

Use this guide to evaluate unit plans you are thinking of using, or to assess and improve instructional plans you develop yourself.

An Exemplary Unit Plan:

Addresses important content

- The subject matter is fundamentally important and worthy of students' time and attention. Lesson objectives align with content standards.
- Learning objectives are explained through essential and guiding questions. These questions help to focus students' attention on meaningful activities that lead to desired learning.
- The plan promotes higher-order thinking processes (interpretation, synthesis, prediction, and evaluation).

Is designed for success

- Teaching and learning activities, student products, and assessment tools directly reflect the learning objectives.
- The unit plan is structured yet flexible.
- Adequate structure ensures that learning objectives are addressed, while flexibility supports diverse interests and needs of students.
- The plan is student-centered. By design, it compels students to make choices as they plan their path to understanding.

Is coherent, comprehensive, and usable

- The learning objectives in the unit act as a unifying thread tying together teaching and learning activities, student products, and assessment.
- The unit plan is a well-developed guide for implementation, describing the entire instructional cycle from concept introduction to final assessment.
- The plan includes supporting resources (such as comparative work samples, schedules, task outlines, scoring guides and rubrics) to guide both teacher and students.

Uses technology effectively

- Technology use is engaging, age appropriate, beneficial to student learning, and supportive of higher-order thinking.
- Technology is integral to the success of the teaching plan and promotes greater engagement and deeper learning by:
 - Fostering new opportunities for interaction and collaboration with experts, peers, and people of different cultures or generations
 - Opening up unique learning opportunities, such as:
 - > online learning communities
 - > participation in real-time events beyond the classroom (example: National Geographic Society Jason Project)
 - > access to primary source materials (example: American Memories Project at the United States Library of Congress)
 - > access to rich databases (example: seismic data at the United States Geological Survey)
 - Supporting new opportunities for expression and sharing, through email, desktop and Web publishing, and multimedia

Supports assessment

- The assessment tool draws a clear relationship between learning objectives and the learning activities that address those objectives.
- Instruments for assessment describe specific qualitative and quantitative performance criteria. When shared with students, these criteria help guide students' efforts.