

School Counseling Curriculum

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Unique Potential Consulting and Leadership Coaching

Starting with You

- Who's in the room?
 - Level?
 - Been a SC less than 5 years?
 - Been a SC more than 20 years?
 - Were ever a teacher?
- How many people are doing 20% or more of their time doing classroom interventions?
- How many are doing 10% or more?
- How many people would like to be doing more classroom interventions?
- How many would like to improve skills and outcomes?

Workshop Learning Objectives: What we hope you will know and be able to do!

- To review/gain awareness of the traditional model(s) of curriculum development
- To learn the Backwards Design [BD] model of curriculum development
- To be able to use the BD model to develop school counseling [SC] curriculum
- To have ideas for assessing the student outcomes associated with your SC curriculum
- To know strategies to use to implement SC curriculum at your school
- To see examples of BD SC curriculum
- To “take away” resources to help with curriculum implementation

What is “curriculum”?

- Curriculum is the organization of the knowledge/concepts/skills we want students to learn.
- Curriculum is NOT an “information dump.”

Scope and Sequence

- The **scope** of a curriculum unit is how broad it is...how much gets covered within the topic area
 - represented by Essential Questions, major themes or concepts, intended learning outcomes or educational goals
- The **sequencing** of a curriculum is the rationale for teaching things in a certain order, so that knowledge is built over time

Curriculum Development...

Traditional Model

- Decide on broad topic(s) to be covered
 - e.g. career planning, test-taking skills, anger management
- Review curriculum standards for topic areas
- Establish scope, general parameters
 - title, length, goals
- Identify problem to be solved in the unit
- Draft the “big picture” for class or curriculum unit
 - beginning, middle, end = sequence
- Determine knowledge students need and how they will gain that knowledge
 - Desired learning outcomes
- Sketch in the lesson plans
- Decide how to evaluate the unit
 - How will you measure/assess student learning?

Curriculum Development...

Backwards Design Model

- In Backwards Design [BD] knowledge is organized around concepts, not facts
- In BD you “start with the end in mind” – start with learning goals and how you will assess student learning outcomes prior to designing learning process
- A major understanding, problem or issue is at the heart of the curriculum
- BD relates learning to the world outside of school
- BD fosters creative/critical thinking
- BD units are often interdisciplinary

“education is not just about learning “the answer,” but about learning how to learn”

Backwards Design...3 steps

1. Identify Desired Results

- What will students **know** and **be able to do**?
- Learning Goals/Understandings
- Essential Questions*

2. Determine Acceptable Evidence of Learning*

- Performance tasks, outcomes, evidence of proficiency
- Other evidence

3. Plan Learning Experiences and Instructions

- What needs to be taught and how
- How to make learning engaging and effective, given the goals and needed evidence

Essential Questions (EQs)

- “Big Questions” that can serve to organize and cohere a curriculum unit
- Serve to engage student interest
- Ensure relevance
- Focus design
- Provoke deep thought, lively discussion, sustained inquiry and new understanding
- Spark meaningful connections with prior learning and personal experiences
- Stimulate vital, ongoing rethinking of big ideas

What are the traits of an essential question?

- The question probes a matter of considerable importance.
- The question requires movement beyond understanding and studying - some kind of action or resolve - pointing toward the settlement of a challenge, the making of a choice or the forming of a decision.
- The question cannot be answered by a quick and simple “yes” or “no” answer.
- The question probably endures, shifts and evolves with time and changing conditions - offering a moving target in some respects.
- The question may be unanswerable in the ultimate sense.

Essential Questions...Examples

- Is art a matter of taste or principles?
- Is science compatible with religion?
- How is our understanding of culture and society constructed through and by language?
- What is oppression and what are the root causes?
- How far should we tamper with our own biology and chemistry?
- What is social justice?
- What is the relationship between conflict and change?
- What is a good decision and how do we know when we've made one?

Essential Questions Activity

- What do you think is a possible Essential Questions in School Counseling Curriculum?
 - Academic domain
 - Career domain
 - Social-Emotional domain

School Counseling Essential Questions

- Who am I?
- What are my goals for my life?
- How do I achieve my goals?
- What will make my life meaningful?
- Is college for everybody?
- What problem solving strategies can individuals use to manage conflict and change?
- What is success?
- What does it mean to be a good friend?

- Your examples?

Why Assess Student Learning?

[Determining Acceptable Evidence]

- Why is assessing student learning the heart of backward design?
 - Student learning is the goal of schooling!
 - To ensure we are having the impact we think we are
 - To spend time only on effective interventions
 - To know with greater certainty that we really are making a difference for students
 - To demonstrate accountability

Summative Assessment

- **Summative assessment** follows instruction [but is designed BEFORE!]
- What will demonstrate student proficiency in ways intended? How do you measure mastery of content?
- How can you measure the new behaviors or skills learned?
- Ideally summative assessment is a chance for all students to demonstrate effective learning

Methods of Assessing Learning

- Multiple choice, true-false tests and quizzes (called selected response format)
- Rubrics (simple checklists, rating scales)
- Short-answer format (written responses)
- Essays, papers, reports (extended written responses)
- PowerPoints, pamphlets, murals (visual products)
- Oral reports, debates (oral performance)
- Role plays, music performance, skill demonstration
- Exhibits (long-term authentic assessment project)

SC Skill-Based Assessments

- Fill out a six or four year academic plan
- Calculate a GPA
- Find college information on-line
- Complete a job application
- Role play specific social skills (responding to teasing, asking for help, problem solving, etc.)
- Fill out a financial aid form
- Identify the location of classes on a school map
- Locate a part of an assignment planner
- Complete a career inventory

Authentic Assessment

- Real problem/issue and audience
- Integrates knowledge and skills (know and do), application of knowledge
- Increases motivation and engagement– there's a reason and purpose for the activity
- Develops communication skills
- In-depth understanding of learning content
- Reflection, self- and peer-assessment
- Flexibility in strategies, products, content and time
- Real consequences for the success or failure of the task

Authentic Assessment Examples

- Authentic Assessment requires that students engage with real-life problems or tasks for a relevant audience:
 - Use web-based resources to create an autobiographical collage that uses images from a variety of sources, write a statement elaborating on how the images depict who you are/ what your goals are, and compare statements and visuals when you present to peers
 - Learn conflict resolution strategies, then create illustrated pamphlets for 1st grade students teaching this knowledge
 - Research the availability of summer jobs, meet with an officer from an employment office, and complete job applications to use for prospective employers

Activity: BD stages 1 and 2

1. Identify Desired Results

- What do you want students to **know** and **be able to do**?
- Learning Goals/Understandings
- Essential Questions*

2. Determine Acceptable Evidence of Learning* (assessment of learning)

- Performance tasks, evidence of proficiency
 - Other evidence
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- **ACTIVITY:** start BD stages 1 and 2 for a SC curriculum intervention in your school

Planning Learning Experiences

- When Learning Goals, EQs and Assessments are defined...THEN lessons are constructed
- Determine if you will use existing curricula or develop your own
- Link learning activities to goals, assessments and desired outcomes
- Make sure content is developmentally appropriate
- Make provisions for individual differences
- Be sensitive to issues of cultural diversity

From Theory to Practice

- To be effective, School Counselors must deliver curriculum that responds to existing needs [*may not be what has always been taught or what you like to teach*]
 - Needs assessments
 - School wide data
 - Stakeholder priorities
- School counseling curriculum needs to be linked to standards
- School counseling curriculum needs to have measurable outcomes

From “Information Dumps” to Meaningful Curriculum

- Need time and expertise to use needs assessment data and BD process to create relevant, effective curriculum units
- Need ACCESS to students so there is enough time for learning to occur [hopefully project based]
- Need to have the work students produce via the school counseling curriculum count [what gets measured gets done]
 - 4-6 year academic plans
 - Career development portfolios
 - Study skills, test-taking strategies, time management
 - Managing emotions, coping with crisis

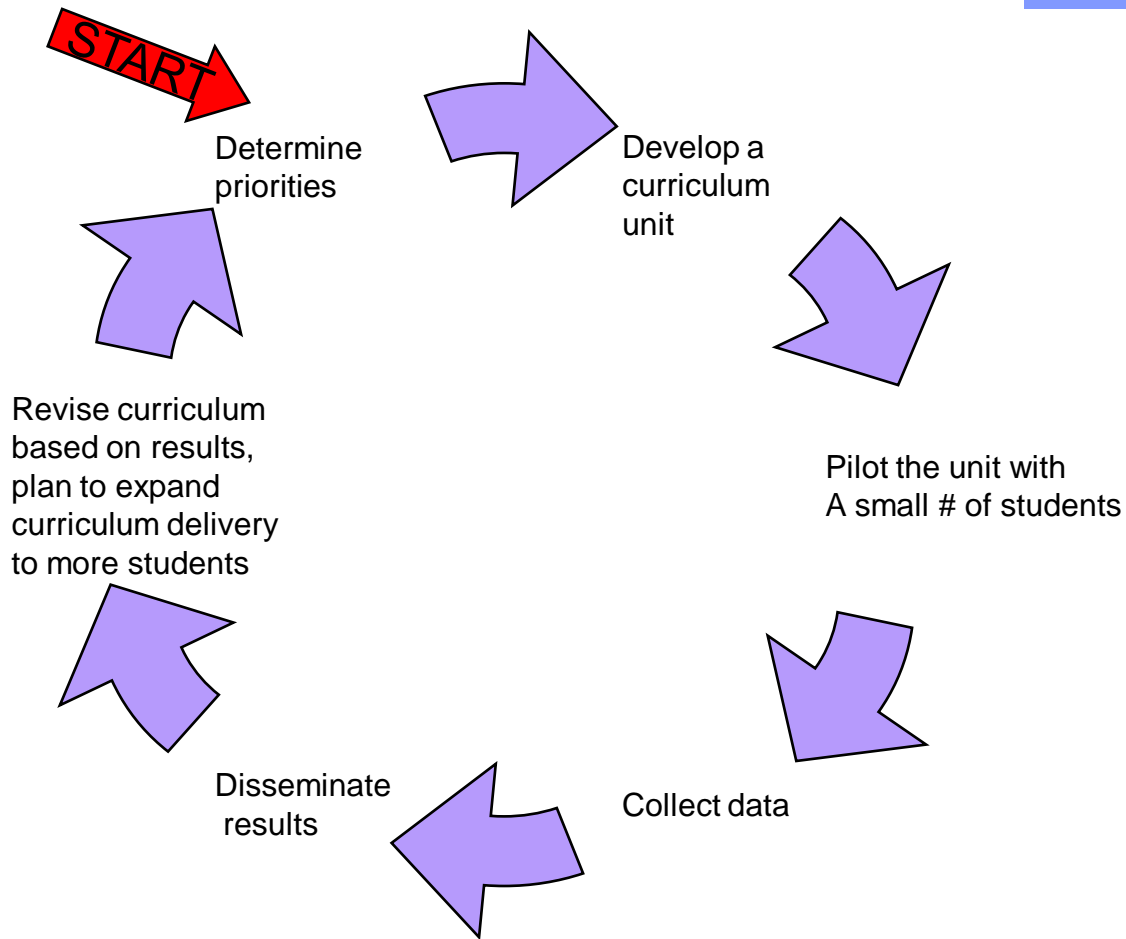
Plan Strategically

- Think Big
- Start Small

GOAL = Institutionalize the SC Curriculum

- School Counseling curriculum for ALL students
- PreK-12 School Counseling curriculum scope and sequence
- School Counseling “courses”
- School Counseling “credits”
- School Counseling “portfolios”
- School Counseling “graduation requirements”

Start Small...



Examples

- **Milford High School**

- 9 lessons over 3 years that focus on post-secondary planning

- **Greater New Bedford Voc Tech**

- 12 lessons over 4 years that focus on success in the 21st century work place

- **Mass. Dept. of Youth Services**

- 45 lessons over 3 months that focus on the possibility of having a positive future

- **Blackstone Valley Tech**

- 120 lessons over 4 years that focus on employability

Take Aways

- Written and web-based curriculum resources
 - Backwards Design template
 - Evidence-Based Curriculum links and resources
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- PP and relevant materials available through the Center for School Counseling Outcome Research, at www.cscor.org