Searching for a Competence-based Approach to School Curriculum: Korean Case and Remaining Issues
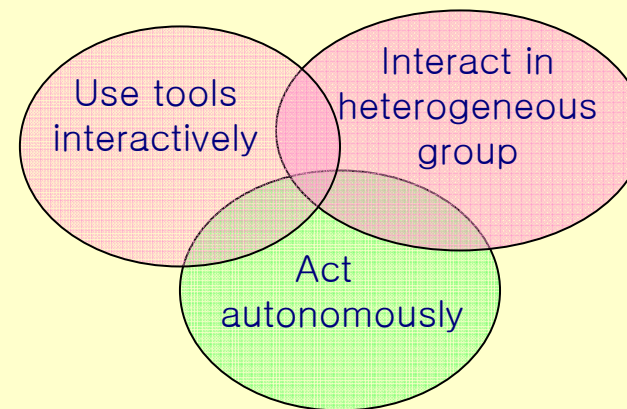
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Won-Pyo Hong
Kwang-Woo Lee

Starting Points

Dominant approach to core competences: what are core competences and how they work in reality?

Global competence, analytic competence, dialogic competence, emotional competence….

Use tools interactively

Interact in heterogeneous group

Act autonomously

DeSeCo Model on Key Competences

Research Questions

Then, how to develop core competences for the next generation of a society?

How to connect core competences with what students' learn in schools, if they are important for students' future lives?

Combining core competences with school curriculum would be beneficial not only to the school curriculum but also to the discourse on core competences.
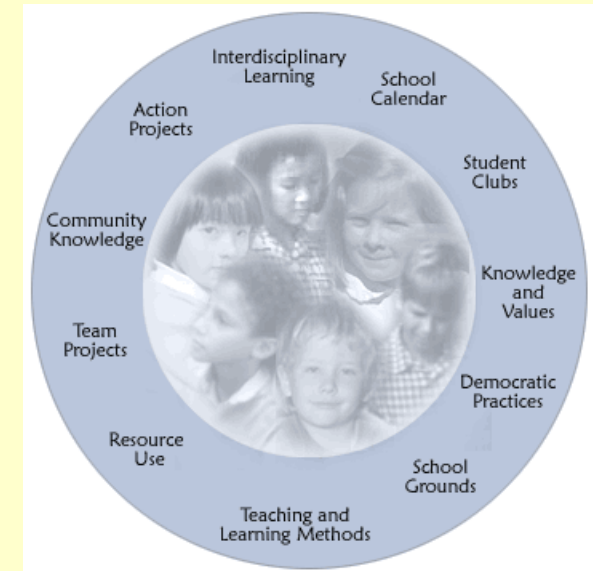
Social Significance of School Curriculum

In many countries, school curriculum is a most important and systematic instrument through which students learn knowledge, attitude and skills valued by a society.

This is why many countries in the world have been trying to revise their curriculum to respond to the changing world.

Through school curriculum, students learn how to make sense of and how cope with the world that they will live in after their graduation.

Limits of the Current School Curriculum

Organized according to the disciplinary structure, subject areas are likely to be disconnected with each other and separated from real-life settings.

Difference between, e.g., "science as a discipline" and "science as a school curriculum" is unclear.

Then, what can be an alternative? What can be a new rationale for selecting and organizing school curriculum?
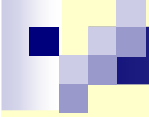
Developing core competence!

Developing core competences can shed a new light on the nature and function of school curriculum.

The ultimate goal of school curriculum is developing students' competences beyond the transmission disciplinary knowledge.

Developing core competences can be a new criterion in organizing content knowledge and selecting instructional methods.

Competence-based approach to school curriculum: Remaining Issues 1

How to draw a social consent on common, universal competences that students shall develop through school curriculum?

Through what process? Who is going to define what a specific competence, e.g., critical thinking, means?

Five Key Competences in New Zealand Curriculum
- Relating to others
- Managing self
- Participating and contributing
- Thinking
- Using language, symbols and texts

Cross-curricular competences in Quebec Curriculum
- Use information
- Solves problem
- Exercises critical judgment
- Adopts effective work methods Thinking
- Achieve his/her potential

Competence-based approach to school curriculum: Remaining Issues 2

Is each subject area supposed to develop all the competences socially agreed? Or, can each subject area choose some areas of competences closely related to it?

Math

<u>Five Key Competences in New Zealand Curriculum</u>
- Relating to others
- Managing self
- Participating and contributing
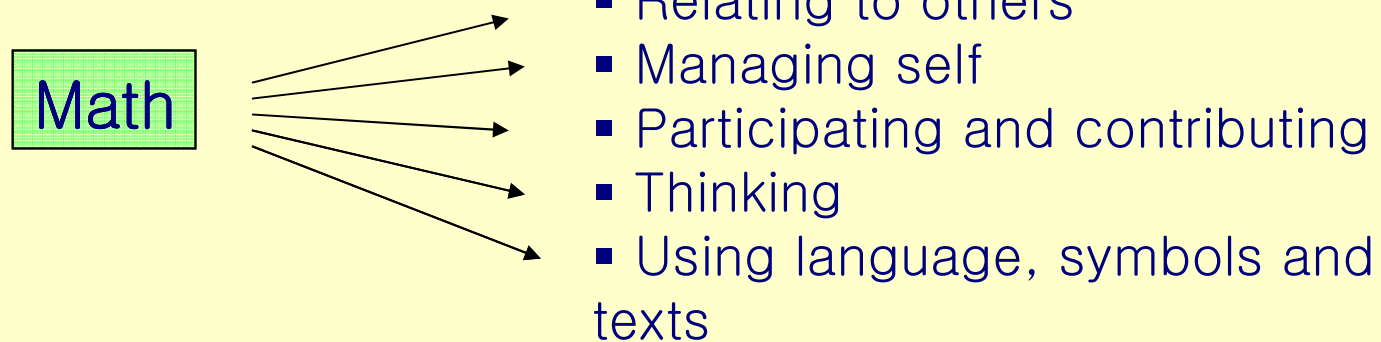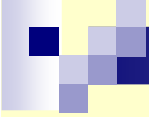- Thinking
- Using language, symbols and texts

Competence-based approach to school curriculum: Remaining Issues 3

How to combine content knowledge and core competences?

Do we have to get rid of traditional content knowledge because if is useless? Or is it still valued in competence-based approach?

If the latter is the case, how can we make use of content knowledge so that it can contribute to developing students' core competences?

A Survey Research

– 2009, Twice in June and July

– Participants: Curriculum professionals in academia and public schools

– 52 Participants in the first survey
– 51 Participants in the first survey

Survey Results 1

Do we need a competence-based approach tin the Korean school curriculum?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	No response	Total
First survey	1(1.9)	2(3.8)	14(26.9)	28(53.8)	6(11.5)	1(1.9)	52(100%)
Second survey	2(3.9)	0(0.0)	12(23.5)	29(56.9)	7(13.7)	1(2.0)	51(100%)

Survey Results 2

Where to introduce core competences in subject area curriculum standards?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	No response	Total
Vision Statement	1(1.9)	4(7.7)	5(9.6)	22(42.3)	19(36.5)	1(1.9)	52(100%)
Goals	1(1.9)	2(3.3)	5(9.6)	28(53.8)	15(28.8)	1(1.9)	52(100%)
Content Standards	1(1.9)	**7(13.5)**	11(21.2)	20(38.5)	12(23.1)	1(1.9)	52(100%)
Instructional Methods	2(3.8)	**8(15.4)**	8(15.4)	23(44.2)	9(17.3)	2(3.8)	52(100%)
Evaluation	1(1.9)	10(19.2)	8(15.4)	22(42.3)	9(17.3)	2(3.8)	52(100%)

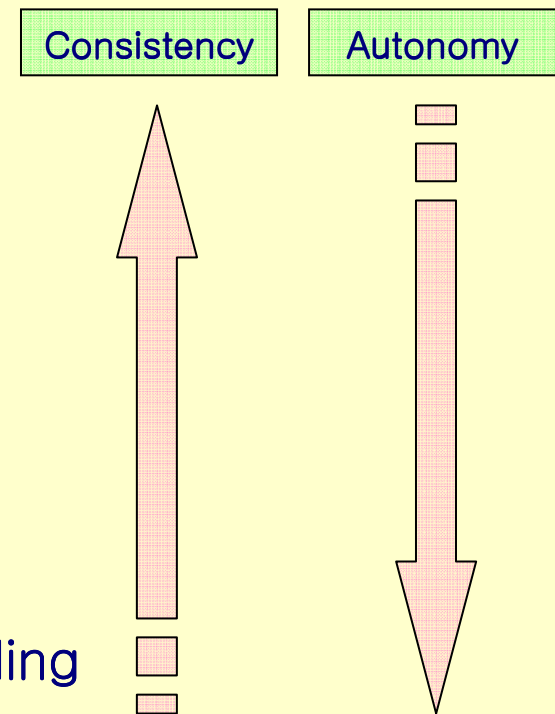## How to combine content knowledge and core competences?

1st option: restructuring curriculum standards according to common core competences socially accepted.

2nd option: restructuring curriculum standards according to selected competences by subject area specialists out of common core competences.
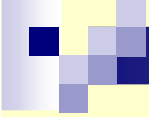
3rd option: restructuring curriculum standards according to competences unique to each subject area without common core competences.

Consistency

Autonomy

Results

How to combine content knowledge and core competences?

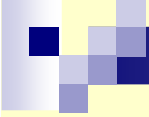|		Frequency and Percentage						
		1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Undecided	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree	No response	Average
1st option	First	8(15.4)	13(25.0)	14(26.9)	10(19.2)	7(13.5)	0(0.0)	2.90
	Second	4(7.8)	19(37.3)	12(23.5)	12(23.5)	3(5.9)	1(2.0)	2.82
2nd option	First	0(0.0)	2(3.8)	14(26.9)	24(46.2)	11(21.2)	1(1.9)	3.86
	Second	0(0.0)	2(3.9)	14(27.5)	19(37.3)	15(29.4)	1(2.0)	3.94
3rd option	First	2(3.8)	6(11.5)	13(25.0)	21(40.4)	9(17.3)	1(1.9)	3.57
	Second	1(2.0)	5(9.8)	16(31.4)	23(45.1)	5(9.8)	1(2.0)	3.52

Summary of the Results

Korean curriculum scholars and practitioners agree that school curriculum needs to employ a competence-based approach

But, they believe that the unique nature and the value of content knowledge of subject areas should still be admitted.

They believe a subject area can contribute to developing selected competences among core, common competences according to its nature and tradition.

Remaining Tasks for a competence-based school curriculum

We need more experiential and concrete data on how to teach subject areas for an effective development of core competences through school curriculum.

We need to think about how to take a balance between content knowledge of subject areas and developing core competences.

We need to think about what the relevant process is for deciding common competences that students are expected to acquire through public schools.

Thank you very much!

Won-Pyo Hong
(eduhong@hufs.ac.kr)