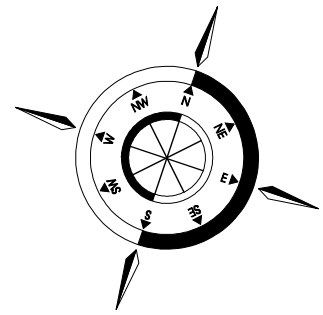


Curriculum Coordinates

- mapping our journey in Christian curriculum development -



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Wad-ja get on the Fraser Institute Report Card?

Overall, three factors contribute to students' scores on achievement tests:

- 1) what is taught in school
- 2) a student's intellectual ability
- 3) a student's out-of-school learning

Schools can and do make a difference. Teachers should provide a challenging, stimulating, and integrative curriculum that engages students to the fullest. Instead of spoon feeding students by telling exactly what they should learn, challenge students to think for themselves and put them in charge of their own learning. Enable them to be responsible for their own achievement - yes, of course they'll resist, we naturally prefer that someone else takes responsibility for what we do or don't do.

We are created to be responsible for our own actions so teach students to be self disciplined and develop their own skills for learning, putting them in the position of setting up their own experiments, searching for their own specialized materials, etc. Remember that a key factor in doing well in further education is the degree of rigor and challenge a student's high school courses had, no matter what grades they received. Therefore, don't keep students from trying higher-level courses; instead, inspire students to take academically challenging courses. Don't encourage students to take the easier route, instead, enrich the curriculum throughout the grades so that they will be able to take the higher level courses when they reach the higher grades.

However, if you are primarily interested in a higher score on the FI Report Card, the simplest way is to weed out students who will not do well!

How can parent confidence be restored? Accept responsibility for what you should be doing well, grow a shared vision and a communal sense of purpose about educating for life.

One way to do that is to increase the grade required in the previous level. e.g. a student must achieve 70% in Chemistry 11 before he/she is allowed to enter Chemistry 12. You can also set up a series of fences with a gate and then set the principal at the gate to discourage weaker students from taking challenging, and significant courses. Make the course descriptions in your school calendar sound like a course is more difficult than it really is. Encourage teachers to prevent students from taking a challenging course and, discourage teachers from working hard to keep at-risk students in class.

On a broader scale, a school should get rid of programs which might appeal to a broad range of skills and abilities and it should allocate more time for examinable courses than it does for non-examinable ones because after all these other courses don't really count. Finally, insist that teachers in your school have students spend a significant amount of time writing practice exams and add a locally-developed course called "How to Write a Great Exam."

Bob Koole

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Both Bob Koole and Bob Bruinsma will be dealing with this topic at the 2005 CEA Convention in Calgary. Bob Bruinsma will also present a workshop on this topic at the Fall 2005 PACS membership meeting in Edmonton on November 5. Bob Bruinsma is a Professor of Education and Associate Vice President (Academic) at The King's University College in Edmonton.

Principals reflect on Professional Learning Communities { PLC's }

This Fall, the Christian Principals in our region were privileged to reflect on the PLC concept. Under the direction of Dr. Jim Parsons, Phil McRae, and Laura Servage { faculty from the University of Alberta who specifically work with Alberta Initiatives For School Improvement }, principals were challenged to see that when teachers work together, student learning improves.

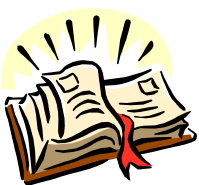
Highlights from the conversation at the Banff Centre within the CPA community were:

1. Use the wisdom of the new teachers on your staff to help bring new or innovative teaching practices to the rest of the staff.
2. "Now Discover Your Strengths" by Buckingham - Online Survey. In doing this online survey, you can come to know your staff in 'deeper' ways.
<http://www.impactpublications.com/index.asp?PageAction=VIEWPROD&PRODID=5346>
3. It is difficult to have a 'problem' define the PLC when you have people that have different curricular focuses/ interests.
4. Community is a large concept and extends beyond just the notion of professional learning community.
5. When assisting people to come together as a community, try and avoid micro-managing.
6. When you empower staff, intentionally or unintentionally, they will rise to a challenge and their many different gifts begin to come to the surface.
7. It is important to honor and respect the people within this school community.

Curriculum Work Within PACS At This Time:

If you have not had a chance to check out the new PACS website, I'd encourage you to do so. We've set it up so that the site is easy to navigate. As time moves on, we will also have the member's section set up so that teachers in our schools can directly download units that they want to use. We are presently in the process of transferring our units into e-documents so that they can be readily accessed on the PACS website.

1. Bible



Our PACS Bible Review Committee continues to meet regularly. Please note that your school community has been sent an updated "Framework for Bible Studies". This revision includes recommended time requirements for Biblical studies and rationale for distinct Bible learning in the Junior High Grades.

Some basic information regarding the progress of Bible Committee work is summarised as follows:

High School

A group of high school teachers gathered in late February to create a resource that will help teachers in the development of high school Bible courses. Duane Konynenbelt of Immanuel Christian High in Lethbridge, Mel Brandsma of Central AB Christian High in Lacombe, and Grace Jewett of Edmonton Christian High will be working on this resource. This project not only has developed an understanding of what is important in Bible learning, but also has provided a support to teachers responsible for developing Bible courses. This resource, still under development, is intended to be usable, flexible, and can be accessed on the PACS website.

Junior High:

- Grade 7 - **Joseph** Unit { presently being test driven in a number of schools} .I will begin working with a team of teachers at Calgary Christian School later this fall on **The Parables of Jesus**.
- Grade 8 - **Words From a Wise Guy** will be published this fall. **Upon This Rock** is presently being published. **Esther** is presently in the writing process. We still need a team to work on **Signposts Of The Kingdom**.
- Grade 9 - **Letters To The Church** { looking to test drive this unit this fall} . **The Case For Christ** is well on its way. **Heroes of Faith** is well on its way.

There is only 1 more unit to find writers for in the 15 unit Junior High Bible program.
If you would like to "Test Drive" a Draft Bible Unit, please contact the PACS office.

2. Social Studies (SS)

The consulting process for social studies program changes in Alberta is nearly complete. There still may be some consultation work done with the grade 11/12 program. Alberta Education has stated that resources for the new program will be made available much earlier than what we had experienced in the K-3 process.



Now that we are finished with the proactive process, the social studies committee can continue the work of considering, recommending, and developing resources for supporting the social studies programs in our Christian schools. Our PACS social studies committee has been active in considering and providing ways that we can best support our schools with the up and coming changes. PACS has provided:

- Social studies workshop for about 30 teachers in Calgary on Feb. 4
- Social studies day sessions for Lethbridge teachers on May 3/4
- Information on social studies materials to assist with selection of materials for the implementation of the new K-3 social studies curriculum { work by Karen Vanden born and Debra Krug in Calgary}

This year, PACS is looking to provide:

- A pre convention workshop on October 18 + 19 for K-3 teachers that will address the following:
 - *Why do we teach social studies?*
 - *How are we going to do this in K-3? Developing a strong foundation for what we do from a Biblical perspective.*
 - *Dealing with changes and getting to know what students need to learn.*
 - *Finding out how resources can support learning.*
- Workshops for grade 4 and grade 7 social studies teachers to help with mandatory changes for the 2006/2007 school year. Workshop date for this has been set for February 17, 2006 in Calgary. **To register for these sessions, please contact the PACS office.**

We also have one teacher participating in a Central Alberta Regional Consortium (CARC) pilot project using video conferencing to develop a model of professional development based on the new K-3 Social Studies Curriculum. We're looking forward to learning more about this initiative as it has future potential for how PACS will continue/enhance it's community curriculum work.

3. Faith and Learning Sessions for High School Teachers



Two years ago, secondary teachers in our PACS region met to discuss the EQ model in developing courses with a Biblical perspective. Both Doug Monsma and Peter Buisman from Edmonton led teachers through this process. This event was sponsored and facilitated by the Christian Educators Association (CEA).

The CEA in conjunction with PACS offered 3 sessions (in Calgary) last year specifically for PACS high school teachers. Last year we covered Social Studies, Science, and Art. This year we are offering another 3 sessions:

The first one was held October 6/7, 2005. In that session, secondary math teachers gathered to deal with the challenge of how the Christian faith is woven into the grade 7-12 math curriculum. Sessions remaining this year are:

November 24/25, 2005 - Session 2 - English

February 9/10, 2006 - Session 3 - Music

To register for these sessions, please contact the PACS office.

The plan is to offer 3 subject areas specifically for junior high teachers for review during the 2006/2007 school year.

4. Devotional Resources

A school wide devotional program (**The Parables**) for small multi age groups is completed and is ready for publication { still awaiting copy right approvals} . By developing devotional resources teachers have the opportunity to extend Christian community to the wider school. This program is similar to the school wide devotional program "**The Fruit of the Spirit**" developed by a group of teachers in Winnipeg. We are trying to develop a series of 5-6 programs that could be used through a cycle. Other units in this series are **The Ten Commandments** and **The Beatitudes**.



Melissa Sawyer, a secondary teacher from Saskatoon Christian School (SCS) has joined the CAC. Melissa is in her second year as a teacher at SCS and is willing to serve on the CAC because of her interest in curriculum building and the learning opportunities in doing so with an integrated biblical perspective. Good to have you with us Melissa!

FUNDS FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Last year, our Christian Curriculum Resources (CCR) Fund spent slightly more than we took in. We had some costs due to the publication of **The Beatitudes and "Upon This Rock"** as well as costs associated with work on the Joseph, Esther and Living in Hope units. We have continued to receive valued support from our schools and at the end of the 2004-05 fiscal year, we had a fund balance of \$25,153.35. The need to keep our donation stream strong will be seen this year as the number of writing projects increases. We could have up to 5 projects ready for publication this year and their costs will drain away our reserves. We hope that strong financial support will grow and continue to meet the needs of curriculum publication for the district. We will continue to issue charitable donation receipts for individuals making donations to the CCR Fund.



NEW RESOURCE FROM CSI:

Fossils and Faith. This course explores the spectrum of perspectives on creation. Students will reflect on the debate between scientific and biblical views of creation and examine how Christians have come to reconcile apparent disagreements. The issues are presented from a Reformed perspective, but no one position is offered as the "best" or "most faithful." This course celebrates the fact that all Christians believe in one God, the creator of the heavens and earth. Published by Faith Alive.

ADDITIONS TO THE PACS PROFESSIONAL LIBRARY

Overman, Christian, and Johnson, Don,
Making the Connections – How to Put Biblical Worldview Integration into Practice.

This book was written especially for schoolteachers, to assist in the process of making the connections between all subjects and the bigger picture of the biblical frame of reference. (2003)

Ortberg, John.,
Everybody's Normal Till You Get To Know Them.

This book zooms in on the things that make community tick. You'll get a thought-provoking look at God's heart, at others and at yourself. Even better, You'll gain wisdom and tools for drawing closer to others in powerful, impactful ways. (2003)

Plantinga, Cornelius Jr.,
Engaging God's World-A Christian Vision of Faith, Learning, and Living.

Plantinga has written a sage, mature, and avuncular even paternal guide to the essentials of the Christian life for the college student. Most valuable, perhaps, is the final section, where he holds forth a vision of how a student should use "knowledge, skills, and virtues" in the service of God. (2002)

Stassen, Glen H. and Gushee, David P.,
Kingdom Ethics: Following Jesus In Contemporary Context.

This book is distinctive in the way that it takes biblical perspectives seriously and constantly encourages the reader to keep in view the kingdom vision that majors in constructive alternatives rather than mere ethical condemnations. All who are serious about glorifying God by the life they live will benefit greatly from reading this book. (2003)

