Reflection:

Goals and Activities

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Winter: Ed 208B
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After our February 5th class where Tom presented his goals and activities for the high school government class for us to analyze and discuss, he asked me if I had time to try and come up with some activities to go with his class. He gave me two guidelines: one that I had to follow (teachers must have something to grade), and one I could attempt to follow (authentic assessment). I decided that it would be good practice for our curriculum. I wanted to see if I could take a goal and create activities that answer the “how do you know?” question. I don’t know if I have succeeded, but it was fun. I have included the email communication as part of this reflection.

From: Tamecia Jones
To: Tom Levine
Date: Feb 12, 2004

Hi Tom,

I don’t know if you wanted this earlier, but this is where I am:

Guidelines:
1. Something you can grade.
2. Authentic assessment would be nice.

Piggybacking on some of the ideas from last week…

If you can get cooperation from school administration or a few teachers in the building, (maybe even higher up than that.) Have the students create a Bill of Rights, yet make it applicable to them by making them create a Bill of Rights for the School. To make it authentic, see if you can get agreement from some authority and/or students to have the students test their Bill of Rights at school or in a class by living or conducting class according to the created one. Then after they have acted it out for one class, day, week, have them revise it by interviewing, surveying, researching and submitting reports. (Analysis and assessment possibilities) Then make them go through the ratification process as if they were representatives from all of the states. Metaphorically, each student group or identity will want certain rights and others won’t. Then the class will have to prioritize the rights and vote on a select few. If you really want to get a long-term affect and can get it, then you can see if the principal will allow for the class/students to submit one ‘right’ for voting into the school handbook. Then the students have to live with that right for the next year, and you can make it a piece of the unit for years to come with various classes. That right could be, for example, lunch off campus, more or less extracurriculars, definition of class dues (synonymous to taxes), how prom theme is decided, etc. Then the class is doing...
this over a period of time and they have to live with what they learned and moved on the next year. (this will only work if it is a junior class)

1. First, class does rights based on what they know.
2. create a bill of rights for class.
3. live by it for one class period.
4. revise the bill by reading and analyzing the Bill of Rights.
5. When you are comfortable with them internalizing the content, create survey and interview questions.
6. Send them out to teach or explain to those that they will interview and survey.
7. Write up reports, etc.
8. Create list to vote on and prioritize.
9. Act this “Bill” out in classes or in school for day.
10. Get feedback from class and schoolmates and write reports.
11. Revise the Bill of Rights.
12. Act it out.
13. Get feedback, and then submit one to administration for the school to see if they will add to policy or handbook.

I know this is over 3(?) weeks, but here you can grade:

1. content knowledge (terms, Rights, etc.)
2. procedural knowledge (survey, interview, analysis)
3. attitudes (pre- and post- through your assessment and or schoolmate feedback about process)
4. writing
5. reflections

Tamecia

After looking at this, Tom says that the activities are reflective of good teaching. I suppose this meant that to create a curriculum with such dynamic and in vitro assessments means that it is not easily implemented in all settings or with all populations. (Why does it have to be? It hasn’t taken much time to broadly outline, and it does not look like it requires lots of created materials. Of course, I haven’t developed one activity yet.)

This type of curriculum is specific, and I know that this type of curriculum is a bias of the professor. I could identify the arguments against this curriculum early in activity development. The goal angel sat on my left
shoulder singing lovely arias, and the argument devil sat on my right shoulder popping gum as I excitedly created activities. Angel: these will be great for authentic assessment. Devil: they may be authentic, but they will take a lot of time and your administrators, possibly implementers, may not be that committed to authentic assessment. Angel: the students can teach what they are learning and see if they have enough knowledge to teach others. Devil: the students will either love that they won’t have to take a test, or they will balk at the additional workload. Angel: these activities will have impact on the school environment on individual, class, and school-wide levels. Devil: this is a whole lot of work for the implementers.

I was proud of the unit because it involved a variety of activities where students might have multiple points of entry and highlight their talents without all of the judgment of satisfactory competence derived from a test. However, the devil on my shoulder reminded me of the various stakeholders. Parents might get excited, but be initially weary because they might not see the enduring goal. Depending on when the curriculum is discovered, time might not allow for administrative flexibility and would force an adaptation of the authentic assessments. Since the news of a non-traditional class might hit the press, the public might have a backlash reaction that could damage satisfaction with superintendents, principals, and teachers. It definitely probably will not make it up to a national standards debate, but that is not reflective of its value. It might better
serve small, charter, or private schools who have additional missions beyond annual yearly progress or a community environment. The implementer ultimately is the frontline developer because delivery and assessment are in those hands.