

Menus

A menu offers students a way to make decisions about what they will do in order to meet class requirements. A menu could be for a single lesson, a week-long lesson or even a month-long period of study. Once the teacher has decided on what the essential understandings and/or skills are, she/he can begin to create a menu.

Steps for creating menus

1. Identify the most important elements of a lesson or unit.
2. Create an imperative or required assignment or project that reflects the minimum understanding you expect all students to achieve.
3. Create negotiables which expand upon the 'main dish' or imperative assignment or project. These negotiables often require students to go beyond the basic levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. For example, they often include activities that require synthesis, analysis or evaluation.
4. Create a final optional section that offers students the opportunity for enrichment. The optional section often reflects activities that students can use for extra credit.

Wormeli (2006) suggests placing the menu options in a restaurant menu style (see below) that could include an 'appetisers', a 'main dish', 'side dishes', and even 'desserts'. He suggests the following format.

Appetisers (Negotiables)

- A list of assignments or projects.
- Students select one item to complete.

The Main Dish (Imperatives)

- An assignment or project that everyone must complete.

Side Dishes (Negotiables)

- A list of assignments or projects.
- Students select two items to complete.

Desserts (Options)

- Optional but irresistible assignments or projects.
- Options should be high interest and challenging.
- Students choose one of these enrichment options.
- Level of complexity.

References

Wormeli, R. (2006). *Fair Isn't Always Equal: Assessing & Grading in the Differentiated Classroom*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.