Leah Grabelsky

LEARNING & PROGRAM DESIGNER

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Learning and program designer with 20+ years developing curriculum, educational programs, implementation frameworks, and knowledge products across classrooms, schools, and districts. Experience spans program development, learning design, and the structures that help organizations put ideas into practice. Work includes designing implementation structures for a New York City initiative that expanded from 21 to 200+ schools, developing district- and schoolwide instructional approaches, and helping translate a new school model into operating tools and routines. Current consulting includes curriculum review and research on external evaluation methods. Uses generative AI to support instructional design, research, and analysis.

SKILLS

Program Development & Design · Learning Design · Curriculum & Assessment Design · Instructional Design · Implementation Strategy & Frameworks · Instructional Resource Development · Continuous Improvement · Knowledge Product Development · Generative AI-Assisted Research & Design · Professional Learning Design

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

LEARNING & PROGRAM DESIGN PROJECTS — 2025–Present

Independent Consultant

- Reviewed curriculum modules for the Alliance for Decision Education, evaluating instructional design and providing feedback to inform revision. In a subsequent project, researched curriculum-review approaches used by five organizations and developed a practical guide and questions to support the Alliance's ongoing work on evaluating external instructional resources.
- Worked with the founding principal of Central Brooklyn Literacy Academy, a new NYC public school for students with dyslexia and language-based learning disabilities, to shape its emerging operating model and develop a staff handbook defining instruction, assessment, roles, routines, and communication.

NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS, Bronx, NY — 2025–2026

Social Studies Teacher — JHS 144 Michelangelo

- Designed and taught a full-year Early American History curriculum for 100 students across four sections, including Honors and ENL, with differentiated texts, scaffolds, and assessments for learners ranging from newcomer English learners to advanced students.
- Used Claude and Gemini to accelerate curriculum and assessment design, including differentiated and multilingual adaptations and a 50-question cumulative exam synthesized from roughly 75 lessons; used item-level analysis and professional judgment to identify student-learning patterns and refine materials.

DOBBS FERRY SCHOOL DISTRICT, Dobbs Ferry, NY — 2022–2024

Assistant Principal — Springhurst Elementary School

- Co-led a literacy curriculum audit at Springhurst Elementary School, comparing science-of-reading-aligned programs through site visits, structured teacher input, and classroom pilots.
- Supervised, evaluated, and developed 60+ teachers and staff, with responsibility for recruitment, hiring, onboarding, coaching, and instructional improvement.

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, New York, NY — 2019–2022

Academic Response Team Specialist — Brooklyn North Borough Office

- Facilitated design of a 20-lesson memoir unit with a middle-school teacher team, aligning objectives, assessments, mentor texts, student work, and a standards-based rubric; led a 2½-hour session enabling educators at other schools to understand and adapt the unit.
- Built reusable learning resources during remote instruction, including a best-practices guide connecting digital tools to instructional rationale, instructional video lessons, and a 60+ resource library organized by whether materials were models, adaptable resources, or ready to use.
- Coached 60+ K–8 teachers and leadership teams in six schools on curriculum planning, formative assessment, and implementation of HMH Into Reading and Illustrative Mathematics.

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, New York, NY **2017–2019**

Assistant Principal of Instruction — High School of Arts and Technology

- Led a schoolwide argument-writing initiative involving about 450 students and 2,700 pieces of writing annually, using a shared rubric, subject-specific adaptations, instructional tools, and teacher inquiry routines to refine instruction based on student work.
- Led development of a 9–12 English scope and sequence with department leaders, aligning genres, standards, and reading/writing expectations across four grades and six marking periods.
- Designed professional learning and three-week coaching cycles in curriculum, formative assessment, and differentiation.

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, New York, NY **2014–2017**

Associate Director of Program Development and Design — Learning Partners Program

- Designed implementation frameworks and program structures for Learning Partners as it expanded from 21 to 200+ schools, including shared expectations, leadership roles, cross-school learning routines, facilitation protocols, and processes for documenting and sharing practice.
- Co-developed the Cycles of Learning framework, adapting Carnegie Foundation Improvement Science into a practical school-team cycle for defining a learning question, testing instructional practice, examining student evidence, refining the approach, and documenting learning.
- Led field-based inquiry and knowledge-sharing across participating schools; co-authored two published case studies documenting how school teams tested, adapted, and spread literacy and mathematics practices, directed companion video profiles featuring teachers and principals, and established processes for reviewing and publishing school-created instructional artifacts.
- Applied the program's inquiry discipline to its own design: built data-collection protocols, observation tools, and analysis routines, then used implementation evidence to inform the 2017–18 redesign and ongoing changes to content and delivery.

LOWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS, Lowell, MA **2011–2014**

Instructional Specialist — Butler Middle School

- Led districtwide 7th-grade ELA curriculum redesign and the transition to Common Core; launched Writing Workshop and Leveled Literacy Intervention through demonstration teaching, side-by-side coaching, and professional learning.
- Directed coaching cycles and professional learning in curriculum, pedagogy, literacy, and data analysis during Butler Middle School's improvement from Massachusetts Level 3 to Level 2 status.

ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Social Studies Teacher — Somerville & Needham Public Schools, MA (2004–2010): Designed and taught history, civics, geography, and literacy intervention; also designed civic-learning projects for authentic audiences, including the student-initiated Black Code campaign.

Founder & Director — Deaf Plus, Interlocken International Summer Camp: Proposed, designed, launched, and directed a Deaf-inclusion program within an established overnight camp.

Fulbright-Hays Research Fellow — Russia (2010): Developed and presented social studies curriculum.

EDUCATION

HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION — Master of Education (Ed.M.), School Leadership
BROWN UNIVERSITY — Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.), Secondary Social Studies
WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY — Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), Psychology/Sociology

TECHNOLOGY

AI & digital learning: Claude, Gemini, NotebookLM, Microsoft Copilot, ChatGPT · Google Workspace and Google Classroom · interactive HTML learning artifacts

LANGUAGES

English (native), American Sign Language (professional proficiency), Spanish (conversational)

SELECTED DESIGN WORK & PUBLICATIONS

NYCDOE Learning Partners Program Case Studies (2017) · Middle-Grades Memoir Writing Unit (20 lessons) · Central Brooklyn Literacy Academy Staff Handbook · Carnegie Foundation Annual Summit Poster: Teacher-Driven Improvement Science (2018)