

Guidelines for Vetting and Sharing Instructional Materials in Schoolnet 12-11-2014

Dr. Weldon: Hello, and welcome to our presentation on the guidelines for vetting and sharing instructional materials. Our presenters for this session are Kerry Christian and Leslie Anderson. I am LaVerne Weldon. We all work in the area of instructional content and are responsible for finding and vetting quality aligned instructional materials for Schoolnet. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction would like to promote and facilitate the sharing of instructional materials, such as lesson plans and learning tasks across the state using Home Base, or Schoolnet. Making available the best materials created by North Carolina teachers for teachers will help build capacity across the state and serve as the means of professional development. In Schoolnet, functionality does exist that allows teachers, schools, and districts to share instructional materials across the state. A process for utilizing this functionality for submitting and approving materials should be established at the local level. Specific and technical instructions may be found in Schoolnet by searching for “submitting instructional materials” or “approving instructional materials,” in the search box for instructional materials in the Classroom section of Schoolnet.

So let's get into how exactly to find and share resources in Schoolnet, knowing that we'd love to have teachers in North Carolina do the same. The objectives of this session are three-fold. First of all to provide information to educators in the use and application of the North Carolina Summary Rubric, which is used to vet resources at the state level, to prepare educators to vet and submit teacher-created instructional materials for approval at the school, district and state levels, and lastly, to assist educators in developing an implementation plan at the local level.

It may be helpful however, before we get into the actual guidelines for sharing and vetting resources, to talk about Home Base, to just give a small short overview of what it is. Most of you are already familiar with Home Base, which is an integrated suite of technology tools. We are familiar with of course, PowerSchool, or the student information system. Some of you are also very familiar with the educator effectiveness tool. And many of you hopefully are familiar with Schoolnet and OpenClass, the instructional materials and tools that assist in instructional design, assessment and data analysis. Within Schoolnet we find a wealth of materials, which are aligned to the North Carolina state standards, essential standards, and common core state standards. These include lesson plans, unit plans, assessment, and data analysis, all within Schoolnet. Just a brief overview also, not only about what Home Base is, but about how you get into Home Base.

You're already logged in using your school login. And this is the basic login page. And then once you log into Home Base, on the left nav bar, generally, you will find a link that will take you directly to Schoolnet. Once you are in Schoolnet, the North Carolina instructional improvement system, the blue banner identifies three major sections. The section that we are going to talk

more about in this presentation is the Classrooms component, or the Classrooms section of that blue banner across the top of the page. If you notice on the bottom right section, there is a section called Instructional Materials. That's what will be the focus of this presentation today, how to find instructional materials, how to vet instructional materials, and then share them across the state.

When you enter into Instructional Materials, you click on that simply. You will see that there are several tabs in the center of the page. The first is labeled Schoolnet, and the others currently are labeled OLE, Science, and Social Studies or SAS Curriculum Pathways is there, as well as some other materials that have been identified from other sources such as the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources.

Today's focus as I mentioned will be on Schoolnet. That number continues to grow as we find more and more quality aligned resources and enter them into Schoolnet at the state level. And we're encouraging you to do the same at the school level and district level so that we can share these wonderful resources across the state of North Carolina.

So our guiding principals for submitting any instructional materials into Schoolnet are that these materials should be aligned with standards and provide opportunities for deeper learning. Again, the emphasis is not on the quantity of resources that we have, although we do want this bank to grow, the emphasis is on the quality of these instructional materials. So as long as they are aligned and provide opportunities for deeper learning, we consider these strong valuable resources to include. You'll learn more about how to vet these resources in a later portion of this presentation.

Let's talk just a moment about the criteria however, for submitting instructional materials to the state bank. And again, that's the focus of this presentation. We want you to be able to share your resources at the school level, at the district level, and ultimately up to the state level so that all educators across North Carolina can find value in these wonderful lesson plans and unit plans and resources that you at your level, the school level, have created and developed.

So the criteria for submitting these instructional materials include those that are readily available to anyone across the state. So if you have specific tool kits or manipulatives or even textbooks that are based on the resource that you are supporting or wanting to share, that may not be something that is available in other districts or schools. So be mindful of that as you consider resources to be shared statewide, if it is something specific to a book or manipulative or a kit that's used in your school or district that may not be something that can be shared statewide.

In addition to that, resources that require commonly available items, such as household items, books, primary sources, novels, or any teacher-made materials are acceptable and may be accessed of all users of Home Base. So be mindful of the fact that if it's something that is specific to your region, your district that is not acceptable for Schoolnet. However, anything that is commonly found across the state, such as these common materials. That

might be something that might be shared.

In addition, pacing guides and district-specific and school-specific curriculum materials may be submitted to the school and district banks for inclusion in the state bank. So this is used as our criteria for submitting instructional materials overall in the state.

At this point we're going to talk just a moment about rubrics and why we use rubrics to vet instructional materials, so Leslie, I'll turn it over to you.

Ms. Anderson: Rubrics and Why. Before we give an answer to this, let's take a look at a few resources. Here we have two resources found on the web. After a brief inspection on a scale of 1 to 5, how many stars would you give each resource, with 5 being the highest and 1 being the lowest? Both resources appear to be very short in nature and task oriented. Everyone knows from experience that all resources or instructional materials may not be created equal. It is also hard to judge lessons, tasks, or any instructional materials from a brief glance. For this reason, along with varying opinions, an evaluation system is needed, hence our need for a rubric.

There are multiple ways of evaluating a resource. For example, a holistic approach, such as using the five star system that we used before, or evaluating multiple parts as with the rubric. The purpose of the rubric is to provide a structure for evaluating a resource in a systematic, purposeful and comprehensive way, allowing the rater to identify, evaluate, and sort objects based on the identified essential elements.

All instructional materials submitted into Schoolnet are evaluated using the North Carolina Summary Rubric. The North Carolina Summary Rubric is tied to all content areas and evaluates all resource types. It provides a general quality check on certain dimensions of each resource. You may have also heard of the Equip Rubric as well. The Equip Rubric is specific to ELA and math and focuses on full lesson and unit plans. Additionally, it offers opportunities to improve alignment and it's tied to instructional shifts and practices provided by the common core. Although they have distinct differences, they also have similarities. They each use an objective rating system, check for alignment to standards, and measure the quality of a resource. Lastly, they are both Achieve projects.

The North Carolina Summary Rubric provides structure for evaluating an online resource and is in place for NCDPI to identify all of the instructional materials for Home Base. This rubric can also be used by teachers and district personnel as they evaluate, create, and share their own original resources. The North Carolina Summary Rubric has seven categories. These categories are divided into two sections. The first section contains required pieces, alignment to standards and opportunities for deeper learning. The second section contains resource dependent pieces that include explanation of subject matter, utility of materials, quality assessment, quality of technology, and quality of instructional and practice exercises.

I mentioned in the previous slide that in order to continue evaluating a resource, it must pass section one, which is the alignment to the standards

set for by the North Carolina Standard Course of Study and offer opportunities for deeper learning. The opportunities consist of instances where the students are thinking critically and or solving complex problems, working collaboratively, communicating effectively, reasoning abstractly, constructing arguments, critiquing the reasoning of others, applying knowledge, constructing, or analyzing models. Once the rubric has been applied, and after you have decided that the resource is aligned and offers one or more opportunities for deeper learning, you can then inspect the instructional materials based on the type of resource.

The North Carolina Summary Rubric has divided the resource into five categories. Quality of explanation of subject matter, which is recommended for evaluation of text and articles, videos and pod-casts, lecture materials, and learning modules. Utility of materials is designed to support teaching, is recommended for evaluation of lesson plans, unit plans and activities. The quality of assessment is recommended for evaluation of formal and informal assessments. The quality of technological interactivity is recommended for learning resources designed with the technology based interactive component. And quality of instructional and practice exercises is recommended for learning resources designed for practice and strengthening of skills and knowledge.

As you begin to apply the rubric to the materials, each resource must receive a score of 2 or 3 for each applicable category. If it does not score a 2 or 3 for both standards alignment and opportunities for deeper learning, there is no need to evaluate it based on the categories of section 2 of the rubric.

Ms. Christian: Let's now look at specific resources and explore how the North Carolina Summary Rubric can be applied when vetting the resource. Looking at this lesson plan for the Learn NC website, how would this resource be evaluated using the North Carolina Summary Rubric? To begin, a full review of all components of the lesson plan should be done to determine whether the resource criteria of the North Carolina Summary Rubric for the two required categories, degree of alignment to standards and opportunities for deeper learning.

In this multi-day lesson, which can be found at the URL referenced at the bottom of the slide, students are tasked with examining several samples of soil and make observations about soil properties. Noting that each resource must achieve a score of 2 or 3 for each category, as applicable for the specific resource, to be considered for submission into Home Base. With regard to alignment, a significant portion of the instructional content of the resource must align to the standard. For example, this resource would exhibit strong alignment, a score of 2 to North Carolina essential standard for science 1.E.2.1, which reads "Summarize the physical properties of earth materials including rocks, minerals, soils, and water that make them useful in different ways."

Because in the lesson students are identifying and summarizing properties of soil, this resource would strongly align with a score of 2. For superior

alignment, a score of 3, the lesson would also have to focus on other earth materials, such as rocks and or water in addition to the soil. The lesson would also exhibit superior alignment, a score of 3, to North Carolina essential standard for science 1.E.2.2, which reads, "Compare the properties of soil samples from different places, relating their capacity to retain water, nourish and support the growth of certain plants." Because the activities described in the lesson allow students to meet the performance expectation as outlined in the standard.

There's also a literacy component in here in the lesson, so alignment to ELA standards can also be considered. To what ELA literacy standards could the resource be aligned? Looking at the second required category, what opportunities for deeper learning are offered by this lesson plan? Consider that students are working in collaborative groups. They're making observations and collecting data. They're documenting their observations and data, and they are applying knowledge to a real world situation. So based on these observations, would this lesson meet strong or superior criteria in this category?

Because there are three or more opportunities for deeper learning, this resource would actually rate a 3, superior, in this category. The rubric should then be evaluated based on any additional resource-dependent categories, which apply. That would be in the section 2 that Leslie mentioned earlier. The only additional category that directly applies to this particular complete lesson plan is the utility of materials designed to support instruction category.

Does this lesson meet criteria for that category? Questions to ask during the review might include, is this something that teachers would find useful in the classroom? Is the lesson able to be easily replicated? Do the provided materials focus on content mastery? Are the provided materials appropriate for the grade level for which the lesson has been designed? Finally, the quality of assessment category could also be used to evaluate the assessment section of the lesson plan, which is a rubric. While the whole resource is not identified as an assessment, there is an assessment component provided, and the North Carolina Summary Rubric could be used to assess the quality and utility of this part of the lesson. Focus on this question, "Does the assessment match the instruction?" while doing your vetting. As you examine the rest of the rubric, can you think of any other categories that could be applied to this lesson?

I'm now going to turn the presentation back over to LaVerne, who will discuss the submission process once you have vetted your materials. How do you get them in Schoolnet and promote them to be submitted for inclusion in the state bank?

Dr. Weldon: Thanks Carrie! So we've learned a lot so far. How to use the rubric, how to apply the rubric, and now let's talk more specifically about these materials that have been vetted using the rubrics and how to submit them up to, not only the state level, but starting at the school level and then the district level,

and eventually the state level.

Here's the process. It's really relatively simple. You first have to assign a person at the school level to serve as a vetting person, or it could be a team of people who would volunteer to bring content forward that could be submitted up to the next level. So in other words, if there's a teacher in the classroom, any one of you perhaps, who has a great lesson plan that you want to share with others in your school, you would simply go into Schoolnet where the resource was created, or the instructional material was created, whether it's a lesson plan or a resource.

You would then hit one button, submit it up to the school level, and someone at the school level, either the content person, the content specialist, the department chair or the principal, volunteer who is either assigned or someone who volunteers can actually serve as that committee of one or more to look at the materials based on the rubric and determine whether it is worthy to be shared with others in the school or the district. This person must have a specific roll or responsibility that is assigned in Schoolnet, and we'll talk about that in a moment.

Also, it would be great to determine the timelines for submission and review so that the submissions would come in either monthly, every two months, or even every week, so that the person assigned to reviewing them will have an idea of how the work will flow and when the work submitted will need to be reviewed.

To ensure that these instructional materials are great, we suggest strongly that you use the North Carolina Summary Rubric because it does ensure alignment to the North Carolina standard course of study and meets the guidelines that we have shared so far. So once that review person has looked at the material, looked at the resource and said this is great, that lesson plan that you the teacher created, that person can then share the resource with the rest of the school or submit it up to the next level, which is the district level, so that that great lesson plan can be shared with other educators in the district, and eventually up to the state level so that it can be shared with other educators across the state.

It's a very simple process. What you see on the screen now really shows the levels of approval and submission. It starts from the school materials bank then moves forward to the district materials bank and then up to the state bank. In the lower left hand corner of Schoolnet you will see in the Instructional Materials section, several banks that are listed here on this slide in the lower right hand corner.

The My Materials bank, My School bank, and ultimately up to the state bank. That's where we're proposing that you submit materials so that those materials can be shared statewide. From the teacher level to the school level, to the district level, and then up to the state level where those materials will be reviewed again according to the rubric and then accepted and approved so that they can be shared across the state.

So here are four simple steps. The teacher simply locates the material in the teacher's material bank, clicks one button that's noted, "Submit for

Approval.” A dialogue box appears and you can either decide to move it forward or change your mind and make a change to that material before it goes up. But once you click okay, that resource, that lesson plan, whatever it is that you want to share, will then go up to the next level. If you’re at the teacher level it goes to the school level. And that volunteer, or assigned person will then review the material and hit “okay” to submit it to the next bank, which would be the school level, or the district level, and up to our level, it’s the state level.

So it goes from one level to the next by simply clicking a button to submit for approval and checking the “okay” button so that it will be shared at the next level, very, very simple process. Again, not everyone has the authority or the roll to approve materials. If you note at the bottom of this screen, you’ll see a website that will take you to the specific rolls and permissions as they are outlined in Schoolnet. The roll that you must have in order to approve instructional materials is the roll entitled “Access to Approve Instructional Materials.”

This roll should be assigned by either the Home Base coordinator or facilitator or point person at the school level or district level. That person can assign the roll so that a person who reviews materials can approve materials in Schoolnet. This particular slide, and even at that website that talks about rolls and permissions, gives very, very outlined, detailed information about what this roll entails, so that you can determine who at your school level or district level needs to have that roll assigned in order to approve instructional materials. That’s the first step in sharing materials at the school level, at the district, and ultimately to the state level.

So again, the materials should be vetted by someone using the North Carolina Summary Rubric, as either a school leader, curriculum leader, principal, a person at the district level, and instructional coach even. Someone should be assigned or may volunteer to use the rubric to review those materials that are submitted to the next level. Once that approval has been given, that material, that resource, that lesson plan then moves up the line to the state bank and it will ultimately appear in Schoolnet if it is approved at that level. If revisions are needed however, that materials will be sent back to the teacher, back to the district, back to the school, so that revisions can be made and then sent forward at a later time. So we really want to encourage you to submit materials that can be shared, resources that can be shared across the state, because we know, even at the teacher level there are great resources that are worthy to be shared with others and with Carolina.

For additional information outside of this presentation, there are ways that you can find training materials within Schoolnet itself. If you go to Schoolnet, you enter into Schoolnet as we discussed earlier. You click on Instructional Materials. You will come to the search page. On the search page you can simply find materials using the keyword “Home Base QRC,” which are resource cards, quick reference cards that you can refer to. And there are two in particular that will show up that will help you to understand this whole submission process better. One is called the Submitting Instructional

Materials Quick Reference Card, and the other is called Approving Instructional Materials. These were both referenced at the beginning of the presentation and can be found in the Home Base training section of resources by simply clicking Home Base Training for the search page.

So it's as simple as that. You've got great materials. You've got great resources. We want to have them shared across North Carolina. If you have questions, please submit them either to the Home Base Support Center if there are technical issues, or if you have questions further, you can contact anyone of us in the instructional content section of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, and we will be glad to answer any questions that you have.

Again, this is LaVerne Weldon speaking. I'm a consultant here at DPI and I want to thank Leslie Anderson and Carrie Christian for their input and presentation for this session. So thank you very much for joining, and we hope that you will share your materials across the state with others.