Maturing Outcomes

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I think that only daring speculation can lead us further and not accumulation of facts.

Albert Einstein

Expert educators continually make decisions about the outcomes of their curriculum and instruction. Over time, as we mature, we expand our capacity to think simultaneously about multiple, cumulative, long-range, hierarchical, and increasingly complex decisions. This article, in the form a conversation between Art Costa and Bob Garmston, describes simultaneous and increasingly complex outcomes educators hold as they work with students. it is intended to provide a helpful organizer for teachers, instructional leaders, staff developers and parents to provoke a dialogue that leads to a shared vision of educational outcomes. Six systems interventions intended to support the enhancement of the school's curriculum potency and instructional power are proposed.

Art: During my first experiences as a junior high school science teacher, given the continuous cycle of hourly changes of unruly adolescents, my chief outcome simply was to make it through each class period. I was focused on three major goals: having my students like me, conducting a class period without too much disruption, and making a good impression on my principal who held the decision as to my future in that district and my chosen profession.

ACTIVITIES As a result, I found satisfaction in providing my charges with many interesting science activities which entertained, intrigued and caused them to be attentive. I sought resource books of science "experiments" for eager adolescents and progressed from day to day, period to period episodically crushing cans, sucking eggs in (then available) milk bottles, and holding cards up on inverted water-filled glasses.

Bob: So your student's were appropriately, astonished, delighted and attentive.

Art: Yes. My outcomes were achieved.

Bob: But there came a time when such activities were not satisfactory for you. How did you grow beyond them as outcomes?

Art: As I matured, with the help of colleagues, staff development, and my own reading, I began wondering what were the cumulative benefits of all these activities. I remembered that beyond the activities, students needed to learn something as well; that there was a content to science; that there were certain laws, principles and concepts that students needed to understand if they were to be scientifically literate.

CONTENT
ACTIVITIES The activities, therefore, shifted from being outcomes in and of themselves to becoming the vehicles by which students could learn certain important scientific concepts and principles. My class discussions became more academic. My homework assignments gained greater rigor by having the students read to find answers to my questions and to form concepts and generalizations. I found the science textbook I was assigned now made greater sense because it provided simple definitions and examples of the principles while the teacher's manual provided me not only with the activities but also outlined, in a logical scope and sequence, the content to be mastered.

Conveniently it had the same number of conceptual units as we had weeks of school.

Bob: So you added to your thinking about lesson outcomes, specific content goals. What prompted you to lift your sights and go beyond these two in your thinking about outcomes?

Art: The great societal resurgence in science sparked by the Sputnik era transformed my thinking again. Education was flooded with new approaches to science, mathematics and history as processes of inquiry. My desired outcomes of mastering scientific content were gradually subsumed by the greater need for mastering scientific methods. I realized that while these activities were valuable, and the content was important, they were no longer my only outcomes. I began to choose content because of its

generative qualities; content became a vehicle for experiencing, practicing and applying such processes as observing and collecting data, forming and testing hypothesizes, drawing conclusions, posing questions. These are the skills needed to think creatively and critically and are basic to problem solving.

ACTIVITIES

CONTENT

ACTIVITIES

Bob: So you now found yourself thinking about activities, content, and process goals simultaneously. You had become interested in more than students' learning content. Additionally, you designed opportunities for them to reflect on their learning of content, and derive from that meaning about the learning process. What influenced your next transformation in thinking?

Art: As I reflect on my next intellectual growth spurt, I was heavily influenced by the school restructuring movement when I was teaching at the University. I came to realize that a common vision was essential to achieving process outcomes. A single teacher can achieve process outcomes only if the other teachers, parents, administrators and the community shared a common vision and those processes skills were reinforced, transferred and revisited throughout the grade levels and across the various disciplines encountered daily in the lives of students. The school needed a mission, and a shared vision of outcomes which transcended all grade levels and all subject areas.

This was not an easy task as various teachers, trained in and hired for their subject matter expertise, were reluctant to adopt trans-disciplinary processes. The scientific method didn't work for the art teachers, and the methods of historical inquiry made little sense to the P. E. coaches. Overarching outcomes that all the staff and community could agree upon and that transcended all grade-levels and disciplines were needed.— outcomes for our graduates that were bigger than activities, content and processes.

DISPOSITIONS

PROCESSES

CONTENT

ACTIVITIES

These transcendent qualities were found in the dispositions or habits of mind (Costa, 1991): continuing to learn how to learn, persistence, restraining impulsivity, collaborating, creativity, metacognition, precision and accuracy, listening with understanding and empathy, risk-taking and being curious, wondrous and enthusiastic about learning. All teachers in all subject areas could agree that these were desirable qualities, virtues and characteristics of their graduates. All teachers could use their subject matter to teach toward these dispositions: persistence was as valued in social sciences as it was in music, math and physical education. Creative thinking was as important to science as it was in auto-shop and art. On these we could agree. Furthermore, parents could relate to these dispositions as well. They found these habits of mind to be basic to their own jobs and professions. Persistence and accuracy were as important to nurses as they were to architects, secretaries or carpenters.

Bob: So by adding the level of dispositions, the historical isolation, disparity and episodic nature of outcomes across disciplines and grade levels could be eliminated. Additionally, aren't these outcomes are as applicable to adults as they are for students7

Art: Exactly. All the inhabitants of the learning organization could become more thoughtful. These dispositions were employed as decisions were made, as resources were allocated and as lessons were planned. The desired outcomes and the culture of the school became congruent and synonymous. The staff, students and the community could continue to develop, perfect and apply these outcomes throughout their lifetimes in numerous situations. What were once our outcomes now became our means. We had larger, more encompassing, long-range and complex systems outcomes. We still taught our activities, we searched for fecund, generative content, we provided practice of our processes, but they now accumulated simultaneously into bigger outcomes: the dispositions.

Bob: But were these dispositions outcomes or were they means as well?

Art: As I reflected on these "passages" (Sheehy, 1995)1 couldn't help but wonder if there might be a step beyond. Are dispositions the ultimate outcomes or only manifestations of deeper and more complex goals? Bob, you and I went beyond the sharing of a vision of the dispositions to ask if there were purposes beyond these? Do the dispositions serve a greater goal? What might constitute a learning organization whose mission it is collectively to nurture, develop and amplify these grander purposes?

Bob: Yes. And these questions took on special importance for us as we realized that we were working within subsystems embedded inside of other subsystems. In such arrangements, different types and magnitudes of learning occur relative to the system in which you are operating. Dilts (1994), who relates some discoveries of anthropologist Gregory Bateson, states:

"In our brain structure, language, and perceptual systems, there are natural hierarchies or levels of experience. The effect of each level is to organize and control the information on the level below it. Changing something on an upper level would necessarily change things on the lower levels; changing something on a lower level could, but would not necessarily, affect the upper levels."

The levels of process outcomes and dispositions fit this pattern. Each higher level, more overarching and abstract than the level within it, has a greater impact upon learning. So, while the influences are reciprocal within the nested levels of instructional outcomes we are describing, modifications at the inner levels (lower) of the hierarchy will produce negligible, if any, changes at other levels. To change the nature of an activity, for example, the teacher may change the process skills with which students engage, but only if this is the teacher's deliberate intention. Teacher outcomes at the content level, however, guarantee changes at the activity level because during planning, the teacher must now assess the degree to which certain outcomes will or will not support the attainment of what students are to know or be able to do at the end of the lesson. The bigger the circle in which the outcomes live, the more influence they exert, not just on today's lesson or this grade level's curriculum and assessment, but on the values with by which we decide which learnings are of most worth. The practical implications are that if we wish to influence an element deeper within the system, each tiny adjustment in the environment surrounding it produces profound effects on the entire system.

At this point we began asking ourselves three types of questions. Was there a system above the system of dispositions—one which humans naturally aspire in their journey of human development, and which, if affected, would also influence one's capacity to learn and utilize the dispositions? We also asked, what are the long-range benefits of teaching towards these dispositions; to what does it all add up? And what constitutes a learning organization which is invested in a continual state of autopoetic growth and self-renewal?

Art: The five states of mind we described related to our work in cognitive coaching fulfilled this quest (Costa and Garmston, 1994). They may be thought of as catalysts; energy sources fueling human behaviors. They are the common foundation for all high performing individuals, groups and organizations. Taken together, they are forces directing one toward increasingly authentic, congruent, ethical behavior, the touchstones of integrity. They are the tools of disciplined choice making which guide human action. They are the primary vehicles in the lifelong journey toward integration.

Bob: These basic human forces are the passions which drive, influence, motivate and inspire our intellectual capacities and high performance.

1. Efficacy: Humans quest for continuous, life-long learning, self-empowerment, mastery and control.

2. Flexibility: Peculiar to humans is their capacity to perceive from multiple perspectives, and endeavor to change, adapt and expand their repertoire of response patterns.

3. Craftsmanship: Humans yearn to become clearer, more elegant, precise, congruent and integrated.

4. Consciousness: Humans uniquely strive to monitor and reflect on their own thoughts and actions.

5. Interdependence: Humans need reciprocity, belonging and connectedness and are inclined to become one with the larger system and community of which they are a part.

These five mind states are the generators of effective thought and action and serve as meta-outcomes for all the individuals who comprise the learning organization. These mind states organize and direct our resources as we encounter and resolve problems, diagnose human frailty in ourselves and others, plan for the most productive interventions in groups, and search out the motivations of our own and other's actions.

Art: Yes. These long range, life-span learnings became the desirable meta- outcomes not only for staff, students and community but for each of us as well. The desired outcomes for me and those outcomes I hold for others became as one. I want for myself, our students and our colleagues to know:

That we have the capacity to make a difference through our work, and that we are willing to take the responsibility to do so.

That we have and can develop options to consider about our work and be willing to acknowledge and demonstrate respect and empathy for diverse perspectives.

That we can continually strive for excellence, and be willing to work to attain our own high standards, and pursue ongoing learning. What and how we are thinking about our work in the moment, and be willing to be aware of our actions and their effects on others and the environment.

That we will all benefit from our participating in, contributing to, and receiving from learning relationships; and be willing to create and change relationships to benefit our work.

Bob: So to what end are we holding the five states of mind? Are they values themselves or are they vehicles and enablers of more transcendent virtues?

Art: I believe today we would agree that they are both means and ends, not "either/or", but "both/and."

Bob: To describe the greater virtues, the destination toward which the mind states move, we draw a vision of adult development as characterized in the literature through such researchers as Lawrence Kohlberg, Sarah Levine, Lisa Laskow Lahey and Robert Kegan. We envision the maturing teacher, one near the peak of his or her capacity, as a highly evolved human being, capable of operating interdependently, while also maintaining and remaining true to a clear sense of personal identity. Such a person would be at advanced stages of adult development, an evolving journey toward greater mental complexity and away from perceiving the self as separate from others and center of the universe (Garmston and Lipton, 1996).

Art: Kegan (1994) marks three major stages of adult development—three systems by which adults make meaning—as they evolve on this life long journey. In the first stage— interpersonal —the self has internalized uncritically the values and beliefs of others, seeks validation from external criteria and has his or her personal identity defined by relationships to people and ideas.

Bob: Your experiences, Art, as a beginning teacher focused on activities, is representative of this initial stage of adult development. In a second stage—the institutional —the adult has relationships but is not defined by them, is self- authoring, self-standard setting and is validated by internal criteria. The self, says Kegan, has developed its own psychic institution. But like institutions of all types, it expends energy trying to protect its boundaries. The result is a tendency toward self- sealing logic and limited flexibility.

Your experiences, Art, in coming to value content and processes in addition to activities, probably marked your passages through this stage. However, something occurred for you, that supported your transition to the next stage—the post institutional.

In this most advanced stage we envision the adult as open to questions, possibilities, conflict and reconstruction of his or her own assumptions, practices and ways of being. This person is committed to continual inquiry and occupies a consciously interdependent relationship with his or her environment. Gifted with these complexities and perspectives, he or she works to develop students in similar directions of self-assertiveness and integration.

Art: OK. So if this is our current vision, how can this orientation be used by teachers, curriculum developers, staff developers, administrators and parents?

Bob: Perhaps a diagram would help to synthesize this vision of the simultaneously multi-layered decisions that teachers make about outcomes. In Figure 1, five levels of educational outcomes are described (Costa and Liebmann, 1996). The educator who functions at broader, more complex levels of personal development thinks beyond the immediate purposes of a lesson and envisions the potential of what it means to be a fully functioning human being. These attributes become aims integrated into their daily outcomes for themselves, their students, their colleagues, their organization and their community.

Figure 1

LEVEL	DECISIONS ABOUT OUTCOMES
MIND STATES	In which mind states do we wish students and colleagues to become more resourceful as a result of this series of learnings? What will we do to capacitate their development? How will we know when the mind states are amplified? How does what we are doing today compare with our vision of what we could be?
DISPOSITIONS	What dispositions or habits of mind do we want our students to develop and employ as a result of these learnings? What will we do to assist their development? How might we know if they ate developing? What will they see or hear in their behaviors as evidence of their growth?
PROCESSES	What processes do I want my students to practice and develop? What will I do to help them develop those processes? How will I know if they are practicing and developing them?
CONTENT	What concepts or understandings do I want my students to know as a result of this activity or lesson? What will I do to help them understand them? How will I know they understand them?
ACTIVITIES	What do I want to accomplish in this lesson? What will I do to make it happen? What will my students be doing if they are accomplishing it?

The maturing teacher, who continually profits from staff development and who lives in a school culture of complexity, creativity and collaboration, operates at multiple levels of outcomes simultaneously as lessons are planned, as students needs are considered, as the immediate and long range goals of the curriculum are assessed, and as the environment of the school and classroom are arranged.

Activity Level: Inexperienced teachers may exhibit episodic and teacher- centered thinking and simply be satisfied to accomplish the activity for that period or day. For example, teachers might describe their outcome as, "Today I'm going to show a video tape about Mexico." Or today "I want students to review the chapter on Mexico's struggle for independence with Spain." Success may be measured in terms of "survival": Did I made it through o.k.? Did it come out alright? Was my timing too far off? Do the students like me?

Using Saphir and Cower's (1988) construct, nested objectives,, three types of teacher outcomes might occur at the activity level we describe above: 1) objectives about coverage—to mention or get said certain pieces of information; 2) objectives about activity—the goal is for the student to finish certain tasks; and 3) objectives about involvement—the objective is to engage student's participation or emotion.

Content Level: Teachers are interested in not only the activity, but they perceive this activity as enabling the understanding of concepts or content to be learned. Saphir and Cower classify such objectives as the mastery of academic knowledge of skills. For example, in the teaching of Mexican history, the teacher not only wants to show the video tape but also wants the students to understand the principal causes for Mexico's struggle for independence from Spain. The teacher's critical decisions focus on what students will know or be able to do as a result of this lesson and how that knowledge will be recognized and assessed.

Process Level: At this level, teachers are interested not only in this activity and in mastering the content, they are also interested in such processes as cognition, collaboration, creation and communication. These are strategies composed of independent skills and clusters of skills: comparing, contrasting, inferring, analyzing, synthesizing etc. A teacher of Mexican history, for example, might have students plan a research project to support their theories that the heroes of the Mexican Revolution were as courageous and brave as those heroes in the American Revolution. Students not only must present an exhibit demonstrating their understanding but must also develop criteria for working together effectively. Additionally, they must reflect on, and evaluate themselves both individually and collectively as to how well they met the criteria of cooperative group work.

Dispositions Level: At this level, teachers are interested in supporting students in internalizing or habituating the dispositions of life-span learning that transcend subject matter—persistence, risk-taking, restraining impulsivity, checking for accuracy, curiosity, and metacognition (Costa, 1991). For example, a teacher might be interested in building the students' metacognitive capacities: during the project on Mexican and American Revolutionary Heroes, students will consciously employ the skills of listening with understanding and empathy— paraphrasing, clarifying and allocentric thinking. An observer will be designated to collect evidence of group members' performance of these skills. Upon completion of the project, participants will be given feedback from the observer as to individual's performance. Students will assess themselves about the effects of their listening skills, group collaboration and task achievement. While these individual skills might have been taught earlier, the emphasis now is on internalizing them as school-wide norms and other staff members would plan for these dispositions to be encountered and transferred across various disciplines.

Mind States Level: The teacher's outcomes in this lesson would be drawn not only from the knowledge base regarding the mind states of consciousness, flexibility and interdependence but also from the school's expressed values and stated mission. A teacher might facilitate student learning about mind states by having them analyze functional and dysfunctional groups. Students are invited to display the behavior patterns of each and then inquire as to the probable mind states from which such behavior would evolve. From these learnings the students draw implications and generalizations about the effects of cooperation and listening in life situations and the mind states necessary to achieve high functioning group work. One sixth grade teacher told us of using the mind states as lenses with which to help students overcome impulsive behaviors and master, through the development of efficacy, flexibility and consciousness, appropriate responses to stressful situations. (Oary, 1995)

Furthermore, the staff works to employ these same mind states as they make decisions, conduct meetings, parent conferences, provide instruction etc. The staff members themselves, monitor their own mind states of consciousness, flexibility and interdependence; they gather feedback about their achievements, their effects on others and set continually higher standards for themselves.

SIX SYSTEMS INTERVENTIONS

Bob: How can educational communities mature in their capacity to think about multiple, simultaneous and complex outcomes? How can they transcend the constraints and limitations of existing curriculum and assessment frameworks to achieve more potent, holistic, life span learnings?

Art: We'd like to offer six systems interventions that leaders might use to spur individual's, as well as school and community group's maturation towards broader, more encompassing and complex thinking.

1. **Aligning values with practices.** The most powerful of systems interventions is to produce clarity about core values. Such values begin with articulated beliefs about how students learn. The maturing organization will have explicated those beliefs in documents that drive conversations, decisions, assessment and reporting in all curriculum and instructional practices. Furthermore, such schools will maintain active committees to stay current with emerging literature and findings in this field in order to contrast and align present practices with those findings.

A parallel level of beliefs and values regard the community's expectations for students. Ultimately, this is a conversation that cannot be held by professional staff in isolation of its community. Rather, agreements about student expectations come from thoughtfully orchestrated and facilitated school-community conversations in which maximum participation is sought and linked with what is known about learning.

2. **Linguistic Mediation.** A second systems intervention is mediation throughout the system at all its levels with all its players: individual teachers, administrators, parents, etc. To mediate is to interpose oneself between a set of learners and the environment and, through questioning and conversing, draw attention to data, the consideration of which, engages and transforms thinking and meaning. From such transformed meaning comes a re-examination of practices within the context of illuminated values.

One of the most powerful ways is through employing certain well designed language tools (Costa and Garmston, 1994). Mediators may employ non-judgmental questioning, paraphrasing and clarifying

as powerful tools to diagnose and expand thinking to more encompassing, long range, over-arching and broader outcomes.

3. In-Servicing. By this we mean directly teaching the concepts of these nested levels of increasingly complex outcomes described above. Such teaching may occur as a prelude to the work of any curriculum group, as a framing device in any deliberations about instruction and assessment practices, as a communication to parents about school goals, and in orientations for new faculty.

4. Structuring. Two types of structuring are possible: Organizational and logistical.

Organizational structuring, in which tasks and goals are timed and defined purposely so that, teachers from diverse levels of maturity—some at the level of content, others at the level of dispositions— must collaborate with each other in order to accomplish the task. The confluence of these multiple perspectives likely enriches the outcome thinking of both groups. Similar diffusion of knowledge and assumptions about learning occurs when teachers from different disciplines are paired in peer coaching partnerships, when they observe in each other's classroom, when they share responsibilities for student learnings or when they are assigned the same students for multi-year periods.

Logistical structuring occurs when the environment is deliberately constructed to produce certain forms of interactions. One high school in Edmonton, Canada, for example, constructed one departmental science lab for the entire school to be shared by all the science teachers and students to purposely structure connections between the sciences. In the Community High School District 155 in Crystal Lake, Illinois the superintendent's team of architects and educators purposely structured the new high school so as to embody the five mind states. They built flexibility into the very walls and passages of the edifice. They made it necessary for the staff, students and community to function in interdependent ways. They even interviewed and selected their architectural team based upon their display of these five mind states (Saban, 1996)

5. Leadership Role Modeling. According to Jick (1995), one of the fastest ways to create change in organizations is for leaders to change themselves first and employ public modeling. For example, leaders publicly state their outcomes in broad terms. Their explanations of why they are doing what they are doing are often embedded in the five mind states. Furthermore, leaders specify behaviors they are working on, make public the rationale for choosing them, and ask others to monitor and provide feedback about the leader's skills and effectiveness and congruence with values driving the choice of using these behaviors. A special and potent form of leadership role modeling is public coaching (Hayes, 1995) in which a skilled cognitive coach publicly interviews a principal or a superintendent about their values, outcomes and plans for the organization.

Such leadership, however, is not invested in a role or position within an organization. Rather, leadership is invested in many people at all levels of the organization as they perform their multiple functions of planning, coordinating, communicating, influencing, coaching, consulting and assessing (Garmston and Wellman, 1995).

6. Assessing. Teachers naturally assess outcomes at the same level at which they are operating. Working at the activity level, the teacher simply might be focused on the on-task or off-task behavior of students. Working at the content level, tests of skills and knowledge achievement to measure student learning will more likely be employed. Operating at the processes or dispositions levels may require multiple assessments: portfolios, interviews, performances and direct observation to assess student's development over time from multiple perspectives.

Since what is inspected is expected, thoughtful leaders will often design and report assessments at the level above where a group or individual is operating. Content focused lessons, for example, would be assessed in terms of their contribution to practicing processes or acquiring dispositions.

Bob: So, Art, now that we've made a case for five transcendent levels of outcomes, are there stages even beyond these mind states?

Art: We believe there are. Earlier, Bob, you described studies of adult development as one way of envisioning the functioning of our most accomplished teachers. But there are other visions as well.

Bob: Yes. Another vision of the maturing human being is offered through biographies of remarkable and virtuous people from a broad spectrum of fields: the sciences, the arts, politics and social services— Eleanor Roosevelt, Margaret Mead, Mahatma Ghandi, Mother Theresa, Mary Baker Eddy, Albert Einstein and Brother Thomas are some that come to mind. Their personal development, and lives, seemed to

move even beyond the mind states. They displayed a personal set of virtues of a dharmic or spiritual quality (Bawley, 1993).

Art: We might identify in them an expression of "ideals" encompassing not only the mastery of processes, dispositions and mind states, but transcending these in pursuit of some universal goal, sought not only for others, but also for themselves. The real challenge to the maturing teacher, the maturing staff and the maturing organization, you see, is to be faithful not only to the external goals but to measure up to the interior goals. As Brother Thomas reflects in the video tape, Gifts from the Fire, To... reach for..."what is beautiful, what is good, what is true; what unites and does not divide." We believe the ideal, what humans at the highest stages of adult development strive for, is the integration of external outcomes and those outcomes within ourselves. Trying to make ourselves better, purer, more beautiful persons; concerned with uniting and not dividing.

IDEALS
MIND STATES
DISPOSITIONS
PROCESSES
CONTENT
ACTIVITIES

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