



World Report

Association of Christian Schools International, Office of International Ministries

Fall 2005

Achieve Your Mission: The MOSAIC Curriculum Framework

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“What does the big picture look like?” thinks Bruce, a ninth-grade math and Bible teacher. “Mission, standards, objectives, instructional strategies, assessment ... If I could see how the pieces fit together, I could more effectively carry out our mission.”

“Are standards and objectives the same thing?” Kim, a fourth-grade teacher, is frustrated. She’s just attended a faculty meeting and is having trouble with new vocabulary. “We’re headed in a good direction. But we need a common vocabulary to get there—or we’ll be talking past each other.”

“Teachers should find our updated English curriculum useful,” reflects Susan, a curriculum coordinator. “The standards are spelled out. Teachers should be clearer on how to help students write more effectively. I can check to see if using the updated curriculum results in improved student writing. But I’m not clear on the connection between the English writing standards and our schoolwide objective on communication—which is what I really want to check. **Is there a way to determine how students are doing on our schoolwide objectives?”**

Bruce, Kim, and Susan are Christian school teachers who are committed to their school mission. Like your teachers, they want to know that their teaching and curriculum work contributes to mission achievement.

Is There a Curriculum Framework That Can Help Them?

Yes! It’s called MOSAIC:

1. **Mission**
2. **Objectives**
3. **Standards**
4. **Assessments**
5. **Instructional strategies**
6. **Children**

1. Mission: A school mission statement is a 15-to-25-word statement that identifies the school, its purpose, and possibly its constituency. An effective mission statement is readable. Faculty, parents, and students should be able to memorize it quickly. Here’s an example: Christian Academy in Japan, a school for missionary children, equips students to impact the world for Christ.

- To increase focus on your mission,
- **Discuss** it at each faculty meeting.
 - **Print** it in all publications and on your website.
 - **Post** it prominently in your office.
 - **Emphasize** to teachers that they are hired to help students achieve the mission.

2. Objectives (also known as expected student outcomes, schoolwide goals, or expected student learning results): Schoolwide objectives define your school mission in terms of measurable

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student learning. Objectives define what a teacher should help a student achieve in order for the student to achieve the mission. Write the objectives in student-friendly language. An example of a schoolwide objective is, “Communicate with purpose, clarity, and poise.”

To increase focus on your schoolwide objectives (and consequently your mission), regularly ask teachers at faculty meetings to share student assessments and explain which schoolwide objectives they address.

3. Standards define what students must achieve within a given subject in order to achieve your schoolwide objectives (and consequently your mission).

Christian schools include additional schoolwide objectives not addressed by standards from secular organizations. Therefore, your school will need to create its own standards or modify secular standards so that subject-area standards address appropriate schoolwide objectives. Secular standards are available from professional organizations (like the National Council of Teachers of Math) and state governments. ACSI also has a list of standards.

What does a subject-area standard look like? If your schoolwide objective is, “Communicate with purpose, clarity, and poise,” one of your English standards might be, “Create clear, purposeful texts.”

4. Assessments are ways students show their achievement of the standards (and consequently the schoolwide objectives and mission).

Assessments are explicitly standards-based. They should be increasingly authentic, meaning that students show what they know through writing, projects, presentations, labs, and discussion (instead of multiple-choice or fill-in-the-blank tests).

An example of a major unit assessment for seniors is, “Write a 1,500-word persuasive article for our school newspaper in which you use a biblical perspective and current research to analyze a global issue, evaluate current responses to the global issue, and outline an effective response to the global issue.”

Before starting a unit, have your teachers create authentic major unit assessments and revise them on the basis of faculty input. Before your students begin work on an authentic major unit assessment, have

teachers give them a rubric (scoring guide), preferably a rubric developed by a department or grade level.

Teachers use the rubric to score the assessment and give the marked-up rubrics to students when returning the assignment. Doing this provides increased feedback on standards achievement to students and parents.

Teachers and/or administrators collect student performance data from rubrics and analyze the data to determine how many students met a given standard (and consequently a given schoolwide objective). When enough data is gathered and analyzed, you can establish baseline data for schoolwide objective achievement (and consequently mission achievement).

5. Instructional strategies are ways that teachers prepare students for assessments.

For example, when students are preparing to write their 1,500-word essays on a global issue, they could repeatedly discuss their research and ideas in small groups before writing their rough drafts.

To promote the use of effective instructional strategies, ask your departments to adopt one to two instructional strategies that teachers will use to prepare students for a given assessment. For example, your English Department could adopt small-group discussion and the writing process for essays.

6. Children: In class, teachers teach children—not course content.

Teachers help students prepare for assessments so the students can demonstrate achievement of the standards, and consequently the schoolwide objectives and mission. As teachers do this, they monitor the children’s learning and adjust lessons.

By putting the pieces of the big picture together, establishing a common vocabulary, and providing student performance data on the schoolwide objectives, the MOSAIC curriculum framework can help you, your teachers, and your students achieve your school mission.

Mission	1. Can your teachers recite your mission? 2. To what extent do your teachers understand that their job is to help their students achieve the mission?
Objectives	3. Do your schoolwide objectives define mission achievement in terms of measurable student learning? 4. Do your teachers and students understand what each schoolwide objective means?
Standards	5. Do your department standards define what students must achieve within a given subject (in order to achieve the schoolwide objectives)?
Assessments	6. Are your assessments explicitly standards-based? 7. Do your teachers give students rubrics before students work on assessments? 8. Do you use assessment results to determine how students are doing on your schoolwide objectives?
Instructional Strategies	9. Do your teachers teach according to the assessments?
Children	10. When asked what they teach, will your teachers say that they teach students to achieve the mission or that they teach course content?

MOSAIC

defines what your mission means.

Ready! Go!

Set! defines

the level of

student

learning

needed to

achieve your

mission and

a plan to

reach that

level.

Make Your MOSAIC SMARTer

While the MOSAIC framework helps define what the mission means in terms of student learning, schools also need to define the level of student learning needed to achieve the mission. To do this, schools can develop SMART goals. A SMART goal is

- S**pecific
- M**easurable
- A**ttainable
- R**elevant
- T**ime-bound

Example: Starting June 2007, with scores based on second-semester major unit assessments, 90 percent of seniors will score above the standard on all 17 schoolwide objectives.

Ready! Go! Set! Use a SMART Goal to Drive Mission Achievement

You're Ready!

You're ready to run the 10,000-meter race. You are in the right race on the right track at the right time. You have trained hard and are ready to qualify.

Something seems strange. You notice that you are alone—no other runners, no race starter, no clock, no spectators—just you. And then you remember that you don't even know what the qualifying time is.

This makes you uneasy, so you concentrate on what you do know—you have to run 25 laps around the track. You start when you are ready. The race is long. You feel pretty good when you cross the finish line, but you never learn what your time was or if you qualified. How frustrating! Before starting training (and definitely before the race), it sure would have helped you to wear a watch and to know the qualifying time.

Ever feel like that after a year of school? In August, you were ready. You were prepared to help your Christian school carry out its mission for that school year. In the back of your mind, you wondered what level of student learning your school needed to qualify for mission achievement. This made you uneasy, so you concentrated on what you knew—helping teachers help students learn to love God, others, and creation. These are good things.

As you finished the year, you felt pretty good—but you never learned what constituted mission achievement or if what took place that year qualified as mission achievement. And then you thought, “I need to address this. We’re headed in the right direction, and we could focus even more on achieving our mission if we had a specific goal. What do I do now?”

What do you do now? Use “Ready! Go! Set!”—*not ready, set, go.*

Ready!

Get ready quickly. Start getting ready this spring, and finish getting ready by the end of first quarter. As a faculty, discuss the benefits of defining mission achievement and review your schoolwide objectives (also known as expected student outcomes, schoolwide goals, or expected student learning results) to be sure they are measurable.

Next, develop your SMART goal.

Collaboratively define the level at which students must perform on your schoolwide objectives to achieve your mission, i.e., “90% of all seniors will score above standard.” Among other things, consider the average student grade point average, the percentage of students who attend college, and standardized test scores (such as AP, SAT, and ITBS). Reach consensus on an initial goal and then determine a deadline (“June 2007”). I recommend setting a deadline that is three years after your starting date.

Finally, determine the source of student performance data (“second-semester major unit assessments”). This last step can get complicated because it involves implementing a schoolwide assessment system that provides performance data on your schoolwide objectives.

Ask each department to select one assessment from the following list (preferably one they are already using): collaboration, competency tests, discussion, labs, performance, projects, service, simulations, or writing.

For example, the English Department could do writing, the Bible Department competency tests (memory verses), the Music Department performances (concerts), and the Art Department projects. Given the number of subjects an elementary teacher covers, I suggest inviting elementary teachers to start with the following: Bible memory, math tests, writing, and reading.

Then ask departments to design explicitly standards-based assessments that will be scored with standards-based rubrics. Provide a template, several sample assessments and rubrics, and time to collaborate.

While departments collaborate on assessments and rubrics, align each department standard with one schoolwide objective. Review this alignment with departments, and make revisions as necessary.

Go!

Go quickly!

Go—even if you haven’t finished all the assessments.

Go—even if you haven’t completed all the rubrics.

If you use too much time to get ready, you won’t have enough time to go!

During second and third quarters, ask teachers to give the department assessments, use department rubrics to score assessments, and tally performance data to determine the number of students who are above, at, or below standard on each section of the rubric. (Teachers can do tallies by hand or in a spreadsheet. If done in a spreadsheet, try to include a chart so teachers can easily “see” how their students are performing.)

As teachers submit data from department assessments, invite them to reflect with you on their students’ performance, the SMART goal, and the mission. This takes time, but it’s worth every minute.

While teachers score department assessments, ask a computer-savvy person to set up a spreadsheet or database to enter the assessment data, including the number of students above, at, or below a given standard. Since your schoolwide objectives and department standards are aligned on a one-to-one basis, data from the rubrics will provide performance data on your schoolwide objectives. Analyze the data to determine how many students are above, at, or below standards on each schoolwide objective.

Set!

During fourth quarter, set down on paper your progress toward reaching your SMART goal—list the assessments and rubrics that teachers used, and the number of students who are above, at, or below standard on each school-wide objective. Give a copy of this paper to departments, and provide time for departments to meet. Ask them to discuss their assessments, rubrics, and student performance data; when departments complete their discussions, ask them to share their findings with the entire faculty.

Next, collaboratively set goals for the coming year. Possible goals include the following:

1. **Collect** a complete set of baseline data on schoolwide objectives from department assessments. On the basis of our first year, we had data on about 50 percent of our schoolwide objectives.
2. **Implement** one assessment per year per secondary department for a period of three years. This doable goal recognizes that teachers need time to fine-tune last year's assessments and rubrics, and time to develop new assessments and rubrics.
3. **Simplify** rubrics to reduce grading time. Our teachers shared that it could take 30 to 60 minutes per student. This is too long.

Imagine What Might Happen If You Use "Ready! Go! Set!"

In August, you're ready. You're prepared to help your Christian school carry out its mission for that school year. You're focused on helping your teachers and students reach the SMART goal, and your teachers are prepared to implement one assessment and one rubric.

During the year, students comment that rubrics provide clear expectations and helpful feedback. You talk with teachers about how their students are doing on assessments and on the schoolwide objectives overall.

As you finish the year, you feel pretty good. Though you haven't reached your SMART goal, you have taken concrete steps toward reaching it and achieving your mission.

At a meeting, the faculty discusses the overall performance data on schoolwide objectives and sets the next steps for reaching the SMART goal. As the meeting closes, you look around and see looks of encouragement.

You think, "We're headed in the right direction, we're focusing more on helping our students achieve our mission, and we know what to do next. We're set—next fall we'll be ready to go!"

Michael Essenburg is the curriculum coordinator at Christian Academy in Japan. He has also served as the school's director of development.

Seven Questions to Consider for Using "Ready! Go! Set!"

Ready!	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How much student learning do you need to achieve your mission? 2. Would developing a SMART goal help you define the level of schoolwide objective achievement you need to achieve your mission? 3. Have you aligned each department standard with one schoolwide objective? 4. Do departments use standards-based assessments and rubrics?
Go!	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Do you talk with your teachers about student performance data from rubric-scored assessments? 6. Do you know how many of your students are above, at, or below standard on each schoolwide objective?
Set!	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. To what extent do you base your annual planning on student performance data and on increasing schoolwide objective achievement (reaching the SMART goal)?

ACSI World Report is published four times a year by ACSI International Ministries, © 2005.

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