively employed, and
- rich and scaffolded tasks and innovative assessments, that go beyond formal tests, are mainstream in every Curro classroom.

Further Education and Training (FET) phase: Grades 10 to 12

In the FET phase our Inter-Curro subject heads (ICSHs) will continue to work on the following focus areas:

- leading 21st century teaching and learning;
- developing professional learning communities (PLCs);
- facilitating and driving the sharing of best practices;
- using data to inform practice, and
- exploring opportunities within the senior phase in order to improve the quality of the FET results.

We have 22 ICSHs who will report directly to the curriculum managers for the Curro IEB schools and the Meridian/Academy schools respectively. The ICSHs function across 15 subjects in Curro/Select and 9 subjects in Meridian/Curro academies.

Our Curro IEB schools will still be guided by the IEB cluster groups for Grades 12. For Grades 8 to 12 we support our subject heads via the ICSHs to ensure that we work smarter and share in ways that will result in excellent matric results within all Curro schools.



WHERE ARE WE HEADING WITH EDUCATION AT CURRO SCHOOLS IN 2017?

Curro is going to be powered by global innovations in learning. To make sure that our Curro learners become lifelong and global competent learners and our educators are ready for the global challenges, we have to focus on the following:

- To support high-quality educational opportunities for our Curro learners, we aim to connect all Curro education leaders and educators to global innovations in learning.
- To spread stories that unite rather than divide, we aim to explore and highlight the best ideas and investment to create educational opportunity for all learners across Curro schools.
- To scale best practices, create resources, join conversations, highlight what's working and share expertise so that we can foster equitable and high-quality education across all Curro schools.

Our educators also need to be lifelong learners and need to understand what high-performing countries do to achieve quality results. High-performing systems around the world, effective teacher learning and improved teacher practices have been identified as top strategies to increase student learning and improve school performance overall. To ensure the above, we started a full-day training session for our primary school educators and plan to start professional learning communities for our high school educators during the third term. Our educators will be able to share resources, learn from one another and collaborate across all Curro schools. This will motivate Curro educators to make sure their professional learning becomes continual, perpetual and global.

Technology and learning innovations are in the process of boosting global IQ. As it becomes less expensive and more widely available, it will connect billions of young people. Curro educators and learners are fortunate to have technology available in their classrooms to use as **open educational resources** (OERs) and they are able to spread their wings beyond their classroom walls. OERs will have a deeper impact on teaching and learning with emerging platforms connecting millions of learners and educators worldwide.

Although **relationships and instructionally sound pedagogy** are the biggest levers for helping all learners succeed, we constantly need to look at new strategies to ensure and to help our learners to stay motivated and engaged in their education. **Project-based Learning (PBL)** is increasingly recognised as a powerful instructional approach throughout the world. More and more practitioners are using the PBL-approach, and this growing demand has created a tremendous need to equip educators and leaders with the knowledge, skills and understanding of how to implement it effectively in order to achieve learner outcomes. This will be a focus area during training sessions for Curro educators in the future.

Through Project-based Learning, our educators will be able to create deeper learning environments for our learners. Evidence confirms that deeper learning environments positively influence learners' academic outcomes and social-emotional factors.

We are excited about the networking between Curro schools that will start through our communities of practice. The power of local networks connected globally could create a 'network effect' for quality education for all.

Curro educators had the opportunity to share their best practices during the curriculum conference that took place during the April school holidays.

In 2017, we aim to share personal stories that unite us in core values, and our focus will be on the major themes of agency, equity, empathy and inquiry.

Agency. We seek to explore innovations that promote self-directed learning and learner agency over their own work. This includes a focus on entrepreneurial models, learner projects and personalised learning for learner voice and choice.



Empathy. Social intelligence is the global skill for the future of work. Employers look to those who have the ability to connect with others as a job skill.



Equity. The most important qualifier for our world of work is equity.



Inquiry. We are looking towards new models and networks (both local and global) that encourage learner inquiry, including innovations in project-based learning and deeper learning.



'Project-based Learning (PBL) is increasingly recognised as a powerful instructional approach throughout the world.'



LIFELONG LEARNING

THE MOST IMPORTANT COMPETENCY A PERSON CAN POSSESS

'I don't divide the world into the weak and the strong, or the successes and the failures ... I divide the world into learners and non-learners.' – Benjamin Barber, sociologist.

Is your capacity for learning fixed or fluid? Can you improve your intelligence and talents through hard work and practice, or are you stuck with the brains you've got? Stanford psychologist Carol Dweck says most of us have either a 'fixed' or 'growth' mindset when it comes to learning. Most of us can get through schooling regardless of which mindset we have, but when it comes to lifelong learning (learning for the sake of learning, without outside pressure) only a growth mindset will cut it.

Lifelong learning is now recognised by educators, governing bodies, accreditation organisations, certification boards, employers, third-party payers, and the general public as one of the most important competencies a person can possess. But even if we all agree on its value, and harbor the best intentions of possessing it ourselves, it can easily escape our grasp if we approach it the wrong way.

We must believe that, at any point in time, we always have the potential to change and grow through application and experience.

'In a fixed mindset students believe their basic abilities, their intelligence, their talents, are just fixed traits. They have a certain amount and that's that, and then their goal becomes to look smart all the time and never look dumb. In a growth mindset students understand that their talents and abilities can be developed through effort, good teaching and persistence. They don't necessarily think everyone's the same or anyone can be Einstein, but they believe everyone can get smarter if they work at it.'

In fact, we are all born with a growth mindset, Dweck says. It's just that some of us don't hold onto it:

'Everyone is born with an intense drive (I prefer need) to learn. Infants stretch their skills daily. Not just ordinary skills, but the most difficult tasks of a lifetime, like learning to walk and talk. They never decide it's too hard or not worth the effort. Babies don't worry about making mistakes or humiliating themselves. They walk, they fall, they get up. They just barge forward.'

'What could put an end to this exuberant learning? The fixed mindset. As soon as children become able to evaluate themselves, some of them become afraid of challenges. They become afraid of not being smart. I have studied thousands of people from preschoolers on, and it's breathtaking how many reject an opportunity to learn.'

Lifelong learning requires embracing opportunities to learn. Do lifelong learners believe that, with enough motivation and hard work, they can become Einstein or Beethoven? No, but they believe that a person's true potential is 'unknown (and unknowable); that it's impossible to foresee what can be accomplished with years of passion, toil and training.'



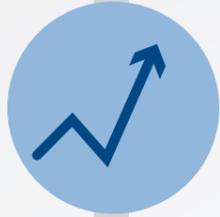
How do you cultivate a growth mindset if it doesn't come naturally? And how do you hold onto it if you've got it already? Here are 25 recommendations to guide you in the right direction:



1. Begin with the end in mind
When you approach a new concept or subject, don't think of it as an isolated learning experience.



2. Accept responsibility for your own learning
The knowledge you cultivate is directly related to the effort you put into gaining it.



3. View challenges as opportunities for growth
Lifelong learners see challenges as learning opportunities and, ultimately, a chance to enhance their own competence and intelligence.



4. Have confidence in yourself as a competent, effective learner
Have the confidence to say you can become a competent, effective learner (through a growth mindset) if you aren't already.



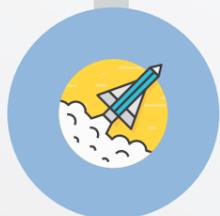
5. Create your own learning toolbox
Identify the tools you use to promote your own learning, and create new ones to add to your collection.



6. Use technology to your advantage
Mobile learning has never been more possible. Take advantage of it!



7. Teach/mentor others
If you can't explain what you've learned to someone else in a way they can understand, then you probably don't really understand it yourself.



8. Play
Keep it fun and it will remain interesting as well.



9. Look at the science
One thing that might be keeping you back from learning new things is the belief that you can't learn new things.



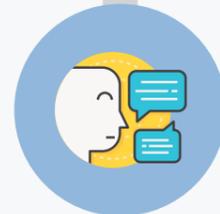
10. Try new things on a frequent basis
Trying new things not only keeps our brains sharp, but also feeds the growth mindset.



11. Learn from those who have a strong growth mindset
Surround yourself with people who are constantly learning, reading, sharing, discovering. It will inspire you to do the same for yourself.



12. Design personal learning goals
It always helps to have a plan. One of the best things about learning is that you're free to explore any topic, any time you want.



13. Talk about what you've learned
We all want to sound educated and informed to others, and lifelong learning ensures that we will. Be sure to use what you learn in conversation.



14. Always have an answer to the question, 'What are you reading?'
It can be a series of articles, a short story collection, a novel, a memoir, a textbook.



15. Keep a 'to-learn' list
There's something permanent about writing it down. Try it, you'll see the difference.



16. Ask questions when you're confused
If you are confident enough in your own intelligence to speak up when you need clarification, you'll have no trouble becoming a lifelong learner.



17. Practice thinking for yourself
Simply studying the wisdom of others isn't enough, you have to think through ideas yourself.



18. Put it into practice
Skill-based learning is useless if it isn't applied.



19. Filter your information stream
Lifelong learners know when to pay attention and when to say, 'Next, please.'



20. Learn in groups
Learning with others is often more rewarding than learning on your own.



21. Unlearn assumptions
To be lifelong learners, we need to be open to each and every possibility.



22. Choose a career that encourages learning
Don't spend forty hours of your week in a job that doesn't challenge you.



23. Have projects and hobbies
It seems like a simple idea, but the truth is, projects and hobbies can easily slip away from us when we're not looking.



24. Learn something new every day



25. Improve your memory
If you can't remember what you've learned, learning can be frustrating.





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