

Definition: “Curriculum”

Tukwila School District

Adapted from the Universal Design for Learning 2.0¹

Purpose of Curriculum

The purpose of curricula is not simply to help students master a specific body of knowledge or a specific set of skills, but to help them master learning itself—in short, to become expert learners. Expert learners have developed three broad characteristics. They are: a) strategic, skillful and goal directed; b) knowledgeable, and c) purposeful and motivated to learn more. **Designing curricula** allows teachers to remove potential barriers that could prevent learners from meeting this important goal. Providing equitable access to curricula while continually evaluating and adapting it allows the district to graduate students ready for post-secondary education, productive careers, and global citizenship.

Components of Curriculum. Four highly interrelated components comprise a curriculum: goals, methods, materials, and assessments.

Goals represent the knowledge, concepts, and skills all students should master, and are aligned to the WA Learning Standards.

Methods are the instructional decisions, approaches, procedures, or routines that expert teachers use to accelerate or enhance learning. Expert teachers apply evidence-based methods and differentiate those methods according to the goal of instruction. Curricula facilitate further differentiation of methods, based on learner variability in the context of the task, learner’s social/emotional resources, and the classroom climate. Flexible and varied, methods are adjusted based on continual monitoring of learner progress.

Materials are usually seen as the media used to present learning content and what the learner uses to demonstrate knowledge.

- For **conveying conceptual knowledge**, materials offer multiple media and embedded, just-in-time supports.
- For **strategic learning and expression of knowledge**, materials offer tools and supports needed to access, analyze, organize, synthesize, and demonstrate understanding in varied ways.
- For **engaging with learning**, materials offer alternative pathways to success including choice of content where appropriate, varied levels of support and challenge, and options for recruiting and sustaining interest and motivation.

Assessment is described as the process of gathering information about a learner’s performance using a variety of methods and materials in order to determine learners’ knowledge, skills, and motivation for the purpose of making informed educational decisions. The goal is to improve the accuracy and timeliness of assessments, and to ensure that they are comprehensive and articulate enough to guide instruction – for all learners.

¹ <http://www.udlcenter.org/aboutudl/udlcurriculum>