



UT Tyler SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Educational Leadership with Standard Principal Certification

Course	EDLR 5349: Curriculum & Instruction for School Improvement
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Term	Fall 2026
Last Day to Withdraw from this course:	October 30, 2026

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course offers a framework intended to help educational leaders (principals) recognize quality instructional and curricular practices that lead to school improvement and student success. The course will provide research-based teaching methods, explains how to implement them in the classroom, and shows what exemplary instruction looks like. Students will observe examples of state-of-the-art teaching methods in action.

OVERVIEW

This course prepares aspiring principals to recognize, analyze, and evaluate high-quality curriculum and instruction across content areas and instructional settings. Students will examine research-based instructional practices, curriculum alignment, cognitive demand, assessment, student work, instructional materials, and evidence of student learning.

Emphasis is placed on developing the professional judgment necessary for principals to determine whether students are experiencing rigorous, aligned, and effective instruction and to identify appropriate leadership responses when improvement is needed.

Students will move from examining individual instructional practices to analyzing broader patterns across classrooms, curriculum, assessment, and campus instructional systems. Throughout the course, students will use multiple sources of evidence to support instructional decisions and connect their analysis to school improvement and student success.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Analyze research-based instructional practices to determine how they support student learning across content areas and instructional contexts.
- Evaluate the quality of curriculum and instruction using research-based criteria and evidence of student learning.
- Analyze alignment among Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), learning expectations, instructional tasks, cognitive demand, assessment, and student work.
- Evaluate instructional tasks and assessments for appropriate cognitive demand, including the application of Depth of Knowledge (DOK).
- Analyze classroom observations, instructional artifacts, assessment evidence, and student work to identify patterns of instructional strength and need.
- Evaluate curriculum, instructional materials, assessment practices, and collaborative instructional processes to determine their contribution to a coherent instructional system.
- Analyze differences in students' opportunities to engage in rigorous, grade-level or course-level learning.
- Evaluate instructional evidence to distinguish symptoms, possible contributing conditions, and significant instructional problems of practice.
- Justify evidence-based leadership recommendations designed to strengthen curriculum, instruction, and student learning.

TEXAS PRINCIPAL STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

EDLR 5349 is aligned with the Texas Principal as Instructional Leader Standards, 19 TAC §241.15. Course content, learning activities, and assessments emphasize the standards most directly related to curriculum, instruction, assessment, student learning, educator development, and continuous instructional improvement.

Primary Standard: Leading Learning, §241.15(c)

This course provides substantial preparation in the following Leading Learning standards. The principal:

- **§241.15(c)(1)** “creates a campus culture that sets high expectations, promotes learning, and provides intellectual stimulation for self, students, and staff;”
- **§241.15(c)(2)** “prioritizes instruction and student achievement by understanding, sharing, and promoting a clear definition of high-quality instruction based on best practices from recent research;”

- **§241.15(c)(3)** “routinely monitors and improves instruction by visiting classrooms, engaging in formative, evidence-based appraisal processes and conferences with teachers, and attending grade or team meetings;”
- **§241.15(c)(4)** “facilitates the use of sound research-based practice in the development and implementation of campus curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular programs to fulfill academic, developmental, social, and cultural needs, including the needs of students with disabilities;”
- **§241.15(c)(5)** “facilitates campus participation in collaborative school district planning, implementation, monitoring, and curriculum revision to ensure appropriate scope, sequence, content, and alignment;”
- **§241.15(c)(6)** “implements a rigorous curriculum aligned with state standards, including college and career readiness standards;”
- **§241.15(c)(7)** “analyzes the curriculum to ensure that teachers align content across grades and that curricular scopes and sequences meet the particular needs of their diverse student populations, including curriculum and instruction management for students with disabilities;”
- **§241.15(c)(8)** “monitors and ensures staff uses multiple forms of student data to inform instruction and intervention decisions to maximize instructional effectiveness and student achievement;”
- **§241.15(c)(9)** “ensures that effective instruction maximizes growth of individual students and student groups, supports equity, and eliminates the achievement gap;”
- **§241.15(c)(10)** “ensures staff have the capacity and time to collaboratively and individually use classroom formative and summative assessment data to inform effective instructional practices and interventions; and”
- **§241.15(c)(11)** “facilitates the use and integration of technology, telecommunications, and information systems that enhance learning.”

Supporting Standard: Human Capital, §241.15(d)

The course also addresses selected Human Capital standards as candidates examine how principals support adult learning and instructional improvement. The principal:

- **§241.15(d)(1)** “invests and manages time to prioritize the development, support, and supervision of the staff to enhance student outcomes;”
- **§241.15(d)(3)** “uses data from multiple points of the year to complete accurate appraisals of all staff, using evidence from regular observations, student data, and other sources to evaluate the effectiveness of teachers and staff;”

- **§241.15(d)(4)** “coaches and develops educators by conducting conferences, giving individualized feedback, and supporting individualized professional growth opportunities;”
- **§241.15(d)(5)** “facilitates the campus’s professional learning community to review data, processes, and policies in order to improve teaching and learning in the school;”
- **§241.15(d)(7)** “collaboratively develops, implements, and revises a comprehensive and on-going plan for professional development of campus staff that addresses staff needs based on staff appraisal trends, goals, and student information;”
- **§241.15(d)(8)** “ensures the effective implementation of a continuum of professional development by the appropriate allocation of time, funding, and other needed resources;”

Supporting Standard: School Culture, §241.15(b)

Selected School Culture standards are addressed as candidates examine the conditions necessary to sustain high-quality curriculum and instruction. The principal:

- **§241.15(b)(1)** “ensures that a positive, collaborative, and collegial school culture facilitates and enhances the implementation of campus initiatives and the achievement of campus goals;”
- **§241.15(b)(2)** “uses emerging issues, recent research, demographic data, knowledge of systems, campus climate inventories, student learning data, and other information to collaboratively develop a shared campus vision;”
- **§241.15(b)(7)** “models and promotes the continuous and appropriate development of all learners, including faculty and staff, in the campus community;”
- **§241.15(b)(8)** “uses strategies to ensure the development of collegial relationships and effective collaboration of campus staff;”
- **§241.15(b)(10)** “establishes and communicates consistent expectations for staff and students, providing supportive feedback to ensure a positive campus environment;”

Supporting Standard: Strategic Operations, §241.15(f)

Selected Strategic Operations standards are addressed when candidates analyze instructional problems and monitor improvement efforts. The principal:

- **§241.15(f)(1)** “assesses current campus needs, reviewing a wide set of evidence to determine the campus’s priorities, and sets ambitious and measurable school goals, targets, and strategies that form the campus’s strategic plan;”

- **§241.15(f)(2)** “outlines and tracks meaningful goals, targets, and strategies aligned to a school vision that continuously improves teacher effectiveness and student outcomes;”
- **§241.15(f)(4)** “establishes structures to regularly monitor multiple data points with leadership teams to evaluate progress toward goals, adjusting strategies to improve effectiveness;”

Supporting Standard: Executive Leadership, §241.15(e)

Selected Executive Leadership standards support candidates' development as reflective, evidence-based decision makers. The principal:

- **§241.15(e)(1)** “reflects on his or her practice, seeks and acts on feedback, and strives to continually improve, learn, and grow;”
- **§241.15(e)(2)** “engages in ongoing and meaningful professional growth activities to further develop knowledge and skills and to model lifelong learning;”
- **§241.15(e)(7)** “gathers and organizes information from a variety of sources for use in creative and effective campus decision making;”
- **§241.15(e)(8)** “frames, analyzes, and creatively resolves campus problems using effective problem-solving techniques to make timely, high-quality decisions;”
- **§241.15(e)(9)** “develops, implements, and evaluates change processes for organizational effectiveness;”

Supporting Standard: Ethics, Equity, and Diversity, §241.15(g)

Equity is embedded throughout the course rather than treated as a separate instructional topic. The principal:

- **§241.15(g)(4)** “models and promotes the continuous and appropriate development of all learners in the campus community;”
- **§241.15(g)(5)** “ensures all students have access to effective educators and continuous learning opportunities;”
- **§241.15(g)(7)** “implements special campus programs to ensure that all students are provided quality, flexible instructional programs and services to meet individual student needs, including instructional and curricular supports for students with disabilities;”
- **§241.15(g)(10)** “treats all members of the community with respect and develops strong, positive relationships with them to create an inclusive school environment.”

Detailed alignment among course learning outcomes, modules, major assessments, the Texas Principal Standards, TExES Principal as Instructional Leader (268) competencies, and PASL expectations will be provided in Canvas.

TEXAS PRINCIPAL CERTIFICATION ALIGNMENT

This course supports the preparation of candidates for instructional leadership responsibilities associated with Texas principal certification.

Course content and learning experiences emphasize principal responsibilities related to:

- Curriculum and instructional quality
- Research-based instructional practices
- Student learning
- Assessment and data use
- Instructional materials
- Monitoring instruction
- Teacher and team instructional capacity
- Equitable access to rigorous learning
- Evidence-based instructional decision-making
- Continuous school improvement

Course activities also provide opportunities for students to practice the analytical reasoning and evidence-based written communication expected in the TExES Principal as Instructional Leader (268) examination. Selected learning experiences support skills associated with the Performance Assessment for School Leaders (PASL), including identifying instructional problems or challenges, examining multiple sources of evidence, supporting professional learning, and evaluating instructional improvement.

Detailed alignment to Texas Principal Standards, TExES competencies, and PASL expectations will be provided in Canvas where applicable.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

There are no required textbooks for purchase. All course materials will be provided at no cost through:

- Open Educational Resources (OER)
- University library resources
- Texas Education Agency resources
- Institute of Education Sciences and What Works Clearinghouse resources
- Open-access research and professional resources
- Selected district and instructional resources when appropriate

REQUIRED READINGS

Required readings will include selected resources related to:

- Research-based instructional practices
- Content-specific instructional practices
- Curriculum alignment and coherence
- Depth of Knowledge and cognitive demand
- Formative and summative assessment
- Student work and evidence of learning
- Instructional materials
- Professional learning and collaborative instructional practice
- School improvement
- Texas Principal Standards
- TExES Principal as Instructional Leader expectations
- PASL expectations

Specific readings and resources will be provided within each Canvas module.

ABOUT COURSE READINGS

This course prioritizes depth of engagement over volume of reading. Rather than requiring students to read large amounts of material each week, readings and resources are intentionally selected to support the analysis of authentic curriculum, instruction, assessment, and student-learning evidence.

Students should approach course readings from the perspective of an instructional leader. The central question is not simply: What does this resource say?

Students should also consider:

- What does this mean for classroom instruction?
- What would this practice look like across different content areas?
- What evidence would indicate that the practice is being implemented effectively?
- What evidence would demonstrate student learning?
- What should a principal look for when observing this practice?
- What limitations or contextual factors should a principal consider?
- How should this evidence influence leadership decisions?

COURSE CONTENT

Module 1 - August 24–September 11, 2026
Recognizing High-Quality Curriculum and Instruction
Module 2 - September 14–October 2, 2026
Observing and Analyzing Teaching and Learning
Module 3 - October 5–October 23, 2026
Evaluating Curriculum, Assessment, and Student Learning
Module 4 - October 26–November 13, 2026
Leading Instructional Improvement
Module 5 - November 16–December 11, 2026
Evaluating Instructional Improvement and Leading for Student Success

GRADING CRITERIA

This course uses a traditional grading approach designed to assess students' ability to analyze and evaluate curriculum, instruction, assessment, and student-learning evidence from the perspective of an educational leader.

Students will be evaluated based on:

- Depth and accuracy of instructional analysis
- Ability to apply research-based instructional principles
- Use of multiple sources of evidence to support conclusions
- Analysis of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and student learning
- Ability to distinguish evidence from assumptions or unsupported conclusions
- Quality and feasibility of leadership recommendations
- Application of course concepts to authentic educational settings
- Quality of writing and organization of ideas
- Engagement with feedback and revision
- Timely submission of assignments

All assignments are expected to reflect graduate-level thinking, evidence-based professional judgment, and professional communication appropriate for aspiring school leaders.

GRADING SCALE

A 90–100% of points

B 80–89% of points

C 70–79% of points

D 60–69% of points

F below 59.9% of total points

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS & EVALUATION

Assignment	
Framework for Recognizing Instructional Excellence	15%
Instructional Observation and Evidence Analysis	20%
Instructional Program Analysis	25%
Instructional Improvement and Professional Learning Plan	20%
Instructional Leadership Portfolio and School Improvement Analysis	20%
Total	100%

Detailed assignment descriptions, expectations, rubrics, required evidence, and the assignment schedule will be posted on Canvas.

ABOUT COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Course assignments are intentionally designed around a small number of substantial learning experiences rather than weekly graded assignments.

Students will complete readings, video analyses, case studies, instructional artifact reviews, calibration activities, and other learning experiences throughout each module. These activities are designed to prepare students for the major course assignments and may not always receive a separate grade.

The purpose of these activities is to develop the knowledge and professional judgment needed to complete the major assessments successfully. Major assignments build across the course.

Students will move through the following progression: Define instructional quality → Observe and analyze evidence → Identify instructional patterns → Define an instructional problem → Develop an improvement response → Evaluate improvement

Students should therefore retain course assignments and instructor feedback throughout the semester because earlier work may inform later analyses.

FIELD-BASED AND AUTHENTIC EVIDENCE

Because this is a principal preparation course, students will have opportunities to apply course concepts to authentic educational settings.

Depending on the assignment, students may examine:

- Classroom instruction
- Curriculum documents

- TEKS
- Lesson or unit plans
- Instructional materials
- Student tasks
- Assessments
- De-identified student work
- PLC artifacts
- Campus or student-performance data
- Instructional improvement evidence

Students must follow all university, district, campus, and legal requirements related to confidentiality and access to educational records.

Student and educator names should not appear in course assignments unless specifically authorized.

Course assignments are instructional analyses and should not be represented as formal personnel evaluations.

Alternative instructor-provided cases or artifact sets may be available when access to appropriate field evidence is limited.

COURSE POLICIES

It is my goal for each of you to benefit and grow professionally throughout this course. This course emphasizes the analysis and evaluation of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and student learning, and your engagement with course materials is essential to your success.

I value open communication and encourage you to reach out via email, phone, or Zoom to discuss course concepts, assignments, or your progress.

PARTICIPATION

Participation is defined by your consistent engagement with course materials, learning activities, field-based experiences, and assignments.

As graduate students preparing for educational leadership, you are expected to engage thoughtfully with research and professional resources, analyze instructional evidence, and apply course concepts to authentic educational settings.

You are responsible for completing assignments on time and maintaining consistent engagement throughout each module.

Because modules may extend across multiple weeks, students should not wait until the final days of a module to begin the work.

Course activities may include:

- Readings
- Classroom videos
- Instructional artifact analysis
- Student-work analysis
- Case studies
- Assessment analysis
- Data analysis
- Field-based evidence collection
- Collaborative calibration activities
- Reflection and revision

These activities are designed to support successful completion of the major course assignments and should be distributed across the module.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

Specific requirements and guidelines will be provided in Canvas.

All assignments must reflect graduate-level thinking and meet the following criteria:

- Submitted on time
- Clearly organized and professionally presented
- Uses specific evidence to support conclusions
- Demonstrates analysis rather than simple description
- Applies relevant research and course concepts
- Distinguishes evidence from assumptions and unsupported conclusions
- Provides recommendations appropriate to the role of the principal
- Protects student, teacher, and school confidentiality
- Is free of typographical and grammatical errors
- Follows APA 7th edition formatting when applicable

All written assignments must be completed in **Microsoft Word**. If another program is used, submissions must be converted to **PDF**.

Assignments are due by midnight Central Time on the due date and must be submitted through Canvas.

Late assignments will not be accepted unless prior arrangements are made due to emergencies or significant health concerns.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is essential in this course. All work must be your own and must properly acknowledge sources through appropriate citation.

Canvas will process submissions through **Turnitin**. You are encouraged to review similarity reports and address any issues before final submission.

Unauthorized collaboration is not permitted unless explicitly stated. Violations will be addressed according to University Policies and the Student Standards of Academic Conduct.

Submitting the same assignment in multiple courses without substantial revision is not permitted. If prior work is used, it must be significantly expanded and developed for the specific learning outcomes and requirements of this course.

Because several assignments involve field-based evidence, students must also accurately represent the evidence they collect. Fabricating classroom observations, student work, assessment results, interview information, or other field-based evidence is considered a violation of academic integrity.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

UT Tyler supports the responsible use of AI tools. AI may be used to assist with writing, organization, brainstorming, and revision when permitted by the assignment, but it should not replace your own thinking, instructional analysis, or professional judgment. **You are responsible for evaluating the accuracy, relevance, and appropriateness** of any AI-generated content. Inaccurate, fabricated, misleading, or unsupported information will impact your work.

AI may not be used to fabricate:

- Classroom observations
- Student work
- Assessment data
- Teacher statements
- Interviews

- Campus data
- Field experiences
- Research findings
- Citations or sources

When an assignment requires you to analyze instructional evidence, your conclusions must be based on the actual evidence provided or collected.

ANY USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE MUST BE DISCLOSED. If you use an AI tool for any portion of an assignment, you must:

- Identify the AI tool used.
- Explain how the tool was used.
- Cite the use of AI according to APA 7th edition guidelines when applicable.
- Include a copy of the complete transcript of the AI exchange with your assignment submission.

The transcript should include both your prompts and the AI-generated responses so that the nature and extent of the AI assistance are transparent.

Failure to disclose AI use or failure to include the required transcript may be treated as a violation of course academic integrity expectations.

AI should be used as a support tool, not as a substitute for engaging with course readings, examining instructional evidence, conducting research, or developing your own professional analysis.

APA STYLE CITATION INFORMATION:

APA Style guidance on citing ChatGPT and other AI tools will be provided in Canvas.

APA STYLE CITATION INFORMATION:

<https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt>

CODE OF CONDUCT

I expect students in this course to conduct themselves as university students of graduate standing and as aspiring educational leaders.

I expect students to actively engage in course assignments and learning activities. I expect students to meet assigned deadlines. I expect students to behave in an academically honest manner. I reserve the right to penalize students who violate class policies.

Because course activities may involve authentic instructional evidence, students are also expected to demonstrate professional discretion and respect for educators, students, schools, and communities.

Instructional analysis should focus on evidence and professional practice rather than personal criticism of individual educators.

COMMUNICATING WITH DR. OLIVERAS

My email address is yoliveras@uttyler.edu. Please note that this is not a Patriots email address. My cell phone number is posted in Canvas.

Feel free to text or email. I will make every effort to respond within 24 hours during the week and within 36 hours on weekends.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

This course is a professional space for learning, analysis, and discussion about curriculum, instruction, assessment, and school improvement.

Students are expected to communicate respectfully and professionally in all interactions. Discussions of instructional practice should remain focused on evidence, course concepts, and student learning. Professional dialogue should reflect respect for differing perspectives and maintain a focus on practices and systems rather than individuals.

Because students may bring examples from their own educational settings, information shared about teachers, students, campuses, or districts should be treated professionally and confidentially.

Disagreement is an important part of instructional leadership. Students are encouraged to challenge ideas, interpretations, and recommendations when those challenges are supported by evidence and communicated professionally.

DIGITAL LIBRARY RESOURCES

Students enrolled in our doctoral program have online access to the UT Tyler Robert R. Muntz Library (<http://library.uttyler.edu>). Follow the link to the library and then complete the instructions at those sites for accessing information from a distant site. Many of the database subscriptions funded by student fees give you access to full text journals that you will need for your review of the literature. If a specific journal is not available, Vandy Dubre will procure the article for you. Please take the time to update your account and get familiar with the resources available.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES & INFORMATION