

Guidelines to Writing a Curriculum Unit

The Institute attaches great importance to the process for writing curriculum units, which includes a prospectus and two drafts before submission of a completed unit. These steps for writing a unit provide you the opportunity to develop your ideas with regard to the comments of your seminar leader and of other school teachers, who are the main audience for whom you are writing. The curriculum unit must be original and a product of your CTI seminar experience, not written previously. By writing the unit, you plan to teach your own students about the seminar subject. Because of the importance of the writing process and the care with which the Institute schedule has been designed, it is imperative that Fellows meet all deadlines. *Units which have not been prepared in accordance with this process cannot be accepted.*

The prospectus, each draft, and completed unit should be submitted in electronic form to your seminar leader by the dates indicated below. Individual assistance with questions about these Guidelines is available from the Coordinator for your seminar.

Curriculum Unit Process and Schedule

Revised Unit Topic/Reading List/Prospectus: due to Seminar Leader – Friday, June 13.

Each Fellow, in consultation with the seminar leader and other seminar members, refines his or her topic and chooses basic readings for research. An essay of two-to-four pages describes what the Fellow intends the final unit to contain. This provides each seminar member with an overview of his or her colleagues' work. Your seminar leader will provide feedback on each prospectus along with a recommended reading list for each Fellow by July 10. (See Prospectus Form on p. 63.)

First Draft: due – Saturday, September 27, 6:00 pm.

This is your first draft of the prose statement of the unit's content objectives and teaching strategies. Whether developed as a unified essay or as separate sections, this draft should consist of paragraphs of sustained narrative, exposition or argument. It should be at least 7-8 single-spaced pages in length (even though your seminar leader may suggest that the draft be double-spaced for convenience in revising and editing). The seminar leader will provide written comments on this draft by October 9.

Second Draft and Synopsis: due on Saturday, November 1, 6:00 pm

This draft includes a rewriting of the content objectives and teaching strategies of your unit, based on comments from your seminar leader and colleagues, and a first writing of the examples of classroom activities, annotated lists of resources, and the appendix on district academic standards. At this point you should prepare the entire unit in a form as close as possible to the completed unit: 15-25 single-spaced pages, with full citation of bibliographical data for items in notes or bibliographies, including annotations. The draft and synopsis will be returned with seminar leader's comments by Nov. 13.

Completed Unit: due via email to Seminar Leader on Monday, November 24.

This is the third rewriting and refinement of the prose section of the unit and the final version of the entire unit. Your completed cover sheet should be attached to the front, and your Appendix 1 (Implementing Teaching Standard) at the end of your unit. The Appendix 1 should also be submitted as a separate document. Fellows should consult the CU Checklist and Mechanical Specifications (Fellows Handbook pp. 28-32) for the appearance and structure of the completed unit, including any illustrations, images, graphs, and tables; special characters or formulas; and use of any copyrighted material.

The Elements of a Curriculum Unit

The final curriculum unit typically includes an introduction, background on your students and school, and your rationale for teaching the unit, as well as the core sections delineated below. Be objective when describing your school and students, remembering your unit will be shared publicly. Share the following background which can be helpful to teachers interested in implementing your unit: school setting, demographics, class size, grade level, subject, relevant characteristics of the group of students that is the focus of your unit, and any relevant features of your teaching situation that influenced your formulation of the unit.

After reading widely about your chosen topic and participating regularly in your seminar, you should complete a curriculum unit with these core features:

- 1) Content objectives – clear statement of what the unit seeks to cover;
- 2) Teaching strategies – a unified, coherent teaching plan for those objectives;
- 3) Classroom activities – three or more detailed examples of actual teaching methods or lesson plans;
- 4) Resources – three annotated lists of the materials you have reviewed: (1) a list of materials for classroom use, (2) a reading list for students, and (3) a bibliography for teachers. You should explain in the prose section of the unit how these resources relate to your objectives.
- 5) Appendix 1 – no more than one page in which you briefly annotate – not merely list – those school district or Common Core academic standards your unit will implement in a significant way. Please title this document: “Appendix 1: Implementing Teaching Standards”. (Include other appendices, if any, after Appendix 1 and number them accordingly.)

You may present the first three elements in a unified essay or in separate sections. Whatever organization you devise, the discussion of objectives and strategies must consist of paragraphs of sustained narrative, exposition, or argument. This discussion must constitute at least two thirds of your completed unit – that is, at least 10 single-spaced pages (not including graphs and images in your page count). Any outlines, lists and worksheets, if used, should be discussed in the section devoted to classroom activities, and included as separate appendices. In selecting examples of classroom activities, you should present methods you have developed, rather than those gleaned from other sources. Considered together, the units prepared in your seminar should reflect a variety of methods.

Remember that the main audience for your unit is other teachers. The presentation of work-in-progress in Institute seminars will provide you with responses from one group of teachers – ideas you can use in revising your unit to make it as widely useful as possible.

Use of Copyrighted Materials

If you want to include excerpts (i.e. passages exceeding a few lines) from copyrighted material in your curriculum unit, you should first obtain permission from the copyright owner. If use of such material is not granted free of charge, you must also obtain advance approval from the Institute for paying any fees. Copyrighted material must be properly credited in an endnote, as described in the discussion of "Notes" in the Mechanical Specifications. *The Institute cannot accept units that contain copyrighted material for which you have not obtained prior authorization.* Because of the delays you may encounter in obtaining permission from copyright owners, you should seek such permission well in advance of completing your unit. We suggest you request such permissions while preparing your first draft. For further information, please consult the detailed instructions and forms provided for obtaining copyright permissions.

Submitting the Completed Unit

Final units must be formatted as described in the *Mechanical Specifications of Writing a Curriculum Unit* section of this handbook on pp. 29-32 and submitted by **Monday, November 24**, in electronic form to your seminar leader. Please be sure to include "CU" and your name in the subject line of your email and copy the CTI office (info@charlotteteachers.org) on your emailed submission. After a final review, your seminar leader will forward your final approved unit to the CTI Director and Program Associate by **Thursday, December 4**.

Your final unit must include the **2014 CTI Curriculum Unit Cover Sheet** (including unit synopsis) at the front and **Appendix 1: Implementing Teaching Standards** at the end of your unit following the resources. A copy of Appendix 1 must also be submitted as a separate document. Title your submissions as follows with your **first initial** and **surname** and the **submission date**: "JSmith_unit_11-24-13" and "JSmith_appendix1_11-24-13." If your seminar leader requests additional changes, be sure to change the date on each following submission.

Your cover sheet must include a synopsis of the unit (200 words) to inform other teachers who may wish to use the material you develop. The cover sheet also includes your recommendation of subject(s) and grade level(s) for teaching your unit, a statement of permission for the Institute to publish your unit in print and online, and a link to the Appendix 1 at the end of your unit.

Also by December 4, the seminar leader will review and indicate to the CTI Director whether each Fellow has participated fully in the seminar and the writing process.

Upon successful completion of the seminar and the unit, as well as completion of CTI's online Fellows' Questionnaire, Fellows who are in good standing will be issued a stipend of \$1500 from the CMS payroll department. (Individuals who do not fulfill all Institute requirements for full participation cease being Fellows and do not receive the stipend). Fellows also receive three continuing education credits (3 CEUs) for their full participation.

To increase availability and use of the curricular resources developed by Fellows, the Institute places each Fellow's synopsis and curriculum unit on its website (www.charlotteteachers.org) and on the Yale National Initiative website; both are searchable for content using the keywords provided by Fellows on their Curriculum Unit Cover Sheets. CMS teachers, other teachers around the world, and the general public may consult these curriculum units and other Institute resources online.