



Case Study

Aurora High School, Nebraska

February 2023



Aurora, Nebraska is a rural town about one hour west of the state capitol Lincoln. Manufacturing, agriculture, and of course Football, are the backbone of the Aurora Community.

When Nebraska released new state guidance around career exploration and postsecondary planning, Aurora High School leadership knew they needed to provide a more innovative and engaging learning experience to help their students understand the possibilities for them both locally and beyond. And for Principal Doug Kittle, it also had to be relevant for today's generation of students.

Learn how Dana Thompson, a lifelong educator and coach, incorporates Find Your Grind in the classroom daily as his core curriculum. Dana embraces the Find Your Grind curriculum, ethos, and message to help students capture their passion.

"We were really searching for a curriculum that would check all the boxes. And when Find Your Grind came out, we said you know what, this is something we need to look at. So we looked in depth at the curriculum, we looked at it, compared it to and measured against the new standards and everything matched it checked every box that we needed it to check. And then the delivery, we knew the delivery, the content was going to captivate students. Because it was real life. It was what I would say on a level that a typical high school student was going to relate to."

– Doug Kittle, Aurora High School Principal

Please share your teaching title and list the classes in which you use Find Your Grind.

Dana: *Business Education Instructor and I use Find Your Grind in my Freshmen Careers Class: 6 Sections throughout the school year!*

How many years have you been using Find Your Grind with these classes?

Dana: *I have been using FYG for the last four years within my classroom and it is the sole curriculum that is used for my Careers class!*

How many students per year do you implement Find Your Grind with?

Dana: *Every year I average around 100 freshmen students in my classroom because we have it as a required class for all freshmen!*

How does Find Your Grind align with your vision for education and preparing students to be Future Ready?

Dana: *Passion is my vision for education and I believe that FYG allows students to dig deeper into what they are passionate about, discover who they are, redefine who they are, and have a focus and purpose as to who they want to become! When they are passionate about who they can become, this will allow them to use their strengths, skills, and talents to be Future Ready!*

What stands out to you the most about Find Your Grind? What makes this learning solution different from other curricula and platforms you have used?

Dana: *What stands out to me about FYG is the fact that the curriculum is self-paced and focused on each student individually allowing them to assess themselves, lifestyles of their own interest, and develop the own path they want to pursue for a career! With a web-based,*



self-paced, and personalized learning solution like FYG, I believe that it allows the students and the teachers to develop plans that are focused on individuals passions and purpose, but also allows for a creative and productive way for the teacher to interact with the students and students to interact with one another!

It is a new semester. How do you typically start the Find Your Grind curriculum?

Dana: *I always start by posing the question: “What do you want to be when you grow up?” I then introduce the FYG concept of “Flipping the Funnel!” And give examples of real-life people who:*

- *Love their lifestyle/career/jobs*
- *Hate their lifestyle/career/jobs*
- *Next question: “What type of lifestyle do you want to live when you grow up?”*
- *Discuss: “Who do you want to become when you grow up?”, compared to “What do you want to be when you grow up?”*
- *Start: The “Journey Starts Here” Unit*

What does your day-to-day look like while implementing Find Your Grind?

Dana: *A typical day will look like this:*

- Bell Ringer: Review yesterday's discussions!
- Class Discussion
- Group Discussion
- Partner Discussion
- Worksheet/Discussion
- Journal/Badge Work

Do you use lesson plans, educator badges, journaling prompts, and worksheets? If so, how do you incorporate them into your teaching?

Dana: *I use the lesson plans, worksheets, and educator badges to help me develop and create presentations to share with my students over points of emphasis for each unit and create activities for discussion whether that is*

individually through an email to me, or a discussion with their partner or group.

Assessments are used as a group discussion/review once everyone has completed it's the first time! Journal prompts are used to monitor and evaluate student's growth as they complete each badge and each student is given three different opportunities when they are done with the journal/badges:

- Personal Insights
- Career Insights
- Mentor Insights
- Action to Take This Week

I have students email (4-6 paragraphs) about Personal Insights that they can take from this unit to continue on their path of finding out who they are, who they want to become, and



how they are going to get there! Students can also create a video (3-4 minutes) about Personal Insights that they can take from this unit to continue on their path of finding out who they are, who they want to become, and how they are going to get there.

How does Find Your Grind engage and connect with your students?

Dana: *FYG engages my students because it gives them a personalized self-paced plan through videos, activities, assessments, and curriculum that relates to them on a personal level, allowing them to discover what their interests and passions truly are, plus continue to discover who they are!*

I also feel that the online Mentors provide students with a personal connection to possible lifestyles and discovering their passions because the mentors range from an ordinary “Joe” in their hometown, to celebrities! Personally, I feel that this shows my students that what they are passionate about is truly something that they could do for the rest of their lives and get paid for it!

Are you able to have impactful conversations with students regarding who they are and who they want to be?

Dana: *I have discussions with my students daily about who they are, who they want to become, and how they will get there! Some of these discussions are one on one, but most of the time we rotate how we complete our discussions: Class discussion or small group break-out discussions. I’ll group them based on their interests/passions or sometimes we’ll watch a video as a class and talk about it.*

What is the best part of Find Your Grind for you and your students?

Dana: *For me, there are multiple parts about FYG for myself and my students:*

The relationships that I build with my students through discussion, interaction, videos, and journaling!

Watching students truly discover who they are and who they want to become!

Watching students discover that what they are passionate about is something that they can do for the rest of their lives and continue to pursue and discover their passion with a career that focuses on who they are!



You can watch the full video interview with Dana at <https://findyourgrind.com/news/case-study-classroom-implementation-in-aurora-high-school/>

To learn more generally about Find Your Grind, please visit FindYourGrind.com

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