

A BETTER WAY

A path towards a more relevant education

STAFF EDITORIAL

OPINION OF THE PACK
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E=hf. The capital of Minnesota is Saint Paul. Columbus sailed the ocean blue... The fact is, in a few years none of this will be relevant. You won't need to calculate the energy of a photon, or spout off the capital of Minnesota, or know what year Columbus came to America.

The real purpose of education is to make you hard to trick. No one cares what random facts you can spew, but by being able to analyze and synthesize data, you can siphon out inaccurate news and prevent yourself from being fooled. So, while the facts are important, what is much more important is being able to interpret data from your friend, a parent, the news, and determine whether it is true.

One of the guiding theories that has changed the modern education system is Bloom's Taxonomy. This theory consists of six different levels of learning: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The pyramid goes in order from the lowest level of understanding (knowledge) to the highest level of complexity (evaluation).

Along with the push for higher level thinking came a movement that promoted teaching for all seven learning styles: aural, visual, verbal, physical, logical, social and solitary. Researchers discovered that while each individual has a learning style that is most effective for them, the synthesis of all seven learning styles promotes a higher level of thinking and understanding in students.

William Glasser, a classroom

management theorist says, "We learn 10% of what we read, 20% of what we hear, 30% of what we see, 50% of what we see and hear, 70% of what we discuss, 80% of what we experience, and 95% of what we teach to others."

While these percentages are a generalization, the theory behind Glasser's message remains. Deeper levels of thinking can only be reached through activities like discussion and argumentation, which, not coincidentally, are also credited with the highest rates of information retention by psychologists.

This brings us to Monarch. A new method, the flipped classroom, was established in 2000 to increase this depth of learning, and is now being utilized in many classes at Monarch. This method has students learn the facts at home to leave time for analysis and discussion during class.

This method sounds great

in principle, but these higher levels of thinking are not always fulfilled, leading to the ineffective use of the flipped classroom at Monarch. Not

only are the highest levels of learning lacking, but the style of learning (watching a video at home and taking notes) mainly appeals to verbal and auditory learners, leaving the other five learning types abandoned. Although labs do appeal to the physical and social learners, they make up the minority of the instructional time in many classes.

Math classes have made an effort to include the application level of learning by introducing real-world problems.

However, let's be real. When has a mathematician ever determined the angle between them and a lamppost to calculate its height? Students want to know not only how the information is applicable to life, but how a real-life mathematician uses

the material. Students want to know what a historian does day to day, what experiments a chemist completes, and how they do so.

While a teacher can say a mathematician does x, y, and z on a day-to-day basis, the only way for a student to truly comprehend x, y and z is to complete those actions themselves. To be a merchant in a simulation about the Aztec Empire or complete a lab on water filtration. Even simple things, like having students discuss and defend their position on an article read for Language Arts, deepens the learning experience. These are the lessons that students remember and carry with them.

Teachers have made tremendous efforts to make classes interactive and increase the depth of knowledge they are giving to students. However, there are still ways that education at Monarch can and must be improved. Interactive activities do happen and enhance classrooms, but don't happen nearly as often as they should.

Bloom's Taxonomy is just one theory, and Benjamin Bloom is just one man, but by talking to students, it becomes apparent that an increase in interactive classes and a change to the flipped classroom is necessary. Monarch students want teachers to incorporate these higher levels of learning: analysis, synthesis, evaluation.

Students not only need to memorize facts and understand the who, what, and where, but need to understand the why and the how of what they are being taught.

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**-William Glasser,
Classroom
Management
Theorist**