

The Primary Curriculum at UWC East Africa

What are the units of inquiry to be studied in Early Childhood (EC)?

All students in EC have four units of inquiry, including one yearlong unit of inquiry that can be revisited periodically throughout the year. The units of inquiry provide a broad subject framework from which students learn the essential skills and knowledge. Subject matter is integrated within the units of inquiry through the study and exploration of conceptually based central ideas. However, where it is not possible to integrate subject matter meaningfully, stand-alone lessons are planned to ensure all students receive age appropriate essential skills and knowledge in the foundational subjects such as mathematics and English language.

Programme of Inquiry for EC:

<p>How the world works</p> <p>Central Idea: We learn to make sense of the world around us</p> <p>Lines of inquiry:</p> <p>Our senses and how we use them</p> <p>Exploring and observing through our senses</p> <p>Using our senses to make decisions and communicate</p>	<p>Who we are</p> <p>Central Idea: Every day we can learn to do more for ourselves.</p> <p>Lines of Inquiry:</p> <p>Different ways we can use our body.</p> <p>How our body grows and changes</p> <p>Ways we can be independent and work together with others</p>
<p>Sharing the planet</p> <p>Central Idea: Life on earth creates opportunities for different interactions.</p> <p>Lines of Inquiry:</p> <p>Classifying living things</p> <p>Different ways people interact with living things</p> <p>Things people and other living things have in common</p>	<p>How we express ourselves</p> <p>Central Idea: Patterns exist in stories and rhymes that move our bodies and communicate sounds.</p> <p>Lines of Inquiry:</p> <p>Different types of art used to tell a story or poem</p> <p>How culture can be expressed through story and the arts</p> <p>Interpreting stories and rhymes</p>

Through each unit of inquiry we construct play based inquiry centres that enhance students understanding of the unit and build upon the essential foundational skills.

How are language skills and knowledge developed in EC?

Learners' needs are best served when they have opportunities to construct meaning and engage in learning within meaningful contexts. Regular guided and independent practice in language skills and strategies allow students to internalise and automate their understanding of how language works with growing proficiency. In turn, students are able to apply and transfer their skills and understanding to increasingly diverse contexts.

Therefore in the Early Childhood setting at UWC East Africa it is recognised that in order for successful and effective language learning to happen, learners need opportunities to:

- be involved in communicating for real-life purposes
- develop generic, transferable skills
- focus on language features, skills and strategies
- build on prior language learning allowing for the development of proficiency
- learn about their own and other cultures through language
- make connections across the curriculum and revisit concepts and processes in new contexts

Language – Conceptual Overview	
<p>Speaking & Listening:</p> <p>Learners show an understanding of the value of speaking and listening to communicate. They recognize that sounds are associated with objects, or with symbolic representations of them. They are using language to name their environment, to get to know each other, to initiate and explore relationships, to question and inquire.</p>	<p>Viewing & Presenting:</p> <p>Learners show an understanding that the world around them is full of visual language that conveys meaning. They are able to interpret and respond to visual texts. Although much of their own visual language is spontaneous, they are extending and using visual language in more purposeful ways.</p>
<p>Reading:</p> <p>Learners show an understanding that print represents the real or the imagined world. They know that reading gives them knowledge and pleasure; that it can be a social activity or an individual activity. They have a concept of a “book”, and an awareness of some of its structural elements. They use visual cues to recall sounds and the words they are “reading” to construct meaning.</p>	<p>Writing:</p> <p>Learners show an understanding that writing is a form of expression to be enjoyed. They know that how you write and what you write conveys meaning; that writing is a purposeful act, with both individual and collaborative aspects.</p>

NB: The above concepts are frequently studied with increasing complexity and in more than one grade level, as determined by the level and ability of the individual student.

The teaching of language outcomes will be integrated in all curriculum areas as well as the focus of guided and shared reading. These instructional activities allow us to focus on contexts for early writing and to begin to learn about literary conventions, as well as many other language outcomes.

How are mathematical skills and knowledge developed in EC?

The mathematics program at UWC East Africa provides the framework for students to become literate and proficient in the language of mathematics by developing both conceptual understanding and procedural fluency. The end result is the ability to think and reason mathematically and to use mathematics to pose and solve problems in real life contexts.

We aim to nurture students who can appreciate the intrinsic fascination of mathematics and begin to use the subject as a way of thinking, as opposed to seeing it as a series of facts and equations to be memorised. Students with mathematical proficiency understand basic concepts, are fluent in performing basic operations, reason clearly, formulate, represent and solve mathematical problems, and maintain a positive outlook toward mathematics. Teachers build on the students' natural curiosity and mathematical understanding and guide each of them to compute, problem solve, communicate, reason, and to make mathematical connections among situations, both within and outside of school.

Mathematics – Conceptual Overview	
NUMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Numbers are a naming system• Numbers can be used in many ways for different purposes in the real world• Numbers are connected to each other through a variety of relationships.• Making connections between our experiences with number can help us to develop number sense.
PATTERN & FUNCTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Patterns and sequences occur in everyday situations.• Patterns repeat and grow.
MEASUREMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Measurement involves comparing objects and events.• Objects have attributes that can be measured using non-standard units.• Events can be ordered and sequenced.
DATA HANDLING	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We collect information to make sense of the world around us.• Organizing objects and events helps us to solve problems.• Events in daily life involve chance.
GEOMETRY (Shape & Space)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shapes can be described and organized according to their properties.• Objects in our immediate environment have a position in space that can be described according to a point of reference.

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The Math program in the EC is sourced by a variety of resources, we utilise a variety of hands on math manipulatives and allow students access to age appropriate mathematical software programs.

Assessment in Early Childhood

Authentic assessment involves utilizing a variety of tools and strategies to capture an accurate picture of each individual child's development. Using this philosophy as our foundation, we plan and design diagnostic, formative and summative assessment tasks. Examples of the assessment tools and strategies we use include:

- Observation and anecdotal notes
- Teacher checklists and rubrics
- Performance tasks
- Contextual products (student work samples)
- Student reflections
- Student goal setting
- Multimedia evidence (photos, videos, audio)

Reporting:

We choose to communicate what students know, understand and can do through a variety of ways. In doing so we hope to convey a clear and accurate picture of each individual child's progress and identify areas for growth. Reporting in the primary at UWCEA takes the following forms:

- Conferences
Parent Teacher Child Conferences
Student Led Celebration
- Written Report - report cards are sent home twice each year, in December and June.
- Portfolios - each student has a growth portfolio of on-going work samples selected (with guidance from the teacher) and reflected on by the student.