



“The best teachers are artists who know the science of teaching.”

— Richard Bankert, 8th Grade Science Teacher
Pawleys Island, SC

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...

“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

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