



Growing Resilient Authentic  
Catholic Educators

January 2024

### Purpose and Focus

A lot has changed in GRACE since 2020 when the pandemic threw the world into a tailspin.

Originally a PLC-training focused program, GRACE has evolved to emphasize leadership development and to partner with the Diversified Learners Committee to best align with the current and developing needs of our Catholic school students and teachers.

*In this newsletter:*

### GRACE By the numbers

**March Walk Throughs** and an update on the GRACE program and direction for the 2023-24 school year

**A Focus on UDL** and Diving into UDL Work

**Opportunities** for Professional Development

**Prayer for Inclusion** from the ACE Conference at Notre Dame



THE OFFICE FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS PRESENTS:

# GRACE MID-Year Report

## Growing Resilient Authentic Catholic Educators

The primary goal of the GRACE program has always been to build leadership capacity amongst our Catholic school educators. In that regard, the program has successfully graduated dozens of teacher leaders into roles such as principal, assistant principal, instructional coach, dean, and department chair. However, for many teacher leaders, their goal for GRACE is not to take on a specific leadership position, but rather, to develop themselves, to continue to learn, and to have the opportunity to learn from one another. Collaboration is the flywheel of the GRACE program, and we are so excited to continue to provide our teacher leaders with the tools to implement change in their schools, the knowledge to contribute to that change, and the support from other regional teacher leaders to collaborate as change agents.



*South Sound Meeting – January 2023 at St. Joseph Chehalis*

## GRACE BY THE NUMBERS



**111**

GRACE Teacher Leaders were registered for the 2023-24 school year representing **65** Catholic elementary and high schools



**27**

different BLC groups have GRACE teacher leaders collaborating in different cohorts including in Aspiring Leaders Academy, the DEIJ Committee & the Assistant Principal Collaborative and more



**15**

of our *current* Catholic school **principals** went through GRACE and all fifteen registered their own teacher leaders in 23-24



# THE WALK-THROUGH PROJECT – March 2024

Since the beginning of 2021, the Office for Catholic Schools has been trying to find a way to ensure that teacher receive on-going and relevant feedback to be effective instructional leaders.

We know from a vast array of education research\* that traditional teacher evaluation systems alone do not affect the instructional quality of a teacher – and yet, a lot can be learned from simply walking through another teacher’s classroom.



After brainstorming with GRACE regional teacher leaders and educational consultants from other dioceses, it became clear that one aspect of GRACE that could bolster this opportunity to learn from one another is to intentionally make it a part of the program. In conjunction with these discussions, our schools hosting accreditation visits also provided us with feedback from accreditation teams about the incredible amount of collaborative learning and professional development simply being in other schools can provide for teacher-leaders.





The *March Walk-Through Project* is an opportunity for teacher leaders to take a half-day outside of their classrooms/buildings to intentionally learn from other schools by utilizing a framework for observation that is both in alignment with the UDL trainings which are a cornerstone of the GRACE program, as well as an opportunity to get out of one’s own building for a while.

Ultimately, the goal of the *March Walk Through Project* is to bring back learnings and collaborate with other teacher leaders during our April workshop (to not add more work outside of the program and full-time teaching/leading requirements of one’s primary job). Therefore, the “March” *Walk Through* could happen as early as February or as late as April, depending on the flexibility of each individual GRACE teacher leader and their school’s needs.

Our January workshops will, therefore, be heavily focused on using a UDL framework to conduct classroom walkthroughs that are not meant to judge, evaluate, nor commend what is happening in each classroom individually, but rather, to identify what work is already being done effectively and rooted in UDL research. One of the hesitations that our teacher leaders have in conducting “walk throughs” is that they feel as though they are supposed to evaluate the teacher and class that they are observing without any kind of formal training on how to do this effectively. Our January workshops will provide both the framework and the training to ensure all GRACE teacher leaders will be able to enter peer GRACE teacher leader’s schools and classrooms feeling confident and competent to complete the project and prepare for the April workshop with valuable observations, learnings, and lessons.

\* For further research on this topic check out *The Best of the Marshall Memo* and/or *Rethinking Teacher Supervision and Evaluation* by Kim Marshall.

## Coming up:

			
January 12 <sup>th</sup> , 19 <sup>th</sup> & 26 <sup>th</sup>	February-April	April 26 <sup>th</sup>	May 17 <sup>th</sup>
Winter Workshops: All day events led by Jeannie Ray Timoney, Ed.D to provide UDL framework walk-through trainings and to secure a time, space, and connection with other teachers for the <i>March Walk Through Project</i> (MWTP)	<i>March Walk-Through Project</i> : half-day experience in another school (schedule set in January)	Spring Workshop: All day workshop to collaborate on the learnings from the MWTP and provide feedback on the process; Catapult Learning Consultants present on how to continue UDL in schools	<i>Final GRACE Meeting</i> : online 1pm-3pm (registration required) to celebrate and wrap up the work of GRACE in 23-24. Principals encouraged to attend.

# AN ARCHDIOCESAN FOCUS ON UDL

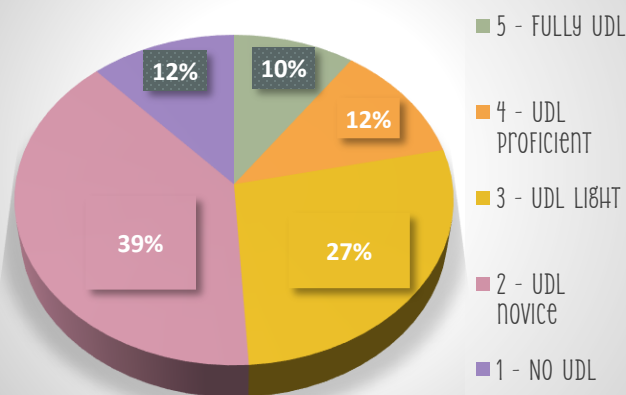
**“All great achievements require time.” – Maya Angelou**

When we surveyed our GRACE teacher leaders in November 2023, we learned that there is a wide range of UDL implementation within our 73 Catholic schools; it ranges from fully on-board implementation to downright push-back of UDL as a framework for accessible and equitable instructional practice.

On a scale of 1-5, (“1” being very little to no work done in UDL at the school to “5” fully implemented and continued dedication to UDL) there were only four Catholic schools who ranked themselves at a “5”, with the majority weighing in somewhere between a 2 and a 3. Six of our schools ranked themselves squarely within the “1” category. When following up with those schools, the common link between them was, not surprisingly, their school leadership. When a principal or academic leader is not supportive of a school-wide initiative such as UDL, then it is hard to get the rest of the school on board. Another comment from schools who ranked themselves low on the scale was that there “was not enough time” to fully dedicate their school to UDL implementation.

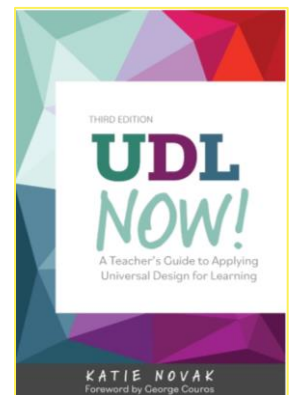
Our Spring workshop in April will provide some PD in this area specific to implementation of UDL at schools resistant to the work required, as well as collaboration time with schools that have been successful in implementing UDL.

HOW COMMITTED ARE SCHOOLS TO UDL?  
(GRACE PERCEPTION SURVEY - 2023)



## Diving Into UDL with a Book Study

At the January workshop GRACE teacher leaders received a copy of Katie Novak’s book *UDL NOW! A Teacher’s Guide to Applying Universal Design for Learning* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.) This text provides context, practice and practicalities of UDL as well as research about the differences between intentional instructional planning and “just good teaching.”



For the purpose of getting your leadership team on board with UDL, we suggest that you read *Chapter 1: Don’t Do it Alone*, which outlines both the imperative need for leadership buy-in, but also the necessity of work on UDL in Professional Learning Communities.

**Pro tip: If you are reading this as a book study with other educators, apply for clock hours to get both great ideas and professional hours for your time! Contact Lisa O’Leary to learn more at [elizabeth.oleary@seattlearch.org](mailto:elizabeth.oleary@seattlearch.org)**





## PRINCIPAL CERTIFICATION, & EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP MASTERS PROGRAMS:

Here are the universities we have cultivated a relationship within Educational Leadership. Many of these programs have rolling admissions periods and a 50% discount for full-time Catholic educators in the Archdiocese of Seattle. All listed universities operate on a cohort basis. This provides a network of fellow aspiring administrators to collaborate with while pursuing the degree/certificate. Additionally, through the generosity of the Fulcrum Foundation donors, there are partial scholarships for these Educational Leadership programs. Click here for the [Fulcrum Foundation Educational Leadership Grant Application](#).

Click [here](#) to see the complete list of our partner

universities websites, contact information and open house dates. Many of these programs have deadlines early in 2024.

If you would like to schedule a meeting with Kelly Surapaneni, Coordinator of Leadership Development, fill out this inquiring form: [Aspiring Leaders Inquiry Form](#)

## More Professional Development Opportunities for GRACE Teacher Leaders

**PD&C Day 2024** – February 9<sup>th</sup> from 8:30am-12:00pm (online only) – registration opens on January 16<sup>th</sup> and must be registered by February 2<sup>nd</sup>. All sessions will provide 3 clock hours. Early Learning will receive STARS hours and will run 8:30am-3:30pm.

**BLC Retreat Part Deux** – March 21<sup>st</sup> – in person at *the Peace and Spirituality Center*, Bellevue WA – email Justyna King, Dave Mayer or Kelly Surapaneni for more information about this leadership retreat for seasoned GRACE teachers and other BLC groups. 6 clock hours awarded.

**Accreditation Team** participation – a sign up sheet for participating on a WCEA accreditation team will be emailed out to all GRACE teacher leaders this spring for 2024-25 participation. 26 clock hours awarded. If you are ready to chair a visit (must have served as a member on at least one team before) please email Justyna directly – opportunities to serve as a chair for WCEA teams in Arch/Diocese in CA, OR, NV, ID, MT, NM, HI, and more!

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## PRAYER FOR INCLUSION

*Father of all that is good and holy,  
We ask that You bless us with Your infinite love and mercy  
As we work with all students in your image  
Students who read with grace and those who need grace to read  
Students who lift others up, and those who need lifting up  
Students who embrace learning, and those who need to be embraced by learning  
Students who make us smile, and those who need a smile  
Grant us the knowledge, patience, and compassion to serve all students  
In our care for they have Your gifts to celebrate  
AMEN*

- Christie Bonfiglio, Ph.D., Program for Inclusive Education, University of Notre Dame

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