Common Core Standards-Aligned Curriculum Development
with Understanding by Design

CURRICULUM MATTERS

Course Number: PRDV 70228
Graduate Credits: 1 credit Online Professional Development course
Class dates and times: Four week course. New modules begin Mondays
Instructor: Katherine Scheidler, Ed.D.
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See Instructor Profile, p. 9

Course open to teachers of all subject areas, all grades, including Special Education and ELL teachers

Course Description:

A carefully developed curriculum is the essential foundation for effective teaching and learning for all students. A remote course, or remote units within a course, best develops learning by first setting out learning goals and steps to the learning, and creating means to engage and retain learners.

Curricula must build vertically from year to year to establish the rigorous Standards learning needed to prepare students well for college and for the challenging changing workplace in which students must continue with the ability to learn. Curricula establish the horizontal learning for commonality within the grade level. Scattershot curriculum creates “curriculum chaos” -- in which individuals select what each wants to teach -- is haphazard, and doesn’t benefit students within a school system. Today’s high expectations for each student require a strong framework guide. However, an effective curriculum also allows for teachers to personalize as needed. Modifying learning for more struggling students must be worked into the curriculum; extending learning for higher achieving learning of the same content and process is also provided in curriculum.

In this course participants will understand the need for a viable and reliable curriculum that helps each teacher build on previous learning to reach higher expectations.

This course provides the big picture framework for understanding the need for solid curriculum aligned with state curriculum frameworks and assessed learning, and provides a modification of the gold standard curriculum model of Understanding by Design for units of study within the curriculum framework. When teachers participate in the curriculum
development, their observations of student needs are incorporated, and teachers understand the discussions behind the guidelines.

Good models of curriculum are provided for study and analysis, such as the Weston Public Schools current posted curriculum.

As the final course assessment project, course participants will create a full year curriculum for their own teaching grade level, with briefer year-long expectations for the years before and after, and develop fully two major learning units within the year. A rubric is provided to guide and assess the final project. Participants will critique one another’s posted final curriculum and learning units, for useful feedback, and to share ideas.

**Course objectives**

Course Participants will demonstrate understanding of:

- Rationale for well-developed written common curriculum to promote learning
- Concept of year-long curriculum to build student skills, knowledge and understanding
- Concepts and delineation of vertical and horizontal curriculum
- Concept of “teaching for understanding”
- Concept of Vygotsky’s “zone of proximal development” and scaffolding learning for struggling students
- Importance of modifying skills and content levels to promote student achievement
- Elements of the UbD curriculum model of unit title, Standards goals, Essential Question to guide unit learning, teaching for mastery, differentiation, re-teaching in a different way for mastery, unit rubric to guide and assess learning, unit reflection
Course Expectations:
- Course participants will complete readings and assigned work within the one module
- Course participants will complete the required response and post on Discussion Board
- Course participants will “reply” to at least two other postings on the Discussion Board for course interaction and sharing of ideas for a professional learning community
- Final project is due first to the instructor and then posted for other course participants to review and comment on as well as learn from and to generate new teaching ideas

Course Modules Units of Study

Week One, Module One:

**Participant introductions**, including teaching position, content knowledge to date (pre-assessment), participant learning goals for this course.

Content presented:

**Rationale for well developed curriculum** that builds from year to year and is both vertically aligned (builds from year to year) and horizontally aligned (within a grade level)

Examples of Standards learning in the area of student research skills for grades Kindergarten through grade 12 as an example of ability to attain high level skills and understanding

Review of posted curriculum that are exemplars of good curriculum that also include samples of what the classroom implementation looks like.

Assignment: Read excerpts from Heidi Hayes Jacobs’ *Mapping the Big Picture* which provide the rationale for big picture curriculum that provides a guide for classroom implementation.

Discussion Board Postings:

1. **Introductions**  Complete and post the written form on participant’s current teaching status, background on curriculum, current understanding of State Standards, curriculum development, and Understanding by Design curriculum model, to share information among the group of par

2. **Post comments on posted curricula**  What do you see as good curriculum guide here; what is needed; what is not relevant given your teaching position.

3. **Comment on Hayes’ curriculum rationale**: Briefly summarize in your own words the rationale here for having well developed curriculum and add your own insights on the topic as well as downsides and means of overcoming obstacles for learning.
Week Two, Module Two:

**Teaching for Understanding:** Study content of Dr. Grant Wiggins’ “Teaching for understanding” text and videos to develop the idea of engaging students in study of topics that lead to acquiring understanding.

Present the rationale for Understanding by Design, and the modified blank template that provides a concrete model to complete. Varied completed UbD learning units are presented, such as a simple differentiated unit on a longer reading that is varied excerpts for varied reading ability, and varied writing on the text to provide student choice, with the common Standards of close reading, inference, central idea and supporting evidence, and opinion writing or argument or narrative writing Standard types.

Participants review curriculum presented by the Brown University Watson Center “Choices” program. Choose one unit to find positive features; explain how this could be adapted for your own classroom.

**Standards Learning:**
Read the history and rationale and implementation for Standards learning, Scheidler, Standards Matter: Common Core State Standards in Reading and Writing. Present in your own words a brief rationale for Standards and any questions you have on the specific Standards.

**Discussion Board:**
1. Participants post examples of situations in which they learned to understand an area, such as when doing a project for a class, doing independent research, learning a sport, cooking, learning how to complete a jigsaw puzzle, learning to teach.
2. Post comments on the Wiggins’ presentations of developing student understanding. What is one or two of the main points of Wiggins’ explication that you find most important, or most compelling? Explain.
3. Choices program units of study: Select one unit you find most interesting and delineate its positive features, explain how you would adapt this for your own use.
4. Read Standards Matter: Common Core State Standards in Reading and Writing. Present in your own words a brief rationale for common state Standards and assessments, and any questions you may have on specific Standards.
Week Three, Module Three:

The Same Curriculum for All Students
Grade level outcomes remain the same, instruction and learning activities may vary, especially dependent on the student’s achievement level.

Struggling Students: Readings on expectations for more struggling students, especially ELL and Special Education students. Presentations of varied means of modifying learning to adapt to varied achievement levels. Strategies include: scaffolding with smaller learning steps, extending learning for higher achieving students; varying for learning styles: direct instruction, open-ended instruction; providing graphic organizers, sentence frames and templates; illustrations and then writing; different developmentally appropriate but idea related readings; pairings with peers; peer collaboration; homogenous and heterogeneous student groups and pairings; teacher assistance level varies.

Discussions Board:
1. Post activities you use with more struggling students. Why are these successful?
2. Develop and post a learning unit on one unit for your year-long curriculum using the UbD curriculum unit template.
3. Comment on at least two other postings of the UbD units, cite positives and suggest modifications with rationale.

Week Four, Module Four:
Final Curriculum Project with sharing

Participants complete a year-long curriculum for the participant’s own grade level. A model is provided, and in addition the participant may use the series of UbD units, or the Weston Public Schools curriculum model. Participants must first send the final project to the instructor, no later than Wednesday of the last week of the course. The instructor will examine the documents and assist with revisions, as needed. Then the participant will post the year-long curriculum document with two more developed UbD units, and with the varied learning in the earlier year and the next year’s curriculum.
Discussion Board:
1. Send your final project to the course instructor no later than Wednesday of the final week. After the instructor’s review and final approvals of revisions as needed, participant posts the final curriculum project on the Discussion Board.
2. Each participant posts comments on two of the colleagues’ posted curriculum documents. Comments are based on the course concepts, readings, and instructor comments of this course, to demonstrate understanding

Required text:

Optional:

Copyright
The course website may contain copyrighted materials that are used in compliance with U.S. Copyright Law. Under that law, materials may not be saved to your computer, revised, copied, or distributed without permission. They are to be used in support of instructional activity as part of this course only and shall be limited to the duration of the course, unless otherwise specified by the instructor or owner of the material. You may only download or print materials at the direction of your instructor, who knows which materials are copyrighted and which are not.

Academic Honesty Policy:

Framingham State University Academic Honesty Policy:
“Integrity is essential to academic life. Consequently, students who enroll at Framingham State College agree to maintain high standards of academic honesty and scholarly practice. They shall be responsible for familiarizing themselves with the published policies and procedures regarding academic honesty. Academic honesty requires but is not limited to the following practices: appropriately citing all published and unpublished sources, whether quoted, paraphrased, or otherwise expressed, in all of the student’s oral and written, technical and artistic work; and observing the policies regarding the use of technical facilities.”

FSU Graduate Catalog, Student Conduct section, page 7
Expected completions for course credit:

1. **Course Readings**: Course readings include posted readings. Reference to these course readings will be expected in course participant Discussion Board postings.

2. **Discussion Board comments** Post the appropriate comments to stated Discussion Board questions each week, so that you don’t fall behind in this intensive course. In addition, post comments to our other course participant colleagues on their postings for good exchange of ideas to promote new learning in sharing thoughts.

3. **Course final project** is a compilation of all the information in course postings and writings and Discussion Board posting class discussions.

**Grading Criteria:**

Your final grade for the course will be based on these percentages:

40 points Participation in class discussions via our Discussion Board including required postings and also responses to other course participants’ postings

60 points Final Project incorporating all aspects of the learning modules on the topics of the writing process, Common Core Writing Standards, peer editing, focus lessons, teacher conferences, and guiding and assessing student writing using rubrics to guide the work

*What the letter grades mean:*

A: All work is excellent, is presented on the due date, and is of high quality (to include being well organized and proofread). Written work includes (and skillfully integrates information gained from the class readings, and your interactions with instructor and your fellow students during online discussion sessions. Far exceeds minimum expectations. A–: All work exceeds minimum expectations, is complete, is presented on time and is of high quality.

B+: Work meets expectations, is of high quality, is complete, and is presented on time.

B: Work meets expectations, is complete, and is presented either on time or late with the instructor’s approval.

B–: Work meets minimum expectations.

*Lower than B–*: Work does not meet expectations.

*Please see course expectations in the rubric below*

Curriculum Course Rubric to Guide and Assess Course Participant work
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Fine</th>
<th>Needs Work</th>
<th>Let’s talk!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discussion Board Posts</strong></td>
<td>Posts weekly assignments</td>
<td>Good posts of assigned work and comments</td>
<td>Sufficient posts, not on time always</td>
<td>Weak and late posts or missing posts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weekly posts</strong></td>
<td>Strong posts</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Discussion</strong></td>
<td>Makes insightful comments and participates well</td>
<td>Makes good comments; participates well</td>
<td>Appropriate comments; needs more participation</td>
<td>Not current with postings; postings need development of ideas, does not “Reply”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>and ideas with instructor and peers are shared</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrates understanding of course concepts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final project</td>
<td>Exemplary final project demonstrating course concepts and is original</td>
<td>Shows good understanding of course concepts; somewhat original</td>
<td>Reflects lack of understanding of some course concepts</td>
<td>Shows misunderstanding of course concepts of year-long work, units</td>
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Instructor Profile below
Dr. Katherine Scheidler taught English for over twenty-five years in Providence, RI, and served as English Department Chair. Her doctoral degree is from the School of Education, Boston University. She has a graduate degree from the Harvard University Graduate School of Education. She holds a Master of Arts in Teaching English degree from Brown University. Her undergraduate degree is from The American University, School of International Service, Washington, DC majoring in English and International Relations.

Dr. Scheidler served as clinical professor, Brown University Education Department, for eight years, teaching Methods of Teaching English and supervising all Brown seniors and graduate program Master of Arts in Teaching English student teachers, concurrent with her teaching in an urban school.

Dr. Scheidler has also served for fifteen years as both Massachusetts Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Professional Development in Hopkinton and Canton, and also as central office Curriculum Director in districts of varied demographics and needs including K – 12 English Language Arts Curriculum in Marblehead, and Curriculum Director, Hamilton-Wenham Regional District. She was most recently K – 12 ELA Director with the Everett Public Schools, adjacent to Boston.

Katherine has taught courses in curriculum, assessment and instruction as a National Faculty member in the Elementary Masters in Literacy program, Lesley University, Cambridge, and The Education Collaborative, Dedham. She is Instructor, Framingham State University, teaching understanding of Common Core State Standards and integration into curriculum and instruction.

web site: www.kayscheidler.com