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THE *BLUEPRINTS* PROGRAM

This course will provide you with a framework for building an inclusive classroom. It will give you many new strategies for meeting the widening challenge of diverse backgrounds and the ever-widening range of physical, emotional, academic, and social challenges in your classroom. The course will provide you with new ideas for integrating helpful instructional strategies throughout the curriculum, and it will provide video demonstrations by your peers from urban, suburban, and rural schools. (A picture is still worth a thousand words!) These teachers will show how they use these strategies with students from many socio-economic, cultural, and special challenge groups. Finally, the course will help you put into practice a “constructivist” approach to learning.

Blueprints for Thinking in the Cooperative Classroom will let you add to your repertoire as a seasoned teacher and encourage you to be a team member. It will challenge you to consider how you and your fellow teachers can create a more caring, cooperative, and thoughtful school. Above all, it will provide you with the tools which research on instruction says will be most helpful as you work to meet the new challenges that societal expectations have imposed on the teaching profession.

Getting Started

Each member of your study team should have a copy of this study guide. If you are taking *Blueprints* for inservice points or graduate credit, your staff developer will ask your team to submit the following: (a) a completed copy of this study guide from each individual on the team, (b) lesson artifacts identified at the end of each assignment in this course, (c) a portfolio cover sheet, and (d) a fair-share explanation sheet. If you are using these materials as a staff development task in your building without special points or credits for incentives, we still encourage you to work together and complete the assignments together.

You will notice that there are several different types of assignments in the work materials. There are individual tasks and group tasks. There are tasks that ask you to think about a topic before, during, and after reading the text. In most cases, the after-reading tasks direct you to apply the ideas from the text to your classroom. We consider these applications and your assessment of the applications to be the most important part of the course. When you try an idea out in your classroom, do not be concerned if it is unsuccessful. We anticipate that some of your lessons will bring awesome results, some will be O.K., and some may need repair and readjustment. What is important is *how* you think about improving your skill in teaching these lessons which enable each and every student to construct meaning from the curriculum you present.

LESSON ORGANIZATION

Each lesson presented in the Team Study Guide contains several sections. In this list, you will see the major headings used in each lesson. These headings will cue you to each component needed to complete the lesson.

Lesson Overview—offers a brief summary to introduce what the lesson will cover.

Materials Needed—outlines what pages in the *Blueprints* text to read, which video segments to watch, and any other materials necessary.

Reading—tells you which sections of the *Blueprints* text to read in order to complete the lesson.

Video Summary & Video—the video summary gives you an overview of what you will observe by watching the video segment. The video section provides you with questions to complete to maximize the knowledge you take from both the text and video.

Applying Your Knowledge—gives you exercises for putting your knowledge into practice.

Reviewing Your Knowledge—provides you and your team with direction for thinking metacognitively about what and how you learned.

Assessing Your Team's Cooperation—encourages you and your team to reflect on and evaluate how well your team is cooperating.

Closure—draws the lesson to an end usually with a journal entry or reflection.

Application/Grade Requirements—outlines classroom applications with grade equivalents for course credit (if required by your district).

Suggested Resources—gives you sources for additional information and references.

Portfolio Checklist—helps you make sure you have completed all of the required assignments for applications/grades.

Journal Pages

Included throughout your Team Study Guide are blank pages for you to complete reflection logs or journal pages. At the end of a lesson, we may ask you to reflect on the work you have completed in that lesson. You and your study team may decide how you want to prepare for this task. For instance, you may want to review the “thought starters” we provide before writing individual responses. On the other hand, you may want to create individual responses first, and then listen to each other’s ideas. Whichever way you decide to proceed, it is important that you record a response in your individual journal and that you take some time to think out loud with your colleagues. If you decide to share your thoughts before you write journal entries, it is important that each team member respects and honors the thinking done by the others in the group. This “thinking about your thinking” or “metacognition” is a critical stage in your construction of meaning from the lesson. This is the stage in which each learner takes responsibility for his or her own learning and constructs meaning or makes sense of the information and experiences gained from a lesson. By practicing and becoming experienced with metacognition, it will be easier for you to help your own students use and benefit from thinking about their thinking.

The Study Team Approach

We suggest that you take this course with one or two peers in a study team. This enables you to complete the study and the application tasks more easily in this cooperative model. However, if you choose to complete the course alone, we suggest you find someone such as a peer, spouse, or friend to help you think through the application assignments. When you encounter team instructions in the work materials, complete the tasks by yourself, but feel free to discuss your ideas with others.

About Grades

If you are using this program in a graduate course or staff development program that requires final grades, you will want to set a goal for the grade you want to achieve. You should make your intentions known to your team by filling out the Portfolio Cover Sheet (Figure A, p. xi). (You may copy this page when completed and attach it to your portfolio work. There is a blackline master of the Portfolio Cover Sheet on p. 138.) This cover sheet must be sent with your portfolio for evaluation. As a team, you can work at a particular level of application. The three levels of application this course consists of are: Basic Application, comparable to a C Grade; Advanced Application, comparable to a B Grade; and Quality Application, comparable to an A Grade. Teams can work at the Basic or Advanced level. However, one team member may choose to work at the Quality level individually even if everyone else on the team elects only the Advanced level, or the whole team may elect to work at the Quality level. Keep in mind that all materials completed must be sent in a team portfolio to an evaluator for a grade. Organization of your work is extremely important. Check with your staff developer for details.

For those who are earning graduate credits, the course uses these approaches to grading (unless your staff developer has provided you with alternative approaches).

1. Each team will submit a portfolio of completed work. If all assignments are completed as instructed, each team member will receive credit for completing the Basic Application level or a C grade.
2. All team members must fulfill their fair share of the work while participating in this course. Upon completion of the course, as a team you will write an explanation describing how your team defined and carried out the fair-share concept (see Figure B, p. xii). Each team member must “sign off” that all members of the team fulfilled their fair share.
3. Your team may decide to complete the additional assignments at the Advanced Application level (B Grade). Assignments at the Advanced Application level are indicated throughout the study guide. These are team assignments for a team grade.
4. Your team, or any member of it, may elect to complete the additional assignments given at the Quality Application level (A Grade). The team may work at the Quality Application level or encourage one or two members to work at the Quality Application level and one or two to work at the Advanced Application level.
5. A portfolio cover sheet must be included, indicating what grade each member is working to achieve. However, it is the right of the grader to determine whether submitted work meets the minimum quality standards for a requested grade. Grading standards are based on these expectations:
 - a. All written work must be neat, well organized, and easy to read. (Type-written text is preferred.) You are expected to use the cover sheets and forms for completing the assignments. Team members should help each other edit all work for correct spelling, grammar, sentence structure, etc., and organize the team portfolio so that the grader can easily find all work submitted for each lesson.
 - b. Answers should be thorough and include specific, appropriate examples and/or reasons.
 - c. Where appropriate, your evaluation of student artifacts must be included.

How to Organize Your Portfolio

If you are using the *Blueprints* program for district or university credit, you will need to create a team portfolio in order to receive credit. As a team, you also can decide the best way to organize your work for an evaluator’s review. In general you will want to include (1) a portfolio cover sheet (see Figure A, p. xi), (2) a fair-share explanation sheet (see Figure B, p. xii), and (3) the team members’ completed study guides. All artifacts and additional assignments requested in the lessons should also be included. Submit all assignments labeled and in order so that the evaluator can easily identify your work.

1. Label all loose materials, such as artifacts, with a lesson number so that an evaluator can easily tell what lesson corresponds to which item.
2. Use the portfolio checklist at the end of each lesson to be sure that you have completed all of the required assignments.
3. Sign and date all materials. When the item is a team submission, all must sign.

FIGURE A

**BLUEPRINTS FOR THINKING IN THE COOPERATIVE CLASSROOM
PORTFOLIO COVER SHEET**

Name _____

Address (work) _____

Phone (work) _____

Address (home) _____

Phone (home) _____

I intend to work at the following level (circle one):

Basic Application (C Grade)

Advanced Application (B Grade)

Quality Application (A Grade)

Figure B

FAIR-SHARE EXPLANATION SHEET

The following is an explanation of the method our team used to carry out a fair share of work when completing the *Blueprints for Thinking in the Cooperative Classroom* program.

Signatures: _____

Date: _____