



Unit Planning

Unit Planning

When developing a course for the semester the process of unit planning is important. The steps below will help guide that process. Without unit plans, instructors tend to focus on class activities that may not address language standards. Unit planning focuses the learning on the language standards that are integrated thematically. Lesson plans aligned with the unit are connected and spiral instruction, so that learners have multiple opportunities to develop and apply what they have learned. Without unit plans, students and instructors can become frustrated because they may see the intended progress. The objectives and outcomes in a unit plan help the instructor articulate to the students what they will know and be able to do in a specific period of time.

STEPS FOR PLANNING THE UNIT

STEP 1: Conduct a needs assessment or interest survey of your students by identifying the learners' language needs for successful participation as a member of a family, workplace, and community. This needs assessment will determine why the learner needs to learn English, pinpointing the immediate reason for learning English.

STEP 2: Using at least one of the state and federally approved assessments: CASAS, BEST, or BEST Plus, complete a class profile. Compare the assessment results to the learners' needs assessment or interests in learning English.

STEP 3: Determine the unit topic from your results of step 1 and 2. Compare your topic for the unit to the CASAS competencies or the Performance-Based Outcomes with local curriculum. Review other sections of the content standards document to gather more skills to include in the unit plan that would be appropriate for the learners.

STEP 4: Select the purpose or goal of the unit. The goals, written as an overview or rationale, explain what the unit is about and what the learners will know and be able to do.

In planning the goal, consider these points:

- *Compare your topic for the unit to the CASAS competencies or the MELT.*
- *Decide what the students should learn and be able to do both in class as practice and how they will use the skills when leaving the classroom.*
- *Summarize what you intend the learners to know about the topic and be able to do in a few sentences or a short paragraph.*
- *Check that your goals are consistent with those of the course and are level appropriate.*

STEP 5: Write appropriate objectives for the unit using behavioral terms to describe what the learners will do, consistent with the unit goal. It is helpful to review the Content Standards by Skill Section and to identify cultural, workplace, technology, and/or metacognitive skills when planning objectives.

STEP 6: Brainstorm learning activities that are appropriate for the proficiency level of the learners that reflect the goals and objectives. Think about materials, including texts, audio and video; manipulatives, authentic materials, field trips, guest speakers, and equipment needed for the activities.

STEP 7: Plan how you will evaluate the learners' progress towards meeting the goal and objectives at the completion of the unit. Evaluation may include demonstrations, projects, portfolio assignments, or unit tests.

Curriculum will always reflect the context of the local area and program schedule, sites, materials, and equipment. It is a broad outline that integrates components and prioritizes the tasks and skills learners will demonstrate. It must be flexible. It should outline the desired outcomes and lead toward that end.

The purpose of unit planning is to connect the competencies, language standards, and skills together so that it creates a unified picture for the students. Instructors are able to group language standards across skills to integrate with the competencies at the students' level. The competencies are the subject matter/topic or theme for the unit and are the same competencies used in the CASAS assessments. In the end, unit planning saves the instructor time and energy when planning lessons. Unit plans can be saved, reviewed, and revised each year because they are broad and generalized. A sample unit plan on the next page provides an example of a unit plan.

* Lowe, Anna. 2001. Six Step Unit Planning. Chicago: Loyola University
[<http://www.luc.edu/schools/education/iplp/test/sixstep.htm>]

** Grognet, Allene. 1997. Performance-based curriculum and outcomes: The Mainstream English Language Training Project (MELT) updated for the 1990s

Sample Unit Plan

Topic/Title:	Health
Goal: (Explanation of the purpose of the unit)	After reviewing the class profile and consulting with students, it was determined that students needed further help with health care issues. Students wanted to be able to make appointment, speak and understand the doctor, and understand medication labels. The students needed to be able to tell the doctor or pharmacist when they did not understand questions or directions. Therefore, the goal for this unit is to explain to the doctor the health problem, and follow medical directions.
NRS Level: (Beg. Lit., Low Beg., High Beg, Low Inter., High Inter., Adv.)	High Beginning
Unit Length: (Varies from 2-12 wks)	4 weeks
Objectives: (What the student will know and be able to do)	The learner will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make and keep a doctor’s appointment • Describe symptoms and understand doctor’s questions • Express lack of understanding • Understand medicine label directions
Competencies: (CASAS or MELT)	CASAS Competencies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify information necessary to make or keep medical and dental appointments • Fill out medical health history forms • Identify and use appropriate medications, including prescription, over-the-counter, and generic medications • Interpret information about illnesses, diseases, and health conditions, and their symptoms • Interpret medicine labels • Interpret medical information

Language Standards: *Focus Standards: (Are the standards that will focus your instruction in this unit and the standards learners will most practice. Other standards listed are necessary to review or perhaps introduce.)	Listening *Follow simple multi-step directions and instructions Identify simple expressions indicating lack of understanding	Speaking Participates in short conversations in everyday activities using appropriate conversation skills and monitoring for listener comprehension *Express lack of understanding *Use the telephone to make an appointment.	Reading Recognize alternate forms of basic information words on a personal information form *Read schedules and simple charts *Follow simple written multi-step instructions	Writing *Complete basic forms to satisfy survival needs	Grammar There is / There are Contractions Demonstrative adjectives (this/that, these/those) Indefinite articles (some/any, much/many) Simple frequency adverbs	Pronunciation Recognize / reproduce pronunciation of chunks (words that go together) and linking the words together
Other Skills: (Cultural, workplace, metacognitive skills, and technology)	Cultural issues relevant to doctors, appointments (making and keeping), using the phone book, (medical services, hospital, poison control), the U.S. medical system, office visit, ER, and 911.					
Possible Materials: (Texts, authentic materials, video etc.)	Authentic: Medicine labels, medical forms, medical charts and graphs, health department information Texts: Topics and Language Competencies 3, Prentice Hall Regents Speaking of Survival, Oxford The Learning Strategies Sampler #2, Project MAPP Speaking of Survival, Oxford Word by Word (picture dictionary), Prentice Hall Regents Basic Oxford Picture Dictionary, Oxford Websites: http://www.geocities.com/sgaer/occatesol/drugstore.htm http://www.drugstore.com					

Evaluation: (The evaluation is an authentic activity that includes the <i>Focus Language Standards</i> and aligns to the objectives in the unit.)	Language Standards (List the Focus Language Standards here.)	Concepts (Topic to be taught in the standard)	Skills: (What students will do)	Thinking Skills (Use Bloom's Revised Taxonomy)	Activities (Be sure to review the objectives above to align the activities with both the unit objectives and the language standards. Numbers beside the activities correspond to the language standards.)
	1. Follow simple multi-step directions and instructions 2. Express lack of understanding 3. Use the telephone to make an appointment 4. Read schedules and simple charts 5. Follow simple written multi-step instructions 6. Complete basic forms to satisfy survival needs	Directions Lack of understanding Telephone appointment Schedules and charts Directions Basic forms	Listening/ Follow Speaking/ Express Speaking/ Use Reading/ Read Reading/ Follow Writing/ Complete	Apply Remember Apply Apply Apply	1. Students will select a picture card depicting an illness, and then listen to 3 sets of directions. When hearing the directions that match their picture, they will raise their hand. The directions will be repeated and they will follow the directions they hear. 3. Students will role-play making an appointment using cells phones. 2 & 6. Students will role-play going to the doctor's office. They will be given a authentic health form to complete, meet with the doctor to describe symptoms and follow the doctor's directions. 4 & 5. Students will select a picture of a person. Then they will be given a chart describing how much medicine to give based on weight and additional written directions on a medicine label. They must determine how much and how often to give medicine to the person in the picture through demonstration.