Curriculum Design Pattern

Global Learning by Design

As well as providing a mechanism for capturing solutions to common education problems, curriculum design patterns can also serve as a way to share, document and publish academic work that can be informally peer reviewed and expanded upon. Below is an outline of the fields that will be used to capture and share the Curriculum Design Patterns that are produced as part of the Global Learning by Design project at RMIT.

Name of Pattern	**First-year Education Student Personal Literacy Review**
Date	June 2014
Author/s	Wendy Warren, Cheryl Semple, Aneta Renieris, Gloria Latham and Jan Senior

Abstract

First-year Bachelor of Education (Primary Education) learners studying literacy need to self-assess their own literacy skills in order to understand the development of literacy learning in children and to identify and teach literacy learning. Early feedback is vital for new university students and the assessment process needs to be efficient and useful for staff and students. This is a new course and risks were taken in its assessment design, mode of preparation, submission, grading, feedback and cross-campus collaboration.

Rationale

This pattern reflects dynamic changes in aspects of teaching and learning literacy in schools and universities. For students, it is an induction into university learning, the discipline of literacy teaching and reflective thinking. For staff, the pattern supports a stable, foundation entry assessment task, which can easily be repeated in all subsequent offerings of the course.

Learners

The learners are first-year Bachelor of Education (Primary Education) students, who are located cross campus with two classes of 30 students at the Brunswick campus and six classes of 30 at the Bundoora campus.

Category

Early Assessment

Outcome/impact

We expect students will achieve the following outcomes:

1. How to understand the complexity of reading. How to read, and what competencies impact on reading.

2. Specific skills including: referencing, reflection, awareness of curriculum documents, e-literacy, induction into course task requirements, and a capacity to choose quality texts for primary school reading.

3. An awareness and confidence in academic learning, curriculum and personal literacy skills.

The pattern should enhance staff awareness of teaching needs in first-year students. It should also develop staff skills in using new forms of streamlined grading and feedback.

Alignment

The first-year learning experience acquaints students with the use of technology for assignments, access to school curriculum documents, referencing and self-assessment of literacy skills. It sets up personal and professional responsibility for specific learning in literacy education and it directly links to tasks two and three, which follow the foundation course.

Challenges

The following challenges and difficulties could impact on this pattern:

Time

There needs to be enough staff time allocated to designing and planning this activity to ensure all is in place for it to run smoothly.

Clarity

The task needs to be clear, so students can engage immediately and effectively.

Effectiveness of technology

The technology used needs to be appropriate for the task, easy to access by all and work.

Cross campus staff collaboration

This is crucial in ensuring consistency and effectively.

What can be done to overcome them?

Make sure these issues are addressed and resolved early on in the planning for this activity.

Instructions/process

The Task

For this assessment task you will create a wiki in Google Sites (draft this writing in a word document and when complete, copy it into the pages of your Google Site as shown in the sample) that will include:

1. A reflection on your history of becoming literate. Begin your reflection with a quote that inspires or challenges you and use three references from the course readings to support your writing. (350 words)

    a. How did you learn to read, write, speak?

    b. What did you read as a child?

    c. Which parts of the course readings and lectures do you recognise in own experience? (reference these)

2. Read the Rationale and Aims for English (http://ausvels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/English/Overview/Rationale-and-Aims) then go to level 5 (http://ausvels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/English/Curriculum/F-10#level=5). Read the statements for level 5 and write a statement for one skill in each mode i to iii below (eg where are you in relation to reading, writing, speaking modes) that you need to develop as a beginning teacher. From this statement develop a learning plan outlining what you need to do to improve this skill within this semester. The three modes of English that the AusVels curriculum uses are: (50 words per mode)

    i.   Reading and Viewing.

    ii.   Speaking and Listening.

    iii. Writing.

3. Choose one children's picture book by one of these authors (Shaun Tan, Margaret Wild, Alison Lester, Meme McDonald) and describe the process by which you chose the book, the experience of reading it and the possibilities you see for using it in the classroom. (200 words)

Conditions

Key success factors include:

— Task needs to be designed before the course guide is completed.

— Timing of the semester is vital as four weeks of teaching needs to be achieved but staff marking time and return for next assignment is essential.

— Provide a checklist of feedback issues that need student attention.

— Provide a communal record of observations of strengths and weaknesses compiled by all staff and sent to students.

— Where there are problems, students need to be invited to meet the tutor and/or commit to a study skills session.

— The instructions for submitting and returning work need to be explicit with dates, style, length, form and expectations made.

— Training for all staff in how to use the technology is essential.

— Teaching to the task workshop a good investment (for staff by the Study and Learning Centre).

— Exemplars of tasks are very useful.

— Exemplars of referencing.

— Links to library and study skills materials embedded.

— Video instructions that talk through the steps to explain and demystify in simple language.

Resources

Library online learning resources for referencing and writing skills

http://rmit.libguides.com/content.php?pid=4587

Reflection

The success of this pattern can be measured in the final assessment task, which asks students to reflect on their learning. This gives accurate insight into the learning established in the early assessment task, both in the content that students include and the quality of their writing and referencing. Students' reflections indicate that the task, and the learning that followed, was beneficial. Academic writing, referencing, curriculum awareness, personal literacy assessment and book selection for children are key components that will be retained.

This pattern was new alongside every aspect of the course – staff, students, technology, lectures and resources. It was problematic as there was no time built into the plan for consultation. In the future with refinement, the pattern should be easier for staff and students to manage and it should make the connections to ongoing learning stronger.

Acknowledgements