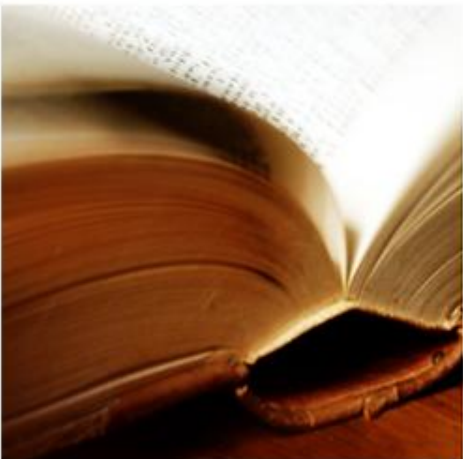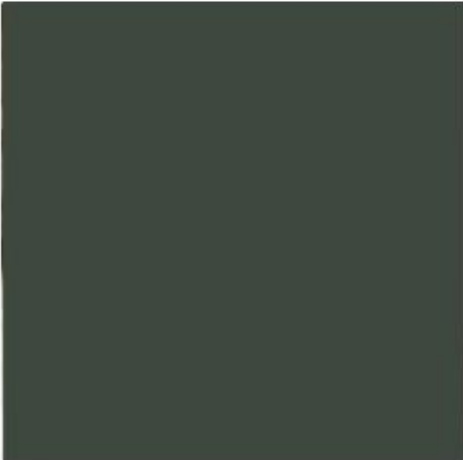# The Dawn of a Skills Continuum

Research Skills Continuum

Our (working) Definition

- ## Skills Continuum

  - A defined set of necessary skills students should obtain prior to high school graduation

  - Is a process of building upon prior knowledge and expanding skill sets

  - A progression of skills working towards their mastery

Background

- Prior experience with a skills continuum at J. Clarke Richardson Collegiate in Ajax (Durham District School Board).

- It is that experience which helped us create our own skills continuum at Maxwell Heights.

Our Goals

- To collaboratively create a common set of skills that Maxwell students need when they leave high school.

- Incorporate those skills into cross-curricular units throughout compulsory courses in grades 9 to 12 with a consistent and repetitive approach.

- Skills taught by the teacher-librarian through the library.

Ministry of Education — Ontario — 1982

Partners in Action:
The Library Resource Centre
in the School Curriculum

Ontario School Library Association

Information Studies
Kindergarten to Grade 12

Information Literacy — Information Technologies — Information and Society — Inquiry and Research

1999 — Curriculum for Schools and School Library Information Centres

EXEMPLARY SCHOOL LIBRARIES
IN ONTARIO

The Ontario
Library Association

a study by Queen's University
and People for Education

2009

RATIONALE

Partners in Action:
The Library Resource Centre
in the School Curriculum

Rationale – Partners in Action (1982)

The teacher-librarian is a teacher who works cooperatively with other staff members and who shares the responsibility for teaching learning skills.

(*Partners in Action*, 1982, p.34)

Rationale – Partners in Action (1982)

This teaching role involves:

- Teaching

- Instructing students on research strategies

- Producing or arranging the production of learning materials

- Providing assistance in the use of learning resources

Rationale – Partners in Action (1982)

Teacher-Librarians, because of their educational qualifications and their experience as classroom teachers, share with their colleagues a common understanding of students and how they learn and of teachers how they teach. In addition, their training and experience with learning resources provide them with expertise that can contribute to the design of resource-based programs.

(*Partners in Action*, 1982, p.34)

Information Studies

Kindergarten to Grade 12

Curriculum for Schools and School
Library Information Centres

1999

Rationale – Information Studies (1999)

The 1995 draft document of *Information Literacy and Equitable Access* (ILEA) states that:

Information literacy is defined as "the ability to acquire, critically evaluate, select, use, create and communicate information in ways which lead to knowledge and wisdom"

(as cited in *Information Studies, 1999, p.1)*

Rationale – Information Studies (1999)

The 1995 draft document of ILEA states that all students should have "equal opportunities to participate and succeed in tomorrow's world. Educators must ensure they have access to information technology, information skills instruction and a wide range of information. Equitable access is fundamental to achieving the goals and expectations of our education system."

(as cited in *Information Studies, 1999, p.1)*

EXEMPLARY SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN ONTARIO

The Ontario
Library Association

*a study by Queen's University
and People for Education*

2009

Rationale – Exemplary School Libraries in Ontario (2009)

"When the school library and teacher-librarian are recognized as playing a critical role in supporting the educational outcomes of the school, the term 'exemplary' can be attached to the school library."

(*Exemplary School Libraries in Ontario*, 2009, p.3)

Rationale – Exemplary School Libraries in Ontario (2009)

"Research has shown that a well stocked library, staffed by a credentialed library media specialist, has a positive impact on student achievement, regardless of the student's socio-economic status."

(*Exemplary School Libraries in Ontario*, 2009, p.4)

Rationale – Exemplary School Libraries in Ontario (2009)

"Key to an exemplary library program is the teacher-librarian's ability to be an effective teacher, providing educational support and leadership through partnering and collaboration, while finding opportunities for integration and cross-curricular connections."

(*Exemplary School Libraries in Ontario*, 2009, p.6)

Our Philosophy

- We are teachers first

- Information Literacy skills are important and cannot be taught in isolation but integrated into curricular assignments

- The inquiry process involves higher-level thinking and is applicable to all departments and beyond high school
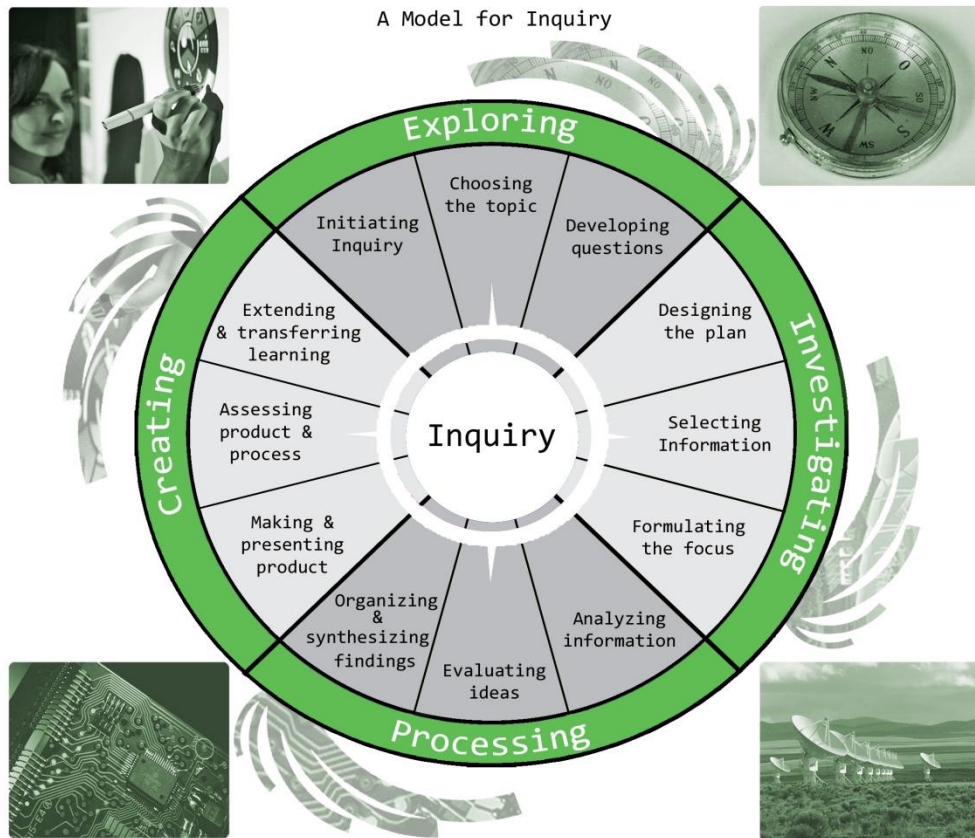
Our Philosophy

- All students should have equal access to everything the library offers

- Consistent approach and repetitive format allows students to achieve mastery of the desired skills

- If a skills continuum is done right, it will have a positive impact on student achievement.

WHAT OUR SKILLS CONTINUUM LOOKS LIKE

A Model for Inquiry

A Model for Inquiry

Inquiry (center)

- Exploring
  - Initiating Inquiry
  - Choosing the topic
  - Developing questions
- Investigating
  - Designing the plan
  - Selecting Information
  - Formulating the focus
- Processing
  - Analyzing information
  - Evaluating ideas
  - Organizing & synthesizing findings
- Creating
  - Making & presenting product
  - Assessing product & process
  - Extending & transferring learning

❑ ✗ I can create questions that direct my research	❑ ✗ I can effectively browse the school and/or public library collection
❑ ✗ I can divide/sort my topic into multiple subtopics	❑ ✗ I keep my information organized by using a note taking sheet
❑ ✗ I use appropriate/reliable sources for research	❑ ✗ I understand what plagiarism is and how to avoid it
❑ ✗ I evaluate and analyze all of my sources that I use	❑ ✗ I understand how to avoid copyright infringement
❑ ✗ I plan accordingly using appropriate timelines to complete my research for the deadline	❑ ✗ I can include *in-text citations* where needed using MLA or APA format
❑ ✗ I can develop and use other keywords to help search for information	❑ ✗ I can cite my reference using MLA or APA format
❑ ✗ I can use a variety of sources of information, both print and electronic, as well as, primary and secondary sources	❑ ✗ I can select and create a product to represent my research findings

The Partner Units

- Reworking of partner unit assignments to follow a consistent template
- ENG 1D1 – Mythology Research
- SNC 1D1 – Space Research
- ENG 2D1 – Discrimination
- CHV 2O1 – Model Citizen
- SNC 2D1 – Genomics

ALIGNING THE SKILLS CONTINUUM

Together for Learning

School Libraries and the
Emergence of the Learning Commons

A VISION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Together for Learning

- A Skills Continuum allows for
  - Equitable Access to
    - A qualified library staff
    - A variety of resources
    - Virtual spaces for access at home
    - Access to technology (computers, laptops, clickers, SMART Boards, web 2.0 tools)

(*Together for Learning*, 2010, p.10)

Together for Learning

- A Skills Continuum allows for
  - Learning Partnerships that provide
    - A cross-curricular and interdisciplinary approach
    - Units that are both complex and resource rich

(*Together for Learning*, 2010, p.11)

Together for Learning

- A Skills Continuum allows for
  - The incorporation of Technology in Learning

(*Together for Learning*, 2010, p.12)

Together for Learning

- A Skills Continuum allows for
  - Discovery and guided inquiry

A Model for Inquiry

(*Together for Learning*, 2010, p.23)

DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Durham District School Board Focus

- Board Improvement Plan
  - Literacy Pillar → Information Literacy Skills
    - Access, manage and evaluate information
    - To think imaginatively and analytically
    - To communicate thoughts and ideas effectively

  (*Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement K-12*, 2012, p.1)

Durham District School Board Focus

- 5 Cogs in Technology - Based on the standards from the International Society for Technology Education (ISTE)
  - In particular Technology as a doorway to information as well as Digital Citizenship

(*Instructional Technology Strategic Plan 2012-2015*, 2012, p.24)

Durham District School Board Focus

- Technology as a Doorway to Information
  - Making effective use of current and emerging digital tools to explore topics and develop research skills
  - Investigating, searching and evaluating digital resources
  - Processing and organizing ideas with digital tools
  - Creating rich-cross curricular products combining various media

Durham District School Board Focus

- Digital Citizenship
  - Modeling and teaching safe, responsible use of digital tools.
  - Promoting and modeling digital etiquette and responsible social interactions related to the use of technology and information.

  (*Instructional Technology Strategic Plan 2012-2015*, 2012, p.23)

MAXWELL HEIGHTS
MUSTANGS

Maxwell Heights Secondary School

- School Improvement Plan
  - School wide approach to demonstrating mastery of important skills
  - Learning Goals & Success Criteria

THE PITCH

School Administration

- Easy to pitch once our expectations were aligned with both the school board and school.

- Sought approval to set-up a committee with a representative from each department.

Colleagues

- Approached colleagues in all departments to send a member to the committee
  - We started with the department heads and asked who might be a good representative for their department.

CREATING PARTNERS

Collaboration

- Created a list of skills students needed to have when they left us in grade 12
  - Collaboratively using Google docs
  - Allows for ownership by the staff

- Identified the most important skills

- Sorted them into the inquiry stages

Collaboration Cont'd

- Focus of attack
  - Junior level focus (Gr. 9 & 10)
  - What units/assignments would we hit?
  - To demonstrate mastery we must ensure the skills are repeated course to course, year to year
    - Similar look and layout

Collaboration Cont'd - The visual aide

- Creation of our skills continuum poster
  - Including our success criteria
  - Student friendly language
- Using OSLA wheel of inquiry
- Poster

MAINTENANCE

Gathering resources

- Identify and address the gaps in our resources for the desired partner units

- Purchase appropriately

C'mon down!

- Booking with course leads/teachers
- Providing updated assignments
- Tracking participation/completion

Meeting Room Booking System

Areas
First Floor
Laptop Carts
Library
Library Equipment (A/V Room)
Second Floor

Period:	Computer Lab (Room 233)(29)	Teaching Area(30)
7:30-8:20 am	See Teacher-Librarian	See Teacher-Librarian
Period 1	Miller(P1)/Bronson(P3)/Roy(P4)	Miller(P1)/Bronson(P3)/Roy(P4)
Period 2	kubsch	See Teacher-Librarian
Lunch	See Teacher-Librarian	"
Period 3	Miller(P1)/Bronson(P3)/Roy(P4)	Miller(P1)/Bronson(P3)/Roy(P4)
Period 4	"	"
2:30-5:00 pm	See Teacher-Librarian	See Teacher-Librarian
5:00-7:00 pm	"	"

REVISITING, REFLECTING, REFINING

Three Rs: Revisiting, Reflecting, Refining

- How's it going?
  - Subtopics were too early in the process
  - Finding weaknesses within the design of the assignment
- Changes?
  - Moved subtopics to the Process stage
  - Reworked note taking sheet

Three Rs: Revisiting, Reflecting, Refining

- Ready to broaden focus?
  - Include the applied level in grade 9 and 10
  - Focus on creating research questions in Grade 11 and 12
  - Focus on using journals in the databases for Grade 11 and 12
- Overcoming challenges in the future

References

Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement K-12, Goals and Strategies 2012-2013. (2012). Whitby, ON: The Durham District School Board.

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