

Curriculum 21

By Heidi Hayes Jacobs

The Big Questions:

1. To what extent are students authentically engaged in their own learning? What kind of ownership and responsibility for their work do students take?
2. To what extent is the student authentically engaged, powerfully and emotionally connected to the curriculum? (the content is meaningful and important to a student, and something he wants to share with others.. something he has created himself).
3. Does the curriculum combine or work together to allow students to create? To make a difference?
4. Is making a good grade the purpose of learning content? Does Function follow Form, or does Form follow Function? What if I held each topic/lesson/unit/objective up to this consideration?
5. Have I considered these questions, discussed them in collaboration with teachers? If so, how do I answer each one? If not, how do I answer each one?

Curriculum Mind Shifts:

1. FROM knowing right answers TO knowing how to behave when answers are not readily apparent. From valuing knowledge ACQUISITION as an outcome to valuing knowledge PRODUCTION as an outcome.
 - a. Focus on student performance under those challenging conditions that demand strategic reasoning, insightfulness, perseverance, creativity, and precision to resolve a complex problem.
 - b. Focus is on learning FROM the objectives, instead of learning OF the objectives.

2. FROM transmitting meaning TO constructing meaning. It is not the content that is stored in memory but the *activity of constructing it* that gets stored.
 - a. Humans don't GET ideas; they MAKE ideas.
 - b. Learning is essentially ACTIVE.
 - c. Constructivist learning - the individual interacts with others to construct shared knowledge. A cycle of internalization of what is socially constructed as shared meaning, which is then externalized to affect the learner's social participation. The individual influences the group and the group influences the individual.
 - d. Interdependent meaning-makers.

3. FROM external evaluation TO self-assessment. Are we educating students for a life of tests or for the tests of life? THE PURPOSE OF EVALUATION IS TO HAVE STUDENTS LEARN TO BECOME SELF-EVALUATIVE.
 - a. Evaluation is the highest level of Bloom's taxonomy. Shift this responsibility to students.
 - b. Make student self-evaluation as significant an influence as external evaluations.
 - c. Process-oriented goals can't be assessed using product-measurement techniques.
 - d. Assessment should be a mechanism for providing ongoing feedback to the learner and a process of renewal: self-managing, monitoring, and self-modifying.

The most important role of educators is to keep students focused on the point, keep them centered in meaningful curriculum content, and guide and facilitate the creation process - take the building blocks of understanding and create something more impressive than the individual pieces, assembling them in meaningful and compelling ways that are worthy of attention.

*GROWTH AND CHANGE ARE FOUND IN DISEQUILIBRIUM, NOT BALANCE

*FORM SUPPORTS AND FOLLOWS FUNCTION VS leading it.

*THE WHOLE IS THE SUM OF THE PARTS!

*Making good grades is a low level mindset

*We need to move from an emphasis on remembering facts to thinking critically about the larger issues that those disconnected facts can only dimly reflect as stand-alone pieces of information.

*'A synthesis of curriculum focused on larger issues...' and then perhaps shared with the world through iTunes, the Web, YouTube...

*The ultimate goal is an effective environment for learning, where students are grouped to work with the personnel organized to match their needs in time frames that support their work in both real and virtual spaces.

*"Students, if you do exemplary work, the very best of the best, I will consider placing your work into global distribution."

*"Students, what do you have to say that is so important, so vital, that it will cause others on our planet to do something that matters, something that will make our world a better place, because they saw your schoolwork, your presentation, your movie, your podcast....?"

*Participatory culture means learning takes on a more active role than the traditional passive mode. The proliferation of devices that merge media types don't strengthen mass culture: they destroy it. *Everyone participates, and each stands on the shoulders of others to create their own unique version of culture and reality.*

The real power of Google Earth isn't in its imagery; it's in its participatory nature. It's not that there's so much rich information about people, places, and culture being available to everyone; it's that all of this info is the result of a global, collaborative, work-sharing effort. And the product is free to the ultimate beneficiaries. Collective intelligence, and the means to tap into it fundamentally shifts knowledge paradigms.

Social production is the producer of content and knowledge in our connected universe. This is the apprenticeship model of learning - *learning by doing*. It occurs without the need for base knowledge. It is 'just-in-time learning as you go.

The technologies are not the point - It is the relationships - the way people connect with each other and the community that is created that determines how the power of learning is shifted. The technology may just be a catalyst, which makes connections more interesting, varied, frequent, or easier to develop, which makes them so valuable to dynamic learning communities. *The power of social media to organize without need for organizations.*

SEMANTIC WEB - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semantic_Web (88)

Old Paradigm: there is a tendency to limit ourselves to those with whom we already agree, rather than *deliberately expose ourselves to those with whom we do NOT agree!*

Change = Fear to many comfortable in the "way we've 'always' done it."

- *Those we venerate the most are those who challenged us to grow and consider new ideas and possibilities as well as to fight for those notions that indeed needed protection.*
- *We should be fearless about ideas and openly engage in discussion and debate about what should matter in the subject matter*

- *We need to go out of our way to encourage learners to take risks both in artistic expression and in the realm of creating ideas. An intellect is a creative thinker and an idea shaper. '*
- Artists are for disclosing the extraordinary in the ordinary.'

Growth Model for Upgrading Curriculum

Curriculum must focus on process as well as content. There are three major decisions to be made:

1. What should be taught - goals and outcomes
2. How to organize and teach toward these goals - instruction / instructional strategies
3. How we might know if those goals are being achieved using these instructional strategies - assessment

Assessments

Start with Assessments, then work to revise Content and Skills.

Reconsider the essential questions that bind and focus Assessment, Content and Skills, all three of them.

- An assessment is a form used as evidence of learning, reflecting progress or regress.
- *Assessment is a NOUN; the name of what a student produces to show knowledge and insight into content, skills, and proficiencies.*
- *Helping students evaluate the progress of their work toward their shared goals in real time is of much greater value than assigning a grade to the work.*

Steps to Upgrading, Updating, and Reconsidering current Assessment

1. *Brainstorm a pool of assessment replacements.*
2. *Identify existing types of technologies in school; commit to becoming comfortable with one new tool per semester.*
3. *Replace one dated assessment with a modern one per semester.*
4. *Share assessment upgrades formally with colleagues and students. This collaborative sharing and brainstorming is essential.*
5. *Formal work session/PD day to review upgrades. These sessions should be recurring, and regular to discuss current practice and update curriculum.*

Revising Content

Carefully articulate what is timely and timeless and concurrently find what we can let go. Updates in curriculum content should be at the heart of our work for our learners and our own professional development.

Best practice is organizing content around central concepts. Encourage an ACTIVE INQUIRY as opposed to PASSIVE ACCEPTANCE of content.

- A global perspective is developed and presented
- A personal and local perspective is cultivated
- Possibilities for future career/work options are developed with an eye to creative and imaginative directions
- Disciplines are viewed dynamically and rigorously as growing and integrating in real-world practice
- Technology and media are used to expand sources of content so that active as well as static materials are included.

Deliberate Debate and Discussion must begin and be maintained.

- Genuine exchanges between colleagues even when difficult
- Challenging the status quo
- Grapple with content choices
- Investigate relationships between the disciplines; reconceive connections between fields of knowledge
- Include students as part of the review team

Guiding Questions

- What content choices are dated and nonessential?
- What choices for topics, issues, themes, and case studies are timely and necessary for our learners within disciplines?
- Are the interdisciplinary content choices rich, natural, & rigorous?

Specific suggestions for each curricular area: pp. 35 - 59

Personnel Configurations

- *Global peer teaching teams (73)*
- *Peer coaches*

Digital Portfolios - General

- Determine purpose and audience
- Table of Contents organized around set of expectations or topic/unit headings or objectives
- *Should include some kind of reflection/self-evaluation as a crucial part of the artifacts presence in portfolio*
 - *Reflect on growth and challenges*
 - *Accomplishments*
 - *Learn to accept and request feedback*
 - *Opportunity to demonstrate skills*
- Essential that the Portfolio contains meaningful feedback
- Table of Contents provides links to student entries
- Artifacts:
 - *Should show context (assignment)*
 - "Portfolio-worthy" assignments
 - Word-processed documents
 - Images
 - Presentations
 - Audioclips/videoclips
 - Artwork

Global Learning and Sustainability

Global Literacy:

- Knowledge of other world regions, cultures, economies, and global issues.
- Skills to communicate in languages other than English, to work in cross-cultural teams, and to assess information from different sources around the world.
- Values of respect for other cultures and the disposition to engage responsibly as an actor in the global context.

Sustainability

- Living within Ecological/Natural Laws and Principles
- Healthy commons (that upon which we all depend and for which we are all responsible) (173)
- A Sense of Place
- Responsible local/global citizenship
- Sustainable Economics
- Humans are an integral part of the natural world and the health and sustainability of our natural systems has a profound effect on the quality of our lives

Start small but with purpose:

- Regular assemblies w/speakers presenting different perspectives on important world issues.
- School climate that engages and offers students serious discussions from multiple vantage points.
- Develop partnerships with local universities, businesses, cultural community, parental community to link in relationship.
- International book clubs
- Collaborative curriculum development
- Active engagement with international sister schools; classroom to classroom, grade/subject/school - all levels.
- Emphasize learning world languages
- Service Learning

Curricular Suggestions

- History - Teach U.S. history in a global context
- Science - Use methodology of scientific inquiry to engage with world problems; work collaboratively with students abroad like real scientists
- Math - Use the world to understand mathematics and use mathematics to understand the world
- Arts - Built in

*Every student studies a world language for 4 years AND experiences a home-stay exchange with a sister school.

*International experiences for faculty

Partnership for Global Learning (www.asiasociety.org)

Cloud Institute (www.cloudinstitute.org)

Ideas for History, Science, and Language (176)

Marin Country Day School

NYC Public Schools

Cambridge Elementary, Mass

Unity Charter School, NJ

Walter Payton College Prep HS, Chicago

John Stanford International School, Seattle

St. Paul's Episcopal. New Orleans

Math in 21st Century - Tebo

Ideal integration for Economics and Culture, K-12

Goals:

1. foster financial literacy, entrepreneurialism
2. understanding of global and local career interdependence
3. Knowledge of budget design
 - Monitor classroom budget
 - Monitor personal budget
 - Graph local/national/global economic trends
 - Make ethical monetary choices
 - Link financial/budgetary choices to practical realities of work

Inquiry:

1. Ask Students: Is intelligence the ability to be informed of answers to my questions, or is it the ability to know what questions to ask? School can be a regimen for learning answers, rather than learning to *inquire*.

Portfolios:

1. Categories /Table of Contents
 - a. Math Standards
 - b. Habits of Mind (212)
 - c. By Unit and Objectives
2. All portfolio content should include some kind of reflection/self-evaluation - crucial to the artifact's presence in the portfolio, and crucial to becoming a more reflective and evaluative learner.
3. Alternative Assessment - Choose a problem/sample from PS folder to include in digital portfolio. Explain the PS process (videotaped). Thus the problem solving strategy/approach is demonstrated.

Blogging and Podcasting:

1. Share responsibility for using blog as collaborative writing tool, summarizing learning and substance of class.
2. "Scribe of the Day" (<http://tinyurl.com/68djoz>) -
 - a. what was/were today's question/s?
 - b. takes notes and collects diagrams that become part of online textbook.
 - c. Reflections on class activities
 - d. Reflections on assessments
 - e. News program about class
 - f. Interviews
3. Alternative assessment
4. Podcasting - Organize, record, and edit podcasts during SNACK time to cover topics and activities in Math class.

Vocabulary

1. Metacognition
2. Perseverence
3. Inquiry

Habits of Mind

Vital habits necessary for success in school, work, and life

1. Persisting - Stick to it! Persevering in a task, remaining focused, to completion. NOT giving up.
2. Managing Impulsivity - Take your time! Thinking before acting, remaining calm, thoughtful, and deliberative. NOT jumping to conclusions or acting too soon.
3. Listening with Understanding and Empathy - Understand others. Devote mental energy to another's thoughts and ideas, holding your own thoughts in order to see another's point of view and emotions.
4. Thinking Flexibly - Look at it another way! Being able to change perspectives, generate alternatives, consider options.

5. Metacognition - Know your knowing! Thinking about your thinking! Being aware of your own thoughts, strategies, feelings and actions, and their effects on others.
6. Striving for Accuracy and Precision - Check it again! A desire for exactness, fidelity, craftsmanship, and truthfulness. NOT settling for mediocrity.
7. Inquiry - Questioning and problem posing: How do you know? Having a questioning attitude, knowing what data are needed and developing questioning strategies to generate information.
8. Applying Past Knowledge to Novel Situations - Use what you learn! Access prior knowledge, transfer knowledge beyond the situation in which it was learned.
9. Thinking and Communicating with Clarity and Precision - Be clear! Strive for accurate communication in both written and oral form
10. Gathering Data Through all Senses - Use your natural pathways! Gather data through gustatory, olfactory, tactile, kinesthetic, auditory, and visual resources.
11. Creating, Imagining, and Innovating - Try a different way! Generating new and novel ideas, fluency, originality.
12. Responding with Wonderment and Awe - Have fun figuring it out! Finding the world awesome and mysterious, and being intrigued With phenomena and beauty.
13. Taking Responsible Risks - Venture out! Being adventuresome, living on the edge of your competence.
14. Finding Humor - Laugh a little! Finding the whimsical and unexpected. Being able to laugh at yourself.
15. Thinking Interdependently - Work together! Being able to work with and learn from others in reciprocal situations.
16. Remain Open to Continuous Learning - Learn from experiences! Having humility and pride when admitting we don't know; resisting Complacency.

Metacognition and Habits of Mind

Metacognition is...

- the ability to know what we know and what we don't know
- the ability to plan a strategy for producing information
- to be conscious of our own steps and strategies during problem solving
- to reflect on and evaluate the productiveness of our thinking
- mentally rehearsing before a performance
- editing mental pictures for improved performance

The Metacognitive Staircase - becoming aware of Habits of Mind

Step 1. Being aware of the kind of thinking we are doing by recognizing and labeling the habits of mind we are using and NOT using to become a productive thinker.

Step 2. Understanding the strategy (habit/s of mind) we are using. Describing how and why they are using this habit. Analyze the sequence of steps of the process being used. What clues prompted them to use it.

Step 3. Evaluating effectiveness. (evaluative and critical thinking). Monitor the effectiveness of the strategy.

Step 4. Apply the habits in other situations. (predictive thinking) Be sensitive to situations in which the habit of mind may be used again, and predict the consequences of such thinking. How to apply in the future.

Step 5. Make a commitment to improve use. Commit to a mindful way of thinking, aware of when they have used the habits to their advantage and when they have not. Determine focus to be more effective in thinking and communicating, and modify their thinking accordingly. Take charge of their own thinking.