

Tools for building beyond the one-room progressive schoolhouse

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Introduction

A variety of social forces are converging to make century-old progressive educational ideas attractive: Economically, the new workforce calls for adaptable “knowledge workers” who know how to collaborate, learn, and develop new ideas. Intellectually, sociocultural and cognitive educational researchers are beginning to synthesize ideas from their two worlds. Pedagogically, schools of education (at least some small, private schools of education) emphasize progressive, constructivist notions in their courses. Technologically, the World-Wide Web, electronic communications, video, simulation software and other new tools have the capacity to support deep intellectual work in ways that were unthinkable a decade ago.

We have begun to hope that the political will to move in a progressive direction on a large scale will inevitably follow. However, we are less optimistic about the capacity of the community of progressive and constructivist educators to foster the population explosion that such a political shift would demand. We need more and better ways of bringing new educators into this kind of work.

Our project, the passion school, is a design system for developing learning environments organized around learner interest Joseph, 2000. The work began with a single person (Joseph) acting as designer, teacher, and researcher. Two new teacher/designers (Edwards and Harris) have adopted the passion curriculum model by reading academic papers, and by working intensively one-on-one with Joseph. These adoption strategies are difficult to scale – the 5th adopter of this model (should there be such a person) will get much less support, to say nothing of the 20th adopter. If we are to participate effectively in fostering progressive pedagogical ideas, we need to develop and externalize these ideas so that they become available to new teachers in a more structured way. In our particular project, we have already articulated activity design strategies. Instructional strategies, however, have not been described, other than in our individual reflections. In order to make the model available to new teachers, we need to articulate not only strategies for developing activities, but also strategies for decision-making during operation of those activities.

In this paper, we describe our two first steps in this direction: We have begun to create a basis for a community of learners among passion curriculum teachers, and we have created a set of representations intended to support a particular kind of instructional decision-making. We hope that these tools will provide a grounding for effective professional development in this model.

The passion school project

The passion curriculum design model is driven by three major concerns: Social justice, cognitive development, and human motivation. By attending to principles drawn from research and pedagogical practice in these three areas, we have developed a structured design approach that results in interest-centered learning environments that address

important learning objectives. The passion school project maintains moderately ambitious goals for scale. We hope ultimately to create a toolkit for schools interested in adopting this model in the extended day. The toolkit would include foundational principles, design guidelines, support for professional development, example curriculum, and video-based examples of instruction. Since the project began with a single designer-teacher (author Joseph), the first step toward developing such a toolkit is to introduce the model to new teachers.

Up to this point, work on the passion school model has taken place through a prototype curriculum, the Video Crew. Video Crew is an extended day class for upper elementary and middle school students, that has been operating over the past five years. The progressive, technology-rich curriculum focuses on video-making, and addresses academic, life-skill, and video-specific learning objectives. In the last two academic years, two new teachers – authors Edwards and Harris -- have led the Video Crew at an urban elementary school, with Joseph’s continued support. Through this work, each teacher has developed his or her own perspective on the design of this curriculum, and each has fed ideas and challenges back into the process of passion curriculum design.

The Video Crew passion curriculum uses video-making as a theme of interest. Young learners with a stated interest in video-making work together to produce videos in a variety of genres, engaging intensively every step of the process – development of initial ideas; writing treatments to persuade the “executive producer” (teacher) to commit resources to a project; screenwriting; storyboarding; budgeting; scheduling; set, costume and property design; production work behind and in front of the camera; creation of soundtracks; editing; and organizing venues for the presentation of their compositions. At the same time, learners earn increasing rights, titles and responsibilities through a system of certifications that demand both intellectual and practical performances of increasing skill. Through this work learners begin to engage with the norms of professional culture. In addition to contending with video-making learning objectives, learners also have to contend with academic objectives such as literacy (in activities like screenwriting, storyboarding, treatments) and mathematics (in activities like budgeting, creating soundtracks).

The passion curriculum design framework exists in the form of a set of representations and examples focusing on activity design. In this work, we set out to develop an equivalent set of tools to support teacher decision-making in this complex environment. Specifically, we focus on a critical element of teacher decision-making in passion curricula: When should teachers intervene? In cognitive apprenticeship terms, when should we scaffold, and when fade? In this paper, we introduce our initial work around framing intervention decisions. This work informs a trajectory by which the Video Crew and its underlying framework can move away from a single-classroom implementation model and toward a full-scale afterschool program adoptable by new staff and new schools.

The passion curriculum design framework

The passion school was initially developed out of a synthesis between the Goal-Based Scenario theory of learning environment design (Schank, 1992; Schank, 1993) and cognitive apprenticeship (Brown, 1989; Collins, 1989). The idea was develop curriculum

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such that learner goals would be the driver of authentic learning activities, and to set those activities in a rich social context that would permit learners with different ability levels to learn from each other. A primary impetus for this work came from recognizing the convergence between cognitive learning theory and progressive education – cognitive theory provides support for authenticity and respect for learner goals, principles central to progressive pedagogies (Dewey, 1913; Freire, 1994). These principles are fundamental to education for self-determination, as well as to a cognitively sound education. The passion curriculum work is a way of explicitly bringing cognitive theory into the service of a socially just education.

A passion curriculum is based on activities derived from adult work in an interesting domain, designed to support serious learning of a variety of kinds of learning objectives. These activities are set in a community of common interest – learners join a curriculum based on interest in the theme. Instructional staff includes teachers as well as practitioners in the domain of the theme.

Passion curricula are grounded in a set of principles derived from GBS theory, cognitive apprenticeship, and progressive education. These principles include:

- **Meaningful work.** This principle is intended to capture authenticity in two senses. Activities should be designed so that they have meaning with respect to learners' own goals. At the same time, they should be authentic in terms of adult practice in the domain of the theme.
- **Rich social environment:** Social relationships are used in design as a motivational consideration. Learning objectives addressed explicitly include social learning objectives. A mix of experience and ability levels means that learners can model for and teach each other.
- **Complex motivational design:** The passion curriculum model views personal interest as the most important motivator of learning, for cognitive and social justice reasons. At the same time, the model recognizes that personal interest is unreliable as a motivator because of the effects of other kinds of motives – even interested learners are easily distracted by difficult work, reward, or social considerations. This framework therefore uses these “context-based motivators” in design, ensuring that challenge is appropriately set, and that rewards and social circumstances tend to support, rather than distract from, interest. (Edelson & Joseph, under revision)
- **Safe opportunities for expectation failure:** Dynamic memory theory (Schunk, 1982), the basis for goal-based scenario design, views learning as a process of reorganizing expectations on the basis of experience. This process requires learners to experience expectation failures – experiences that demand that kind of reorganization. However, these experiences will not lead to effective learning if they are associated with too high a degree of emotional trauma. Therefore, passion curriculum design has allow learners to take real risks with their ideas, while protecting them from emotional consequences that might lead to a shut-down in learning.

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In addition to these key principles, the passion curriculum model also provides a set of specific guidelines for enactment – design guidelines developed through real-world work with the Video Crew prototype. These guidelines frame theme selection, alignment of learning objectives with activities, and construction of the projects, certifications, classroom and professional life that constitute the major work forms in passion curricula. Guidelines also address development of classroom infrastructure.

- Theme selection: Themes are designed to reflect the specific interests of learners and adults, as well as to connect with important learning objectives
- Alignment: Passion curriculum design uses an epistemic game (Collins, 1993 #78) to embed learning objectives into activities
- Projects: Projects are significant works in the domain of the theme. They include three key phases – proposal, development, and culminating activity. Activities in each phase address important learning objectives.
- Certifications: Certifications are designed to motivate learners to address learning objectives that are particularly difficult. They use context-based motives to help learners press forward in the case of difficulty. They include a set of authentic tasks, a defined standard for each task, and a completion package – an authentic title and associated rights and responsibilities. An example from the Video Crew design is the camera operator certification.
- Classroom life: Students address social learning objectives by determining codes of conduct and developing conflict resolution strategies.
- Professional life: Passion curricula are organized around structures and norms modified from the professional world in the domain of the theme.
- Infrastructure: The spaces, time divisions, materials, and equipment in passion curricula are intended provide constraints and affordances that help students make effective choices about their work.

The passion curriculum model provides extensive philosophical and practical support for activity design. Missing from the this model is a meaningful theory of instruction. In this highly complex pedagogical setting, we need to provide much more support for teacher decision-making.

Development methodology for a theory of instruction for passion curricula

This project uses design-based research to move its goals forward. This style of research calls for ongoing cycles of design, enactment, reflection/evaluation, and redesign. Each design enactment puts into practice ideas developed in the reflection phase, and provides a testing ground for those ideas. The Video Crew was developed and taught by Diana Joseph between 1995 and 2000, as a prototype for creating the passion curriculum design framework. In 2000-2001, Joseph moved out of the teaching role, as Arnell Harris took over instruction. Aletha Edwards works with a modified version of the framework in 2001-2002, in which she trains veteran members from previous enactments of the video crew to act as mentors to a new generation of Video Crew students. Joseph collaborated

with Harris and with Edwards to develop curriculum and to refine the passion curriculum framework.

A second major strategy for developing our theory of instruction comes from teacher action research. Action research is a professional development tool in which teachers collaboratively reflect upon student work, pedagogical ideas, and experiences trying out new ideas in practice (Bransford, 1999). Action research enhances teacher learning because it develops collaborative relationships between all members and it requires practitioners' participation in the research design and examination of their own practice. Action research has always been a part of the passion school model in that teachers collect fieldnotes and video documentation of their classroom practice for later reflection. We intensified the collaborative component of action research in our context as a way of externalizing ideas about instruction. Action research thus has multi-layered implications for professional development in the passion curriculum model – on the one hand, our work together itself constitutes a powerful learning opportunity for us. On the other hand, the results of that learning, in the form of the instructional representations we will describe, become a tool for future professional development. One especially useful aspect of action research for us is its ability to be tailored to the levels of expertise and the needs of all within the group.

Video Crew enactments

Joseph taught Video Crew in two different sites – from 1996-1999 she taught Video Crew as a classroom special program and after school at a large urban public elementary school. The after school portion of the program served students in grades 4-7, about three days per week plus student-organized weekend sessions. Six to ten students participated at any given time. Students produced fantasy, wrestling, music videos, spoofs, horror videos, and animation. At the end of each academic year, students organized a “film festival” to present their work to friends, family, and favorite teachers. From 2000-2001, she taught video crew at a small urban school which we will call the Charter. This work took place in the Charter's extended day program, approximately three afternoons per week. Students made talk shows, music videos, and kung-fu and horror videos. They closed the year with a documentary about the school, presented to the school's board, faculty and sponsors at their annual meeting.

Harris' and Edwards' instructional work took place in the Charter's extended day program as well. Harris additionally used some of the curriculum elements in the regular instructional day with an overlapping group of students during a designated weekly project time. The Charter's students are African-American. About 70% of the Charter's students are eligible for free lunch.

During Harris' tenure as video crew teacher, 15 students participated in Video Crew. Several of these students had some experience with Video Crew from the previous year, when Joseph taught the course. Students made fantasy, sports, commercials, talk shows, music videos, “after school specials”, “gross-out” vids, and newscasts, as well as covering events around the school. The group met 2-3 days per week, with no special culminating activities.

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Edwards is currently teaching video crew. She began in January of 2002, training experienced Video Crew students as mentors for a group of incoming students. By highlighting the mentor role, Edwards' design presses forward on the cognitive apprenticeship basis for the passion curriculum model. As of March 2002, Edwards was working with six mentors and six members. The mentors had paired up with members to shoot their first project together, which is a music video. In April 2002, the mentors will work with members to shoot their first documentary film, which will follow a play production process all the way from the audition through rehearsals to the opening night. This year's Video Crew also has plans to show all their projects at the end of the year in their own sponsored "Film Fest" where they can vote on best production, give awards, and invite the public to view all of their hard work.

The enactors

The three authors differ from each other as teachers in a variety of ways, two of which have been particularly useful in developing the ideas in this paper: We have different kinds of experience with the model, and we came to the model with different backgrounds that shaped our personal instructional philosophies. In terms of passion curriculum experience, Joseph was the originating teacher, and now focuses on design and research around the passion curriculum work. Edwards and Harris are teachers in the extended day program at an urban charter school, who have adopted and adapted the Video Crew curriculum and participated in recent refinements to it. Joseph began developing the framework and using it instructionally in 1995, Harris used the model for one year (2000-2001), and Edwards began very recently -- in January of 2002.

Joseph's teaching style comes from a teaching background in progressive education through the arts in an urban setting, and a research background in the Learning Sciences. Harris' style emerges from his background in traditional theater and as an urban-based artist, producer and director in the post-modern tradition, as well as his recent experience as an urban classroom teacher. Edwards' style is grounded in a traditional theater and film background, teaching in a private school with little supportive training, and a practical degree in the Learning Sciences.

	Joseph	Harris	Edwards
Experience	Original enactor, 7 years design, teaching and research experience	1 year teaching and design experience, 1 year continued contact with the project	6 months design, 3 months teaching experience
Key elements of educational background	Education through the arts, research and design foundation in learning sciences	Traditional theater, urban-based postmodern artist, teaching in urban schools	Traditional arts teaching, traditional theater, teaching in private schools, design foundation in learning sciences

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These differences create two dimensions of perspective that allow us to think about a range of teacher experiences. One dimension focuses on the degree of choice that we think learners need to have. We all think that learners need to make choices far more than they do in a traditional curriculum, and we all see structure in the curriculum as having value, but we differ in our attraction to either of those poles. Of the three of us, Harris is the most comfortable with very open-ended instruction, possibly because of his background and training in post-modern art, which orients him toward thinking of artistic process as far more important than artistic product. Edwards is the most comfortable with structured situations, possibly because her teaching and her own education have been very structured.

A second dimension of difference in our styles is that we have different ways of thinking about our relationship to the passion curriculum model. We all see the model as a work in progress, with temporary stability subject to change if real-world testing shows a need for such change. At the same time, we have differing stances with regard to our own power to change the model. Since Joseph was the original creator of the model and has a long intimacy with the ideas, she is quite comfortable with the idea that the model needs to be responsive to teacher needs. Edwards, on the other hand, as a very recent adopter of the model, views the design principles and guidelines as fixed, while the instantiation of the design in her particular classroom, and her instructional decisions, are hers to determine. Harris falls somewhere in the middle of this continuum. These stances are important at this phase of the project – Edwards role is to test the model in the real world, and in order to do that, she needs to think of it as stable. Joseph, on the other hand, in her role as researcher and designer, needs to take responsibility for the ultimate shape of the model. She therefore needs to think of the model as malleable clay until we have further tested it under a broad array of circumstances.

These differences in perspective have been invaluable to our work – they help us to stay aware of a developmental trajectory for passion curriculum teachers as they learn to practice in this model. Our range of perspective also means that we bring a wide variety of tools and lenses to the work of articulating what we understand about passion curriculum instruction. These perspectives play important roles in shaping the representations we describe below.

Process of developing the new tools

The three authors met weekly in February and March of 2002 to develop the concepts in this paper. We began the process by articulating personalized definitions of the terms in the original Joseph description of the passion curriculum framework (Joseph, 2002). This provided a basis for authors Harris and Edwards to externalize their own understandings of the framework. Our discussions gave rise to a common language we used to talk about specific moments in Video Crew – powerful moments, difficult moments, and moments that each teacher identified as exposing the model at work. One key challenge arose again and again through these examples: How do teachers in passion curricula determine when to intervene? This question shaped our subsequent discussions.

Not surprisingly, we often disagreed about when to intervene. An illuminating example arises in comparisons raised between Joseph's work and Harris' work at the end of their respective school years as Video Crew teacher. Joseph tells the following story from the 1997-98 video crew:

A few nights before the film festival, we really had nothing to go on – our planning hadn't been effective, and I had no idea how to teach them how to plan. In some ways, this might've been a good time to let things fall through – to end with a little party, or something with lower stakes than a public film festival. But at this particular school, students didn't have many opportunities to execute complex plans, so it was especially important to me that they have a successful experience here. The next day, I told the students how worried I was, that I'd been up thinking about it and was ready with some ideas about how to pull our fat out of the fire. Anita interrupted "Miss Diana, I was up all night, too!" She engaged with the planning in a way I hadn't seen from her in the past. I had mixed feelings about her reaction – it was great that she was so personally involved, but were the stakes too high? Is it ok for an 11-year-old to be up all night worrying about something like this? On the other hand, it was a really powerful experience for her, something she'll never forget. The culminating activity was critical here – that's what created the urgency that drove the learning. In the end, it felt right to intervene to make sure that the culminating activity happened.

But Harris, under similar conditions, made a very different decision:

By the second part of the semester, my video crew members were involved in other activities around the extended day program, such as cheerleading and theater. Each of these activities had its own specific expectations, demands and final presentations. I saw the amount of pressure/ time and energy needed to fulfill these endeavors. It seemed to me that my students could learn something about completing projects in those other contexts, even though adults were in control of how that completion happened. The need for a final showing or screening never felt dire. What did feel dire was that the students needed to experience real control over whether they reached a final stage or not. In other words, I had the freedom to let students run into trouble in their planning -- trouble I thought would help them learn. For example, my student Mark was producing a music video, and on

the day he'd scheduled for shooting, he let himself and his crew get completely distracted. I sat back and watched, and at the end of the day asked him how he thought it had gone. He wasn't pleased, but the next day's work was much improved, and it was clear he'd learned something about how to get his project going. I don't think that improvement would have happened unless I'd let him back himself into a corner.

Rather than making sure we completed a culminating activity, I chose to focus on the day-to-day process of video production--trial and error, collaboration, and learning from mistakes. Although a final festival would have been a nice gesture, the students benefited as well by creating videos for themselves--for that reason only.

Two similar curricula designed on the same principles, two very different instructional decisions around culminating activities. How can the passion curriculum theory be constructed and represented so that it supports the process behind both seemingly contradictory intervention decisions? Or, perhaps the model should clearly identify one of these decisions as more effective than the other, in order to help teachers understand what constitutes effective intervention in passion curricula?

In order to articulate the reasons behind our intervention decisions, and to understand each other's decisions, the three of us developed a set of representations of the considerations involved in deciding whether or not to intervene. These representations reflect three different perspectives that we hope will provide multiple lenses for new teachers as they engage with this model. These representations go hand in hand with the theoretical principles and guidelines for enactment described above.

In the next section of this paper we present the representations, and close with a narrative from Aletha Edwards about her own instructional decision-making as a novice passion curriculum teacher, a narrative that exposes the ways that these representations might impact the development of thinking about instruction for passion curriculum teachers.

The representations

We created three different representations of the considerations in instructional decision-making. These representations strongly reflect our views of structured vs. open-ended curriculum, and our views of the passion curriculum model as fixed or malleable. We see these representations as tools for teacher development in the passion curriculum model, in that they can support reflection on decision-making in specialized ways. We present the three representations in order of complexity.

A tool for introducing the model

This representation, developed by Edwards, is a relatively simple tool for thinking through the elements of the passion curriculum framework. The image describes a pyramid. The front of the pyramid describes the high-level categories of considerations in instructional decision-making: core principles, design guidelines, design elements, and teacher decisions. The side of the pyramid lists some of the specific ideas that fit into each of those categories.

The pyramid captures two key metaphors that have been useful to Edwards – first the notion that the passion curriculum ideas are hierarchical, including foundational principles that are fundamental to work in this arena and therefore absolutely fixed, and moving through to decisions which are entirely the teacher’s responsibility. A second metaphor conceives of this model as a story that has a beginning with a background (corresponding to the principles), a middle in which details are spelled out (corresponding to the guidelines and design elements), and an end where a resolution or action takes place (corresponding to the teacher’s decision). So flexibility increases as we move up the pyramid.

This representation simplifies the complexity of ways that design principles, enactment guidelines, and enacted designs inform decision-making. A strength of this representation is that it can be used to think through decision trajectories in a relatively simple way. A teacher could place a limited set of ideas in each slot, and use the interactions between those ideas to make or to reflect on a decision.

Edwards says:

As a new teacher, I feel the curriculum designer established the principles of the PC early on for me and had already put the guidelines in place for me. Therefore, all I

had to do was think about how to carry out these principles and guidelines and follow through with executing them.

A tool for deepening sophistication with the model

This representation, developed by Harris, captures the passion curriculum model in three concentric ellipses. In this metaphor, the passion curriculum design principles are the center of an orbital system around which the other concepts can revolve. The first orbit contains variables specific to the context in which a particular curriculum operates: the institutional setting for the curriculum; the resources at hand; the guidelines for creating projects, certifications and other elements of the curriculum; and even certain aspects of the teacher's personal style. This representation views these variables as relatively stable, and part of the context at hand. The outermost orbit contains the factors that are most responsive to teacher decision-making: the operation of day to day activities, specific project and certification designs, how the daily schedule runs, how tradeoffs are made between the demands of authentic practice and the need to scaffold.

The "solar system" metaphor allows for rotation of contextual factors around principles, and teacher decisions around contextual factors. Within each of these orbits, the conceptual "planets" can move fluidly. The goal of this representation is to bring these various concepts into alignment. With so many variables to consider, this is a way to keep a solidified connection from the small detail to the fundamental idea. This

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representation adds complexity to the model – supporting consideration of several factors at once.

This representation maintains the hierarchical notion captured by the pyramid representation – the ideas at the center of the solar system are fixed for any passion curriculum, while those at the perimeter are determined by the particular teacher. The solar system adds a second principle – that the relationships between the ideas captured here are fluid, and can be played with to support decision-making.

A tool for thinking about many considerations simultaneously

This representation uses a cube¹ to capture decision-making considerations in three dimensions: Principles, context and design elements. The cube representation permits researchers, designers and teachers to follow the trajectory for any decision. Imagine each cell in the cube lighting up to show that combinations of factors from the different dimensions are in play. If we return to Joseph's decision to intervene, key considerations were – outside opportunities for learners (these were limited), core learning objectives around completing tasks, project design (specifically the culminating activity, rich motivation. Harris' decision, on the other hand, was guided by considerations of

¹ The notion of using a cube to represent complex idea interaction was inspired by Karen Pittman's work, for example in Yohalem & Pittman (2001).

authenticity, creating opportunities to experience expectation failure, and limited outside opportunities to take responsibility (though many outside opportunities to complete projects with help). Each of these decisions would create a different pattern of highlights within the cube. Each pattern makes visible the set of considerations behind an intervention decision. We would not expect this visualization to make any particular decision easier, necessarily, but we hope that by reviewing decisions in this manner, teachers would begin to develop a clearer understanding of their own styles, and a clearer position as to how that style fits with the model.

While this representational tool is far too complex to be useful for a new teacher, it has power when teachers are ready to consider multilayered interactions between factors. We also suspect it may be useful in future research on teacher decision-making in this context.

Our differences in style and experience have resulted in representations that we see as lining up along a developmental trajectory. The simple pyramid is sufficiently scaffolded to support passion curriculum pedagogy for new teachers. The solar system is more complex, supporting decision-making when teachers want to consider more factors simultaneously, with more play in the relationships between those factors. The cube could be thought of as representing all of the possible combinations of considerations, providing much power and freedom in thinking about decisions, but very little structure and support.

These representations become descriptive tools for teachers to depict their own decision-making trajectories, thereby making them available for reflection. These representations are not intended to definitively rule in or rule out any particular intervention decision. We believe they can be effective tools to support decision-making, at least around the issue of intervention, but probably not in real time. They would be most useful in learning the model, in instructional planning, and in reflection on practice. For ourselves, we believe these models will be powerful tools in developing our own instructional decision-making skills, and we hope they will also be useful in analysis of emerging decisions, for research as well as for developmental purposes.

Edwards' development as a passion curriculum teacher²:

A teacher might track the development of his or her intervention decision-making by thinking of intervention decisions as falling into one of four categories.

² Edwards is the only currently active teacher – the only one of us with the capacity to put to the test new ideas she develops in our learning group or through thinking about representational tools. Joseph and Harris also feel they have developed greatly through this process, but we can only reflect on our prior practice – we have no context in which to test or illustrate our learning. We celebrate Edwards' courage in making her developmental moments available to public view.

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		Did the teacher intervene?	
		Yes	No
Did the teacher see this as a decision that fit the model?	Yes	Satisfying intervention	Satisfying non-intervention
	No	Unsatisfying intervention	Unsatisfying non-intervention

Edwards used this idea to think about her own development as a teacher, during a period in which she taught video crew with support and regular observation from Joseph, and at the same time participated in weekly learning group meetings with Harris and Joseph. She identified an example from her teaching of a moment that fell into each of the four categories. Edwards used the pyramid representation to help her visualize the factors behind each decision:

1. A satisfying intervention:

Situation: Making a movie title in a computer-based video editing program for the Recruitment Video but the group wants to explore the sound effects offered in the software instead.

Decision made: I intervened and was glad I did.

Reason for intervention: to get students back on task (since I knew the video needed to be done by the following week). This came down to a choice between teaching strategies vs. authenticity. The teacher has to be available to assist students with learning that is appropriate for their developmental level. At the same time, an executive producer has to be available to assist in the management of production. Because of the coming deadline, authenticity became more important here.

Key considerations: Principles -- learning by failure, authenticity. Guidelines --- project. Design element – video procedures for this video crew. Decision: to intervene.

2. A satisfying non-intervention:

Situation: A conflict arises between two students – one has removed a CD from the other’s purse.

Decision: I did not intervene, and was glad I did not.

Reason for not intervening: I wanted the girls to learn how to work out their differences on their own. A key principle in the passion curriculum model is to try to establish a rich social environment. I see this moment as helping them to develop skills necessary to a socially just world.

Key considerations: Principles – learning by failure, rich social environment. Guidelines – community life. Design element – learning to do conflict resolution in video crew.

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3. An unsatisfying intervention

Situation: I am discussing with the students the reason why we are editing the recruitment video together collaboratively – why I am participating with them in this process.

Decision made: I intervened and was not glad that I did.

Reason for intervention: I wanted to make sure the recruitment video would get done so I decided that it would be best if we all worked on it collaboratively. It would have been interesting to see what would have happened if I had let Marjorie and Terrence try to teach Audra how to use the software on their own. Or if I had allowed students more time to explore the software on their own so that they could become familiar with how to use an editing tool. I think the students would have not felt so stifled (and bored) in learning how to do the task if they had more time to explore the technological environment and if they hadn't had someone over them trying to micro-manage them.

Here I chose to intervene as a teacher and maybe I should have been an executive producer and not have intervened until after I requested for a demonstration of their final product. If they did not have a demo to show me, then I could have intervened and asked why did the product not get done? What went wrong during the process? What could be done next time to meet the goals of the task and deadlines of the project? This way I would have fostered the idea of learning expectation failure, which helped the students realize the importance of staying on task and meeting deadlines for a project. I then could have reiterated the importance of getting certified in certain aspects of the video making process in order to keep the status of mentor and to move up through the ranks of video production.

Key factors: Principles: authenticity, learning by failure. Guidelines: projects.
Designed elements: video procedures in Video Crew.

4. An unsatisfying non-intervention

Situation: While Marjorie and Audra go back and forth about who is going to be in control of the computer, I sense a lack of engagement with the task the students are working on. Marjorie knows how to do the sound effects task the students are working on, and wants to just do it instead of helping Audra learn the skill. Also, I notice that there is tension in the room between not only the students but between the students and I as well.

Decision made: I did not intervene and was not glad that I did nothing

Reason for intervention (or not): I did not intervene with my thoughts about how the learning process was coming along because I did not want to slow the work pace down any further. However by not intervening and addressing the tension in the room, I saw a somewhat bad situation just get worse and learning had shut down. Joseph's fieldnotes

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from this session suggested that at the moment there was tension sensed amongst the group, it would have been a good time to revisit the guidelines of the Passion Curriculum and use certifications as a way to engage students in learning the task at hand. I think this is right. I could have suggested that Marjorie use her skills to get certified as an editor, with the responsibility of teaching others. That might have helped with the tension because the students would have had clear roles in the situation. I also think being reminded of the assessment aspect of certifications could have helped them to stay on track.

Key factors: Principles – authenticity, rich social environment. Guidelines – projects, certifications. Design elements: video-making procedures in Video Crew, editing certification.

Edwards adds:

Thus far in implementing the Passion Curriculum I have found that I struggle between the dichotomy of being a teacher and being an authentic video producer for the video crew. Part of this struggle comes from the fact that I have never been officially trained as a teacher. My college education has consisted of Communications and Theater training as well as over the past year, training in “how people learn.” All that I really know about teaching has come from my interactions with different curricula over a three year period and from the advice of my parents who are both educators with over 25 years of teaching experience. Therefore, I feel my teaching philosophy is what’s known as “old school” because it stems from the day when teacher education research was much more conservative and traditional. That is, a teacher would lecture and talk to kids about a subject area and students were expected to listen. A test would be given to students to see how well they listened. However now, after going through an intense MA Program called Learning Sciences at Northwestern University, I realize that there are so many factors for how people learn that the traditional methods of teaching do not work anymore with the average 21st Century child. I feel many students today need not only innovative curriculum with engaging activities and rich social and learning environments to work in, but they also need innovative teachers to teach them.

Conclusion

This work serves to help us move beyond a single-classroom implementation in two key ways. First, we have a set of specific representations to use in professional development materials as we begin to introduce the model to new teachers. These representations are the first elements of a theory of pedagogy for passion curricula, to complement the evolving theory of design. Second, we have begun to establish a framework for professional development in the passion school project – our process in developing this paper represents a first approximation toward an ongoing professional development practice in the action research tradition. We expect to continue our practice of regular meetings, partly to continue our own development, and partly to further elaborate our theory of instruction.

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The ideas in this paper have an immediate and direct impact on our work, in several different ways. Most directly, they impact current instruction in the working Video Crew, through changes in the ways Edwards thinks about instructional decision-making. They also impact near-term development of the passion school project by pressing forward our thinking about professional development.

Our immediate next step will be to create a manual for passion curriculum development. This manual will include the theory of design (further specification of the design principles and guidelines to which we have alluded) as well as the beginnings of a theory of instruction, based on the ideas in this paper. These concepts will be grounded in examples and teaching moments from our work. We see such a manual as the basis for expanding the passion curriculum project to new teachers. The process of developing representations has been especially powerful for us, and we see that process itself as an important part of professional development.

We see three ideas in this paper as having value outside our own project. First, the very notion of focusing on intervention decisions in professional development is important – we believe that other progressive educators could benefit by thinking in a structured way about this issue prior to beginning to teach. Second, we believe that the activity of developing representations as a part of action research could be very powerful in many instructional contexts. Third, the idea of using teacher-developed representations to support instructional decision-making along a developmental trajectory is one that may have application in other contexts.

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