Draft Universal Schema for Basic Education Curricula

- **Criterion**: Knowledge/skills that have the potential to reduce suffering
- **Principle**: Empower self-improvement

Foundational Skills

- **Communication**
  - Language: dominant languages necessary for commerce, government, and civil society
  - Reading: ability to read common documents (such as newspapers, informational pamphlets, technical manuals, business agreements, and government documents)
  - Verbal Expression: ability to express one's thoughts, desires, and needs to others verbally, including any special forms of communication (eg formal business letter)
  - Tools: means of communication (eg community fora, postal systems, email, web, as available)
- **Numeracy**
  - Counting
  - Quantitative reasoning
  - Marking the passage of time
  - Arithmetic
  - Basic geometry
  - Elementary algebra
- **Reasoning**
  - Evaluating data
  - Identifying stakeholders
  - Making inferences
  - Analyzing causal relationships
  - Identifying potential solutions
  - Predicting potential outcomes
  - Decision-making
  - Making arguments
- **Research**
  - Formulating a clear research question
  - Locating sources of information, including "book research," investigative or experimental methods, and people who are likely to have or can lead one to the desired information
  - Evaluating sources of information

Disciplinary Content

- **Health**
  - Nutrition
  - Exercise and rest
  - First aid
  - Disease awareness
  - Sexual health
  - Maternal/infant health
  - Personal safety
  - Medical facilities
- **Government**
  - How decisions are made
  - How to participate in government
- **Economics**
  - Financial literacy: currency, banking, rationing wealth/planning for the future, local system of borrowing and lending, debt awareness, consumer credit (as applicable)
  - Entrepreneurship:
    - Recognizing a need for goods or services
    - Preparing a business strategy
    - Understanding business cash flow and basic accounting
    - Familiarity with basic marketing
    - Knowing how or where to obtain capital
    - Being aware of the legal requirements on business
- **Employment**
  - Obtaining Employment: locating available jobs, local customs of soliciting employment, presenting oneself in a winsome way, kinds of compensation other than salary in common use
  - Technical Skills

Community

- **Group Identity**
  - May include history, literature, fine arts
- **Interpersonal skills**
  - Understanding perspective
  - Politeness, mutual respect
  - Admitting when one has erred, asking and extending forgiveness
- **Practical orientation to the community**
  - Housing, transportation
  - Rights/responsibilities of living in the community

Excerpted from: Michael Culbertson, *What Does Everyone Need to Learn: Toward a Universal Schema for Basic Education Curricula* (Ed.M. thesis, Boston University, 2008), Appendix A. This page may be copied freely under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 License. <michael.culbertson@gmail.com>