

UNDERSTANDING CONCEPT-BASED LESSON DESIGN

A Process for Developing Instruction Plans

Intended Use

This document is intended to be used as a guide for those educators who would like to develop their lesson plans using a concept-based model. Included is a process for developing concept-based instructional plans. It will be most useful for those educators who have attended concept-based unit development training and are experienced with developing concept-based units.

Organization

This document is outlined as a process of steps. Each step contains a description of that step as well as questions to pose to guide your work. While a process is outlined in this document, understand that this is not a linear process. Many steps may occur simultaneously. This is also an iterative and variable process based on teacher preference. The process is presented here as steps for coherency.

NOTE: *While there are different models for designing lesson plans, the following critical components outlined in this concept-based lesson design process are mostly based on the work of Dr. H. Lynn Erickson, international expert in concept-based curriculum and instructional design. This approach to curriculum and instructional design is better suited for the type of teaching, learning and assessing necessary for success with the new Essential Standards as well as preparing students to be College, Career and Civic READY!.*

THE PROCESS

Note: This process assumes that you have already developed concept-based units. Many of the non-negotiable elements of concept-based lesson planning are based on the key components in a concept-based unit.

STEP 1: Sequence and chunk the generalizations from your concept-based unit of instruction.

To begin the lesson planning process, you must first begin by identifying all of the generalizations from your concept-based unit of study. **Sequence** the generalizations in a logical order in which you would teach them. Once you have sequenced and grouped your generalizations, identify those generalizations that will be assessed using a **performance task**. This is important so that you can also identify the associated learning experiences that will form the basis of your lessons. Remember: You develop the performance task first and then teach the learning experiences so that students are prepared to complete the performance task. Then, group them into **chunks** that can be the focus of individual lessons. NOTE: if this is being done within a collaborative group, be mindful that sequencing may vary according to individual teacher preference. There is no right answer, *as long as the sequencing is logical*.

As you sequence and chunk the generalizations from your concept-based unit, ask yourself:

- How could I order these generalizations in a coherent fashion that my students can understand, transfer and build on prior knowledge?
- Which generalization(s) will be assessed using a performance task?
- How could I group or “chunk” the generalizations to form individual teaching and learning segments?

STEP 2: Copy the Guiding Questions

Once you have decided on the generalizations that will be the focus of each lesson, copy the guiding questions for each generalization into your lesson planning template. The guiding questions are important because they will serve as the basis of student engagement, inquiry and assessment of knowledge, skills and understandings.

As you copy the guiding questions for each generalization, ask yourself the following questions:

- Do I have a good mix of factual and conceptual questions that will lead my students to the desired understanding(s)?
- Do I need to add additional questions?
- Is there a provocative question in this lesson that will require students to engage in a debate? (*Note: this type of question may not be in all lessons.*)
- How can I sequence the questions so that they allow students to inductively arrive at the generalization(s)?
- How do I get my students to ask their own questions during the lesson?

STEP 3: Identify the content and skills from your concept-based unit that are necessary to help students arrive at the generalization(s).

The content you select from your unit should be good examples to support the generalization(s). The particular skills you elect to use for the unit are really dependent upon the focus of the unit. Because skills transfer beyond a particular lesson or unit, they should appear in multiple lessons.

As you select the particular content and skills for which students will be engaged for each lesson, ask yourself the following question:

- What content examples can students engage with that allows them to arrive at the generalizations?
- Is there a balance in content that represents depth versus breadth?
- What disciplinary skills do students need in order to delve deeper into the content?
- Are there any multi-disciplinary skills from another content area that would be useful to students during this lesson?

STEP 4: Develop an assessment plan for the lesson.

This step will appear in various parts of the planning process. You should begin with where the performance task(s) for the unit will fall in the sequence of lessons as this is the most important assessment in the unit because it assesses the most important

generalization(s) of the unit, including content and skills. Then, decide other generalizations, content and skills that will be assessed in each lesson. Your assessment plan should include a mixture of formative and summative assessment.

As you develop the assessment plan for each lesson, ask yourself the following questions:

- How will the factual content be assessed?
- How will the skills be assessed?
- How will the generalization(s) be assessed?
- How will I employ the formative assessment process?
- What will be assessed in a summative way?
- Will students have opportunities for self-reflection?
- Will students have opportunities for peer reflection?

STEP 5: Extract learning experiences from the unit that support each performance task.

In your concept-based unit, there should be a series of learning experiences identified that will help students become successful on the performance task. You should identify learning experiences for each performance task and sequence them in a coherent manner in order to prepare students for the ultimate performance task.

As you extract the learning experiences from the unit, ask yourself the following questions:

- Are there additional learning experiences that need to be added?
- How can the learning experiences be sequenced so that there is a logical progression of knowledge acquisition, skills development and conceptual understanding?
- How will I assess the content, skills and understandings students should acquire from the learning experience?
- What instructional strategies will I use to engage students in the learning experience?