

PARENTHOOD EDUCATION CURRICULUM RATIONALE

INTRODUCTION

How to nurture human development is an on-going question individuals and families face from one generation to the next. The ability to nurture humans across the life span is influenced by the complexities of life today. Many of the conditions in society and in parent-child relationships have the potential of causing or contributing to human suffering. The need for all young people to critically contemplate the role of responsible family life and parenting is becoming more evident in shaping the future of society. How does one manage work, family, and parenting responsibilities? What are the multiple realities of parenting for both males and females? How do "I" develop healthy parent-child relationships and thus influence the well-being of society?

THE CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

Oregon's Parenthood Curriculum has been designed for use within the state's high school Family and Consumer Sciences classrooms. Although specifically designed for students who have not yet become parents, it is applicable in a variety of programs, including those for teen parents.

The overall goal of the Parenthood Education Curriculum is to enable future parents to nurture their children. The philosophy is based on a prevention perspective that is attempting to take an active approach to creating conditions which promote well-being of parents and children.

The curriculum is organized around the **practical perennial problem** of "what to do about nurturing human development." Practical problems are a "revived notion of educational methods that allow us to identify problems and move to resolution, in a way that involves us to take action." Practical problems, according to William Reid (1999) in his work, *Curriculum as Institution and Practice* are those that:

1. deal with questions that have to be answered;
2. the grounds on which a decision should be made are uncertain;
3. must consider varying existing affairs;
4. are unique in time and context;
5. involve competing goals and values;
6. have no predictable outcome; and
7. the grounds on which we decide to answer the questions are not ones that point to the desirability of the action chosen as an "act in itself," but grounds that lead us to believe that the action will result in some desirable state of affairs (Chapter 2, pp. 22-23).

The "**Practical Reasoning Process**" has been selected as the framework for the curriculum in order to help students examine the underlying causes of "**practical problems**" and the implications of solutions on themselves, their families, and society in general. In other words, the individual decisions "I" make have human consequences and social consequences. Rather than memorizing facts, students acquire information and move from thinking to action in a responsible way. This is in contrast to the technical approach or the "banking" system of education where the teacher decides what information the students need to know and then presents that information as "deposits" of knowledge.

The "**Practical Reasoning Process**" begins by identifying a common problem or question. Then the teacher and students consider four areas in which to examine the problem:

1. **Awareness of Context** – all the factors in society which might affect what should be done about the problem.
2. **Desired Results** – the most ideal regarding the problem or question.
3. **Alternative Approaches** – various ways of dealing with the problem.

4. **Consequences of Action** – related to the alternative solutions.

The curriculum enables students to interrelate their life experiences and their educational experiences in preparing for future parenting responsibilities and in moving from thinking to action in a responsible way.

The teacher should remember that a variety of teaching strategies for developing critical thinking skills are integral in using the Practical Reasoning framework. For example, the curriculum identifies numerous strategies within the directed activities in each unit. The teacher will find activities utilizing cooperative learning, discussion techniques, written exercises, and use of media, to name a few.

LABORATORY EXPERIENCE WITH CHILDREN

Actual experience working with young children should be a critical part of any parenthood education curriculum. Work with young children provides the opportunity for adolescents to develop a more realistic view of developmental capabilities of children and provides an avenue for “taking action” in guiding children through safe, educational experiences.

COMMUNITY GUIDANCE

All Family and Consumer Sciences programs are encouraged to establish community-based advisory committees. This is especially true for the Parenthood Education Curriculum. School and community interaction offers an opportunity to exchange ideas about student needs in a local community and strengthens program development.

TEACHER PREPARATION

Teacher preparation is critical in delivering the Parenthood Education Curriculum from a practical reasoning perspective. Family and Consumer Sciences teachers already have professional preparation in family studies, child development and parent education. However, preparation in the practical reasoning process is critical if the curriculum is to go beyond the banking method of teaching and challenge students to think critically and act responsibly when making parenting decisions.

REFERENCES

Reid, William (1998). *Curriculum as Institution and Practice*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

HOW TO USE THE OREGON PARENTHOOD EDUCATION CURRICULUM MODEL

The curriculum format reflects the unique practical reasoning framework and is organized as follows:

Continuing Concerns

Specific **continuing concerns** were selected to reflect the developmental needs of high school students.

Related Concerns

Each continuing concern has **related concerns** which provide a framework for the curriculum unit. Each **related concern** is organized in a curriculum unit format and is written to the classroom teacher.

Desired Results for Learners

An overall statement of **desired results** is designed to assist the user of this curriculum guide in understanding the primary focus for each unit.

Learner Outcomes

The **learner outcomes** (commonly referred to as “objectives”) are stated in terms of the components of the “Practical Reasoning Process” (awareness of context, desired results, alternative approaches, and consequences of action).

Supporting Concepts

These are the major topics or concepts included in the curriculum unit.

Background Information

Each unit includes a section on background information. It is designed to be a resource for teachers and consists of a compilation of readings and thoughts of the writers. References for sources are included. Teachers are advised to refer to the original sources as often as possible.

Teacher Preparation

Teachers are encouraged to reflect upon their own life experiences related to the curriculum unit as they prepare for teaching. Questions are provided to stimulate that reflection.

Directed Activities

These are the suggested strategies to use for student-teacher interaction in order to help the student through the practical reasoning process relevant to the related concern. It will enhance the unit to use Directed Activities in the order presented and in their entirety; however, that will not always be possible. At the conclusion of each directed activity, the “Practical Reasoning Process” components that are emphasized through the activity are specified.

Resources

A listing of resources at the conclusion of each unit is provided for use in further study and for supplementing the Directed Activities.

Supporting Materials

The concluding pages of each unit are the Supporting Materials. These include any materials which can be used as a resource for the student or teacher, as well as activities the students can complete. The Supporting Materials are coded as SM-, with a corresponding number in sequence of use within the unit (e.g., SM-2)

UNIT TO INTRODUCE PRACTICAL REASONING TO STUDENTS

DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENTS:

Students will examine the components/skills involved in the practical reasoning process.

LEARNER OUTCOMES: Students will:

1. Become familiar with terminology used in the *Oregon Parenthood Education Curriculum Model*.
2. Examine component parts of the practical reasoning process used in the *Oregon Parenthood Education Curriculum Model*.
3. Practice using the practical reasoning process.

SUPPORTING CONCEPTS:

- A. Technical vs. Problem-Focused Approach.
- B. Rationale/Purpose.
- C. Practical Reasoning Process.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The purpose of this unit is to familiarize students who will be using the *Oregon Parenthood Education Curriculum Model* with the practical reasoning process used throughout this document. Hopefully students will have a greater understanding of the concepts when they are familiar with the terminology and can comprehend some of the information the teacher has received through in-service training and reading the introductory pages of this manual.

The practical reasoning approach to education is in contrast to the technical approach, which emphasized skill, facts, and "how-to's," and where the teacher alone decides what information the student needs to know. When information is presented in the technical approach, there are usually right and wrong answers and the information frequently has a sequential order. It can be compared to the "banking" system of education where the teacher presents the information as "deposits" of knowledge. The intention of the banking system is that throughout life the student will "draw" from that deposit of information in order to live a good life.

The practical reasoning approach used in the curriculum model for parenthood education grows out of a search to solve the problems individuals and families face now and in the future. Students are led to "peel back the layers" and look for meanings rather than memorize facts. They not only acquire the information, but know how to act on it. Practical reasoning is based on the context of the problem as it looks at what is most desirable and what possible approaches can be used to arrive at the desired results. With this approach, the intellectual and emotional aspects of a person's life are integrated into the learning process. Proponents of this approach say it: 1) motivates students and promotes their personal involvement, 2) prepares students for the information age, 3) changes attitudes and values since facts alone do not, and 4) provides a proactive stance in that it helps students be advocates for change rather than accept existing conditions (AHEA Global Connections, 1988).

The contrast in the two approaches may be illustrated by considering the concept of communication between parent and child. In the technical approach, specific skills and techniques, such as "I messages," are based on the teacher's judgment that such skills are

important for all students. Within the practical reasoning approach, such specific skills would be viewed as an alternative approach for helping students reach the results they desire (in response to a previously identified problem) within the context of their own life experiences, emotions, feelings, and relationships.

The practical reasoning process starts with the identification of a problem. Practical reasoning is needed to decide what is best to do about a problem affecting the well-being of self and others, especially those in families. The problem-focused approach requires technical information in solving complex problems. While the technical approach involves “how to do,” the practical reasoning approach considers “what to do about,”

The practical reasoning approach “involves critical and creative thinking, communicating, and examining meanings and values in an atmosphere of trust and openness” (Ohio Vocational Consumer/Homemaking Curriculum Guide, 1983).

The *Oregon Parenthood Education Curriculum Model* has used four components to examine the defined problem. Because there is no specific sequence to these areas, they can be used in any order. An explanation of these areas can be found in the introductory pages. In addition, a further way to consider these areas with students is to ask questions, such as those that follow:

Desired Results:

- What is the goal?
- What is the ideal situation? The ideal state of affairs?
- What are some desired outcomes? What ought to be? What should be?

Awareness of Context:

- What’s going on – in the family? In my family? In society?
- What has been the historical influence of?
- What is the significance of the past for the present?
- Identify the factors involved – the people involved and the reasons for their involvement?
- What are the problems? Why and how are these problems?
- How reliable is the information? What myths exist about? What kinds of information should be taken into consideration in coming to decision about...?

Alternate Approaches:

- What are the ways to accomplish the goals or reach the desired results?
- What are possible solutions to the “problem”?

Consequences of Action:

- What are the consequences of using each of the alternative solutions to reach my goal?
- What happens if I act this way?
- What are the positive and negative consequences of these actions?
- What are the consequences to me? To my family? To my community? To my nation? To the World?
- What if everyone made this choice?
- How have these actions affected individuals and families?

Practical reasoning can help us examine the underlying issues; it is a framework that helps us “peel back the layers.” Some guidelines for peeling back the layers are:

1. Examine beliefs about one's own role in the situation.
2. Examine the meaning of actions taken in the situation.
3. Consider the norms governing the particular situation.
4. Gain an understanding of one's own needs in the situation.
5. Consider ways to satisfy one's own desires in the situation (Morgaine, 1989).

The Directed Activities which follow are designed to aid students in understanding the practical reasoning process and the terminology used in the Oregon Model. When students have attained the Learner Outcomes in this unit, it will assist them in accomplishing the Learner Outcomes for other concepts (units) covered in this Model.

TEACHER PREPARATION:

1. Think about your experiences as a student. How have you been taught? How often were you taught with the "banking" method of education?
2. Think about your own teaching styles. How do you teach? Do you use the "banking method" more than you want to?
3. Recall your initial experiences with the practical reasoning approach. How might you use those experiences to help teach your own students about it? How might you adapt this lesson to accomplish that purpose?

Note: TM in the activities refers to transparency master and SM refers to student master.

DIRECTED ACTIVITIES:

Supporting Concept A: Technical vs. Practical Reasoning Approach

1. Help students think about the style of teaching their teachers have used by asking questions:
 - How were you taught?
 - What methods did your teachers use?
 - Who determined what they taught?
 - How much influence have you had on what you were taught?
 - What factors have influenced the way they teach/taught you?
 - What were/are their needs in fulfilling their role?
 - Are there other ways that might be used?
 - What might be some consequences or results if those ways are chosen?
 - What is the end goal of all teachers – what do they want to happen?

Supporting Concept B: Rationale/Purpose

2. Using a transparency master, poster or white board, explain the practical reasoning process by drawing symbols to represent the process as you talk about it. In the instructions that follow, the message to be given by the teacher is written with quotation marks around it. While talking, the teacher should draw the symbols that go along with the message.

"Practical reasoning helps us decide what is best to do about a problem which affects the well-being of ourselves, others and families. People must be able to communicate freely

with each other and a trusting atmosphere is important for this to be effective." Write COMMUNICATION AND TRUST in the middle.

"In practical reasoning, the decision makers (you, your family, and your community) consider various areas for solving the 'what to do about...' problem. These include:

1. Alternative Approaches to solve the problem,
2. Consequences of Actions taken,
3. Awareness of Context affecting the problem,
4. Desired Results for everyone involved."

(Write *Alternative Approaches*, *Consequences of Action*, *Desired Results*, and *Awareness of Context* to the side. SM-1 could be used for this activity.) Discuss what these terms mean, using the information given on "Practical Reasoning Process" (SM-2). This could also be used as a student handout.

"Throughout the process of gathering and sharing information, we are constantly interacting with each other, our thoughts, and our actions. Usually, we are not aware that we are considering all the information needed (alternative approaches, possible consequences, desired results, and context) in order to make the best decision possible."

"This interaction, communication, action, and thinking process comprises practical reasoning. Becoming skilled in using these processes can help us make decisions we can be proud of – now and in the future."

Supporting Concept C: Practical Reasoning Process

3. To help students understand the four components of practical reasoning, choose a practical "problem" as a class. (For example, "What do we do about alternate child care for young children of parents who are not at home?")

In groups of three to four, have students make a list of the *Desired Results* or the ideal situation. (For example, using the above question, ask "What are the desired results regarding alternate child care for children? For parents?" Examples could be: safe, healthy environment, happy children, available when parent needs them, etc.) After several minutes, have the group come together to share ideas from smaller groups. Ask the following questions:

- Are these (is this) true for all individuals or families and across cultures?
- Are they defensible or correct or justifiable?

Again, in small groups, have students make a list of some influences on the situation (*Awareness of Context*) which might help in the decision-making process. (For example, "What are some factors in society that affect alternative child care? In the family? Why do parents use child care? What are circumstances in _____ (name of town) which affect our available choices for child care? Why do parents choose one type of care over another? Examples given might include: availability of child care centers in the community, parent's attitudes regarding child care centers, etc.) In the larger group, share ideas from smaller groups. Discuss with the following questions:

- Where do our ideas come from?
- What traditions or assumptions seem to influence our thinking about this problem?
- How do different individuals and families experience this problem?

In small groups, have students list *Alternative Approaches* to the problem. (Using this example, "What are some solutions to alternative child care? What are ways you have been cared for while growing up? What are some ways children can be cared for while parents are away?" Examples given might include: child care centers, neighbor who takes children in, self-care, etc.) After several minutes, come together and share ideas in the large group.

In small groups again, have students list *Consequences of Action*. ("What are the real outcomes from each of these alternative solutions? What may be the short-term and the long-term consequences of each of these approaches to children? To parents? To society?") Share ideas in the large group, putting student's ideas on transparency or white board. Stress that the process and openness in discussion is more important than "right answers."

4. To give students more "practice," have them work in new groups of three to four and go through the process again, using a different problem. As a class, brainstorm a list of some problems families face (teen suicide, teen pregnancy, child abuse, bankruptcy, etc.) Have groups select a problem to address. Give each group butcher paper and magic markers. Have them write their problem at the top and work through the four components in sections on their paper. When finished, have the groups present their problem to the class. As an alternative to using butcher paper they could use "Practical Reasoning Think Sheet" (SM-3) and then as they share, complete a "Think Sheet" on an overhead transparency.
5. Have each student go through the practical reasoning process individually by completing the "Practical Reasoning Think Sheet" (SM-3). Remind students that when they identify consequences, they should refer to the consequences of each alternative approach. The "Think Sheet" could also be used as a homework assignment or quiz at the end of the unit.
6. Review the practical reasoning process in class discussion or in writing.
 - How is practical reasoning different from the "banking" method?
 - What are some advantages and disadvantages of each?
 - What does practical reasoning involve?
 - Where does it begin?
 - In what situations in life might you use it?

RESOURCES:

Global Connections: Development Education for the American Teenager through Home Economics. (1988). Washington DC: American Home Economics Association.

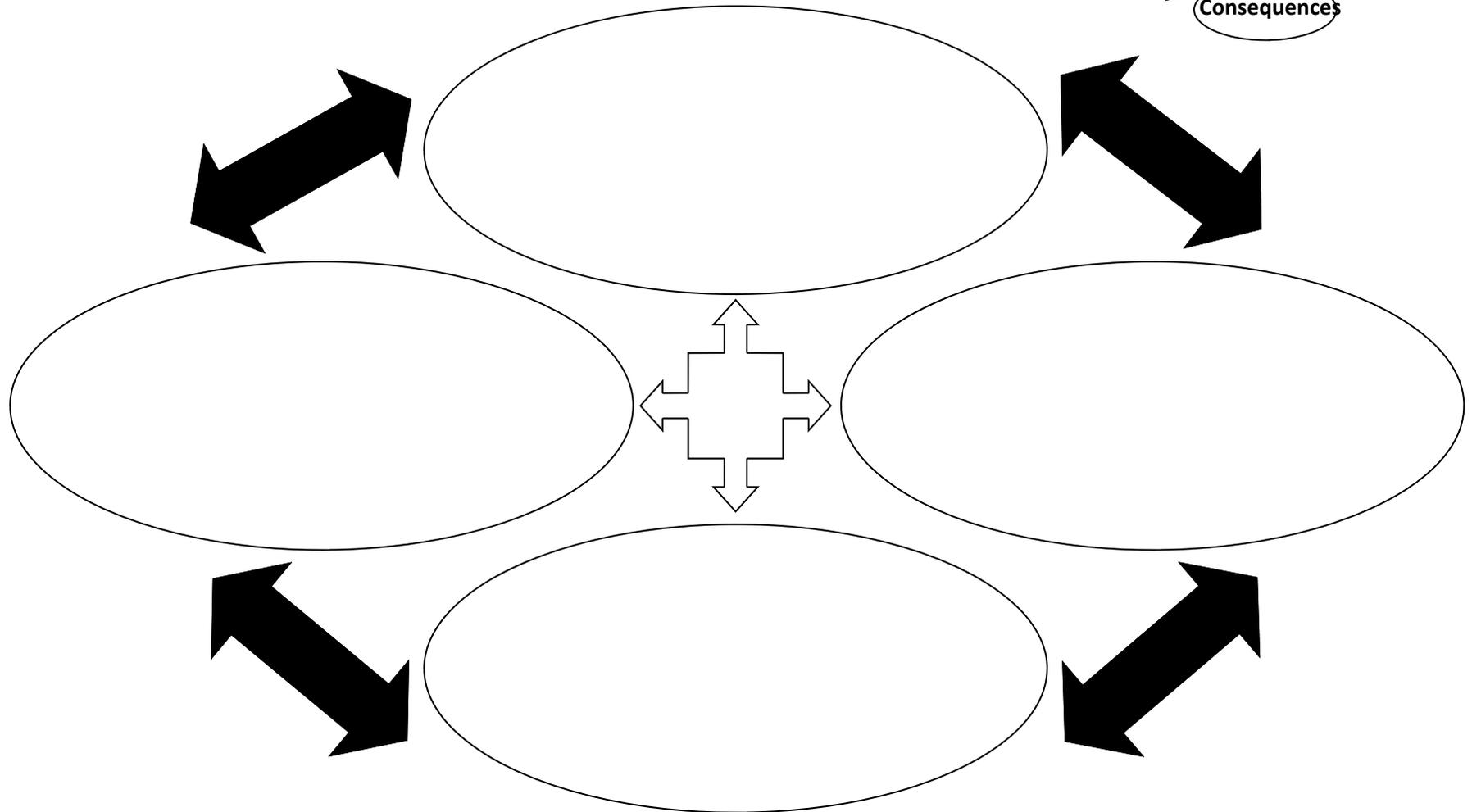
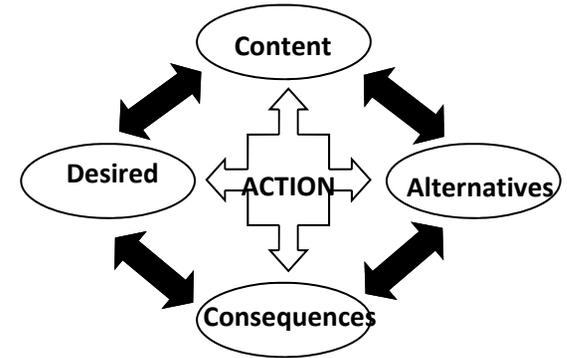
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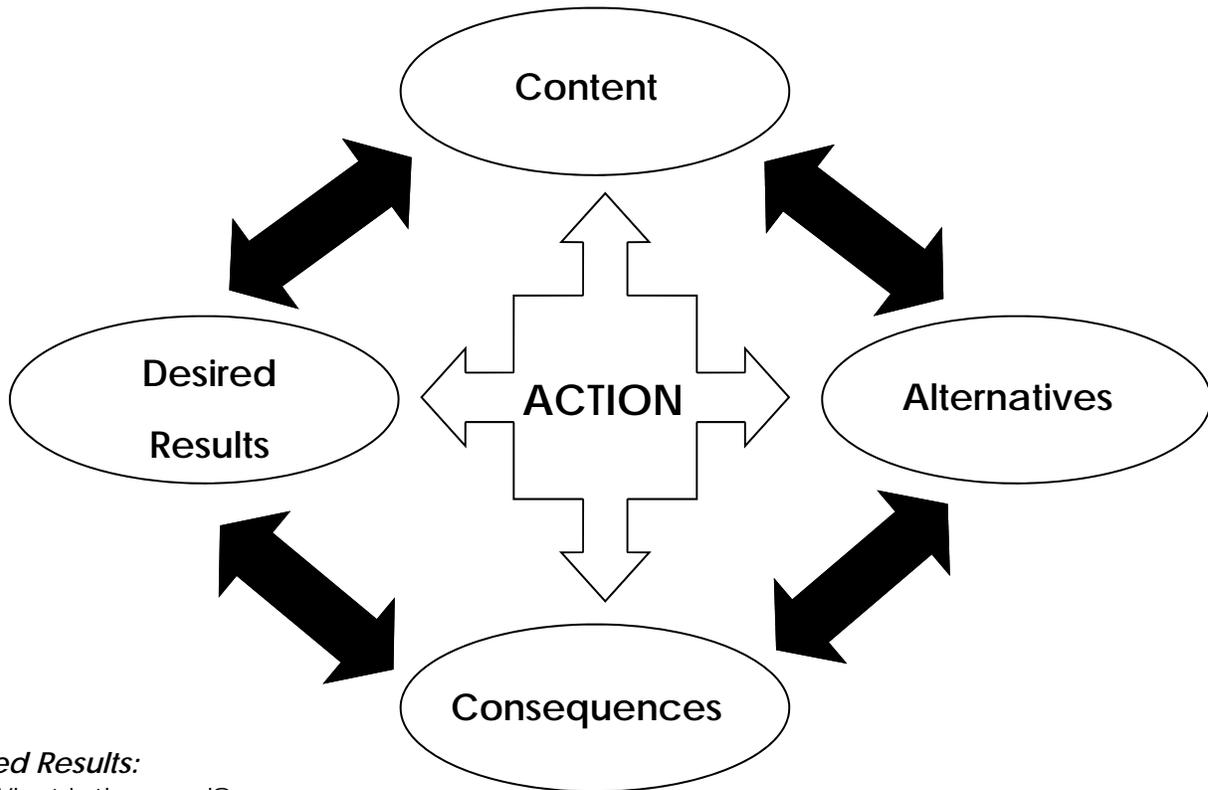
Reid, William (1998). *Curriculum as Institution and Practice*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

PRACTICAL REASONING THINK-SHEET #2

Name _____



Practical Reasoning Process



Desired Results:

What is the goal?
 What is the ideal situation or outcome?
 What ought to be?
 What should be?

Awareness of Context:

What's going on – in the family and/or in society that affects this situation or the goal?
 What has happened in the past in the family and/or in society that affects this situation or the goal?
 Who are the people involved?
 What are some problems?
 What kind of information needs to be considered to reach the goal?
 How reliable is the information?
 What questions would you need to ask?

Alternative Approaches:

What are possible ways to reach the goal?
 What are some possible solutions?

Consequences of Action:

What happens if I act this way?
 What are the positive and negative consequences of each of these alternative solutions?
 What affect do the consequences have on me? On my family? On my community? On my world?
 What if everyone made this choice?

PRACTICAL REASONING THINK SHEET

Identify a *PROBLEM*:

Suggest *ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES* and *CONSEQUENCES*:

Alternative Approaches	Consequences
a.	1. 2.
b.	1. 2.
c.	1. 2.
d.	1. 2.
e.	1. 2.

Identify some *DESIRED RESULTS*:

- a.
- b.
- c.

Gather information to become aware of the *CONTEXT*. *Identify some influences on the situation.*

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

TAKE ACTION!