Curriculum Literacy Guide

As teachers and students recover from the school closures and disruptions in the previous few school years, teachers face the challenge of unfinished learning for many students. A critical component of strong, standards-aligned instruction that can support unfinished learning is high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) aligned to those standards and professional development grounded in the use of these materials. Research suggests that providing teachers with access to higher-quality, better-aligned curricular materials can prompt improvement in student outcomes in significant ways. For the average student, access to HQIM is comparable to over half a year of additional learning (Kane et al., 2016); for a new teacher, use of HQIM elevates their impact to that of a teacher with three years of experience (Kane, T., 2016).

But teachers don't always have access to the high-quality instructional materials they need or the knowledge and skills to use them. A recent report (May 2022) from the nonprofit curriculum reviewer EdReports found that less than half of U.S. teachers believe their instructional materials align with learning standards. Curriculum literacy — the skill of recognizing, selecting, revising and facilitating the use of quality curriculum — can make a real difference by narrowing opportunity gaps and accelerating student learning at scale (The New Teacher Project, 2018). Many teacher preparation programs have not sufficiently prepared new teachers to understand the importance of well-taught, high-quality curriculum on student learning, or how to recognize, select, revise or facilitate high-quality curriculum use in the classroom.

With curriculum literacy, teachers will be more effective in using the materials provided by states and districts and can address gaps in low-quality materials if necessary. Without curriculum literacy, teachers may cobble together lesson plans for each class, day in and day out, or ineffectively implement the curriculum. As a result, both teachers and students suffer.

This guide is designed to provide guidance to educator preparation programs to improve the quality and sustainability of their program's work in curriculum literacy broadly and in supporting teacher candidates to become critical consumers of curriculum.

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OVERVIEW
of Curriculum Literacy

WHAT IS CURRICULUM LITERACY?

Curriculum literacy is the skill of recognizing, selecting, revising and facilitating the use of quality curriculum. It requires educators and educator preparation programs to shift from developing curriculum to being a smart user of curriculum, being able to both effectively evaluate and implement curriculum.

This guide uses the term curriculum literacy to mean a set of skills and abilities. It is distinct from the following terms, which are important and integral to this work:

◆ A curriculum (also known as an enacted curriculum or the taught curriculum) is a teacher facilitated sequence of student learning activities using curriculum materials as the foundation of instruction

◆ Curriculum materials (also known as the adopted curriculum or written curriculum) are the resources teachers use (e.g., textbooks or lesson plans) to facilitate those student learning experiences

◆ High-quality instructional materials refers to curricular materials that are content-rich and standards aligned. Many states (e.g., TX, NM, DE, OR) consider curricular materials high quality when they:

    » Ensure full coverage of state standards;

    » Align to evidence-based best practices in the relevant content area;

    » Support all learners to access grade level material, including students with disabilities, English Learners and students identified as gifted and talented;

    » Enable frequent progress monitoring through embedded and aligned assessments; and,

    » Include implementation supports for teachers, including both teacher and student-facing materials.

CURRICULUM LITERACY AND TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS

As states and districts address the urgent need to support HQIM implementation and classroom use, the longer term opportunity is to prepare teachers to ensure that they are ready to use high-quality instructional materials with their students. This focus on curriculum literacy requires a shift in standard teacher preparation practice (Steiner, 2019). Even though curriculum literacy is a critical skill for new teachers, few students learn about curriculum literacy and old mindsets persist — in a recent survey of teachers:

◆ 34% reported their preparation program "emphasized how to develop my own lessons and unit plans from scratch"

◆ 14% reported their preparation program "emphasized curriculum literacy, focusing on how to skillfully use and modify curriculum"

◆ 45% reported their preparation program "emphasized both these approaches" (Rand, 2021)

THE CHALLENGE OF CURRICULUM LITERACY

Teachers, schools and teacher preparation programs (TPPs) face challenges in using and advocating for curriculum literacy. Some districts and teachers are using non-aligned materials as their primary curriculum. For example, two widely used elementary reading programs — Fountas & Pinnell and Lucy Calkins Units of Study — are not aligned to standards or the science of reading. Additionally, many teachers use and take pride in self-created and self-sourced materials. At the heart of this challenge is a mindset: good teachers are skillful lesson planners who use curriculum materials as resources rather than the focus of instruction. If resources are not aligned to standards, are not backed by research or are untested, relying on resources would be a mistake. But when teachers have access to and use high-quality instructional materials, research shows that students have better outcomes (Kane et al., 2016; Chiefs for Change, 2017).

Preparing teachers to be curriculum literate will require new practices for TPPs. Rather than preparing teachers who are expert lesson planners, TPPs will need to prepare effective teachers who can identify, select and appropriately adapt high-quality instructional materials. Rather than being curriculum agnostic, TPPs will be advocates for the use of HQIM. Rather than rely on traditional courses with lectures, discussion and problem-solving, TPPs will create curriculum-based professional learning experiences for teacher candidates.

This guide addresses three key challenges facing TPPs regarding curriculum literacy:

ENGAGING TEACHER EDUCATORS in designing coursework to include HQIM, addressing concerns and building expertise with the content

COMMUNICATING about the curriculum work TPPs are doing, both internally and externally with partners, anticipating concerns related to HQIM and getting feedback from stakeholders

SUPPORTING TEACHER CANDIDATES as critical consumers of curriculum during coursework and throughout their practicums

Each of these challenges requires the TPP to develop a shared understanding of what curriculum literacy means for the program, clearly define curriculum literacy and set a vision for the change required.

While these are not the only challenges facing TPPs, the work to address these will begin to address the gap between candidates' knowledge and skill and support broader implementation of HQIM. Addressing these challenges could look different for each TPP, as they could have different relationships with their partner district(s). Some TPPs may work with only one district that is already utilizing high-quality instructional materials. Others may partner with a single district not utilizing high-quality instructional materials. And still others may partner with numerous districts that each use different instructional materials. This guide is designed to provide a starting place for TPP teacher educators and leaders to re-think their approach to teacher preparation that is specific to their context and district partnerships. By tackling these challenges, teacher preparation providers can better support prospective teachers' curriculum literacy, and their ability to translate their understanding of the subject and the curriculum into meaningful learning opportunities for students in their district.

OVERVIEW
of Teacher Preparation Transformation Center Workgroup

To address the challenges teacher preparation programs face when trying to integrate HQIM into their programming, we — representatives from five national teacher preparation transformation centers working with TPPs across different teacher training contexts and areas of expertise — formed a working group to create a guide to support TPPs and other Centers. The purpose of this working group was to focus on a set of practices that are specific to the work of integrating curriculum literacy into the teacher candidate training experience.

As members of the **Teacher Preparation Transformation Initiative,** we ground our work in a shared vision for teacher preparation transformation: If teacher preparation programs implement sustainable, quality programming at scale, then more teachers will be better prepared to positively impact outcomes for Black, Latino and low-income students. The Teacher Preparation Outcomes and Indicators is a framework that describes the outcomes teacher preparation programs seek to achieve in service of this vision.

For TPPs and Centers using the Teacher Preparation Outcomes and Indicators, we have included the below crosswalk that connects the Outcomes and Indicators with each challenge discussed in this guide.

CHALLENGE	TEACHER PREPARATION OUTCOMES AND INDICATORS CROSSWALK
CHALLENGE 1: Engaging teacher educators in designing coursework to include HQIM	**Teacher Preparation Outcomes and Indicators, Quality Objective A:** Programming builds teacher candidate competency to meet the needs of Black students, Latino/a/x students and those students experiencing poverty Outcome 2: Programming provides opportunities for teacher candidates to develop, practice and demonstrate competencies, including content and pedagogical knowledge and skills that promote learning for all students **Teacher Preparation Outcomes and Indicators, Quality Objective C:** Program ensures teacher educators are effective Outcome 1: The teacher preparation program sets expectations for effective teaching for teacher educators Outcome 3: The teacher preparation program delivers high quality professional development based on teacher educators' needs, teacher candidate performance and program completer performance
CHALLENGE 2: Communicating about the curriculum work TPPs are doing	**Teacher Preparation Outcomes and Indicators, Quality Objective C:** Program ensures teacher educators are effective Outcome 1: The teacher preparation program sets expectations for effective teaching for teacher educators Outcome 3: The teacher preparation program delivers high quality professional development based on teacher educators' needs, teacher candidate performance and program completer performance
CHALLENGE 3: Supporting teacher candidates as critical consumers of curriculum	**Teacher Preparation Outcomes and Indicators, Quality Objective A:** Programming builds teacher candidate competency to meet the needs of Black students, Latino/a/x students and those students experiencing poverty Outcome 2: Programming provides opportunities for teacher candidates to develop, practice and demonstrate competencies, including content and pedagogical knowledge and skills that promote learning for all students

HOW TO
Use This Guide

This guide is organized by three primary topics, which represent key challenges facing TPPs regarding curriculum literacy:

◆ Engaging teacher educators in designing coursework to include high-quality instructional materials;

◆ Communicating about the curriculum work TPPs are doing; and

◆ Supporting teacher candidates as critical consumers of curriculum.

For each topic, the guide includes a table with:

◆ **Example actions** TPPs or Teacher Preparation Transformation Centers (Centers) could take depending on how far along they are in advancing curriculum literacy (exploration, preparation and implementation phase); and,

◆ **Guiding questions** that aid TPPs or Centers in identifying whether and how they are addressing challenges related to curriculum literacy.

Each TPP or Center has its own strategy for approaching curriculum literacy as well as tools and resources for implementing its approach. This guide is not meant to replace these approaches or tools. Instead, this guide is meant to supplement and support existing efforts. Further, because Centers and TPPs vary in their readiness and ability to support HQIM, their approach to utilizing this document will be different. For example, some may choose to tackle all three topics at once while others may tackle one or two at a time as they continue to deepen their understanding of HQIM and related work.

GUIDANCE FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT

Given that each TPP could be in a different phase of implementing curriculum literacy, this guide includes a short self-assessment to help Centers and TPPs identify where they are in this work. This guide breaks down the sample actions, guiding questions and helpful examples into three phases of curriculum literacy implementation for TPPs:

◆ In the **Exploration Phase**, a TPP is aware of curriculum literacy and is beginning to engage partners in conversations about curriculum literacy, partner needs related to HQIM, the role the TPP could play, and where the TPP might want to lean in to address identified needs.

◆ In the **Preparation Phase,** a TPP identifies potential barriers and opportunities for implementation, further assesses partner needs, and develops a plan around curriculum literacy that addresses barriers and is aligned with TPP goals.

◆ In the **Implementation Phase,** a TPP initiates curriculum literacy-related projects and efforts across the organization or with partners and has ongoing structures, processes, and supports so that the HQIM work continues to be delivered, with or without some adaptation.

The self-assessment will help users identify where they are within these phases and therefore where they most need to focus their work in curriculum literacy.

SELF Assessment

Given that each TPP could be in a different phase of implementing curriculum literacy, this guide breaks down the sample actions, guiding questions and helpful resources into three phases of HQIM implementation for TPPs: **The Exploration Phase, the Preparation Phase** or **the Implementation Phase.**

Programs can complete this self-assessment to identify which phase they are in for each challenge, and then focus their review of this guide on that stage. Note that some TPPs may be in the same stage across all three challenges, while others may be in different stages depending on the challenge.

CHALLENGE 1: ENGAGING TEACHER EDUCATORS IN DESIGNING COURSEWORK TO INCLUDE CURRICULUM LITERACY

CONSIDER THESE QUESTIONS TO ASSESS YOUR CURRENT STAGE:

EXPLORATION

◆ Have you considered the importance of curriculum literacy and how it connects to the mission/values of your program?

◆ Have you thought about the internal stakeholders who should engage in this work?

◆ Have you considered what high-quality instructional materials are available and what materials your partner districts are using?

PREPARATION

◆ Have you started to identify specific teacher educators to engage in this work?

◆ Have you considered the various ways teacher educators can engage in this work?

◆ Have you considered common language or definitions related to curriculum literacy?

IMPLEMENTATION

◆ Have you held meetings with your planning team?

◆ Have you made shifts to any coursework so that it incorporates curriculum literacy?

◆ Have you received candidate data to monitor progress?

Rating for Challenge 1

Given your reflections to the above self-assessment, what stage is your program in with efforts to engage faculty in designing coursework to include HQIM?

EXPLORATION   PREPARATION   IMPLEMENTATION

Reflection

What is your program currently doing to engage faculty? What might be next for your program?

CHALLENGE 2: COMMUNICATING ABOUT THE CURRICULUM WORK TPPS ARE DOING

CONSIDER THESE QUESTIONS TO ASSESS YOUR CURRENT STAGE:

EXPLORATION

◆ Have you identified stakeholders who you should communicate with about curriculum literacy?

◆ Have you talked about what your program's vision is for curriculum literacy?

◆ Have you considered how your vision aligns with those of your stakeholders?

PREPARATION

◆ Have you begun drafting messages to share with stakeholders?

◆ Have you considered different communication methods you could use for sharing these messages?

IMPLEMENTATION

◆ Are you regularly communicating your curriculum literacy work to stakeholders?

◆ Have you considered ways to gather feedback from stakeholders on your communication?

Rating for Challenge 2

Given your reflections to the above self-assessment, what stage is your program in with efforts to communicate about the curriculum literacy work your program is doing?

EXPLORATION   PREPARATION   IMPLEMENTATION

Reflection

What is your program currently doing to communicate about your curriculum literacy work? What might be next for your program?

CHALLENGE 3: SUPPORTING TEACHER CANDIDATES AS CRITICAL CONSUMERS OF CURRICULUM

CONSIDER THESE QUESTIONS TO ASSESS YOUR CURRENT STAGE:

EXPLORATION

- Have you determined your definition of curriculum literacy?
- Have you considered whether and how curriculum literacy is currently taught in your program?
- Have you considered how district partners are using HQIM?

PREPARATION

- Have you created a planning team?
- Has the planning team identified learning opportunities throughout the program that can be assessed?
- Has the planning team begun to develop course material?

IMPLEMENTATION

- Have you created learning opportunities for teacher candidates to build their curriculum literacy?
- Do you have a way to assess teacher candidate curriculum literacy?
- Have you discussed how to implement this material with teacher educators?

Rating for Challenge 3

Given your reflections to the above self-assessment, what stage is your program in with efforts to support teacher candidates as critical consumers of curriculum?

EXPLORATION   PREPARATION   IMPLEMENTATION

Reflection

What is your program currently doing to support teacher candidates as critical consumers of curriculum? What might be next for your program?

CHALLENGE 1

Engaging teacher educators in designing coursework to include curriculum literacy

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO ENGAGE TEACHER EDUCATORS IN DESIGNING COURSEWORK TO INCLUDE CURRICULUM LITERACY?

By engaging teacher educators in designing coursework, TPPs support their development and improve the quality of program experiences for teacher candidates.

WHAT DOES THIS WORK LOOK LIKE?

This can look like teacher educators helping to create new program objectives, revise courses or evolve candidate performance expectations. This requires teacher educator buy-in and support, since they carry out the program. Teacher educators should be partners in the design of coursework and not simply stakeholders to be consulted. Ideally, teacher educators who are advocates for the changes and are committed to keeping their colleagues well informed help keep the design process on track, which, in turn, generates broad-based support. This same engagement should continue throughout the implementation phase, in order to ensure ongoing teacher educator involvement.

WHAT ARE THE COMMON CHALLENGES TPPS FACE WHEN DOING THIS WORK?

Engaging teacher educators in designing coursework that includes curriculum literacy can be challenging because it requires a trusted process, changing mental models and identifying and agreeing on K-12 curriculum materials.

◆ **Trusted process:** This work requires trust between the individuals engaging in the design process. Trust could be challenging to build because the teacher educator representatives may lack experience in this area or are not trusted by their peers, or because teacher educators are working in silos and therefore do not have strong relationships. Trust might also be challenging to build if previous attempts to design new coursework have failed to garner support.

◆ **Changing mental models:** Teacher educators may have mental models for curriculum that vary widely based on their experiences. They might need to gain new knowledge to be successful in this work. For example, they might need to learn about curriculum literacy themselves or build the understanding that the use of instructional materials is a complex practice that requires more than a session or two in a methods course. Some teacher educators might also have to overcome concern that limiting the focus to one curriculum will benefit some candidates and hurt others.

◆ **Identifying and agreeing on what K-12 curriculum materials to use in teacher preparation:** Teacher educators will need to identify and agree on which K-12 curriculum materials to use in their coursework. This can be

challenging if programs partner with multiple districts that use different curriculum materials. It can also be challenging if teacher educators have different opinions on the curriculum materials the program should use.

WHICH OF THESE STAGES OF ADOPTION ARE YOU IN FOR THIS CHALLENGE?

◆ In the **Exploration Phase**, a TPP is exploring the role of curriculum literacy in its current coursework and candidate expectations, assessing the current state of curriculum literacy in the program and considering the role teacher educators could play in a curriculum design process.

◆ In the **Preparation Phase,** a TPP identifies potential barriers and opportunities to engage teacher educators, further assesses teacher educator and district partner needs, and develops plans to both engage and support teacher educators in curriculum literacy.

◆ In the **Implementation Phase,** a TPP engages teacher educators in a planning team and makes decisions about how to create learning opportunities for teacher candidates to experience, comprehend and apply HQIM. A TPP has structures, processes, and supports in place to continue engaging teacher educators, assessing the learning opportunities for teacher candidates and monitoring implementation of curriculum literacy with or without some adaptation.

	Example Actions related to HQIM	HQIM Guiding Questions
EXPLORATION	◆ Scan or audit current coursework and practical experiences that include or are related to curriculum literacy ◆ Examine the current profile for graduates and determine the role of curriculum literacy	◆ Why is curriculum literacy important and how is it connected to your mission/values and program goals? ◆ How will teacher educators be engaged in the process? ◆ What is the role of our district partner(s)?
PREPARATION	◆ Convene the right team: Create clear criteria for and nominate potential teacher educator committee members ◆ Create opportunities for teacher educators to engage with HQIM: Structured time/space for them to talk about the topic and do work to begin improving practices ◆ Develop a shared language about curriculum and instructional materials ◆ Creates plan to build teacher educator understanding of curriculum literacy	◆ Who is important to engage in this process? How can we make it possible for them to participate? ◆ How can we build trust between the teacher educators engaging in this work? ◆ How can we support teacher educators to advance their own curriculum literacy? What new knowledge do they need to build to engage in this work?
IMPLEMENTATION	◆ Engage planning team in course development: Define course goals; determine course content; develop teaching methods and tools that are appropriate for the size of the class; determine how to evaluate student learning ◆ Collect candidate data to monitor progress and consider course adjustments as needed ◆ Share progress with teacher educators and partners; solicit feedback to inform continuous improvement ◆ Provide opportunities for teacher educators to build their understanding of curriculum literacy	◆ How might we create learning opportunities for teacher candidates so they can experience, comprehend and apply HQIM? ◆ What K-12 curriculum materials will we build into our coursework? How will we select these materials? ◆ How might we document progress and impact of our curriculum literacy efforts? ◆ How will we share findings with teacher educators and partners?

HELPFUL RESOURCES

◆ **Unit for a social studies methods course focused on developing curriculum literacy:** This is a detailed unit plan for a social studies methods course aimed at developing curriculum literacy.

◆ **Teacher Preparation's Big Opportunity** This is a short read that makes the case as to why teacher preparation programs need to keep pace with the HQIM movement. It poses some questions for preparation programs to consider.
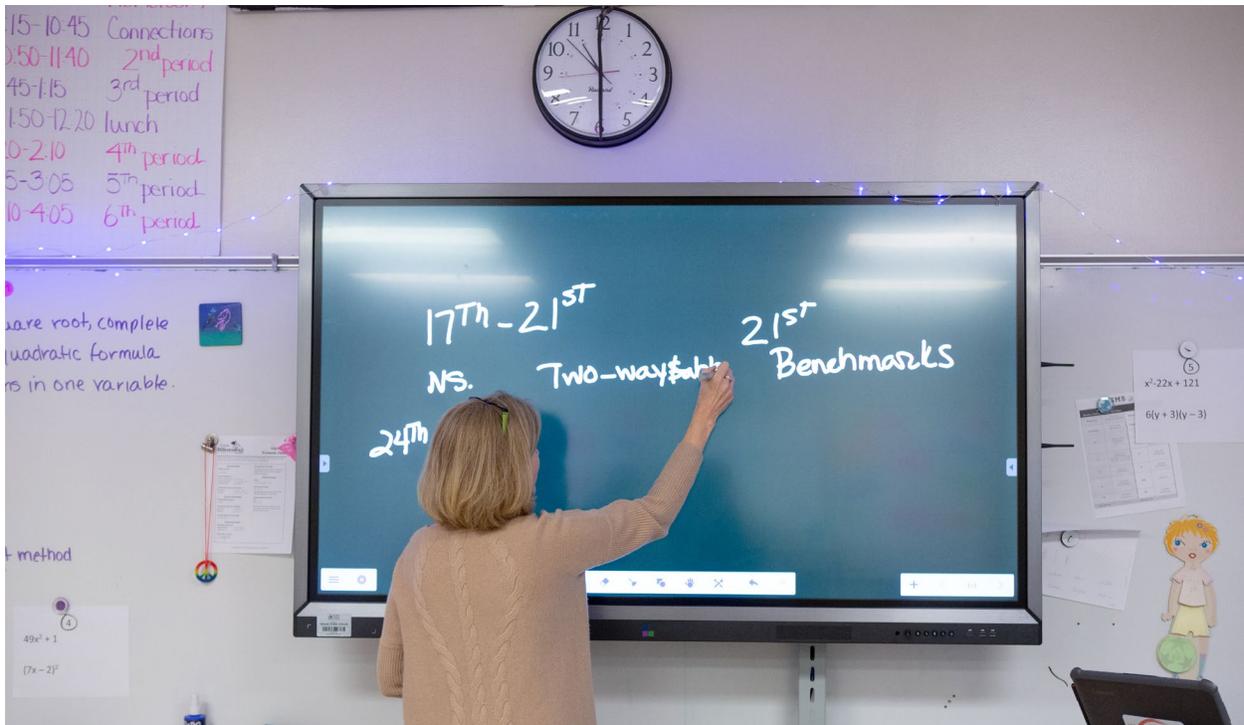
CHALLENGE 2

Communicating about the curriculum work TPPs are doing

WHY IS THIS WORK IMPORTANT FOR TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS?

While TPPs incorporate curriculum literacy as a key competency for teacher candidates, they must communicate with and engage their internal and external partners. Building widespread understanding and support is critical to the successful implementation of new initiatives and particularly around new concepts like curriculum literacy. Many states have definitions of HQIM that can serve as a good starting point (such as Texas and Delaware), but TPPs will need to clearly define curriculum literacy in the context of their own program, candidate competencies and partner district curriculum decisions. Additionally, district partners may already be engaging in HQIM-related work. By engaging outside partners, TPPs can learn from and work in partnership with their districts.

While engaging teacher educators and partner districts in this work is essential, TPPs have a responsibility to reach out to their many other stakeholders as well. Communications and engagement can take many forms, but they are rooted in a strategy with specific goals, clearly defined audiences and clear, compelling messages. Those messages will require a variety of tactics, from face-to-face meetings to social media, to reach the right audiences.

TPPs inform their key audiences about their work with regular updates using communications tools such as websites, newsletters, presentations and meetings. Additionally, TPPs listen closely to stakeholders to ensure their messages about curriculum literacy are heard and understood, and to learn from the work their stakeholders might be doing themselves. Additional modes of communication can be in the form of surveys, focus groups and advisory boards to learn how teacher educators and partners think about the new work and use those perspectives to drive program improvements. By involving teacher educators and partners, TPPs proactively enlist stakeholders in shaping the curriculum literacy work. This type of communication builds understanding and support by creating meaningful opportunities for stakeholders to participate. Finally, TPPs inspire stakeholders by holding a clear vision for what curriculum literacy is and why it's important. When teacher educators and partners value and are personally invested in these changes, they are more likely to proactively help implement and sustain them.

WHAT DOES THIS WORK LOOK LIKE?

Communicating about curriculum literacy looks like having an easy-to-communicate vision for what curriculum literacy is and why it is important. TPPs will intentionally look into the ecosystem of stakeholders and think critically about who to inform and engage and how (e.g., via in-person or virtual meetings, surveys, focus groups, discussions, newsletters, workshops, retreats, high-quality videos, website updates, social media posts, town hall sessions, phone calls, etc.). When designing communication tools, TPPs will communicate regularly and across styles and modes,

capturing both the hearts and minds of people when communicating the work of the TPP. For example, rather than relying solely on presentations of the work that the TPPs are doing, newsletters or meetings can be turned into lively and informative discussions of the impact that TPPs are making. This can give the audience a chance to feel something which, in turn, would gain their support and cooperation. Ultimately, TPPs are creating communication structures that encourage diverse representation, inclusiveness, and equitable participation, and inviting the stakeholders to "learn into" the work of curriculum literacy and to share their own expertise back with the TPP.

WHAT ARE THE COMMON CHALLENGES TPPS FACE WHEN DOING THIS WORK?

Communicating about curriculum literacy can be challenging because it requires agreeing on a clear message, changing mental models and using communications tools.

◆ **Clear messaging:** TPPs might struggle to create a clear, shared message that communicates the work TPPs are doing and why it is important.

◆ **Changing mental models:** Because stakeholders may not have a shared understanding of curriculum literacy and because curriculum literacy challenges some of the ideas around what constitutes good teaching, TPPs need to have thoughtful and consistent communication. TPPs may under-communicate if they don't establish a cadence of communication or don't repeat messages frequently. Additionally, TPPs might need to shift their belief that the TPP is the holder of all curriculum-related knowledge and understand that partner districts might also have expertise to share.

◆ **Communication tools:** The tendency in communication is usually to tap into the rational side of people's minds with plans, goals, methods, deliverables and deadlines. We often forget that before we can get buy-in and support from people, we need to engage their emotions and "find the feeling" that motivates them (Heath & Heath, 2010). TPPs may not be using the right communication tools and may instead rely on more technical messages. For example, presenting reports or narratives to someone who prefers bullet points, or sending emails to an individual who responds best to in-person communication.

WHICH OF THESE STAGES OF ADOPTION ARE YOU IN FOR THIS CHALLENGE?

◆ In the **Exploration Phase,** a TPP develops a vision for curriculum literacy that clarifies why it's important to the TPP, identifies ways to document progress and impact of curriculum literacy efforts and begins to test that vision with some stakeholders.

◆ In the **Preparation Phase,** a TPP identifies potential barriers (e.g., district partners who do not use HQIM, political constraints, communication tools with low impact) and opportunities for communication (e.g., district partner use of HQIM, champions of HQIM and communication tools with reliable reach), further assesses stakeholder needs, and develops a plan to communicate about curriculum literacy that addresses barriers and is aligned with TPP goals.

◆ In the **Implementation Phase,** a TPP initiates curriculum literacy-related projects and efforts across the organization or with partners. It also has structures, processes and support that are ongoing so that the curriculum literacy work continues to be communicated, with or without some adaptation.

Example Actions related to HQIM	HQIM Guiding Questions
EXPLORATION ◆ Develop a clear statement of your vision for curriculum literacy ◆ Test your vision with a group of stakeholders to ensure it resonates with their perspectives ◆ Incorporate curriculum literacy into governance meetings/agendas ◆ Conduct stakeholder mapping and clarify what engages or motivates them related to curriculum literacy	◆ What is our vision for what curriculum literacy is and why it's important? Where are we headed? ◆ How might we document progress and impact of our curriculum literacy efforts? ◆ Who is it important to communicate with about curriculum literacy and why? ◆ What HQIM are our partner K-12 districts implementing? Do we have access to those for use in our program, and if not how can we communicate with partners about this?
PREPARATION ◆ Create key messages aligned to vision and program goals ◆ Determine how to guide communication efforts based on audience (e.g., via surveys, by monitoring participation, engagement, asking people's opinion about how they want to be engaged/informed, etc.) ◆ Establish a cadence for communication ◆ Determine how you will get feedback on your messages	◆ What are our key messages? ◆ How will we communicate with teacher educators and partners? What resources/tools are available for communicating? How do they want to receive information from us? What is the best way of communicating our message to them? ◆ How can our communication tools create space for us to learn from our partners? ◆ Who will be communicating? ◆ How often will we communicate? How frequently should our messages be repeated/reinforced? ◆ How will we receive feedback on our messages?
IMPLEMENTATION ◆ Regularly communicate about curriculum literacy in reliable ways (e.g., newsletters, website) ◆ Evaluate the impact of key messages and/or stakeholder engagement ◆ Utilize the information learned from partners about HQIM	◆ How do we know the stakeholders received our communication? ◆ How are we using the information we learned from our partners on this topic? ◆ Did we achieve the results we desired? ◆ How can we improve our communication?

HELPFUL RESOURCE

◆ **BranchED's REDI Stakeholder Identification Tool:** This tool can help programs identify stakeholders and determine what and how to communicate with them.

CHALLENGE 3

Supporting teacher candidates as critical consumers of curriculum

WHY IS THIS WORK IMPORTANT FOR TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS?

By supporting teacher candidates as critical consumers of curriculum, TPPs can better prepare them to select, revise and facilitate high-quality curriculum. Programs can do this by providing opportunities for teacher candidates to demonstrate competencies in coursework, advising and clinical experiences. Thus, teacher candidates will be able to navigate and use HQIM in the classroom.

WHAT DOES THIS WORK LOOK LIKE?

TPPs that are supporting teacher candidates as critical consumers of curriculum have both a clear vision for what curriculum literacy is and structured opportunities for teacher candidates to practice those skills. Teachers will be assessed on a set of competencies that teach and test curriculum literacy, including:

◆ Research on the impact of teaching effective curricula and on the impact of different pedagogies on student learning

◆ The ability to discern high-quality curricular materials from low-quality, using credible curricular ratings, such as EdReports

◆ The ability to use tools to evaluate as-yet-unrated curricula (such as IMET), to evaluate lessons (such as EQuIP) and to evaluate the extent to which curricular materials are culturally responsive and relevant (such as the Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard or Assessing Bias in Standards and Curricular Materials)

◆ Exposure to sample curricula, state standards and learning curricula in content areas that are highly rated

◆ Guidance on navigating real-world circumstances where teacher candidates may be faced with curricula that are not high-quality

TPPs will design and offer course-based or clinical experiences where teacher candidates are supported to evaluate curricula and propose remedies to the material or pedagogy if required. For example, a Secondary English Language Arts methods class could include assignments that ask students to consider using a set of guiding questions to get oriented to a piece of curriculum (example from University of Michigan here). Schroeder and Curcio (2022) propose a general instructional sequence that could be taught in either the social studies or literacy methods course. In clinical experiences, teacher candidates have the opportunity to remedy deficiencies in the materials they are required to teach. During practice debriefs or reflections, teacher candidates will receive feedback and be evaluated on their ability to evaluate curricula, identify deficiencies and remedy them to the extent possible.

WHAT ARE THE COMMON CHALLENGES TPPS FACE WHEN DOING THIS WORK?

Supporting teacher candidates as critical consumers of curriculum can be challenging because it requires rethinking current course requirements, developing teacher educator expertise and aligning with partner districts.

◆ **Rethinking current programs:** Developing candidates' skills in the use of instructional materials is a complex practice that requires more than a session or two in a methods course. Current course requirements may not allow time for additional content or skill development in curriculum literacy.

◆ **Developing teacher educator expertise:** Current teacher educator expertise may not be aligned with new course requirements and may require marshaling expertise from outside the program (regional, district or research partners) to provide additional content and/or guidance. Additionally, teacher educators who observe in partner districts may not have the skill set required to support teacher candidates to remedy required material or pedagogy that is not high-quality.

◆ **Aligning with partner districts:** Teacher candidates are likely to be required to teach host school materials and pedagogy and they may not have the opportunity to remedy the material or pedagogy. Mentor/host teachers during clinical experiences may not be open to teacher candidates bringing new or different materials into the classroom. And, when partner districts do not use the same curriculum, it creates an additional burden on teacher educators to support practicing teachers.

WHICH OF THESE STAGES OF ADOPTION YOU ARE IN FOR EACH CHALLENGE

◆ In the **Exploration Phase,** a TPP is auditing current coursework and graduate profiles, discussing curriculum literacy with district partners and developing their own expertise and understanding about curriculum literacy.

◆ In the **Preparation Phase,** a TPP engages a planning team in program development, including the identification of the competencies of curriculum literacy required for graduates, and begins designing learning opportunities for candidates in coursework and in practicum.

◆ In the **Implementation Phase,** a TPP initiates curriculum literacy-related projects and efforts across the organization or with partners. It also has structures, processes and supports that are ongoing so that the curriculum literacy work continues to be delivered, with or without some adaptation.

Example Actions related to HQIM	HQIM Guiding Questions
EXPLORATION ◆ Scan or audit of current coursework and practical experiences that include or are related to curriculum literacy ◆ Examine the current profile for graduates and determine the role of curriculum literacy ◆ Survey teacher educators to understand their level of curriculum literacy ◆ Survey district partners on current practice and understanding of HQIM ◆ Marshal expertise from outside the program (regional, district or research partners) to provide additional content and/or guidance	◆ How do we define curriculum literacy? ◆ How is curriculum literacy currently taught? ◆ What is the effect of current practice? ◆ What is the curriculum literacy level of our faculty and mentor teachers? ◆ How do our district partners think about curriculum literacy? How do they need to be engaged in this work?
PREPARATION ◆ Create an assessed set of competencies ◆ Engage planning team in program development: Define learning/course goals; determine content; develop teaching methods and tools; determine how to evaluate student learning ◆ Design learning opportunities for candidates in coursework and in practicum	◆ What does curriculum literacy look like? ◆ What are the knowledge and skills we expect? How will we assess them? ◆ How will curriculum literacy be part of the practicum? ◆ How will we communicate about curriculum literacy with our district partners? ◆ What kind of learning opportunities do we need to create for teacher candidates so they can experience, comprehend and apply HQIM?
IMPLEMENTATION ◆ Update course materials and resources ◆ Convene teacher educators to discuss implementation strategies ◆ Evaluate course quality against expectations/ impact	◆ How might we embed new learning opportunities into current coursework so that teacher candidates can experience, comprehend and apply HQIM? ◆ How might we document candidate knowledge and skill with curriculum literacy? ◆ How might we mitigate differences between district/school partner approaches to curriculum literacy?

HELPFUL RESOURCES

◆ **Secondary ELA methods course syllabus**: Draft ELA methods course syllabus (work in progress), which is grounded in HQIM and makes extensive use of materials.

◆ **Preservice elementary teachers' critique of instructional materials for science:** A journal article that describes how teacher candidates were engaged in a guided analysis of curriculum materials in an elementary science methods course.

◆ **Considerations for culturally relevant content:** A resource to use after a first read of a text, to determine whether it's usable for the classroom, and to begin thinking about complexity and relevance. This includes determining whether a text should not be used, or whether the teacher will need to be thinking carefully about attending to cautions in the text when using with students.

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