

A PROPOSED CURRICULUM

FOR A

SECONDARY SCHOOL

BY

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Consciously embracing life's journey...

A PROPOSED CURRICULUM FOR A SECONDARY SCHOOL

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VISION

In line with Montessori philosophy, we envision loving and creative individuals who are spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically independent:

- individuals who contribute holistically with integrity and respect in their own unique ways to

society and the environment;

- visionaries, continuously developing their skills for life long learning;

- people who understand the physical and mental connectedness of life;

- passionate, adventurous beings embracing consciously their life's journey.

WHENCE THE CURRICULUM?

PRINCIPLES:

Maria Montessori wrote: **“The years between 12 and 18 see the children become humanistic explorers, seeking to understand their place in society and their opportunity to contribute to it.”**

She believed that secondary schools should prepare children for life, not just for university and a career.

“*Humanistic exploration*”, “*understanding one’s place in society*” and “*contributing to society*” are the three Montessori principles guiding the curriculum.

The fourth guiding principle is: “*discovering one’s talent(s)*”.

The fifth principle supports the four above: “*achieving mastery*” – the mastery needed to achieve the four principles above, and ultimately the Vision:

Consciously embracing life’s journey...

CONNECTEDNESS:

Our curriculum draws from other philosophies, writings and curriculums:

1. ‘Erdkinder’

Maria Montessori has outlined a plan for this environment in a pamphlet titled “The Erdkinder and the Function of the University”. In the section dedicated to the *Erdkinder*, the three pivotal elements included are a farm, a hostel and a shop. These are the bare bones of an environment, which can become rich, versatile and productive and, as the need arises, may expand into a veritably self-sustaining working community. Side by side with an academic education suited to young people who have gone through ‘the advanced method’ mentioned by Maria Montessori, this multifaceted environment will provide for young adolescents, side by side with academic instruction, apprenticeships in a variety of arts, crafts, trades, professions and vocations taught by experts in their field. Young people of this age, therefore, are not condemned to the anxieties of intellectual achievement as an ultimate end. They can continue to make purposeful use of ‘the hand – instrument of the intelligence’ thereby not only enhancing their intellect but, more pragmatically, enhancing their possibilities. The self-assurance acquired will allow them to develop hardiness and equanimity with which to face life’s vicissitudes.

2. The Writings of Tim Seldin:

Seldin is one of the international leaders in Montessori education as Chair of the Montessori Association in the United States. Consider this view on secondary education:

“Our society has left behind the rites of passage that once facilitated the child's transition from childhood to full status as an adult. By design, a Montessori high school is a carefully prepared environment that helps teenagers master the secrets of the world of adulthood: how to act appropriately in given situations, earn a living, understand everyday law and economics, and how to express love and friendship. Students are accepted by the school community as adults-in-training.”

Excerpt from *"Adolescence Without Tears. Montessori High Schools"* by Tim Seldin.

3. The Sustainability Imperative:

The writings internationally around environmental and social sustainability challenge the way people selfishly and greedily –

- do business;
- share power;
- use techno-scientific developments;
- become 'haves' at the expense of the 'have-nots'.

As a challenge to this, age-old values like honesty, selflessness and compassion are re-emerging at every level and in every sector of society. This comes out of a deepening spirituality that goes beyond dogma.

In essence, the imperative says that we have to consider the inter-connectedness of 'person', 'people' and 'planet' and the way we make 'profits'. No one of these may take precedence over any of the others.

Here we draw from successful sustainability projects internationally that have taken seriously the admonition to "walk lightly on the Earth".

One such project is the Sustainability Institute of Prof. Mark Swilling in Stellenbosch where a sustainable community has established an environmentally-friendly workspace, schooling process and residential area that recycles its waste, uses renewable energy, all in a people-friendly environment.

4. Humanist Psychologists:

Humanist Psychologists such as Carl Rogers and Erik Erikson encourage the fulfilment of one's needs as a means towards actualising one's potential in a spirit of co-operation and inter-dependence.

5. Curriculums from Successful Montessori Secondary Schools Internationally:

We can glean from best practice of other Montessori secondary schools, internationally, like:

1. a. Athena Montessori College, Wellington, New Zealand

An inner-city school that uses all the city's resources – library, sports facilities, etc.

1. b. Clarke Montessori, Cincinnati, Ohio, USA

The first Montessori Secondary School in the USA, it is also located in a city.

1. c. Knysna Montessori Secondary, South Africa

The first Montessori Secondary School in South Africa that follows the 'Erkinder' approach of Maria Montessori.

6. The South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

The NQF gives practical expression to our Vision. Its Critical Cross-Field Outcomes all point to the types of mastery a learner needs to achieve (see Appendix 1).

THE CURRICULUM IN PRACTICE

THE CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

Learners will follow the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) Curriculum, leading to the IEB Further Education and Training Certificate (Matric). The learners have opportunities to learn well beyond the curriculum, and extend themselves in areas of interest and ability, in order to achieve mastery.

General Education and Training Certificate

Learning Areas

Grade 7

Grade 8

Grade 9

English First Language

IsiZulu / Afrikaans Second Language

Mathematics

Natural Sciences

Social Sciences

Technology

Economic and Management Sciences

Life Orientation

Arts and Culture

Further Education and Training Certificate

Learning Areas (6 required fields)

Grade 10

Grade 11

Grade 12

English First Language

IsiZulu / Afrikaans Second Language

Mathematics / Mathematical Literacy

Choice of:

- Human and Social Studies

- Physical, Mathematical, Computer and Life Sciences

- Any other combination for which there is sufficient demand.

These learning areas must achieve the Critical Cross-Field Outcomes referred to in Appendix A.

The pedagogy we will use to achieve the above Learning Areas (required of all secondary schools in South Africa) is what will give our secondary school the cutting edge:

The method of teaching will be organised into three broad fields of endeavour:

- **World of Work**

Here the learner will be involved in real work-related activities:

- income generating projects within the school setting such as operating the tuck shop for the school, farming practices such as egg, poultry and vegetable farming;
- assisting in the running of the school, such as catering, administration, caring for younger children in after care, holiday programmes, assisting in other learning environments, cleaning, maintenance, etc.
- job shadowing and workplace experience in places of work;

- involvement in organisations such as NGOs , unions, community-based organisations.

- **Service**

Learners will choose an organisation at which to perform service to the community, such as:

- old-age homes;
- animal hospitals, etc.

- **Creation**

Learners will develop a creative project of their own, and gain mastery in it, such as:

- creative writing;
- a technological project;

- an art project

These fields of endeavour will be negotiated with the learners' mentor at the beginning of the year.

Each mentor (see **The Staff** below) will ensure that *all the learning areas in the GETC* are covered and that the learner is working towards mastery of the Critical Cross-Field Outcomes – leading to the GETC examination at the end of Grade 9.

Changes within the year of workplace or service settings or changes from year to year of settings will be negotiated between learner and mentor.

The ratio of learners to mentor shall be no more than 10:1.

Learning will be individualised with the core of the face-to-face learning taking place in the mentoring sessions, scheduled on a regular basis.

Where necessary, learners will have in-school learning such as laboratory work for Science and Biology.

The curriculum outline is presented below. Note that this plan will be modified in the light of experience over the years during which it is developed.

Grade

World of Work

Service

Creation

7

Major part of year spent with in school setting (on earth-related projects and in running the school and in

One day per week in service setting

One day per week working on creation project

8

Major part of year spent within school setting (on earth-related projects and in running the school and in

One day per week in service setting

One day per week working on creation project

9

Major part of year in workplace placements and also simulated business ventures in the school

One day per week in service setting

One day per week working on creation project

General Education and Training Certificate Examination

Grade

World of Work

Service

Creation

10

Focussed study across the 6 required fields of learning

Negotiated period of time in service setting – within or outside school

Negotiated period of time to coincide with fields of learning

11

Focussed study across the 6 required fields of learning

Negotiated period of time in service setting – within or outside school

Negotiated period of time to coincide with fields of learning

12

Focussed study across the 6 required fields of learning

Negotiated period of time in service setting – within or outside school

Negotiated period of time to coincide with fields of learning

Further Education and Training Certificate Examination (FETC)

VALUE-ADDED FEATURES

The above Grade 10, 11 and 12 programme is designed for learners who wish to go on to

Higher Education and Training in the academic field – Academic University, University of Technology.

However, a learner who wishes to follow an interest in the field of commerce and industry may continue in Grades 10, 11 and 12 with intensive workplace experience following on from Grade 9.

Such a learner will be able to gain South African Qualifications Authority-recognised qualifications during Grades 9, 10 and 11 already, and ultimately an equivalent of the FETC (Grade 12) through learning in the workplace. Such a learner will be able to continue with qualifications in the commerce and industry sectors, or be able to transfer to a tertiary institution after the FETC.

In our curriculum, a strong emphasis will be put on entrepreneurship – the ability to develop self-employment opportunities. All learners, irrespective of whether they are studying in the academic or in workplace-related fields will leave the school with well-developed entrepreneurial skills.

RESIDENTIAL LEARNING

All learners in Grades 7 to 9 will be expected to be at least weekly boarders in the school residence. This is required in order for learners to fulfil their duties in the school projects and to participate in the running of the school.

It shall be optional for learners whether or not they wish to remain boarders in Grades 10 to 12. However, the school recommends highly that they remain on as boarders.

ENROLLING THE FAMILY

A strong emphasis will be placed on the involvement of the family as a very important part of the learners' education. Every learner's family will be encouraged to participate in any event we hold, from the business breakfasts, to concerts or camps.

In addition, parents, grandparents and siblings will always be welcome to join in during the day at the school to help and support, or just pop in to join in with the fun.

Every parent has some skill that can be passed on to learners, from computer technology, to arts and crafts, to creative writing or operational mathematics. Parents will be required to offer their specialist assistance and experience to learners on a rotational basis.

Parents will also be expected to negotiate workplace placements in their places of work for job shadowing / work experience.

THE STAFF

The Pedagogical Committee of the International Montessori Society states:

The qualifications of the teacher of adolescents should be those required to teach in secondary/high school. There could also be vocational experts and professionals in their own field. In view of this there is no specific Montessori training required. The adolescents are

provided with a prepared environment, not a school. Dr. Maria Montessori outlined the syllabus and methods without going into specific detail.

The staff of our secondary school shall all be qualified secondary school teachers and ideally also be Montessori-trained teachers (12 – 15). All will have to attain the additional skills of **mentoring** and **project management**.

As **mentors**, staff will need to help learners identify their talents and passions and to obtain the skills to master these. Thus, mentors will need to have the sensitivity to follow learners' interests and directions and to ensure through this, that the learners master the critical cross-field outcomes and the learning areas required for Grades 7 to 9.

As **project managers**, staff will need to assist learners to plan and develop projects, execute the projects and evaluate the projects. They will also need to project manage the liaison with businesses, parents, organisations and the learners themselves.

This will require additional enskilling of qualified educators – whether Montessori trained and/or traditionally trained.

DISCIPLINE

The learners ideally shall be self-regulated. The learners, themselves, shall be responsible for creating school policies, dealing with infractions and running school functions, under the guidance of and with the support of the mentors.

A FINAL WORD FROM MARIA MONTESSORI

Scientific observation has established that education is not what the teacher gives; education is a natural process spontaneously carried out by the human individual, and is acquired not by listening to words but by experiences upon the environment.

The task of the teacher becomes that of preparing a series of motives of cultural activity, spread over a specially prepared environment, and then refraining from obtrusive interference.

Human teachers can only help the great work that is being done, as servants help the master. Doing so, they will be witnesses to the unfolding of the human soul and to the rising of a New Man who will not be a victim of events, but will have the clarity of vision to direct and shape the future of human society.

Education for a New World

Consciously embracing life's journey...

FURTHER VALUE-ADDED FEATURES

A SECONDARY SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

1. The proposed secondary school should be linked with a college that offers courses from NQF Level 5 and upwards, encompassing both the FETC at NQF Level 4 and qualifications/unit standards/short courses at NQF Level 5 and above.

1. The College will offer education and training during the day and evening.

1. This would mean that advanced learners in the secondary school could do courses beyond FETC level *simultaneously* with their FETC studies. Conversely, adult learners can do participate in second-chance FETC courses.

1. This means that we would emphasise the similarities between school learning and adult education, rather than keep them separate.

1. This also means that we would blur the artificial distinctions between education and training.

1. The secondary school and college will be run from the same building complex, custom built for the blurring referred to in 4 and 5 above.

1. The essence of the education and training offered will be Montessori and new age – caring for the person, people, planet and profits (the mantra of caring businesses), ensuring that all who learn and work in it are environmentally friendly and caring of people, as spiritual, physical and emotional beings.

1. The College shall adopt the same Vision Statement as the Secondary School.

1. All facilitators in the College will commit themselves to the curriculum offered in the secondary school. If necessary, facilitators shall be trained to a level where they can facilitate within this philosophy. We are seeking a “learning community” in which meta-thinking and learning is practised and where peers learn with and from one another.

1. I believe that we will fill a market niche for those learners seeking to enskill themselves fully for the world we live in now and will inhabit in the future, who wish to make a difference and who wish to give something of themselves to their fellow human beings.

1. The College and Secondary School will thus work synergistically to offer excellence in the courses that they offer to enable learners to enjoy the best fruits of society – top university places, top jobs, the best business enterprises – to have the skills to negotiate their present and futures, and above all, to have spiritual and emotional well-being to embrace life with joy and freedom.

1. As such, I believe it is a worthwhile, replicable model that can well develop into similar campuses around the country.

A JUNIOR PRE-SCHOOL, PRE-PRIMARY, ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

1. Ideally, we should develop a campus that contains a seamless progression from Junior Pre-School, through Pre-Primary School, Elementary School, Secondary School and College.

1. This will enable us to maximise our talents with regard to educators in all phases, particularly when we establish teacher-training courses, catering for the additional skills of mentorship and project management.

1. I envisage directresses/ors in the junior pre-school, pre-school, elementary and secondary schools training prospective Montessori educators in training courses in the College. Mentors in the secondary school will also assist to upskill directresses/ors in the junior schools.

1. The result of this will be that at any given time all educators will be learners and teachers at the same time.

1. Training could be done on-site and in a virtual class setting through the internet. Thus, training seminars can happen any time of day or night, weekday or weekend, depending on the availability of mentors/directresses/ors and their trainees.

A SELF-SUSTAINING COMMUNITY

1. This proposal fits well with the establishment of a self-sustaining community in which people purchase property within the estate and build for themselves environmentally-friendly living spaces.

1. The estate shall undertake small-scale farming (with the involvement of the secondary school learners) to generate income for sustainability.

1. The community shall establish environmentally-friendly workspaces that it rents out to small businesses and organisations.

1. It shall recycle its waste, use renewable energy, all in a people-friendly environment – along the model of the Sustainability Institute in Stellenbosch.

1. This will be the ultimate realisation of our “walking lightly on our Earth”.

Tom Swart

22.05.05

APPENDIX 1: CRITICAL CROSS-FIELD OUTCOMES

These are the outcomes that link all the National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) of all the 53 countries who have NQFs to one another. These are the umbrella outcomes that all education and training must achieve, whether for children or for adults at whatever level it happens:

1. 1. Identify problems and be able to solve them. Be able to use critical thinking
1. 2. Work effectively with others as a member of a team, group, organisation, &
1. 3. Organise yourself responsibly and effectively. Manage your activities resp
1. 4. Collect, analyse and organise information. Be able to evaluate information

1. 5. Communicate effectively using pictures, numbers and words, both orally and

1. 6. Use science and technology effectively and critically so that you show res

1. 7. Show that you understand that everything in the world is related – when y

You must become aware of the importance of:

1. 1. Thinking of and experimenting with many different ways to learn more effe

1. 2. Becoming a responsible citizen who takes part in the life of local, national

1. 3. Dealing with your racism and all other forms of bigotry.

1. 4.

Looking at different education opportunities and different career opportunities.

5. Developing your entrepreneurial skills to be able to create your own income.

