Scope & Sequence

How is the Core Curriculum infused into *The Transitions Curriculum*?

The Transitions Curriculum responds to the current school reform movement, which emphasizes integration of core subjects throughout every aspect of the school curriculum. Core academic content is infused into lessons through real-world relevant activities. Attention must be placed on infusing additional core curricular content into *The Transitions Curriculum* lessons and activities as much as possible.

It is also important to help students understand the relationship between the core academic skills they are learning and their application to real life through contextual learning. We want students to know that they are learning core academic skills. Their belief in the usefulness and relevance of the curriculum will keep them in school, which is exactly where they need to be.

How are the *SCANS* Foundation Skills infused into the Curriculum?

As mentioned earlier, the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) defined the skills a young person must know in order "to hold a decent job and earn a decent living." This report, "What Work Requires of Schools: A SCANS Report for America 2000," reflects the business community's desire for education to focus on skills necessary for success in the world of work. One section of the report describes three foundation skills and five competencies needed for a productive, full and satisfying life. According to the SCANS report, all eight of these skills and competencies must be an integral part of every young person's school life.

A *Scope and Sequence* matrix is located at the beginning of each unit. Twelve matrices have been developed for *The Transitions Curriculum*, with a separate matrix for each of the four units in *Personal Management*, *Career Management* and *Life Management*. The matrices provide a graphic display of the specific SCANS foundation skills that are included in each *Transitions Curriculum* lesson, according to the content and activities of the lesson.

Natural overlap occurs between the SCANS foundation skills and *core subjects* in the lessons and on the matrix because employers, as well as educators, are concerned about the academic, thinking and personal qualities of youth. This overlap serves to emphasize the importance of equipping students with the strongest foundation possible before they leave school. SCANS foundation skills are clustered into three areas: basic skills, thinking skills and personal qualities. Each area contains a set of specific skills as defined below:

Basic Academic Skills: Reads, writes, performs mathematical operations, listens and speaks

- Reading—locates, understands and interprets written information in prose and in documents, such as manuals, graphs and schedules
- Writing—communicates thoughts, ideas, information and messages in writing; and creates documents, such as letters, directions, manuals, reports, graphs and flow charts
- Arithmetic/Mathematics—performs basic computations and approaches to practical problems by choosing appropriately from a variety of mathematical techniques
- Listening—receives, attends to, interprets and responds to verbal messages and other cues

- Speaking—organizes ideas and communicates orally

Thinking Skills: Thinks creatively, makes decisions, solves problems, visualizes, knows how to learn and reason

- Creative Thinking—generates new ideas
- Decision Making—specifies goals and constraints, generates alternatives, considers risks and evaluates and chooses best alternative
- Problem Solving—recognizes problems and devises and implements plan of action
- Visualizing—organizes and processes symbols, pictures, graphs, objects and other information
- Knowing How to Learn—uses efficient learning techniques to acquire and apply new knowledge and skills
- Reasoning—discovers a rule or principle underlying the relationship between two or more objects and applies it in solving a problem

Personal Qualities: Displays responsibility, self-esteem, integrity, sociability, self-management and honesty

- Responsibility—exerts a high level of effort and perseveres toward goal attainment
- Self-Esteem—believes in own self-worth and maintains a positive view of self
- Sociability—demonstrates understanding, friendliness, adaptability, empathy and politeness in group settings
- Self-Management—assesses self-accurately, sets personal goals, monitors progress and exhibits self-control
- Integrity/Honesty—can be trusted, understands the impact of violating societal values and beliefs, chooses ethical courses of action

SCANS Competencies have been identified as critical for success in the workplace of today. The five competencies are not identified specifically in the SCANS foundation skills section of the lessons or on the *Scope & Sequence* matrices. However, these SCANS competencies are infused into activities throughout the entire *Transitions Curriculum*. Any opportunity to further strengthen these competencies will be beneficial to the students.

The SCANS Competencies are:

- Identifying organizing, planning and allocating resources
- Working with others
- Acquiring and using information
- Understanding systems and complex interrelationships

- Working with a variety of technology

How are Critical and Higher Order Thinking Skills incorporated into Transitions?

Benjamin Bloom's six-level system continues to be a very helpful framework for structuring goals, questions and activities and differentiating instructional expectations within the classroom. According to Bloom's hierarchy, students approach new learning at the lower levels of the system, knowledge and comprehension. Once the informational base is founded, the student can be challenged to move to the higher levels of application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Although all teachers do teach thinking skills, a large part of classroom instruction and testing is geared to the lower levels of Bloom's system. Learning facts and memorizing information is a start, but are not enough. Our task is to equip our students for a world changing so rapidly that we cannot even imagine what they will need to know.

The teachers can use Bloom's framework to challenge students and thus increase the relevance, generalizability and retention of the instructional content. "Develop Thinking Skills through Effective Questioning" (Figure 1) and "Bloom's Levels in the Cognitive Domain" (Figure 2) are guides that may help utilize higher-order thinking skills in the classroom.

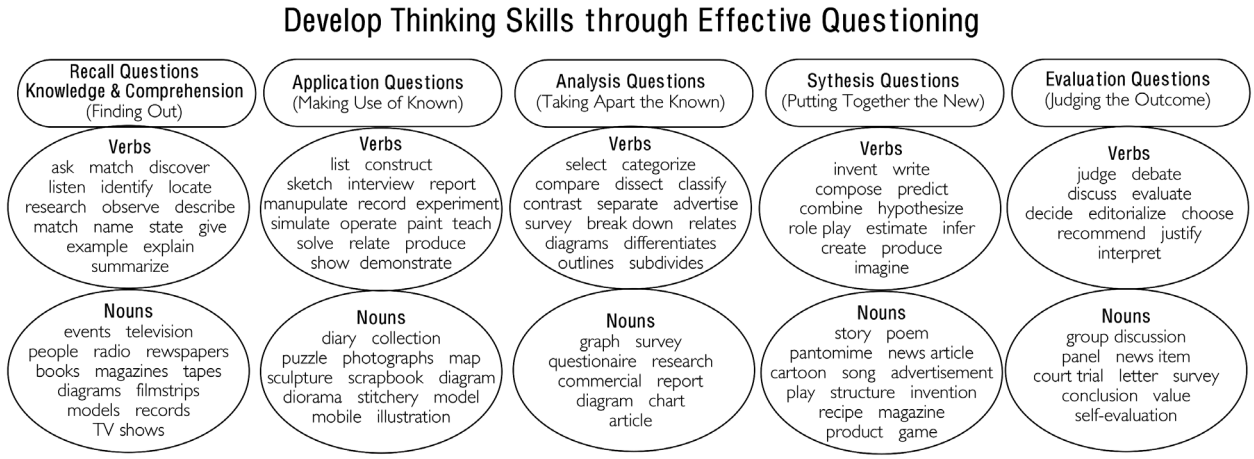

Figure 1

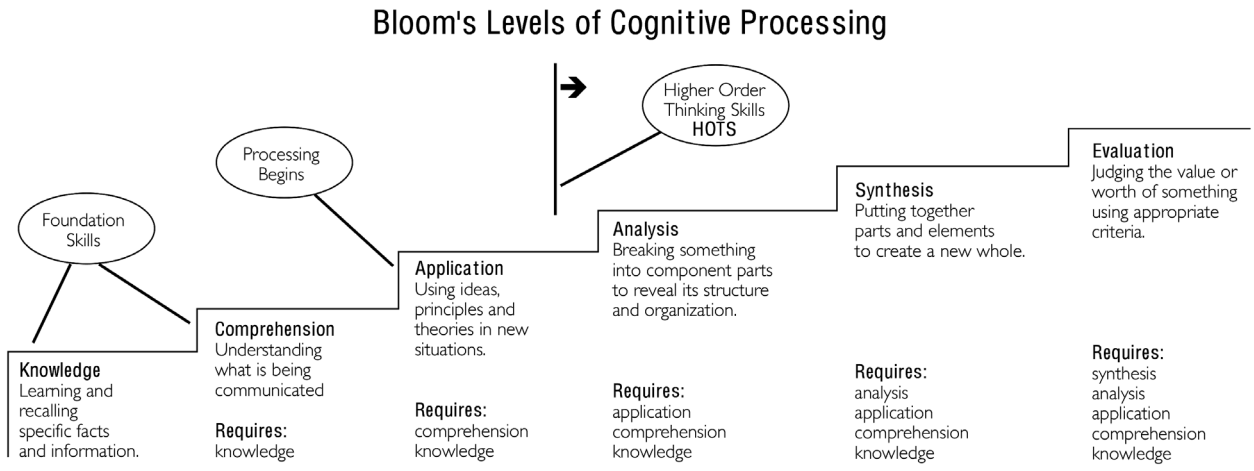

Figure 2