

Facilitator Notes

Activity 1

Unit Planning Basics

Facilitator Notes:

Teachers are adept at identifying the standards and content to be explored in a given unit of study. The NBPTS standards add an additional element to consider. The importance of understanding and incorporating the standards into units of study were explored in an earlier workshop.

The activities planned for units of study are often one dimensional. This activity is designed to help teachers dig deeper into the elements of a unit that provide opportunity for students to become more engaged in activities within a unit of study.

Background information to share:

Units of study are vehicles for delivering learning opportunities. Well planned units that consider the standards, student knowledge and abilities as well as student interests will create opportunities for greater learning.

Many teachers are very accustomed to planning units by identifying the instructional activities first. Planning should begin with assessment of student knowledge and the identification of what they are to know as a result of the unit's planned activities.

Too often units are limited studies of a topic rather than in-depth studies. They often have a general learning focus, rather than focusing on identified learning.

Units of study often are teacher-directed and the teacher is the main source of information. We know that instruction that differentiates learning for all students and allows students opportunities to investigate meaningful topics impacts achievement in positive ways.

Assessment is often separate from instruction and even more often is summative in nature. Units of study developed by accomplished teachers provide for on-going assessment. Both the teacher and the student understand the standards to be evaluated and students have opportunities to work toward those clearly defined standards.

Effective evaluation assesses knowledge and the application of that knowledge.