

12Rs development framework

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Introduction

At the moment I can talk in general terms that most people would immediately understand about what a particular R is, why it's important, give an example or two and so on - but that's just setting the scene when we need a proper script to work with, pick holes in, dispute and provoke thought. To do this I propose to dissect each R according to a standard pattern. These smaller segments should be easier to use as agenda items, prompts for research and experiment while also providing a concrete basis for discussion and evaluation. It should then be possible to compare and contrast these elements as a group.

If you imagine a matrix with Rs across the top and elements down the side they you can see the overall pattern of the work.

I have called this a development framework because the intention is to use this as a scaffolding for practising educationalists (which I'm not) to use as the basis for field work. As it stands this is pure speculative analysis with much spade work needed before the fuzzy concepts can be put into practice. - That's your job!

The top-level breakdown for each R is:

A Description

What are we talking about and why does it matter?

B Development state

Where do we stand today and what are the issues we want to address?

C Examples

One of the big troubles with the Rs is although 'we know what we mean - generally' they're concepts which cannot be precisely defined. We might also want to sketch out a scale of competence, for which we need to be able to relate to real world situations.

D Assessment

Practical and meaningful measuring.

E Learning

By now we should have a pretty good idea of the scope of the R but we need to understand how people learn it or mis-learn it.

F Miscellaneous thoughts, notes, suggestions and hunches

G Public discussion

It's important to engage the general population in these issues. So some distillation, simplification and debunking is necessary if the key points are to be understood.

This provides a template for completely describing each R and its associated value, issues, beneficiaries, state of, and opportunity for, teaching.

A Description

What are we talking about and why does it matter?

- A.1 General
 - Defining the concept in everyday terms
- A.2 Home, school, work, social and later life
 - How this skill is important in various aspects of living
- A.3 Value
 - Qualitative assessment of the individual, social and economic benefit
- A.4 Not to be confused with...
 - Making sure we don't get muddled in our minds between different Rs which may be commonly or closely linked. These observations will come in useful as pointers to where we should be looking at combinations of related Rs.
- A.5 Useful prerequisites and helpful for...
 - Where does this R fit in with the other Rs and other skills. What situations are there where being competent at this R be required or highly beneficial.
- A.6 Situations where assessment is desirable
 - A doctor giving instructions might want to think whether their patient is likely to be able to remember what they've been told or is capable of reading a written handout. Knowing when we need to be on the lookout will help us develop practical awareness and assessment methods.

B Development state

Where do we stand today and what are the issues we want to address?

- B.1 Current state of general competence
 - A cursory survey of how well the general population is equipped with this skill.
- B.2 Specific types of people at risk from missing skills
 - Trying to identify any sections of the population who don't have certain skills or where lack of skills can lead to joining an identifiable disadvantaged group.
- B.3 Current state of learning opportunities
 - How do people learn and maintain these skills at the moment. Is there a decent range of materials and approaches? What emphasis, bias or misleading goes on? Are we concerned with attitudes as well as abilities?
- B.4 Typical problems
 - Major effects of failure in general and how lack of skills can affect people's lives.
- B.5 System issues
 - Investigating the social and educational infrastructure and how well it delivers results. For example do schools put any resources aside for teaching Remembering? If not is that because they have other things to do or they can't 'get a handle' on the subject, or don't have a target?

C Examples

One of the big troubles with the Rs is although 'we know what we mean - generally' they're concepts which cannot be precisely defined. We might also want to sketch out a scale of competence, for which we need to be able to relate to real world situations.

- C.1 Very simple
Beginner's steps. Anyone with only this level would be considered functionally incapable.
- C.2 Simple
Getting on the way and showing understanding of what the concept is all about but not having confidence or competence to tackle everyday living tasks.
- C.3 Essentially useful everyday
This is what we would consider to be the minimum level for everyday living: Going to the shops, managing weekly expenditure, dealing with family, social and work interactions and so on.
- C.4 Sophisticated
Above average facility. For example handling the odds of poker hands or writing literate poetry.
- C.5 Special
A particular aspect. For example caring for a relative is a special kind of responsibility.
- C.6 Needed for work
This is a good place to list a multitude of jobs that require more than the minimum level of competence and care. This list could form the basis of motivation for doing better at Rs, careers advice and thinking about job-related assessment.
- C.7 Failure
Where lack of a skill causes problems and where it leads.

D Assessment

- D.1 Objectives and Metrics
Trying to find competencies within the R and then what we're looking to measure. For example one of the objectives of reporting is Accuracy and we'd be looking for Breadth (covering all important points and understanding the overall context) and Detail (getting the details correct). This is quite an important section because we'll end up with what amounts to a blueprint for a curriculum.
- D.2 Competence scale
A very tricky area because there is lots of variability in real-world context and a lot of subjectivity about broad concepts. However at the very least, thinking about this will help us arrive at poor and excellent categories and from there to some average expectation.
- D.3 Signs of presence/absence of 3Cs
Are there tell-tale symptoms or go/no-go tests that tell us how competent, careful and confident somebody is with a particular R. Warnings about confusing signs of one poor R with another.
- D.4 Possible contexts
Here we go into a bit of detail about specific situations where we have

a reason for assessment. This can lead us to examine the importance of awareness of a particular R in a particular environment.

- D.5 Quickie/Interview methods
 - Off the cuff, informal methods.
- D.6 Experience/Track record methods
 - How can we usefully look at historical data?
- D.7 Examination/Challenge methods
 - How can we 'measure' this particular R using some test? (Doing multiple Rs together may be an aspect that needs looking at.)
- D.8 Value of a 'certificate'
 - What can 'go wrong' after 'passing' a 'standard'? How applicable is 'a standard' to all circumstances?
- D.9 Warning signs
 - What to look for in real life that might indicate a lack of competence at this R.

E Learning

By now we should have a pretty good idea of the scope of the R but we need to understand how people learn it or mis-learn it. There is far more to this than lessons in a school room!

- E.1 Influencing environments
 - We need to take quite a close look at the influence different contexts have on how people learn their Rs. In some ways this will tell us a lot more about the nature of the environment than the learning processes involved in acquiring skills. Many Rs will be similarly affected.
- E.2 Teaching methods
 - How we can go about informal and formal teaching. What resources can we use.
- E.3 Age/maturity
 - It is traditional to concentrate on a moving target between 17 weeks and 17 years. OK then, exactly what are the age-related factors, expectations and sweet-spots? Some R's, for example remembering and resolve, can decay with increasing age. How should we go about teaching different age groups?
- E.4 Differences between boys, girls and other groups
 - There may be social or cultural differences between different sections of the population. How might these affect our approach to teaching?

F Miscellaneous thoughts, notes, suggestions and hunches

Thought and suggested lines of further enquiry.

G Public discussion

It's important to engage the general population in these issues. So some distillation, simplification and debunking is necessary if the key points are to be understood.

- G.1 **Headline issues**
 Popular topic titles with our own comments on use, mis-use and usefulness.
- G.2 **News, reports and popular articles**
 Review of current affairs and interested parties
- G.3 **Problems in a nutshell**
 Explained in layman's terms
- G.4 **Our key points**
 - What we expect
 - Why we want it
 - Who should be involved
- G.6 **Parent's quick reference card**
 All-in-one overview with practical information
- G.5 **Next steps in a nutshell**
 Explained in layman's terms