



INTEGRAL CURRICULUM FOR EFFECTIVE AND RELEVANT LEARNING

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INTEGRAL CURRICULUM
FOR
EFFECTIVE AND
RELEVANT LEARNING

A Global Learning Communities Manual

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INTRODUCTION

The challenge for teachers now and in the future is going to be to create co-ordinated and integrated learning opportunities for students across a range of learning locations (including schools, home, work placements, community etc). As we learn more about the process of learning, and use this to integrate our responses to a rapidly changing world, teaching is becoming a process of facilitation of effective learning rather than simply the transmission of accepted, imposed, compartmentalised curriculum.

Over the past decade, every western, and many eastern countries have undergone massive changes in curriculum organization- from imposed, rigid syllabi to learning frameworks based on a more conceptual approach to learning. This has necessitated a move toward more interactive classrooms, which in turn has significantly changed the role of the teacher. This has inevitably impacted on assessment, and thus reporting, procedures.

Now new challenges exist, not only the creation of curriculum for learning, but also the creation of curriculum to be delivered in a number of different ways, to accommodate multiple learning styles, intelligences, and levels of developmental appropriateness, across a variety of learning environments and formats. Further, with the plethora of information available (and growing) on the internet, discernment and selection of curriculum for effective learning is a new and challenging skill for teachers to learn.

The issue of preparation, writing, and conversion of existing curriculum, regardless of its appropriateness, for delivery across the internet, satellite or wireless, and particularly in preparation for the convergence of technology which is occurring internationally provides a further challenge for educators. The simultaneous educational and technological conversion of curriculum for delivery across these platforms is a highly specialised field and one in which the Working Futures Group is both highly experienced and has been recognised nationally. We have been selecting and preparing curriculum which is available to be used by individuals, small groups or classroom based learners across years 3-12. Working Futures Group curriculum frameworks have been used by large numbers of teachers and schools and several Australian states to assist teachers to learn how to develop curriculum more appropriately for current and future needs.

The Working Futures Group believes that successful learning and development requires a purposeful approach to learning, facilitated by teachers who have strong philosophical, theoretical and principle-centred bases. These educators work to create a powerful alignment between the learning environment, an integrated approach to conceptually based learning in interactive classrooms, and an approach to assessment in which the individual ultimately learns to assess and challenge themselves. We envision a coherent curriculum that would do justice to the integrity of each subject and also bring each to bear on all the others in a way that reflects an integrated, as opposed to compartmentalised, approach to real life.

To achieve this we have developed frameworks for school change and curriculum development, and a range of services, including a series of integrated units based on a conceptual approach which are designed to assist educators and schools in their individual and collective on-going learning process.

LEARNING CONNECTIONS: INTEGRAL CURRICULUM FOR MINDFUL LEARNING is an innovative series of teaching units that align, in a comprehensive and practical way, the classroom environment and a conceptually-based curriculum with meaningful, relevant, interactive teaching and learning strategies, and purposeful assessment. Used by teachers all over the world, two of the units have also provided the basis for assisting several schools to restructure their entire middle years programs. All units are fully adaptable to any year level.

Our INTEGRAL UNIT SERIES INCLUDES:

| | |
|---|----------------------------|
| The Gods Must Be Crazy: 9Grades 5/6/7 | a Study of Societal Change |
| The Y Files (Grades 6/7/8) | a Study of Interdependence |
| A Community Cookbook (Grade 1) | a Study of Community |
| The House That Beebo Built (Grades 4/5) | a Study of Human Rights |
| Fox Song (Grades 2/3) | a Study of Cycles in Life |
| Great Cheddar Cheese Sandwich Caper (Grades 5/6) | a Study of Systems |
| The Truly True Story of the Three Little Pigs (Grades 1/2 | a Study of Changing Forms |

An introduction to these units, including a comprehensive explanation of their construction and the development of an Earth Education program, are incorporated at the end of this manual.

The GLC approach to Integral Curriculum includes:

- A. A conceptual learning basis based on key ideas and questions; focused on the learner, based on inquiry, questioning and experiential learning through participation in story.
- B. An emphasis on the processes of learning, as well as student retention and use of knowledge which seeks to develop student understanding.
- C. The incorporation of the most powerful learnings from the best researchers and advocate leaders in the field. These include Kieran Egan's storyform (based on living within story), Susan Kovalik's Integrated Thematic Instruction (based on brain-based learning), Renate and Geoffrey Caine's focus on making connections and brain-based learning, Edward Clark's circular matrix based on questioning, James Bean's and Garth Boomer's approach to negotiated curriculum, Briggs' Problem-Based Learning, Lilian Katz's project approach, Pigden's use of process subjects as the focus for integration and Heidi Hayes Jacob's emphasis on maintaining the integrity of the disciplines within an integrated context.
- D. Our framework aligns a conceptually based curriculum with interactive, experiential and cooperative learning, a range of learning styles, extended thinking and problem-solving, and numerous other strategies found to enhance learning effectively.
- E. All units incorporate local, Australian National and International Curriculum Frameworks and include references to specific subject area disciplines of maths, language arts, social studies, science, technology and design, and the visual and performing arts.
- F. Our framework provides strategies to aid the teacher in facilitating on-going, multiple forms of assessment. Each unit describes ideas for monitoring and documenting student learning growth as well as ideas for 'performances of most worth' that could be used for summative authentic assessment.
- G. The units are developed around grade clusters, so that they may be used in multi-age classrooms and easily adapted to preceding and successive grade levels. They are designed to be developmentally appropriate, while still being both flexible and adaptable.
- H. Each unit contains a matrix which outlines the major conceptual areas of the unit content, as well as key questions the students will study, debate or dialogue, problem-solve, research, develop projects

about and/or become involved in relevant community action. Units are presented in such a way that the teachers and students can together 'peel back' layer after layer and go deeper into the process of learning.

- I. Most importantly, each unit has as an overriding focus, the development of young learners as competent, considerate and positively contributing local and global citizens who:
- * respect and care for self and others
 - * participate in and contribute responsibly to society
 - * sustain learning throughout their lives
 - * Are competent personally, socially, economically, ecologically, culturally and morally.

We wish you well in the challenges which both exist right now, and lie ahead of us in creating relevant and appropriate learning opportunities for our students which extend not only their learning, but ours as well as we endeavour to prepare our young people to the best of their, and our, ability.

Julie Boyd

CEO Global Learning Communities

1999 Telstra Entrepreneur of the Year

1999 Ausindustry innovations Award National Finalist

2000 Businesswomen's Hall of Fame

Julie Boyd has been involved in curriculum development with individual schools and at state level for many years, with a more recent emphasis on the creation of digital curriculum and digital learning environments to complement face to face learning. Her conceptual frameworks have been used at individual school and state levels for both development and review purposes, and her work, with partners, in the specialised field of simultaneous educational and technological conversion, and/or development of school, vocational and university level curriculum has been recognised nationally and internationally.