

# Reimagining Curriculum

Rob Taylor

Curriculum Coordinator, Filmmaking Teacher

@robetaylor, rob@newsequence.org



Austin Prep



# Old Art and Design Progression

Grade 9: Technology

Grade 10: Art

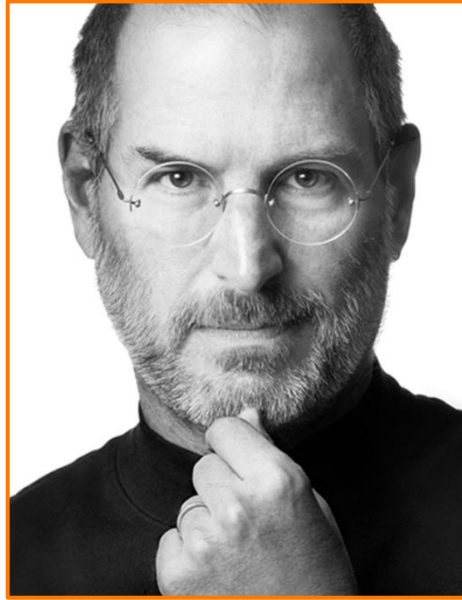
Grade 11: Drama

Grade 12: Electives

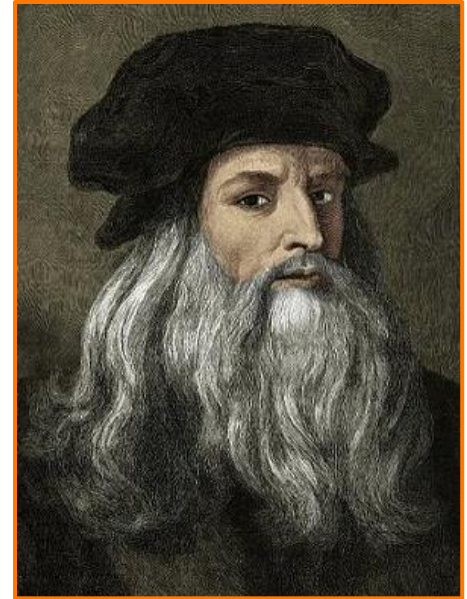
# Austin Prep Teachers



Stevie Nicks  
Singer, Songwriter



Steve Jobs  
Apple Founder



Leonardo Da Vinci  
...Leonardo Da Vinci

# Old Deployment Model

Grade 9: **Technology**

(Steve Jobs – 4 Sections)

Grade 10: **Art**

(Leonardo Da Vinci – 4 Sections)

Grade 11: **Drama**

(Stevie Nicks – 4 Sections)

Grade 12: **Electives**

...didn't run

# Revised, Elective-Based Model

## Mixed Grade Courses

Programming

2 Sections (Jobs)

Graphic Design

1 Section (Jobs)

Typography

1 Section (Jobs)

Guitar

2 Sections (Nicks)

Songwriting

1 Section (Nicks)

Singing

1 Section (Nicks)

Illustration

2 Sections (Da Vinci)

Painting

1 Section (Da Vinci)

Biology

1 Section (Da Vinci)

Select 3 to graduate

# Destructive Myths

# Myth #1

The History class of Ms. Clinton and Mr. Trump is exactly the same.

# Myth #2

There are tons of books students must read, equations they must know, and elements whose electron counts they must memorize or else they won't be able to function in **the real world\***.

\*college



# Myth #3

If they don't read *A Farewell to Arms* or learn trigonometric functions by the time they're eighteen, they never will.

# Our Process

# Mission + Best Practices

## **Austin Prep**

Minds to inquire  
Hearts to unite  
Hands to serve

## **Center for Curricular Redesign**

Content  
Character  
Skills

# Mission + Best Practices

## Austin Prep

Minds to inquire

Hearts to unite

Hands to serve



## Center for Curricular Redesign

Content

Character

Skills

# Phases

Phase	Catchy Name	Year
Phase 1	Trial	2016-17
Phase 2	Low-Hanging Fruit	2017-18
Phase 3	Critical Mass	2018-19
Phase 4	Synchronization	2019-20

# Phase 1 Trial

# The Art and Design Department

## The “Test Kitchen”

Mixed grade courses  
Students ranked their top three options  
Individualized process

# Old

Art

Technology

Music

Theater



# VISUAL DESIGN

# PERFORMANCE

Illustration

Screenwriting

Studio Art

Public Speaking

Yearbook, Photojournalism

Acting

Graphic Design

Dance

Immersive Technology

Vocal Repertoire

Programming: Python

Music Fundamentals

Programming: Java

Guitar Workshop

Filmmaking

Keyboard Workshop

# TECHNOLOGY

# MUSIC

# Successes

Robust offerings  
Mixed grade worked  
More passion

# Challenges

No “base” knowledge  
Harder scheduling  
Disappointment with backups

# Phase 2

## Low-Hanging Fruit

# History and English Departments

## The Teacher's Pets

Depth over breadth  
Some mixed grade options  
Some interdisciplinary options  
Prioritizing ninth grade “flavors”

# Old

Foundations of History

---

American History

---

Modern History

# New

Foundations: World/Europe

Civil War Era, American West,  
Women in American History, Cold  
War Era America

---

Stories of Africa, Identity in Latin  
America, Demystifying the Middle  
East, Giants of Asia

# Old

9<sup>th</sup> Grade English

---

American Literature

---

British Literature

# New

Dystopias, Coming of Age

Discussions and Debates, Speeches

Voices on the Fringe, Shakespeare in Literature, Novel Writing, Creative Writing, Adolescent Psychology in Lit, Language and Composition, Women in Lit, Popular Literature

# Successes

Teacher enthusiasm

Student ownership of curriculum

Infusion of skills

# Challenges

Scheduling: Time

Scheduling: Satisfaction

Teacher deployment

# A Quick Aside: Semester Courses



# Dual Credit Courses

The American Experience (History/English)  
Science and Religion  
Literature and Religion

# Successes

Interdisciplinary

Created more options

Co-teaching

# Challenges

Incentivized courses

Inefficient teacher deployment

Missing department progression

# The Tools We Use

Interdisciplinary Courses  
Semester-Long Courses  
Mixed Grade Courses

# Phase 3

## Critical Mass

# Mass Rollout and Refinement

Core to our identity and philosophy  
Comfort within system  
Flywheel and iterations

# Back to Paper

Ideal Schedule	Semester I	Art and Design	Preference	Taken Before?
Course #1		Studio Art		
Course #2		Illustration		
Course #3		Graphic Design		
Course #4		Programming: Python		
Course #5		Programming: Java		
		Computer Science - AP		
		Filmmaking		
		Screenwriting		
		Yearbook		
		Music Fundamentals		
		Austin Beginner Band (Full Year)		
		Austin Band (Full Year)		
		Keyboard		

Course #6	English	Rank	History	Rank
	Passing in Literature		Stories of Africa	
Course #7	Shakespeare in Film		Nationalism and Identity in Latin America	
On the back of th	Novel Writing		Demystifying the Middle East	
including alternat	Popular Literature (CP only)		The Giants of Asia	
	Creative Writing		World History - AP	
	Adolescent Psychology in Literature		European History - AP	
	Women in Literature		Defer Credit (not common)	
	Eng. Language and Composition			

Year → Semester

Environmental Science

Energy, Conservation  
and Ecology

Pollution, Urbanization

Marine Biology

Marine Science

Oceanography

# Rotation Schedule

2017-18

Contemporary World Literature

Monsters in British Literature

Voices on the Fringe

The Great War

Passing Identity in Literature

Shakespeare in Film

Creative Writing

Language and Composition

2018-19

The Great War

Passing Identity in Literature

Shakespeare in Film

Adolescent Psychology in Lit.

Women in Literature

Popular Literature

Creative Writing

Language and Composition

2019-20

Adolescent Psychology in Lit.

Women in Literature

Popular Literature

Contemporary World Literature

Monsters in British Literature

Voices on the Fringe

Creative Writing

Language and Composition



# Phase 4 Synchronization

# Current Challenges

Consistency

Modern pedagogy

Culture of curricular review

Broadcasting

# Current Answer...

Scope and Sequence

# Reflections of a “Technology” Teacher

# Scope and Sequence

Content	Skills	Values
8 “Modules”	2	2
Determined by department	Chosen from list of 10	Chosen from list of 6
Assessed each month	Assessed 4 times annually	Assessed 4 times annually

# Content

Depth over breadth

Focused

“Exemplars” for learning transfer

# Skills

Logic

Creativity

Critical Analysis

Synthesis

Communication

Design Thinking

Evaluation

Research

Strategy

Engineering

# Values

Curiosity  
Appreciation

Perspective  
Diversity

Empathy  
Collaboration



# Database

Course	Quarter 3		Quarter 4		Skill 1	Skill 2	Value 1	Value 2
	Topic 5	Topic 6	Topic 7	Topic 8				
Morality - H	Justice Principles	Social Teaching	Just Society	Case Studies	Research	Synthesis	Perspective	Empathy
Biology - CP	Genetics	Evolution	Plants	Animals	Logic	Engineering	Appreciation	Empathy
Geometry - H	Transformations	Area and Volume	Circles	Quadratic Expressions	Logic	Design Thinking	Perspective	Appreciation
Latin - AP	Aeneid p2	Major Presentation	Aeneid p3	AP Review	Critical Analysis	Communication	Diversity	Perspective
Civil War - H					Synthesis	Economics and Strategy	Empathy	Diversity
Writing Center - H	Rights of Writers	Literary Circles	How to Write	Review of Literature	Evaluation	Communication	Collaboration	Empathy
<a href="#">Filmmaking</a>					Creativity	Design Thinking	Curiosity	Collaboration

# Accountability and Process

Beyond checking boxes

Shift accountability to the courses (off the teachers)

# Timeline

Month	Process
March	Introduction
May	Course Deployment
Summer	Craft Course Outlines
January	Midyear Review
April	Evaluation
May	Redeployment of Courses

# The Future

Value skills and character in curriculum

Redefine a “Course”

Increase schedule flexibility

Integrate technology

# Thank You!

Rob Taylor

[www.newsequence.org](http://www.newsequence.org)

@robetaylor

[rob@newsequence.org](mailto:rob@newsequence.org)