

RLC



RIVERSIDE LEARNING CENTER



GRADE 4 ECOSYSTEM

DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING

WELLSPRING CURRICULUM

SAMPLE





CURRICULUM CONTENT

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Thanks to all students and faculty who have been part of these courses and enriched the curriculum with their perspectives and practices.

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1. INTRODUCTION

PREAMBLE

The past thirty years have seen dramatic shifts in education and education systems globally as well as in India. This has been mobilized by greater awareness among all stakeholders, increased private investment and further accelerated by the digital technology revolution. Reform policies have moved beyond issues of access and infrastructure, they are diving deeper into measures to improve the quality and standard of learning. Surveys in India point out that the examination centric system prioritizes rote learning, which severely limits students' abilities to apply their knowledge in real world contexts. Internationally, the crux of the discourse has come to be centered around the idea of creating inclusive and sustainable development: OECD's Trends in Education 2019 report focuses on the new challenges that globalization brings – growing consumption, unsustainable use of resources, and, for some, a feeling of being left behind – recognizing that there is an important role for education to play in improving civic and social participation and promoting democratic citizenship.

We feel that children are now growing up in a world where there is an increasing distance between people who are different, and a diminishing capacity to listen to perspectives that differ from our own. As a result, the world needs education systems and teachers who can help our students become self-directed learners who understand the importance of tolerance, acceptance and compromise. More than anything, our students need to experience a nurturing and loving school culture first-hand, if they are to graduate with the desire to make our society more empathetic and equitable.

The Riverside School was started in 2011 as an experiment to create a child-centric learning culture that values the development of character as much as the building of skills and knowledge. Our foundational belief is that Design Thinking, with empathy and action at its core, is the key to empower all school stakeholders with the courage to engage with life as proactive citizens, actively shaping a more desirable world every today engagement with their education.

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The development and application of our simplified problem-solving framework of **Feel-Imagine-Do-Share (FIDS)** has led us to deeply understand the needs of our ecosystem, involving stakeholders in envisioning best-case scenarios and then prototyping, implementing and iterating them. In this manner, our decisions, behaviours, protocols, practices and the processes we follow as a community have been created through conversation and dialogue with students rather than mere instruction. We have seen that when students take themselves as playing a key role in the design their own learning journey, there is a remarkable increase in their ownership of, and engagement with their education. Moreover, this approach has dramatically increased students' capabilities to apply the skills and knowledge that they learn in school by creating the space to foster higher order skills in **creativity, innovation and problem-solving**. Throughout this design process, teachers and students have also engaged with and drawn **inspiration from philosophies and pedagogical frameworks** from across the globe, including Dr. Howard Gardner, Project Zero, the Reggio Emilia schools, IDEO, and perhaps most importantly, Mahatma Gandhi.

While our experiments in Design Thinking and Human-Centric Design have led to spin-offs that have impacted millions of children and communities around the world (see: *Design For Change**, *aProCh*** and *RLC****), we believe our most significant impact has been on our primary stakeholders and their families through the creation of the **HumanE Curriculum** that shifts us from **Being Human by Chance** to **Being HumanE by Choice**. Alumni who have graduated over the past years regularly visit and keep in touch with the school, and their maturity and perspective are a living testament to the **HumanE Curriculum** that they have helped build.

This curriculum develops a value system characterized by **5-Es – Empathy, Ethics, Excellence, Elevation and Elevation** – embedded in each of the processes and practices that shape the design of our school ecosystem. All of our processes have been contextualized, drawn, iterated, prototyped and implemented at the Riverside school. For example, the practice of starting each day with a **conglom** (coming together of students every morning) irrespective of the age of the students, allows students to engage with different perspectives, and each learner, thus building their confidence to take ownership of their learning journeys every single day.

In each of these grade-specific curriculum documents, we describe the rationale for how stakeholders are engaged with at each grade level and the sequence and manner in which these different processes are introduced, developed and integrated across the year, month, week and day.

Website Links: * <https://www.dfcworld.com> | ** <http://www.aproch.org> | *** <http://www.riversidelearningcenter.in>



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SECTION
**UNDERSTANDING
WELL-BEING CURRICULUM**



BRIEF:

WHY WELLSPRING?

Distractions surmount today's youth. Social media, political instability, regional conflicts, TV and media explosion has distanced youth from play, people and purpose. They are consumed in consumption of unregulated information and more so in contributing to the chaos by creating virtual identity of themselves that is in total disconnect with their own reality and the reality of the world.

What if, in the midst of this confusion, children are able to connect with themselves, their immediate environment and the world where reality, hope and positivity becomes their scripting rather than the need to consume, pretend and be dubious.

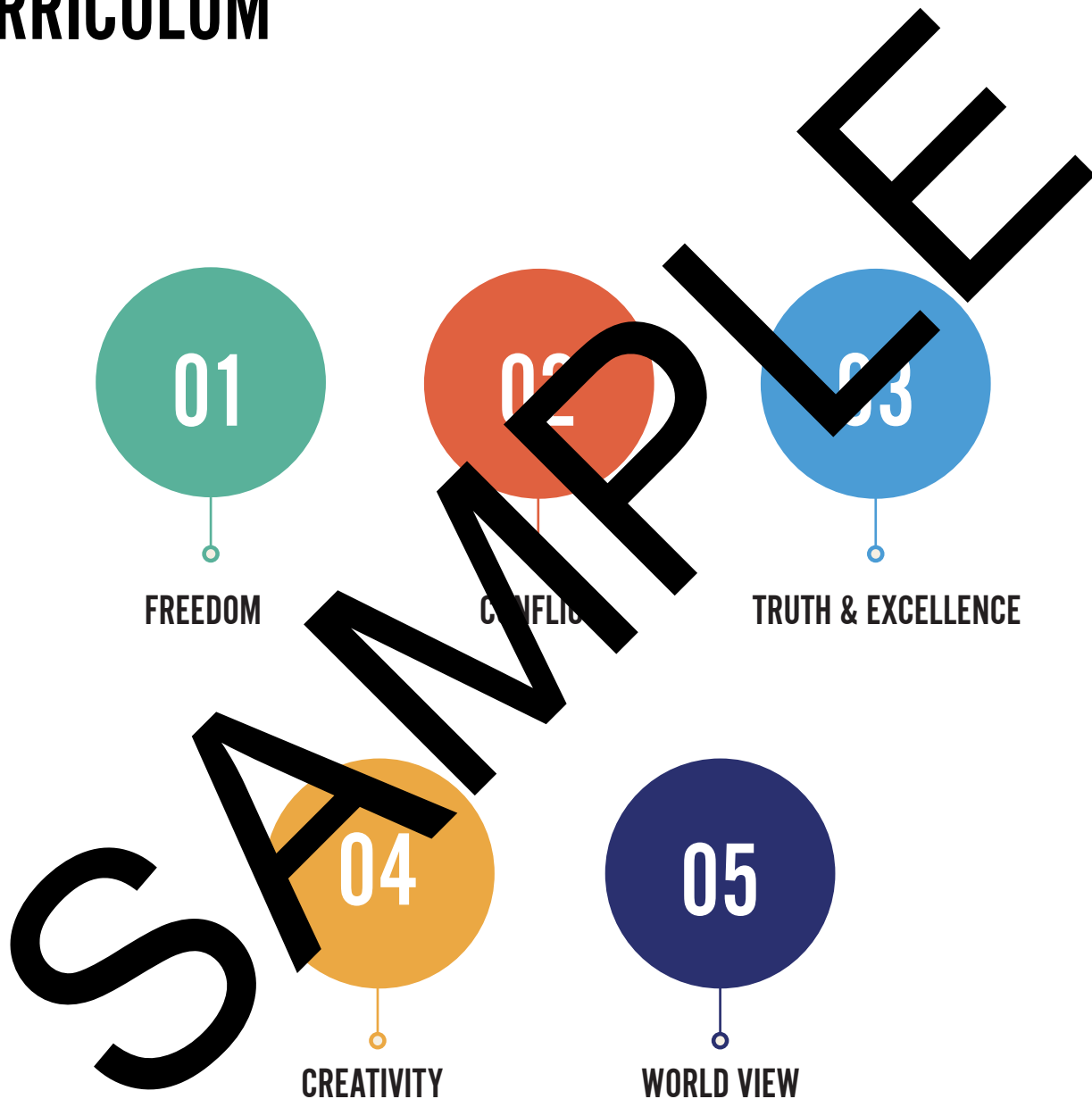
Wellspring is an endeavour to engage students through mediums of art, dance, drama, cinema, debates, thinking cohorts etc, to experience life by connecting the past to their present, holding perspectives, imagining best-case scenarios and becoming conscious and aware of one's own identity, purpose and practice.

We believe, Wellspring will provide a platform for students to become more compassionate towards self and others and responsibly with a purpose in life.

*Wellspring - an abundant source of something.
"a wellspring of ideas"*



1. UNDERSTANDING THE
**ROADMAP OF
CURRICULUM**



CRITICAL THINKING CURRICULUM

based on poem 'Where the mind is without fear' by Rabindranath Tagore

In the poem, "Where the mind is without fear" Rabindranath Tagore has visualized a country that is based on the premise of universal nature of existence. In his view, this country is one, where people are free, they are not divisive but understand the existence of the united world. People here pursue truth hence excellence is not stagnating but is ever creative and have the larger world view. This poem seems just right for a child to build an understanding of one's own identity and the position in the world that they belong to.

The five verses are interpreted as 5 beads of Freedom, Conflict, Truth & Excellence, Creativity and World View by the teacher and the students.

The curriculum has been carried out with **6th and 7th grade** students based on your context and the content of the curriculum you can choose the age group you would like to do it with. This curriculum has **5 modules**, each with **2 to 3 sessions** (subject to change) of 40 minutes (except 2).

WHERE THE MIND IS WITHOUT FEAR

*Where the mind is without fear
And the head is held high;
Where knowledge is free*

*Where the world has not been broken
Up into fragments
By narrow, selfish walls;*

*Where words come out from the depth of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its
Arms towards perfection*

*Where the clear stream of reason
Has not lost its way
Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;*

*Where the mind is led forward by thee
Into everlasting
Thought and action
Into that heaven of freedom, my father, Let my country awake.*

- Rabindranath Tagore

TEACHERS' GUIDE

a few things to keep in mind before you begin with the curriculum

Guide for the facilitator before beginning the topic:

Before you begin with the curriculum, share your curriculum context with the faculty of the school. How these principles are aligned to the school's values, context, pedagogical approaches and needs.

Establish this with the students: Many conversations in the curriculum can be subjective and perspectives of various students. We should be open and respectful to listening to all.

Housekeeping:

*Ideas like housekeeping should usually be shared with all facilitators of the school so that the children feel at ease in all the classes that they are attending.

- The working spaces should be safe, welcoming and extremely comfortable, allowing students to relax let go of the worries of their daily life and focus on the session, encourages students and creates a state of solidarity and trust. This could include sitting in a circle and brightening up the space.
- Look at the room and note considerations such as ventilation and accessibility for all participants.
- The space can provide a variety of seating options including a more informal space where participants can sit on the floor.

Additional aspects:

- Use metaphors to communicate the topics. Children connect a lot with things that they use and situations that they are in, so metaphors making the learning more personal and contextual.
- Bring in your own resources to address the students to make it context based.

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*Sculpture at Akshardham,
Gandhinagar, Gujarat*

SESSION 1: INTRODUCTION TO WELLSPRING

OBJECTIVE

Students should have a general understanding of this programme. The students will comprehend that they will gain knowledge about themselves, other people, and the world we live, in order to make our lives more beautiful.

RESOURCES

- Image of the sculpture at *Akshardham, Gandhinagar, Gujarat*
- Video 'The Pale Blue dot' (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EWPfmdAWRZ0&t=18s>), a 5.35 minute speech by *Carl Sagan*.

SR. NO.	TIME	DESCRIPTION
1	30 MINS	<p>GUIDED INQUIRY</p> <p>Ask the students to respond to the image.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do you see?• Who is this man?• What is he doing?• What is the expression on the man's face?• How do you feel as you look at this image? <p>Build from the sharing what the students will learn to do in these sessions. i.e. 'Understand life to live in a beautiful way, carve our own destiny.'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Show the video 'The Pale Blue Dot'• What did you understand from that video?• How does it feel to know that we are not even a dot in the vast universe?• Do our actions still matter?
2	10 MINS	<p>CLOSING THE SESSION</p> <p>Ask the students to share what they understand about wellspring.</p>

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