

# GEC competency assessment

Teachers



basic education

Department:  
Basic Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



**3** ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
EMPLOYABILITY  
EDUCATION

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## About this document



- ➔ This document provides you with a brief overview of the GEC Pilot Study Project and outlines what your role is in this pilot first iteration. This is a new form of assessment process for South African schools.
- ➔ The aim of this assessment process is to measure the development of skills (or competencies) that will result from the projects that the learners will do.
- ➔ At this stage we would like you to start learning what to look for, and, for now, to gain a basic understanding of how to measure what you are seeing.
- ➔ The Assessment Form for each of the 4 Skills being assessed for now is included. This is one tool of a couple of tools being tested.
- ➔ We will be learning from your teaching and assessment feedback so that we can improve the next iteration of the GEC Pilot Study Project.

# About the GEC

By now you will be well aware of the DBE's nation-building exercise - the **GEC Pilot Study Project**.

We deeply appreciate the support you have already given to this initiative by being willing to be a part of it.

## What is it?

The GEC is an important national initiative that will support the development of learners' "21<sup>st</sup> century skills" and strengthen the effective assessment of these skills and learners' knowledge in such a way that can help guide their future study and career pathways.

## Who is driving it?

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) has partnered with E<sup>3</sup> (the Entrepreneurship, Employability, and Education programme in the DBE) to create a pilot study and field testing of the GEC assessment components.



*We should measure what we treasure...  
Because what gets measured gets done and improved!*

## What is the purpose?



The DBE describes the purpose of this Pilot Study as being:



*... to test the appropriateness of assessment instruments and model in a purposeful selection of schools and to gather data that can be analysed by expert review groups to advise on the process going forward.*

*43 schools across 9 provinces have been identified to conduct a pilot study on the draft assessment instruments in the third and fourth school terms. Data from the pilot study will be used to refine the assessment instruments for further and more representative field testing in 2022 and upscaling in 2023.*



## What is the reason for it?

Dr Mark Chetty, Director for National Assessments explains the reasons for the GEC:

“

*This new method of assessment in the General Education and Training (GET) band is a fundamental approach to improve quality education in South Africa. Learners who have no inclination to continue with traditional schooling will, after the next few years of pilots and trials, have the option to choose a more suitable, personally customised career pathway after earning a Grade 9 or GEC certificate. The GEC is an important national initiative that will support and strengthen the effective assessment of South African learners' 21st century skills and knowledge to help guide their future study and career pathways.*

”

The GEC exists so that learners will be able to make informed decisions that will assist them to choose their next phase of study; have a sense of their levels of preparedness for life after school; and so that their supportive environment (parents, teachers, principals) can further guide, support and teach them based on the combination of results at the end of Grade 9, which will include their aptitude skills/assessment, the integrated common task assessment and the standardised test - and not purely their ability to memorise data for exams.

## What is the pilot?

In 2021, 43 schools from across the 9 provinces have been identified to conduct a pilot study on the draft assessment instruments in the third and fourth school terms. Data from the pilot study will be used to refine the assessment instruments for further and more representative field testing in 2022 and upscaling in 2023. This instrument is one of a couple of different instruments being tested.

We recognise your ongoing and critical role as a teacher in this nation-building project - preparing young people for success if life after school.

**We thank you for your support in making this project a success for the entire country.**

Please read on to find out more about the GEC and measuring these essential skills for the 21st century.



**43 schools**  
across the  
9 provinces  
are in the  
pilot study

# Measure what you treasure...



Do you as a teacher treasure a learner with good (matric) results or one who is prepared to be successful in life after school? If it is the latter, what should you be teaching and how? And how will you know that your teaching has been successful using this new measurement?

We all treasure learners who are **equipped with a toolbox of skills (sometimes called competencies)** that will help them navigate and be successful in the changing complex world. The purpose of schooling is to **create learning environments, learning content, and teaching approaches** that create opportunities for learners to develop these toolboxes full of useful survival tools, such as competencies, skills and mindsets.

In South Africa, with youth unemployment at over 70% - at this time – the need for engaged, productive, motivated, entrepreneurial, solution-seeking learners equipped with sharpened tools in their toolbox is more critical than ever. Therefore, the GEC is not just another attempt to “fix education” in South Africa; it is a nation-building project to enhance our compelling goal of learners having a meaningful, productive place in society after school – whether it be occupational, vocational or academic - which in turn reduces this shocking youth unemployment statistic.

If you also believe that the purpose of the teacher is to be a facilitator who is preparing young people to thrive, then the way you look at assessment needs to change too. Assessment measures what we treasure. We treasure prepared learners with 21st Century skills. The implication is that every lesson design should be constructed to have this goal in mind: to have learners leave school skilled in the competencies that are critical to survive and thrive in life after school.

The GEC assessment is moving towards this new lens for preparing and assessing learners and you, as a teacher, have a vital role to play in this mindset shift.

## **Your role in the GEC Pilot Study Project-Assessment**

As a research teacher, you are part of a bigger team that is developing a new way for the country. This team consists of your principal and the rest of the team at E<sup>3</sup>. Specifically:

- ✓ You are the critical implementors and researchers, and
- ✓ Your classrooms are the important laboratories of learning.

### **In this process you will need to know:**



- ✓ What the tools (competencies, skills, and mindsets) are
- ✓ How to recognise them in the classroom
- ✓ If they are effective enough
- ✓ How to improve them if they aren't good enough yet
- ✓ How to design lessons that ensure that learners have the skills and competencies they need to flourish after school.

Your principals, and school champions will be sending you ongoing information to assist you to continue this project and we, as the E<sup>3</sup> team, are here to help, too. We would love to hear about your experiences so we can continue to improve and develop the projects and assessments.

Remember that we all treasure learners who have skills/competencies to flourish in this changing world. Through this pilot we will find the most effective ways to measure these so that we can proactively ensure the competencies are activated and developed through the most effective lesson design and the most conducive learning environments.

Every lesson design should be constructed to have this goal in mind: to have learners skilled in the competencies that are critical to survive and thrive in life after school.

The GEC assessment is moving towards this new lens for preparing and assessing learners and you, as teachers, have a vital role to play in this mindset shift.

## **Creating the environment to develop an Entrepreneurial Mindset**

As teacher superheroes, your role in the classroom is to prepare young people for success in life after school. That is not an easy task because the young people of today face many challenges; the world is uncertain, with pandemics, food insecurity, drought and so on. As teachers you can create an environment in your classrooms for young people to develop the skills, mindsets and competencies they need to navigate this changing world. We call these skills the Entrepreneurial Mindset.



Having an **Entrepreneurial Mindset** empowers learners to take ownership of their learning, becoming purpose-driven opportunity-finders and problem-solvers able to succeed in employment, entrepreneurship, and further education.

One way to create an environment for young people to develop their Entrepreneurial Mindset is **through Playful Project-based Learning**. Learners work on identifying and solving real-world, relevant problems through a project designed to activate an Entrepreneurial Mindset. This type of teaching is relevant to all subjects and all learners. Remember, this is not about setting up a business, it is about developing the skills and competencies to succeed in education, employment, and entrepreneurship. The Entrepreneurial Mindset is universal, and everyone needs this to succeed in this changing, challenging and complex world we live in!



## ➔ Assessing the Entrepreneurial Mindset

There is so much evidence to show that an **Entrepreneurial Mindset can be learnt!** And if it can be learnt, then we can assess it. One important thing to re-emphasise here is that it CANNOT be measured with an exam – it can only be measured through observation and self assessment and reflection.

You have to be able to **notice when a skill is forming and know how to help to make it sharper and stronger.** This means you must know what these skills (or competencies) are. Learners themselves should be able to see their own learning growing and developing (make the skills explicit)- i.e. their learning should be visible to them so that they also can take charge of becoming more skilled (develop metacognition, buy-in and student ownership). You should be able to start to see the progression of the development of the acorn and know how to nurture it into a mighty oak by ensuring that the nutrients and environment are present and correct to help it to thrive.

## ➔ Getting started

An **Entrepreneurial Mindset is made up of many different skills, competencies, and mindsets.** However, since you might be starting your journey in developing young people's entrepreneurial mindsets, we recommend that you start by measuring just a small number of skills. The first part of your assessment journey starts with:

- ✓ **Understanding** what these skills are
- ✓ **Looking** for these skills in your lessons
- ✓ **Thinking** about how your teaching environments enable the development of these skills. What might you do differently to provide more opportunities for learners to develop these skills?

As you gain more experience in measuring these you can gradually introduce more of the other elements of the CCR rubric.

We are always here to help and support you on this journey of preparing young people for success in life after school so if you have any questions, you can pop them into The Teachers' Lounge – look for the GEC Circle here: <https://www.teacherconnect.co.za/feed>. Remember **your questions, feedback and ideas will be helpful** not only to us but to other teachers starting their competency journeys too. We will have a formal live chat event every Wednesday between 5 and 6 pm from August to October.

We hope you find this short guide useful and remember help is always at hand.

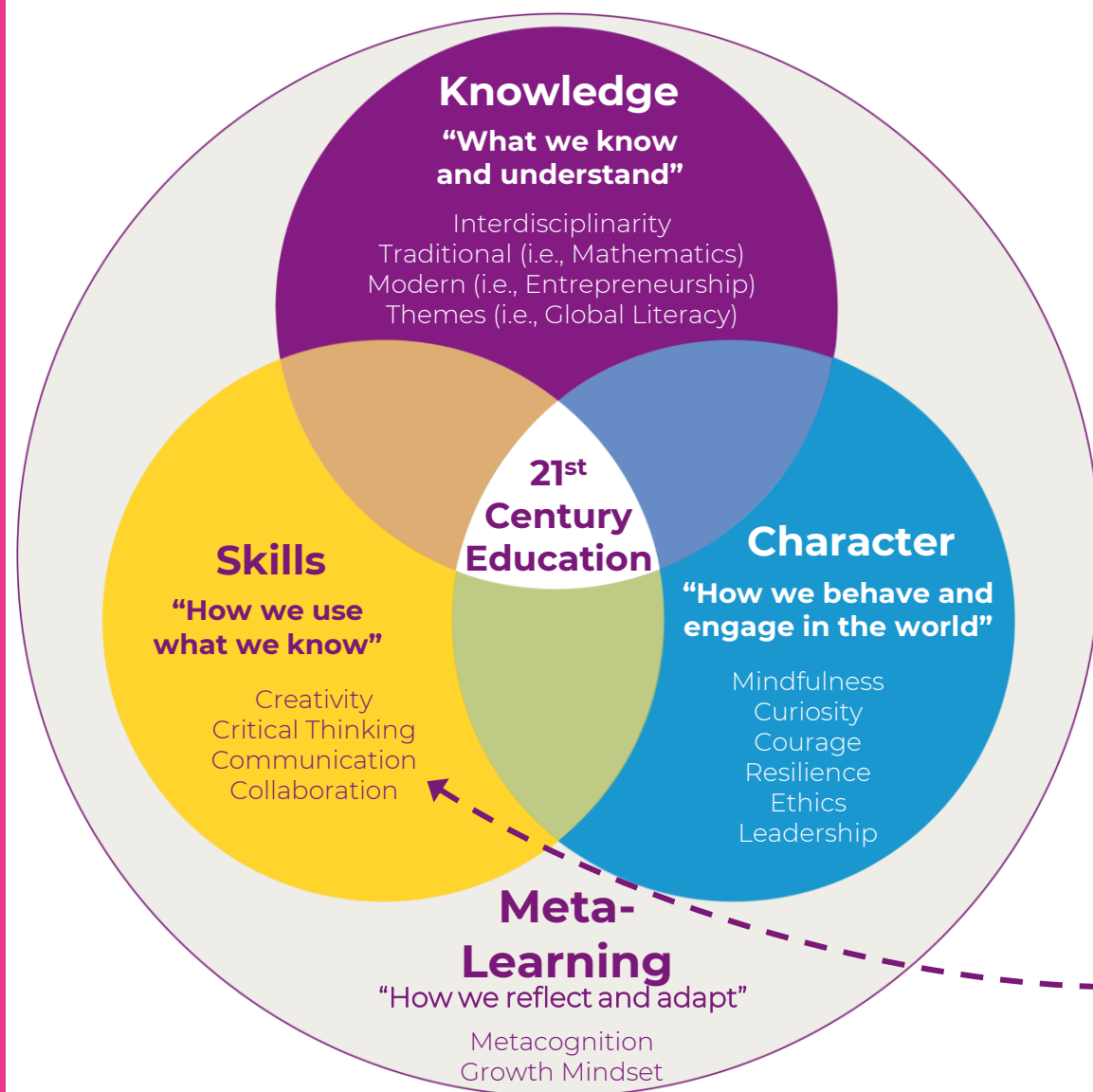


We really like the rubric developed by the **Centre for Curriculum Redesign (CCR)** and we have simplified their rubric to make it easier to use in the classroom.

Let's start with just these skills:

-  Communication
-  Critical Thinking
-  Collaboration
-  Creativity

# About the framework



The Center for Curriculum Redesign has created a thorough framework of **competencies and sub competency proficiency levels**. Every competency included in the diagram on the left has been thoroughly researched and tested and includes detailed and easy to follow 'learning progressions' for each competency and sub-competency.

An example taken from creativity is outlined below.

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Expert
Gathering information	Identifies and describes familiar information and ideas during a discussion or investigation.	Identifies the main ideas and selects and clarifies information from a range of given sources.	Identifies and clarifies relevant information and prioritises ideas.	Uses reasoning skills to prioritise the relative merits of information about complex issues.

We have chosen to start with **identifying** these skills in the classroom and adapted the CCR framework so that it is more manageable for those who have never used it before. So instead of seeing a range of descriptors we simply ask you to observe these skills in your lessons and have adapted the framework accordingly.

Developing and measuring these 21st century skills is not a simple task, and it is one that will take several years. Each year we will scaffold this and develop the complexity of the framework. We welcome your feedback and experience in this process.

These are the 4 skills that this assessment is focusing on for now. This graphic shows these in context of what skills, knowledge and character elements will ultimately be assessed by the end of the pilot in 2022 and form what is often called '21st century skills', or 'skills for a changing world', and/or competencies.



# Elements of Creativity

Creativity is all about using your imagination to see things differently. Creative people come up with different ideas and find realistic solutions to problems they face.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## DURING THE PROJECT OR ACTIVITY:

How often did the learner show this behaviour?

	Never (1)	Sometimes (5)	Often (10)	Always (15)		
1. <b>Generating ideas:</b> Did the learner generate ideas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
2. <b>Solution seeking:</b> Did the learner actively look to find relevant and realistic solutions to problems identified?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
3. <b>Reflecting:</b> Did the learner reflect on the activities and the outcome?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
4. In relation to the explanation of creativity did the learner demonstrate an understanding of what creativity is? <i>Circle your answer below on the scale from 1 to 5.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Did not understand creativity	1	2	3	4	5	Completely understood creativity



**Total marks for creativity**

/ 50

Analysing information

The CCR outline several different elements or sub-competencies that make up a definition of Creativity, which include:

Transferring knowledge and experience to solve a problem

Taking risks

Listening

**Solution seeking and idea-generating**

**Reflecting**

Here we will focus on generating ideas and solution seeking and reflection.  
Taken from the Centre for Curriculum Redesign 2018.

**Solution seeking and idea-generating**

Creative people develop new ideas. They are also good at turning these ideas into realistic solutions, especially within situations where there are limitations. Creative people see limitations as opportunities to be innovative by reflecting and improving on their ideas.

**Reflecting**

Part of the process of creativity is reflecting on the process itself and making small changes when appropriate to improve the process.

# Elements of Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is all about asking questions to understand the world around you, it is also about trying to make sense of the information you find, evaluating it and connecting it to other pieces of information.

The CCR outline several different elements or sub-competencies that make up a definition of Critical Thinking, which include:

Reasoning

Critical Reflecting

Analysing

Considering alternatives

Critical thinking is about developing higher levels of understanding, ultimately transferring these critical thinking skills outside the context in which they were learnt (CCR, 2015). This tool will focus on analysing and considering alternatives. Taken from the Centre for Curriculum Redesign 2018.

## Analysing

Analysing is all about breaking down a complex topic or piece of information into smaller parts that are easier to understand. You can use tools, such as thinking maps to help you to do this. It is also about asking questions to help you understand something.

## Considering alternatives

To expand initial idea(s) by considering different and/or opposing views.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## DURING THE ACTIVITY:

How often did the learner show this behaviour?

Tick your answer in the blocks

Never (1)

Sometimes (5)

Often (10)

Always (15)

1.

**Analysing:** Did the learner ask questions which demonstrated their ability to analyse the information about the topic and activity they were learning?

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

2.

**Analysing:** Did the learner use tools to help them to organise the information they gained about the topic/activity? (e.g. Thinking maps is one tool).

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

3.

**Considering alternatives:** Did the learner consider opinions or views that were different from their own viewpoint?

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

4.

In relation to the explanation of critical thinking did the learner demonstrate an understanding of what critical thinking is?

Circle your answer below on the scale from 1 to 5.

Did not understand critical thinking

1

2

3

4

5

Completely understood critical thinking



Total marks for critical thinking

/ 50

# Elements of Communication

Communication is the process of transferring information from one person or group of people to another. You can communicate in different ways, through speaking, writing, without words and use different tools. Good communicators try and understand other people (have empathy).



Questioning

Multiple-means communicating

Inter-person communicating

Empathising

Articulating

Non-verbal communication

The CCR outline several different elements or sub-competencies that make up Communication, which include:

Here we will focus on empathising, articulating and non-verbal communication..

Taken from the Centre for Curriculum Redesign 2018.

## Empathising

Good communicators try to understand how other people feel and take their experiences into consideration.

## Articulating

(expressing in your own way)

To excel in communication, it is important to consider the audience and present information using tools and methods that are appropriate for that audience.

## Non-verbal communication

(facial expressions and hand gestures)

Communication is not just about words. Non-verbal cues and tones that people use can be extremely important for conveying emotions and messages. It is important to know how the WAY that you say something impacts others as much as, or more than, WHAT you say.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## DURING THE ACTIVITY:

How often did the learner show this behaviour?

Tick your answer in the blocks

Never (1) Sometimes (5) Often (10) Always (15)

1.

**Empathising:** Did the learner "put themselves in others' shoes" to try to understand how they feel?

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

2.

**Articulating:** Did the learner consider their audience and tailor their responses appropriately, using the most appropriate tools?

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

3.

**Non-verbal communication:** Did the learner demonstrate an understanding of non-verbal means of communicating?

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

4.

In relation to the explanation of communication did the learner demonstrate an understanding of what communication is?

Circle your answer below on the scale from 1 to 5.

Did not understand communication

1

2

3

4

5

Completely understood communication



Total marks for communication

/ 50



# Elements of Collaboration



**Collaboration is when people work with each other to complete a task. It involves co-operation and teamwork and the sharing of ideas, knowledge, and skills to reach the same goal.**

The CCR outline several different elements or sub-competencies that make up Collaboration, which include:

Leveraging others' strengths

Considering

**Conflict resolution**

**Compromising**

**Feeding back**

Here we will focus on compromising, conflict resolution and feeding back.  
Taken from the Centre for Curriculum Redesign 2018.

## Compromising

People who are good collaborations take responsibility for their own behaviour and tasks. They also know that they cannot get their own way all the time and work with the team to find the best solutions.

## Conflict resolution

People who are good at collaboration are good at solving conflict or disagreements in their groups. They actively listen and try to understand a problem from different peoples' perspectives.

## Feeding back

The best collaborators give constructive feedback. They also openly receive feedback to help them grow and develop their skills.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### DURING THE ACTIVITY:

How often did the learner show this behaviour?

Tick your answer in the blocks

Never (1)   Sometimes (5)   Often (10)   Always (15)

1.

**Compromising:** Did the learner make compromises so that the team could get the best results?

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

2.

**Conflict resolution:** Did the learner demonstrate the ability to resolve disagreements or conflict in the team?

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

3.

**Feedback:** Did the learner give useful feedback to the team and was willing to receive, and act on, feedback?

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

4.

In relation to the explanation of collaboration did the learner demonstrate an understanding of what collaboration is?

Circle your answer below on the scale from 1 to 5.

Did not understand collaboration

1

2

3

4

5

Completely understood collaboration



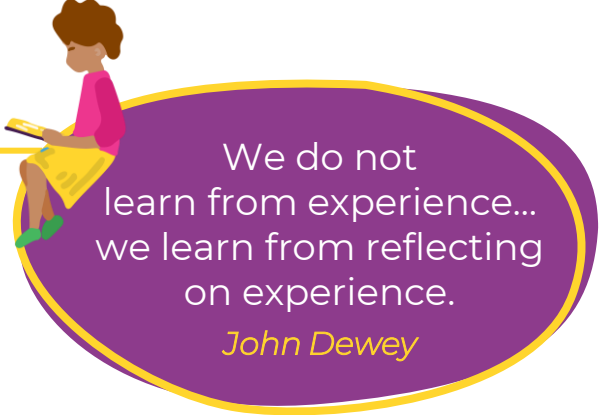
**Total marks for collaboration**

/ 50

# My Reflections

This is the start of a journey to **prepare young people with the skills, competencies, and mindsets** they need to succeed in a complex, ambiguous and challenging world. Measuring these things is not an easy task, and certainly not one we would expect teachers to gain mastery in in the first year. Assessment this year is all about understanding what these skills and competencies are and starting to see them in your lessons and with your learners.

We have created this assessment tool, to help you to reflect on your experiences of seeing and understanding these skills in your classes. There are no right or wrong answers here - please answer honestly as this is a tool for you.



We do not learn from experience... we learn from reflecting on experience.  
*John Dewey*

● Do you feel that **you have better understanding** of what the skills of Collaboration, Critical Thinking, Communication and Creativity are? Please explain your answer?

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● Were you able to **'see' Collaboration, Critical Thinking, Communication and Creativity in your lessons?** How easy were they to see, now that you know what they are?

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● How does knowing about what these skills are **affect your thinking about the lessons you design?**

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● What will you **do differently to create more opportunities** for your learners to practice these skills in your lessons?

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What ideas do you have to **measure these skills** in your lessons?

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