

CURRICULUM COMMUNICATION

OCTOBER
2014

**WHAT IS
THE IEB?**

**WHAT ARE THE
BENEFITS?**

**WHY DOES
ASSESSMENT
MATTER?**

**LET'S TALK
21ST CENTURY
LEARNING**



CURRO

MESSAGE FROM ALTA GREEFF

Dear Parents and Guardians,

FOCUS ON THE IEB

We are often asked to outline exactly what the differences are between the examinations written at the end of Grade 12 in the various Curro schools. At Curro, learners attending Curro and Select schools write the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) examination at the end of Grade 12, while learners attending the Curro Academies and Meridian independent schools write the National Senior Certificate (NSC), also known as the government examination or 'matric'. The certificate awarded on the basis of both these examinations is the same: the formal National Senior Certificate.

The NSC examination signifies the culmination of twelve years of formal schooling and is regarded as one of the key barometers of the state of health of the South African education system.

It is important to note that, even though our learners in the various Curro schools write different examinations, it does not affect our approach to learning and teaching. The difference lies only in the assessment. We believe that by using modern methodology, based on research information on how the human brain learns, we are delivering world-class education. Curro continues to strive towards excellence in our classrooms by including the teaching of 21st century skills as they are advocated internationally.

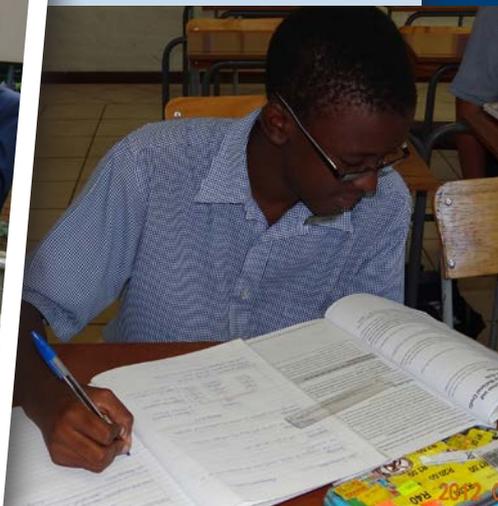
Our big challenge remains to find ways to continuously assess 21st century skills to ensure that it is reinforced and valued. We want our learners to

- Learn well
- Do better in examinations than ever before
- Cope with the masses of information that are available via the World Wide Web
- Do really well at university and in the workplace
- Flourish at life itself

In this issue we'd like to demystify the IEB examination and have asked Anne Oberholzer from the IEB to answer key questions in this regard. We've also asked some of our alumni about their experience of writing the IEB examination. Don't miss the overview on the CCEE information sessions recently conducted at some of our schools.



Head: CCEE



WHAT IS THE IEB?



The IEB is the Independent Examinations Board, an assessment body that is accredited by Umalusi, the South African statutory body responsible for quality assurance for school and adult assessments. The IEB offers external assessment for Grade 12 in accordance with legislation and Umalusi directives. Learners who pass Grade 12 are awarded the National Senior Certificate.

Why does assessment matter?

The IEB believes that assessment has a direct impact on teaching and hence on learning. The way a question is asked matters, because it will either open up the mind of a learner to explore different ways of seeing and understanding, or close down a learner's mind to focus on the 'right' answer. External examinations are often criticised because it is felt that they encourage rote learning by the learner and the provision of 'drill and practise' exercises by the educator. This method is often highly rewarded in examinations where these types of questions require a mechanical repetition of material, opinions or skills, rehearsed and practised during the year, in preparation for the examination. However, universities complain that learners reach them with very good school results, but without a real understanding of the meaning or significance of particular concepts.

If a learner intends to succeed in their chosen career following school, they need to do much more: they need to understand the origins of the information, its implications and applications in real-life contexts. They need to think about issues, apply learnt knowledge in new situations and discuss options in solving problems.

Problem-solving is a critical life skill and practice in problem-solving is a critical teaching strategy. The skill is developed when educators pose problems that encourage learners to discuss options of what to do, or how to approach the problem, when there is no obvious indication of what one ought to do. Through discussion learners are faced with multiple options from which they need to choose a strategy and they need to be encouraged to form opinions about issues relevant to different types of subject material and the discipline itself.

A quality education demands that learners learn important knowledge and content, but also understand the concepts and apply them in unfamiliar contexts. A good assessment instrument provides a balance across both aspects of learning.

WHAT IS EXPECTED FROM EDUCATORS?

This approach to assessment, to which learners at IEB schools are exposed from the early grades to high school, has a direct impact on how educators approach their teaching. If the educators know that the IEB examination will require learners to consider issues for themselves, analyse situations and evaluate options, provide an unrehearsed response that they themselves have developed to substantiate their opinions, they will from the outset approach their teaching with this in mind. That is also why Curro continues to invest in their educators to ensure that their skills are continuously updated in line with IEB requirements.

In essence, for the IEB, the way you ask a question matters. It either underlines the important lessons from studying history or it re-inforces the false perception that 'facts' are indisputable, no matter who is reporting them.

The strategy of using quality assessment to drive quality teaching creates a more rounded learner with an ability to apply acquired knowledge in different scenarios. Through the process of analysis and deduction, the learner can provide an answer that conforms to principles of clear logical thought that is understood, and is communicated clearly and appropriately to the relevant audience.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF STUDYING FOR AN IEB EXAM?

The philosophy of the IEB is that assessment drives teaching and learning. Hence good, probing assessment will promote good, quality teaching that develops the skills needed for success in life. This includes clear thinking, analysis, evaluation, unambiguous communication, substantiation of opinion as well as a strong grounding in the fundamental skills and knowledge that underpin the subject curricula.

For the stronger learner, the stimulation provided by an examination that explores understanding and requires learners to develop and substantiate their own views and probes more deeply, militates against boredom that often sets in when a strong learner is unchallenged. The IEB provides Advanced Programme courses in Mathematics, English and Afrikaans, in order to provide strong learners with an opportunity to further develop their skills and knowledge in these fundamental areas. The Advanced Programme courses have been benchmarked by UK NARIC and have been placed as comparable to A-Level.

For the stronger learner, the focused attention on developing key skills required in life prevents the learner from believing that learning off-by-heart is the only way to success. The exposure to other ways of accessing and displaying knowledge, and the exposure to multiple ways of seeing an issue encourage them to explore ideas more fully than they might in a classroom that suggests there is only one correct answer and only one correct way to do something. IEB schools generally have focused support for learners who may experience difficulties in specific subject areas.

Name: **Nathan Edwards**

School: **Curro Serengeti**

Matriculated: **2013**

Achievements: **Head prefect at Curro Serengeti. Achieved the highest academic honours for exceptional achievement over the period from Grade 8 to Grade 12.**



I KNOW I AM PREPARED . . .

I am currently a pilot holding a valid private pilot's licence (PPL) and studying towards my commercial pilot's licence. During 2015 I will also be either starting a BCom degree or I will be furthering my aviation knowledge by getting a degree in something aviation related.

Being exposed to the IEB assessment at Curro played an extremely important role in my development. It opened many doors for me. The IEB prepares learners for university; this is why students with an IEB background excel later on in their lives. My education was one of the major things in my life that has moulded me into the individual that I am today. I knew that it was going to help me and my future and now that I am out of school I have noticed just how good Curro has been to me, I'm extremely knowledgeable, I can think "out of the box", analyse and interpret situations and I am able to assist in projects involving much thought and responsibility owing to the standard of education I received.'

Name: **Dylan Gouveia**

School: **Curro Aurora**

Matriculated: **2013**

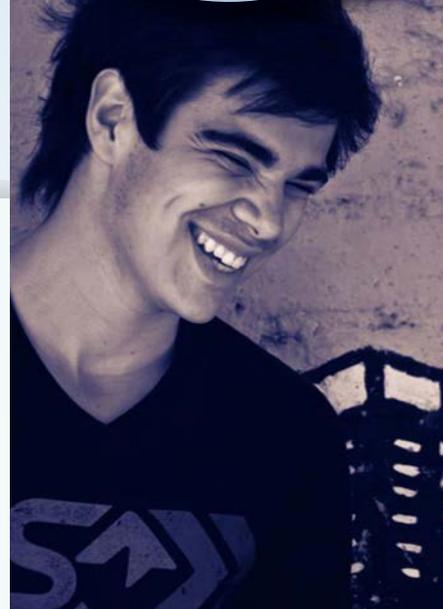
Achievements: **Top Curro matriculant, aggregate of 91%**



I CAN COPE WITH ACADEMIC DEMANDS . . .

'I am currently studying medicine at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

'Because of my schooling and the IEB, I am today able to cope with the academic demands of my course. I have been adequately equipped with the discipline required for working and studying under pressure. I have been taught the skills for critical engagement and thinking and have the ability to organise myself and balance my activities and workload with ease. The exposure to IEB assessment and the education I was afforded prepared me well to cope with the demands made of me at tertiary-education level.'



LET'S TALK 21ST CENTURY LEARNING

Contact with our educators, parents and guardians is key in ensuring that everyone involved in a learner's education remains informed and can contribute in a positive way. Alta Greeff and Lionell Horn of the CCEE team recently returned from a successful visit to selected Curro schools, engaging parents with children in the primary and high school as well as educators and curriculum leaders. This proved so popular that more visits are planned.

The need to transform from traditional education to 21st century learning was discussed. As Utkarsh Lokesh, an advocate for 21st century education, says: 'Education leaders and advocates get so excited about individual stories of success that they sometimes neglect to engage in the hard discussions about implementing these ideas on large scale to benefit all learners. I believe that if we're going to get serious about 21st century systems of teaching and learning, we cannot be satisfied with isolated success

stories – no matter how exciting they are.'

The CCEE is serious about this engagement and the transformation of traditional education into 21st century teaching and learning in order to ensure that learners are prepared for the uncertainties of the future. 'Our Mathematics approach is only one of the key differentiators in this process,' says Alta Greeff, head of the CCEE. Have a look at <http://www.curro.co.za/ccee/maths-approach.aspx> for more.

Join the conversation!

Parents are invited to become part of the community to ensure transformation in education. 'Make sure that you become part of an informed, intelligent conversation about what should be happening in our classrooms, and be open to change,' says Alta.

Join us on Twitter to keep the conversation alive:

Lionell Goss Horn - @primliteration

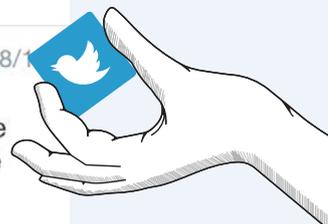
Alta Greeff - @altagreeffroodt



@kojobaffoe thank you Mr Baffoe



Kojo Baffoe @kojobaffoe 5/8/1
Great presentation on how curriculum developed at the Prince's school. Makes one feel so much better when exposed to thinking.



WHAT WAS THE FEEDBACK?

'Our parents and educators were enthusiastic about Curro's vision.' - Johannes Mouton, Embury College

'Our parents found the talk most informative and exciting. There was an appreciation of the key 21st century skills and the fact that CCEE is abreast of these critical developments. Moreover, our parents are excited that CCEE is engaging these issues and seeking out conscious ways of implementing strategies towards realising these 21st century skills for Curro learners.' – Dave Wiggett, Curro Aurora





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