South African children are learning robotics from Grade R

Take a look inside Curro Academy Protea Glen, Soweto and its robotics class.

In March 2022, the Department of Basic Education announced that it plans to introduce several new school subjects to its curriculum, including coding and robotics. These STEM subjects would be implemented from this school year.

Regardless of government requirements, Curro and Curro Academy have started implementing robotics from the foundation phase in some branches, including Protea Glen. This is done using vital hardware from ASUS Education's line of notebooks.

"Curro has become almost like a trendsetter in actually introducing that subject to our kids even before the government said that it's compulsory," says Mr Swart Sibanyoni, head of the primary school at Curro Protea Glen based in Soweto.

Look at the practical skills

Curro Academy Protea Glen was established in 2019. "It's always a struggle to start a school from the bottom, says Mr Sibanyoni. "But here the school is so oversubscribed that [even now], we've got people who are already on waiting lists because the school is full."

Learners at Protea Glen even benefit from being introduced to robotics through Duplo Lego robots using the ASUS BR1100 laptops.

"At Curro, robotics has its own curriculum. Curro came up with the curriculum so that it is not something that's integrated in the learning, but it becomes a subject on its own. Because once it's a subject on its own, it gives it that seriousness that the subject needs and deserves," Mr Sibanyoni continues.

How it works

We've all heard that we're preparing children of today for jobs in the future that don't exist yet. And it's mostly true if you consider what they're learning in schools now.

At Protea Glen, learners can expect to learn how to code on laptops using small robots and the ASUS laptops from Grade R. The class is equipped with Windows-based laptops that are used to teach learners basic coding and a variety of other digital skills.

"We're using the laptops to code little robots. We use the laptops to let children learn how to type, how to paint and how to play games…" explains Ms Tersia van Kraayenburg, the foundation phase robotics teacher.

This is done in a more practical environment, as it can be challenging to teach young children theory and programming. But at Protea Glen and at other Curro Academies, these practical classes serve as the foundation for future careers in robotics and coding.

"It's not a subject that you can do in a theoretical manner," Mr Sibanyoni explains.

If South Africa is going to prepare the technicians and scientists of the future, we better start by introducing children to the ideal IT infrastructure hardware from the start. ASUS Education offers a variety of IT solutions for learners and educators in South Africa.

For more info, contact:
Marcé Bester
ASUS Technical Public Relations Manager
marce_bester@asus.com
083 966 6779

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