

## Introduction

SEA programs who choose to include an enrichment component in their academic programming do so in recognition of the fact that many of our students are at or below grade level in terms of their academic preparation. Given the importance of academic preparation to college success, these programs choose to both support student's efforts at school as well as enrich and supplement their academic learning.

Leading with steadfast high standards and a pressing sense of purpose helps staff guide students to reach their academic potential. Once you decide what you are going to do, do it well and don't get muddled. It can be very tempting to try to do it all, but it is best to make a decisive choice about your enrichment curriculum and stick with it long enough to assess impact. (Note - this guide was created in thinking about enrichment *outside* of test or college preparation.)

## Overview

To lead effective academic enrichment sessions, programs need to do the following.

- ❑ Create Strong Plans
  - ❑ Make choices about curriculum, content, and format
  - ❑ Plan from big to small, back to front, with yearly goals and daily plans
  - ❑ Get buy-in and participation from staff and families
- ❑ Facilitate Effectively
  - ❑ Consider and plan according to physical space
  - ❑ Be organized and prepared
  - ❑ Manage behavior

## Create Strong Plans

**Make your choices about curriculum, content, and format.**

- ❑ *Be mission driven and have or seek clarity.* Working backwards from mission will ensure you are on track to helping your students meet your collective goals. What are your short and long-term academic goals for students in your program? Work from there.
- ❑ *Ask the right questions.* Are we trying to build foundational concrete skills? In what area(s)? What are the strengths in your current academic staffing configuration? You want to capitalize on the strengths as well as interests of your academic staff as this leads to spirited and inventive planning and ultimately- lessons delivered to

students.

- ❑ *Know your students' educational environment and resources.* Assess the strengths and areas for improvement in your partner schools or districts. You can use test scores, grades, or internal metrics to determine the greatest areas of need. Think about what your students might be lacking in their learning environments that they will likely need in the collegiate and career environment.
- ❑ *When considering timing and sequencing for possible units, think about the calendar and major events, seasons, or times of year you would like to align curriculum with (SEA Teams Essay contest and Individuals Art and Writing contest, Hispanic Heritage Month, Black History Month, National Girls and Women in Sports Day, Earth Day, etc...)*
- ❑ *Consider how your curriculum fits with other program curriculum to avoid redundancy (Health and Wellness, College Access and Placement, Boys and Girls Groups, etc...).*
- ❑ *Consider staffing capacity and frequency.* What's the model? Half-time homework and half-time enrichment? Full-time enrichment? What is the frequency? How long are the sessions?
- ❑ *Utilize your SEA member programs.* Some programs do literacy, some do coding, robotics, author's craft/writing. While the possibilities are nearly endless, you want to be focused and purposeful.

### **Plan from big to small and back to front.**

- ❑ *Once you decide on your content focus, create a long-term plan that is forward-looking but backwards-planned.* Start with your yearly objectives by grade level and work backwards from there. Plan the yearly goals, then the units, and finally, the daily lessons. This long-term plan will be good to communicate purpose to your board, external parties and donors, other program staff and to hold academic staff accountable. Once developed, this can be a great tool for onboarding and succession. See the [Squash Haven Academic Enrichment Plan](#) as an example.
- ❑ *Daily lesson planning.* Familiarize yourself with a traditional 5-step lesson plan template (see [Teach for America template](#)). The essential elements are (although there are many different names): Intro/Hook, Introduction to New Material, Guided Practice, Independent Practice and Wrap-Up/Conclusion. Here is a [5-step lesson plan guide](#) from Squash Haven with additional notes.
- ❑ *Be objective driven.* Determine what students should KNOW and BE ABLE TO DO at the end of each lesson. This is often called SWBAT (Students will be able to...) These objectives can be scaffolded, and the leading model of this is called "Bloom's Taxonomy". [Blooms Taxonomy guide](#)
- ❑ *Differentiation* is often necessary with the diverse and heterogeneous groupings we

have in our classrooms (mixed gender, mixed age groups/grades, and mixed ability, among other things). Making sure each member of the session can grasp concepts is imperative. Addressing various learning styles with varied approaches will help reach all students. Here is a [Differentiation and Accommodation guide](#) from UMass Dartmouth.

- ❑ *Anticipate misunderstandings or lack of background knowledge or vocabulary.* Cut this off at the pass by anticipating things you may need to explain and show them in the Intro to New Material section of your lesson plan. The more time you spend at the front end, the less time you will have to spend with questions and general confusion.
- ❑ *Plan the sell, EVERY DAY.* Kids want to know WHY. Make sure in each lesson you are providing the rationale for your lessons. This may be a good time to use an anecdote from personal experience or your past experiences with former students. The buy-in is the MOST IMPORTANT PART of any lesson especially with voluntary programs like ours.
- ❑ *Work in incentives and interventions and present those right along with new content for a unit.* For younger students this may mean extrinsic rewards like squash dollars or preference on an upcoming trip. To build intrinsic motivation you could also do something like a positive call home to each student who shows maximum effort. This is also a great way to engage caregivers. In terms of interventions you might deduct points on a program-wide system already in place, or create scaffolded remediations/consequences like re-do's or additional make-up sessions. Calls home or requiring a parent/guardian signature on a poorly done assignment or test/quiz can also be effective and can build relationships as well as engage families in the process of your enrichment agenda. Some programs may withhold squash or external trips and opportunities, but this must be consistent with program philosophy.
- ❑ *Plan meaningful culminating projects that are engaging as well as objective-driven.* Give specific rubrics or guidelines. Plan a communal presentation and invite other team members from other cohorts, other staff members, and caregivers and families.
- ❑ *Follow-through with assessment.* If you are going to grade a piece of writing or art project on a rubric, make sure to return it in a timely manner and celebrate successes. Consider having a dedicated space for exemplary effort, like a Student Work Wall. Link effort on these projects to other larger program structures for incentives and intervention.

### **Get buy-in and participation at all levels**

- ❑ *Engage other staff members* by sharing your current units and ideas at staff

meetings. Invite other staff into sessions and event planning.

- ❑ *Make sure families are aware of the units and the rationale.* Keep them informed throughout the process with signed assignments and invitations to final presentations.
- ❑ *\*\*\*If you plan to require supplemental work OUTSIDE of time at program, or subtract any homework time, make sure to communicate scope and rationale to families. Supplemental work should be focused and purposeful. You can do this with new families entering the program, but make sure to also engage veteran families if this is a change in practices. At the minimum, a letter should go home, but a special family meeting may also be good practice if it is a large shift in routine and rationale.*

## Facilitate Effectively

### Consider and plan accordingly for your physical space

- ❑ *Think about furniture arrangements and possible seating charts for best efficacy.*
- ❑ *Organize partners or groups ahead of time and be deliberate* about if you want them heterogeneous or homogeneous in terms of level related to the task. Be as discreet as possible when assigning groups and make sure to change it up regularly. Assigning “roles” in groups or partners also give students purpose and keeps them on task. Example: Someone is the scribe, someone is the timer, someone is the presenter.

### Be organized and prepared

- ❑ *Be ready to go in the space before students arrive.* Greet students at the threshold of the academic space. Some educators like a handshake, high five or other greeting at this time. This sets the tone for the session.
- ❑ *Have all materials prepared:* sharpened pencils, highlighters, calculators, flash cards, computers, snack partitioned out, etc. Leaving no room for confusion helps to capitalize on the limited amounts of time we have for enrichment.
- ❑ *Be CONSISTENT with procedures.* Where do students pick up their writing utensils? Where is the extra lined paper? How do they dismiss at the end of the session? PRACTICE PRACTICE PRACTICE. The smoother the transitions, the more time for instruction and learning. Once you’ve got a good structure, you can start varying things like seating arrangements. Front loading the practice will save enormous amounts of time over the year.
- ❑ *Give students responsibility for the running of their own classroom.* For younger students, assigning jobs can be a great learning tool. Have a mailperson to hand out flyers and permission slips, a line leader, a person to check all chairs have been

pushed in, etc... Classroom helpers are also a way to engage students who may need to get up and move around during the session.

**MANAGE BEHAVIOR.** We could be here all day on this one!

- ❑ *There is much literature on this to date, so read up!*  
<https://www.weareteachers.com/classroom-management-books/>  
<https://www.goodreads.com/shelf/show/classroom-management>
- ❑ *Create your classroom “rules”, “expectations”, “guidelines”.* Keep them simple, short and relevant. Pick the things that you MOST VALUE. Engaging students in the process will promote buy-in but make sure to reserve ultimate discretion. Example: Make 5 rules of your own and let the class vote on the last one. Spend 1-2 sessions JUST on these expectations. Make sure to explain WHY. Example: We will throw out our trash at the end of the session. This way we won’t have students getting up all session and distracting others because we have so much to learn and so little time! POST your rules. If they are a departure from rules before, or you are trying to do a behavior “reset”, or you are new to the program, send these “rules” home to get signed. This gives leverage for conversations with caregivers down the road.
- ❑ *Encourage participation throughout the lesson.* You can require it, incentivize it, acknowledge it publicly, make it a competition, etc. A common strategy is to put students’ names on popsicle sticks and pull them to either have students answer questions or help with various tasks.
- ❑ *If appropriate, create a system of incentives and remediations.* This may go in line with other systems in place in your organization, or you may have to create your own plan. Are you going to use daily scores? “Report cards” to parents/guardians? A warning and points system? Research and decide what works best for you and make sure your system is sustainable. Something like calling home after a first warning may not be practical unless you want to be calling multiple families every night after program for small infractions. If your squash staff is amenable, you may link these to squash opportunities.
- ❑ *Remember that minor misbehaviors ultimately become major.* Whether it is a repeated relatively small offense like talking out of turn, if it becomes a trend with one kid, or catches on and other kids start doing it, now you have a bigger problem. Pick your battles in some cases, but remember to SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF as long as your reactions match the level of the indiscretion- this will lead to your overall credibility- which leads to trust. Example: It may just be a quick touch on the shoulder to a student who is daydreaming, but a conversation in the hall with you about a rude comment made to a teammate as that is more egregious.
- ❑ *Be authentic.* While you can observe other educators and read all the books out there, you must determine what works for YOU. Kids detect apprehension and

inauthenticity. If you don't believe what you are dishing out, try it another way. A wide range of personalities can succeed in shepherding students to be their best selves.

- ❑ *“Diagnose” the issue with a non-participatory or unhappy student.* Is it hunger? Did something happen at school or home? At squash practice? Is another student bothering or bullying them? Utilize your relationship with the student to determine if there are ways you can meet their needs so they can participate constructively and act appropriately in session. While you want to make sure there aren't major impediments holding your student back from success that day, demanding grit and perseverance while maintaining high standards is also important. This is a balance.
- ❑ *Be firm, not mean.* Speaking firmly will communicate seriousness to students. Letting anger into the equation will lead to a power struggle, and the staff member (simply by engaging in the power struggle) has already lost.
- ❑ *Use humor, but do not humiliate.* Students love corny jokes (even in high school!) but they don't love to feel embarrassed. Once you've publicly humiliated a student, you've lost him/her for the session, and maybe longer.
- ❑ *Admit shortcomings and apologize.* We all make mistakes, and letting students see that (in small doses) will ultimately lead to more respect for you and what you are trying to accomplish.
- ❑ *Be **consistent** but reserve the power of discretion.* What is fair is not always equal. You will have students in your room with a variety of needs, some academic and some behavioral or social/emotional. While you don't want to give the impression that each student is on their own agenda, you want them to know that what you decide is fair, and you have their best interests in mind. This also promotes acceptance of differences and empathy.
- ❑ *Make gametime decisions about what needs to be addressed immediately and what can wait for an individual discussion after session.* If you decide to wait, make sure the discussion happens in a timely manner because institutional memory (for us and our students) can be quite short with all that we are juggling. Just remember to be consistent with these decisions to avoid bias or what could be perceived as bias.
- ❑ *Do what you say you are going to do.* If you are going to start a unit on a particular day, do it. If you are going to make an extra copy of that one handout for that one kid, do it. Your consistency will lead to a sense of security and trust from your students.
- ❑ *Most of all- make your students feel SAFE.* Let them know that you are there to teach them to engage with others in ways that make everyone feel safe and valued. Behaviors counter to those objectives will not be tolerated. Whether they show it or not, kids thrive when appropriate boundaries are drawn and they understand and believe in the purpose of those boundaries. This holds true for even our oldest

students. While the approach may be different, and even your tone of voice and language selection may vary by age group, your unrelenting high expectations shouldn't.

## **Additional Resources**

- ❑ [Lesson Planning Template](#), by Teach for America
- ❑ [Using Bloom's Taxonomy to Write Learning Outcomes](#), by Pearson Education
- ❑ [Tips for Educators on Accommodating Different Learning Styles](#), from UMass Dartmouth
- ❑ Classroom Management Books
  - ❑ [15 Awesome Classroom Management Books](#), by We Are Teachers
  - ❑ [Popular Classroom Management Books](#), by GoodReads
- ❑ [Edutopia](#), an online resource by the George Lucas Educational Foundation with articles, tips and strategies, and weekly e-newsletters

## **SEA Shared Drive Resources**

- ❑ [Squash Haven Academic Enrichment Plan](#)
- ❑ [Squash Haven 5-Step Lesson Planning Guide](#)
- ❑ [Squash Haven In-Class Essay Rubric](#)
- ❑ [Squash Haven Sample Discussion Do's](#)
- ❑ [Squash Haven Sample Final Project](#)

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