



Indicator: All teachers develop weekly lesson plans based on aligned units of instruction. (5095)

Explanation: Typically, teacher Instructional Teams develop units of instruction with differentiated and aligned activities and formative assessments. Individual teachers then develop lesson plans appropriate for their students. Weekly plans are most common. A standard template for all teachers in the school ensures quality and standardization.

Questions: Does your school provide teachers with a standard template for weekly lesson plans? Who reviews the plans? How do you help new teachers understand your system? Do teachers create paper plans, or do you provide an electronic system for them?

The process started with a document, sometimes provided by the district, that aligns the standards, curriculum, and assessments. The instruction teams use this document to align units of instruction, determining together what students needed to be able to do by the end of each unit. Hattie (2012) states that this planning “can be done in many ways, but the most powerful is when teachers work together to develop plans, develop common understandings of what is worth teaching, collaborate on understanding their beliefs of challenges and progress, and work together to evaluate the impact of their planning on student outcomes” (p. 41).

Once this planning has taken place and units are developed, teachers can then, either singularly or together, develop lesson plans based on these units. Teachers must “begin with a deep understanding of what each student already knows and can do, and how the instruction is aimed at increasing the progress and levels of achievement for each of the students” (Hattie, 2012, p. 42).

The assessments planned in the instructional teams should allow each teacher to evaluate how well “students have learned what [he] wants them to learn while instruction ensures that they learn it. For this to occur, assessment, learning objectives, and instructional strategies need to be closely aligned so that they reinforce one another” (Carnegie Mellon, n.d., para 1.) Teachers can ask the following questions to make sure each is aligned: Learning objectives:

- What do I want students to know how to do when they leave this course?
- Assessments: What kinds of tasks will reveal whether students have achieved the learning objectives I have identified?
- Instructional strategies: What kinds of activities in and out of class will reinforce my learning objectives and prepare students for assessments? (Carnegie Mellon, n.d., para. 1)

Redding (2005) writes that teachers take all the resources developed by the instructional team—curriculum, standards and benchmarks, district curriculum guide, a school’s curriculum syllabus, as well as the textbook and materials developed by teachers, and pulls all the pieces together into a lesson plan to guide their instruction. In order to guide and standardize this planning, a school may provide a lesson plan template or a standard Student Learning Plan template. To ensure quality and standardization, the district or school can provide teachers with an orderly method

and templates for constructing their daily, weekly, and unit lesson plans, aligned to standards-based objectives. The curriculum, materials, and learning activities are organized so that the teacher can target instruction to each student's level of mastery. This system works with instructional units, usually three to six weeks in duration, developed by the Instructional Team for each subject. The unit plan also includes pre-tests and post-tests—quick assessments aligned to standards-based objectives that guide the teacher in individualizing instruction through Student Learning Plans. The system takes full advantage of the learning activities and materials developed by teachers and teams of teachers. (p.

Learning activities, the assignments given to each student targeted to that student's level of mastery, are carefully aligned with the objectives included in the unit plan to provide a variety of ways for a student to achieve mastery as evidenced in both the successful completion of the learning activities and correct responses on the unit post-test.

The learning plan grid provides a structure for a teacher, or team of teachers, to organize learning activities that are aligned to one curricular objective in the unit plan. The grid provides areas to identify differentiated activities (teacher/co-teacher centers, activity center, cooperative center, independent work, homework), and levels of objectives (prerequisite, target, enhanced).

An activity instructions form is created for each activity on the learning plan grid. For centers (or work stations), a copy of the activity instructions form may be laminated and placed at the center with the necessary materials. For independent work, several copies of the activity instructions form may be laminated and placed near the work time schedule so that students may pick them up when scheduling for independent work and return them when finished.

The Learning Plan Grid forms (available in Resource link) show how a target objective is leveled to produce prerequisite and enhanced objectives and how each objective is aligned with student-directed learning activities in various instructional modes.

References and Resources

- Hattie, J. (2012). *Visible learning for teachers*. Maximizing impact on learning. Abingdon, Oxon, Routledge.
- Redding, S. (2006). *The mega system: Deciding, learning, connecting*. Lincoln, IL: Academic Development Institute.
- Carnegie Mellon. (n.d.). *Why should assessments, learning objectives, and instructional strategies be aligned?* Retrieved from <http://www.cmu.edu/teaching/assessment/basics/alignment.html>

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