



Mission: Advancing Excellence in Teaching, Learning, and Leadership

Virginia Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (VASCD) is an organization of over 2,000 members and is affiliated with the national organization of ASCD. **VASCD** is committed to excellence in education by providing programs and services to promote quality instruction for lifelong learning.

VASCD acknowledges the need to develop and commit to a shared vision of the knowledge and skills students need to know and demonstrate so as to become successful learners, employees, and citizens in the 21st century. Therefore, VASCD supports the five key goals of the Virginia Association of School Superintendents' (VASS), "Blueprint for Virginia Educational Reform".

Education Funding	Blueprint for Virginia Educational Reform
<p>Fund fully the Virginia Standards of Quality.</p> <p>Recruit high-quality teachers supported by ongoing professional development.</p> <p>Provide additional resources for strengthening schools, families, and communities.</p> <p>Provide resources to bring all classrooms up to 21st century technology standards.</p>	<p>Goal 1: Prepare all students to be college and career ready(Curriculum/Readiness)</p> <p>Goal 2: Measure student progress and achievement through a variety of assessments not limited to standardized, multiple choice tests (Assessment)</p> <p>Goal 3: Use evidence-based teaching and learning models that meet individual needs of diverse students (Instructional Delivery)</p> <p>Goal 4: Recruit, develop, and maintain effective and technically-proficient teachers, administrators, and classified staff (Human Capital)</p> <p>Goal 5: Ensure the Commonwealth meets its financial responsibility in providing public education and promoting economic development (State's Role in Funding Public Education)</p>

Preparing Students for the 21st Century:

A Case for High Quality Curriculum, Assessment, and Technology

VASCD supports teaching, learning, and leading that focuses on student success in a complex, rapidly changing world. This responsibility requires schools to provide essential skills that equip students to successfully navigate technological, societal, economic, informational, and demographic issues.

High Quality Curriculum:

- VASCD: Although core knowledge serves as a building block to new learning, students must graduate with skills that go well beyond facts and basic skills.
 - Curriculum races aren't very brain friendly (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2010).
 - Need to place the focus on true understanding rather than accumulation knowledge (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005).
 - Sense (what is it?) and meaning (is it relevant) are important to higher quality learning experiences (Sousa and Tomlinson, 2010).
 - 21st century skills require use of knowledge, not retention, so we need to prepare students for divergent and executive thinking (Sousa and Tomlinson, 2010).

Assessment:

- VASCD: Students should apply knowledge and skills to novel situations and authentic problems, demonstrating creativity, innovation, self-reflection, and flexibility in thinking.
 - "A variety of assessment modalities and some student choice in assessment type can bring students to the assessment with less anxiety and increase the positive learning experience, as well as provide the opportunity for them to demonstrate what they know and not simply what they memorized, forgot, or never learned" (Willis, 2006, p. 91).
 - When students only learn information for a test, they may develop the capacity to hold the information in working memory until the test (a matter of a few weeks?), record it on the test, and then discard it as no longer needed. They then can no longer recall what they "learned." and have little or no retrieval, application, or transfer ability later on (Sousa and Tomlinson, 2010).
 - Rote-learning assessments evoke only a convergent response from students. Performance-type tasks also evoke divergent responses. In the former, only a limited area of the brain is involved. In the latter, multiple areas are involved (Sousa and Tomlinson, 2010).
 - Students' brains lose when assessment doesn't require use of executive function, especially during the years when executive function is developing in the brain. Society

also loses because of the increasing number of jobs/roles that require divergent and executive function (Sousa and Tomlinson, 2010).

- When higher-level thinking is assessed and more areas of the brain are involved in responding, there are more avenues to successful response, less likely increase of cortisol (stress), and greater likelihood of endorphins (pleasurable response to the assessment), and greater learning (practice, sense, meaning) (Sousa and Tomlinson, 2010).

Technology and Learning:

VASCD: The future will demand a citizenry capable of solving societal and ethical challenges. High quality instructional programs must include the use of advanced technologies to access and facilitate learning, interactions in learning communities that foster teamwork through inquiry and authentic problem solving, and environments where innovation and creativity are valued and practiced.

- Digital students (our current learners) must become media literate; putting the tools they know to work for themselves and society.
- Now more than ever, authentic experiences with instructional technologies must be provided to allow students to acquire and scaffold visual and information literacy utilizing these tools
- Students must learn to analyze complex environments – virtual as well as physical – and apply appropriate technological resources in response while navigating those environments.
- In an increasingly inter-connected world, students must hone the skills necessary to collaborate and create with their peers using 21st century tools – profoundly and productively

References

Sousa, D. & Tomlinson, C. (2010). *Differentiation & the brain*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.

Wiggins, G. & McTighe, J. (2005). *Understanding by design*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Willis, J. (2006). *Research-based strategies to ignite student learning*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.