

GUIDING PRINCIPLES/QUESTIONS

1. Does the method emphasize higher level thinking skills and concepts?
2. Is the method flexible and open-ended enough for students to develop at their own pace?
3. Are the adaptations and modifications providing an environment as nurturing and safe as it is intellectually stimulating?
4. Will the method alienate and separate the child from his/her peer group or connect them to their classmates and the curriculum?
5. Do the methods provide a process which recognizes the uniqueness of each child, is responsive to the child's needs, and is of value to the child?

Program Goals

Upon exiting the PACE curriculum, students will:

1. Develop and apply higher order thinking, reasoning, problem solving, and metacognitive skills.
2. Develop and apply critical thinking abilities.
3. Develop and apply creative thinking abilities
4. Develop and apply communication skills.
5. Develop personal growth and social development skills.
6. Develop the ability to become an independent and self-directed learner.
7. Develop the ability to use a range of resources for learning and communication.
8. Foster a life-long love of learning and ideas.
9. Develop and apply appropriate habits of mind to new learning endeavors.

Curriculum Processes

1. Focus on major themes, concepts, issues, ideas, and principles.
2. Emphasize the need for a large knowledge base.
3. Employ multidisciplinary approach.
4. Teach research skills and thinking skills as self-governing and self monitoring processes (metacognition)
5. Curriculum is concept-based, and thematic.

Curriculum Focus

1. Enables child to realize maximum potential.
2. Imparts intellectual and aesthetic legacies of global community.
3. Transformation of ideas as well as transmission of knowledge.
4. Commitment to excellence, hard work.
5. Learning must be relevant and meaningful to students.
6. Higher-order thinking is central element of all teaching and learning.
7. Teach students to monitor and direct their thinking.

Curriculum Strands

The PACE curriculum has developed the following strands:

1. Thinking Processes and Skills
2. Forms of Reasoning
3. Creativity and Talents
4. Metacognition (self-monitoring and strategy regulation)
5. Problem-Solving (general-applied)
6. Communication Skills
7. Affective Development

Assessments

Open-ended assessments are conducted throughout the year on a revolving basis. This serves the dual function of providing insight in to the child's development while constructing the evolving curriculum. Emphasis is on multiple assessment strategies and multiple data sources that respect student differences and provide support and opportunities for diverse learners. Assessment options include:

- Portfolios
- Learning Contracts
- Graded Assignments (based on established rubrics)
- Mix of long/short-term assignments
- Journals
- Projects
- Self-Assessments

STRAND 1 - THINKING SKILLS

1. Develop and apply critical thinking skills.
2. Develop and apply higher-order thinking skills.
3. Develop and apply conceptualization skills.
4. Develop and apply visual thinking techniques.
5. Develop and apply reasoning (analogical/inductive/deductive) skills.

STRAND 2 - CREATIVITY

1. Demonstrate the ability to use fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration.
2. Demonstrate the use of the brainstorming process in creative problem solving.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of various creative thinking strategies by using convergent and divergent thinking processes to complete an original product.

STRAND 3 - PROBLEM SOLVING

1. Demonstrate basic understanding of creative problem solving skills.
2. Develop problem solving techniques by participating in group generated solutions to ill-defined problems.
3. Participate in small group activities to generate solutions and ideas through scampering and brainstorming.

STRAND 4 - METACOGNTION

1. Develop ability to monitor, regulate, and evaluate thinking processes.
2. Develop and apply learning and thinking strategies to tasks.
3. Generate appropriate study questions.
4. Consider outcomes and consequences of strategies.
5. Employ multiple criteria for evaluation.
6. Develop and apply appropriate terminology.
7. Develop skills of organization and management.

STRAND 5 - RESEARCH

1. Develop skills needed for independent study by defining a topic or issue and participating in group brainstorming of ideas related to a topic or by webbing ideas directly related to a topic.
2. Devise a plan for research (time management).
3. Use appropriate level of resources such as internet, videos, maps, dictionary, atlas, books, software, surveys, interviews, graphs, magazines, newspapers.
4. Determine relevancy of research materials found by collecting and sorting data and materials related to the topic.
5. Develop note-taking skills.
6. Analyze and organize notes into a meaningful format.
7. Prepare a product to show research findings.

STRAND 6 - COMMUNICATION

1. Participate effectively in a group discussion.
2. Communicate verbally by recognizing and practicing techniques of public speaking.
3. Organize a speech by preparing and delivering in a formal audience setting.
4. Give visual presentation (transparencies, posters, bulletin board, videos, electronic media, etc.).
5. Communicate in written format.

STRAND 7-AFFECTIVE

1. Assess and clarify their feelings on giftedness.
2. Assess feelings about themselves and their peers.
3. Assess feelings about issues.
4. Consider relationships.
5. Learn to manage frustration and impatience.
6. Properly interpret constructive criticism.
7. Understand peer response and rejection.
8. Encourage risk-taking.
9. Understand personal power and responsibility.
10. Encourage self-directed, internal motivation to reach potential.

CURRICULUM DESIGN AND INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

Integrated Curriculum Model (ICM)

Comprises three interrelated curriculum dimensions:

- 1) Advanced content knowledge that frames disciplines of study.
- 2) Applies and develops higher-order thinking and process skills.
- 3) Focuses learning around central themes, issues, ideas from both real-world applications and theoretical models.

Curriculum Connections (Taught throughout the school year)

Literature Units (LIFT) (Grades 3-5)

Internet Investigations (3-5)

Mythology and Folklore (3-5)

Poetry (Grades 3-5)

Problem Math (3-5)

Geometry Mazes (3-5)

Social Studies (3-5)

Architects of Learning (3-5)

-Direct instruction in:

- (a) Teaching of thinking
- (b) Teaching for thinking
- (c) Teaching about thinking

Process-Based Learning

Children learn by doing. Actively engaged in all aspects of learning.

Open-Ended Work

Learning is presented as series of possibilities/potentialities rather than as production.

Acceleration

Children work at their own pace by moving through varied activities within each class. Offers variation in approach, pace of learning and associated activities. Curriculum compacting, etc.

Enrichment within each activity.

Each lesson and/or activity is multi-dimensional and multi-layered. This feature allows each child to fully explore and develop all concepts and ideas as they understand and envision them.