



# Teaching and Learning Cycle at Summit Academy Charter School

## EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

At Summit Academy Charter School, our mission is to bridge the gap between aspiration and reality by preparing sixth-twelfth grade scholars to gain acceptance to, excel in and graduate from college using three pillars of success: mastery of core subjects, character development, and community leadership. Our educational philosophies are deeply rooted in our mission and are fueled by proven research-based instructional strategies. Our beliefs are as follows:

**All Scholars Can Learn.** We believe that all scholars can achieve at high levels, when provided with high quality, engaging instruction led by skilled and caring teachers who hold scholars to high expectations.

**Learning Should Be Engaging, Rigorous and Relevant.** We recognize that scholars better comprehend and retain information when we create a stimulating learning environment.

**Teaching Is An Artful, Sacred Science.** Teachers possess a great power to influence and shape our scholars intellect and character.

**Character is Key.** A major component of Summit Academy Charter School's vision is to support in the character development of our scholars.

**Leaders Create the Culture for Teaching and Learning.** Our instructional leaders at Summit Academy lead by example.

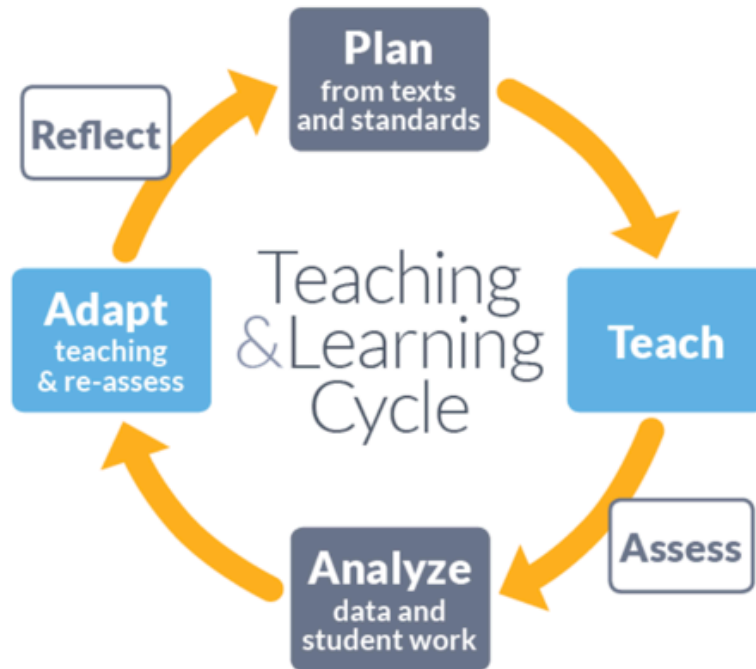
**It Takes a Village.** Scholar growth and achievement takes the work of a community of people who are interested in seeing a child grow and achieve.

## SUMMIT ACADEMY'S TEACHING AND LEARNING CYCLE

At Summit Academy, we believe that teaching is an artful, sacred science. To meet the needs of our diverse learners, we use a variety of proven, research-based instructional models, strategies and best practices. We believe that impactful, effective teaching and learning is a cyclical process, which consists of six steps (outlined in greater detail below):

- ☑ Planning
- ☑ Teaching
- ☑ Assessing

- ☑ Analyzing
- ☑ Adapting/Reassessing
- ☑ Reflecting



## Planning

Planning drives teachers to purposefully prioritize actions that lead to the mastery of standards. Our teachers plan with the end in mind by reviewing and unpacking Common Core Standards into specific, measurable, and attainable objectives.

Our lesson plan are designed to include the following components:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Common Core Standards                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Guided Practice  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Key Concepts/Vocabulary                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Independent Practice                                       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Objective                                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Checks for Understanding (sprinkled throughout the lesson) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Materials                                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Closing  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Do Now                                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exit Ticket  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hook/Opening                               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Homework   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mini-Lesson (Introduction to New Material) |  |

## Teaching: Instructional Models, Instructional Strategies and Lesson Design

We employ a variety of instructional models including, but not limited to the below-listed models. Regardless of the model, our lessons are designed to be scholar-centered. We believe that the person engaging in the “talking” and “doing” is the person doing the learning.

**Socratic Seminar** – Based on Plato’s Dialogues, the Socratic method challenges scholars to think analytically and critically with the questioning and careful guidance of a teacher.

**Reciprocal Model** – This is an instructional approach in which scholars become the teachers in small group reading (or other content) sessions. Teachers model, then help scholars learn to guide group discussions using strategies such as summarizing, question generating, clarifying, and predicting.

**Integrative Model** – In the Integrative Model, scholars develop a deep understanding of organized bodies of knowledge while developing critical thinking skills.

**Social Interaction Model** – The Social Interaction Model involves scholars working collaboratively to reach common goals, increasing learner involvement and providing leadership opportunities and decision-making experiences.

**Inductive Model** – In the Inductive Model, scholars use information that illustrates concepts to search for relationships that lead to uncovering of principles, generalizations, and rules, thus allowing scholars to acquire a deep understanding of those concepts.

**Concept-Attainment Model** – Using examples and non-examples to illustrate concepts, the Concept-Attainment Model employs inductive strategies to help scholars reinforce their understanding of concepts and practice hypothesis testing.

**Concept-Development Model** – The Concept Development Model builds on scholars' prior knowledge and refines and extends concept information so that scholars can understand increasingly complex and abstract ideas.

**Problem-based Model** – The Problem-based Model is designed to teach problem-solving skills and content and to develop self-directed learning. The model uses a problem or a question as a focal point for scholar-led investigation and inquiry. Problem-based learning is a broad family of teaching models that includes problem solving, inquiry, project-based learning, and case-based learning.

**Direct-Instruction Model** – With emphasis on active teaching and high levels of scholar involvement, the Direct Instruction Model focuses on both concepts and skills.

**Lecture-Discussion Model** – The Lecture-Discussion Model uses a teacher-centered approach to help scholars understand organized bodies of knowledge.

### Instructional Strategies

As we plan and execute our lessons, we utilize a variety of strategies to support scholars in learning the content. They include, but are not limited to:

**Modeling** - An instructional strategy where the teacher or another scholar demonstrates a new concept or skill and scholars learn by observing and emulating.

**Jigsaw** – A cooperative learning strategy that enables each scholar of a group to specialize in one aspect of a topic or one part of a reading or other task.

**Graphic organizers** – A graphic organizer is a visual and graphic display that depicts the relationships between facts, terms, and/or ideas within a learning task.

**Effective questioning** – Teacher questioning and scholar response are common classroom learning activities.

**Discovery/Inquiry-based learning** – Inquiry learning is based on constructivist theories of learning, where knowledge is “constructed” from experience and process. It covers a range of approaches, including: field work, case studies, investigations, individual and group projects, and research projects.

**Turn and Talks** – This strategy permits all scholars to participate in discussion, rather than only a few scholars participating in a class-wide discussion.

### **Assessment**

At Summit Academy, we believe that data is information to help us reflect and to help us get better, smarter and stronger as teachers and learners. As a result, we are constantly assessing our scholars. We assess for standards and skill mastery regularly using a variety of assessment tools to gather comprehensive data that may impact our next steps. We use three types of assessments: formative, interim and summative. A formative assessment is an informal assessment that allows teachers to gather information quickly about what scholars may know or not know. Formative assessments afford teachers the opportunity to provide immediate feedback and correct misconceptions or misunderstandings. At Summit Academy, we give Interim Assessments approximately every six weeks to determine if scholars have mastered the standards taught previously. It allows teachers to see gaps and trends in the learning and teaching. We use the information gathered from the Interim Assessment to develop reteaching and/or remediation plans. A Summative Assessment is an assessment that takes place at the end of a large chunk of learning. An example of a Summative Assessment is the State Exam. We use the data from the State Exam to plan for the next school year and make effective learning groups.

### **4. Analyzing**

At Summit Academy Charter School, we consistently rely upon qualitative and quantitative data to best inform instruction in the classroom. In addition to the scholar data that is gathered on a daily basis inside and outside classrooms, including but not limited to, Do Now's, exit tickets, other formative, and summative tasks, and behavior logs, teachers also utilize observational notes that include anecdotal information about specific scholars. By conducting observations during class, teachers are able to quickly target and create an intervention plan for particular scholars who are exhibiting behaviors that indicate possible issues such as time on task/off, engagement, motivation, and other specific behaviors that are not readily noticed or can be identified through scholars' written work. Utilizing data on a consistent basis to determine objectives and goals for scholars is one of the most efficient ways to track scholars' progression and regression and make purposeful and impactful decisions for instruction. Therefore, we are always seeking different ways to collect information in order to assess our work, reflect, and evolve as a community of learners.

### **5. Adapting**

Once teachers have examined and evaluated data, they can identify the gaps in scholar learning and create the most informed re-teaching plan. A major part of being an effective educator is being able to adjust an instructional plan and reteach a topic or skill in a purposeful manner. An adjustment plan can consist of teachers developing alternative instructional strategies or modifications. Once teachers make a re-teaching plan they determine when the instructional modification will take place, and how they will make the plan meaningful and engaging for scholars who didn't understand the material while addressing the needs of those who are prepared to move onto the next lesson. Once the lesson(s) is retaught, teachers use rubrics to re-assess scholars, make note of successes and challenges, and utilize the new data to determine the most purposeful next steps.

### **6. Reflecting**

We believe that effective instruction and scholar progression is primarily driven by teacher reflection. If teachers do not reflect than they will stunt or limit their ability to strengthen their instructional capacity to look clearly at successes and struggles and consider purposeful options for change. We recognize that teachers have the ability to make an impact on a scholar's life inside and outside of the classroom and we strive for this impact to continuously be positive and