

Let's Practice: Questions for Unit Planning

Rationale: Students need meaningful purposes for learning. Units of study need to be developed to provide for purposeful learning as well as to meet the needs of all students. Participants will share units they have taught and analyze some important features about them.



Management

Time: 45 minutes

Materials: 1 copy of facilitator handout (WS5.A1.H1) "Let's Practice" handout (WS5.A1.H2) for participants
Plain chart paper, markers
Post-it® notes

Equipment: Computer/LCD for WS5 PowerPoint

Grouping: Individual/table groups of 6-8 (whole group activity if you have less than 12)

Outcomes:

- Participants will begin to understand the elements of good unit design.

Instructions to NB Candidate Support Provider:

1. Use the Facilitator Handout *Unit Planning Basics* (WS5.A1.H1) to provide the participants with some background on the common use of standards and curriculum guides in planning units of study as opposed to the better use of those aids in developing units of study that provide students with opportunities to learn deeply.
2. Ask participants to list the titles of 3-5 units they have taught.
3. Participants go around the table and share 1 unit. A recorder writes the unit of study that each participant names on a blank chart. The group chooses 2-3 to discuss. Preferably they choose one unit from each of the education levels represented at the table (Early/Elementary, Middle, High).
4. Working as a table group, participants are to determine if they can tell whether the unit of study might have met standards for the level intended and in what ways the unit could have included opportunities for purposeful learning.
5. The table group chooses one unit to explore. They divide themselves into 3 smaller groups to analyze the unit's possibilities by discussing responses to assigned "Let's Practice" questions on handout (WS5.A1.H2). Suggest that participants also consider the questions as they relate to the Architecture helix. (The assigned questions are on the WS5 PowerPoint).
6. Beginning with group one; each small group quickly shares their thinking with their table.
7. Participants work individually to examine a unit of study they are considering as a portfolio entry using the questions and architecture to frame their work and explore the value of the unit.

Processing:

- In what ways has this activity helped you think about the units you plan for students?
- What are your thoughts about things you might work on when you develop units for your portfolio?

Follow-up:

Participants who work near each other might share their plans for units of study with each other. They could use the questions as a guide for beginning to develop strong units of study.

