

Changes in BC's New K-12 Curriculum

What are the Implications for Post-Secondary?



British Columbia has a new Kindergarten (K) – Grade 12 curriculum. K to Grade 9 was rolled out in Fall of 2016. Grade 10 curriculum will be mandatory in Fall of 2018 and Grades 11 and 12 will follow in Fall of 2019. The new curriculum model was built on research, global best practices and consultations with teachers and education leaders in BC.

Changes in the classroom, in student learning and in the system, is going to take some time to be successfully deployed, implemented and integrated. In addition, as with any large change initiative, resources, time, money and other needs are key for success. Change management components and clear communication strategies are also necessary for all involved including the K-12 and PSE sectors. BC is a way into this implementation, but there is still much to be done in terms of informing, resourcing and providing answers to important questions. There are successes happening, as well as challenges and uncertainty across the province.

While the new K-12 curriculum is gradually being implemented, other groups (those in BC's post-secondary institutions, [BCRA](#), [BCTLC](#), [BCCAT](#)) are having conversations about impacts on admissions, changes in curriculum for post-secondary courses, what the new learners will be like when they enter university or college, will the students be successful in post-secondary education – among other topics. Each post-secondary institution will face different challenges and successes with the new K-12 curriculum as each institution appeals to different groups of applicants.

The K-12 curriculum changes are significant and will have some level of impact on post-secondary classes and courses, especially given the qualities and attributes grade 12 graduates may possess upon entry. So, it is worthy to stop and look at what those changes might be and how post-secondary institutions could respond to create opportunities for a more seamless learning experience for students.

New Student of Tomorrow?

Local domestic students in BC's post-secondary institutions may be arriving:

- with more awareness of their learning strengths and abilities
- a greater focus on what they can 'do' versus what they 'know'
- awareness of 'big ideas' in a discipline for a course or a program
- having dived deeper into certain concepts and principles in some subject areas (more of a focus of learning a topic in more depth, than many topics at a shallow level)
- more engaged and aware of six core competencies for life-long learning (including communication, creative thinking, critical thinking, positive personal and cultural identity, personal awareness and responsibility and social responsibility)
- with more choice and ownership of own learning
- more involved in reflecting upon, sharing and communicating their accomplishments to parents, peers and teachers
- having built a 'capstone project' in Grade 12
- more aware of Aboriginal perspectives and worldviews
- what other characteristics?



Possible Impacts for PSE: According to Five Key BC K-12 Curriculum Changes

1. Core Competencies



For many institutions who have developed "institutional learning outcomes" or "graduate attributes", they'll be pleased to see that many of the same skills and attributes (critical thinking, communication skills, self-regulation, valuing diversity) are now part of a student's K-12 educational background. Students will come into PSE institutions more aware of the skills and attributes required for learning success.

Post-secondary educators can explore ways in each discipline to continue to enhance these competencies, find ways to make them more evident to students in learning activities and possibly incorporate into assignments, lessons and experiences. The use of student portfolios provides other possibilities for students to provide examples of the competencies/graduate attributes in demonstrating their learning and development of the skills and knowledge required of their education.

Core competencies can also be extended through linkages with co-curricular records, experiential learning opportunities (co-ops, internships, work experiences), service learning and other learning avenues that allow students to provide evidence of examples of their further growth and development.

In addition, post-secondary educators can incorporate self-regulation strategies and metacognition exercises into their

lessons to assist students with 'learning how to learn in the discipline'. This might help students gain skills in becoming more self-aware of what new methods work for them in learning in post-secondary classes.

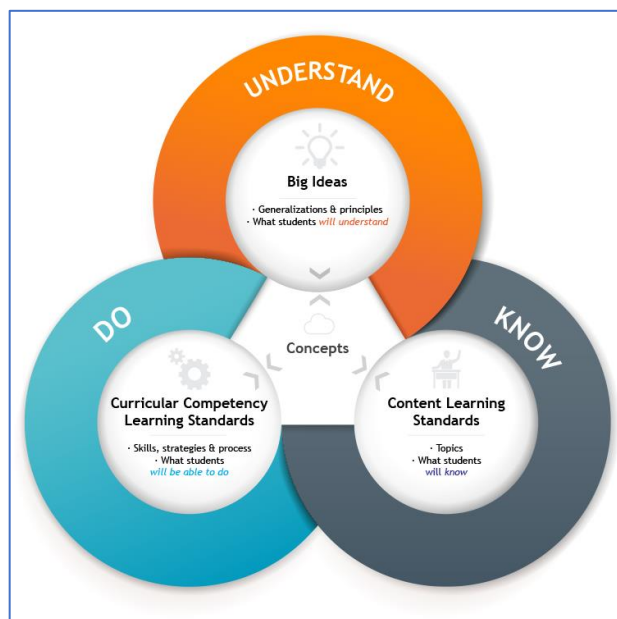
2. Concept-Based, Competency-Driven Framework: Know-Do-Understand Model

The curriculum has less "knowing" and more "doing" along with focusing on the big ideas. Students should come into post-secondary hopefully with stronger skills, strategies and processes for applying and doing the learning.

The previous K-12 curriculum had a lot of 'knowing' and a larger amount of content to attend to, whereas this new curriculum is focused on the "how" of learning in a subject area.

Students should be arriving in PSE institutions with greater awareness of the learning process, how to go about applying their skills and knowledge and will seek to understand the bigger ideas and principles for new courses and learning experiences.

In addition, students will have had more choice, flexibility and experiences in personalizing their learning coming into post-secondary education.

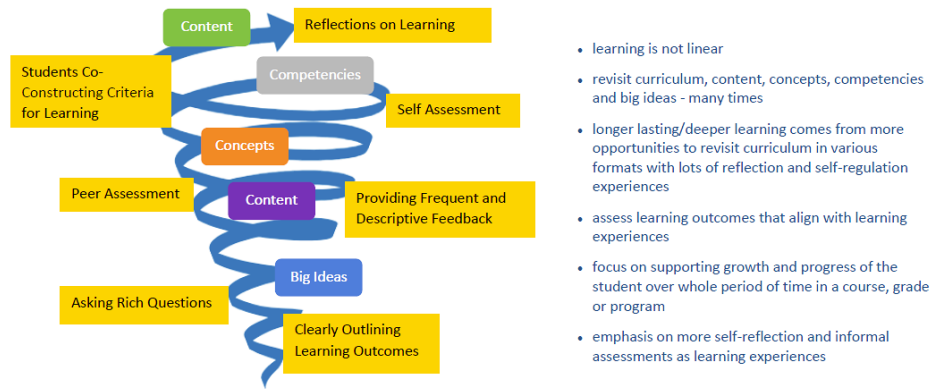


Content-focused Curriculum

Content-focused curriculum: Measuring learning outcomes through tests, assignments and exams aligns well with content-focused curriculum.



Concept and Process-Oriented Curriculum



Spiral from Davo Sime: <https://thenounproject.com/davosime/>

Possibly the bigger underlying concept with this new framework is the shift from content-focused curriculum (more linear and focused on testing, assignment and exams at end of topics, chapters, themes or modules) to a concept and process-oriented curriculum (more spiral in shape and focused on revisiting concepts and content many times throughout a course) with frequent and varied assessment as learning experiences to guide students in understanding their growth and development. This may be the more challenging component for all educators in redesigning and enhancing their assessment and instructional methods.

The opportunity for post-secondary educators is to look at their curriculum and classes and take this opportunity to reassess how learning happens.

- Are there elements of the new K-12 curriculum that could be extended or enhanced in university and college classes?
- Would chatting with Gr. 10-12 teachers on how they are teaching a specific discipline in this new curriculum model assist post-secondary educators in making learning a more seamless experience for students?
- Might this new curriculum provide opportunities for collaboration and connections to create professional learning for both the K-12 and PSE sector?

The new K-12 curriculum provides both sectors will opportunities to grow and learn from each other.

3. Literacy and Numeracy Assessments

Exemplar #2 - Score: 4

- ☒ Work shows an advanced understanding of the situation
- ☒ Appropriate strategy implemented
- ☒ Correct mathematical solution
- ☒ Evaluates mathematical solution in context
- ☒ Communication is clear, detailed, and organized

Most of the discussion in the province around the new graduation assessments is about admissions. Eventually all course-based provincial exams that accounted for 40% of the final course mark will be no longer (e.g., English 12, Communications 12).

Many post-secondary institutions have decided they are not using the proficiency results of the new Numeracy and Literacy Assessments as an indicator of admissions for their institution, but some may use them.

Post-secondary institutions may wish to use the results in other ways to assist students in being successful in their studies.

There are opportunities here for rich conversations amongst all educators.

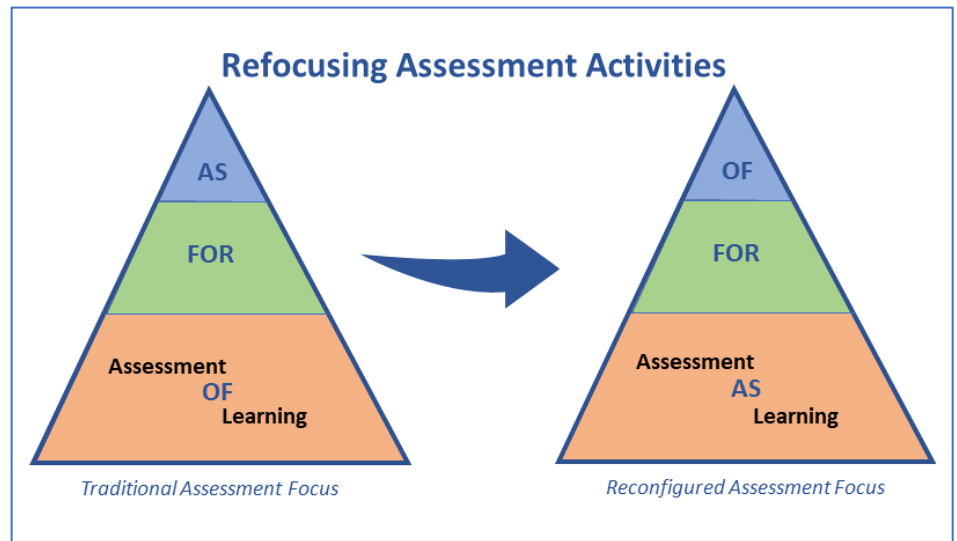
4. Assessment AS Learning: Communicating Student Learning

With an increased emphasis in K-12 on assessment as learning, students should enter post-secondary institutions with greater self-awareness, abilities to engage in effective questioning and inquiry processes, as well as being able to reflect on their own learning and identify areas of strengths and need.

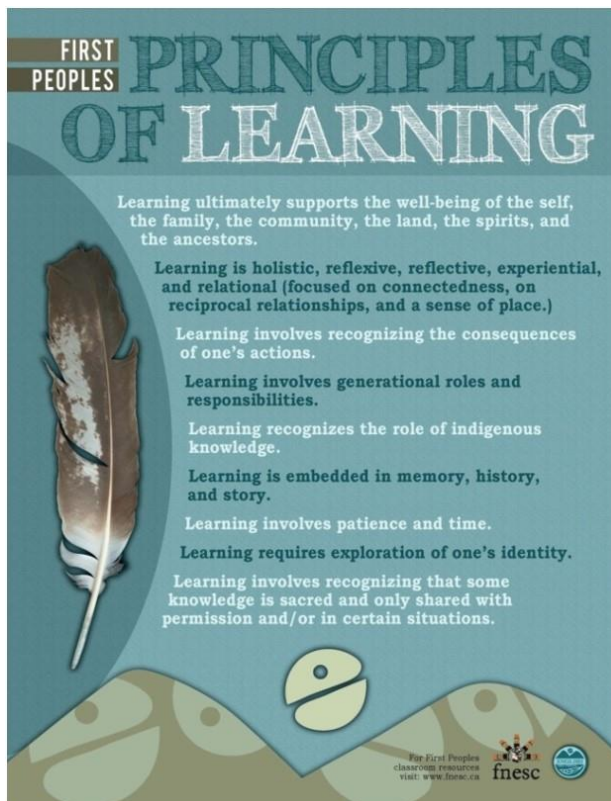
Students may express wishes to continue these assessment practices as they continue their learning journey and development of self-regulation and metacognitive learning skills.

Post-secondary educators should be prepared to foster continued growth with similar techniques and tools for student success.

However, both sectors require more training and resources for knowing how to implement learning with greater emphasis on assessment as learning. It won't happen overnight and requires understanding and confidence first with the strategies and methods for implementation.



5. Aboriginal Knowledge and Perspectives



Students will be coming to PSE institutions more aware about First Peoples history, culture and perspectives. PSE institutions are already working on how they can integrate these same First Peoples history, culture and perspectives in their courses and classes.

This is a challenge for both sectors (K-12 and PSE) as this takes time for educators to learn themselves, clarify their own misconceptions and experiences and get to a place where they are appropriately integrating Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing in their classes in meaningful and authentic ways.

A simple checklist of ways to change your class or adding new literature or posters to curriculum is not the way to approach appropriate integration.

The challenge faced by all educators and support staff is to embrace Indigenous learning as a life-long journey - as it is going to take a while to feel comfortable and understand what needs to be done.

Post-secondary Education's Next Steps?

- Learn more about the changes in the K-12 curriculum and how it might impact their discipline, program and/or course (e.g., ask questions, fill in gaps of knowledge, clarify areas where needing more detail etc.)
- Revisit and re-examine their curriculum (e.g., changes to K-12 curriculum might affect post-secondary curriculum to ensure students are suitably able to build upon knowledge and skills they have and have not acquired)
- Enhance curriculum connections with some similar components like big ideas, learning strategies, core competencies (e.g., look at institutional 'graduate attributes or learning outcomes' and see how they connect to Core Competencies, add in 'big ideas' to course syllabi etc.)
- Re-examine their instructional and assessment methods (e.g., to ensure there is suitable pathways for learners to develop and apply their new learning, experience a more seamless journey from Grade 12 etc.)
- Examine institutional admissions processes (e.g., are all new Gr. 10-12 course names updated, do admission's details change with new course structures and content in Grades 10-12?)
- Build more collaborations and connections with K-12 educators to learn from each other about the way learning is happening (e.g., have science teachers at local high schools visit post-secondary institutions to engage in conversations about the learning journey for students and vice versa, bring together K-12 and PSE educators over gatherings focused on key topics and ideas)
- Link with local School Districts to share professional learning experiences about the new curriculum, instruction and assessment (e.g., build relationships to learn what K-12 teachers are engaging in with respect to professional development and training on the new curriculum, possibly co-participate in some of those sessions)
