AURORA INSTITUTE

SYMPOSIUM BREAKOUT SESSION
MONDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2021 | 2:30-3:30 PM ET

Agency by Design: Making Learning Engaging

PRESENTERS:

- Derek Wenmoth, FutureMakers (NZ)
- Joe DiMartino, Center for Secondary School Redesign, Inc.
- Marsha Jones, University of Arkansas
- Shelly Poage, John Tyson Elementary School

FROM NEW ENGLAND TO NEW ZEALAND AND PARTS IN BETWEEN

Derek Wenmoth
FutureMakers,
New Zealand

Marsha Jones
University of Arkansas

Shelly Poage
Principal, John Tyson
Elementary School,
NW Arkansas
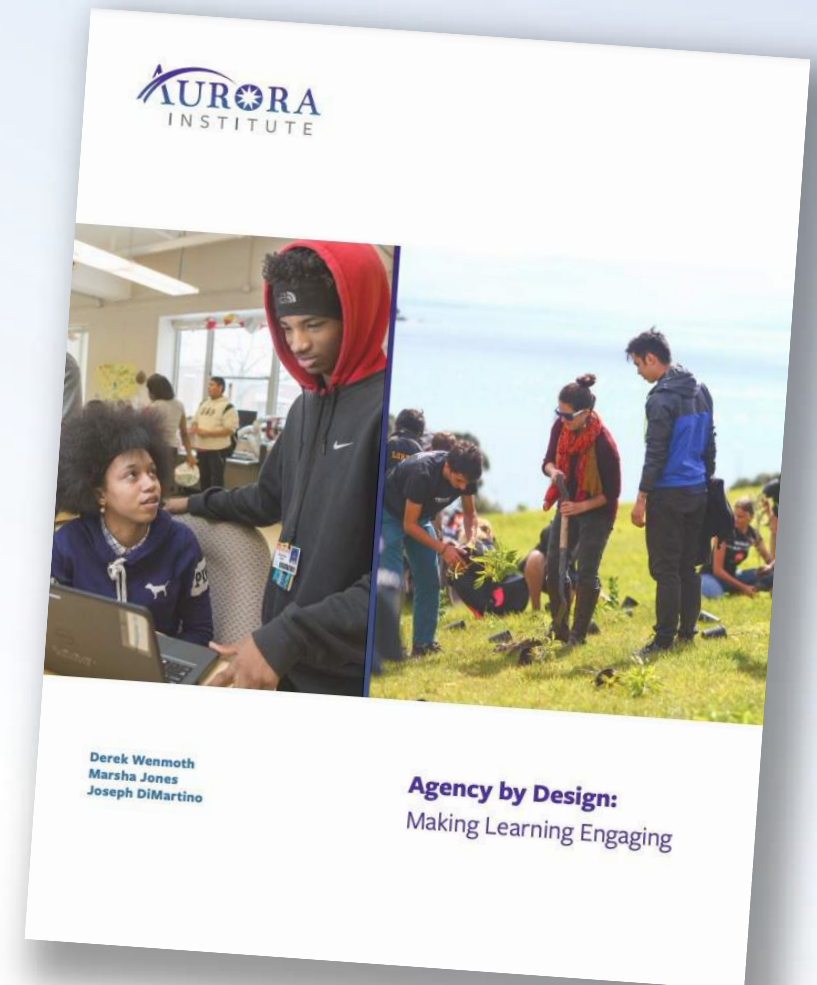
Joe DiMartino
Center for Secondary
School Redesign Inc.

Agency By Design: Making Learning Engaging

Download the paper

Our paper is available online on the Aurora Website:

https://aurora-institute.org/resource/agency-by-design-making-learning-engaging/

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FOCUS OF TODAY'S PRESENTATION

1. Demonstrate how intentional and deliberate planning in lesson design builds and supports student agency.
2. Review the essential elements fostering agentic behaviors and suggest participants reflect on their own environments as a comparison and identify areas strength or improvement
3. Review the three dimensions of agency and then invite participants to reflect on their own practice
4. Introduce an instructional design model focused on agentic behavior and come away with practical ideas to implement in their own context.
5. Hear from students who will share their perspective as partners in the learning process

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AGENCY REVEALED

Both Positive and Not so Positive experiences of the pandemic...

- Internet access

- New demands on parents

- Diminished connections with peers face-to-face

- Social and emotional concerns (general well-being)

- Ability to manage learning expectation and assignments

- Conduciveness of home environment for learning

- Teacher responses to remote learning environments

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WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

- There is still a lot of work to be done.

- We cannot confuse compliance with agentic behaviors

- We can take deliberate action to promote student agency

- Utilizing design inspired leadership models

- Institute practices the support agentic behaviors in a partnership learning model

- Intentionally plan for increased agentic behaviors in the design of the curriculum, Learning activities, acts of teaching, assessment and progress monitoring.

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UNREALIZED POTENTIAL OF LEARNERS

Agency is…

- "Having choices and the ability to act on those choices"
(Skills, ability and dispositions)

- "Unlock the basic genius and goodness of every student." (Greg Sinner)

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THIS WE BELIEVE

- We believe that student agency is an essential attribute of learners of all ages.

- We believe that student agency must be developed deliberately and intentionally.

- We believe that agency should be a core component of the requisite planning so all learners can thrive and be successful.

- We believe that agency can and should be promoted within the organization of the curriculum, the planning process, the design of instructional activities, and the assessment of learning.

- We believe that there are elements of student agency already established in teacher evaluation and supervision models but are not at the forefront of teacher expectations.

- We believe that a catalyst for success requires leaders (classroom, building, district) to embrace "design-inspired" leadership strategies.

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DESIGN INSPIRED LEADERSHIP QUALITIES

As leaders we must promote:

- Different roles and relationships

- Classroom activities that reflect more choice, self-determination, self-management, creative freedom and student leadership

- Include student voice in more formal ways

- Promote inquiry that allows for student voice in the design of the curriculum

- Promote assessment FOR Learning

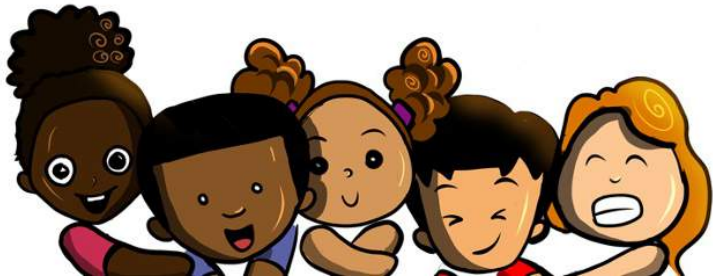*Agency By Design: Making Learning Engaging*

SHIFTING ROLES

- Leaders model this new vision in their interactions with faculty and students

- Leaders engage in capacity building, distributed leadership, and infrastructure change which includes faculty and students

- Leaders share control through collaboration and input

- Leaders use best practice models of change

- Leaders develop communication strategies about the new vision

- Leaders exhibit flexibility in use of space, time and resources

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BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

- Student management over authentic engagement

- Structure over innovation

- Hierarchy over collaboration

- Compliance over self-direction

- Fixed mindset over growth-mindset

- Risk avoidance versus risk taking

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10 CONDITIONS FOR LEARNER AGENCY

1. Learner at the center of all learning experiences
2. Relationships and partnerships
3. Cultural responsiveness
4. Leadership
5. Teaching as Inquiry and Student inquiry
6. Curriculum and Pedagogy
7. Assessment for learning
8. Assessment for Capability
9. Technology
10. Innovative Learning environments

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MORE THAN VOICE AND CHOICE

Requires accepting responsibility for...

- **Self**: self expression that avoids harm or negative consequences

- **Others**: understanding how our personal decisions will impact others

- **Shared environment**: awareness of how our actions impact our environment

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FOSTERING AGENCY IN LEARNING DESIGN

Curriculum	• Who is involved in the development of the curriculum?
Learning design	• What role do the student play in the design of learning and when engaging with the learning activity?
Acts of teaching	• What pedagogical approaches are used to stimulate and engage the learners?
Learning support and supervision	• What role do the students play in supporting and supervising their own work?
Assessment	• What role do students play in determining their own success criteria?
Monitoring Progress	• What role do students play in self assessment and what tools are available?
Environment	• What freedom do learners have to choose where they learn?

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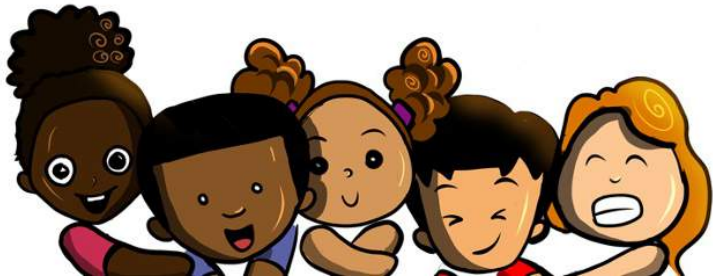
HEARING STUDENT VOICES

Student Panel:

- Jevin- 6th grader from Hellstern MS

- Miller- 5th grader from John Tyson

- Audrey from Parker Charter School

- Colleen Meaney, Director of the Sizer Center at Parker Charter School

STUDENT QUESTIONS

- What was a project that was important to you?

- What did you do to make your project a reality?

- How did you monitor your progress?

- How did your project give you voice and choice at school?

- Why did the project matter to you or to others?

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Jevin – 6th Grade – Helen Tyson Middle School, Springdale, Arkansas

- When I was a student at John Tyson Elementary School, I was an original Tiger Talk host.

- This experience gave me a voice and was personalized because I got to learn about and do things that I chose as I met EAST Student Standards. One EAST standard is to collaborate as a productive team member.

- Podcasting gave me the opportunity to recognize the value of participating on a team, and participate in various roles on the team.

- I also learned to respect the opinions and contributions of others on the team. We all had to work together to produce an episode.

- Now that I am in middle school, I am using what I learned through podcasting and I am trying to start a podcast at my middle school.

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Miller – 5th Grade – John Tyson Elementary, Springdale, Arkansas

- One of the standards in EAST is to solve community-based problems using technology.

- We use podcasting technology to connect parents to the great things that are happening at our school.

- Another standard is to communicate with a variety of audiences. In Arkansas, we have reading, writing, listening, and speaking standards for each grade level.

- At our school, we use rubrics to measure our progress on each standard.

- Podcasting has given me a voice that I am using to make a difference in my community and school. This year's episodes are all about helping parents learn about 5 skills for personal success. We'll focus on problem-solving skills, self-awareness, and appreciating diversity.

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Audrey – 12th grade, Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School, Devens, Massachusetts

- When I was in tenth grade, I did a project on packaging and sustainability. This was important to me because whenever I was in the grocery store I would see Clementines packaged in red plastic netting and I had often wondered, *why isn't this designed more sustainably?*

- To make this idea a reality, I chose to redesign, completely sustainable packaging for Clementines that would still fit all of the customer's needs. I applied scientific knowledge, skills we learned in geometry, and critical thinking skills to design this packaging.

- I had voice in this project and was invited to choose my own focus.

- This project, like most projects at the Parker School, was super engaging because I got to combine my passion for helping our climate with our learning in class and demonstrate competency in a way that mattered even beyond the project.

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Natural Resource Extraction for Plastic

◦ Styrofoam, aluminum, tin, polymer materials, etc.

◦ Plastic

◦ Plastic production uses crude oil, natural gas, and coal

◦ Extraction methods: deforestation, fracking, oil and gas leaking, among other harmful effects
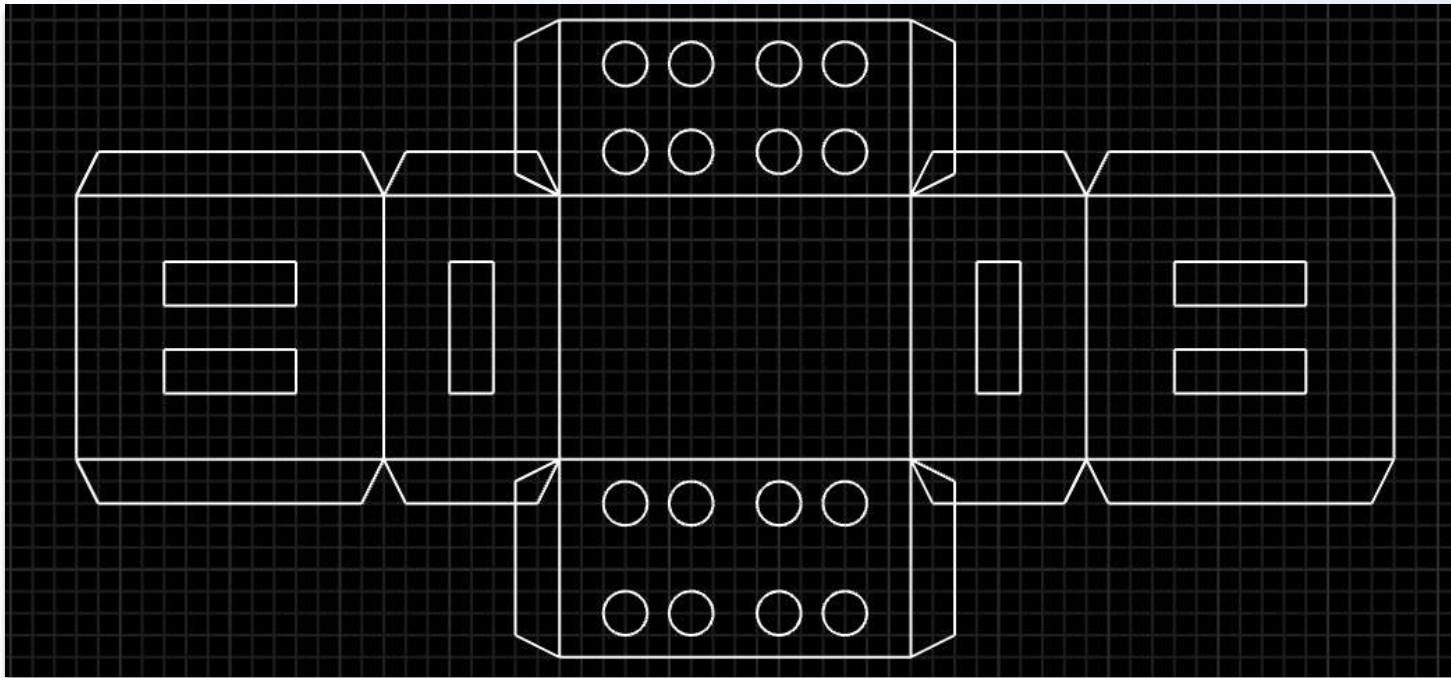
Measurements

- Clementine boxes are stacked separately, not on shelving
- Length vs Width
- On average, there are 20 medium-sized clementines in a bag
- One medium-sized clementine is 2 inches in diameter, 1.5 inches in height
- Sphere volume vs. rectangular prism
- Volume of 120 in³
- l = 8in   w = 6in   h = 4in
- 192in³ -- 72in³ = 120in³

Dieline: windows + display features

WHAT DID YOU HEAR?

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CLOSING COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

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