



The Courageous Curriculum

The Concept:

Jonathan Lear, a teacher from Sheffield, spoke at a headteachers' conference about how he had revolutionised his school's curriculum and I knew this would fit with our school's ethos perfectly! We were able to arrange for several road trips to Sheffield so that teachers could see for themselves the awesomeness in action.

Many staff meetings and planning sessions later we had the foundations for our own Great Easton version of an exciting and innovative curriculum.

One of the most frustrating elements of teaching is never having enough time. We start the term buzzing with ideas about the outcomes we will see in all the different subjects...however, the reality is often very different as we felt as though we were continually spinning plates and rushing the children through a curriculum. Whilst we did our best to make learning as fun and meaningful as possible, there was always a nag in our head that there must be a different way. So hearing what Jonathan had to say about re-thinking the approach to the curriculum resonated with us.

Ultimately, we are passionate that children will leave GEPs ready "for life in the twenty-first century by creating opportunities for learning that are engaging, motivating and memorable." Our new curriculum "is a system that encourages independence, curiosity and creativity; a system that produces collaborators, innovators, leaders and, above all, a system that helps our children to understand what it means to be human". (Guerilla Teaching by Jonathan Lear Independent Thinking Press 2015 p.11)

The Curriculum Design:

Skills

Skills-based non-negotiables that underpin the curriculum and creates a foundation that are essential for learning. (see Appendix One GEPs Subject Skills Map).



Create

Discover

and

Explore

The difficulty with the old curriculum was that we were trying to teach every subject every week. The limitations of this meant that we could be teaching two or three subjects an afternoon which means that teaching is rushed and children don't get a chance to explore their own lines enquiry. The three term structure enables a deeper focus: 'Create' is based around art, drama & music, 'Discover' has a history theme & 'Explore' is all about geography. This allows us to be able to deepen the children's understanding of these subjects in a much more focused way.

Concept Grid and Christian Values

These are words that make connections across subjects and beyond subjects e.g. human rights - justice, beauty and equality are all concepts that could be covered and explored through history, geography, science and art. By taking a broader view of things we can get some big ideas and also allow us to focus on RE and PSHCE. Each term we choose 4 concept words, with at least one of these being a core Christian value. This ensures that Christian values are at the heart of our teaching and learning each day because these words underpin and create connections across subjects and themes in our project work. For example within the 'Life.Divine fate or free will?' create project the concept word 'peace' will underpin the Christmas link and the children will be considering whether or not Jesus was the Messiah and encouraging the children to consider whether or not their lives are pre-destined - fatalism verses determinism.

Concept Grid

Adversity	Consequences	Freedom	Passion	Spirituality
Beauty	Well-being	Segregation	Morality	Stewardship
Belief	Democracy	Happiness	Poverty	Strength
Belonging	Discrimination	Identity	Power	Sustainability
Care	Diversity	Individuality	Prejudice	Tradition
Change	Dreams	Influence	Pride	Transformation
Choice	Duty	Integration	Protest	Oppression
Class	Equality	Judgement	Reform	Media
Cohesion	Failure	Conflict	Resilience	Value
Common Good	Fairness	Wealth	Sacrifice	Virtue
Community	Faith	Loyalty	Rights	Weakness
Consent	Fear	Free Will	Truth	Perseverance
Justice	Responsibility	Peace	Friendship	Creativity
Compassion	Forgiveness	Trust	Service	Wisdom
Hope	Courage	Humility	Thankfulness	Generosity
Respect & Reverence	<i>18 of the concepts are Christian Values for Life (taken from The Church of England Toolbox). However, love is the foundation of all values and therefore it is not included as a separate value. Love underpins our school vision and as such, will be at the forefront of all concepts.</i>			

Key Enquiry Question

This needs to be an over-arching philosophical question. This allows us to explore the concepts and kick-start the children's curiosity and desire to learn more. This also allows opportunity for the children to develop further lines of enquiry. All teachers and LSAs enjoyed training from the philosophy man in October 2019 to ensure we are really effective in leading and modelling questioning.

Authentic Outcomes and Critical Audiences

An authentic outcome means having a real event at the end of the project as a goal for the children to work towards. This builds motivation and raises expectations and expertise. This helps the children to be viewed as professionals or as people capable of producing professional work. Expectation and aspiration are not always the norm. It helps to build self-esteem, belief and confidence and is an excellent way of developing awareness of professions and careers.

Critique

This enables the production of beautiful work. Positive feedback and growth mindset e.g. 'That's an amazing picture, what a great start', the children can begin to embed a subconscious understanding that there are always improvements that can be made. This is a type of feedback that can be individual or given to peers.

Each term we will continue to send out a curriculum share letter so that you are aware of how you can support your child with their learning. Exercise books continue to come home so that you can see what they are learning in school so you can discuss their learning with them at home. Dojo is also a fantastic way to keep up to date with day to day events in the classroom.