UNIT PLAN

Building rich experiences into a unit plan is complicated. As an aid for tweaking or overhauling the big elements of a unit plan, we’ve created a checklist, broken into planning steps. You cannot do it all, so make your curriculum choices count.

STEP ONE
Describe...

- The unit’s central focus
- Target concepts within the discipline(s) that the unit is intended to address
- Your personal mission, vision, & goals for students
- The culminating performance task (CPT), final project, final performance, or portfolio
- Major standards that the unit will address: CCSS, state level, grade level, departmental level
- The essential questions
- The unit’s scope
- How you will sequence the curriculum. Here are 10 ways suggested by Michael Stephen Schiro:
  - Simple to complex
  - Chronological
  - Easy to difficult
  - Developmental
  - Prerequisite knowledge & skills
  - Close at hand to far away
  - Whole to parts
  - Parts to whole
  - Known to unknown
- The objectives (targeting skills & content knowledge)
- Learning theories & models of instruction:
  - Activity-based curriculum
  - Workshop
  - Inquiry
  - Integrated studies
  - Process
  - Developmental
  - Deductive / inductive
  - Centers
  - Learner centered
  - Ecological
  - Experience-centered
  - Student-designed
  - Simulation
  - Blended learning
  - Problem-based learning (PBL)
- Themes & topics that address big questions

Identify Students’...

- Level of content mastery & prior knowledge
- Learning needs / potential learning obstacles
- Cultural assets
- Learning goals & motivations

STEP TWO
Identify Resources...

- Guest speakers
- Team-teaching partners
- Available technologies & software
- Community resources: museums, parks, professional societies, businesses, & organizations

Continue...
STEP THREE
Develop Experiences that Meet Objectives & Support...
- 21st Century skills
- Critical Thinking
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
- English-Language Learners (ELL) & English as Second Language (ESL)
- Differentiation
- Enrichment
- Collaboration
- Social & Emotional Learning (SEL)
- Motivation
- Authentic learning tasks
- Learning experiences
- Extension activities
- Opportunities for students’ choice

STEP FOUR
Collect & Devise...
- Introductory teaser lesson / The final day of instruction for the unit
- Handouts

STEP FIVE
Lock Down...
- Hours to complete the unit
- Break unit into 3-5 Major Curriculum Segments:
  1. Include major concepts & skills that build toward the CPT
  2. Concludes with interim performance tasks (formative assessment) that build competencies toward successfully completing the CPT
  3. Self-assessment
- Mechanisms that provide the teacher with feedback about the instruction
- General outline in calendar

STEP SIX
Develop...
- Build flex time into the unit for re-teaching or makeup work
- A specific timetable
- Lesson plans, handouts, materials, routines, & homework
- How key ideas will spiral through the curriculum
- Outline when students will engage in active learning

STEP SEVEN
Create...
- Descriptions & directions for assessments: authentic, formative, self-, & summative
  - Debate
  - Oral presentation
  - Quiz
  - Problem-solving activity
  - Role play
  - Essay
  - Checklist
  - Observation forms
- Task-specific rubrics
- Opportunities for feedback on instruction
- Routines

STEP EIGHT
Go Time...
- Teach!
- Review & chart students’ performance on assessments
- Review students’ feedback about the unit & instructor
- Reflect & redesign

“The art comes from the teacher’s personality, experience, and talents. The science comes from knowledge of child development and the structure of the curriculum.”
— Dr. David Elkind, Child Psychologist