An Overview of the Parallel Curriculum Model
What is the Parallel Curriculum Model?

The Parallel Curriculum Model is a set of four interrelated designs that can be used singly, or in combination, to create or revise existing curriculum units, lessons, or tasks. Each of the four parallels offers a unique approach for organizing content, teaching, and learning that is closely aligned to the special purpose of each parallel.
The Parallel Curriculum Model

- CORE CURRICULUM
- CURRICULUM OF CONNECTIONS
- CURRICULUM OF PRACTICE
- CURRICULUM OF IDENTITY

KEY CURRICULUM COMPONENTS
The Key Curriculum Components Exist in All Parallels

- ALID
- Extensions
- Resources
- Products
- Grouping Formats
- Learning Activities
- Teaching Strategies
- Introduction
- Assessment
- Content Knowledge

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CORE  CONNECTIONS  PRACTICE  IDENTITY
What does “Parallel” mean?

- Each parallel has components that align with each other.
- Parallels can be used singly or in combination.
- Each of the parallels is of equal value and use with a variety of students or with an individual student at a variety of times.
- The choice to use a particular parallel should be strongly related to learners’ profiles, the subject area, content goals, related units, lessons, and tasks.
What goals does PCM foster?

• Enhances the collaboration between general education and gifted education
• Increases the number of students who participate in challenging and motivating curriculum
• Nurtures the varied strengths and interests among all our students
• Strengthens the sense of collegiality within the field of gifted education
• Increases the extent to which gifted education theory and principles are incorporated into daily practice
What are the purposes for the Parallel Curriculum Model?

• Provides teachers with a comprehensive framework with which they can design, evaluate, and revise existing curriculum
• Improves the quality of the curriculum units, lessons, and tasks
• Enhances the alignment among the general, gifted, and special education curricula
• Increases the authenticity and power of the knowledge students acquire and their related learning activities
• Provides opportunities for continuous professional, intellectual, and personal growth
• Offers teachers the flexibility to achieve multiple purposes
• Reinforces the need to think deeply about learners and content knowledge
• Uses high quality curriculum as a catalyst for observing and developing abilities in learners
• Allows flexibility to address varying needs and interests of learners
An In-Depth Look at Each of the Parallels
Core Curriculum Parallel
The Core Curriculum is a plan that includes a set of guidelines and procedures to help curriculum developers address the core concepts, principles, and skills of a discipline. This parallel is designed to help students understand essential, discipline-based information, concepts, principles, and skills through the use of representative topics, inductive teaching, and analytic learning activities.
A chain reaction occurs that enables students to use their knowledge about a representative topic and large portions of the discipline.
Learning the structure of a discipline involves the transfer of principles and attitudes. In essence, it consists of learning initially not a skill but a general idea, which can then be used as a basis for recognizing subsequent problems as special cases of the idea originally mastered. Learning structure involves a continual broadening and deepening of knowledge... The more fundamental or basic the idea learned, the greater will be its breadth of applicability. Indeed, this is almost a tautology, for what is meant by “fundamental” is that an idea has width as well as wide applicability. (1960, p. 18).
Why the Core Curriculum?

- Promotes student understanding of a discipline
- Makes new learning easier and more efficient
- Promotes content expertise
- Promotes teachers’ understanding of a discipline
- Promotes higher level thinking
- Responds to the knowledge explosion in a practical and efficient manner
- Promotes equity and opportunity to learn
- Increases depth of understanding
- Promotes transfer
Guiding Questions within the Core Curriculum

• What is the essential content within this discipline?
• What are the powerful concepts, principles and skills within this discipline?
• Which topics best represent the core content discipline?
• Which topics are developmentally appropriate for my students?
• How might I help students construct an accurate scheme of this discipline?
• Which resources, activities, and products provide opportunities for students’ analytic thinking about core knowledge?
• How might I assess student learning?
Curriculum of Connections
Parallel
The Curriculum of Connections builds upon the Core Curriculum. It is a plan that includes a set of guidelines and procedures to help curriculum developers connect overarching concepts, principles, and skills within and across disciplines, time periods, cultures, places, and/or events. This parallel is designed to help students understand overarching concepts and principles as they relate to new content and content areas.
The Curriculum of Connections

What kind of connections are we talking about?

Connections across time, events, topics, disciplines, cultures, and perspectives
• Connections to self, other texts, and other people
• Understanding of intra and interdisciplinary macroconcepts
• Understanding of intradisciplinary generalizations
• Understanding of interdisciplinary themes
The Curriculum of Connections

What is the purpose for making these connections?

• To discover key ideas in multiple contexts
• To examine variance across contexts
• To use ideas from one context to understand another context
• To use connections and contexts to formulate questions and hypotheses
• To improve depth of understanding
• To foster the development of analogical reasoning and metaphoric thinking
• To see the world in a grain of sand
• To enhance perspective
• To improve problem solving
• To “make the strange familiar”
• To develop wisdom
• To fosters the development of analogical reasoning and metaphoric thinking
Guiding Questions within the Curriculum of Connections

- What are the major concepts and principles in this discipline?
- Which of these major concepts and principles link to numerous topics, people, events, time periods, cultures and other disciplines?
- Which topics, events, people, or time periods best represent these intra or interdisciplinary connections?
- Which topics, events, people, or time periods are developmentally appropriate for my students?
- How might I help students construct a more comprehensive scheme of this discipline, related topics, and other disciplines?
- Which resources, activities, and products provide opportunities for students to think metaphorically about macroconcepts, principles, and generalizations?
- How might I assess student learning?
Curriculum of Practice
Parallel
The Curriculum of Practice is a plan that includes a set of guidelines and procedures to help students understand, use, generalize, and transfer essential knowledge, understandings, and skills in a field to authentic, discipline-based practices and problems. This parallel is designed to help students function with increasing skill and competency as a scholar, researcher, problem solver, or practitioner in a field.
What is meant by the Curriculum of Practice?

• Understand real world applications in a discipline
• Assume the role of a practitioner as a means of studying the discipline
• Become a problem solver
• Work as a researcher
• Function as a scholar
Why might we use the Curriculum of Practice?

- Allows students to function as a practitioner, a producer, a researcher, or a scholar in the discipline
- Helps students see the relationship between the questions that disciplines seek to answer and the questions that they seek to answer in their daily lives
- Allows students to assume a leadership role in conducting their own research
- Provides a rationale for the persistent student question, “Why is this so important to learn?”
- Provides students with the tools and methods for independent learning
- Provides a means for exploring the daily lives of professionals in the discipline: working conditions, hierarchical structures, fiscal aspects of the work, and peer or collegial dynamics
- Offers students the opportunity to learn how to use and apply the skills of the discipline in real world situations
Guiding Questions within the Curriculum of Practice

- What are the common problems, practices, issues, needs, and questions within this discipline?
- Who are the practitioners, researchers, scholars, and contributors within this discipline?
- What are the powerful cognitive, research, reference, learning, communication, and methodological skills within this discipline?
- What kinds of products, services, research, or investigations are typically conducted in this discipline?
- Which problems, practices, issues, needs, and questions are developmentally appropriate for students?
- Which resources, activities, and products provide opportunities for students’ to act like a practicing professional within this field?
- How might I assess student learning?
Curriculum of Identity
Parallel
The Curriculum of Identity is a plan that includes a set of guidelines and procedures to assist students in reflecting upon the relationship between the skills and ideas in a discipline and their own lives, personal growth, and development. This parallel is designed to help students explore and participate in a discipline or field as it relates to their own interests, goals, and strengths, both now and in the future.
The Identity Parallel

- Emphasizes the role of the individual within a content area
- Provides opportunities for self exploration
- Supports an individual’s search for affinity, affiliation, and knowledge of self
- Offers a sequential plan to address increasing levels of interest and commitment to a field
Why might we use the Curriculum of Identity?

- Reduces student alienation
- Encourages examination and reflection about students’ strengths
- Clarifies for a student, over time and at increasing levels of specificity, the degree of “fit” between his or her learning profile and a targeted field
- Highlights student personal growth; targets possible next steps
- Increases the likelihood of self-actualization and productivity
- Reminds us that the focus of our work is students
- Illuminates powerful differences among students
- Provides specific techniques for learning about the identity of individual students
- Pinpoints where teachers can make adjustments to accommodate critical differences
- Lessens the likelihood of the “one-size-fits-all” curriculum
- Makes teaching more enjoyable
Guiding Questions within the Curriculum of Identity

• What are the various interests, abilities, and learning preferences of my students?
• Which topics, skills, opportunities, and careers are related to my students’ profiles?
• How might I link my students’ profiles with the content I am required to teach?
• How might I introduce my students to professionals, organizations, and role models in their areas of interest and strength?
• How might I help my students discover their own strengths and affinities?
• How might I identify, measure, and help my students reflect upon their growth and progress toward self-actualization?
• What is our long-term plan for supporting my students’ self-actualization?
• Which opportunities and activities are appropriate for my students at this stage of their development?
• Which resources, activities, and products provide opportunities for students’ self-reflection and personal development?
Ascending Levels of Demand
Ascending Levels of Demand

Ascending levels of intellectual demand is the process by which we escalate the curriculum in order to match the learner profile. Prior knowledge and opportunities, existing scheme, and cognitive abilities are major attributes of a learner’s profile. Teachers reconfigure one or more curriculum components in order to ensure that students are working in their zone of optimal development.
Ascending Levels of Intellectual Demand Take Into Consideration Students’ ……..

• Cognitive abilities
• Prior knowledge
• Schema
• Opportunities to learn
• Learning rate
• Developmental differences
• Levels of abstraction
Why Provide Ascending Levels of Intellectual Demand?

• To honor differences among students.
• To address varying levels of prior knowledge, varying opportunities, and cognitive abilities.
• To ensure optimal levels of academic achievement.
• To support continuous learning.
• To ensure intrinsic motivation.
• To provide appropriate levels of challenge.
Guiding Questions that Support the Ascending Levels of Intellectual Demand

• What are the powerful differences among my students’ levels of prior knowledge, cognitive ability, and rates of learning?
• Which students requires greater or lesser degrees of depth, abstraction, and sophistication with regard to this unit, lesson, or task?
• How might I design lessons and activities that provide varied levels of scaffolding, support, and challenge?
• Which content, teaching or learning activities, resources or products support varying levels of prior knowledge and cognitive ability within this unit, lesson, or task?
• How might I assess students’ growth when many of them possess varying levels of abstraction and prior knowledge?