

Assignment 6 – Reigeluth Questions

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- 1. *Many states are moving towards using Standards of Learning (SOLs) to assess each teacher's ability to teach specific content and each student's ability to learn specific content. Do you think that these types of requirements constitute a "piecemeal" change or a "systemic" change in our education system? Why?***

The move toward Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments is a step in the right direction; however it is a piecemeal change rather than a systemic one. Whereas a systemic change would encompass the entire system, the adoption of SOLs is a piecemeal change because it focuses only on a small part of the overall system. While most would agree that learning standards are indeed a crucial part of the educational system because they establish the objectives for each area of study (Standards of Learning, 2009, May 27), the standards in and of themselves do not bring about the type of systemic change required to accommodate today's information age (Reigeluth, 1994).

One of the essential changes to better align the educational system with the information-based world in which we find ourselves in modern society is to move away from delivering "a fixed amount of content to a group of students in a fixed amount of time" (Reigeluth, 1994). Yet, the SOLs essentially lock in these time-based requirements by forcing a specific amount of information to be delivered within a specific timeframe. The standards address the need for holding achievement constant at established levels of competency, but they also create time constraints on when those standards should be met. Thus, when educators are provided with a checklist of standards, the list often becomes a syllabus in which one standard is taught and checked off, moving to the next one (Peterson, 2001). This linear form of teaching puts an emphasis on test preparation with reduced innovative teaching (Peterson, 2001) and maintains focus on the memorization of facts rather than on abstract thought, problem-solving, and meaning making – all of which are changes necessary to align our educational system with other changes of the information age (Reigeluth, 1994).

Because the SOLs don't bring about the complete overhaul of the educational system necessary to bring it up-to-date with today's information world, I believe that their adoption is only a piecemeal change to the overall system. I certainly agree that learning standards and attached accountability for both educators and students are essential components of effective instruction. However, a linear approach to education with an

emphasis on checking off various standards and the side effect of stifled teaching innovation do not bring about the type of systemic change needed to meet the needs of today's students (Reigeluth, 1994).

- 2. Do you think that this type of change is realistic and feasible in your work environment? Taking into account the features listed in Table 3, have you seen this type of change in your workplace? If so, briefly explain these changes. If not, explain one thing you could do to implement this type of change.**

For the most part, this type of change is realistic and feasible in my work environment. We provide our employees with a great deal of learning and development programs available on their demand and as part of their individualized plan for professional development. Additionally, nearly all of our courses – both required and optional – strive toward enabling our associates to think critically, solve problems, communicate effectively, utilize technological tools and resources, follow a path of continuous progress, and learn cooperatively.

Some ways in which these critical elements are accomplished include cooperative learning in which role plays are used to apply concepts to solving problems that associates will face on the job. We provide workshops to help our associates use communication skills to express themselves effectively. We provide and train associates on the use of technologies to solve daily problems and make their lives easier. We allow associates to determine and follow their own individual learning plans as part of their overall career development objectives. Finally, our trainers are indeed facilitators in that they partner with our employees and provide individualized attention as often and extensively as necessary to ensure our learners succeed.

References

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