Course Description

The course will focus on two essential questions:

1. What type of curriculum design process will engage students in inquiry and make the understanding of essential ideas more likely?
2. How do school leaders bring about enduring curriculum improvement?

Class activities and readings will provide school leaders with an understanding of the relationship among curriculum design, assessment, and instruction. We will explore these relationships from a classroom, school, district, state, and national perspective. In addition, we will consider how these relationships have evolved based on societal trends, knowledge of human development, educational reform movements and theories of learning. Throughout the course, school leaders will be challenged to examine the curriculum design process from a change theory and leadership orientation.

Course Learning Experiences

Class activities and readings will explore the following topics to develop an understanding of the two essential questions which anchor the course:

1. How will a backward design planning process help avoid common inadequacies in curriculum and assessment planning?
2. How do common curriculum, assessment, and instruction practices interfere with the cultivation of student understanding?
3. How will a comprehensive assessment system that includes a continuum of methods for appropriately assessing the degree of student understanding be successfully adopted, implemented, and institutionalized?
4. What role should predictable student misunderstandings play in the design of curriculum, assessment and instruction?
5. How do the role of students, teachers, and assessment compare in activity based teaching, content based teaching and teaching for understanding?
6. How do teachers and school leaders develop an assessment climate which builds student confidence and inspires learning?
7. How do school leaders assess if the written, taught, tested, and learned curriculum
are similar?

8. What are the theoretical and practical implications of the change process with regard to curriculum design.

9. How does the culture of a school influence curriculum, instruction and assessment?

10. How does the curriculum reflect current and past cultural, political, and societal trends?

11. What are the future cultural, political, and social trends that are likely to impact the curriculum?

12. How does the present standards based reform movement compare with past reform movements?

13. What can school leaders do to ensure that state and national policies to reform education are informed by the realities of the school and classroom to enhance the probability of successful change implementation.

14. How do school leaders communicate effectively with parents and the community about curriculum improvements?

**Course Evaluation**

See enclosed rubrics.

1. Attendance 40%
2. Culminating projects 40%
3. Individual and group class work 20%

In traditional terms, quality work will earn a grade of B or better. If you do not meet the quality standards of this course, you may revise your work until the standards are met. While I do not encourage grades of incomplete, I realize that other personal circumstances sometimes interfere with graduate study. Anyone seeking to take an incomplete should notify me before our last class.

**ACADEMIC SUPPORT**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible.

At any point in the semester, if you encounter difficulty with the course or feel you could be performing at a higher level, please consult with me. Students experience difficulty in courses for a variety of reasons. For problems with writing skills or time management, make an appointment to see a student tutor available through the University.

**Culminating Projects**
**First Culminating Project: Individual Unit Plan** - What type of curriculum design process will engage students in inquiry and make the understanding of essential ideas more likely?

Design a unit you teach or plan to teach or plan a professional development workshop or course for adult learners using a backward design model.

- First draft due on June 9
- Second draft on June 24
- Final unit plan will be submitted on June 25. Do not enclose in a plastic or cardboard cover.
- SAS envelope

**Second Culminating Project: Group Project (3 to 5 students per group)** - How do school leaders bring about enduring curriculum improvement?

**Setting**
Assume you are in your first year as the principal of a school in a nearby district. After several months in your new school (you have completed your entry plan) you realize there is a need for a common framework for designing curriculum. During your first few months on the job you have discovered that in most learning areas the textbook is the curriculum or that teacher interest or expertise about preferred units seems to guide what students experience. As a result students in grade 2 (or grade 7 mathematics or US History) do not have a common experience. The curriculum is more or less dependent on what teacher a student has for grade 2 (or grade 7 mathematics or US History).

The curriculum design you desire to implement is best described as:

A. Clearly defined essential learnings for every unit in every learning area

B. Close monitoring of each student’s learning. Frequent information provided to each teacher on how well his or her students are achieving the essential learnings in comparison to similar students in other classes and in comparison to agreed upon proficiency standards.

C. A systematic plan to give students extra time and support when they do not understand the essential learnings or have mastered the essential learnings.

D. Teachers working in collaborative teams that focus on improving student learning and teaching skills.

E. A genuine commitment to continuous improvement

**Your Analysis**
Review pages 13-20 in the Transitions text and decide on how you will create a corresponding list of actions using the same scale, possible action to take, and the similar categories, 1-4. In other words you are re-writing pages 13-20 based on the above circumstances.

- First draft due on June 24
- Final draft due on July 3

**Class Schedule and Topics**
(reading assignments may vary depending on pace of class and student interest in related topics)

**Tuesday, May 12, 2009** 4:00 - 8:15 p.m.
- Introductory activities
- Backwards design model
- Curriculum, assessment and instruction relationship
- Summary of school leadership
- Reading assignment: Introduction, Chapters 1 and 11 in W&M

**Tuesday, May 19, 2009** 4:00 - 8:15 p.m.
- Role of assessment
- Relationship of IQ and EQ to six facets of understanding
- Bloom’s taxonomy and W & M Theory of Understanding and implications for unit design
- Introduction to Change Theory (status quo)
- Reading assignment: Chapters 2 and 4 in W&M and handout

**Tuesday, May 26, 2009** 4:00 - 8:15 p.m.
- Compare and contrast goals, understanding, essential questions, knowledge and skills
- Fullan’s lessons of change
- Reading assignment: Chapters 3 and 5 in W&M and Chapters 1 and 2 in Bridges

**Tuesday, June 2, 2009** 4:00 - 8:15 p.m.
- Designing units
- Designing assessments that focus on essential learnings
- Designing meaningful learning experiences
- Three phases of change
- Transition vs. change
- Reading assignment: Chapters 7 in W&M and Chapters 3-7 in Bridges.

**Tuesday, June 9, 2009** 4:00 - 8:15 p.m.
- Designing units to ensure student understanding
- Skills of school leaders to bring about school improvement
- Chapter 9 in W&M

**Tuesday, June 16, 2009** 4:00 – 8:15 p.m.
- Personal nature of change
- Teaching for understanding
- Change process and implication for school leaders
- Reading assignment: Handout

**Wednesday, June 24, 2009** 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
- Change theory: practice vs. structure and change vs. improvement
- Adaptive vs. technical changes and implications for school leaders
- Changing school culture
- Maine Learning Results, CAS, and NCLB and relationship to school culture and curriculum design
- Standards Based Reform Movement and past reform movements

**Thursday, June 25, 2009** 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
- Culminating Projects