Articulation Educational Impact of The Achievement Cycle Model and A Comprehensive Assessment Plan in Taiwan

by

Chu-Yung Liao (Ryan)

Presented to

Dr. William P. McCaw

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of

EDLD 694: Curriculum Design and Evaluation

The University of Montana

Summer 2003
Understanding The Achievement Cycle

The achievement cycle, which is developed by Allan Glatthorn, is one of prominent curriculum design models. It is a systematic approach to curriculum, assessment, instruction, and learning. Glatthorn (1999) defines the achievement cycle as the close interactive relationships of standards-based curricula, performance evaluation, assessment-driven instruction, and authentic learning.

Standards-based curricula

Standards are the framework and central focus of the curriculum. As Kendall and Marzano (1997) explain, there are content standards and performance standards. Content standards define what all students should know and be able to do. They describe the knowledge, skills, and understandings that students should have in order to attain high levels of competency in challenging subject matter; performance standards identify the level of achievement expected for each content standard. They state how well students demonstrate their competency in a subject. Glatthorn (1999) ascertains that standards-based curricula are curricula based on content standards as explicated by experts in the field.

Performance Tasks and Performance Assessments

Besides, Glatthorn (1999) states that “performance task is a complex open-ended problem posed for the student to solve as a means of demonstrating mastery” (p.18).
He also indicates performance assessment is one type of assessment of student learning. This type of assessment provides teachers with information about how a child understands and applies knowledge. Performance assessments "represent a set of strategies for the application of knowledge, skills, and work habits through the performance of tasks that are meaningful and engaging to students" (Hibbard, 1996, p. 5).

Assessment-Driven Instruction

In addition, Glatthorn (1999) explains “assessment-driven instruction is planning and teaching that are based upon, derived from, and focus on the performance task and its performance assessment” (p.19). Therefore, ADI (assessment-driven instruction) can help students prepare on rigorous performance assessment.

Authentic Learning

The concept of authentic learning is used to solve problems and complete open-ended tasks. Glatthorn (1999) believes the students construct their own knowledge and values through authentic learning which is higher-order learning. He says “the central purpose of curricula, assessments, and instruction is improving authentic learning” (p.19).

Strengths

As noted above, there are several strengths to use the achievement cycle
Curriculum Design

First, learning is viewed as a continuous progression through knowledge and skills indicated by standards. Activities, assessments, and instruction are designed to support student proficiency regarding standards so that students, parents, teachers, and administrators are clear on the expectations for student learning. Second, students are self-directed and self-assessing. In performance assessments, they allow students to reflect on their own work and evaluate their progress. Furthermore, performance assessment tasks are also reserved for measuring those standards or benchmarks not easily measured by tests and quizzes.

Weaknesses

Since there are several benefits for the achievement cycle model, some careful attention should be paid. First, poorly written standards may make no one can realistically teach to or ever adequately assess. In addition, standards-based instruction have often been found with curricula that emphasizes learning isolated skills and with textbooks that promote skill mastery through memorization and practice. Furthermore, the concept of standards-based instruction is more teacher-center rather than child-center that specific facts and skills is more important than learning to learn. Moreover, performance assessment tasks can be time-consuming and resource-demanding. Some teachers are hesitant to implement performance assessments in their classrooms because these teachers feel they don't
know enough about how to fairly assess a student's performance (Airasian, 1991).

*Comprehensive Assessment Plan*

Judy Carr and Douglas Harris (2001) define “comprehensive assessment is an ongoing inquiry, a process of raising questions, collecting data to provide some possible answers, and making reasoned decisions about necessary changes in programs, practices, and resources that will affect student performance” (p.81).

Carr and Douglas Harris (2001) also declare the assessment plan specifies classroom, local, and state levels of data related to resources, programs and practice, and results areas. At the classroom level, assessments help teachers to determine what students know and what to do in order to improve their instruction. Besides, at the school and district level, assessment results can provide a basis for program evaluation and change, and curriculum revision and implementation. Furthermore, at the state and national level, assessment data can provide information to improve education through policy and legislation. “Therefore, a comprehensive assessment plan combining different levels of assessment for different purposes is needed” (p.67).

Finally, they address several major components in building a standards-based assessment plan, such as setting clear purpose for student assessment, ensuring student assessment is worth the time and effort, establishing the role of standards, developing a process for setting criteria related to standards, setting performance
levels, and developing a student assessment plan. They believe that this type of comprehensive assessment plan will provide complete and coherent information to improve student performance through standards-linking system.

*The Relationship*

In general, the achievement cycle model has a close relationship with the comprehensive assessment plan because both they encompass the concept of assessment. Both of their basic concepts are ongoing assessment of student learning. All major components and strategies are to help students increase learning achievement and meet standards-linking system based on leadership actions in the area of curriculum and evaluation.

*Impact on Taiwanese Education*

According to the achievement cycle (Glatthorn, 1999) and the comprehensive assessment system (Carr and Harris, 2001), I firmly agree that they are thorough and comprehensive curriculum design and assessment plan that can be used to improve education for all students in Taiwan. The momentum is growing from some reasons.

First, many Taiwanese students suffer from outdated traditional single paper-pencil assessments through memorization and practice. Carr and Harris (2001) assert “rarely does a single assessment tool provide equally useful data for all purposes” (p.67). Therefore, the achievement cycle model and comprehensive
assessment plan use a variety of strategies for assessing students’ learning and ability to apply their knowledge to new problems or in different contexts. Consequently, multiple measures will be coming to impact Taiwan’s education instead of single assessment system. All Taiwanese students will have more equality and quality of education from the new comprehensive assessment system.

Second, identifying the benchmarks is a new concept for Taiwan educators. In fact, the traditional curriculum standards seem to be very broad and vague in Taiwan educational system. Students, parents, teachers, and administrators are not clear on the expectations for student learning. Indeed, benchmark is a concrete statement of skills and knowledge to be demonstrated at a specific performance level. Identifying the benchmarks is used as checkpoints to monitor students’ progress from one level to the next and to measure progress toward a high-level proficiency standard. With this in mind, this is a simple process of quality control to identify Taiwan’s students who have mastered skills and those who have yet to master them.

Third, traditionally Taiwanese teacher’s role is information giver in a classroom. Rather, the role of teachers should facilitate authentic learning (Glatthorn, 1999). Thus, it will be more challenging and complex than conventional instruction in Taiwan’s classroom. Teachers will need to take more responsibilities on students’ learning by providing a rich learning environment and helping students interact with
that rather than only sage on stage.

In short, in a changing education system, educators should continually work to update curriculum design and evaluation by reviewing and editing the framework to reflect changes in curriculum, standards, and assessments. I believe the more better understand the quality of education being provided to the students around the world, the more resources and strengths all students will benefit from.
References


