Education Plan: A.3 Program of Instruction

Curriculum for Academic Core Content Areas

The Rigor/Relevance Framework, developed by the International Center for Leadership in Education (ICLE)[i] will serve as the tool for development and implementation of curriculum, instruction and assessment at the MCLC. The framework, posted on the next page, is based on two dimensions of higher standards and student achievement:

1) There is a continuum of knowledge based on the six levels of Bloom's Taxonomy describing increasingly complex ways to think. The low end involves acquiring knowledge and being able to recall or locate that knowledge. The high end labels more complex ways in which individuals use knowledge, often referred to as higher-order thinking skill in which students can solve multistep problems and create unique work and solutions. The updated Bloom's Taxonomy terms will replace those found in this model.

2) The second continuum, known as the Application Model, is one of action. The five levels of this continuum range from knowledge in one discipline to application to real world unpredictable situations or how a person puts knowledge to use. While the low end is knowledge acquired for its own sake, the high end signifies action – use of that knowledge to solve complex real world problems and to create projects, designs and other works for use in real-world situations.

Rigor occurs as the instruction and assessment moves up the Taxonomy. Relevance relates to the degree of real world application in the instruction and assessment. One of the principles of effective learning is congruence among curriculum, instruction, and assessment. This is the expectation across all curricular areas for all students attending the MCLC.

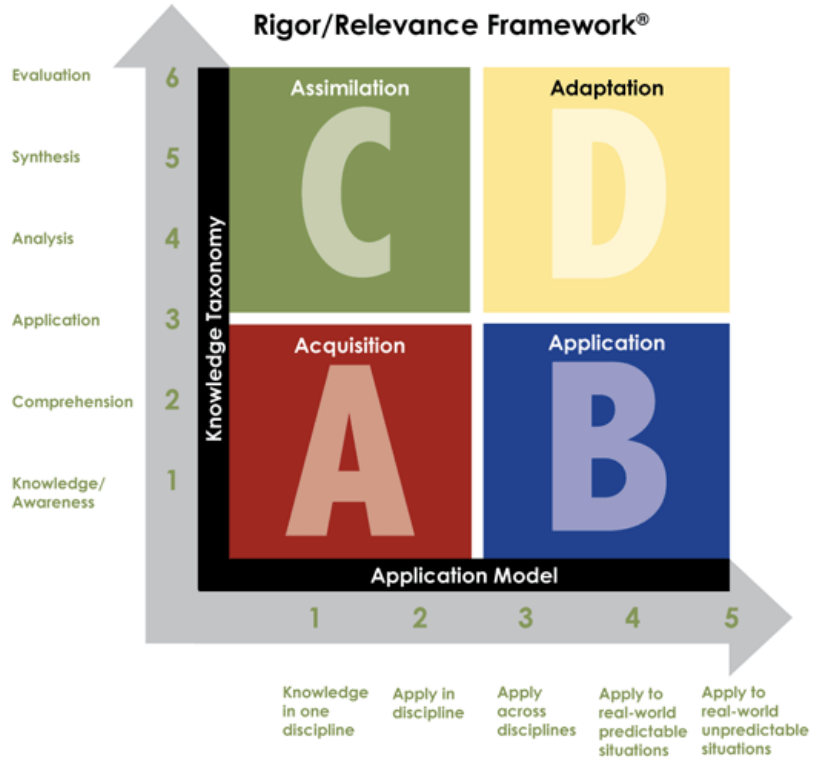
The Rigor/Relevance Framework has four quadrants. Each is labeled with a term that characterizes the learning or student performance at that level. Rigor occurs as the instruction and assessment moves up the Taxonomy. Relevance relates to the degree of real world application in the instruction and assessment. The overall goal for instruction at the MCLC is to help students meet college readiness standards and the expectations for 21st century application by focusing on quadrant D.

Curriculum Components

The Arizona Common Core Standards will serve as the foundation for MCLC Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment. In order to reach the higher college preparatory standards for MCLC the Arizona Standards will be augmented with strands correlated with the PSAT/SAT and the College and Work Readiness Standards (CWRE). The new standards impact not only what we teach, but also how we teach and assess learning. The shared responsibility for teaching literacy across other core subjects is one example and fits well with the interdisciplinary and multi- grade teacher design team model at the MCLC. Additionally, student projects will be co-developed with community business partners thereby including workforce standards across the curriculum.

Rigorous/Relevant Methods of Instruction

In order to help students reach the higher levels associated with Quadrant D, the MCLC design teams, composed of teachers across disciplines and community partners, will be guided by principles of project based learning and parallel explicit instruction. Design teams will work at two grade levels so teachers will be able to stay with their students for up to two consecutive years. One team will work with grade 6-7 and the second team with grade 8-9. Students will participate in a common grade level core curriculum with applied differentiation and acceleration to address specific instructional levels in a single track curriculum approach. This will be augmented in the elective course assignments and guided by formative assessments that are scheduled at the end of each three week block.



A	B	C	D
Students gather and store bits of knowledge and information. Students are primarily expected to remember or understand this knowledge.	Students use acquired knowledge to solve problems, design solutions, and complete work. The highest level of application is to apply knowledge to new and unpredictable situations.	Students extend and refine their acquired knowledge to be able to use that knowledge automatically and routinely to analyze and solve problems and create solutions.	Students have the competence to think in complex ways and to apply their knowledge and skills. Even when confronted with perplexing unknowns, students are able to use extensive knowledge and skill to create solutions and take action that further develops their skills and knowledge.

www.LeaderEd.com

The overall goal is to help students move toward quadrant D in order to create, evaluate and apply analysis to authentic, real-world problems and issues.

Learning Outcomes and Progressions

The MCLC design teams will identify the Essential Learning Outcomes (ELO) drawn from the Core Curriculum Standards. These ELO's will address the criteria of endurance, leverage and readiness [ii] and will serve as the foundation for the expected learning progression across the curriculum. The integrated curriculum design along with an inquiry, project based approach provides for parallel tasks focusing on the same big ideas but addressing different level of difficulty to address student readiness. The design teams will be comprised of a team of teachers in Math, Science, and Humanities supplemented by specialists in the arts, technology, languages and special education as needed. This allows for the ELO's to be embedded in and reinforced across the curriculum. As part of the MCLC professional learning community approach, each design team will develop their integrated curriculum along with the common formative benchmark assessments to be administered every three weeks. Results of the assessments will be shared and discussed for immediate adjustment and differentiation in instruction to allow for enrichment and remediation. Remediation will always be provided directly by the design team teachers through the use of small group student teams for re-teaching and individualized computer based programs such as Achieve 3000. The MCLC elective course options also provide for further support and enhancement during the regular instructional day in addition to the tutorial programs offered before and after the regular school day.

One can see from the Curriculum Examples that the core curriculum standards are carefully integrated into each project and lesson. Additionally, there is clear evidence of rigor to include college entry level course expectations. Examples of materials recommended for instruction include *Building Math Power,* a constructivist based college preparatory mathematics curriculum covering Pre-Algebra through Algebra II/Trigonometry. *Connected Math (CMP2)* is another example of resources that align well with project based learning for middle school levels. Achieve 3000, the lexile based computer program, will help to provide differentiation in reading instruction across all subject areas. Through use of the Beyond Textbooks curriculum tool from the Vail District, teaching design teams will incorporate authentic text for literacy instruction and assessment.

The goal is to integrate a high level of instructional technology across the curriculum. Grants will be written to add to the number of student computers, graphing calculators, and other technology tools and to apply for E-rate funding. Initial funding is set aside in start up and first year budget to provide some computer access for the students and staff.

Design teams will use a common rubric for designing projects based upon *Real Learning, Real Work*[iii] used by Jobs for the Future. The rubric includes Authenticity, Academic Rigor, Applied Learning, Active Exploration, Adult Connections, and Thoughtful Assessment Practices. Projects will be required to meet the following criteria: 1) Meet core standards; 2) Engage students; 3) Focus on essential understanding; 4) Encourage higher-level thinking; 5) Teach literacy and reinforce basic skills; 6) Allow all students to succeed; 7) Use clear, precise assessments; 8) Require the sensible use of technology; and 9) Address authentic issues.

An important aspect of the MCLC program is to develop independent thinkers so they take on more ownership and responsibility for their learning. Gallimore and Tharp, in building on the

work of Vygotsky[iv], present a framework for progression through stages leading to performance capacity. In the first level there is a gradual release of assistance as the responsibility for learning shifts from adult to learner. In Stage II the learner carries out the task without assistance. In Stage III the learner enters the developmental stage and shifts from apprentice to master. Stage IV represents the recursive nature of learning. In everyday teaching language this is sometimes referred to as the process "I do, We do, You do" in which the teacher demonstrates the task, then the students practice with the assistance of the teacher, eventually shifting to the student doing the task independently. It is expected that the students at the MCLC will progress through these stages and become independent thinkers.

Professional Learning Community (PLC)

To support the design teams there will be a comprehensive professional development plan to include participation in training with the Buck Institute for Education. Initially, this will take place through an online learning option presented by the Buck Institute. An investment will be made in materials for training through the ICLE Model Schools network. Staff will work closely with New Tech High and High Tech High, both in California, by participating in Institutes and Seminars each year beginning year two of the school. The Academic Leader will provide the initial training for Project Based and ICLE strategies based upon her experience with these resources. She was instrumental in the implementation of these programs during her tenure as Director at STAR Academic Center where project based education was successfully implemented 2009-2010 school year.

The ongoing process of StrengthBuilding Training and Coaching will also serve as the vehicle for school improvement and the foundation for collaboration teams. This will be provided by Master StrengthBuilder, Pamela Clark-Raines, as part of her role as Community StrengthBuilding Leader. The collaboration teams will be expected to review student progress on a continuous basis guided by observation of student work and benchmark assessments. This information will then be used to guide differentiation of instruction and academic intervention steps. This is pivotal to the school belief that all students, regardless of ability, will be fully integrated in the regular instructional and social programs.

Time is scheduled directly in the instructional day for design team meetings and weekly collaboration blocks. Half days allow for all staff to review continuous benchmark progress and make team decisions regarding direction or redirection of instruction. This job embedded professional development time is an essential component of the PLC and will be guided by two highly qualified lead teachers.

Special Education Assurances and Procedures

The MCLC administration will assure that staff will identify, locate and evaluate all children with disabilities within the population served who are in need of special education and related services. They will maintain a record of all children who are receiving special education and related services. Further, the school will fully meet the Americans with Disabilities Act to include application of the 504 plan for all students who may require that support. Because the school admissions process will include support from our community partners all entering

students will benefit from a full academic, health, social and language screening to assure that appropriate services are initiated upon enrollment.

The school intends to contract with a licensed School Psychologist for the psycho-educational evaluation and case management oversight to assure that students who are identified, along with their families, receive all of the services and safeguards required by law. Additionally, funding has been included in the budget for related services that may be expected to include Occupational and Physical Therapy, Speech Language, and Interpretation for Hearing Impaired. These funds may also be used for Bilingual Evaluations as needed.

Design Teams will be carefully monitoring the progress of students so that any student who may need support is quickly identified and provided with appropriate interventions. The Academic Leader has a substantial background in the operation of programs for youth with special needs including oversight of a K-8 self contained program for youth with severe emotional disabilities and a grade 6–12 ED-P program. She has also been responsible for administration of all special education regulations in large high schools as well as alternative schools. The Community StrengthBuilding Leader is a licensed Social Worker and has over 20 years of experience in this field. Additionally, there is a plan to contract with a licensed School Psychologist who will provide all evaluation services and support the Multidisciplinary Team in developing a case management plan that meets all required federal and state mandates.

The MCLC service delivery model will be a fully inclusive program with separate service specifically limited to support labs and related services that may be specific to the identified student need. Each design team will have the benefit of a qualified special education teacher who will teach as part of the team. The smaller class sizes and the multi-grade approach will also provide a more optimal learning environment for struggling learners. Because the school focus is on project based learning, all students will benefit from participation in “mainstream” project based classes and experiences. The special education teacher will be provided with additional planning time in order to manage the required work for the IEP, updated evaluation and required team and family meetings. All rights of FAPE will be assured. Full confidentiality of records and instructional delivery will also be assured. All students will be expected to demonstrate high mastery of the state standards and will sit for AIMS at each offering. Exemption from AIMS will be very limited with emphasis on use of augmentation so long as that option is available. Students with special needs will not simply be excused from the expectation for meeting and exceeding on AIMS and related assessments.

Parents will be a vital part of the school. Therefore, the necessary communication and meetings required to implement a viable special education program will be enhanced by their regular participation. A copy of the full procedural guidelines will be provided for all youth who are in the process of evaluation or services. The Family Mentoring Program will assure that all parents have full access to all elements of the Community School. Additionally, the Social Work Interns will provide for both case management and counseling services to support students and families as needed.

Formative and Summative Assessment Plan

A comprehensive framework for assessment and evaluation is built into the continuous school improvement system. The goal of standards based education is quality for all with emphasis on what is learned rather just on what is taught. It is expected that:

- Curriculum, instruction, staff development, assessment and accountability systems are integrated and focused toward the attainment of standards by all students.
- Students will be performing on assessments that reflect our school's content standards.
- Grade and school level accountability reports will reflect performance levels on content standards.
- There will be a smaller gap in performance between the highest and lowest performers in our school.
- Students will not be promoted through the system without demonstrating proficiency of content standards.
- What is valued, what is taught, what is tested and what is reported to the community team and the public will be perfectly compatible.

The purposes for assessment will be 1) Assessment FOR Instruction and 2) Assessment OF Instruction. *The Assessment for Instruction* is generally teacher focused and consists of pre-testing and formative assessment so the teacher can make "next step" decisions about teaching and intervention. These assessments will also serve as feedback information for students as they work through their projects so they can make adjustments and improvements in their work. These should occur throughout the learning in a variety of formats. *The Assessment of Instruction* is more student focused providing a summative account of learning across several concepts. These are generally carried out at the end of a course or project, typically used to assign a "grade" to be incorporated in the student led conferences with parents each block.

Formative Assessments will include Intermittent Checks for Understanding and formal Benchmark Assessments each three weeks to track student growth toward meeting the Arizona and National Standards. Benchmark results will be quickly analyzed and provided back to each design team so that instructional decisions can be made through collaboration. Students will also contribute to formative assessment through completion of tasks required for their graduation portfolio and student led parent conferences.

Additionally, formative assessments are directly linked to instruction in that teachers use evidence of learning to adapt instruction to meet student needs. It is expected that teachers will incorporate elements such as the key strategies that define assessment for learning:[v]

- Clarifying and sharing learning intentions and success criteria
- Engineering effective classroom discussions and tasks
- Providing feedback that moves learners forward
- Activating students as owners of their learning
- Activating students as instructional resources for one another

Summative Assessments, generally conducted at the end of a course or project to assign a "grade," will also serve as the basis for decisions regarding promotion, differentiation of instruction, and interventions as part of the Progress Monitoring process. A major summative assessment will be the student exhibition of learning as the culmination of each major project. This will be the demonstration of meeting all of the standards required for the project as reflected in the rubric. The other summative assessments which will be reported to the public and also guide the continuous improvement planning will be AIMS (Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards), Stanford 10 for 9th grade, PSAT scores beginning grade 10 and SAT/ACT Scores in grades 11 and 12.

All students will complete a series of pre-assessments upon enrollment to include academic standing, emotional and social intelligence, health and development, and strengths/assets (funds of knowledge). Results will be shared with the design team, students and parents/guardians as part of development of the Individual Personal Education Plan for each student. These will also serve as the baseline for the individual student portfolio required for graduation. By year two this will become a digital portfolio.

Expectations for assessment driven instruction in Reading and Mathematics are detailed in the Performance Management Plans and will be developed for all curricular areas as design teams begin their work prior to the opening of the school.

---

[i] International Center for Leadership in Education. Rexford, New York. 2010 www.LeaderEd.com
[ii] Reeves, D. High Performance in High Performing Schools: 90/90/90 and Beyond. Center for Performance Assessment, 2003
[iii] Steinberg, A. Real Learning, Real Work. Routledge, 1998
[iv] Gallimore and Tharp. Teaching Mind in Society in L.C. Moll (Ed.) *Vygotsky in education (175-205). 1990*
[v] National Staff Development council (Theme/Assessment) By Dylan William, Vol. 27, No. 1, Winter 2006; NSDC (www.nsde.org)