VASCD Micro-credential Descriptions
Summer/Fall 2021

All micro-credentials have three parts. Teachers receive feedback from a trained external assessor after each part has been submitted, moving on to the next part if all criteria are met. If all criteria are not met, teachers use the assessor's feedback to revise and resubmit the evidence. One submission is always allowed; additional submissions are at the discretion of the assessor.

For all micro-credentials, Part 1 (prior to the activity) is a narrative of approximately two pages in which teachers respond to a set of focus questions. The questions vary according to the specific micro-credential, but always relate to the teachers' current assignment and context as well as experience and background knowledge related to the micro-credential skill.

Part 2 of each micro-credential consists of a series of activities to be completed and required pieces of evidence to be submitted. Activities and submissions are different for each micro-credential. They may include lesson plans, video/audio/transcripts of classroom interactions, observations of student interactions, pieces of student work, or student feedback. The activities for the micro-credentials currently being offered are summarized below.

- Creating a Performance Assessment Blueprint. Teachers construct a design blueprint for a performance assessment by (1) understanding the components included in a performance assessment; (2) organizing learning goals around a big idea, driving question or problem; (3) designing the tasks that students will complete to show evidence of learning; and (4) creating success criteria matched to goals and tasks. Activities include brainstorming and refining ideas around which to construct a performance assessment and then creating aligned learning goals, success criteria, and tasks. These are all parts of a blueprint that will be submitted as evidence of competency.

- Build a Rubric Teachers construct a rubric to be used with a performance assessment by (1) identifying learning targets using appropriate content and skills, including the 5 C's; (2) using student-friendly language in a rubric that clearly communicates learning goals, success criteria, and levels of performance; and (3) providing a peer review of the rubric which assesses the alignment of learning goals with the rubric, and (4) revising the rubric as needed in response to the peer review.

- Incorporating Peer Review and Feedback Teachers implement structured protocols for peer-to-peer feedback and review that lead to deeper learning for students. use the selected protocols to model and teach students about giving and receiving feedback, and then observe students as they exchange and respond to feedback. Submissions include (1) a narrative describing the choice of protocol(s); (2) a recording of students engaging in peer-to-peer feedback; and (3) teacher observations and reflection regarding the students' use of peer feedback to improve the quality and depth of their work.

- Facilitating Respectful Student-to-Student Conversations Teachers choose and apply protocols that support a culture of respectful student-to-student conversations which promote deeper learning. After exploring a variety of resources, they create a series of lessons in which students will learn and practice the skills of respectful conversations. Submissions include (1) a recording in which students are demonstrating respectful conversation in the context of a learning activity; (2) a description of students' growth and level of engagement in these conversations over time, and (3) observations regarding how the conversations did or could lead to deeper learning.

- Building Classroom Community Teachers cultivate a learning environment in which a strong sense of community contributes to deeper learning. They do this by (1) identifying and applying community building strategies that help learners feel safe and confident; and (2) establishing a sense of unity in the classroom based on shared values and goals that support deeper learning. The activity involves implementing a series of lessons using selected strategies that can be used to build community. Submissions include the plans for these lessons, a recording of students using the strategy, and feedback from students on how the strategy impacted their interactions with others and their learning.

- Building Students' Academic Discussion Skills Teachers design and implement activities for students to engage in deeper learning through productive academic discussion. They do this by teaching students to (1) identify the elements of a productive discussion; (2) provide evidence that supports of refutes ideas and opinions in a discussion; and (3) presenting evidence-based ideas in opinions in an easily understood manner.

Part 3 (after the activity is complete) is a narrative of approximately three pages in which teachers respond to a set of reflection questions. The questions vary according to the specific micro-credential, but always tap into the teachers' thinking about the activity as it relates to their professional development, their students' learning, and their future professional practice.