

III. Teachers of mentally
handicapped children,
Training of

*Special Education
Curriculum Development
Center* —an in-service training approach

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A COOPERATIVE PROGRAM INVOLVING THE IOWA STATE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
AND THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

IN-SERVICE TRAINING MATERIALS FOR TEACHERS
OF THE EDUCABLE MENTALLY RETARDED

Session II

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Guidelines
For the Development of
LIFE EXPERIENCE UNITS
Applicable for use in Special Classes
For the Educable Mentally Retarded

Note: This guide is a modification of one section of a study guide prepared by Edward Meyen for a course in the teacher training program and is not to be reproduced without permission from the author.

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PREFACE

Please Read

The purpose of these materials or Life Experience Units is to provide illustrative units and suggestions for their development. The materials are not intended as a text, nor is it anticipated that special class teachers will find the sample units entirely applicable to their specific classes. The major purpose of including sample units on identical topics for different age levels is to illustrate the teaching of units on similar themes to the same group of children as they progress through different levels of the Special Education program.

Because local resources and the unique needs of different groups of children influence the content and general orientation of units, most teachers would probably approach the topic of "Family and Home" from different points of view. These differences of course are impossible to anticipate; thus, the illustrative units have been written from the perspective of a teacher who would be teaching additional units closely related to the theme. For this reason the content is not all inclusive. It should be noted that the unit for the intermediate level is less detailed and extensive than the other two levels.

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PART I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose: The purpose of this guide is not to suggest a single approach to the education of retarded children nor is it intended to present a new set of objectives for their education. Rather its purpose is to present the utilization of "Life Experience Units" as a desirable approach to teaching educable mentally retarded children and to offer some direction for the development of units. Any discussion of unit teaching for the mentally retarded must be couched in the context of broader curriculum considerations. Inherent in these considerations should be clarification of the emphasis to be given to unit teaching in the educational program and the structuring of units which reflect both scope and sequence in the presentation of information and the teaching of basic skills. Unless these considerations are viewed as conditions to be met, we risk the formulation of isolated instructional experiences which may or may not be relevant to the educational programs appropriate to the needs of the mentally retarded. This guide is based on the premise that the development of Life Experience Units for use in teaching the mentally retarded must be more than a collection of information about a topic and the structuring of an activity accompanied by a few well selected group assignments.

All too often units are taught because the teacher is interested ✓
in a specific topic or because considerable resource material happens

to be available. The utilization of ill-prepared units or the employment of mediocre teaching practices will more than likely result in the sharing with students a minimum amount of information about a topic which potentially should have been developed into a more comprehensive and meaningful learning experience. The intent of this guide is to present basic information on an organizational structure for employment of units in teaching the mentally retarded, offering direction in the development of experience units and suggesting guidelines relative to the organization of Life Experience Units into a sequential year's program of work. ✓

Background: In developing an educational program to meet the needs of a local community, the school assumes responsibility for structuring a differentiated curriculum to accommodate the needs of all children inclusive of the educable mentally retarded. The significance of this task becomes apparent when one considers the varied learning problems of children and the different roles which these children will fulfill later as adults. As a curriculum innovation, the organization of special classes for educable mentally retarded children is an administrative consideration and accomplishes little more than to reduce the range of abilities and the number of children enrolled in a given class unless the instructional program developed by the teacher is commensurate with the needs of the pupils. ✓

While questions exist in the minds of some educators relative to whether or not the teaching of trainable mentally retarded is education, the situation is clear in terms of the higher functioning educable mentally retarded child. Education as a product will be

basically the same for the educable as it is for his more able peers. When we consider education in terms of its influences on the lives of people, it becomes apparent that the significance of what we teach is in general measured by the degree to which it is later applied by the learner. The higher the correlation between what we teach and the application by students later in life, the more successful the educational system--assuming that we have appropriately appraised the individual's needs and assuming that we have made correct decision in our curriculum planning. If the mentally retarded are truly different in their rate of learning and their capacity to learn, then these differences should be reflected in "what" and "how" we teach in special classes. ✓

The justification for special classes is often credited to the ineffectiveness of the regular class curriculum in educating the mentally retarded. This rationale is based on the premise that the academic orientation which typifies the curriculum in general education is not appropriate to the educational needs of the mentally retarded. Those who support this view feel that educational outcomes for the mentally retarded must be more than academic achievement in basic skills. They acknowledge that the curriculum should emphasize the practical application of basic skills, however, they stress that considerable emphasis should also be given to social development, improvement of self-concept, and adaptability of the individual. While there tends to be general agreement on this philosophy, little consistency is reflected in the instructional programs implemented in special classes. Teachers vary in terms of how they perceive the cur-

riculum for the educable mentally retarded; consequently, considerable variance exists in the content and scope of basic skills incorporated in instructional programs in special classes for the educable mentally retarded.

In general, there is agreement on the philosophy that the program should be practical, have high utility value, and be geared to the functioning level of the child. However, in observing a number of special class teachers the contrast between what is expressed as goals and objectives for teaching the mentally retarded and what in reality is actually included in the curriculum becomes apparent. In some cases it is difficult to differentiate between what the child receives in special class and the experiences offered in the regular program. Most of the contrast between practice and beliefs is influenced by the orientation of the teacher and the inconsistency in teacher training programs.

Because of their previous experience in teaching "normal children" in regular grades, teachers often find it difficult to change their expectations of pupil achievement and to alter their teaching methods accordingly. The lack of prepared materials for use with the mentally retarded and unrealistic expectations on the part of some administrators also contribute to the dilemma which surrounds curriculum development for the mentally retarded. The inconsistencies in instructional practices in special classes can possibly be explained in terms of the lack of a single proven approach to teaching the mentally retarded. In spite of the vast amount of experience that has been accumulated in teaching the mentally retarded and the

research carried out, the lack of a proven approach which results in the mentally retarded child functioning at his expected level as determined by his mental age has not been developed. In reality, no one approach seems to work best for all teachers. Consequently, teachers tend to experiment with different methods and ultimately use the one which works best for them. Such approaches range from a watered down version of the regular curriculum to complete reliance on unit teaching. Although special educators are sensitive to the situation, considerable differences in opinion exist relative to which specific techniques are most effective in teaching the mentally retarded. There is probably more agreement on the kinds of information that should be taught to the retarded and the type of social being he should become than there is on how the fundamental basic skills should be taught.

The major factor which seems most relevant to the success of a given approach is motivation. The approach which typically works best with the mentally retarded is one which allows the teacher to structure experiences which appeal to the students and which "makes sense" to them. Unlike the third grade teachers who have available to them well researched and expertly designed texts, teacher's manual, and supplementary material, special class teachers must rely on their own ability to modify and/or develop their own materials. Certainly, materials used in regular classes have value for use with the mentally retarded. However, it must be remembered that while in the regular class the retarded child failed to profit from these same materials. The retarded child often brings to the special class ✓

negative attitudes towards materials he had been using as well as towards school in general. The child tends to generalize these attitudes to whatever it is that is his concept of school. The problem is further complicated by the limited scope of most programs for retarded children and the lack of methods research.

It appears that much confusion centers on realistic expectations in terms of the mentally retarded child's performance in the areas of reading and arithmetic. The minimizing of emphasis given to academic skills in contrast to stressing social development and vocational skills has resulted in failure on the part of special education to spell out the basic skills essential to the curriculum for the mentally retarded. At the same time, however, competency in reading and arithmetic is acknowledged as essential to independent living. Because of the concern for social development, there is a tendency on the part of many teachers to relax their concern for the teaching of basic skills. In some cases they take the other extreme and initiate formal instruction in these skills too early. They overlook the factor of readiness and introduce concepts to the retarded before he is capable of coping with them. When this happens, emotional problems may develop or the child learns unrelated parts of what should be sequential learning. The consequences of this error are great. First of all, learning under these conditions is inefficient and, secondly, the techniques and materials used with the child before he is ready will not be as effective the second time. On the other extreme is the problem of a prolonged readiness program; it has been found in some studies that too much time can be

devoted to readiness. These factors suggest that even though the teaching of academic skills may not be the major portion of the curriculum for the mentally retarded, that teachers must carefully consider the scope and sequence of basic skills regardless of the approach they may take in their teaching techniques.

Since the purpose of special classes is to improve the benefits derived by retarded children from instruction and to maximize their effectiveness as adults, it is obvious that the curriculum is the key to a successful program. A final curriculum consideration which is germane to programming for the educable mentally retarded relates to the influences of social class on how children view the experiences they receive at school. A large percent of the children enrolled in special classes for the educable mentally retarded come from socially deprived backgrounds. In the main, these are children from lower class homes in which the lack of stimulation and insufficient opportunities have greatly influenced their intellectual performance. The materials and experiences typically provided through public schools are geared toward the child from the middle class. The child in the lower class is concerned with the present; he needs to see immediate application for the skills that the teacher is attempting to develop as well as the information she is teaching. He is not inclined to be interested in experience for the sake of learning, nor is he aware of the cumulative factors of education in terms of future application. Because of the large portion of children in special classes coming from deprived backgrounds, the special class teacher must be very conscious of the attitudes and needs of this group. The selection

of techniques and materials should reflect this consideration. The program employed by the teacher must be flexible and designed to capitalize on the experiences which are very relevant to these children. She must also refrain from trying to impose on them discipline and teaching techniques which are geared for the middle class but not appropriate for this group of children. The teacher should be sensitive to what is important to them for the present as well as the future.

Background Summary: The previous general discussion of curriculum for the mentally retarded has been presented to establish a frame of reference for consideration of unit teaching for the mentally retarded. Teachers are often prone to identify themselves as utilizing units when in essence their curriculum planning relative to unit teaching is merely superficial. They may teach a few short-term units on selected topics, holidays, or special events; However, they often fail to sequentially plan their units so that the concepts and skills taught through unit teaching relate to the continuity of their overall instructional program.

While there are critics of unit teaching, there are also numerous proponents of the method. It is interesting to note that it has been over 30 years since Ingram's book was first printed in which the appropriateness of unit teaching for the mentally retarded was stressed. It has also been a number of years since one of the first publications of the U. S. Office of Education, pertaining specifically to curriculum for mentally retarded, was published and edited by Elise Martens. It

too stressed the unit approach teaching for the retarded children. Since then, numerous articles have appeared in professional journals pertaining to the utilization of units in curriculum for the mentally retarded or indirectly by considering techniques that are essential to unit teaching. In reviewing curriculum guides published by many public schools, it becomes apparent that a basic characteristic of these documents centers around the utilization of units to present the content of curriculum. While this consistency in the presentation of curriculum information on teaching the mentally retarded does not imply an endorsement of the method, it at least suggests that consideration be given to the method.

The wide-spread reference and implied support for unit teaching for the mentally retarded indicate that inherent in the expressed philosophy for educating the mentally retarded is concern for practical application of skills and the need for a means of teaching the mentally retarded child which capitalizes on experiences and successes, and which contributes to the ultimate development of concepts the retarded children will need as mentally retarded adults.

In teaching the mentally retarded, considerable responsibility rests with special class teachers. They must appraise instructional materials on the market and determine which materials are appropriate, which are mediocre and which are worthless to their needs. They also assume responsibility for modifying and developing teaching materials. The degree to which teachers use the units enters into these decisions. Life Experience Units may constitute the major vehicle for classroom

instruction or they may be effectively used in a limited way as a supplement to a program centered around the use of developmental series. It will be assumed throughout this guide that the teacher is interested in making extensive use of units in structuring learning experience for the mentally retarded.

PART II

ORGANIZATIONAL CONSTRUCT FOR LIFE EXPERIENCE UNITS

The greater the emphasis given to unit teaching in special classes for the mentally retarded, the greater the need for a systematic approach to the development and organization of units. The choice of an experience unit approach to teaching this group of children does not free the teacher from the responsibility for studying the sequential teaching of basic skills. Unit teaching offers the teacher the necessary flexibility to maximize experience units to the needs of the retarded and to focus on social development in a meaningful way. However, if considerable reliance is placed on units as a teaching technique, assurance must also be provided that academic skills are not ignored. When approached in a systematic fashion, the teaching of basic skills with an application frame of reference can be accomplished.

As further support for the need for an organizational framework from which units can be developed the following often voiced criticisms of unit teaching with the mentally retarded are discussed.

1. Too much responsibility is placed on special class teachers for the sequential teaching of basic skills through unit teaching.....

Once you deviate from adherence to basal series, the teacher assumes responsibility for structuring the instructional program to maintain sequence and at the same time provide sufficient scope. This is a

legitimate view and reinforces the statement that if teachers are to rely on units, they must first strengthen their background in basic reading and arithmetic methods.

2. In unit teaching the teacher tends to take too many liberties in the selection of content..... As a generalized criticism this particular one appears to be less valid if it is agreed that the curriculum should have high utility value for the individual and be geared to the demands he will encounter in daily life. Even if a more traditional approach is taken to the instructional program, the majority of the decisions on curriculum content must be influenced by the factors prevalent in the local environment of the children.

3. Units tend to lack continuity..... As topics are selected which are distinct from other units being taught during the same year, teachers tend to select units and superficially teach something about all aspects of the topic to the degree that it lacks appeal to the same children at a later date. This is a very valid criticism, but again, this situation need not exist if teachers seriously approach the development of units in a systematic manner. This doesn't mean that repetition should be omitted. Rather, it means that repetition should involve the presentation of the same concept within different contexts and from different points of view with varying difficulty.

4. The development of units is time consuming..... Granted, considerable time is required to develop good units. Much of the time spent in preparing units, however, is needless duplication of effort. If the teacher will follow some basic steps in developing

her units, the amount of time required to prepare a unit can be minimized. The more units a teacher develops in accordance with a planned system, the more efficient she becomes and, consequently, the less time involved. The ideas, techniques, and activities employed in unit teaching are cumulative and your resources increase with each unit you develop. Regardless of the proficiency of the teacher in writing units, the task of teaching will probably remain more difficult than a textbook oriented program.

5. Not every teacher can be successful in using units.....

While this criticism can be generalized to all instructional approaches, it probably is most applicable to unit teaching, mainly because it requires an energetic, imaginative and knowledgeable person to successfully use units. Obviously, relying on units to serve as the basic core of an instructional program places many demands on the teacher that she could otherwise avoid if she used a textbook oriented approach.

BASIC CORE AREAS

The integrated Life Experience Unit Approach as discussed in this guide is based on six core areas of learning experience, namely, arithmetic concepts, social competencies, communicative skills, safety, health, and vocational skills. In contrast to the development of units which focus on a narrow range of experience and information relevant to a specific topic, this approach suggests that every unit should include planned experiences in each of the core areas. Naturally, some units lend themselves more to one core area than another,

e.g., a unit on the Home and the Family may basically be a unit strong in social competencies. However, through careful planning, sufficient learning experiences related to the unit topics can be incorporated from other core areas. The unit may still be strong in social competency, but there is a much greater opportunity for including basic skill type activities in a given unit if consideration is given to each core area in the planning stages.

Following is a brief descriptive discussion of the six core areas. Refer to Chart I for a schematic illustration of how the core areas relate to specific units.

I. COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Communication skills are probably the least difficult of the skills included in the six core areas to integrate into a Life Experience Unit. Included in this core are all of the skills pertaining to communication. Reading, writing, speaking, and listening would be considered the major elements of this core. Although reading and writing experiences cannot be over-stressed, speaking or the use of conversational speech should not be neglected. Conversational speech will generally be used much more by the retarded than reading or writing. The ultimate aim of this core is the teaching of a functional vocabulary for speaking, listening, and recognition.

II. ARITHMETIC CONCEPTS

The arithmetic concept core should be geared to the teaching of arithmetic skills. Included are the teaching of number facts and

understanding of their uses. Consideration must be given to teaching concepts pertaining to measurement, time, money, comparisons, etc. When developing units for the educable mentally retarded, one must capitalize on every opportunity to introduce the teaching of arithmetic concepts. All children within a class for the educable mentally retarded will not have a common understanding of arithmetic concepts, therefore, one must be concerned with providing learning experiences in arithmetic concepts according to the various levels of arithmetic competence in the class.

III. SOCIAL COMPETENCIES

The importance of this core cannot be over-emphasized. Regardless of the success in learning skills in other areas, the success of the retarded in becoming socially and occupationally accepted by society will depend, to a large extent, upon his possession of good social attitudes and traits. Most units offer unlimited opportunities for the introduction of this core. The retardate needs to be taught how to get along with others, the social graces of having guests and being a guest, desirable social habits expected by employers, plus many more too numerous to mention but which are of sufficient importance to be included in a curriculum for educable mentally retarded. It is the lack of acceptable social attitudes and traits that often sets the retardate off and away from his peer group. He becomes stereotyped because of his social incompetence. This is a determining factor in the retardate assuming a contributing role in his community.

*attitudes about self
interpersonal relationships
respect for authority
acceptable behavior*

IV. HEALTH

The majority of units lend themselves to reinforcing this core. There is a strong tie between the health core and social competencies. The retarded child must develop good health habits if he is to be accepted by society. The health core should provide learning experiences relating to cleanliness, good grooming, dental care, food, growth, preparation of meals, to mention a few. These children should be taught proper health habits in using public facilities as well as personal hygiene. The flexibility of the Unit Approach offers opportunities for practical application of these habits.

V. SAFETY

The effect of the safety core is realized in the child's moving about, his participation in school, his use of leisure time, and in his occupational pursuits; the acquisition of good safety practices necessitates continued emphasis on this core. These children must be made aware of the safety hazards at home, at school, and on the job. Almost every unit provides opportunities for teaching safety. When selecting units applicable to a specific level, consideration must be given to those units having potential for teaching of safety habits that meet the present needs of the retardate.

VI. VOCATIONAL SKILLS

Our efforts in striving toward successful vocational placement for the mentally retarded should be reflected in our curriculum planning. Increased consideration should be given to such vocational

skills as (1) applying for a job, (2) completing application forms, and (3) good work habits on the intermediate and pre-vocational levels. However, the development of good attitudes and responsibility should begin at the primary level and continue to receive emphasis at the upper levels.

The purpose of Chart I (see page 18) is to illustrate the intent of integrating each of the core areas into each unit. The selected units are not necessarily to be interpreted as recommended unit topics, rather, they are included mainly for illustrative purposes. It should be noted that the reference to art, music, and physical education does not constitute additional core areas. In many programs these areas are taught by special subject teachers or the children are grouped with children from regular classes for instruction. Their inclusion in the construct is to suggest that when appropriate, experiences in art, music and physical education should be included in unit teaching. Many units, particularly at the older level, will not lend themselves to these activities. This limited concern for this area is not to imply the relative importance.

Class discussion

Take a Unit Topic and generate ideas for each one

'what item of safety is suggested in each one clothing as the Jr High level commences etc?'

suggest it's major area of emphasis

Chart 1

Construct

Chart 1

Construct

Construct	ARITHMETIC	CONCEPTS	SOCIAL	COMPETENCIES	COMMUNICATIVE	SKILLS	SAFETY	HEALTH	VOCATIONAL	COMPETENCIES
Life Experience Units										

18

PART III

DEVELOPMENTAL STEPS TO WRITING UNIT

The unit method of teaching educable mentally retarded children has received increased attention in recent years. Realizing the benefit which retarded children can obtain from a well-planned and effectively-taught unit, it is the intent of this outline to suggest procedures in developing Life Experience Units. The organizational structure included in this outline is recommended as a desirable procedure for developing units. Basically, the Integrated Life Experience Unit Approach is the adaptation of practical every-day experiences into units of work designed to facilitate social growth and learning experiences of the educable mentally retarded. Into each unit are integrated planned experiences in arithmetic concepts, social competency, communication skills, health, safety, and vocational competencies.

The flexibility of this approach allows the teacher to draw upon practical every-day experiences that are familiar to the retarded and to develop these experiences into meaningful learning situations. Motivating the retarded becomes less of a problem when you are drawing upon teaching resources with which a child is familiar and relating them to meaningful learning experiences within the individual's environment.

The basic purpose of the developmental steps outlined in the following pages is to encourage the teacher to carefully plan her

unit and in the process to accumulate a resource of ideas pertinent to the unit topic. Each step represents an evaluation of the merit of the topic being considered. In other words, the idea of the preliminary step is to test the potential of the unit and to prepare the teacher for the later writing of her lesson plans.

Many teachers approach the writing of units by briefly noting the major points to be covered and proceeding to write lesson plans. In many cases the result is a well taught unit, however, even a well taught unit may be inadequate if it failed to effectively cover the material. If considerable emphasis is being given to unit teaching in the curriculum, then it is essential that the unit be viewed as a tool for teaching more than specific information relative to an isolated topic. The teaching of academic skills must be considered an integral component to the unit teaching approach. The construct previously discussed and the developmental steps to be described on succeeding pages are designed to require a consideration of these broader curricular demands.

Preliminary Steps

Keep in mind that the purpose of the preliminary steps is to evaluate the potential of the unit and in the process to generate a resource of ideas on content, material, and techniques relative to the unit. To facilitate this effort questions are used to introduce each step. For illustrative purposes the completed step from the sample units accompanying this guide are inserted as examples following the outline of each step. It should also be noted that in progres-

sing through the preliminary steps the teacher is not attempting to write the steps in final form, rather, the purpose is preliminary to the actual writing of lesson plans. As teachers become proficient in this procedure, the preliminary steps become somewhat routine.

Select 1 unit and carry through with class

DEVELOPMENTAL STEPS TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF LIFE EXPERIENCE UNITS FOR THE EDUCABLE MENTALLY RETARDED

Preliminary Steps

- I. Select the unit you plan to teach. (What are the reasons for teaching this particular unit at the present time?)
 - A. When selecting a unit, you should consider the contributions that the unit can make to the total curriculum.
 1. Review the units that have previously been taught.
 2. Concern yourself with the needs of the class with respect to strengths and weaknesses in different core areas.
 3. Formulate your rationale; take time to jot down why you desire to teach a specific unit at this particular time.
 4. Unless past experiences with the class indicate a definite need for concentrated work in one core area, refrain from teaching more than one unit with major emphasis on the same core simultaneously.
 5. Your personal interest is a poor criterion.

B. This is a logical time for some unit. e.g. Winter - from fall to spring

EXAMPLE

Home and Family

Primary Level

Solving the many and varied problems inherent in homemaking is a problem to be faced in some degree by all people. The development of basic homemaking habits and skills is often learned incidently by normal children. The retarded child, however, must overcome certain deterrents if he is to adequately cope with and solve the problems of homemaking and family living.

Because of their limited mental capacity, slow learners need

specific training and instruction in order to learn those concepts other children may pick up incidently. Many retarded children come from homes where low standards of homemaking and family living exist. These homes fail to provide the necessary training the retarded individual needs.

Therefore, equipping the mentally retarded with skills to function acceptably as a family member, head of a household, or a parent becomes a major task of the school. The foundations for these skills are introduced at the primary age level and are developed and expanded throughout the successive age levels.

- II. List experience sub-units. (What are the possible related themes around which lessons can be grouped within the context of the unit topic?)

This step is the first test of whether or not your unit topic has potential.

A. A sub-unit is a short unit related to the main basic theme.

1. The sub-units should reinforce the basic unit.
2. Sub-units can be utilized to strengthen core areas in which the basic units show evidence of being weak.
3. The listing of possible sub-units will facilitate organization of learning experiences and activities pertaining to the unit.

4. First list what appears to be logical sub-units in random order.

5. Later organize your sub-units into a sequential pattern.

6. At this stage you are actually generating a resource of ideas about the content and direction of your unit. These sub-units will later represent collections of lessons. It is also quite probable that many sub-unit topics will be deleted as you progress with your planning.

7. Sub units may at some later time be thought of as basic units

according to how you piece the unit

7. This is the key step in reducing your later efforts in developing a unit.

8. A theme considered a sub-unit in reference to one unit may later be considered a major unit. (Refer to chart.)

EXAMPLE

Home and Family

Primary Level

Parent's Occupations
Our Jobs at Home
Sex Education
Good Manners
Health Habits
Food
Keeping Clean
Safety in the Home
The Telephone
Play Time
Holidays
Our Neighborhood

III. State your general objectives for the unit. (What are your overall objectives in teaching this unit? Be general, not specific, at this point.)

A. For the purpose of developing Life Experience Units for the educable mentally retarded, consider objectives as a general competency that you want the children to attain. (Think in terms of overall outcomes.)

B. Because of the various ability levels present in most special classes and the varied background of experiences which the class members possess, as a teacher you must adjust your goals for these children to allow for evidence of success according to the individual pupil's rate of achievement. You should not anticipate all children becoming proficient in all concepts or objectives.

EXAMPLE

Home and Family

Primary Level

A. To develop an understanding of the individual members of the family and their roles.

first new ground
after you complete the
preliminary steps
come back and
write instructions
objectives
then when
it will be
written as
measurable
objectives for
lesson plans

This example includes the second order objectives

1. Names of family members
2. Duties of family members
- B. To begin sex education through the study of pets
- C. To become familiar with different rooms in a house; to learn about the purpose and furnishings of each
 1. Kitchen
 2. Livingroom
 3. Dining room
 4. Bathroom
 5. Bedroom
- D. To develop an appreciation fo good home life
 1. The home as the center of family life
 2. Expression of love within the family
 3. Cooperation, courtesy and respect among family members
- E. To develop good safety and health habits
 1. Adequate rest
 2. Eating proper food
 3. Basic cleanliness rules
 4. Knowledge of common childhood illnesses and simple health precautions
 5. Accident prevention in the home and yard
- F. To develop an understanding of the ways families have fun together
 1. Activities in the home and community
 2. Celebration of holidays and special occasions
- G. To develop an understanding of the relationship between the home and the community

Important

IV. Outline your unit according to the various core areas, namely, arithmetic concepts, social competency, communication skills, safety, health, and vocational competencies. Vocational competency would probably not be included in the primary level. (What activities can be used to teach the core area skills related to the topic of the unit?)

A. After categorizing the concepts and objectives according to the core areas, the next step is to develop a list of activities which will reinforce the basic core areas.

1. This is an important step in the development of a well-balanced unit and should receive careful attention.
2. Sometimes it is helpful to list activities at random that are related to your basic unit, then categorize them according to basic core areas.
3. This is also a "test" step to determine the strength of the unit in the different core areas.
4. Arrange activities in some order convenient for your use. Review each core area and weed out duplications. Also check to be sure they are properly categorized. Compare the activities with the pattern of sub-unit developed in Step II. Again, the purpose is to generate ideas on activities and techniques so that you have a resource to draw upon when you are writing your lesson plans.

EXAMPLE

Home and Family

Primary Level

Core Area Activities

A. Arithmetic Concepts

1. Count the number of people in family
2. Learn telephone numbers
3. Count number of rooms in house
4. List the cost of various forms of recreation
5. Use clock to show the time for going to bed, eating meals, etc.

*Comments on example
give eg of non activities
Not concepts*

6. Measure materials to be used in making model house
7. Use calendar to show date of birthdays, holidays, and other events.
8. Use teaspoon measure for making soda-salt mixture to use when brushing teeth.
9. Making comparisons -- older, younger, big, small, long, short

B. Social Competency

1. Dramatize roles of family members
2. Prepare booklet about children's families and homes
3. Use check list of things to be done at home by children
4. Demonstrate and dramatize proper behavior patterns
5. Plan a visit to a child's home
6. Invite guests to a party
7. Tape record introductions
8. Make puppets to represent members of family

C. Communicative Skills

1. Learn vocabulary list -- names of family members, names of rooms in house, names of holidays, etc.
2. Write experience charts
3. Class discussions of family activities, etc.
4. Write stories, make booklets, label pictures about family and home
5. Read signs, labels, ads
6. Use telephone directory
7. Listen to stories related to home and family
8. Learn home addresses

D. Safety

1. Put away toys
2. Draw pictures of danger areas in the home
3. Dramatize safety rules to follow when outdoors
4. Practice using bandages and antiseptics and stopping nose bleeds, etc.
5. Use telephone to call doctor
6. Look at various household poisons; learn to recognize danger

E. Health

1. Make charts showing proper food
2. Demonstrate proper way to wash hands, face, etc.
3. Make check list of things children can do to help keep house clean
4. Ask a nurse to explain common childhood diseases
5. Dramatize proper care for someone who is ill
6. Write stories about getting adequate sleep
7. Care for pets in the classroom
8. Prepare bulletin board display showing good health rules

F. Vocational Competencies

1. Dramatize parents working to earn a living
2. Provide opportunities for children to assume responsibility for routine duties in classroom
3. Stress following directions, obeying rules

V. Resource Material (What resource materials and/or people would be appropriate in teaching this unit?)

- A. Compile a list of resource material and resource people which might be utilized in teaching these children.

- B. There is generally an unlimited resource of materials for any given unit. These materials are available in many forms and from various sources.
1. Free and inexpensive materials from commercial companies, Chambers of Commerce, various civic departments, etc.
 2. Field trips can and should be utilized to supplement units when they can definitely contribute to identifying the unit.
 3. There is a wealth of material in the form of visual aids, films, records, magazines, newspapers and disposable materials which can be used to advantage.
 4. The construction of model stores, banks, and post offices can be used when they facilitate the understanding of a concept.
- C. Resource people can be brought into the classroom for a demonstration and class discussion.
1. This generally has value prior to or immediately following a field trip.
 2. This gives you an opportunity to evaluate the children's oral discussion and, also, their social attitudes in reference to having a guest in the classroom.

Check Use of Resource People

1. They should understand who they will be talking to.
2. The assignment to them should be clear.
3. You should prepare the children for the session.
4. You should follow up to gain their evaluation of the activity.

EXAMPLE

Home and Family

Primary Level

Resource Material
Hand Puppets
Movies and Filmstrips
Experience Charts

Bulletin Boards
 Story Books
 Field Trips
 Pictures
 Old Magazines
 Telephone Directory
 Resource People
 Art Materials
 Free Materials
 Games and Toys
 First Aid Supplies

crucial

VI. Vocabulary (What words can most easily be taught in relation to this unit topic?)

- A. One of the principal contributions which a Life Experience Unit should make to the retarded child's education is that of helping him to develop a vocabulary made up of words which are crucial to the unit which is being taught. This vocabulary should include words which are relevant for speaking, writing, listening and reading.
- B. You should determine a basic list for the above-mentioned vocabulary area during the early stages of the unit.
 1. Be alert for opportunities to integrate these words into lessons in a meaningful way.
 2. Allow for frequent repetition of these words both written and spoken.
 3. Provide opportunities for the children to use these words.
 4. Provide opportunities for review of vocabulary words about and in conjunction with other units.

EXAMPLE

Home and Family

Primary Level

Specific names of children's family members

father	babies	thank you	pajamas	poison
mother	room	excuse me	slip	safety
brother	kitchen	guest	dust	games
sister	livingroom	sleep	sheets	garden
family	dining room	hour	blankets	party

home	bedroom	breakfast	pillows
collect	older	bathroom	lunch
younger	furniture	dinner	children
stove	pepper	house	refrigerator
snacks	care	sink	energy
food	cupboard	soap	clothes
table	hands	wash	chair
face	iron	couch	fingernails
job	healthy	work	bed
teeth	earn	toilet	television set
money	bathtub	rinse	toothbrush
fix	cooperate	salt	toothpaste
ruler	help	soda	yard
manners	underwear	parent	share
socks	toys	blouse	take turns
pets	interrupt	dress	trash
visit	jeans	dishes	introduce
shirt	male	polite	shoes
female	please	skirt	dishcloth
hanger	movers	drainer	community
doctor	dentist	check-up	dishtowel
shots	fold	scratches	nose bleeds
burns	cuts	directory	dangerous
careful	telephone	fire	electric outlets
swimming	matches	picnics	roller skate
clubs	fishing	library	restaurants
celebrate	shopping	presents	holiday
Easter	birthday	Halloween	Valentine's Day
school	Christmas	church	Thanksgiving
stores	relatives	neighbors	neighborhood
sick	medicine		

Final Step

Preparation of Lesson Plan: The preliminary steps were designed to facilitate the actual writing of lesson plans. If the previous steps have been taken seriously and considerable time devoted to their completion, the teacher should now have a wealth of ideas relative to the content and direction of the unit. A brief review of the preliminary steps should indicate the major strengths and weaknesses of the unit. The teacher should also have accessible a resource of ideas on vocabulary, activities, and community resources.

Until this step, the emphasis has been on generating a resource of ideas on the unit topic and evaluating the potential and appropriateness of the unit. The organization of lesson plans will be sufficient direction for most teachers in teaching a unit. This does not mean that each lesson is written in such detail that exactly what the teacher is to do and say is included. Rather, it means stating objectives for each lesson and specifying how the teacher plans to attain the objective.

Suggested Format: A variety of formats are used by teachers in writing units. The format suggested in this guide is relatively simple. Teachers should feel free to use a format of their own selection or design. However, teachers are encouraged to be consistent in the use of a format.

Format

Objectives	Activities	Resources	Experience Chart

For an example of lesson plans written according to this format, refer to the sample units on "Family and Home" which accompany this guide. In addition to the material in the following section, detailed suggestions for each column of the format appear on pages 37-39.

Column 1:

Objectives: In contrast to the general objectives listed in step III, the lesson objective should be more specific.

1. After listing the objectives for the lesson, you need to explore the concepts which should be taught if the objectives are to be achieved.
2. A concept should result from a planned learning experience that the teacher develops as a means of teaching the children the understandings they need in achieving the general unit objectives which have been stated.
3. When listing concepts, make them specific and keep in mind that concepts should be organized in a sequence that will contribute to the accomplishment of the general unit objective.
4. In listing concepts, it is imperative that you (a) give consideration to assuring representation of the six basic core areas, and (b) that the concepts contribute to the achievement of the general unit objectives.
5. Refer to the list of sub-units which should now be in sequence.

Column 2:

Activities: In this column list the specific class activities

which you plan to conduct for each lesson. Sufficient narrative information should be included so that another teacher reading your plans would be able to associate the activities with your class procedures. Also in this column include those vocabulary words which you plan to stress in the particular lesson. Refer to the activities included in the steps for suggestions or activities according to core areas. As you teach your unit indicate which activities are successful and which are not.

Column 3:

Resources: Specify the resource material or people. If a book is to be used, list the title, author, and publisher.

Column 4:

Experience Chart: Effective use of experience charts as a teaching tool and as a means of recording lessons is the key to successful unit teaching. The use made of experience charts in unit teaching is the same as in teaching reading at the primary level except that this serves a more general purpose throughout the teaching of a particular unit. An immediate response to the suggested reliance on experience charts with the mentally retarded is that the technique is most applicable at the primary level and that older pupils will find it too juvenile. This doesn't have to be the result. If the teacher places value on the technique and alters its use in terms of content and the exercises taught in using the tool with older students, they will accept it.

It is not desirable to write out the story in advance, then at-

tempt to duplicate it exactly on the experience chart during the lesson. However, it is important that the teacher include in the lesson plans approximately what she hopes to end up with on the experience chart. It then becomes the responsibility of the teacher to stimulate discussion so that the children contribute a story which approximates the content planned by the teacher. Although experience charts do not determine the direction of the unit, they do assure continuity if appropriately used. In general, every lesson should be recorded on experience charts. This allows for frequent review and serves as a permanent record of the unit.

Commercially prepared tables are available or the teacher may assemble sheets of 24 x 30 lined newsprint. Regardless of which is used, the teacher will find the use of an easel of considerable assistance. The illustration on page 40 suggests a design which can be easily constructed by most custodians or students in a shop class.

Suggestions for teaching lessons:

- ✓ 1. Teach the unit, but don't talk the unit. All too frequently units fail because the teacher persists in talking the unit to death and then wonders why the children were not interested.
- ✓ 2. Plan your unit and record the successes and failures of the activities.
- ✓ 3. Always have an alternate activity in mind which you can bring in at any time to change the activity.
- ✓ 4. Be prepared to switch the activity at a moment's notice.
- ✓ 5. Make the initial lesson motivating. Be an opportunist in capitalizing on experiences of the children.

Most difficult

6. Follow each lesson with meaningful seatwork or small group work that can be carried out with a minimum of direction for the teacher.

Summary: The lack of prepared curriculum materials developed for the mentally retarded places considerable responsibility on the teacher for the modification and preparation of teaching materials. This situation coupled with the background typical of children in special classes makes the utilization of well-designed units a reasonable approach to teaching retarded children. This does not mean that the teacher should necessarily organize the total instructional program around Life Experience Units. However, if the curriculum content is to be relevant to the needs of special class pupils, an instruction approach similar to unit teaching becomes almost mandatory for certain concepts of the curriculum.

Summary or rationale: The intent of this guide has not been to provide an exhaustive "cookbook" on the preparation of units. Instead, the purpose has been to offer a brief description of an approach to the development of units. Inherent in this guide has been an emphasis on the teacher's concern for teaching basic skills and a plan for the systematic development of units.

Future publications of the Center in the area of unit teaching will focus on the following:

1. The organization of units into a year's plan of work
2. Evaluation of unit activities
3. The development of a basic skill inventory as a reference in developing units
4. The preparation of partially completed units covering a wide range of topics

GUIDE FOR WRITING EXPERIENCE UNIT PLANS

The purpose of this guide is to serve as a reference in the development of "Life Experience units." It is suggested that the format used in developing lesson plans for "Life Experience Units" be similar to the format of this guide. Each of the four areas should be considered in the development of a "Life Experience Unit." Under each heading is listed several suggestions that should facilitate the development of a complete unit.

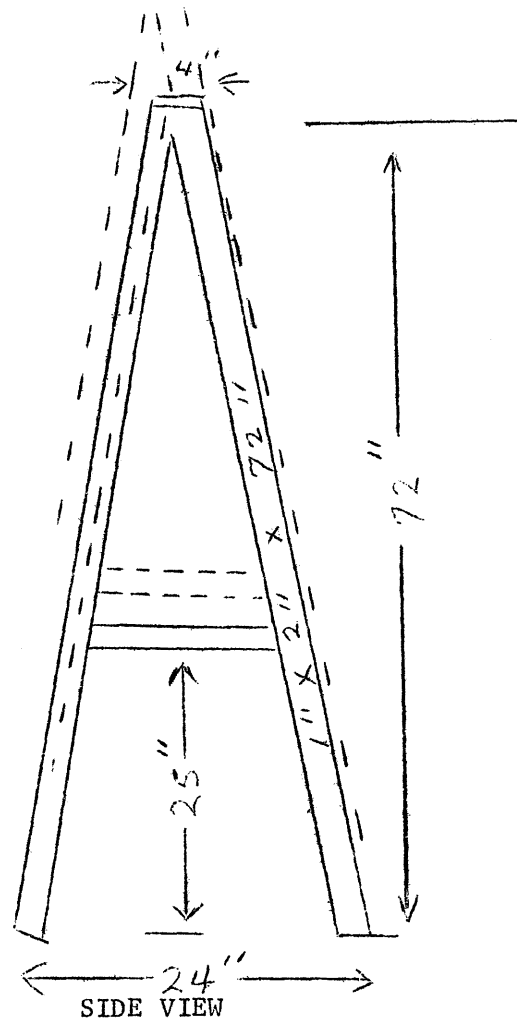
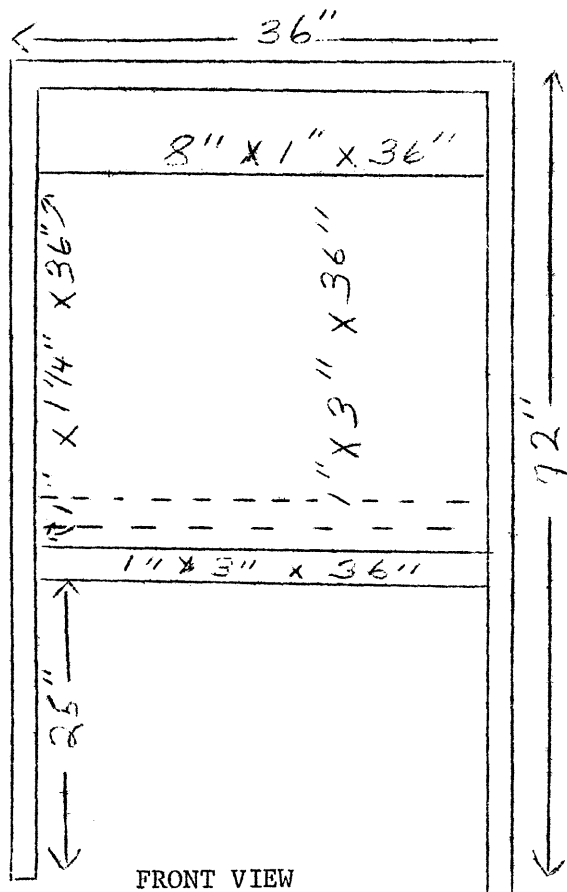
OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	RESOURCE MATERIAL	EXPERIENCE CHART
1. List specific objectives.	1. Experience chart -- valuable activity	1. Posters	1. For each lesson prepare a brief outline including the concept that you plan to teach during the lesson.
2. List concepts that should be acquired through this unit.	2. Discussion activities a. Relating personal experiences	2. Bulletin boards a. Use concrete materials.	2. Select vocabulary words that seem crucial to the unit.
3. Consider the following core areas: a. Social b. Occupational c. Health d. Safety e. Language development f. Arithmetic	b. Discussion on specific topic. 3. Reports 4. Collections a. Pictures b. Objects, etc. 5. Art activities 6. Puppet show 7. Dramatizations	b. Attractive and interesting to age group. 3. Supplementary materials a. Many companies have free materials available that can be used to supplement units.	3. Separate vocabulary into spelling and recognition groups. 4. Use pictures when necessary to illustrate a concept.
4. Correlation with related units.	8. <u>Seat Work:</u> READING	b. Railroads c. Health org. d. Safety org. e. Dairy, etc.	5. Use manuscript or cursive according to your group.
5. Will the lesson contribute to the development of good work and study habits?	1. Alphabetizing exercise 2. Multiple choice 3. Completion exercise 4. True and false 5. Punctuation and completion	4. Resource people in the community 5. Pictures 6. Magazines 7. Use of materials such as:	6. Stimulate interest so that the students will want to contribute to the building of the chart.
6. Will it help to develop skills? a. Academic b. Manipulative	6. Develop original sentences 7. Flashcard drill		7. Refrain from making the unit too verbal. 8. Solicit student par-

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	RESOURCE MATERIAL	EXPERIENCE CHART	
7. Practical application of lesson.	3. Fill in missing letter.	a. Food cartons	ticipation in constructing the experience chart.	
8. Will it help the student make better use of his leisure time?	9. Matching word game	b. Straws		
	10. Silent reading	c. Milk cartons		
	11. Association of picture and label	8. Audio-Visual materials		
	12. Organization of sentences into sequence	a. Movies		
	13. Picture cards with label on reverse side	b. Film strips		
	14. Exercise to stimulate the following of directions.	c. Tape recorder		
		d. Phonograph		
		e. Television		
		9. Models		
		a. Farm		
		b. City, etc.		
	ARITHMETIC			
	1. Number recognition			
	2. Counting objects			
	3. Measuring			
	4. Money exercises			
	5. Relating numerals to objects			
	6. Grouping of twos, fives and tens			
	7. Number work sheets -- addition, subtraction, etc.			
	8. Association of number word with numeral			
	SPELLING			
	1. Missing letter exercise			
	2. Match words and pictures			
	3. Selecting correctly spelled words from misspelled words			
	4. Correct usage exercise			
	WRITING			
	1. Writing labels to pictures and objects			
	2. Copy material from the printed form			

OBJECTIVES**ACTIVITIES****RESOURCE MATERIAL****EXPERIENCE CHART**

3. Writing sentences and stories
4. Writing numerals and number words
5. Writing the alphabet

EXPERIENCE CHART EASEL AND CHALK BOARD
MATERIAL LIST, BLUE PRINTS AND DIRECTIONS FOR BUILDING



LIST OF MATERIAL

- 4 - 1" x 2" x 72" Legs
- 4 - 1½" x 1" x 36" back base for sides
- 4 - 1" x 3" x 36" back base and front base
- 2 - 1" x 8" x 36" top back base
- 1 - 1" x 4" x 36" top cap
- 2 - 32 3/4" x 42½" x ½" cellotex or chalkboard
- 1 - 14½" x 34" x ½" plywood or hard board for storage area bottom
- 4 - 6" heavy duty clipboard clips
- 8 - ½" x 36" quarter round trim

