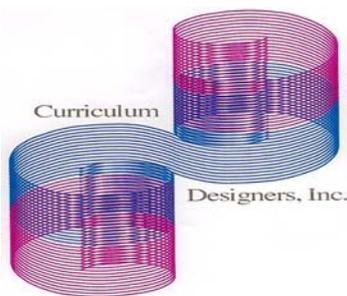


COACHING PROTOCOLS FOR DEVELOPING QUALITY CURRICULUM MAPS:

To be used in conjunction with the curriculum mapping entry rubric featured in *Getting Results with Curriculum Mapping Facilitators' Guide DVD*. ASCD Alexandria, VA 2006, pp 130 - 131. In order to use the questioning prompts effectively, first read the paragraph elaborating on the focused criteria with your partner or group.

DR. HEIDI HAYES JACOBS



CURRICULUM MAPS:

Detail on Content -

Content entry should begin with a clearly stated concept. A concept is a relational statement that describes a key idea or understanding. For example in science, a concept might be: “In the natural world there are systems comprised 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 comprised of interdependent component parts. If we do not use a concept to initiate our content entries, then what we have are random facts disassociated pieces of knowledge. In short there should be a concept followed by bulleted, targeted content points with key facts, key names, key events, and key points of knowledge to be addressed. Working with concepts makes writing essential questions much easier as well.

- Is there a clearly stated concept?
- Do the subcomponents link to the concept?
- Are the subcomponents helpful to the reader’s understanding of the key knowledge?
- Is there sufficient information to have a working sense of the focus of the unit or strand?

Essential Questions -

Essential questions embed a targeted concept 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 and enduring understanding that will service to guide and to drive the learner, essential questions at their best are engaging.

- 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?

Precise 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.

- 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?

Targeted assessments –

An assessment is a demonstration of learning thus it always takes the form of a 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 doing with what we want them to know and be able to do. The assessment should align with targeted skills, the content, and the essential questions.

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

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.

- Are all of the entries: content, skills, assessment, and essential questions age appropriate?
- Are they engaging and motivating for the learner?

- Are the entries understandable and precise in their descriptions?

Accuracy of response –

The key purpose of mapping is to improve student performance by reading and reviewing our maps as collaborative professionals. We inform and change our maps based on what our learners need us to working on for them. In order to make the process viable, honest and direct entries in real time is critical. One of the interesting dynamics with mapping is that because there is regular ongoing review of maps, the staff and administrators tend to be extremely honest and straightforward in their work. Everyone knows that everyone else in the building has access to their maps, in the same way that all doctors and nurses have access to the procedures and records kept in order to inform all those aiding patients. The precision of the language on the maps has a great deal to do with how accurately we can interpret another colleague's maps.

- Are the entries honest and clear descriptions in real time of the operational curriculum?

Conceptual Understanding of the Design Process –

The mission and purpose of a school setting should be present in the curriculum choices made by the faculty. The standards selected for our learners become a seminal part of the design process and should appear in real time in the map with real examples of student work to reflect the goal of a designated standard. Principles in *Understanding by Design* (Wiggins and McTighe) are applicable here: What is it we want our students to know and to be able to do? Curriculum Mapping expands this question to consider the “big picture” and make choices that build cumulatively and connect year to year, class to class. The CM software allows us to construct reports and searches that reveal whether the design of the program is building systematically.

- Do the designs work in coordination with other grade levels and other disciplines?
- Does the curriculum reflect the larger purposes and mission of the school setting?

- Are the specific needs of the target student population reflected in the design?

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. 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.

- Do the basic elements on the map align and support one another?
- Are there any elements disconnected from the whole?
- Does the map align with other maps in the building or between buildings on the K-12 journey?