

# Education needs to update to global skills inclusion in curricula

The 2016 report by the World Economic Forum (WEF) revealed that educational institutions worldwide are failing to equip learners with the global competencies they will need to be employable in coming years.



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According to Traci Salter, the academic strategic development advisor for ADvTECH Schools and an International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO) trainer, educator and evaluation team member, it is imperative for South African educational institutions to change their approach now, to ensure that critical competencies for the global workspace are incorporated into the teaching and learning taking place at schools, colleges and universities.

“Many international businesses and thought leaders are increasingly raising the discussion around competencies students need now, so that they will be able to face the complex challenges and changes taking place in the global workspace.

“Developing these competencies will be of benefit to all students and are as important as the foundational skills of literacy and mathematics. They should be core in the way we learn, as well as in the way we need to interact in the world that is.

Globally, there is increasing acknowledgement of the fact that in 2020 the skills necessary in previous years will have been replaced by a demand for different skills that are not being given the required attention. Addressing this discrepancy is now crucial.

## Missing skills

“The WEF study into the Future of Jobs considered the employment, skills and workforce strategies of the future. It canvassed chief HR and strategy officials from the world’s top companies, across industries and geographies, to determine what they will require of future recruits.

“They compiled a summary list of the top ten skills identified for both 2015 and 2020 and shared their findings of what

needed to be taught. While some countries have made significant strides in implementing programmes to empower their young people in this regard, others, including South Africa, are falling dangerously behind. The results were a revelation and South Africa can no longer afford to ignore these fundamental findings (see infographic below).

## Top 10 skills

### in 2020

1. Complex Problem Solving
2. Critical Thinking
3. Creativity
4. People Management
5. Coordinating with Others
6. Emotional Intelligence
7. Judgment and Decision Making
8. Service Orientation
9. Negotiation
10. Cognitive Flexibility

### in 2015

1. Complex Problem Solving
2. Coordinating with Others
3. People Management
4. Critical Thinking
5. Negotiation
6. Quality Control
7. Service Orientation
8. Judgment and Decision Making
9. Active Listening
10. Creativity



Source: Future of Jobs Report, World Economic Forum

“All educational groups need to be referencing this list and asking how they are ensuring these skills are being developed and embedded within the teaching and learning taking place at their schools, colleges and universities.

Salter says that the group’s 96 schools, the core skills continuum has been packaged into five broad categories - thinking skills, research skills, communication skills, social skills and self-management skills. Each of these key areas have been broken down into specific focus areas and age appropriate outcomes, which are continually revisited from Grade 000 to Matric, thereby progressively developing students’ abilities and enabling them throughout their educational journey.

## Catching up to the fourth Industrial Revolution



Traci Salter

“Any perception that these global competencies are nice-to-haves, given South Africa’s existing challenges in education, is simply naive. Additionally, implementation, while calling for commitment and an investment in staff training, time and energy, does not require vast additional funding.

“All schools, higher education institutions and universities, whether public or private, must take note of the WEF guidelines or risk having our country’s students left behind in what is generally now being called the fourth Industrial Revolution.

“These core skills are not an addition to existing curricula, but a change in approach to teaching and learning. They are transdisciplinary skills that must be incorporated as part of all learning experiences. No matter the content or concepts being explored, there are

opportunities in all of these, for different types of thinking, various forms of research, opportunities for collaborative tasks, numerous ways to communicate understandings as well as occasions for students to develop their self-management skills.

“Teacher education and professional training are crucial to the successful implementation of global competence education. South African educational institutions should be providing specific training programmes to support teachers in acquiring a critical awareness of the essential role education can play in the unpacking and development of these fundamental global skills.

“Facing unprecedented challenges and opportunities, this generation of educators is now compelled to address these

required capacities and it is now no longer a negotiable discussion. These skills are prerequisite global competencies, which means that no matter where in the world we are, we will all need to be competent and confident in applying them in a myriad of settings,” she concludes.

Salter is currently part of an international panel of experts exploring the implementation and embedding of 21st century skills in schools across the globe.

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