

Professional Development For Digital Educators

STUDENT GUIDE



We are glad you have chosen to take this course. It is our expectation that the learning you receive, the artifacts you build, and the competencies you gain will help you to increase engagement and learning with your students. The goal of this guide is to help you succeed. It explains things like course requirements and expectations, learning in an online environment, how to approach a competency-based course, and how to qualify for graduate credit for this course. If you need more information, a course tour and orientation video can be found at the top of your home page or you may contact your Learning Coach (learningcoach@sophia.org) for additional questions.

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Just the Facts: Course Structure, Grading, Expectations and Policies

COURSE STRUCTURE: All courses are competency-based and consist of one or two units. Units are broken down into Challenges, Milestones and Touchstones (Touchstones are required for graduate credit only) and reinforced by tutorials and other learner supports. You will work through Challenge questions in each unit and then demonstrate your learning in the Milestone assessment. On your Course Home Page you will find a Course Tour which provides a walkthrough of the course components. If you decide to pursue graduate credit, you will also complete a Touchstone: a project that asks you to demonstrate your learning by applying your new knowledge and skills into your instruction and reflecting on that experience.

WHAT IS A CHALLENGE? Challenge questions are formative assessments to be answered while you learn. Each Challenge presents practical problems to solve. You have three attempts to solve each Challenge question. You may leave the Challenge question at any time to view tutorials or additional information (or take a break) and return to Challenges whenever you want to continue your learning. You are also able to improve your score (as long as you have remaining attempts).

Under each set of Challenge questions, you will find one (usually Challenge #11) that requires you to apply your learning through an activity to be done outside of the online course. These activities will blend your learning with real-world application as you create and test artifacts with your students. You will be asked to reflect on that experience as part of the Challenge questions. If you wish to pursue graduate credit, you will find that the artifacts that you create and test as part of those activities are designed to build towards your Touchstone projects.

You must get at least half of the Challenge questions correct in a unit in order to advance to the Milestone for that unit.

WHAT IS A MILESTONE? Milestones test your mastery of the concepts taught in the course. Each Milestone is a summative assessment of the unit. You will have two hours to complete each Milestone but most learners find that they can complete the Milestone in an hour or less. You will only be given one chance/one sitting to complete each Milestone. You must get at least half of the questions correct to pass—but keep in mind that you need to average 70% across all Challenges and Milestones to receive an overall passing grade for the course and qualify for clock hours. Milestone points are weighted 2x that of Challenge points for the calculation of your overall score in the course.

WHAT IS A TOUCHSTONE? (only required for graduate credit) A Touchstone is a project-based assessment that helps you apply mastery of course concepts to solve an authentic problem. Touchstones provide an opportunity for you to receive feedback on your mastery of learning by Capella faculty. Once you apply for graduate credit and pay your tuition, you can work on your Touchstone whenever you want. However, you must get at least half of the Milestone questions correct before you can submit the Touchstone for that unit. For more information on Touchstones, see Graduate Credit Option.

How it Works: Course Expectations

TIME COMMITMENT: Competency-based and online learning allow you to apply your previous knowledge throughout the course. All learners will have different experiences with how they approach the course and how long they take to complete it. On average, Professional Development (PD) courses will take between 20-50 hours to complete depending upon the number of competencies, your prior experience, and how you choose to reflect upon and practice what you have learned. About half of your time in this course will be spent in online coursework while the other half will be spent applying your learning with your students and reflecting on that experience. Online coursework is available anytime and anywhere. You can stop and start the course as much as you want; your information is saved and you can always start right back where you left off. You have 60 days from the start of the course to complete it. You can apply for a one-time extension if necessary.

GRADING: Upon successful completion (overall 70% or better) of all Challenges and Milestones, Capella will provide a certificate stating that you have earned clock hours for Continuing Education (50 hours for two credit courses; 25 hours for one credit courses). For graduate credit grading, see Graduate Credit Option below.

STUDENT HONOR CODE: Academic dishonesty is a serious offense in any academic community. Failure to comply with the student honor code will result in removal from the course, and/or disqualification to enroll in future courses. By participating in Professional Development courses, students must abide by the following honor code:

- The answers to all assessments, which include Challenges, Milestones, and Touchstones will be your work, and your work alone.
- You will not make questions & answers to Challenges, Milestones, and Touchstones available to anyone else.
- You will not engage in any other activities that could dishonestly improve your results or improve/hinder the results of others.

ABOUT CAPELLA UNIVERSITY: Capella is an accredited online university offering bachelors, masters, doctoral, and certificate programs designed to take you to the forefront of your profession. Our competency-based curriculum delivers foundational knowledge and real-world skills so what you're learning is immediately applicable to your career. Capella serves more than 35,000 students from the U.S. and around the world and offers more than 140 graduate and undergraduate specializations and 20 certificate programs.

CAPELLA & SOPHIA: When Capella started to look for a Learning Management System to deliver these professional development courses, Sophia stood head and shoulders above the rest.

Sophia's intuitive interface makes even the most novice learners comfortable right away. Capella University chose Sophia's platform because it supports competency-based learning by offering multiple tutorials to understand the material, multiple attempts to check your learning, the ability to return to questions or tutorials whenever you want and a clean, easy way to track your progress.

CUSTOMER SUPPORT: Sophia and Capella have teamed together to offer the easiest customer support for our learners. Whenever you need help—with technical issues or with questions about the course content—you simply need to reach out to your Learning Coach from within the course. Click on the "Let's Chat" button on your Course Home Page to reach your Learning Coach. You can also call 1-888-341-0327 or email learningcoach@sophia.org. Learning Coaches are available from 9am-5pm CST Monday through Friday. If they are not online, they will get back to you (usually within 24 hours) with an answer.

EXTENSION POLICY: We want you to be successful in this course. If you cannot complete your Professional Development course in the allotted 60 days, we do grant one extension, not to exceed 30 days, at no additional cost.

Help for Learners: In-Course Support

Capella University chose Sophia's platform because it supports competency-based learning with a host of features, each designed to reinforce and strengthen your learning. As you work through your course, we encourage you to try various combinations of these supports to best reflect your own learning style.

COURSE SYLLABUS: Learners can view and download the course syllabus from the *Student Guide & Course Docstap*.

VIDEO TUTORIALS: Each concept is supported by at least two video tutorials. Each video covers the concept but featuring different instructors providing you variety and choice. You can return to these videos at any time while you work through your Challenge questions or as a review before taking the Milestone assessment.

CONTEXTUALIZED QUESTIONS, MULTIPLE ATTEMPTS & HINTS: While working through the Challenge questions, you have multiple ways to interact with the content. First, Challenge questions unfold as a story, setting the context for the learning. The characters and situations are meant to help you envision the material in an authentic setting. You have three attempts to answer. If you answer incorrectly, you will have an opportunity to return to the tutorials to search out answers and go deeper into the learning. The accompanying hint will suggest an alternative way to think about the question.

PRACTICE MILESTONES: Before you begin each Milestone, you will want to take the Practice Milestone. Here you will find similar questions along with answers to help you prepare.

LEARNING COACHES: Through our 'Let's Chat' feature, you have access to your Learning Coach. They can help you navigate technical issues as well as help you with content and course material. You can also call them at 1-888-341-0327 or email them at learningcoach@sophia.org. Learning Coaches are online from 9am-5pm CST Monday through Friday. If they are not online, they will get back to you (usually within 24 hours) with an answer.

PROGRESS AND SCORE INDICATORS: Your Course Dashboard Page provides real time feedback on your progress to help you stay on track. The Progress Bar gives you a recommended schedule to ensure a successful completion. The Score Indicator plots your current score. The Score Report page provides more details on your activity and progress.

Getting Started: Tips for Online Learning

There is no "right way" to take this course. Most learners settle into their own path before they finish the first set of Challenges. Because courses are competency-based, there are a couple of things that might feel different right off the bat. Problem solving begins immediately when you click on the first Challenge. Challenge questions are formative assessments designed to guide your learning by identifying where you need deeper learning or where your prior experience can propel you ahead. You'll be asked to answer a question with little information. It might feel funny to see the question before you have "learned" anything. And, more than likely the question will be harder than you anticipate. Not to worry. If you think you know it, take a shot. You have three attempts. It could be that your prior experience has already given you this skill. If you're mistaken, watch a tutorial of your choice, tuning in for information that will help you answer the question. Feel free to experiment to see which style suits you best.

FIRST TIME USERS: Some first time users feel a bit uncomfortable not reading a text or watching a lecture before they begin answering questions. This is a pretty natural reaction. You may want to review the Study Guide (found on your Course Home Page) and view some of the tutorials before you dive into the Challenge questions. You could choose to watch both tutorials for the first group of concepts and then try to answer the Challenge questions. Remember, you have three attempts to answer the Challenge questions.

There are other learners who use the Challenge questions to set the context for the tutorials. They first read through the Challenge question and then view the videos to search out the answers. At this point, many learners gravitate to one video tutor's style and use that tutor throughout the course. They then view the additional tutorial when they find themselves struggling and need another approach to the learning.

Many learners experienced with this kind of course spend the first part of the course going through the Challenge questions, answering those they know and skipping through those they don't. They identify where they are weak and then go back and view those tutorials before their second and/or third attempts.

TIPS FROM USERS: Here are some helpful tips from learners who have completed the course.

For Challenge Questions:

- Read through each of the questions in the Challenge first so that you have a general idea of what to look for as you watch the tutorials.
- View all the tutorials linked to the Challenges. They can be found above the question or under the *Helpful Tutorials* tab. They provide the information needed to complete that Challenge.
- Take notes on the tutorials as you watch them and write down key terms and definitions, processes, diagrams, etc.
- Use your notes to complete the Challenge questions.
- If you struggle with a concept, contact a Learning Coach via live chat, phone or email for assistance.

For Milestones:

- Review all Challenges prior to taking the Milestone.
- Print off and complete the Practice Milestone before attempting the actual Milestone.
- Grade yourself on the Practice Milestone using the answer key provided.
- Review tutorials related to the concepts you got incorrect on the Practice Milestone.
- If you continue to struggle with a concept, contact a Learning Coach for assistance.
- Take the Milestone at a time and location when you can have undisturbed time, so you can focus on completing the Milestone successfully.

For Touchstones (only required for Graduate Credit):

- Give yourself enough time to develop your Touchstone. Preview the *Sample Touchstone* to see if graduate credit is right for you.
- Review Touchstone descriptions thoroughly to understand the project requirements. Pay particular attention to the rubric to understand how the Touchstone will be graded.
- Review the Touchstone support concepts to refresh the unit concepts that you mastered while working on Challenges and Milestones.
- If you need any guidance or have any questions while working on your Touchstone, please reach out to your PD Faculty Mentor at PDFacultyAdmin@capella.edu.
- Before you submit a Touchstone, proofread and make appropriate edits.
- Please be aware that this is a graduate level course and any writing you submit should meet graduate level qualities and expectations.

Graduate Credit Option: Applying for Capella Graduate Credit

As part of this course, you have an opportunity to qualify for graduate credits. (Please note: Capella's academic calendar is based on the quarter system, so 3 quarter credits equals 2 semester credits.) By completing the Touchstone project(s) associated with your course, you will apply your course learning immediately within your own classroom, building or district. When you decide to pursue graduate

credit, you'll find it's easy to get started.

WHEN TO DECIDE: You will need to make a decision to pursue graduate credit within 60 days of starting your course. You can preview a Sample Touchstone from your Course Home Page. It is a good idea to consider this option early in your coursework so you can be considering your Touchstone project as you learn. This will also assure that you have ample time to complete and submit the Touchstone assessment. You can select the Graduate Credit Option at any time from your Course Home Page.

HOW TO GET STARTED: Preview the Touchstone from Course Dashboard. If you decide to pursue graduate credit, click to purchase. You will be prompted to pay your tuition with a credit or debit card. Graduate credit tuition is \$50 per quarter credit. When your tuition payment has been submitted, you will receive an acknowledgement and your Touchstone project(s) will be available in your course. At that point you should review the project and the rubric so you can start to formulate your plan. You can start the Touchstone at any time but you cannot submit it until after you have passed the corresponding Milestone.

SUBMITTING YOUR TOUCHSTONE: When you are ready, submit your Touchstone as spelled out in the instructions. In order to reduce delays and ensure that your feedback is highly productive, it is important that you pay close attention to the rubric and instructions when submitting your Touchstone. Once submitted, Capella faculty will provide feedback to you in 10 business days. If you have attained graduate credit, you will receive information about how to access your transcript. If you have not passed the Touchstone, you will receive feedback by which you can revise and resubmit your Touchstone. If you are in a 2-credit course, you will repeat this process for your second Touchstone.

GRADING: Learners approved for Capella University graduate credit receive a grade of "PC" for "Petition Credit" and do not receive a traditional letter grade.

Detailed instructions are found in the Touchstone instructions for each course or you can always contact your PD Faculty Mentor at PDFacultyAdmin@capella.edu if you have questions.