Curriculum Design

Overview & Purpose: In many of your Education courses, you are asked to write unit plans. That’s important work, but it is also essential that you learn to plan from an even broader perspective—that you design for relationships across the units in your courses. Thus, your task for this project is to plan one semester of a specific high school or middle school English language arts (ELA) course.

Audience: Your “final” draft—which I hope you will keep revising as you continue your learning about teaching—is intended for multiple audiences. You are writing for:

- **Yourself.** Your plans should help you to learn the process of designing—for the big picture of a course as a whole, for extended units, and for the daily details of contextualized lessons. Ideally, you’ll be able to implement these plans (or sections/aspects of them) in your teaching.
- **Me.** You will need to demonstrate to me (as your supervisor, coach, and evaluator) your implicit and explicit understanding of the principles and practices we study in EDUC 354.
- **Each other.** We’ll share in-process and final drafts to learn from and with each other.
- **Your job search audience.** Administrators and teachers on interviewing committees may want to see or hear about examples of your work.
- **Other teachers in the field.** Finally, you may eventually decide to share your lessons by publishing them through venues such as [www.readwritethink.org](http://www.readwritethink.org).

Requirements & Procedures: Plan one semester of a specific high school or middle school ELA course. Present an overview of the course as a whole, as well as more detailed plans for one unit that fits within the semester you design. Use what you learn from your study group project and from the other course readings and activities to inform your planning. The completed project should include the following:

- A brief overview describing the semester as a whole (about 200 words). What ties your lessons and units together as a cohesive whole? What will students do, and what will they learn?
- A description of the course context. What is the name of the course, and what is the school like where it is taught? How does this course relate to other courses in the school’s curriculum? Is the course required, or an elective? What is the length and frequency of the class periods?
- A profile of the students in your imagined class. Who are the students, and what are their abilities and their needs? Include at least one ELL student, and be sure to explain this student’s stage of language learning.
- A list or description of the main goals of the course. What NCTE/IRA standards are addressed in your semester plans? Which of the Common Core State Standards apply to the semester you have planned?
- A list of the texts for your course (e.g., your literature anthology, any novels, etc.).
- The following language for your class syllabus. (Don’t worry about other elements that typically are included in a syllabus, such as class rules.)
  - A brief description of each of the major projects and assignments, written in the language you will use to briefly describe these activities to your students.
  - A calendar or table of your semester plans. Show the due dates for assigned readings, for multi-draft writings, and (as you see fit) for activities.
- A theoretical rationale for the course (approximately 350 words) in which you draw on principles from course readings and activities to explicitly discuss the theoretical and practical justification for your plans for curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Why are your course and unit designed as they are? Use an ELA teacher’s discourse (similar to that used in course readings) to present your argument.
- An APA list of references—those you have cited, as well as those that inform your design.
Detailed plans for one original unit (at least three weeks in length) from your course, including:

- A list of the NCTE and Common Core standards addressed in this particular unit.
- A planning calendar that outlines the main content and methods for your unit. What teaching-learning activities will be the focus of each class period? What are the main texts that will be used during each class period?
- Three lesson plans from the unit (either sequential or representative), each one formatted in careful accordance with ReadWriteThink.org Author Guidelines (http://readwritethink.ncte.org/authors/author_guidelines.pdf). One of the lessons may be a reworking of an EDUC 354 lesson plan that you wrote previously. As a set (not within each individual lesson), these three lesson plans should demonstrate your applied knowledge of how to coordinate the following teaching-learning activities:
  - literature study and reading strategies,
  - writing,
  - grammar in context, and
  - differentiation for the instructional needs of English Language Learners.
- Copies of any reproducibles (for teachers and/or students) that accompany the three lesson plans. (e.g., handouts, overheads, SMART board screens, etc.).
- A description of the assessment(s) you would use to determine the extent to which students met the main goals of the unit as a whole. Be specific (e.g., not just “a test” or “a paper,” but “a test that requires students to...” or “a paper in which students demonstrate...”).

In-Process Drafts: Throughout our EDUC 354 semester, you will share in-process drafts of the smaller sub-components of this project. Meeting these workshop due dates is important for you and for your classmates who will be learning with you. Missing draft deadlines or coming unprepared for these workshops will result in a full-grade reduction from your final score on the project.

Final draft: A hard copy is due at the beginning of our exam period on Monday, December 13. Also, post your curriculum design to our electronic space OR upload your project to your website and list only the URL for the link in our electronic space. Please indicate to me on your hard copy whether or not I may use your project as a good example for future classes.

Grading: Your Curriculum Design counts for 20% of your final grade. The components of your project will be considered together for a single, holistic score. A quality project will demonstrate your applied knowledge of our semester of study, including methods, theories, research, and resources for teaching literature, reading, composition, and grammar. Your design for the semester, unit, and individual lessons will showcase sound, innovative planning for instruction that is appropriate for the students in your teaching-learning context. Additionally, your theoretical rationale will use an ELA teacher’s discourse to discuss the theoretical and practical justification for the unit plan. The project as a whole—as well as individual components—will be organized effectively, written in a polished style, and presented in a format that clearly expresses your intent for the semester to your multiple audiences. Quality project work will demonstrate a developed, accurate understanding of the principles addressed in class, in the assigned readings, and in my responses to your work.

Afterward: At the exam period, you will write a summative reflection on your work in EDUC 354 by responding to the course focus questions while also discussing how your Curriculum Design demonstrates what you have learned this semester from our course readings, activities, and discussion.