Long-, medium- and short-term planning

Broadly speaking, these terms can be defined thus:

- the long-term plan is the scheme of work
- the medium-term plan is the unit of work
- the short-term plan is the planning for lessons.

It is probably better to think in terms of ‘planning’. The term ‘plans’ may imply set, unchanging formats and diagrams. Planning implies a design process that is open to change and relates to specific cohorts, classes and groups.

The short-term plan may also be better thought of in some cases as a ‘session’, especially in the context of experiences beyond the classroom, in order to convey the idea of a flexible sequence of learning appropriate to the group, rather than entirely set and unchanging periods within a classroom.

What is important is to be clear about what constitutes the best features of such plans or planning.

**The long-term plan will:**

- provide a **forward vision** of the range, content and curriculum coverage, and focus over a longer period of time
- provide a **shared, agreed pathway through the years of the key stage** for the cohort, group, year, etc.
- **link to the medium-term plans** and, by implication, the **short-term plans**
- provide a form of **curriculum ‘road-map’** that may draw on wider departmental, school and local events, processes, timetabling and links
- be **adaptable** and **evolve** according to changing circumstances and needs
- draw on **broader strands of progression** that can be traced and linked across the timescale of the plan
- be **evaluated** through feedback to see that it matches the needs of the learners.
The medium-term plan will:
- clearly focus on specific aspects of progression, around suitable objectives and assessment outcomes
- link to a long-term plan which envisages and frames the opportunity for two levels of progress for all pupils across a key stage
- identify strategies and activities that will support pupils in working towards these objectives and outcomes
- present a coherent and engaging sequence for learning and teaching
- put learning in meaningful contexts for pupils
- make close reference to appropriate texts and resources
- be adaptable and evolve to the needs of particular groups and individual pupils
- provide planned opportunities to develop pupils’ experience and understanding of key concepts
- be evaluated through feedback (e.g. from assessment, lesson observations, pupil interviews) to indicate that the unit is both effective and engaging.

The short-term plan
A successful medium-term plan will result in a range of possible formats and ideas for what a short-term plan or resource might be.

For example, while the short-term plan may still in many cases provide a clear, structured lesson plan with starter, introduction, development and plenary session, this will be one of a range of pedagogies and learning designs chosen because of the stage pupils have reached in their learning. Other plans may more appropriately begin, for example, with investigation and group discussion, leading to presentation and peer review. Alternatively they may start with experiences outside the classroom and lead to independent research followed up by direct teacher-led instruction on how to interpret or process findings or responses for specific purposes and audiences.

Whatever the format, style or content of the resource that will guide short-term work, it will need to have personalisation at its heart and, alongside it, an understanding of how the short-term plan will aid progression. Above all, the detail of the plan will ensure a rich and engaging learning experience that will build upon what has happened previously in a teaching sequence, and link into what is to happen thereafter - guided by the medium- and long-term planning.

The following set of principles may assist you in the short-term planning process.

There are three areas against which to reflect on your plans and processes:
- building, practising and applying skills
- the learning process
- progression through levels and leading to independence.
### Building skills*

Skills need to be:
- taught and **built**
- **applied, practised** and **developed**
- **secured** and **applied independently**.

Building skills is a recursive process and should be revisited at each of the stages above, as and when required, in a range of contexts and situations.

### The learning process

This needs to be a compelling (and recursive) process that will:
- **engage** pupils by establishing aims and success criteria, drawing on prior learning, selecting stimulating resources and contexts, and sharing knowledge and ideas
- **explore** purposes, skills, aims, processes, ideas and key questions
- **transform** skills and knowledge into deep learning, through collaborative and increasingly independent work, consolidating and extending what has been learned
- provide opportunities to **review, evaluate** and **present** what has been learned, experienced and enjoyed
- **reflect** in an extended way on the whole process and the next steps that are required.

This broadly fits with the familiar structured lesson model, but should now be seen in terms of a **learning process** that works in a **range of flexible contexts** such as with extra-curricular opportunities, or over a sequence of short sessions.

### Progression*

This will be determined by:
- the increasing **complexity** of situations, contexts, resources and activities
- the **technical demand** associated with these activities
- the learner’s **familiarity** with the task, activity or context
- the level of **independence** with which a learner demonstrates and applies skills, knowledge and understanding.

*Note: these are, broadly speaking, the principles of progression within the functional skills standards and approaches, but are closely mirrored by the strands within the Framework for secondary English.*