

Planning Curriculum and Instruction

Written and complete lesson plans should be made for each lesson you teach, using the WWC format or one acceptable to your supervisor and cooperating teacher. These plans should be regularly reviewed by both your cooperating teacher and your college supervisor. They must be organized, clearly labeled, and accessible at the time of observations. Student teachers may use the handbook for storing these lesson plans, or they may create a separate notebook. Lesson plan notebooks must be available for viewing by your college supervisor during each observation and visit.

Two of the great differences between classes about teaching and the reality of teaching are 1) the time pressure for making decisions and 2) the available choices about curriculum and instruction. Because all student teachers must fit into the established classroom to which they are assigned, and because the NC Standard Course of Study and local decisions about curriculum are important to follow, there is not always the freedom to teach what one knows best or is most interested in.

From the beginning, in addition to getting to know your school and your new classroom, you should focus on **understanding how your cooperating teacher organizes time and formally and informally plans day, week, and unit activities**. You will need a plan book of your own (*some schools will provide this and other office/clerical supplies; the Education Department also has materials available for you*). You will need to know whether plans are regularly scrutinized by administrators or others on an established schedule. **As a student teacher, you should expect to have your planning notes reviewed daily by your cooperating teacher** (or less frequently at his or her discretion) **and weekly during your observations**. Current and recent plans should be kept in the “Lesson Planning” section of this student teaching handbook, or another well-organized notebook. In addition, most student teachers will need to create a filing system for archiving lesson plans and units (and all supporting materials) as they are completed.

There are many ways to record teaching plans and organize notes for running a classroom, and your first priority should be learning your cooperating teacher’s methods. Later you may want to adapt or replace that system with one that is best fitted to your own teaching. In addition to day-to-day planning and managing classroom time, you should also be learning about larger week and unit plans, which may be made by grade level teams or other groups of teachers. In secondary schools there are often pacing or scope-and-sequence course guides.

It is your responsibility to ask lots of questions and to work to understand the many different layers of planning and organization that are necessary for good teaching. You are also encouraged to discuss planning with any other teachers who are willing to share their materials or methods. You will quickly understand the challenge of meeting and assessing content or behavioral objectives as class time races by. It is likely that your cooperating teacher, as a veteran, has many of these objectives in mind during planning, and that he or she may not always remember to explicate the basis of curriculum decisions to you. That’s why you need to ask!

In the student teaching seminar we will discuss planning and decisions for curriculum and instruction. As you take on primary responsibility for the classroom we will continue to encourage you to use the materials in the Learning Resource Center and to share ideas with others in the seminar. Your cooperating teacher and others in your school are also likely to give you access to many more materials and resources than you can possibly use right away. You should create a **personal filing system** for organizing copies and creating new units that you teach or otherwise encounter.