

# LEAD 504 Course Portfolio

# 3

# **EXEMPLARY**

Curriculum Map  
Grade 6 Physical Education  
September 8<sup>th</sup> – September 12<sup>th</sup>

<b>Date</b>	<b>Essential Questions</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Skills</b>	<b>Assessments</b>	<b>Activities/ Strategies</b>	<b>Standards</b>
Week 1 Sep 8 <sup>th</sup> -Sep 12 <sup>th</sup>	Why is a dynamic warm-up better than a traditional warm-up with static stretching?	Dynamic Warm-Up -What is it -What are the 8 locomotor movements	Jog, Scoops, Skipping, Leg Cradle, Knee Hugger, Active Quad, High Knees, Butt Kicks, Shuffle Jack, Carioca, Rockette Kicks	None	Group Instruction- Learning the warm-up	5-8 P.E 1,2,5, 6
Week 2 Sep 14 <sup>th</sup> -Sep 18 <sup>th</sup>	What are the benefits of physical activity?  What is life long fitness and why is it important?	Physical Fitness -Benefits of -Appropriate length of	Physical Fitness -Jogging - Form Running  -Push Ups - Form  -Sit Ups - Form	None	Form Running Drills Relay Races Wacky Relay	5-8 P.E 1,2,3
2 Week 3 Sep 21 <sup>st</sup> - Sep 25 <sup>th</sup>	What is good teamwork?  What does it mean to be a good leader?  What does good effort “look” like?	Physical Fitness- Same as above  Frisbee- throwing and catching	PF-Same as above  Frisbee- Throwing and Catching – Forehand Pass -Short passes-Focus on accuracy	Connecticut Physical Fitness Test Pre Test-Mile Run	Fitness Stations- -Med Balls -Physio-Balls -Dyna Bands -Ladders -Jump Ropes -Fun Push Ups -Core strength chart activities  Connecticut State Physical Fitness Test  Frisbee- Catch	5-8 P.E 1,2,5,6,7

<b>Date</b>	<b>Essential Questions</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Skills</b>	<b>Assessments</b>	<b>Activities/ Strategies</b>	<b>Standards</b>
Week 4 Sep 28 <sup>th</sup> - Oct 2 <sup>nd</sup>	What is muscular strength and what activities will help improve muscular strength?  What is muscular endurance and what activities will help improve muscular endurance?	Physical Fitness	Push Ups, Curl Ups	Connecticut Physical Fitness Test Pre Test Push ups and curl ups	Connecticut State Physical Fitness Test Push Ups and Curl Ups	5-8 P.E 1,5,6
Week 5 Oct 5 <sup>th</sup> - Oct 9 <sup>th</sup>	What are some examples of good teamwork in a game of Frisbee?  What are some good examples of leadership in a game of Frisbee?	Connecticut Physical Fitness Test – Supplemental Exam  Frisbee Throwing and catching/ Offense vs. Defense	Running  “marking up”  Passing  Movement off the frisbee	Connecticut Physical Fitness Test Pacer Test	Pacer Test  Frisbee Golf With Targets  Frisbee Keep Away	5-8 P.E 1,5,6,7
Week 6 Oct 13 <sup>th</sup> - Oct 1 6 <sup>th</sup>	Why is pacing important?  Why is it important to put in good effort during testing?	Connecticut Physical Fitness Test  Frisbee -Rules of Ultimate Frisbee	Jogging  Defensive/Offensive Strategy	Connecticut Physical Fitness Test Mile Run	Mile Run  Ultimate Frisbee	5-8 P.E 1-7
<b>Date</b>	<b>Essential Questions</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Skills</b>	<b>Assessments</b>	<b>Activities/ Strategies</b>	<b>Standards</b>
Week 7 Oct. 19 <sup>th</sup> -23 <sup>rd</sup>	Why is it important to put in good effort during testing?	Connecticut Physical Fitness Test	Push Ups Curl Ups Hamstring Flexibility	Connecticut Physical Fitness Test Push Ups Curl Ups Sit and Reach	Push Ups Curl Ups Sit and Reach	5-8 P.E 1,5,6,7

**Curriculum Map**  
**Grade 7 Physical Education**  
**September 8<sup>th</sup> – September 12<sup>th</sup>**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Essential Questions</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Skills</b>	<b>Assessments</b>	<b>Activities/ Strategies</b>	<b>Standards</b>
Week 1 Sep 8 <sup>th</sup> -Sep 12 <sup>th</sup>	Why is a dynamic warm-up better than a traditional warm-up with static stretching?  What are the benefits of physical activity?  What is life long fitness and why is it important?	Dynamic Warm-Up  Physical Fitness -Benefits of -Appropriate length of -What is and is not considered physical activity	Dynamic Warm-Up  Physical Fitness -Jogging - Form Running  -Push Ups - Form  -Sit Ups - Form	None	Review of Dynamic Warm-Up  Fitness Stations -Med Balls -Physio-Balls -Dyna Bands -Ladders -Jump Ropes -Fun Push Ups -Core strength chart activities	5-8 P.E 1,2,5, 6
Week 2 Sep 14 <sup>th</sup> -Sep 18 <sup>th</sup>	What is good teamwork?  What does it mean to be a good leader?  What does good effort “look” like?	Physical Fitness- Same as above  Frisbee	PF-Same as above  Frisbee- Throwing and Catching – Forehand Pass -Short passes-Focus on accuracy		Fitness Stations- Same as above  Frisbee- Frisbee Golf w/targets	5-8 P.E 1,2,5, 6
Week 3 Sep 21 <sup>st</sup> - Sep 25 <sup>th</sup>	What is muscular strength and what activities will help improve muscular strength?  What are some examples of good teamwork in a game of Frisbee?	Physical Fitness  Frisbee Offense Defense	Jogging  Frisbee – Rules of Ultimate Frisbee	Connecticut Physical Fitness Test Pre-test Mile	Fitness Stations  Frisbee- Keep Away	5-8 P.E 1,2,5,6,7

<b>Date</b>	<b>Essential Questions</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Skills</b>	<b>Assessments</b>	<b>Activities/ Strategies</b>	<b>Standards</b>
Week 4 Sep 28 <sup>th</sup> - Oct 2 <sup>nd</sup>	What is muscular endurance and what activities will help improve muscular endurance?  What are some good examples of leadership in a game of Frisbee?	Introduction to the Fitness Room  1 <sup>st</sup> Muscle and Bone of the Week	Fitness Room Safety expectations and procedures  Muscle of week- Quadricep Bone of week-Femur	Pre Test Push ups and curl ups	Classroom setting in fitness room-reviewing safety expectations and orientation	5-8 P.E 1,5,6
Week 5 Oct 5 <sup>th</sup> - Oct 9 <sup>th</sup>	Why is pacing important?  Why is it important to put in good effort during testing?	Connecticut Physical Fitness Test – Supplemental Exam  Frisbee  2 <sup>nd</sup> Bone and Muscle of the week	Jogging  Defensive/Offensive Strategy  Muscle of week Hamstring Bone-Tibia	Pacer Test	Pacer Test  Ultimate Frisbee	5-8 P.E 1,5,6,7
Week 6 Oct 13 <sup>th</sup> - Oct 16 <sup>th</sup>	Why is it important to put in good effort during testing?	Connecticut Physical Fitness Test	Push Ups Curl Ups	Connecticut Physical Fitness Test Push Ups Curl Ups	Push Ups Curl Ups	5-8 P.E 1,5,6,7
Week 7 Oct. 19 <sup>th</sup> -23 <sup>rd</sup>	Why is it important to put in good effort during testing?	Connecticut Physical Fitness Test	Mile Run Sit and Reach	Connecticut Physical Fitness Test Mile Run Sit and Reach	Mile Run Sit and Reach Ultimate Frisbee	5-8 P.E 1,5,6,7

**Curriculum Map**  
**Grade 8 Physical Education**  
**September 8<sup>th</sup> – September 12<sup>th</sup>**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Essential Questions</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Skills</b>	<b>Assessments</b>	<b>Activities/ Strategies</b>	<b>Standards</b>
Week 1 Sep 8 <sup>th</sup> -Sep 12 <sup>th</sup>	Why is a dynamic warm-up better than a traditional warm-up with static stretching?  What are the benefits of physical activity?  What is life long fitness and why is it important?	Dynamic Warm-Up  Physical Fitness -Benefits of -Appropriate length of -What is and is not considered physical activity	Dynamic Warm-Up  Physical Fitness -Jogging - Form Running  -Push Ups - Form  -Sit Ups - Form	None	Review of Dynamic Warm-Up  Fitness Stations -Med Balls -Physio-Balls -Dyna Bands -Ladders -Jump Ropes -Fun Push Ups -Core strength chart activities	5-8 P.E 1,2,5,6
Week 2 Sep 14 <sup>th</sup> -Sep 18 <sup>th</sup>	What is good teamwork?  What does it mean to be a good leader?  What does good effort “look” like?	Physical Fitness- Same as above  Frisbee	PF-Same as above  Frisbee- Throwing and Catching – Forehand Pass -Short passes-Focus on accuracy	None	Choice of the following  Fitness Stations- Same as above  Frisbee- Frisbee Golf w/targets	5-8 P.E 1,2,5,6
Week 3 Sep 21 <sup>st</sup> - Sep 25 <sup>th</sup>	What is muscular strength and what activities will help improve muscular strength?  What are some examples of good teamwork in a game of Frisbee?	Physical Fitness  Frisbee Offense Defense	Jogging  Frisbee – Rules of Ultimate Frisbee	Connecticut Physical Fitness Test Pre-test Mile	Fitness Stations  Frisbee- Keep Away	5-8 P.E 1,2,5,6,7

<b>Date</b>	<b>Essential Questions</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Skills</b>	<b>Assessments</b>	<b>Activities/ Strategies</b>	<b>Standards</b>
Week 4 Sep 28 <sup>th</sup> - Oct 2 <sup>nd</sup>	What is muscular endurance and what activities will help improve muscular endurance?  What are some good examples of leadership in a game of Frisbee?	Introduction to the Fitness Room  1 <sup>st</sup> Muscle and Bone of the Week	Fitness Room Safety expectations and procedures  Muscle of week- Quadricep Bone of week-Femur	Connecticut Physical Fitness Test Pre Test Push ups and curl ups	Classroom setting in fitness room-reviewing safety expectations and orientation	5-8 P.E 1,5,6
Week 5 Oct 5 <sup>th</sup> - Oct 9 <sup>th</sup>	Why is pacing important?  Why is it important to put in good effort during testing?	Connecticut Physical Fitness Test – Supplemental Exam  Frisbee  2 <sup>nd</sup> Bone and Muscle of the week	Jogging  Defensive/Offensive Strategy  Muscle of week Hamstring Bone-Tibia	Connecticut Physical Fitness Test Pacer Test	Pacer Test  Ultimate Frisbee  Fitness Room	5-8 P.E 1,5,6,7
Week 6 Oct 13 <sup>th</sup> - Oct 16 <sup>th</sup>	Why is it important to put in good effort during testing?	Connecticut Physical Fitness Test	Push Ups Curl Ups	Connecticut Physical Fitness Test Push Ups Curl Ups	Push Ups Curl Ups	5-8 P.E 1,5,6,7
Week 7 Oct. 19 <sup>th</sup> -23 <sup>rd</sup>	Why is it important to put in good effort during testing?	Connecticut Physical Fitness Test	Mile Run Sit and Reach	Connecticut Physical Fitness Test Mile Run Sit and Reach	Mile Run Sit and Reach Ultimate Frisbee or Fitness Room	5-8 P.E 1,5,6,7

## Evaluation of Alignment Documents

LEAD 504  
Leading Learning I: Planning, Instruction, and Assessment  
Andrew Snyder, EdD

  
November 16, 2009

If you were to log onto the Killingly Public Schools (KPS) website, you would have instant access to the entire districts approved curriculum documents. These documents are what the KPS Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum considers to be alignment documents. They are all easily accessible by grade and subject. Although many subject areas were updated to a new format this past summer, and some are still in progress, each

curriculum is written in a specific manner approved by the Assistant Superintendant and Board of Education. Unfortunately, the uniformity of documents ends with the format. There are varying degrees of information, use of standards, and overall complexity between the documents.

When I opened the district Physical Education curriculum to begin this project, the first item of concern was that there did not seem to be anything online for Physical Education in grades K-4. My initial reaction was that it must have been left out inadvertently. The website is new this year and they are slowly adding information to the site. One phone call to the secretary at central office cleared up the situation quickly; there is no K-4 written PE curriculum. Strange as it may seem, apparently five years ago when the entire district was working on developing curricula, the elementary school specials teachers were not required to go through the process. I am not sure why this is the case, but it certainly makes it difficult to truly understand what to expect from fifth graders when they enter our building. It also explains why there are such large differences in the knowledge base between the students from the two elementary schools that feed into our building.

As a result of not having a K-4 PE curriculum, I am forced to focus only on the curricula for grades 5-8 and 9-12. With just a quick glance you can easily see that the two documents have very little in common. The high school curriculum is broken down first by grade level and then by units of study. Each sport is listed along with the standard and benchmarks related to the unit. The curriculum seems as though it would be very useful in determining what is taught at each grade level. Unfortunately, the curriculum is long and includes several more sports than could possibly be covered in a year. Consequently, that which seems to be useful may just turn out to be completely overwhelming. Another issue is that the standards they are using are clearly ones that they have made up themselves. Although they are clear and easy to understand, they are not in any way related to the state or national PE standards. Therefore, they are not at all in line with the middle school curriculum which is based solely on the state and national PE standards.

The middle school curriculum is very poorly written. I am only willing to completely “trash” it, because I actually helped write it. It is not separated by grade level or sport. The content standards, as well as the benchmarks, are simply copies of the national standards. The curriculum in no way depicts what is actually taught in the classroom. As stated before, there is no elementary curriculum, so it cannot possibly be in line with that, and we never even bothered to look at the high school curriculum. Honestly, the entire document should just be torn up and forgotten about.

The only similarity between the two documents is that neither even so much as refers to assessment in anyway. As a result of the many differences and inconsistencies between these two documents, the idea of categorical concurrence is null and void. There is no categorical concurrence. Considering there is no mention of assessments in either document; the range of knowledge, balance of representation, and depth of knowledge are all impossible to measure.

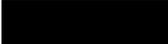
The real question here is; where did it all go wrong? It is easy to answer that question. None of the people involved in writing the curricula were given any professional development in this area. Although it may sound cynical, I truly believe that the PE curricula in our district were accepted as a formality. The district needed to be able to say that a curriculum for PE existed, but no one really cared how good it was or how it was being carried out each day in the classroom. Five years later, here we are, starting completely from scratch, and still having nothing in the lower grades to build upon.

As a teacher I can take what I have learned in this class and apply to the work I am currently doing on the curriculum for my department. As an administrator, I can learn from the mistakes of others. No matter what the content area is, the curriculum, and how that curriculum is applied, is important. Educating the staff on how to properly write and implement is a curriculum is important. Even if you personally do not understand each content area, finding someone with expertise in each area to evaluate curricula, is important. Treating everyone on the staff as an equal and making them feel needed, is important.

Moving forward; my goal is to create a curriculum that is useful and appropriate. I will take the time to schedule a meeting with both the elementary teachers and the high school teachers. I do believe that as a district we should have common goals for our students. I will educate my middle school team on the importance of using the standards to drive what we teach and hopefully what we assess. At the moment our haphazard approach to planning does not at all support the effort that we put into our teaching each day. Individually, our lesson plans are great. Our units make a logical progression. The problem is that our efforts stop there. We do not hold our students to high physical expectations, nor do we hold ourselves to high professional expectations. My challenge will be to gain the support of my staff, and to entice them to put their effort into creating a curriculum that is truly designed to promote some level of success for all of our students.

Classroom Assessment Confidence Questionnaire  
Paper # 2

LEAD 504  
Leading Learning I: Planning, Instruction, and Assessment  
Andrew Snyder, EdD

  
October 10 , 2009

What must it be like to be the principal of a school that has had difficulty in making AYP, has forty-five percent of the population receiving free or reduced lunch, and who's students' are the children of a population of adults, only twenty-five percent of which have high school diplomas? If you are wondering, ask the principal of Killingly Intermediate School. The factors that are working against the success of our school are great, and yet our principal prides herself on instruction first and management second. She is an amazing woman, and despite her flaws in the managerial aspect of being the leader of the building, she excels at being the educational leader of over one hundred faculty members and nearly nine hundred students.

The principal of my school has a Bachelor's Degree in Mathematics, a Master's in Administration, and a 6<sup>th</sup> year degree in curriculum. Her knowledge of curriculum and standards, coupled with a 35 year long career, makes her more than competent and rather confident in her ability to guide and positively influence instruction. She is further supported by a staff with several veteran teachers, and a two district coordinators in the areas of math and English/Language Arts. Her two assistant principals have not had nearly the experience that she has had, both as far as tenure, and time actually teaching prior to becoming an administrator.

The levels of competency vary greatly among the staff and administration in my building. Having no insight into what the education levels are of most of the staff, nor the knowledge of what types of professional development they have all received, my opinions are just that, opinions based on observations and random conversations.

Our school has been working toward being a successful Professional Learning Community for about five years now. Many of us have been to conferences and have had the opportunity to be apart of professional development opportunities to ensure our transition to becoming a PLC. One of the major components of being a PLC is using common assessments. This of course is only required of the core classroom teachers. Considering this, it is my thinking that most of the teachers in my building are quite familiar with and comfortable with many types of assessment. Each teacher in my building I also a member of a data team. The data teams are supposed to analyze the outcomes (the data) from the common assessments to drive their instruction. I too am on a data team, the fifth grade math data team, which typically spends the meeting time we have talking about tests that they have given in their classes, tests that I have never even seen before and have nothing to do with what I am teaching in my classes.

This leads me to believe that my lack of understanding, competency, and confidence is probably shared by many if not all of the teachers of "special" classes. Being that the classroom teachers are so entrenched in this, it would make sense that they are much more comfortable with the concepts than I am. The specials teachers in my building, along with many of the newer teachers in my building can definitely benefit from professional development in the areas of curriculum, standards, and assessment. Too many times, for me at least, people get talking about something, and do not stop to understand where others are coming from experientially. Professional development would help create common ground for everyone in the school, regardless of years of service, position, or subject area.

Classroom Assessment Confidence Questionnaire  
Paper # 1

LEAD 504  
Leading Learning I: Planning, Instruction, and Assessment  
Andrew Snyder, EdD

October 10 , 2009

Performance assessments, common assessments, data driven instruction, and standards are terms that all teachers in this era of education should at least be familiar with. The issue lies in the difference between being familiar with these terms, and having the ability to use this knowledge to drive what is actually occurring every day in the classroom.

As a PE teacher I use very little authentic assessment. Much of what I use to determine my students' grades is subjective. My other roll, as the fifth grade health teacher, only requires that I give my students (who I only see once a week) a grade of either Pass or Fail. With very little pressure on me to assess my students regularly, and with no implications on the students if they were to fail my classes, assessment is not high on my list of priorities. I have actually been instructed by my principal not to grade my PE students on skills. The lack of importance placed on PE and health makes it very difficult to motivate the students and me too for that matter. This isn't an excuse. I know that my colleagues and I are capable of much more, but with no professional development in this area, where do we begin? This class is my opportunity to make a change. If I can gain an understanding for the material covered here it will not only be useful to me as a "someday" administrator, but more importantly in the roll that I currently play.

Considering my lack of use of assessments on a daily basis, I am relatively uncomfortable, that is to say, that I lack confidence completely when it comes to this topic. My experience with curriculum, standards, and assessment is very little. The learning curve for me in this graduate course is huge. I completely understand the need for standards in the classroom as well as competency standards for administrators when it comes to standards and assessment. I understand the use of assessment to motivate students and to guide teaching and learning. I also understand the need for the principal to be an educational leader, and someone who has a strong background in this area. I know that if required to, I could create assessments for my students. I could test them and analyze the data to learn and understand about my students' needs. I can differentiate instruction to ensure that all of my students have an opportunity to learn. My lack of confidence does not stem from a lack of understanding regarding assessment, but rather in my ability to correctly apply this knowledge to my teaching practice and the teaching practices of my colleagues.

My strengths lie in my communication and interpersonal skills. I have the ability to connect with many types of students and their families. I am not intimidated by the idea of conversing about what needs to be happening at school, and how we can make a child's experience a successful one. I am a good manager. I am a good communicator. I am lacking in the most important area, instructional leadership. It scares me to admit this, but in doing so, I know what I need to work on. Instructional leaders are not just in the classrooms, but also in the main office. This is something that I admittedly did not truly understand before embarking on this quest to become an administrator. I now understand what the role of principal entails, and I know that with hard work I can some day fulfill that roll successfully.

Professional development is of utmost importance to me. I have had little to no professional development on curriculum, standards, or assessment, besides other than what we have covered in this course. This needs to change. I do not want to be the PE teacher that just rolls out the ball and sits back while the kids play. If I want to gain the respect of my colleagues I need to prove that every discipline has a purpose in the education of children.

I also would like to further my knowledge of what is being taught in the academic classrooms. If I am ever going to lead a school, I need a better understanding of life outside of the gym. Although I believe I do a pretty good job of staying connected with the other teachers in my building, more of an effort needs to be made on all of our parts to work together.

Killingly Intermediate School is currently making up a schedule for the teachers to start doing "walk-throughs" of classrooms. In other words, teachers are going to be given the opportunity to walk into other classrooms and using the rigor relevance framework, assess what type of teaching is going on and therefore what type of learning the students are engaged in. Currently the schedule does not include the "specials" teachers. My intent is not only to get myself on this list, but use the idea to create a basis for professional development for all of the teachers, including the "specials".

If I am being honest, reading the competency standards and confidence questionnaire has made some things very clear to me. I am not qualified to be "THE" educational leader in any building right now. I have a great deal of learning to do, but most importantly, I am hungry for that knowledge and understanding. At first my lack of understanding truly scared me, but now it has fueled my desire to learn, understand, and hopefully become a successful educational leader.

## Reflection on Instructional Leadership

LEAD 504

Leading Learning I: Planning, Instruction, and Assessment  
Andrew Snyder, EdD

  
November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2009

*“Most important, leaders can conceive and articulate goals that lift people out of their petty preoccupations and unite them in pursuit of objectives worthy of their best efforts.”*

John Gardner

This quote cuts right to the heart of what is required of the leadership in many of our public schools in society today. It is true that leaders need to be strong, have a clear vision, have the ability to manage, and have a strong grasp on educational standards and curriculum, but they cannot do this alone. Even the strongest of leaders will fall short of their goals, if the people she leads are not in support of the overall planned goals and objectives. No matter what the intentions of a plan are, if people are caught up with their own priorities or rather preoccupations, they cannot and will not truly put forth their best effort.

A leader in education today is expected to wear many hats, one of which is that of “instructional leader.” Being the instructional leader is not only important, but expected. A principal’s role is no longer that of disciplinarian and manager. Principals are looked up to by their faculty, the students, and the parents in the community. They are expected to know about and understand exactly what is going on each classroom. They are expected to have power and influence over the people working in their building, and they are expected to do this all in addition to being a role model within the building and

the community. Of course, the idea that a principal can know everything and be an expert in every area is ludicrous, which is why it so important for a leader to be surrounded by people who have specific expertise and who can be trusted.

A good instructional leader is a person that builds a team of people that they can trust and work effectively with. The members of this team should also be leaders that can foster relationships throughout the staff. In order for an educational leader to change and influence the curriculum and the teachers on a staff, they need to be able to cut through the negativity and doubt that is present in many buildings. It is not the principal's responsibility to write the curriculum, but instead to cultivate a belief among their staff that the curriculum can be better and should be implemented in a specific manner.

Principals should be able to read and give feedback on a curriculum, and evaluate it for alignment and connection to the standards.

I believe that in order to gain support from people working for you, those people need to believe that you truly understand what is that they do. People will be more willing to buy into the overall goals of an organization, if they believe that the goals are directly related to them. If a leader does not have a good understanding of what each person or group of people does, they will not have the knowledge to help gain their support and trust.

Being an instructional leader is crucial in the high stakes world of education that we are living, working, and learning in today. Considering the level of accountability for a principal, it only makes sense that building leaders are involved in the curriculum and other educational activities in the school they are a part of. No matter what type of school you become the leader of, it is important to understand the "nuts and bolts" of all aspects of the school. In order to make positive changes, you need to make people believe in themselves and their students. In many cases this may mean cutting through the negativity and really changing the culture of the building. Before any progress can be made academically with the children, you need to first change the adults. It does no good to have high expectations for kids and no expectations of teachers.

A good educational leader has a vision and solid action plans. They not only have an action plan for improving student outcomes, but also an action plan to gain support and buy in from the faculty and staff. Being afraid of change will not only stifle creativity, but it will virtually stop a school's productivity completely. Having a clear plan for educational change and implementation of new initiatives will ensure progress for teachers, students, and the community at large. First, help and make people believe in what they do, and then watch as they take their new found confidence into their classrooms to make their students believe.

## Final Course Reflection

LEAD 504  
Leading Learning I: Planning, Instruction, and Assessment  
Andrew Snyder, EdD

  
November 30 , 2009

When I look in the mirror I see someone who is capable of hard work, of making changes, of leading people towards a common goal, and of reaching children where they are and helping them reach their own goals. I have always known that I was meant to work with children and I have always had the knowledge and confidence that is necessary to be a good PE teacher. The question in my mind is: Do I have what it takes to make changes and create a common vision in a building of several different disciplines; do I have what it takes to be a good administrator and instructional leader?

Throughout this course I have said to myself on many occasions; Kristy you are more than just a dumb jock. It was as if I continuously needed a pep talk. Never have I ever before felt so far behind others in the class as far as knowledge of the subject matter is concerned. I have stated on many occasions that my tenure as a PE teacher has never really forced me to learn about standards and curriculum. In the beginning of this course my lack of knowledge terrified me. The thought of failure terrified me, but as the course progressed I realized that although the “learning curve” for me was great, so was my opportunity to expand my thinking and grow as both a teacher and leader.

Although I have certainly learned a great deal about the nuts and bolts curriculum, standards, and alignment, I feel as though I have learned even more about the importance of a successful curriculum. I now understand how a written document truly can influence teaching and learning. I now understand the importance of mapping a curriculum, not only to track what you are doing personally, but to ensure that what is being taught is appropriate for a grade, age and subject. Prior to taking this class I honestly thought the curriculum was just a written document of what was being taught. I thought everyone had a curriculum like mine, a document full of non-sense that just collected dust in my filing cabinet. I now understand that a well written curriculum is aligned with standards and grade level expectations. It is a document that can drive instruction and assessment, and ultimately can improve student achievement. A well written curriculum can streamline the art of teaching making those teachers who are already great, even better, and helping those teachers that struggle to find a compass to help them improve.

I have learned more in this class than any class that I have ever taken. Not only has this class given me knowledge that can improve my teaching, but it has also given me the confidence to help lead others towards a goal of improving their teaching. I often wondered how an administrator could truly assess the teaching of a person that was teaching in an area that they themselves were not familiar with. It is all becoming clear to me now, and thank goodness, I was really beginning to wonder if I could really pull this educational leader role off.

I honestly would not change a thing about my approach to this semester. I think I needed to be in a place where I was frightened of failure. It made me really focus on what we were learning about together. Everything we learned about was new to me and therefore none of the material was boring or redundant. I have been able to take what we have learned about in class and bring it back to my co-workers as constructive criticism and guidelines for improving what we do on a regular basis. I do not think I am at a point where I feel comfortable evaluating a curriculum outside of PE and health, but I

know I will be there at some point. Having to rewrite the PE curriculum could not have come at a better time. I now feel confident that I can create a useful document. Hopefully, the work I do on this document will help further the confidence that I have already built in terms of guiding others.

Most people would probably look at the syllabi for the courses we have already taken in this cohort and wonder how they were related at all, but they truly are. It all rests on the line repeated often by Dr. Page, “Can we all agree that we are here for the kids?” It does not matter if you are talking about community connections, building relationships within your building, standards, or curriculum; because every topic leads you back to one goal, improving teaching and learning. Creating a curriculum that is understandable, accessible to the public for their use in understanding what their children do every day, and using this curriculum as the building blocks of your day to day work all affect learning, and isn’t that what teaching is all about.

I finally get it. I finally understand how curriculum is supposed to work on a day to day basis. I finally understand the true connection that should exist between what is written, taught, and tested. I now know how using every avenue possible to reach our students is essential to student growth.

As the pieces of this program begin to fit together, I am really beginning to see a future for myself outside of the gym. In the past I would sometimes find myself thinking about spending the next thirty years teaching PE, and honestly, I couldn’t imagine it. Although I love teaching PE, sometimes it can truly be mind-numbing. The information in this course alone has given me a breath of fresh air that was much needed. I feel rejuvenated, and now believe that I can once again find a spark in myself. Until the day I have the opportunity to be an administrator, I know that what I have learned in the Educational Leadership program thus far, will not go to waste.

LEAD 504  
Leading Learning I: Planning, Instruction, and Assessment  
Andrew Snyder, EdD

  
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Having a tool that helps create a clear view of what is taught each day in your classroom is not only valuable, but crucial to providing information to help ensure the success of your students. When you have the opportunity to use this tool to compare your work to other teachers in your building, the process of communication and collaboration is streamlined in a way that is concise and easy to understand. Curriculum mapping not only helps organize

the teacher as an individual, but also each department, and hopefully the school and district as well. Before reading the book “Mapping the Big Picture”, by Heidi Hayes Jacobs, I did not understand what curriculum mapping was, and how beneficial it could be. Now, I cannot wait to use this tool to help my PE department get back on track with an appropriate, meaningful, and engaging curriculum.

For the mapping project I chose to “map” the first seven weeks of Physical Education class at Killingly Intermediate School. I mapped out 6<sup>th</sup> grade PE, asked one colleague to map 7<sup>th</sup> grade PE, and the other colleague to map 8<sup>th</sup> grade PE. Before giving them the template that I used to map 6<sup>th</sup> grade, I explained to them what mapping was, and gave them an example of a map. I decided not to show them the map that I had already completed, as we all team teach at least two of the three grades and the maps will more than likely be very similar. I think that this is what may be unique to PE. The fact that we have common planning time each day, that we team teach, and that we all teach several grade levels, makes it easy to plan what we are going to do with each grade. I know what is going on in their classes for the most part, because I teach with them every day. As a result I do not expect the maps to be all that different from my own.

At this time of year we are required to administer the Connecticut Physical Fitness Assessment. Most of what we are teaching at this time of year is related to the test. We are also required, by our principal, to have essential questions posted in our classrooms. As a result, this part of the map was easy to fill in. The major differences between the maps exist between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade. 6<sup>th</sup> grade is the first year that students are required to change and have PE more than once a week. Although we generally teach the same units to each grade level, we move much more slowly with 6<sup>th</sup> grade. For example, as shown on the map, 6<sup>th</sup> grade has not yet had their orientation in our fitness room, where as 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade have.

My biggest fear associated with this project, was asking other colleagues to essentially do “homework”. Unfortunately, my fears were not totally unfounded. They did the work, but not without a fair bit of complaining, and instead of filling it out individually, they decided to work together. As a result, there are very few differences between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade maps. Also, they did not want to have to type into the document. Instead they hand wrote it, and gave it back to me. They left the essential questions blank, but left a comment that said “you know what these are so you can fill them in”. Consequently, I decided to type the maps for them. I also decided that considering I also teach those grade levels, I would fill in the places they left blank. Although this may not be exactly what the project asked for, I found it helpful for my own teaching purposes. Unfortunately, nothing about the maps they

turned in really surprised me. I received exactly what I thought I would receive. Considering most of our planning is done as a group in our team meetings, I know what they are teaching. I don't always know how well they are teaching it, but I know in general what activities they are using for each grade level, and what progression they are using.

On Friday afternoon, after receiving the maps from my colleagues, we had a meeting with the assistant superintendent to go over his expectations for our revised curriculum. To make a long story short, we need to throw the old one in the trash, and start from scratch. The old curriculum does not at all reflect what we are actually teaching. What we are actually accomplishing in our classrooms is appropriate and meaningful. Unfortunately, if we all left the building tomorrow, never to return, and four new people stepped into our positions, they would have absolutely no idea what we do, and no documentation to help them.

Our maps prove one thing; that we have a solid plan for what our students need to learn. The problem is that we do not have a written plan anywhere. We are engaging in what I would consider to be best practice, but we have no way to track or reflect on what we are doing. We may have meaningful units, but nothing written down that ensures that we are building from year to year on what we have taught. We may teach the same units every year, but we do not use the same games or activities with each grade level. Where is this written down? It's not.

Curriculum mapping, in my mind, is a tool that I believe my department can benefit from using. We have great ideas, lessons, and units. We generally work well together, and have the ability to communicate and plan. We are well aware of what is going on from grade level to grade level, because we all teach each grade level with one another. The problem is that we have been somewhat lazy about documenting what we are doing as a way to check up on ourselves and each other. This is hard work, and can be time consuming. At the present time the only thing we have is a dry erase calendar to keep track of what we have taught, and what is coming next. It gets erased and not recorded. None of us really keeps a plan book; we all just refer to the board. It is one of those things that is the way it is, because it is the way it has always been done. The biggest challenge here is to crack the mold on what has always been to make way for something new, exciting, and valuable.

Reflection # 3  
The Hidden Curriculum

LEAD 504  
Leading Learning I: Planning, Instruction, and Assessment  
Andrew Snyder, EdD

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“Each week teachers in an elementary school devote 250 minutes to reading and 50 minutes to art. Students learn this lesson: ‘In this school, art is not considered very important.’” (Glatthorn and Jaillall, 2009) Unfortunately this is not only part of the “hidden curriculum”, it is actually how many classroom teachers feel. With the high level of accountability for teachers of reading and math being what it is, schools have rapidly changed their focus from a multi-dimensional approach to education, to one of hyper focus on math and reading.

So where does this leave the teachers of the related or fine arts? What does this do to the school culture and feeling of togetherness amongst the teachers? It leaves many schools in the place where my school is right now, divided and disgruntled. In a time when our focus should be on aligning our curricula and working together on creating units that not only teach our content, but reinforce the content in other classes, we are instead becoming more divided each day. Everyone is so worried about what they need to do in their own classrooms that no one seems to be able to stop to understand the point of view of others. The atmosphere makes people defensive and down right grumpy.

The hidden curriculum, however unintended, really is the underlying atmosphere in most buildings. The messages that adults give to students through their actions are far greater and longer lasting than the lessons we teach every day in our classrooms. If, for example, the administration in the building gives the impression that being sent to the office for disciplinary reasons will not be tolerated, and will result in serious consequences, than the students will have an understanding for this. Of course the opposite is also true, and besides the message being sent to the students, it also sends a message to the staff that comes across as unsupportive and unwilling to take a hard stand. The message that trickles down through staff and students is that no one cares. This can have lasting and scarring effects on everyone.

For example, the PE department at my school is required to rewrite the PE curriculum this year. The most practical approach to this task includes such assignments as reviewing current practice, the current standards, and current assessments being used to grade students. It would also make sense for

the middle school department to get together with the teachers from both the high school and the elementary schools. Although these tasks may seem to be definitive points on our next team meeting agenda, the chances of them making it on, are slim to none. Many “specials” teachers feel as though they are not considered important and are not respected, but I believe that this is our opportunity to gain some respect. If we can approach this project in a professional manner and truly consider our curriculum in terms of what is being taught, tested, and the alignment K-12, we too can gain respect for our work. We will have the forum, at least with the administration, to support our vision that physically active children learn better and more than those children who are sedentary.

The issue is that so many of my colleagues have felt for so long that they do not “count”, and that their only purpose is to provide classroom teachers with a preparation period. These feelings create an atmosphere where they do not have the drive to put the work in required to write and align a purposeful and successful curriculum. Although I can understand why these teachers feel the way they do, and in turn I can understand the way the academic teachers feel, I do not think we (the specials teachers) should use it as an excuse not to do the best job that we can. I am so sick of being referred to as the “NRT’s” (Not Real Teachers, a term created by the specials teachers in my building). I am fed up with people put no effort into the education of our students and creating a better school, and then have the nerve to sit back and complain about it.

In some schools this lack of camaraderie has seriously upset the school culture. When the school culture is not good, the teachers’ willingness to put effort into their teaching is not what it should be; the messages within the hidden curriculum are loud and clear. How can we expect students to respect us and find worth in what we have to teach them, if we do not even respect each other and show support for all of the curricula in the building. I truly believe that the hidden curriculum has a great impact on what our students learn each day, and the messages that are being sent through the hidden curriculum start with the administration. As stated in ISSLC 2, an educational leader promotes the success of every student by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture (2008). It is important that everyone is “on the same page” when it comes to how we discipline, how we communicate, and what our expectations for staff and student performance are. If the staff cannot find common ground in these areas, the culture of the school is affected, and in turn student performance is affected.

If I were an administrator one of my first comments just might be “stop complaining, and start conversing!” The number of issues that arise concerning the hidden curriculum in my school could give me enough information to write at least ten pages, but once again, I would just be complaining. I want so badly to help change this part of my school, and although it is an overwhelming task to consider, I truly believe it is a worthy one. My short-term goal is to start with my department, if I can gain the support of the three people that I work directly with, maybe we can gain friends and influence people throughout the staff. We, as well as many other staffs in many other schools, need to learn to trust one another, learn from one another, and lean upon one another. Together we stand...divided we fail.

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Reflection # 4  
Curriculum Mapping

LEAD 504  
Leading Learning I: Planning, Instruction, and Assessment  
Andrew Snyder, EdD

  
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“When each teacher becomes a curriculum editor, the professional level of the entire school is elevated” (Hayes Jacobs 1997). The key here is that “each teacher” should be a part of mapping and curriculum development. So how do you make this happen? How do you as an educational leader help your faculty understand the importance of curriculum mapping, mandate that each teacher actually do mapping, and accomplish all of this without creating a group of disgruntled teachers who view the task as just one more thing to do?

These questions, as well as many others, have been swimming in my head since I read the chapters on curriculum mapping. For the last few years, as my school has worked towards becoming a Professional Learning Community, curriculum mapping has been going on regularly in my school. The problem is that it has only been going on in the academic teams, and even then I believe that only the team leader is required to actually map out what is going on in their particular team and grade level. Specials teachers have not been required to map their curriculum, and until I started reading this book, I was not really sure what curriculum mapping was.

Now that I understand what the process entails, I can understand how valuable mapping can be, that is if it is done correctly. What good is it for the fifth grade team leaders to map curriculum, when they cannot possibly be in each grade five classroom? Even then, what good does it do them to map their curriculum if they are not going to use the map to compare what they are teaching to what teachers from other grades are teaching? The implementation of the process seems a bit overwhelming, especially if the staff has not had the proper professional development on how to map and why to map.

As stated before, my PE department has to re-write our curriculum this year. We have been struggling with how to get started. With half of our department being new to the school in the past year, it has been difficult to come to consensus on what should be taught and when it should be taught. In addition we have not had the opportunity to meet with either of the elementary schools or the high school in our district. Curriculum mapping seems to be a logical place to start, but only if we can get each PE teacher in the district to take the time to map their curricula.

Fortunately, the middle school already has essential questions written for each class, and each teacher must have them posted in the classroom, PE included. The odd part of this requirement is that we were told to make essential questions, but were given no further information on how they were connected to mapping the curriculum. I know that other teachers in my school have been given professional development in these areas, but once again the

specials teachers were not included. Now that I have read this book I feel like I have some concrete information that I can share with my department. I have to be the leader in this situation and teach as well as convince my colleagues that curriculum mapping will help us determine the best way to approach our curriculum.

As I read through these chapters several points about the way my school is approaching curriculum came to mind. We are currently using a system that includes a curriculum council, and for the life of me I could not tell you who is on that council other than my principal. The reason that we are re-writing our curriculum is because it has come to the end of a five year cycle. I was a part of writing the curriculum five years ago and I have not really looked at it, revisited it, or really given it much thought until this year. I have to wonder if anyone else realizes the flaws to the system that we are using. For example; I know that there are huge gaps in our K-12 curriculum, as well as a great deal of overlapping. Fortunately, now I have a tool that can help me clearly define where those gaps and overlaps occur, which can help guide discussions and hopefully lead to some decisions.

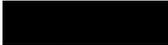
It seems as though the more I read about curriculum and the processes that are involved in creating a meaningful curriculum, the more I question what is going on in my school. I believe that my school does a good job with curriculum and assessment in the academic areas, but this unfortunately does not carry over into the non-academic areas. If we are supposed to work as a building and create units to integrate material that the students are learning in other classes, then everyone needs the same professional development. We need to be looking at curricula in all areas and at all grade levels. I believe that this can work; it's simply a matter of good leadership to get the ball rolling and get the job done. My school has a number of wonderful initiatives occurring, but it is time to get the whole staff working together for a common goal and a common vision.

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Reflection Paper # 5  
Positive Behavior Support

LEAD 504  
Leading Learning I: Planning, Instruction, and Assessment  
Andrew Snyder, EdD

  
November 9 , 2009

“Few Americans would disagree with the proposition that one of the most important outcomes of the early years of education should be internalizing such values as respect for others, honesty, fairness, compassion, civility, responsibility, tolerance, self-discipline, patience, and hard work” (Tucker and Coddling, 1998). As much as we as teachers would like to believe or at least wish that these character traits are being taught at home, the reality is that they are not, at least not with any kind of consistency. Our culture has changed. Our students are not coming from the same homes, neighborhoods, or communities that they were in the 1950’s. As educators I believe we recognize this, but now we have to be willing to except these changes, and the changes that need to occur in our effort to educate today’s children.

In the school year 2008-2009, Killingly Intermediate School was reprimanded by the state of Connecticut for having too many suspensions. As a result of this issue KIS is now required to be a part of program called Positive Behavior Support or PBS. PBS is a program that focuses on teaching

respect, responsibility, and safety. As a school we have begun to implement strategies to help instill the importance of these characteristics in our students. The program began last year and a handful of teachers were invited to the training and became what is referred to as the PBS Committee. This year we started a program in our school called “Caught you being good.” It is a program that has come with a great deal of controversy and has caused somewhat of a division of staff members; those that believe that it is a meaningful program, and those that do not.

This year I have volunteered to become a member of this committee. Last week the other members of the committee and I had the opportunity to attend a state-wide convention. As I sat in this conference, and truly started to understand the basis for PBS, the research that supports the program and outcomes that are expected as a result of the program, my “wheels” really started turning. Had I not been in a graduate program and had the inclination to become a part of this committee, I would probably still be a member of the staff that was not totally convinced of the worth of this program. I did not understand what PBS was all about, or what the goals of the program even were. Once again the leadership in my school has attempted to implement a program without fully educating the entire staff. It really is no wonder why the adults in my building do not understand or support this program. When only a handful of people have been trained, and those people are not people seen as leaders in our school, how can anyone expect the program information to be disseminated successfully to the remainder of the staff?

If our goal is to teach the students about respect, responsibility, and safety, we have to first get the adults to buy in to this initiative. We have to work on changing the culture of the adults in our building before we can expect to change the culture of our students. As Tucker and Coddling state “the most powerful teaching in this arena has to do with the values that students see embodied in the way the school actually works every day, the way the adults in the school treat the students and one another. Great care needs to be taken to make sure that everything the adults in the school do reinforces and does not sabotage these values” (1998). It does not matter if we have posters and paintings all over the building that say RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, and SAFETY. We have to believe and practice these concepts if we want to successfully teach them.

As far as KIS is concerned, we need to take a step back. We need to educate and re-educate the teachers, custodians, paraprofessionals, cafeteria staff, and every other adult in our building that has contact with children, on what PBS is, and what our expectations are for reinforcing these concepts. As a committee we have decided to put together a presentation for the entire staff. Our hope is to show it at the next faculty meeting. In advance of that

meeting we intend to have meaningful conversations with our co-workers to gain support and improve understanding. Regardless of what people feel personally, this is a program that the state is requiring that we be a part of. Rather than complaining about it, people need to get on board and make the best of the situation, and we as a committee need to help them strategize ways to make this happen. We need to give them a reason to believe in the value of PBS.

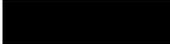
In reality it all comes back to culture and the ability of the people in leadership positions, in your building, to build and sustain a meaningful, productive, and successful culture, as stated in ISLLC 3. The culture at KIS has taken a few blows in the last few years. The teachers are very stressed out due to our inability to make AYP, and many of our teachers are close to retirement age. They are tired, worn out, and unable to muster up the strength to try “just one more thing”. Making changes in our school, and in our interactions with our students, will not be easy, but if we truly are all “here for the kids” it is more than worth the effort.

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Reflection Paper # 1  
My Connections to “Curriculum”

LEAD 504  
Leading Learning I: Planning, Instruction, and Assessment  
Andrew Snyder, EdD

  
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The word curriculum, as discussed in class, can refer to several different things to many different people. Regardless of the meaning of the word, the thought of discussing curriculum can be a daunting one. Unless you are a veteran teacher or administrator with experience creating, writing, and evaluating curriculums, the thought of doing such tasks can be overwhelming. This of course is my own opinion, and probably reflects my own experiences, or lack of experiences with curriculum development. For example; what is mapping, what is scope and sequence? Too often administration simply assumes that everyone knows what this terminology means. In order to effectively create a curriculum that is not only written, but taught, tested, and mastered, teachers need the professional development to help them understand just what “curriculum” is.

As the date for the beginning of this class approached, I have to admit I was overwhelmed. I personally have very little experience working on curriculum, and have had no professional development to further my knowledge in this area. Oddly enough, the week after class started I received a letter from my Assistant Superintendent stating that our PE/Health curriculum was in need of review and updating before the end of this year. The current curriculum that we are working with is based on outdated state level standards, and was written by four people who had no experience with curriculum work, me included. This class could not have come at a better time. Hopefully the knowledge that I gain will not only improve my PE curriculum and teaching, but will also help me understand curriculums from other disciplines as well.

As I was reading through the chapters the key point that stood out in my mind was not how to decide what to put in your written curriculum, but what the point of the curriculum actually was. In short, why are we teaching what we are teaching and what do we expect our students to learn? We have to ensure that what is written in the curriculum is in fact what we are teaching, and eventually what we are testing the kids on. We then have to analyze the results of the tests that we give to be sure that the students are achieving the desired outcomes stated in the curriculum. (English, 2000)

This really got me thinking about the Physical Education curriculum in my school. The written curriculum is generally in line with what is actually happening on a day to day basis in our (my PE department's) classroom (the gym). On the other hand, there are very little if any authentic assessments occurring. Other than keeping track of who is getting changed for PE in the proper attire, there is very little assessment that occurs at all. In fact, we give state physical fitness tests to each student in grades 6-8, but do not use the results of the test when factoring the students' grades.

Although I believe that my department does an adequate job at teaching PE, there is definitely room for improvement and "tightening of the curriculum." (English) There are two or three people that teach at each grade level for PE, and I know for certain that we are not all stressing the same outcomes. As much as we recognize that this needs to happen, we never seem to follow through with our intentions. In many cases our planning is more concerned with ensuring that the students are getting the absolute most amount of activity time possible and less concerned with what they are actually learning from the activity. I would venture to guess that this is a similar concern in many PE departments.

Overall it seems as though we are more focused on ISLLC 3, the managerial/ organizational piece of running the department, than we are on ISSL2. Although we strive to create a motivating, nurturing, collaborative, and trusting learning environment, we fall short when it comes to developing assessments and accountability systems to monitor the progress of our students. (ISSLC, 2008) The major issue facing our department is lack of leadership. Although I seem to fill the role of department head, and I attempt and usually do take the lead in most cases, I am not technically the head of the department. We are a team, we are equals, and we are not all on the "same page" when it comes to the focus of our lessons.

Unfortunately, the administration in my building seems to be more focused on the academic teachers than they are on the "specials" teachers. The PE department is very rarely evaluated or held accountable for student progress and achievement. That coupled with the high turn-over we have experienced in the last few years, has left the department floundering a bit in terms of streamlining what we are teaching, why we are teaching, and how we know that the students are learning. To take it one step further, we should be asking ourselves what we are going to do when the students do not learn. Do we simply move on, or should we require a certain level of mastery? Without proper assessment it is impossible to determine the answers to any of these questions.

Perhaps rewriting the curriculum together will give us common ground from which to work from. We can literally start from scratch. We need to acquire all of the documents and support materials necessary to build our curriculum upon, and begin by ranking which lessons, units, and concepts we feel are the most important. The ideas of using index cards to organize and rank the individual units and lessons within the curriculum seems like a systematic and fair way to determine what will be included in the curriculum guide. Perhaps this class is just what the doctor ordered. Maybe the knowledge I gain here can breathe new life into the Killingly Intermediate School PE department. One can only hope.

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Reflection Paper # 2  
“Failure Is Not an Option”

LEAD 504  
Leading Learning I: Planning, Instruction, and Assessment  
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“Failure is not an option.” These words are not only the title to the introduction of Tucker and Coddington’s book, but can also often be heard daily (many times sarcastically) in the halls of the Killingly Public Schools. About five years ago the Killingly Public School board introduced a new policy that teachers were no longer allowed to give “F’s” on report cards. With no reasoning behind the policy, no research to support this plan, and little communication regarding the implementation of this policy, the proverbial “poop” hit the fan all over the district. Like many other initiatives that I have been a part of, the administrators in the district did little to prepare or gain support for the changes being made. The expectations for both the staff and the students were not at all clear, and as a result the policy was not well received.

I remember quite clearly sitting in a staff meeting at the beginning of the school year, energized and ready to go, when my principal stood up in front of the staff and announced that we were no longer allowed to give an “F” to any student. We were now to give “I’s” and “N’s” (Incomplete, or Needs Improvement) instead. She stated that she understood that this was a big change and that there were problems that were sure to arise, but that we could iron them out as time went on. That was it, no protocol as to what constitutes an I or an N, no reason why this was the new policy...NOTHING!!! Well as you might imagine this put a spark into the staff, and not a good one. Everyone had their opinions as to why this would never work and how we already coddle the students too much. Chaos ensued, and without further conversation or explanation, we were on to the next agenda item. In terms of ISLLC 2 and school culture, our administration was failing miserably, and the school year had only just begun. (ISLLC, 2008)

As one would probably guess, many people throughout the district were upset by this change. Teachers were told they had to give make-up tests if students failed, but were not given guidelines as to who should make them up or how the new test should be scored. Some teachers just made up their own rules, while others were relentless in their attempts to get real answers from the administration. And then there were those teachers who decided it was just easier to give students C’s and D’s and therefore give the students credit for the class.

After reading Tucker and Coddling’s first two chapters, I now understand the premise behind the policy in my district. The idea that students should not be simply promoted from one course to the next is a novel one; however without standards and assessments to determine a student’s level of proficiency, a policy like ours is useless. Sure we can say that no one has failed and that every student has completed the coursework for a given subject area, but can we prove that they have truly mastered the material?

I cannot speak for the high school programs, but I do know that at the middle school we have spent a great deal of time creating common assessments to determine which areas of the curriculum the students are struggling with. This information does not, however, determine whether or not a student is promoted from one class to the next. We have made sweeping changes to our reading programs to create “extra” time for those students who are not performing on grade level in reading, and targeted students who perform poorly on state tests to be a part of intervention groups, and yet those students will be promoted to the next grade at the end of the year regardless of how much progress they have made. We are also in the process of creating a

standards based report card, which makes me wonder how we as a school will handle those students who do not reach the standards. Will we promote them to the next grade? Will they be held back and made accountable for what they have and have not learned? Should social promotion even be considered?

The idea of a certificate to graduate from high school, or a middle school certificate to be promoted to high school, is an interesting one. I agree that something of this nature would greatly improve student motivation. My school seems to be on the right track with checking and ensuring that students are learning, but our answer to what we do when they don't learn is still a bit cloudy. Our students are still promoted from grade to grade, and as a result, they don't feel the pressures of succeeding in order to get their diploma or grade level promotion.

As an administrator I hope to alleviate some of the stress of implementing new policies by having a proper initiation phase, gaining support from key faculty before introducing the new initiative (the 80/20 theory), and supporting the new change with research that is easily connected to the situation of our school, its faculty, and most importantly our students. Gaining support from the community is also important when the policy is going to directly affect the face of several student report cards, the one and only connection some of our parents have with their child's education.

The task of ensuring that kids are not failing, helping to create standards and assessments to achieve this, properly preparing your staff for the changes that need to be made, helping the community to understand and support those changes, and doing so within the vision of your school, is a daunting one. An educational leader will have to consider all of the ISLLC standards when faced with an issue of this magnitude, as it affects the whole school, its culture, and the culture outside of the school. Judy Coddling was a brave soul to put the sweeping changes into action that she did at her high school in Pasadena. Although I am not sure I would have approached the situation in the same manner that she did, I can only hope that some day I too can be firm enough in my belief that all children can succeed, to make that changes that she made.

## **References**

- National Policy Board for Educational Administration (2007). *Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008*.
- Tucker, M.S., & Coddling, J.B. (1998). *Standards For Our Schools: How to set them, Measure Them, and Reach Them*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

**Curriculum Map**  
**Grade 6 Physical Education**  
**September 8<sup>th</sup> – September 12<sup>th</sup>**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Essential Questions</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Skills</b>	<b>Assessments</b>	<b>Activities/ Strategies</b>	<b>Standards</b>
Week 1 Sep 8 <sup>th</sup> -Sep 12 <sup>th</sup>	What are the benefits of physical activity?  Why is life long fitness and why is it important?	Physical Fitness -Benefits of -Appropriate length of -What is and is not considered physical activity	Physical Fitness -Jogging - Form Running  -Push Ups - Form  -Sit Ups - Form	None	Fitness Stations -Med Balls -Physio-Balls -Dyna Bands -Ladders -Jump Ropes -Fun Push Ups -Core strength chart activities	
Week 2 Sep 14 <sup>th</sup> -Sep 18 <sup>th</sup>	What is good teamwork?  What does it mean to be a good leader?  What does good effort “look” like?	Physical Fitness- Same as above  Frisbee	PF-Same as above  Frisbee- Throwing and Catching – Forehand Pass -Short passes-Focus on accuracy	Pre Test-Mile Run	Fitness Stations- Same as above  Frisbee- Frisbee Golf w/targets	
Week 3 Sep 21 <sup>st</sup> - Sep 25 <sup>th</sup>	What is muscular strength and what activities will help improve muscular strength?  What are some examples of good teamwork in a game of Frisbee?	Physical Fitness  Frisbee Offense Defense	Jogging, Push Ups, Curl Ups  Frisbee – Rules of Ultimate Frisbee	Pre Test Push ups and curl ups	Fitness Stations  Frisbee- Keep Away	

Date	Essential Questions	Content	Skills	Assessments	Activities/ Strategies	Standards
Week 4 Sep 28 <sup>th</sup> - Oct 2 <sup>nd</sup>	<p>What is muscular endurance and what activities will help improve muscular endurance?</p> <p>What are some good examples of leadership in a game of Frisbee?</p>	<p>Introduction to the Fitness Room</p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> Muscle and Bone of the Week</p> <p>Connecticut Physical Fitness Test – Supplemental Exam</p>	<p>Fitness Room Safety expectations and procedures</p> <p>Muscle of week- Quadricep Bone of week-Femur</p>	Pacer Test	<p>Classroom setting in fitness room-reviewing safety expectations and orientation</p> <p>Pacer Test</p>	
Week 5 Oct 5 <sup>th</sup> - Oct 9 <sup>th</sup>	<p>Why is pacing important?</p> <p>Why is it important to put in good effort during testing?</p>	<p>Connecticut Physical Fitness Test</p> <p>Frisbee</p> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> Bone and Muscle of the week</p>	<p>Jogging</p> <p>Defensive/Offensive Strategy</p> <p>Muscle of week Hamstring Bone-Tibia</p>	Mile Run	<p>Mile Run</p> <p>Ultimate Frisbee</p>	
Week 6 Oct 13 <sup>th</sup> - Oct 16 <sup>th</sup>	<p>Why is it important to put in good effort during testing?</p>	Connecticut Physical Fitness Test	<p>Push Ups Curl Ups</p>	<p>Connecticut Physical Fitness Test Push Ups Curl Ups</p>	<p>Push Ups Curl Ups</p>	
Week 7 Oct. 19 <sup>th</sup> -23 <sup>rd</sup>	<p>Why is it important to put in good effort during testing?</p>	Connecticut Physical Fitness Test	<p>Mile Run Sit and Reach</p>	<p>Connecticut Physical Fitness Test Mile Run Sit and Reach</p>	<p>Mile Run Sit and Reach</p>	

## WHATIF MAD LIB

One day you walk into school to find \_\_\_\_\_ (#)

\_\_\_\_\_ students \_\_\_\_\_ in the  
(naughty adjective) (bad verb: -ing)

\_\_\_\_\_. As an educational leader in the  
(place in the school)

\_\_\_\_\_ Middle School, You \_\_\_\_\_  
(famous person) (adverb)

\_\_\_\_\_ the situation. One \_\_\_\_\_  
(verb: 1st person present singular) (positive adjective)

teacher attempts to \_\_\_\_\_ you the with  
(verb: infinitive)

situation, but another \_\_\_\_\_ teacher decides  
(negative adjective)

to \_\_\_\_\_ away because he thinks you're  
(verb: infinitive)

\_\_\_\_\_. Meanwhile, the naughty students  
(negative adjective)

have begun to throw \_\_\_\_\_ at you. However,  
(plural noun)

you are able to use your \_\_\_\_\_ action plan  
(positive adjective)

and \_\_\_\_\_ the situation and save the day.  
(verb: 1st person present singular)

## WHATIF MAD LIB

\_\_\_\_\_ (#)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(naughty adjective)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(bad verb: -ing)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(place in the school)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(famous person)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(adverb)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(verb: 1st person present singular)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(positive adjective)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(verb: infinitive)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(negative adjective)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(verb: infinitive)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(negative adjective)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(plural noun)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(positive adjective)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(verb: 1st person present singular)