

CMSD'S DEFINITION OF CURRICULUM

Bybee et al. offers a strong metaphor for the description of curriculum, as understood at CMSD. That is, the curriculum is "a complete framework that provides information needed to make decisions about the content, the sequences of activities, the selection of instructional strategies and techniques that are likely to be effective." (p.86). Curriculum "is like the broad sketches of an architect's plan. The framework gives an initial picture of the program and is based on certain specifications. The architect's plan has to fulfill certain requirements. At the same time, the more specific details are left to the contractors and the carpenters. Everyone knows there will be modifications as the framework is developed and implemented, but there should be some fidelity to the original intentions, specifications, and design." (p. 86).

CMSD's formal curriculum is called the "Scope and Sequence Guide". The following assumptions, which are outlined in the introductory material of the Scope and Sequence Guide, drove the design for this curriculum.

Because nearly one-third of CMSD students will attend more than one CMSD school during the course of the school year (EMIS 2008), we must collaboratively agree upon what content is taught to our students and at what time of the year. Therefore, we must develop a pacing guide which provides an instructional order for the content tested on the OATs and OGTs.

The state of Ohio Academic Content Standards identify the benchmarks as the academic content that will "align with achievement tests where applicable" (p. 18) and indicators as the "checkpoints that monitor progress toward the benchmarks" (p.18). Further, abundant research indicates that a curriculum must be viable, focusing on the teaching of fewer concepts taught deeply over the covering of several discreet skills taught at a surface level (see for example, Marzano, 2003). Therefore, the CMSD curriculum must outline a scope and sequence of the state benchmarks, not indicators, and the indicators should be used as a tool for assessing the learning of those benchmarks.

If all students are to be successful in the curriculum, classroom teachers must differentiate to meet learner needs (Tomlinson and Allan, 2000). A tightly scripted curriculum does not allow teachers the flexibility to differentiate lesson planning and instruction for the learner. Therefore, while we need to agree upon what content is to be taught and when, we must also allow enough flexibility within that framework to support thoughtful, individualized lesson planning and classroom instruction.

Finally, we know that curriculum should be reviewed, revised, and updated annually (see for example, Ohio Department of Education, 2008). Therefore, this curriculum should be considered Version 1.0. Feedback should be collected in multiple ways during the implementation of this curriculum and a plan for annual revision of the curriculum must be in place.

REFERENCES

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