Science for All Americans and Benchmarks for Science Literacy

*Science for All Americans* and *Benchmarks for Science Literacy* discuss a topic that has concerned educators for years. It seems that each time a new set of benchmarks comes out, they are more vague, less in depth, and the number of them increases. The question remains; what are we really trying to do? Are educators supposed to see how much information we can teach or is our job to teach them how to think and how to be creative problem solvers?

Most educators would view *Science for All Americans* as a breath of fresh air. “Education has no higher purpose than preparing people to lead personally fulfilling and responsible lives.” (*Science for All Americans*) This article is calling for more in depth teaching of science rather than the “overstuffed and undernourished” (*Science for All Americans*) science curriculum that we have now. This book is not suggesting a quick fix, it is suggesting a gradual, but lasting change to our education system. It also outlines the need for reform. Some of the concerns include low test scores and discouraged teachers as well as our weakness in science and technology compared to other countries. Although it will not be an easy transition, many teachers and students would appreciate a shift from memorization of random facts to meaningful learning.

*Benchmarks for Science Literacy* does a remarkable job of focusing on the nature of science rather than unconnected pieces of information. I would love to incorporate a curriculum like this in my classroom. I would like to see my classroom shift from teacher centered learning with an emphasis on notes and worksheets to student centered labs and inquiry based activities. Objectives like those found in *Benchmarks for Science literacy* would allow students to practice skills that they need to have in order for The United States to remain competitive in the world of science and technology. *Science for All Americans* and *Benchmarks for Science Literacy* do a wonderful job of focusing on what is important in science education.