Expeditionary Learning at King Middle School

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1. Develop a <u>compelling topic:</u>

- ✓ that <u>targets the content and skills</u> that students need to know at their grade levels;
- ✓ that is <u>engaging to students</u>;
- ✓ that addresses <u>community issues</u> or is meaningful to the community;
- ✓ that provides opportunities for <u>in-depth investigations</u> by all students;
- ✓ that provides opportunities for students to identify with or consider <u>multiple perspectives</u> (on gender, race, ethnicity, social class, or controversial scientific issues);
- ✓ that has <u>guiding questions</u> that synthesize the big ideas and require students to engage in <u>complex thinking</u>.

2. Design a <u>comprehensive final product</u>:

- ✓ that requires each student to create representations of the <u>targeted knowledge and skills</u>;
- ✓ that addresses the <u>guiding questions</u>;
- ✓ that includes <u>accommodations for differentiation</u>;
- ✓ that has an <u>exemplar model</u> and <u>product descriptors</u> created by the house or by other houses that can evolve during the expedition;
- ✓ that is adapted from a current <u>professional product</u>;
- ✓ that includes <u>high quality writing</u> and <u>craftsmanship</u> from each student;
- ✓ that includes a plan for students to <u>archive their finished pieces and reflections digitally for portfolio</u>.

3. Choose the <u>professional role(s)</u> that students will assume during the expedition:

✓ so that professionals can be scheduled to work with students;

✓ so that students can develop the skill set(s) associated with the profession(s) and expedition;

✓ so that students can present their <u>final product</u> to the <u>appropriate audience</u>.

4. Identify and organize the <u>major learning resources</u> for the expedition:

✓ that are developmentally appropriate for all learners;

✓ that provide opportunities for all students to pursue <u>independent research</u>;

✓ that are made available in an <u>on-line index</u>, in the classroom, and/or in the library.

5. Get the expedition on a <u>shared team calendar</u>:

✓ to schedule <u>major learning activities</u> and due dates;

✓ to block out a number of days in the final weeks of the expedition for student and teacher <u>critiques and revisions</u>.

✓ to schedule <u>school specialists</u> and <u>community experts</u>;

✓ to share school resources;

✓ to block out testing dates and other events;

✓ to book 2 - 3 <u>field experiences</u>.

✓ to block out additional time for the <u>expedition manager</u>.

6. Plan for a <u>culminating event</u>:

✓ that includes the exhibition or evidence of <u>high quality work and writing</u> from each student;

✓ that provides opportunities for every student to talk about his or her learning with a significant adult or audience.

✓ that includes a <u>narrative of the expedition</u> produced by students.

accommodations for differentiation	Several strategies have been developed at King to help all students to stay meaningfully engaged with the content and skills of an expedition for the length of the expedition: • *Designing a multi-tiered final product* in which each student is required to produce a discrete portion that demonstrates targeted knowledge and skills. Students who finish ahead of classmates are expected to take on additional production responsibilities and / or develop other portions of the product such as: additional research topics related to the expedition; documentary video, audio or other media chronicling the expedition; additional graphics, etc. For students who need support to produce the required portion of the product, individual modifications are developed by the team. • *Providing differentiated learning resources and experiences* to match the interests, abilities, needs and styles of all students including multiple anchor texts, multiple student roles, and a variety of learning activities that match a variety of learning styles. • *Planning with specialist to provide differentiated instruction and support* for students with IEPs, for English language learners, and students with other learning needs.
appropriate audience	The people who can evaluate, appreciate, and / or benefit from the final product. Usually, these people have been involved in the expedition along the way as professional experts, community resource people, etc., but may also include students who can benefit from learning about the expedition topic.
archive finished pieces and reflections for portfolio	The team identifies the common pieces that will best represent learning in the students' portfolios, and creates a process for archiving the work digitally in students' accounts.
community experts	Expeditions involve expert members in the community. Sometimes the experts are fulfilling their professional roles, sometimes they are relating their experiences, etc.
community issues	Community issues lend purpose and meaning to students' learning experiences. Community issues can create the human interest element, and can lead to natural opportunities for service and presentation of learning to the public. Community issues can mean local or global issues.

compelling topic	The compelling topic captures the content of the learning expedition, links the content to big ideas, and specifies the real world context (setting, event, time, issue) in which that content will be studied. The compelling topic is chosen in consideration of the content that students need to learn. It is compelling to students in that they can develop a vested interest in gaining knowledge and skills related to the topic.
complex thinking	Students will employ higher order thinking strategies (comparing, classifying, deduction, induction, analysis, constructing support, abstracting, analyzing, perspectives, etc.) to address the guiding questions and major learning activities of expeditions.
comprehensive final product	A comprehensive final product conveys the big ideas and the discrete learning of each student in the expedition. The product is appropriate to the topic studied, reflects the students' best abilities (via many revisions), is adapted from a professional product, and is designed to be shared in a public forum.
craftsmanship	Student work demonstrates ownership and pride through attending to detail, making work aesthetically pleasing, and meeting high standards. As much as possible, students use professional tools and formats, and master the conventions of the medium.
critiques and revisions	Critiques and revisions are on going processes throughout the duration of expeditions. However, additional planning consideration should be given to blocking out days in the final weeks of an expedition to ensure that all students are supported in producing their best work for the final product. Critiques and revisions include self-editing, peer critiques and editing, teacher critiques and editing, and several revisions.
culminating event	Expeditions end with culminating events. These often take place off site. Every student has a role at culminating events, which includes discussing his or her learning. Culminating events address the guiding questions, showcase the final product, and provide appropriate forums for expedition community experts to interact with students about their learning and products. Procedures and skills for the culminating event are taught and practiced before the event.

engaging to students	Students understand the expedition's connection to the real world and are motivated to engage in real world applications of new knowledge and skills as part of the expedition experience.
exemplar model	Exemplar models are planning tools created by the teachers prior to the expedition so that teams can anticipate and manage the workflow of the expedition. Building the model prior to the expedition enables teachers to: • organize the product resources; • sequence skills and knowledge instruction; • plan the project backwards on the calendar; • anticipate the time needed for student revisions; • plan for differentiation; • identify what quality work looks like; • and make connections with experts in the building and / or community; • discover stumbling blocks. Exemplar models take time to create. Teams are encouraged to request coverage to schedule a day to develop their models. Exemplar models are distinct from exemplars. Exemplars are products produced by students in previous expeditions that the teachers use to inspire students and develop / communicate ideas about quality.
expedition manager	The expedition manager is a rotating role among the four core house teachers; over the course of two years, each core teacher has the expedition manager role once. The role of the manager is to ensure that the logistical needs of the expedition -- from planning to execution to debriefing -- can be met. The expedition manager does not need to be the person who is taking the academic lead.
field experiences	Expeditions include a minimum of 2 – 3 field experiences. Fieldwork is used to build both curiosity and background knowledge and to do in-depth investigation. Fieldwork has a clear purpose that furthers the work of the learning expedition: students collect data, conduct interviews, or do structured observations. Procedures and skills for fieldwork are taught before the event and data collected are analyzed and used back in the classroom. As much as possible, fieldwork is modeled on the authentic research of professionals in the field.

guiding questions	Expeditions have two or three open-ended guiding questions. Guiding questions convey an expedition's starting point and trajectory. Often they indicate the roles that students will perform. Guiding questions are complex and investigative in nature, and can best be answered by combining knowledge with experience; the answers to guiding questions cannot be looked up in a book. At the end of an expedition, all students will provide appropriately sophisticated answers to the guiding questions, implicitly or explicitly, through their work.
high quality writing	Writing that has been developed through the writing process, including self-editing, peer editing, teacher editing, and several revisions.
in-depth investigations	Expeditions emphasize depth over breadth. Students are given the time, resources, and purpose to deeply investigate a topic. Students engage in research, hands-on investigations, field work, connected learning activities, and product development to gain deep understanding and experience of the expedition topic.
independent research	The independent research process includes surveying a variety of resources to build background knowledge, followed by targeted inquiry. Independent research is a core component of learning expeditions. Independent research happens in two general ways: 1) When each student has a unique topic in a learning expedition, students pursue research individually and include their findings in their portions of the final product. In this case, the final product can be used to assess an individual's research performance. 2) When an expedition has students assigned in teams to topics, each student is still responsible for pursuing independent research on the topic, and developing his or her own conclusions. Subsequently, student teams can share their research and findings and collaborate on shared conclusions. Individuals are assessed, however, on their independent work.
major learning activities	Events that provide experiential opportunities to develop understanding of targeted knowledge and skills for an expedition. Most expeditions have 4 – 6 major learning activities which include fieldwork, research, product making, and continuous development of a skill or area of knowledge.

major learning resources	Text, mixed media, and human resources that are the predominant sources of information for the expedition.
multiple perspectives	Every student should be able to see him or herself in the context of the expedition. Teachers can be mindful of choosing topics, experts, professions, products, etc. that provide all students with opportunities to make personal connections to both the content being studied and the roles being performed. In addition to identifying with the expedition, topics and learning experiences should include multiple points of view and provide students with opportunities to challenge and expand their sense of self.
narrative of the expedition	Narratives of the expedition can include student presentations, video and multimedia displays, or text and graphic displays. The expedition narrative helps students and the audience understand what students learned and how they learned it. Student media crews can be developed at the beginning of an expedition to capture media and produce the narrative along the way.
on-line index	A variety of on-line tools and resources are available for teachers and teams to collect, organize, and deliver resources. All teachers have access to blogs and web-based server spaces. On-line classroom sites are also available.
product descriptor	Product descriptors are produced by teachers, usually with input from students, to identify and define the key components of expedition products.
professional product	Expeditions products are professional in two ways. 1) Products are based upon actual professional products modified to match the developmental levels of students. As much as possible, students use professional tools and formats, and master the conventions of the medium. 2) Products require students to demonstrate professional work habits, including attention to detail, a sense of ownership and purpose, a commitment to quality, the ability to collaborate and manage time, and the practice of continuous improvement.

professional roles	Students take on professional roles in a variety of ways. 1) Students learn about how professionals perform tasks that address the problems and issues related to the expedition. 2) Student tasks are modeled upon professional tasks and students are taught how to perform those professional roles. 3) Students demonstrate professional work habits, including attention to detail, a sense of ownership and purpose, a commitment to quality, the ability to collaborate and manage time, and the practice of continuous improvement.
school specialists	People in designated roles (special ed, ELL, literacy, technology, world languages, health, library and media specialist, related arts, and custodial staff) as well as staff who are experts in areas that are not identified with their subject area.
shared team calendar	Teams are expected to keep a shared expedition calendar to support collaboration and resource sharing within teams, among specialists, and among houses. Teams are expected to post fieldwork dates and major learning events to the King Middle School on-line calendar.
targeted knowledge and skills	Targeted knowledge and skills correspond to grade level learning standards but are more specific to the expedition's context. The targeted knowledge and skills are taught so that students have the resources to explore the expedition topic; engage in meaningful fieldwork and other roles; address the guiding questions; and produce and present the final product.