Embracing Student Competencies

“Every young person should leave school with the confidence, the ability and the desire to make the world a better place”

Vikki Pendry The Curriculum Foundation
Vision
A World Class Curriculum for every learner

Our belief
Every child should leave school with the confidence, the ability and the desire to make the world a better place

Our ‘manifesto’ for change
All over the world curriculum review is taking place. There is widespread recognition that the curriculum of the past is inappropriate for demands of the 21st century. The importance of knowledge is not in question but knowledge alone is not enough. Our young people need to become highly competent and therefore the curriculum must ensure they can develop the skills and attitudes to complement their knowledge.
A World Class Curriculum is defined by principles such as those in the table above rather than by its content.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domains</th>
<th>A world class curriculum will:</th>
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| Values, aims and principles                  | ...be based upon clear, shared values, aims and principles which put learners at the heart of the curriculum and recognise their role as citizens of the world ...
|                                              | ...provide exciting opportunities for the intellectual, physical, emotional, social, scientific, aesthetic and creative development of every learner |
| Key competencies for learning and life       | ...ensure the development of competencies for learning and life and a sense of hope and agency in every learner ...
|                                              | ...encourage independence of mind and action and the development of individual interests and talents ...
|                                              | ...excite the imagination, encourage curiosity and develop creativity                           |
| The world’s major branches of learning      | ...secure learners’ knowledge, skills and understanding of the world’s major branches of learning, disciplines and subjects ...
|                                              | ...ensure understanding of how learning in different disciplines is interconnected and relevant to life, global issues and world events past, present and future ...
|                                              | ...provide clear and relevant pathways for learning and the flexibility to respond to developing needs, interests and contexts |
| Community, local, national and global contexts | ...locate learning in the context of the learner’s life and local community, and also within a national and international dimension ...
|                                              | ...address contemporary issues as well as the big ideas that have shaped the world             |
A truly learner-centred curriculum addresses all aspects of development and is founded on principles such as the need to excite the imagination, to encourage curiosity and to develop creativity. It prepares young people for the 21st century, equipped with the knowledge and competences to make them effective lifelong learners. It maximises life chances in terms of success in tests and examinations and broadens horizons while ensuring learning is relevant to students' lives.
Student Competencies for the South Sudan National Curriculum

Critical and creative thinking
- Plan and carry out investigations, using a range of sources to find information
- Sort and analyse information and come to conclusions
- Suggest and develop solutions to problems, using their imaginations to create new approaches
- Evaluate different suggested solutions

Communication
- Read and comprehend critically a variety of types and forms of texts
- Write fluently on diverse subjects and for different audiences
- Speak clearly and communicate ideas and information coherently in a variety of situations
- Listen and comprehend speech in a variety of forms
- Use a range of media, technologies and languages to communicate messages, ideas and opinions

Co-operation
- Work collaboratively towards common goals
- Be tolerant of others and respectful of differing views, when working together
- Adapt behaviour to suit different situations
- Negotiate, respecting others’ rights and responsibilities, and use strategies to resolve disputes and conflicts
- Contribute to environmental sustainability

Culture and identity
- Take pride in South Sudanese identity and the diverse nature of South Sudanese society.
- Build understanding of South Sudanese heritage in relation to the wider world
- Appreciate and contribute to the development of South Sudanese culture
- Value diversity and respect people of different races, faiths, communities, cultures, and those with disabilities.
Student Competencies developed for the National Curriculum of Uganda.

Here we see how they cross and cut through all areas of the curriculum.
Student Competencies developed for the National Curriculum of Zambia.
Here we see how Student Competencies form part of an overall Curriculum Framework, working together with subjects, values and principles, culture and heritage in support of the Aims of the National Curriculum. (Example here for South Sudan.)
Here we see how Student Competencies (or Generic Skills) form part of an overall Curriculum Framework, working together with subjects, values and principles and cross cutting issues. (Example here for Uganda.)
Student Competencies....

Traditional subjects continue to be important, but young people need to **develop a set of competencies that they can apply in all those subjects**, and which they can also apply **throughout life**.

These competencies lie at the heart of every subject, and **enhance learners’ understanding of those subjects**.

They are also the competencies that are needed for young people to continue to learn, to adapt to change, and **to cope with the challenges of life in the 21st Century**.
• The following slide shows us where in actual fact, there is current support in the UK for the development of Student Competencies...even though that term is not actually used.

• Can you identify the relevant phrases?
## Meeting the aims of the National Curriculum for England 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our curriculum should:</th>
<th>Our pupils should be able to:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Help to engender in pupils an appreciation of human creativity and achievement.</td>
<td>Provide reasoned justifications for their views.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teach pupils to negotiate, evaluate and build on the ideas of others. They should speculate, hypothesise and explore ideas.</td>
<td>Ask questions to improve their understanding of a text.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reason mathematically by following a line of enquiry, conjecturing relationships and developing an argument using mathematical language.</td>
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## Meeting the requirements of Ofsted as described in the School Inspection Handbook August 2015

**The spiritual, moral and cultural development of pupils is shown by their:**

- Use of imagination and creativity in their learning.
- Interest in investigating and offering reasoned views about moral and ethical issues.
- Ability to understand and appreciate the viewpoints of others.
- Interest in exploring, improving understanding of and having respect for different faiths and cultural diversity.

**Outstanding descriptors:**

Pupils love the challenge of learning. Pupils are curious, interested learners who seek out and use new information to develop, consolidate and deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills. Pupils understand how their education equips them with the behaviours and attitudes necessary for success in adult life.
Employers and world leaders tell us about the importance of competencies.

“We look for employees who can think for themselves, work in teams, communicate well, and solve problems. It’s not what they know, it’s what they can do.”

Indra K. Nooyi
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, PepsiCo
“We need employees who can show initiative, think on their feet and find the solutions to problems.”

Sifiso Dabengwa
CEO MTM Group
“The school curriculum must prepare young people for an uncertain future.”

To do this, we need the traditional subjects, but we also need young people to develop the key competencies that will enable them to cope with life in the 21st Century.
PISA tests students all around the world every 3 years at the age of 15 to assess and compare the effectiveness of Education Systems.

PISA tests student’s ability to:

• apply their learning
• think critically
• solve problems
• make judgements

The objective of the PISA testing is to determine how well students are prepared to meet some of the challenges of their future lives.

These problems are designed to reflect some of the kinds of thinking, tasks and activities the students might be expected to carry out in their day-to-day lives.
Getting practical.

Work together in groups of 4 to produce a variety of shapes using the circle of string provided.
In this activity, groups of delegates were given a loop of string and asked to make the following shapes. The activity aimed to illustrate the way that student competencies can enhance learning in a particular subject area.

Make a quadrilateral.
What can we say about the angles you have created?

Make a hexagon.
How do these angles compare to the angles created in the previous shape?

Make any right angled polygon.
Are there any lines of symmetry here? How does this effect the size of each interior angle?
Make any irregular polygon. 
Describe the properties of the shape you have made.

Make a shape that contains 2 or more triangles. 
Describe and compare the interior and external angles.

Make a 3D shape. 
Describe the properties of each face that you have created.

Take it in turns to give instructions!
Education leaders in South Sudan and Uganda try out this activity too!
Building competences into opportunities for classroom based assessment.

By promoting student competencies and building them into our classroom practices, we create opportunities for the kind of assessment that means we really ‘get to know’ our students...what can they do? Why? How?
A single source gives us narrow focus.

Using a triangulation approach to assessment, we get the full picture of what learning is taking place.

If our curriculum is well-rounded, we need a variety of sources.
An example here of how student competencies are build into assessment practices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Studies: Primary 4</th>
<th>Unit 1: Technology</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment Opportunity 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Learners should investigate important technological advancements in South Sudan as set out in the ‘Learn About’ section. Learners should present documents and posters that describe these technologies. <strong>(Product)</strong> The teacher should ask learners to share their presentations with each other, encouraging them to explain what they believe to be the key features of technology that is of benefit to them. <strong>(Observation)</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Learning Outcome</strong></th>
<th><strong>Assessment criteria</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Explain the meaning of technology. (K)</td>
<td><strong>Product</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Describe the impacts of technology on the people of South Sudan. (K&amp;U)</td>
<td>● Does the presentation outline features of technology clearly?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● State the key benefits of technology (S)</td>
<td>● Does it identify the impacts of technology on the people of South Sudan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Does it state the key benefits of technology?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Observation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● What key words are used to define technology?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>● How do learners explain their choices for the key benefits of technology?</td>
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7) How do we assess the Generic Skills?

As well as Learning Outcome for each of the Sub-Strands of the Learning Areas, the new syllabuses set out a set of five Generic Skills:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical thinking and problem-solving</th>
<th>Creativity and innovation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Plan and carry out investigations</td>
<td>Use imaginations to explore possibilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sort and analyse information</td>
<td>Work with others to generate ideas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify problems and ways forward</td>
<td>Suggest and develop new solutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Predict outcomes and make reasoned decisions</td>
<td>Try out innovative alternatives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluate different solutions</td>
<td>Look for patterns and make generalizations</td>
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<th>Communication</th>
<th>Co-operation and Learning</th>
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<tr>
<td>Listen attentively and with comprehension</td>
<td>Work effectively in diverse teams</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talk confidently and explain things clearly</td>
<td>Interact effectively with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read accurately and fluently</td>
<td>Take responsibility for own learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write and present coherently</td>
<td>Work independently with persistence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use a range of media to communicate ideas</td>
<td>Manage goals and time</td>
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<tr>
<th>Calculation and ICT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use numbers and measurements accurately</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpret and interrogate mathematical data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use mathematics to justify and support decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use technology to create, manipulate and process information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use technology to collaborate, communicate and refine their work</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The very nature of “Generic Skills” means that they apply across the Learning Areas. They are not found in one Learning Area only. In the very nature of skills, they have to be acquired and deployed in a context. The Learning Areas provide these contexts. They can therefore be assessed within the context of what is being taught; for example, was the learner able to “plan and carry out an investigation” in Science or “Write and present coherently” in Social Studies.
An illustration here of how education leaders in Uganda are planning to build opportunities for the progression of Generic Skills into their Syllabus.
An example of how student competencies are build into Medium Term plans in South Sudan.
Student competencies (skills) allow us to promote and explore higher order thinking skills for lifelong learning.
THINKING THROUGH THE LEARNING CHALLENGE

Eureka!
Wow, that was great.
Now I feel as if I really understand it. I can do this!

Consider
What have I learned from going through The Pit? How can I apply this new learning to another context? Now I’m ready for the new learning challenge.

@TheLearningPit
An illustration from @TheLearningPit of how cognitive conflict and challenge requires higher order thinking skills.
Getting Practical!

Illustrating how student competences can enhance learning.
In this activity, groups of delegates were given 5 foods to consider.

Order your foods.....

Most to least beautiful

Most useful to least useful

Most expensive to least expensive
Order your foods.....

Most nutritious to least nutritious

Put foods in two groups. Define your criteria!

Any other ideas??????.
How could you move this activity forward now?

What competences are you developing?

Each group of foods make up the ingredients for a soup!
“Every young person should leave school with the confidence, the ability and the desire to make the world a better place”
Thank you for sharing.

Feedback please!

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