

Coaching Protocols for Curriculum Map Reviews

Making the School Mission Real

Vibrant and effective learning organizations are driven by mission and not by compliance. A clearly stated declaration of the driving purpose and goals of an institution is critical to galvanize professional practice. The mission statement and strategic plan should be shaped by specific tenets regarding what matters most for a specific group of learners in a specific setting'.

Critical is that the mission is supported directly by the Strategic Plan reviewed by all members of the school and local community.



A

Pedagogy will be reflected in the statement's notation of the relationship between teacher and learner and community. Alignment to the mission and strategic plan must be evident in the curriculum maps. In a very real sense, the proof of commitment to the mission is demonstrated in learning plans, implementation, and targeted assessments.

A central tenet in mapping is that all school missions are to correspond to the students in the setting: their needs, their aspirations, and demographics. Certainly any mapping efforts must be dedicated to the learners to be served.

MACRO level concepts and priorities need to be incorporated into K-12 practice on an ongoing basis that open possibilities for new kinds of learning opportunities beyond traditional courses such as internships, virtual networks, global partnerships, field studies.

Prompts-

- Do you have an actionable mission statement driving school decision making?
- Has every member of the faculty and staff had the opportunity to respond and to discuss the mission and to the strategic plan?
- Are the purposes of the mission operational in the curriculum map?
- What are the specific needs of the learners in your setting that are important to consider when laying out curriculum, instruction, and assessment?
- _ Are our MACRO level ideas actionable in the mission?



Transfer Goals that Operationalize Our Mission

To ensure the meaningful and sustained development of our learners, the translation of the mission into a set of meaningful transfer goals is central to curriculum design. We should see the direct alignment of the goals in ALL decisions regarding curriculum, assessment, and instruction.

As Jay McTighe (2014) states:

“Transfer Goals highlight the effective uses of understanding, knowledge, and skill that we seek in the long run; i.e., what we want students to be able to do when they confront new challenges – both in and outside of school. They are long-term in nature; i.e., they develop and deepen over time.

- They are performance based; i.e., require application (not simply recall).
- The application occurs in new situations, not ones previously taught or encountered; i.e., the task cannot be accomplished as a result of rote learning.
- The transfer requires a thoughtful assessment of which prior learning applies here; i.e., some strategic thinking is required (not simply “plugging in” skill and facts).

- The learners must apply their learning autonomously on their own, without coaching or excessive hand-holding by a teacher).

- Transfer calls for the use of habits of mind; i.e., good judgment, self regulation, persistence along with academic understanding, knowledge and skill.”

*retrieved from website <http://jaymctighe.com/>(2014 posted)

PROMPTS:

*Does the transfer goal reflect the spirit of the school mission?

*Is the transfer goal actionable in guiding our curriculum, assessment, and instructional choices?

*Is the transfer goal actionable in guiding our professional development choices?

*Are there cornerstone assessments anchoring the transfer goals vertically?



External Alignment to Standards

After targeted standards have been unwrapped, the language of the standard should be directly translated into the map. The curriculum makes the standard come alive in the classroom by creating clear content, skills, and assessments that support and fulfill the mission of the standard. The nouns and verbs that were unwrapped in the standard can be viewed by the corresponding content, skills, and assessments in the map. .When working on consensus mapping, the scaffolding of more complex maps can be clearly seen just as the standards become more complex.

It is important to note that standards are not curriculum but are proficiency targets. Each set of standards has unique structure and considerations. For example, the Common Core ELA standards are content free whereas Next Generation Science Standards are packed with concepts and critical content. Standards should be accessible to teachers – by discipline – in a drop down format (ideally) so that these are easily referenced and in the forefront as a unit is planned.

- Are the unwrapped standards evident in the map?
- Are the maps building in a scaffold year to year in a corresponding way to the scaffold in the specific standards?

Big Ideas



A big idea is a relational statement that describes a key idea or understanding. The big idea points directly to the purpose for the unit the transferable concept. For example in science, a big idea might be: *“In the natural world there are systems composed of interdependent component parts”*. So, when teaching the human anatomy in science, the curriculum should link all content and factual material to the concept of the human body as a system composed of interdependent component parts. If we do not use a concept to initiate our content entries, then what we have are random facts and disassociated pieces of knowledge.

PROMPT:

- Does the big idea get to the heart of the concept and purpose of your unit?
- Is the big idea a complete sentence with power?
- Will the big idea translate to an essential question?
- Does the big idea correspond to the standards?



Essential Questions

Essential questions embed the big idea into an interrogative form. Thus the learner is set into a path of inquiry in pursuit of knowledge and insight into the essential question. They take on the role of curriculum chapters in that they organize and focus and frame not only the content but the skills and assessment entered on the map. Reflecting the big

idea will serve to guide and to focus the learner. Essential questions are written directly for your specific student audience. We highly recommend **COLOR CODING** questions to match the big idea. This color coding method can filter throughout the map so that content, skills, and assessments will match the EQ. Again, this method supports, the notion of EQ's as curriculum chapters.

Prompts:

- Is there a clear concept driving the question?
- Is it written for the targeted students as the audience?
- Can it organize and frame a set of classroom experiences?
- Is it essential for the students given their experiences K-12?
- Does it align with standards?
- If there is more than one question, are all of them necessary?
- Does it link and bind content, skills, and assessments on the maps
- Do the color coded EQ's correspond one-to-one with the big idea source?
- Do(es) the question(s) inspire thinking or is it a question that an answer could be easily “googled”?



Detail on Content

Content entries reflect the significant knowledge and information to which students will be exposed. Content choices should support the big idea. In short on a map content can be posted as bulleted, targeted content points with key facts, key

names, key events, and key points of knowledge to be addressed. There will be a preponderance of nouns listed in the content because of the nature of facts and information entries. Critical is that we have an emphasis on current content and timely issues.

A thoughtful review of content GENRE choices should be considered in our units and courses, that is, whether we focus on: Topics, Issues, Problems, Themes, or Case Studies in the crafting of curriculum.

Is the content TIMELY? It is critical that students are engaged in current issues, problems, information, and ideas at any age.

Prompts:

—Does the content support a clearly stated big idea?

--- Is the course or unit focused on the genre choice that will best engage learners?

-Is the content organized so that it builds upon one concept and another?

—Are the information and information points color coded back to the appropriate essential question?

___Are the entries of significance?

—Is there sufficient information to have a working sense of the focus of the unit or strand?



Precision Skills

Skills are desired or targeted proficiencies and must commence with an action verb with each entry. The specific action verb is necessary because skills can only be taught and learned when they are observable and assessable. The skill is strategically used by the student to investigate and examine the content. The skill might also ask the student to generate and to create in response to the content. Students need to be clear what actions they are cultivating whether skills within disciplines

or cross-disciplinary in nature. Skills within a discipline reflect the language used in standards as developed by state education departments is presented in skill sets. Cross-disciplinary skills are characterized by their applicability in an area of work such as literacy strategies or specific study skills.

Are the new literacies- digital, media, and global being developed?

PROMPTS:

- Is there a natural opportunity to upgrade the map with the insertion of a digital application?
- Is there a natural opportunity to replace a traditional formative assessment with a new media format?
- Might learners participate in a global outreach component in a map to connect with another location using media tools?
- Might learners explore a global perspective on the content being examined in a unit?
- Does each skill entry begin with a specific action verb?
- Do the skills make good sense as proficiencies to engage the learner with the content?
- Is there sufficient time on the map to work on cultivating the skill?



Dispositions and Habits of Mind

In order to support the development of thoughtful and engaged learners, our curriculum should support the cultivation of specific dispositions and habits of mind. As Costa and Kallick note:

Our focus is on performance under challenging conditions that demand strategic reasoning, insightfulness, perseverance, creativity, and craftsmanship. The critical attribute of intelligent human beings is not only having information, but also knowing how to act on it. Employing Habits of Mind requires drawing forth certain patterns of intellectual behavior that produce powerful results. They are a composite of many skills, attitudes and proclivities.

The 16 Habits of Mind include:

- Persisting
- Thinking and communicating with clarity and precision
- Managing impulsivity
- Gathering data through all senses
- Listening with understanding and empathy
- Creating, imagining, innovating
- Thinking flexibly
- Responding with wonderment and awe
- Thinking about thinking (metacognition)
- Taking responsible risks
- Striving for accuracy
- Finding humor
- Questioning and posing problems
- Thinking interdependently
- Applying past knowledge to new situations
- Remaining open to continuous learning

(<http://www.artcostacentre.com/html/habits.htm>)

Prompts:

*Are there specific habits that will best serve a specific learning experience?

*Are there specific habits / dispositions that a learner needs to develop for his or her own growth over time?

*Have we built into our design opportunities to formally provide instruction and learning experiences to support the identified habits? *



Targeted Assessments

An assessment is a demonstration of learning thus it always takes the form of either a tangible product or a temporal performance. An assessment is something we can observe, so our entries must take the form of a noun. The evidence of learning takes a form that will show the learner's progress or regress. Assessments must be presented in highly precise language because vague or unclear generic entries do not help describe the learner's experience. If a teacher enters the word "quiz" as an assessment, it is unclear what type of quiz, and the type makes a difference. A ten-item multiple choice quiz requires far different skill sets than a two paragraph constructed response quiz. Most important is that the assessment is genuine evidence of how our students are acquiring what we want them to know and be able to do.

School faculties need to agree as to whether they will separate formative and summative assessments on maps. Assessments can be refined and deepened by using guides such Webb's DOK to determine the level of complexity of a task. Wiggins and McTigh's work in UbD on moving from practice to rehearsal to authentic performance is another lens to view assessment design.

The assessment should align with targeted skills, the content, and the essential questions and big ideas. Clearly assessments are the demonstration of targeted standards. These standards can be "bundled" from different standard sources. (For example: some writing standards bundled with science standards).

In our work in Lower Merion, we want to specifically focus on CORNERSTONE tasks that are aligned to our transfer goals and drive curriculum planning. As McTighe notes they:

- *Anchor the curriculum around important, recurring tasks.
- *Require understanding and transfer of learning.
- *Provide evidence of authentic accomplishments. (ASCD, Atlanta Conference, 2016)

Prompts-

--Does the assessment provide an opportunity to demonstrate the transfer goal(s) ?

—Does the assessment align directly to the standard?

—Does the assessment provide observable evidence of the targeted skills?

__Is the assessment reflect a MODERN type of demonstration?

---Is the assessment based on a specific career type? (For example, a case study, prototype, grant proposal, data analysis, forum presentation, investigative journalism article,

—Does the assessment provide evidence of the student's knowledge of the prescribed content?

—Is the assessment identified in a precise manner in a noun form?

—Is the choice of formative or summative assessment deliberate?

-Is the assessment flexible to meet the needs of a diverse group of students?

-What about intervention and extension as it relates to the assessment?

-Are students provided with assessment choices and/or authentic assessment opportunities?



Developmental Focus



The primary focus of all of our efforts in creating curriculum maps is to assist the specific learners in our care. We need to always check our work to see if the developmental characteristics are evident in our curricular choices. The stage and age of the learners is a central consideration. Whether it is the highly concrete and sensory-motor needs of our

youngest learners or the complex and more abstract cognitive abilities for our high school students, the maps need to correspond to those qualities. What is more, there are inherent emotional and physical considerations for each phase. A savvy teacher focuses the map to take advantage of and to build on the exciting features of each age and stage as well as wrestles with the challenges and limitations.

Prompts

- Do the maps reflect the specific needs of our specific students?
- Are all of the entries: content, skills, assessment, and essential questions age appropriate?
- Are they engaging and motivating for the learner?
- Are issues of text complexity thoughtfully considered?
- Are the maps accessible to learners – or in other words – how will students have access to this and is it written in language that is accessible to them?



Internal Alignment

In any composition, the elements need to correspond and support one another. Whether it is a written composition, a musical composition, or a curriculum map, we want to be sure that all elements support and reflect the value of each of the others. THIS IS WHERE COLOR CODING is a must! The whole is the sum of the parts. Thus, in examining entries on a map we not only want to see external alignment to the standard or to the mission statement, but internal alignment between the elements: content, skills, assessment, and essential questions. Internal alignment also suggests that the map aligns with those grade levels preceding and those that will follow. When appropriate the map should work across a grade level and disciplines. The design should be the best kind of “learning architecture”. The map is a classroom planning blueprint.

Prompts

- Do the basic elements on the map align and support one another?

- Are there any elements disjointed from the whole?
- Has there been effective use of color coding to reflect corresponding choices about the design of the unit.

A NOTE for FUTURE REVIEWS:

Fundamental to designing curriculum and instruction is to deliberately consider the time in which the learner lives. When we look at our maps and they could have been planned for the last century, it reflects old habits and a lack of commitment to helping to prepare learners for the future. Maps need to be rigorously examined to find opportunities to “upgrade”, that is, replace dated content, skills, and assessments with contemporary alternatives. An emphasis on digital, media, and global literacy is at the basis of mapping revisions. Our students need to be employing digital applications, creating media products, and expanding their global perspectives actively. We support using the Curriculum 21 Clearinghouse <http://www.curriculum21.com/clearinghouse> as one sources for upgrading possibilities.

(based on Coaching Protocols developed by H.H. Jacobs/ retrieved from curriculum21.com)