School districts tend to choose a universal lesson planning format for their teachers in order to promote consistency. Often times, the lesson planning format is aligned with a particular evaluation structure/program/approach adopted by the school or district. In the 1980’s Madeline Hunter developed a lesson planning method which was widely accepted across the country. This lesson planning method is called the Essential Elements of Instruction (EEI). The lesson planning format that Rio has developed closely resembles this planning approach. The Critical Components of Lesson Design (Rio Salado College) is comprised of both the traditional method as well as modern advancements (practice and vocabulary) in effective lesson planning research. You will find the Lesson Plan template on the Educator Preparation Program page under Teaching Forms.

**Important: The difference between a Lesson Plan and an Activity**

When planning a lesson, even the most experienced teacher can unintentionally start with a “cool” activity they heard or read about, and then try and “build” a lesson around it.

Can this work out? Yes!
Can starting with the activity get the planning piece a bit “sidetracked”? Yes!

An “activity” is difficult to define, in relationship to a lesson plan, typically an activity it is a learning/practice “thing or event” that students engage in.

For example, if a teacher happens to find some cool rainforest animal decorations at the local teacher’s supply store, it makes perfect sense to build an interactive bulletin board “scene” with student-made animals and incorporate some writing by creating flip book facts about each animal. Can this “activity” be aligned with appropriate standards and easily lend itself to being tied to a measurable objective? Probably! It may not, however, be the best and/or easiest way to lesson plan. Starting with the standards, creating a measurable objective, and then creating an activity that seamlessly can connect with an assessment which demonstrates students’ proficiency is a more “organized” and streamlined way to plan a lesson.

A lesson plan is a detailed set of directions which outlines the teacher’s objectives for what/how the students will learn (content) or be able to do (skill) at the conclusion of the
lesson. The plan includes the necessary materials, a measurable goal aligned with a specific academic standard, as well as a step-by-step narrative describing the procedure designed specifically to stimulate the intended learning in all students.

Preparing a Lesson Plan

A beginning teacher will devote more time and effort into creating detailed lesson plans than most experienced teachers. Having a detailed lesson plan will help to ensure that the lesson sequence is well thought-out and structured in a way that enhances the delivery of instruction. This doesn't mean that instruction will not deviate from the original plan (most likely it will). As a new teacher becomes more confident and experienced they will not be writing lesson plans for every minute of the instructional day. Detailed lesson plans will help guide instructional delivery as well as help the teacher identify the most effective instructional strategies until more experience is gained.

Well-planned lessons required a significant amount of time as the teacher needs to design measurable objectives which align with state standards. For a teacher to facilitate the best possible learning opportunity for their students, they must also carefully select content, craft questions, and develop activities which will support mastery of those pre-determined measurable objective(s) which, in turn, students will apply to real world situations.

Rio Salado’s lesson design includes the following three major components:

- **Planning**
- **Assessment**
- **Teacher Facilitated Instruction**

**Planning**

The “Planning” phase highlights logistical components as well as objective and standard information which include *author, subject area, Topic or Unit of Study, grade level, time required, materials and media, aligned state standards, measurable objective(s) Criteria for Mastery (quantitative and references the assessment), remediation, and extensions.*

- Author
- Subject Area(s)
- Topic or Unit of Study
- Grade Level
All of the components listed above are fairly self-explanatory, with the exception of **Materials and Media, Aligned State Standards, Measurable Objective(s), Remediation and Extensions**, please see below for additional information.

**Materials and Media**

- **Materials**: This component includes all content and supply-based materials (text, colored paper, visuals, manipulatives, whiteboards, graphic organizers, etc.). It is important to have all lesson materials ready to go before beginning the lesson.

- **Media**: This component includes any technology/media devices (Smartboard, document camera, iPad, iPod, electronic keyboard, clickers, YouTube video, etc.). If this lesson plan incorporates a technology standard, students must be actively engaged with the technology tool.

**Aligned State Standards**

Research your current state standards - (typically found on the state education department website) so that your lesson objective(s) are aligned appropriately.

**Measurable Objective(s)**

Measurable Objective(s) are carefully crafted statements that describe significant and essential learning that students will be able to do by the end of the lesson. In other words, measurable objectives identify what the student will know and be able to do (and to what specific degree) by the conclusion of the lesson.
To assist in creating a measurable objective, the ABCD model breaks an instructional objective into four parts:

**Audience**

The *audience* describes the intended learners. (i.e. The students will..., The 3rd grade students will..., The history students will...)

**Behavior**

The *behavior* is represented by the “measurable” verb which describes what the audience will learn or be able to do after the lesson is finished. Bloom’s Taxonomy and/or Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (see below) are great resources for selecting specific and, most importantly, *measurable* verbs. (i.e. use context clues, create, describe, identify, design)

**Condition(s)**

The condition further describes the specific circumstances (which can include curriculum/content) in which the students’ learning will occur. The condition offers a “drilled down” description of required resources or materials the students will need access to in order to demonstrate their ability to meet/exceed the criteria for success (using a metric ruler, given a 2ND grade narrative passage, using a drawing program on the computer).

**Degree**

The *degree* states the expected performance criteria. This includes the *quantitative mastery level* that the students will perform on a given task in order to meet the measurable objective. (i.e. 100% of the students will achieve at least 8 out of 10 points OR 3 out of 4 on a rubric OR 9 out of 10 on a given product checklist).

**Examples:**

Measurable Objective(s) Exemplars with component indicators

- *The students (A) will be able to use context clues (B) in a 2nd grade level narrative passage(C) and answer 4/5 questions with 100% accuracy (D).*
- *The 3rd grade students (A) will be able to create(B) 8 out of 10 polygons(D) using a drawing program on the computer(C).*
The behavior/action verb is an important part of a measurable objective as it describes how the student will demonstrate mastery during the assessment portion of the lesson. Bloom’s Taxonomy and Webbs’ Depth of Knowledge are two resources widely used in the education field and backed by educational research to specifically describe intended behaviors.

Bloom’s Taxonomy is a resource which showcases specific verbs (often correlated to a product-based outcome) which indicate or classify the level of thinking required in order for a student to demonstrate proficiency. This very precise, descriptive verb can be found within the wording of a measurable objective. The six levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy (listed in order of the lowest cognitive rigor to the highest) include: Remember, Understand, Apply, Analyze, Evaluate, and Create.

Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (DOK) by Nathan Webb was developed based on research about student thinking in order to maximize student learning. Webb’s DOK focuses on the thinking process, specifically, how deeply students must understand a new concept, skill or strategy in order to recall, explain, and apply their new learning in an everyday
context. So, this particular descriptor extends beyond the Bloom’s Taxonomy “verb” and addresses “how” the students will demonstrate their thorough understanding.
According to The Glossary of Education Reform, differentiation refers to a wide variety of teaching techniques and lesson adaptations that educators use to instruct a diverse group of students, with diverse learning needs, in the same course, classroom, or learning environment. When a teacher coordinates individual or small group instruction in order to vary the delivery of instruction; this is an example of a teacher initiating differentiated instruction.

- Remediation: Remedial instruction specifically targets a skill that a student needs to master. The teacher-identified and initiated “act” of providing additional, intense instruction is referred to as an intervention. An intervention is not an accommodation or a modification, it is considered a tool to help the struggling student understand a new concept, skill or strategy. It is a re-teaching of the concept using a different presentation approach or method. The use of a multi-sensory approach would be beneficial, as a range of learning style preferences and needs can be met.

- Extension: This is not merely an extra assignment and it is not just more of the same type of independent work. Extension opportunities are not considered extra credit as it is considered an “enhancement” beyond the lesson objectives. Use Webb’s Depth of Knowledge and/or Bloom's Taxonomy to create an activity that goes above and beyond the original lesson objective. The goal of the extension is to challenge all of the students and stretch their thinking while maximizing the learning opportunity.

**Assessment**

The “Assessment” component includes Pre-Assessment Data and Post Assessment sections where you will share data which supports the need for the lesson as well as the data which demonstrates the level of mastery at the conclusion of the lesson. Assessment data illustrates the effectiveness of the instructional sequence as well as informs future planning.

Pre-Assessment: Data collected prior to the lesson which drives the instructional focus. This data could include teacher-made tests, DIBELS, progress monitoring, state/district assessments, etc. Pre-assessment data is critical when developing a lesson plan which will meet the needs of all students. When completing a lesson plan or a Sequential Lesson Plan Unit as a part of a field experience assignment, the mentor teacher should be consulted for direction in terms of specific data literacy to support the lesson plan’s measurable objective(s).
Post-Assessment: Data collected after the lesson (or series of lessons/unit) which demonstrate student proficiency and student mastery of measurable lesson objective(s).

**Types of Assessments**

*Formative assessment* is more diagnostic than it is evaluative. It is used to monitor student learning and can be conducted during a lesson to help the teacher adjust instruction if necessary. Typically, this type of assessment isn't “graded” and is often just a quick “snapshot” of student progress/proficiency. Formative assessment may include; a question and answer session, performance observation, listening in on small group work, individual contributions to collaborative group projects, “exit” tickets, anonymous voting, etc. Informal assessment observations should be documented (checklist, anecdotal notes, etc.) in order to guide future lesson planning.

*Summative assessment* evaluates student learning at the “end” of a lesson, unit, term, semester, or even a school year. Sometimes, the summative assessment “score” is compared against a universal standard or school benchmark. Typically, a summative assessment is taken under a controlled conditions and are monitored closely. Summative assessments may include; tests, essays, worksheets, projects, speeches, oral reports, performances, etc. How will you measure and document the students' achievement on the formal assessment? Possibilities may include: skill-based checklist, rubric, developmental scale, answer key for test, essay, worksheet, or quiz.

Whether the post-assessment is formative or summative, it is an essential part of every lesson and must be included in each lesson plan. It is important for you to demonstrate your ability to assess the students’ current academic proficiency levels, and plan a lesson that is appropriate Once the students have completed the assessment activity, (this might even be the independent practice) teacher reflection needs to take place in order to plan future instruction. If the learning/lesson objectives were not met, this would indicate the need to reteach the lesson using a different teaching strategy.

**Teacher Facilitated Instruction**

The “**Teacher Facilitated Instruction**” portion of a lesson is one of the most important (and lengthy) parts of a lesson as the teacher outlines a detailed, step-by-step set of
instructions spanning from the Anticipatory Set through the Instructional Sequence and ending with the Closure of the lesson.

Anticipatory Set with Purpose (written in narrative form): The purpose of the anticipatory set is to grab the students’ attention. The teacher actively engages and motivates the students about the lesson topic through conversation, visuals, read alouds, computer clip, critical thinking questions, etc. The anticipatory set should be relevant to the lesson and link students' prior learning to the current lesson focus. It is important for the teacher to directly state the new concept, skill and/or strategy the students will be learning and how it will apply to their own lives (age appropriate).

Instructional Sequence

This portion of the plan should include: direct instruction, modeling, guided practice, active engagement, checking for understanding, and an independent activity. In order to demonstrate your thorough knowledge of each critical component, you will insert an abbreviated indicator at the end of each content item. Direct Instruction: (DI) Modeling: (M) Guided Practice: (GP) Active Engagement (AE) Checking for Understanding (CU).

- **Direct instruction** refers to instructional approaches that are structured, sequenced, and led by the teacher.

- **Modeling** is when the teacher demonstrates, for the entire class, a skill or strategy. This can be in the form of a “think aloud” or direct instruction.

- **Guided Practice** involves an opportunity for the students to practice the new skill or strategy with the teacher’s support.

- **Active Engagement** strategies are techniques the teacher employs to intentionally involve all students in all aspects of the lesson.

- **Checking for Understanding** occurs throughout the lesson when the teacher intentionally takes advantage of opportunities to ensure that the students understand what is being taught.

**Independent Activity:** a post-assessment may occur during this portion of the lesson. Unlike the guided practice, the teacher is not readily available to correct
mistakes or assist with activity completion. The purpose of this work is to help with the retention of the material that was covered and to demonstrate student proficiency. The independent activity can take place before the lesson closure and/or as a homework assignment (as practice only, not assessment).

**Closure** (written in narrative form): This is the culmination of the lesson, or the *finale*. Revisiting or reflecting on the measurable objectives, with the students, will help organize the new learning or information into a meaningful context so that they can apply their new knowledge to future learning opportunities. Keep in mind that the closure portion of the lesson is not the end point of the skill or subject but a final "check for understanding" used at the end of the class period or before changing subjects. The information gathered during this portion of the lesson will help the teacher plan future instruction.