

SUPSI

Draft selection of relevant topics for the experimentation

Wikipedia Primary School

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Scope of this document

This document presents a selection of topics that could be used as target topics for the development of Wikipedia articles relevant to African primary education curricula.

Method

Grades

The discussion with teachers and other stakeholders during the first project meeting in Cape Town, along with the visit to two primary schools, allowed the identification of the Intermediate Phase (grades 4-6) as the best grades for the project's experimentation. Teachers in the intermediate phase are normally generalist teachers (consequently, they need more content information for teaching) and the language of instruction progressively becomes predominantly English (so that non-native teachers would benefit even more from content information available both in English and in their mother tongue).

Moreover, Wikipedia is an online encyclopedia. As such, it is concerned with what teachers and educational scientists call *content (savoir)*, as opposed to *procedures, methods (savoir-faire)* or *attitudes (savoir-etre)*. School programs for the Intermediate level are more subject-matter oriented than those in the previous grades, where basic competences (reading, writing, socialization) represent the main focus. This balance is rather common in all school programs: children should first go through a socialization phase, learn to be at school, and learn to read, write and use numbers (this is the focus on Kindergarten education and usually of the first 2 years in primary education), and will only then be able to approach "subjects matters". Also, linguistic competences are more mature in the higher grades, allowing content learning to be more efficient.

Sources

The topics presented in this document were taken from the South African *Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools)*, published by the Department of Education in May 2002 (Gazette No. 23406, Vol. 433; in the following they are references as NCS), and then double-checked against the indications contained in the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement* for the Intermediate Phase (version published in 2011; CAPS).

Geographical focus

Within the current partnership and with the available resources, the focus on South Africa responds to criteria of feasibility. Moreover, the linguistic diversity of this country makes it a perfect scenario for the project's experimental phase. Finally, this capitalizes on the pre-project analysis, which also includes South Africa.

Such geographical focus does not prevent the main findings of the project and its conclusions to be extended to other countries through a consistent analysis of school programs or other educational standards documents.

Subject matter

The topics selected have specific local or pan-African character. This criteria was introduced based on two considerations. First, these are the topics that make more sense to teach in local languages; second, these are possibly topics that are less represented on Wikipedia.

Indications from teachers and stakeholders led to select topics from the *Social Sciences* (History and Geography), *Life Orientation* (in particular healthcare-related topics), and *Natural Science* programs.

Relevance

The assessment of the relevance of each topic was done based on the volume of contact hours dedicated to that topic and on the topic's presence in more grades/subject matters. Moreover, proximity with South African / Panafrican themes was considered.

Topics by grade

The selection of topics is reported in the associated Excel table.