Design of Geography Instructional Materials

Online Course for ProGeographer Program
UNC Graduate Certificate in Geography Education

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The purpose of this course is to provide participants in the ProGeographer program hands-on experience developing and testing geography instructional materials related to topics presented during their 3-course set of content and field courses. It can be taken as a standalone course for participants who are not completing the graduate certificate.

Prerequisites

- Participants must be able to test the materials they develop in classes during the year in which this course is delivered.
- Participants will supply samples of typical activities they have used in their own classes prior to this course.

Objectives

- Participants will complete a set of three exercises and engage in online discussion-board forums with their colleagues about designing geography materials that use an issues-based, inquiry approach.
- Participants, working in teams, will develop and test (in classrooms) a unit of standards-based geography instructional materials, to be published on the Colorado Geographic Alliance (COGA) website or any other suitable website for national dissemination.
- Successful completion of this course (GEOG 513) is part of a “Graduate Certificate in Geography Education” from UNC.
Course Structure

January 2015

☐ Participants will be assigned three exercises that provide practice in organizing spatial data for use in classroom activities. Debriefing and analysis of these tasks will be done through online discussion-board forums.

☐ Participants will develop a content outline for their final unit. The unit will consist of 3-5 issues-based lessons that use place-specific case studies to present geographic concepts appropriate for each participant’s curriculum. The outline will include a plan for student activities based on use of appropriate spatial data to illustrate the concepts.

February – April 2015

☐ Participants continue development of their units, acquiring and organizing the spatial data needed for each lesson’s activities.

☐ Participants test the materials in classrooms; reflect (using discussion board forums) on the classroom usefulness of their activities and lessons; and revise the units as needed based on the classroom experience.

☐ Participants will be divided into “editing teams” that will review each other’s unit ideas and exchange suggestions with their team members, via an open forum on Blackboard. Course instructor will monitor discussions and guide the development process as the units are developed. Classroom tested versions of the units will be completed by April 30, 2015.

May - June 2015

☐ Participants will be asked to conduct a workshop for other teachers to introduce and model the unit for them. These workshops would demonstrate effective use of inquiry-based materials in geography teaching.

☐ Following final editing, the units will be published in summer 2015.
Course Requirements

- **Exercises:** (75 points) – Participants must complete on a timely basis three data acquisition and organization activities during January 2015. These will be submitted electronically to Blackboard and scored by the instructor to ensure that geographic data are organized and analyzed appropriately.

- **Participation in Discussion Boards:** (125 points) – Participants are required to engage with their colleagues and the instructor in the Blackboard forums. These discussions will include debriefing of the exercises; discussing strategies for presenting geographic concepts and current events at grade-appropriate levels; finding sources for data and appropriate organization of data for student use in lessons; and reflecting about classroom testing of the units. Scores will be based on the timeliness, quality, and frequency of contributions.

- **Final Unit:** (300 points) – Participants complete development and classroom testing of an instructional unit that is appropriate to grade and curriculum. This original unit includes a coordinated set of 3-5 lessons, including appropriate concept presentations, all supporting materials (data for student activities), and guidance for other teachers using the unit. Lesson elements should include educational objectives; time and materials needed; detailed instructional procedures; relevant geographic questions and data, including maps or other graphics; any student worksheets as needed; assessment strategies and instruments; and list of references and suggested reading list. During this course, participant teams will assess each other’s units, critique activities and concept presentations, and evaluate the units to improve their classroom utility.

Readings and Resources


**Grading**

The course requirements described above come to a total of 500 points. Letter grades are assigned based on points earned, as follows: A = 450 points and higher; B = 400-449; C = 350-399; D = 300-349; F = less than 299. Because this course is part of the Graduate Certificate in Geography Education, a grade of B or higher is required to satisfy the Certificate requirements.

**Disability Accommodation Statement**

Any student requesting disability accommodation for this class must inform the instructor giving appropriate notice. Students are encouraged to contact the Disability Support Services at (970) 351-2289 to certify documentation of disability and to ensure that accommodations are implemented in a timely manner.