



## The Literature in English Syllabus through the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Lens: A Hermeneutic Analysis

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### Abstract

This study investigates the relevance of the Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education (LGCSE) Literature in English in teaching the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills as well as evaluating the place of this subject syllabus in this era. This qualitative study used the interpretivist paradigm and hermeneutically document analysis of the syllabus document was done. The results revealed that critical thinking, communication, cooperation, and creativity predominate in the learning skills category. Learning skills are followed by literacy skills, in which the sub-skill of flexibility appears in each of the seven syllabus aims. Information and media are closely behind with appearance in five syllabus aims each, while technology is last with zero syllabus aims. There is no evidence that the syllabus provides the learners with the technological skills they need to succeed in school and elsewhere. It was also discovered that the LGCSE Literature in English syllabus is of paramount importance for survival in the 21<sup>st</sup> century thus it is recommended that its place as an elective subject be re-evaluated and be granted the place of a core subject.

**Keywords:** 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, curriculum, Lesotho education system, LGCSE, Literature in English syllabus

### Introduction

The skills that make up the 21st Century competencies are what learners now need to excel in the Information Age. These abilities are meant to enable pupils to stay up with the quick-paced modern markets of this era (Lekhanya&Raselimo, 2018). Each skill has a different way of assisting learners due to their individual unique traits. Thus, in the era of the Internet, they are crucial (Hoff, 2022). There is a strong sense of urgency to prepare our learners for jobs and technologies that do not yet exist in a quest to unravel teething troubles that we do not even know are difficulties and it has never been more important for educational institutions to prepare learners for the types of skills needed for them to live and work in the 21st century (Crutcher, 2011). This is a problem that affects educators everywhere, and it appears that the answer is to collaborate with corporations and policymakers (Rozita, 2013) in order to contextualise the curricular and the education systems within the 21st century.

A range of skills and competencies are a requisite in the lives and livelihoods of learners, beyond and besides literacy and numeracy for survival in the 21st century (Care & Anderson, 2016). In the same tandem, Kurata, Mokhets'engoane and Selialia (2022) aver that the modern day technological metamorphoses have affected individual's diurnal lives. Therefore, the contemporary education systems around the world concede and accede to the prominence of a breadth of skills (Care, Anderson, & Kim, 2016). In this light, it is imperative that the syllabi should align with the curriculum in promoting the requisite skills for survival in this era (Kurata, Mokhets'engoane&Selialia, 2022).

It is rare that members of the Generation Z, those born between 1995 and 2009, can recall a period before the internet, smartphones and other technology that were widely used during the majority of their scholastic careers. Additionally, technologies like 3D television, Instagram, iPads, and music streaming services like Spotify are older than Generation Alpha, who were born after 2010. As a result, they are probably the first generation to experience and will live in the 22nd century in substantial numbers. Growing up in the midst of and with this level of technology therefore entails having access to a vast amount of knowledge. Given that everything is just a click away, some children have never had to wait more than a few seconds to learn the answers to their questions. They can educate themselves at any time and location about any topic that interests them.

Generation Z and Generation Alpha make up the modern learning cohort. In their homes and schools, these two generations were exposed to cutting-edge technology advancements. In contrast to their grandparents who turned books, they are digital populations that are comfortable with applications and coding. Therefore, a 21st century education emphasises giving learners the necessary abilities to succeed in this technologically advanced environment (Lekhanya&Raselimo, 2018). They can develop their independence and practice those skills. The abundance of information that is readily available to them calls for the development of 21st century skills so that they may concentrate more on interpreting the information, disseminating it, and using it cleverly. This is further emphasized by Schiro's (2018) claim cited in Kurata, Mokhets'engoane, and Selialia (2022) that the purpose of

education in the 21st century should be to free learners from having to receive information; rather, education should enable and compel them to meet the needs of the modern community.

How educational goals and methods might be fashioned to develop learners' capacity to handle the problems and opportunities of our modern world is a question that academics have worked to answer using a variety of capacities of didactic exploration in this post-modern era (Hoff, 2019). We live in communities that are very different from what they were just over 20 years ago due of the rapid technology advancements, globalization, and migration processes (Hoff, 2022). These vicissitudes have impacted on our everyday lives both at home and at work, conceivably most intensely in terms of how we interrelate with other societies.

Similarly, cross-cultural coincidences have come to be an integral part of our daily reality (Stadler, 2020). However, due to the unstable nature of 21st century communication and the increased levels of bigotry and zealotry in the world, such meetings are frequently pressure-filled (Council of Europe, 2010, 2016; Stadler, 2020). That is, the interconnected, multicultural world of today helps us deal with conflict and uncertainty by enhancing our capacity to address complex problems in a knowledgeable and resourceful way. However, what are deliberated as skills differ extensively, from country to country (Care et al., 2016), as well as across the range of education patrons within countries (Care, Kim, Anderson, & Gustafsson-Wright, 2017). Many of these human qualities were already highly valued in previous centuries, but this century is seeing them valued more emphatically by education stakeholders, industry and the workforce, as well as through global statements about the qualities and characteristics of the 21st century citizen.

These changes make it appropriate from a didactic standpoint to examine the types of teaching constituents that are brought into the classroom, the subjects that are presented and taught, and the strategies for motivating learners to learn (Burbules, 2009; Eisner, 2004; Ludvigsen et al., 2015). Lesotho is no exception in this regard. According to the Education Sector Plan (ESP) 2016–2026 the Ministry is embarking on a quest to guarantee entrée to all-encompassing pertinent education (Ministry of Education and Training, [MOET], 2016). In light of this, the current study explores to locate the function and place of literary texts in the classroom of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, focusing in particular on Lesotho's teaching and learning of the Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education (LGCSE) Literature in English syllabus. Despite the fact that reading fiction in the EFL classroom has traditionally been a major activity (Fenner, 2020), and also given the demands of both the present and the future educational systems, the academic value of this style of literature has also been questioned (Habegger-Conti, 2015). This is evident in Lesotho because Literature in English has been made to fight for space by competing with subjects like Accounting and Economics in the curriculum (Moea, 2022b) and also many schools keep dropping it out of their school curricular (Moea, 2022a) because they do not understand its worth.

The practical values attached to Literature education do exist. First off, reading Literature helps learners develop the learners' critical thinking abilities (Keerthika, 2018) as they search for the ever-present 21st century talents. Linguistically, it gives learners the chance to analyse and internalize sound language usage through the use of well renowned wordsmiths (Alvi&Alvi, 2019). Additionally, reading literature helps learners develop a deeper awareness of the societies that produced the works that foster greater empathy for other people (Keerthika, 2018). Above all else, the foundation of literature education is to instil in learners an understanding of what it means to be both human and humane. In addition to what it means if we lose it, it is concerned with what it means to treat someone or something.

Literature education teaches learners to value the numerous writing conventions and improves their writing skills. The printed word is even more crucial in the 21st century due to the development of communication systems. Therefore, being strong writers ourselves and being able to recognize excellent writing in others can only improve our experiences (National Curriculum Development Centre [NCDC] & Examination Council of Lesotho [ECOL], 2018). Because it is concerned with the social reality of man, his adaptation to it, and his desire to alter it, literature is a social institution that use language as its medium (Awa, Igiri&Ogayi, 2020). In its ideal form, literature reflects social reality and, as a result, the economy, politics, religion, and culture of the society in which it is written. Of course, literature imitates life because it is written. It thus catches the diverse attitudes and emotions of its neighbourhood.

With literature supporting the beneficence of Literature, its low eminence and lack of desirability were among the findings of a 2007 research study on the subject's position in Singapore secondary schools (Dass, 2014). Given the foregoing, where do we situate the literature component of the English language course within the framework of the growing issue of learner readiness for the twenty-first century? Recent research on literature education in Singapore has also served to draw attention to the unpredictability and inconsistency of the curriculum, provide suggestions for its redesign while taking into account the contemporary Singaporean environment and the effects of globalization, and consider the provision of alternative curricula. In order to determine whether the LGCSE Literature in English curriculum is appropriate for teaching 21st-century skills, a study must be conducted in Lesotho. This will be accomplished by an analysis of the general syllabus objectives, which serve as both the foundation and the testing ground for such a syllabus.

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## Literature review

Around the turn of the millennium, the phrase 21st century skills became popular and began to be used to refer to a set of abilities that have been deemed crucial for preparing young people for the demands of the rapidly changing workplace and society of the 21st century (Ananiadou& Claro, 2009; Erdem, 2019; Pellegrino, 2017). The term's theoretical and practical ramifications have, understandably, become a major worry for educators as a result. Many international networks and organisations have set out to define these competencies and create frameworks for implementing them in educational contexts. The need for pedagogical approaches that enable processes of in-depth learning, cross-cultural communication, critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, problem-solving, and innovation as well as the development of a broad range of literacies is emphasised by all of these frameworks, despite the fact that they vary across different international contexts (Chu et al., 2017).

The Norwegian Core Curriculum, which outlines the general goals and objectives of education, and the subject-specific curriculum both take into account the idea of 21st century skills. According to the Core Curriculum (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017), fostering in-depth learning entails providing learners with a variety of tasks and opportunities to engage in activities of increasing complexity, "so that over time the pupils will be able to master various types of challenges" (p. 12) across both familiar and unfamiliar contexts. In-depth learning requires an inquiry-based approach, which means that learners must be given opportunities to be creative, inquisitive, and innovative (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017). This is in contrast to surface learning, which focuses on the memorisation of facts and procedures (Sawyer, 2008).

Critical thinking is also required for this type of learning, which is defined in the Core Curriculum as the capacity to analyse pre-existing concepts in order to generate novel insights, to evaluate various sources of information analytically, and to admit that one's own point of view might be incomplete or even incorrect (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017). When it comes to the latter issue, allowing for discussion in the classroom may be crucial because it will encourage learners to interact with and take a position on a range of perspectives and ideas. In fact, communication and collaboration are emphasized in the Core Curriculum (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017) as social learning components that can be crucial in assisting learners in handling conflict and disagreement in a healthy way, supporting Iversen's (2014) description of the classroom as a community of disagreement.

The three main goals of education—personal, economic, and civic—are outlined by Ferrero (2011), who also emphasizes the importance of humanities education, in this case Literature education, for the personal and civic goals of education. However, the economic purpose of education has supplanted the other two, and since the humanities cannot be justified in economic or credentialist terms, it appears to have lost all significance and value; a school's value is now determined by whether it helps learners earn credentials that will make them employable (Ferrero, 2011). According to Ferrero, it is the responsibility of the policymakers to incorporate the humanities into their plans.

Any subject that wants to be relevant in education must cover both domestic and global development goals. The subject should also be consistent with the curriculum assessment policy, which sets the type of content that should be provided to learners in order to achieve the educational goals (Raselimo&Thamae, 2018). In a similar vein, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) affirms that the fundamental aim of the government's educational policy is to give learners the opportunity to develop into respectful and responsible members of society by offering a sustainable, higher-quality education that values individual learning practices. The obvious challenge is helping learners relate what they have studied in English class about literature to modern challenges of the twenty-first century and approach them from fresh perspectives. Here, the success of literature instruction rests on learners' capacity to relate what they have learned to contemporary social and technological issues (Ferrero, 2011).

In an effort to globalize Lesotho's educational system, the 2009 curriculum and assessment policy states that learners must develop the core competencies of effective and functional communication, problem-solving, scientific, technological, and creative skills, critical thinking skills, collaboration and cooperation, functional numeracy, as well as learning to learn (MOET, 2009; Raselimo and Thamae, 2018). Similar to this, the Ministry of Development Planning [MDP] (2012) notes that education is one of the primary methods the Lesotho government does to combat poverty. It asserts that the government's prior vision, Vision 2020, which envisioned a society with adequate scientific and technical knowledge, well-established moral standards, and a functioning educational system, guaranteed this. Bassett (2008) emphasizes that the revolution in literature education on the way to "becoming more inclusive...benefiting more from technology...and... more global in perspective" (p. 8) and the belief that "knowledge and understanding of... literature, and art can enrich our lives" (p. 11) remain uncertain, necessitating an investigation into the place of literature education in the 21st century curriculum.

There is no disputing literature's influence on contemporary culture. Each author uses literature as a medium for expression. Apparently, Lewis (2002) avers that "Literature enhances reality rather than merely describing ... enhances the necessary skills that daily life necessitates and supplies, and in this way, it irrigates the already-existing deserts in our lives" (p 103). In other words, Literature demonstrates the true intricacy of human struggle. At the turn of the century, education stakeholders were engaged in a contentious debate over which skills and competences should direct 21st century educational policy and practice in an effort to orient education toward the future (Chalkiadaki, 2018). Where does the study of Literature, or the humanities in general, fit into this growing anxiety and need to provide our learners with the skills they need to succeed in the 21st century?

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## **Methodology**

This study was a qualitatively designed, where data were presented in non-numerical form (Creswell, 2013) and meaning was interpreted from the data to help understand social life through the study of specific populations or locations (Flick, 2014). This approach helped the researcher gain understanding of a phenomenon under study. In this instance, the syllabus document was the non-numerical form that was analysed to better understand the occurrence. This was the case so that qualitative research could support a thorough understanding of a particular phenomenon (Moleong, 2010). In this case, the researcher sought to determine whether the LGCSE Literature in English curriculum and 21st century competencies were compatible. The researcher used an interpretivist paradigm because interpretivist viewpoint encourages researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and its complexity in its specific context rather than attempting to take a broad view of the basis of understanding for the entire population (Creswell, 2013). In this instance, the researcher aimed to gain a greater comprehension of the connection between the syllabus paper and the competencies it covers. Because document analysis is a qualitative procedure (Morgan, 2022) that covers the identification, verification, and consideration of documents that relate to the object investigated, and the document under study was the syllabus document that relates to Literature education and 21st century skills, it was chosen as a method of data collection. This study was hermeneutically conducted because hermeneutics has much to offer those interested in qualitative inquiry, allows for interpretations and a thorough comprehension of the phenomenon under investigation, and is specifically

appropriate for work that is textual and interpretive in nature (Goble & Yin, 2014). Exegesis, another name for hermeneutics, is the process of explaining or interpreting a text (Goble & Yin, 2014). Since the researcher interpreted the text in question—the syllabus LGCSE Literature in English syllabus document—it was thus relevant.

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## Results and analysis

Critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, information literacy, media literacy, technology literacy, flexibility, leadership, initiative, productivity, and social skills make up the list of the twelve 21st Century Skills. Learning and innovation skills, literacy (information, media and technology) skills, and life and career skills are the three areas into which each 21st Century skill is subdivided (Kurata, Mokhets'engoane&Selialia, 2022).

### *Learning skills*

The four Cs (Critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication) curriculum, which is categorized under learning skills, teaches learners the mental processes required to adapt to and improve a contemporary work environment. The ability to assess issues and generate thoughtful, effective solutions to their social problems is a skill that is developed through critical thinking (Indah, 2020). "The syllabus intends to strengthen the ability of learners to communicate clearly, appropriately, and effectively in speech and in writing," reads the first syllabus aim, which demonstrates the application of critical thinking. Through these genres, readers' perspectives are expanded, and they are helped to think outside the box (Austin, 2022). Literature has evolved into something of a conversation starter in contemporary society in addition to being a source of amusement and information. Popular and successful persons frequently discuss the crucial role literary books have in shaping and guiding their career choices, thereby boosting their success (Sharma, 2020). The second syllabus aim, which states that a learner of literature must be able to respond imaginatively to literary texts from different periods and cultures, is another example of how the critical thinking talent is displayed. The capacity to "react imaginatively" demonstrates the use of both creativity and critical thought. The curriculum goal number three, which states, "...enjoy literature and understand its contribution to aesthetic, creative, and intellectual progress," further reflects this. Similar to this, appreciating "imaginative and intellectual progress" calls for advanced mental activities that increase one's capacity for problem-solving and critical thinking. This is because reading encourages logical thought (Olasehinde et al., 2015). Reading literature exposes one to the societal themes it explores, such as admiration, horror, loneliness, war, etc., and this exposure helps one develop empathy and sympathy for both oneself and others (Moea, 2022b). This literary function is consistent with goal 4, which states that when one develops the capacity to "explore themes of universal human concern," one sharpens one's understanding of both oneself and others by being implicitly critical 'explore'. Critical thinking skills are needed to analyse situations and comprehend what it means to be human. As a result, goal four illustrates critical thinking abilities. Similar to aim four, aim five calls for the development of a learner's capacity to recognize the methods by which various authors achieve their effects. One must employ critical thinking abilities to analyse, draw conclusions, and appreciate diverse writing styles in order to analyse how they are used to produce various outcomes. Furthermore, goal six calls for critical thinking abilities because it emphasizes the need for one to cultivate a varied reading culture that will help them "understand" the value of reading for personal growth. When analytical abilities are applied and an inference is made, comprehension occurs. Critical analysis is used to draw inferences, and as a result, this goal reflects critical thinking abilities. A learner should get a knowledge that creative writing is a form of self-expression and personal fulfilment, according to syllabus aim seven. Understanding necessitates analysis, and analysis calls for the use of critical thinking abilities. Therefore, aim seven is similar to aim six in this regard.

Creativity fosters unconventional thinking so that problems can be solved in novel ways (Austin, 2022; Pellegrino, 2017). This ability is clear in aim two because, by responding imaginatively, one uses their creativity. Since imagination goes hand in hand with creativity, creative skills are effectively used. The third aim demonstrates the presence of creative abilities as well. This is due to the fact that a learner is expected to develop via studying literature and become receptive of a literary work on a variety of levels imaginatively, intellectually, and aesthetically. This is demonstrated by Moea (2022a), who claims that the many literary forms or genres reveal the world's mysteries and broaden one's perspectives in speaking and writing, favourably influencing the learner's writing styles. The third aim's appreciation of "imaginative growth" also identifies the inclusion of this ability in the LGCSE Literature in English course. The LGCSE Literature in English syllabus increases the learner's capacity to perceive various ways in which authors achieve their effects, which is reflected in the fifth syllabus aim. Understanding how writers accomplish their goals might inspire readers to adopt certain writing techniques and apply them creatively to their own writing. Similar to the fifth purpose, the sixth aim has creativity in it: "...read widely and comprehend how reading helps to personal development." Having read widely, one's originality is encouraged, which improves one's reading and writing skills. This feeds and cultivates the reader's creativity, which is essential in the twenty-first century because managements and industries around the world agree that creativity and innovation are essential to the competitiveness of various organizations in the global economy (Lekhanya&Raselimo, 2022). Because it is crucial to the development and improvement of modern civilisation, the LGCSE Literature in English correlates with this competence. This is due to literature's continuing ability to move the reader's consciousness into a completely unrelated world full of love, harmony, pain, and battles (Education- News, 2020). Therefore, it should come as no surprise that literature provides avid readers with a means of escape from the harsh realities of the outside world. The seventh aim states that a learner should develop an aptitude to '...understand that creative writing is a source of self-expression and personal fulfilment.' In this situation, reading a creative writing (literary text) work will hone one's creativity and encourage them to use it to create their own creative work as a way of "expressing themselves" and finding "personal fulfilment."

Collaboration fosters teamwork, which is essential for success in education and life in general. It also empowers learners to develop original ideas that can advance their countries (Gundry et al., 2014). It makes people into a cohesive group. This is clear from the second syllabus purpose, which requires

learners to respond to literary texts from various historical and cultural contexts. Understanding other cultures in their various eras enables one to see things from their perspective and, as a result, to collaborate with people from those cultures. Literature is viewed as an "encyclopaedia of a nation's civilisation and culture; reflecting the psychological structure of a nation, spiritual aspirations... and cultural practices," as claimed by Moea (2022a, p. 5). Reading about these civilizations thus improves one's comprehension of and ability to work with various societies. Aim 4 states that the same talent "...lead to a better understanding of themselves and others." The study of values and attitudes in literary texts gives us the capacity and power to view the world through a renewed lens (Moea, 2022b). Understanding others makes it simpler to work together for the benefit of oneself and others.

Communication develops ability to present ideas and exchange opinions through different methods as well as the ability to actively listen and understand other people's views. The first syllabus aim, which reads, "The syllabus aims at developing the ability of learners to communicate accurately, appropriately, and effectively in speech and in writing," reflects the importance of communication in the development of the capacity to present ideas and exchange opinions through a variety of media as well as the capacity to actively listen to and understand others' points of view. In the world of the twenty-first century, communication is the crucial interpersonal ability required for both surviving and building strong relationships with others; it is through communication that different ideas are conveyed (Kurata, Mokhets'engoane & Selialia, 2022). Because literature is a conversation starter, this curriculum encourages effective and appropriate communication because it gives learners the language and diction they need to participate in conversation after reading a literary work. The second goal, which states that a learner should "understand and respond" imaginatively to literary materials, also reflects communication. The ability to respond requires reading, and the ability to demonstrate knowledge depends on reading. These are the two communication skills that are required. The third goal emphasizes how the LGCSE Literature in English program helps learners develop their capacity to "enjoy literature and understand its contribution to aesthetic... progress." An increased ability to communicate better results from an appreciation of the "aesthetics" of language, which is a tool for communication. This is because better communication will result in more accurate and appropriate diction. The fourth syllabus aim emphasizes once more how this syllabus fosters the capacity to investigate issues that are shared by all people, which will help people understand one another and themselves better. Through reading literature, one is exposed to various language usages as a mode of communication. This allows one to become acclimated to and ready to understand others, which "leads them to have a better understanding of themselves and others" and allows one to see how other people communicate in contrast to how they are accustomed to. A learner should be able to "...appreciate varied ways in which writers achieve their results," according to the sixth aim (NCDC & ECOL, 2018). This is further supported by Ezeokoli and Igubor's (2016) claim that allowing learners to analyse complex or non-standard instances of language makes them aware of language usage rules and enables them to understand various language contexts. The sixth aim is for a learner to acquire the ability to read widely and even to understand how reading helps with personal growth. English-language literature strengthens reading habits, and Olasehinde et al. (2015) confirm that reading sharpens the mind and prepares the voracious reader for distinction in life. Reading literary works will therefore improve one's language as well as their ability to read, which is a communication skill. The seventh objective recognizes that a learner will gain knowledge of how creative writing may be a vehicle for self-expression and personal fulfilment. "Self-expression" is accomplished fully and entirely through communication, which is perfected through avidly reading literary works. As a result, someone who has had exposure to reading is able to communicate themselves clearly, accurately, and with the appropriate diction as required by the social setting. A piece of literature can be used to record, chronicle, and learn about anything happening in a society because literature is a product of that civilization. Literature is the art of language, thus it cannot exist without it, according to Moea (2022b), because it is a necessary tool for beginners to learn English entirely in nations where it is not the first language. In a same spirit, Moea (2022a) affirms that literacy, which is embodied in communication through the linguistic skills learned by studying literature, is fundamentally essential for the development of each person's capacity to participate effectively in a specific culture. This claim firmly embeds this objective inside the workings of collaboration, enabling a literary creation to be a well-positioned member of society who speaks and writes correctly and appropriately as necessitated by both the audience and the context.

### ***Literacy Skills***

Lynch (2018) defines literacy skills as those that increasingly reflect technological use in addition to the abilities necessary in problem-solving, collaboration, and the presentation of information via multimedia. These skills include information literacy, media literacy, technology literacy, and flexibility. These abilities include the capacity to locate data both conventionally and digitally (Kurata, Mokhets'engoane, & Selialia, 2022). In the twenty-first century, literacy is concerned with both the creation and confirmation of knowledge. Accessing, analysing, managing, and conveying information are all part of information literacy (McNaught, 2008). The first aim is to "communicate accurately, appropriately, and effectively in speech and writing," the third aim is to "enjoy literature and appreciate its contribution aesthetic, imaginative, and intellectual growth," the fifth aim is to "appreciate different ways in which writers achieve their effects," the sixth aim is to "read widely and understand how reading contributes to personal development," and the seventh aim is to "understand that creative writing is a means of showcasing one's abilities." Media literacy is a component of all of them, which in this case will be literary texts, as there must be a variety of media involved for all of this to occur. Finding trustworthy sources and authentic information is essential to distinguishing it from the fake information that abounds on the Internet. Nevertheless, none of the seven syllabus goals for the LGCSE Literature in English include the advancement of technological abilities. The CAP and this syllabus are therefore out of sync. The synchronization of these two is so that subjects would include means to enhance technology abilities, according to CAP, from which this syllabus was derived (MOET, 2009). Since universal education in this day and age demands someone to be competent in these skills, this is a challenge that the curriculum developers (NCDC in this regard) need to address. Flexibility is defined as the readiness to accept essential concessions in order to advance a group's common objective (the Partnership for 21st Century Skills [P21], 2009). It enables constructive handling of praise, setbacks, and criticism while effectively accommodating input (Barak & Levenberg, 2016). All seven of the goals display this sub-skill. The first goal emphasizes flexibility through the capacity to communicate "accurately, appropriately, and effectively"; the second goal demonstrates flexibility through showing

comprehension and imagination in responses, especially to far-off periods and cultures, enabling a better approach to such and accommodating them as is presented in pellucid terms by the fourth goal, "...lead to a better understanding of themselves and others" in order to be accommodating of one another. The third aim is aligned with the fifth goal through an appreciation of "different ways in which other writers achieve their effects, allowing understanding of different individual writing styles," while the sixth and seventh goals demonstrate flexibility through an understanding of how reading contributes to "personal development" and how creative writing affects "self-expression and personal fulfilment," respectively.

### *Life skills*

The idea of life skills (including leadership, initiative, productivity, cross-cultural relationships, and social skills) looks at intangible elements of a learner's daily life (Collie & Marting, 2016). Life skills are the aptitudes that enable effective adaptation to environmental changes. These intangible characteristics highlight both professional and personal qualities. Examples of these include the ability to make decisions, solve problems, interact with others, be aware of oneself, have empathy, and manage stress and emotions (Buckle, n.d.). Reading, whether for pleasure or scholastic objectives, sharpens the mind and makes a person think logically and unflappably; for this reason, reading is a habit that is necessary for a great man (Olasehinde et al., 2015). Another lesson to be pecked from literature is that it trains readers to be voracious analytical readers who can analyse a character and delve inside their minds to determine what drives a character, what shapes their beliefs, and how one interacts with others (Zala, 2013). Four syllabus aims— 2, 4, 6, and 7—are where these claims that support life skills are located. In order to understand how the study of Literature in English helps learners connect cross-culturally, Aim 2 encourages them to read and respond "imaginatively to literary texts from diverse... cultures." Aim 4 promotes intercultural awareness, "explore areas of universal human concern," self-awareness, "... a better understanding of themselves," interpersonal skills, and empathy, "...lead to a better understanding of themselves and others," and it works to facilitate effective positive adaptation to environmental changes. Self-awareness appears in aim number six, "...understand how reading helps to personal development," and is repeated in aim number seven, "...understand that creative writing is a form of self-expression and personal fulfilment." Literature is beautiful because it is a true reflection of who we are as people, encompassing the full spectrum of sentimentalities and feelings that we experience or identify with (Austin, 2022). It is evident that literature has always served as a source of enjoyment, giving readers a chance to escape the pain, suffering, tiredness of the world, and the monotony of daily life. The author's opinions, views, skills, and mind are all there in the entire literary package. Literature serves as an encyclopaedia as well as entertainment for its audience. The reader learns about the man, the world, and life from one end of the literary work to the other (Rusdiansyah, Adilah&Rahmadani, 2022). As a result, it gives one the tools needed to face the difficulties of the time—the 21st century.

### **Conclusion**

This study aimed to examine the position and importance of literature education in the LGCSE syllabus and curriculum by examining how the syllabus for LGCSE Literature in English aligns with 21st century competencies. Except for technology capabilities, all of the curriculum's aims clearly fall under the umbrella of 21st century competencies, albeit to varied degrees. The following learning sub-skills—critical thinking, communication, cooperation, and creativity—appear to predominate in the learning skills category. Learning skills are followed by literacy skills, in which the sub-skill of flexibility appears in each of the seven aims. Information and media are closely behind with five aims each, while technology is last with zero aims. As previously stated, there is no evidence that the syllabus provides learners with the technological skills they need to succeed in school and elsewhere; these are the skills that allow for a novel approach to teaching and give both teachers and learners access to a variety of educational tools that foster creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration (which, according to the results of this study, predominate the LGCSE Literature in English syllabus), as well as the promotion of inclusion (Gopo, 2022). The next group is a life skills group that clearly identifies interpersonal skills, self-awareness, empathy, cross-cultural awareness, and dealing with emotions and stress.

Based on these results, if learners are able to think critically and creatively, collaborate well, and communicate effectively, they will be more equipped for career success. Additionally, they have better tools to lead happier, healthier lives. According to Paige (2009), adopting a curriculum for the twenty-first century should incorporate knowledge, critical thinking, innovation skills, media literacy, real-world experience, and basic academic topics. To achieve the real learning that the 21st century demands, learners must actively engage in the learning environment and develop 21st century skills like cooperation, critical thinking, and problem solving. This will provide learners with the knowledge and life skills they need to be successful in their future careers (Lombardi, 2007). According to the results of this study and Lombardi's claim, it is sufficient to say that the LGCSE Literature in English course offers these skills in an adequate manner. Additionally, the results imply that English literature's status as an elective should be reviewed because they confirm the subject's crucial role in society's ongoing struggle to preserve humanity in the 21st century. Since literature's slogan is "live and let live," literature serves as the social environment that can teach people how to live in harmony with one another.

### **Recommendations**

Literature ties together various sentiments and cyphers, values, and informed reflections to show off its inventive tradition. In Literature education, the complexity and subtlety of everyday existence are employed as forms to illuminate an experience that includes rhythm, repetition, and contrast, which contribute to the development of functional aesthetics (Keerthika, 2018). Therefore, curriculum in the twenty-first century should stress knowledge construction and encourage learners to produce the knowledge that is important or significant to them in order to help learners master new skills. Making curricula more applicable to the real world can improve learners' motivation, engagement, and understanding of the material while also

preparing them for adult life (Lombardi, 2007). This emphasizes even more how important it is for the LGCSE Literature in English course to include technological abilities in order to provide learners with this necessary talent in a time when they are sorely needed.

Teachers in the twenty-first century must take on the role of a mentor or guide for their learners rather than the all-knowing expert who imparts all of their knowledge. Given their easy access to information of all kinds, children will surely know more than teachers do about some subjects and have a head start on the technology being used. Teachers must be given the resources they require to encourage and promote learning in order for them to empower their learners. This reform is wonderful news for educators. Instead of trying to arm learners with every piece of information needed to succeed in subjects they are unfamiliar with, teachers should support learners as they enter new professions. This entails preparing learners to function independently of their parents and teachers, ensuring they possess the required skills, and then guiding them as they develop the self-confidence to succeed. This necessitates that the instructors be flexible, inquisitive, and future-focused. Teachers must always be acquiring new instructional strategies and engaging in collaborative learning with their learners. As thus, the Ministry of Education and Training should train them.

Language as a tool was created by humans about 50,000 years ago. It gives the objects of the world a reliable identification, allowing for more complex comprehension and conversation about them (Fischer, 2019). Furthermore, according to Fischer, writing became a technology used by humans roughly 7,000 years ago. We are able to record the sounds of our thoughts and spoken phrases through writing. The result is impeccable- that language shapes thought. Writing requires thinking as a crucial step. To understand what others are thinking, we must read and think. Prolonged, in-depth reading, as opposed to the typical online reading style, is required to understand literature (Padhi, 2018). Literature also differs from other forms of writing in its substance, which encourages us to think in innovative and sophisticated ways. Because Literature is one of those things that can and, in my opinion, should be a part of that diversity, it is still important in the twenty-first century.

Literature is important because it imparts a wealth of knowledge, promotes moral values, and is enjoyable. Exposure to excellent literature is necessary at every stage of life since it has many positive effects on us (Beers & Probst, 2011). It is obviously rather limiting to define literature as just but a familiarity with letters. Actually, it creates the framework for a happy life (Padhi, 2018). In a time when our personal lives intersect with those of others all around the world, we want better for our schools and much better for our learners. We inspire them to approach problems from a different perspective, engage in new experiences, and develop their empathy. We want pupils to read literature (Beers & Probst, 2011; Olasehinde et al., 2015; Padhi, 2018). Reading and studying literature, as antiquated as it may seem, is a skill that is required in the twenty-first century.

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