



**UND** UNIVERSITY OF  
**NORTH DAKOTA**  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

# Teacher Guide

Designed to work with FACS standards

*(Updated October 2024)*

## Access:

### Module:

<https://education.und.edu/about/why-teach>

### OR Contact:

#### Office of Teacher Education

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# How the Module Works

## How to connect your students?

- Every user will need a smart device with a web browser (Laptop, PLD, Tablet, smart phone.)
- Headphones are also important for users to experience the video and audio content without disturbing others. (*Note: about half of the Module's content is video and audio.*)
- Please visit this link to access the module: <https://education.und.edu/about/why-teach>
- The Module is freely available to the public, hosted by the University of North Dakota. Anyone can anonymously browse all eight "Topic" pages at any time.
  - However, completion of the Module for receiving the **certificate** from UND will require a brief registration in which the user submits basic information (name, email address, school, etc.)
- Student users having difficulty with the Module should refer to their teacher first.
- Teachers or individual users having difficulty with the Module may refer to:
  - *Why Teach? North Dakota* manager: **Katie Stermer** - [katie.stermer@und.edu](mailto:katie.stermer@und.edu)
  - Alternatively, you may reach out to a staff person at this website to be connected for support: <https://education.und.edu/academics/tlpp/teacher-education/index.html>

## Intended Use

- This Module is designed for use in classrooms as well as future educator programs.
- The intention goes *beyond* educating students who are already interested in teaching, but to develop interest in teaching among students who haven't thought about a career or are looking for something new.
- The Lexile and difficulty of the Module are generally appropriate for 8<sup>th</sup>-grade and above. Topics #7 and #8 have to do with college readiness and may be less appropriate for 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> grades.
- This Module may also be used as about 1-week of *autonomous* curriculum. For example, a substitute teacher would be able to direct students to use the Module, assuming students are equipped for it.

## Progressing through the topics

- There is *not* a special teacher dashboard, or teacher content built into the Module. This guide is meant to play that role. Assigning the *Why Teach?* Module to students will mean you act as a user alongside your students, accessing the content in the same mode.
- There are no blocks or gates preventing a user from skipping ahead or referring to the content out of topic sequence. The only limitation is access to the "Progress Page Codes" at the end of each topic which you open by completing the content for that topic. Students are encouraged to complete one topic at a time and complete the "Progress Page Codes" at the completion of each topic.
  - Please encourage students to enter the code manually, rather than copy/paste. This will be more accurate.
- The "Topics" (#1 - #8) cover a range of detailed ideas related to their titles on the home page.
- Each Topic has a variety of activities. They all start with a "Topic Guide Video" which overviews the topic. Following the video are activities, videos, "scenarios", and short readings to develop ideas about the topic.
- Each Topic is estimated to require **at least 20 minutes** even for the fastest students. Some will take closer to 30 minutes. Students working faster than this are likely skipping content (ex. the videos allow 2x speed).
  - Video and audio content in the Module require **headphones** or a speaker for access; however, all videos are subtitled.
- To complete the "Progress Page" required for the Certificate, users will have to complete the Topic within 1 session. Changing computers or refreshing the page will reset the Topic page and users will have to start over.
- In the next section are **Live Activities** that we have designed for a secondary class to further engage with the content of each of the topics.

- (Note that much of the Module's content corresponds to North Dakota FACS Education and Early Childhood standards - Strands 1, 4, 13 – which are listed for several classes, including Child Development and others.)

### Progress Tracking & Certificate of Completion:

- The Progress Page mentioned above is our office's way of tracking user progress on the Module.
- At the conclusion of each completed topic, the student, the teacher, and the module manager will receive an email indicating which topic has been completed. This is the only way (beyond memory) for the students to track their progress.
  - Please be ready to supply your class with your email address. As the teacher, you may delete these emails, or you can use them to track student progress.
- When any user has submitted their progress for all of Topics #1 - #8, the module manager will personalize and send a **certificate of completion** to that user's email address. This is **not an automated process** and will take a few business days.
- **If you or a student are having difficulty getting the certificate**, please email via contact above.

### A word of *caution* about some Topic ideas:

- The topics contain a variety of ideas about teaching from **various perspectives**.
- The design is always intended to be **positive and constructive** about the profession, but also realistic and honest. The perspectives given are not always perfectly consistent, though they mostly agree.
- Student or teacher users may sometimes **disagree** with the content or draw unintended conclusions. For example, the content about misconceptions may lead students to simplistically decide teaching is a "bad profession" even though that topic does much to respond to this and demonstrate the contrary.
- For class activities, we recommend focusing on the positive and constructive elements to create a rich and insightful view of the values of teaching professions.

## Activities to do *live* with students alongside the Module

### Topic #1

We recommend accessing the Module and looking over the first topic *together as a class*.

- If you are using the full Module for class credit or seeking the Certificate at the end, then the **"Progress Page"** element on this page will be important and something you may want to explore with your class.
- If individual students will be progressing at their own pace in a classroom setting, *they will need headphones*. Alternatively, you may progress as a class, projecting the videos for all.
- A simple introductory assignment for the students would be to understand they have to complete the Topic #1 and enter in their progress on the **Progress Page** before the next class meeting. Then the class can be ready to move on to Topic #2 (which is open for use, even if students haven't completed Topic #1.)

### Topic #2 – Realities and Misconceptions of teaching

Well-oriented students can proceed with this and the following topics independently or as a class.

*Activity Idea* - We recommend a writing prompt, perhaps argumentative writing, in which students are asked to show understanding of their choice of misconception, explain why it is a misconception, and develop a counterargument using the evidence and reasoning provided in this Module.

- We recommend avoiding activities that list out or expand discussion on misconceptions in a haphazard manner. This topic has the potential to lead students to unproductive criticisms about school that have more to do with their own observations than how teachers do their work.
- Misconception #2 “Teaching takes a special person” would be a good candidate for more open discussion because it allows students to connect in a positive/constructive way with how diverse skills are valuable.
  - This segment also introduces “fixed vs. growth mindset” which is a great learning concept.

**Note about Topics #3 - #6:** *There is a common thread across these topics about understanding and practicing the skills teachers need for leading a group of students. As a teacher, you could plan a more extensive class activity where groups of students get to plan and deliver a lesson and then reflect on the topic using concepts from the Module.*

### **Topic #3 – What does good teaching look like?**

This topic is about “good teaching”, and your students are currently *in* an educational context that you are leading. Given this, we recommend that classroom activities *avoid* getting into a scenario in which students evaluate their real teachers. The discussion topic and activity below are meant to expand on how different students might imagine and adapt to a future teacher role for *themselves*.

*Discussion Topic* – If you were a teacher, how would you adapt one of Ranger Nick’s four qualities (celebrate mistakes, appreciate differences, relay feedback, and evaluate yourself) of a good teacher to your own classroom? Be specific and discuss the details of how it would work with students. Also, what important qualities could be added?

*Activity Idea* – This Topic matches well with FACS Education and Child Development Standard 4 (4.2-4.6). Following the student’s completion of this Topic you could spend one or more class sessions in which groups of students take turns teaching each other a topical mini lesson with the goal of interacting or reflecting on one or more of the four features. For example, combining the “appreciation of differences” to adapt to individual needs of their group (4.3.4)

### **Topic #4 – Day-to-day as a teacher**

This topic may give you a good opportunity to get into specific details about how you do your job as a teacher in a way that helps your students connect with and appreciate learning (or other features of their teacher and/or school.)

- The topic refers to things a teacher does throughout the day, but many of them could be expanded on or compared against a student’s typical day. For example, which tasks are the most rewarding or how to do the annoying ones efficiently.
- One concept to land on at the end of this topic is how teaching keeps you busy, and coaching further adds to this, but teachers have choice about their extra duties and extra curriculars. They have opportunities and rewards that people in the private sector do not.

*Activity Idea* – Create a group or whole-class discussion with a creative activity for reporting out (e.g. butcher paper or short presentations). **This is probably the best opportunity in the Module to get your students talking, whether in groups or as part of a whole class discussion.** It will be easy to share and compare daily experiences, preferences, and strategies that they have and how they compare to the perspectives offered by the teachers (or yourself.)

## **Topic #5 – Teaching Skills and Challenges**

If you haven't done a class activity yet that gives students a chance to try out some of the teaching skills from the Module, we recommend this section as another time to try it. Topic #5 includes references to specific skills teachers use. It also talks about the importance of practicum (practical experience).

*Activity Idea* – The “practicum” and “methods” ideas in this topic matches well with FACS Education and Child Development Standard 4 (4.2-4.6). Following the student's completion of this topic you could spend one or more class sessions in which groups of students take turns teaching each other a topical mini lesson with the goal of interacting or reflecting on one or more of the four features.

*Activity Idea 2* – You could also adapt this topic into a shorter activity where partners or groups must draw from a set of challenges (See #4 Challenge list in this Topic) to deal with as if they were teachers in a specific context. You could set up some teams, give them a teaching scenario, and then draw a challenge for them to respond to in 5-10 minutes. When time runs out, each team must report what they would do experiencing that challenge.

## **Topic #6 – Choose a Pathway**

This topic allows students to choose a focus area of Elementary Education or Secondary Education. Creating a class activity related to this topic will help students internalize some of the different ways they would have to manage their class of Kindergarteners, 5<sup>th</sup> graders, high schoolers, etc.

*Activity* - We recommend that any supplemental activity that you plan for your classroom creates groups of students to either: a) focus on collaborating and sharing their interpretation of one of the focus areas from the Module, or b) partnering in a mixed way (elementary partnered with secondary) to collaborate about differences they would expect to encounter planning or working with these different age groups.

## **Topics #7 & #8 – Becoming a Teacher / Future of Teaching**

The content of these last topics works together and should be given a different focus based on age and experience level of the class you are working with:

- 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> grade may want to focus on class activities from earlier modules while completing these Topics in a more cursory way. Perhaps one exception to this is the Teaching with A.I. video at the end of Topic #8, which would be a good discussion-starter for every age group.
- 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> or above may want to dig into the future-orientation activities such as surveying the program offerings from one of colleges on the list in Topic #8. Or they could take a closer look at differences between a B.A. and a B.S. or at the ESPB website.
- A CTE- or career-focused class could go quite a bit further and take steps to help develop a college application using these Topics and following the links provided as a starting point.

*Activity Idea* – A letter-writing activity might fit nicely here, either as a connection to the “Teacher Education Program” segment, or as a summative exercise that asks students to draw on what they have learned from across the Module. The letter could address a Teacher Preparation/Education program at a specific college or university, asking the student to express their qualities as a potential teacher and demonstrate understanding of what is expected of good teachers, and how they plan to meet the challenges of the profession (referring to Topics #3, #4, #5).

## Note about FACS standards:

The descriptions above emphasize specific development of FACS standard 4. Other FACS standards woven into this Module include standards 1, 6, 12, and 13. These ask students to analyze, develop and demonstrate ideas and skills related to employability, workplace skills, family and relationships with others, and human growth and development.

FACS Standards closely related to Education Careers - 1.2 – 1.3, 4.1 – 4.6 , 6.1 – 6.2, 12.2, 13.1 – 13.6.

The Module contains connections to many of these larger ideas for understanding how educators relate to their community and families through their work. We recommend that rigorous FACS courses treat the Module as a jumping off point for background knowledge and analysis skills that the class would take further into developing and demonstrating skills for themselves. For example, “demonstrating teamwork in the workplace” (1.2) or “demonstrating skills that individuals and families can utilize to support civic engagement in community activities” (1.3) are a step beyond the understandings offered by this Module.

## Thanks for Participating!

### As you finish using the Module:

- Refer to the “Certificate of Completion” section above if you have questions as students finish.
- Relay feedback you may have, including user or content errors, to [katie.stermer@und.edu](mailto:katie.stermer@und.edu).
- If Katie is unavailable, please contact the Outreach for Teacher Recruitment or Retention via their website (<https://education.und.edu/about/trr.html>)
- If you really enjoyed the Module and want to voice support for more programs like this in North Dakota, we would love to hear from you and share your support to education leaders in the state.