

Barbara Zá Franks, EdD

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Curriculum and instructional design leader with 18 years across K-12, online, and international education, specializing in AI-powered, standards-aligned ELA curriculum. Designs and quality-control standards-mapped full courses, assessments, and multimedia lessons calibrated to state standardized test rigor. Pair deep content expertise with data-driven personalization to build adaptive learning pathways that move every student to mastery and above-grade-level outcomes.

*Curriculum Development & Design | Standards Alignment | Assessment Development & Item Writing | Instructional Design
EdTech & Adaptive Learning Platforms | Multimedia & Video Lesson Production | AI-Powered Personalized Learning
Mastery-Based Learning | Data-Driven Decision Making | Curriculum QA & Program Evaluation*

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Chief Research Officer (Freelance Consultant)

04/2025 – present

VIRTUOUS SEA CORPORATION | Irvine, CA (Remote)

- Lead the organization's applied research strategy, overseeing the design, execution, and dissemination of studies focused on international education, workforce development, student outcomes, and labor market trends.
- Direct quantitative and qualitative research initiatives, including survey design, interview protocols, data analysis, and mixed-methods studies that inform organizational strategy and client decision-making.
- Develop and manage a multi-year research agenda examining international student experiences, career outcomes, employer engagement, immigration policy impacts, and workforce readiness.
- Supervise research personnel and external collaborators, ensuring methodological rigor, data integrity, ethical compliance, and timely project delivery.
- Author and oversee the publication of research reports, white papers, conference presentations, and peer-reviewed articles that contribute to industry knowledge and thought leadership.
- Translate complex research findings into actionable insights for educational institutions, employers, policymakers, and corporate partners.
- Lead the development of proprietary research frameworks and data-driven solutions that strengthen VSC's position as a leader in international education and workforce intelligence.

AI-Driven English Language Arts Learning Strategist

12/2025 – 06/2026

2-HOUR LEARNING / ALPHA SCHOOLS | Austin, TX (Remote)

- Serve as Directly Responsible Individual (DRI) for Grades 3-8 Language Arts and Vocabulary across the entire Alpha School system, spanning 50+ campuses and thousands of students nationwide.
- Design and maintain AI-powered ELA learning pathways using adaptive platforms to ensure each student progresses at their individual knowledge grade rather than age grade level.
- Develop and quality-control standards-aligned assessment content, including vocabulary questions, reading comprehension items, grammar assessments, calibrated to precise grade-level readability and rigor.
- Build full standards-aligned ELA and Vocabulary courses and narrated video lessons for Grades 3-8 across grammar, writing, and vocabulary, mapping every component to CCSS sub-standards and calibrating instructional rigor and item difficulty to NWEA MAP RIT bands, Bloom's taxonomy distributions, and STAAR-style revision and editing tasks.
- Conduct item-level analysis of Language assessments to surface mis-calibrated, low-rigor, or decontextualized questions, then redesign tests with passage-based items and balanced answer keys to improve construct validity and ensure authentic, grade-appropriate rigor.
- Conduct individual student placement and performance reviews using MAP RIT scores, XP data, accuracy metrics, and time-on-task data to identify whether students are correctly placed, at risk, or ready for advancement.
- Identify and resolve systemic enrollment gaps by querying student data across all campuses to ensure every G3-G8 student has an active Language and Vocabulary course assignment.
- Collaborate cross-functionally with campus DRIs and Guides to translate data insights into actionable engagement interventions at the classroom level.

- Apply a mastery-based learning model, ensuring students advance only upon demonstrated proficiency, resulting in above-grade-level achievement across the student population.
- Support the 2-Hour Learning model by optimizing ELA content delivery so students reach rigorous academic outcomes within a compressed, self-directed daily learning block.

Chief Academic Officer

11/2023 – 06/2025

KNOWLEDGELINK | Boston, MA (Remote)

- Directed academic operations for multi-campus network of American international schools in China.
- Oversaw curriculum development, accreditation, and expansion into new academic markets.
- Managed implementation of educational programs while evaluating student performance and faculty management systems.
- Led high-level consulting projects for new school launches and product development.
- Developed strategies to enhance curriculum delivery across multiple programs.
- Facilitated data-driven discussions to guide academic policy decisions.
- Mentored academic leaders to promote continuous improvement in teaching practices.
- Conducted reviews of academic policies to ensure compliance with accreditation standards.

Academic Dean

11/2023 – 06/2025

KNOWLEDGELINK (St. Mary's Online Academy) | Boston, MA (Remote)

- Directed academic operations for online U.S. high school diploma program serving international students.
- Oversaw quality assurance of curriculum and management of instructional staff.
- Implemented blended learning models to enhance student engagement and performance.
- Guided development of policies aligned with international student needs and U.S. accreditation standards.

Startup Founder

08/2023 - Present

D.R.E.A.M. EDUCATION SOLUTIONS | Freeport, The Bahamas

- Founded an international education management company to facilitate K-12 and higher education pathways across Africa, Asia, Central America, and the Caribbean.
- Designed and implemented dual diploma programs, early college pathways, and American university pipelines for international students.
- Developed tailored curriculum models, academic policies, and partner onboarding systems for institutional clients.
- Established partnerships with stakeholders to expand market reach and manage B2B collaborations with schools and universities.
- Oversaw marketing strategies, admissions systems, and student services operations to ensure scalability.

Head of School

07/2022 – 07/2023

OMOLOLU INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL | Anguilla, British West Indies

- Directed operations, instructional leadership, and strategic planning for K-8 IB PYP school.
- Evaluated student performance data to guide curriculum adjustments and instructional strategies.
- Managed faculty development initiatives, enhancing teaching quality through targeted feedback.
- Fostered relationships with parents, staff, and community partners to enhance engagement.
- Managed budget allocations to support academic programs and facility improvements.

Chief Academic Officer

08/2021 – 07/2022

KNOWLEDGELINK | Ningbo, China

- Directed academic operations for a multi-campus international school network, managing K-12 and online programs.
- Evaluated educational programs for effectiveness and compliance with established standards.
- Developed strategic plans to enhance academic excellence throughout the institution.

- Led faculty training sessions that improved instructional practices and increased student engagement.
- Oversaw recruitment and hiring of faculty members across multiple disciplines.
- Facilitated data-driven discussions to guide decisions on academic policies and practices.
- Collaborated with departments to unify efforts in achieving educational goals.
- Supervised academic deans, teams, and support personnel to ensure operational efficiency.

Regional Dean

01/2020 – 07/2022

KNOWLEDGELINK (Barstow Schools in China) | Ningbo, China

- Directed academic and operational management across four campuses serving over 1,200 students.
- Supervised campus leadership teams to enhance hiring processes and performance evaluations.
- Led curriculum alignment initiatives to ensure educational quality and regulatory compliance.
- Implemented cross-campus initiatives for academic quality assurance and continuous improvement.
- Conducted academic audits and curriculum revisions to maintain adherence to educational standards.
- Managed departmental resources to uphold institutional policies effectively.
- Promoted initiatives aimed at elevating academic quality and improving learning outcomes.
- Engaged in strategies to enhance student success rates within academic programs.

International School Principal & Academic Dean

01/2020 – 07/2022

KNOWLEDGELINK (Barstow School of Ningbo) | Ningbo, China

- Directed academic leadership for middle and high school programs serving over 900 students.
- Managed faculty assignments, scheduling, and advanced course enrollment processes.
- Standardized academic policies, student handbooks, and course catalogs to ensure consistency.
- Analyzed assessment data to inform school improvement strategies.
- Supervised campus leadership, including deans and department heads, to enhance operational efficiency.

Founding Academic Dean

09/2019 – 12/2019

KNOWLEDGELINK (Barstow School of Cixi) | Ningbo, China

- Developed academic programs tailored to institutional goals and diverse student needs.
- Oversaw academic program for middle and high school students, ensuring alignment with U.S. graduation standards.
- Monitored student achievement data, initiating improvement strategies based on analysis.

Dean of Faculty

03/2019 – 12/2019

KNOWLEDGELINK (Barstow School of Ningbo) | Ningbo, China

- Oversaw instructional faculty management for middle and high school divisions.
- Conducted teacher observations, coaching sessions, and performance evaluations.
- Developed onboarding and in-service training programs for new teachers.
- Led professional development initiatives to enhance faculty collaboration and instructional quality.
- Managed recruitment processes and ongoing professional development for faculty growth.
- Performed regular assessments of school policies to ensure compliance and effectiveness.
- Mentored new teachers entering the profession to support their transition.

Instructional Coach & Curriculum Developer (Independent Contractor)

12/2017 – 11/2019

NEW STAGE SUBJECT ENGLISH | Shanghai, China

- Developed and implemented a comprehensive early years curriculum alongside instructor training programs.
- Created resources to enhance classroom management and increase student engagement.
- Delivered professional development sessions on best practices for curriculum implementation.
- Observed classroom practices, providing constructive feedback to enhance educator effectiveness.
- Mentored new educators, guiding them in effective pedagogical approaches.

Startup Founder SHANGHAI D.R.E.A.M. EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY CO., LTD. Shanghai, China	07/2016 – 12/2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Founded an education consulting firm specializing in custom curricula and teacher training for K-12 and corporate clients.• Developed tailored academic solutions for government, corporate, and private schools entering new education markets.	
Elementary Teacher SHANGHAI PINGHE BILINGUAL SCHOOL Shanghai, China	08/2011 – 06/2016
Music Teacher (Part-Time) ST. ANDREW'S ANGLICAN SCHOOL Exuma, Bahamas	09/2007 – 06/2008
Startup Founder & Music Teacher CENTER STAGE PERFORMING ARTS STUDIO Exuma, Bahamas	07/2007 – 07/2011
Human Resources Coordinator FOUR SEASONS RESORT GREAT EXUMA Exuma, Bahamas	03/2006 – 06/2007
Administrative Assistant & Music Teacher THE EDUCATION CENTRE Grand Bahama, Bahamas	01/2005 – 02/2006

EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

Doctor of Education (EdD) in Leadership AMERICAN COLLEGE OF EDUCATION Indianapolis, IN <u>Dissertation Title</u> : The Influence of Leadership Behaviors on Teacher Retention: A Basic Qualitative Study	06/2025
Post-Baccalaureate Teaching Certification MORELAND UNIVERSITY Washington, DC <u>Certification</u> : District of Columbia (Washington, DC) Elementary Education	10/2016
Master of Education (MEd) in Educational Leadership AMERICAN COLLEGE OF EDUCATION Indianapolis, IN <u>Certification</u> : District of Columbia (Washington, DC) Administrative Services (K-12 Principal/Assistant Principal)	12/2014
Bachelor of Arts (BA) in International Relations LYNN UNIVERSITY Boca Raton, FL	12/2004