

Creating Your Own Unit: Beginning With Standards

One of the goals of the Integration workshop is to help you develop standards-based and technology-rich units. This activity will help you start planning a technology-rich unit that meets your students' most critical learning needs, as well as important standards.

Phase one: What's your topic?

Working alone or with a grade partner, create a new word-processing document for your Unit of Practice.

Start by creating a title for your unit that reflects the topic you've chosen.

What standards are most important?

Go online to one of the following standards sites to identify at least three local and national standards critical to your students that can be addressed by the unit you are planning.

Texas Education Agency

- www.tea.state.tx.us/teks

Intel's Standards by State

- www.intel.com/education/teachstandards/state.htm

Education World – National Standards

- www.education-world.com/standards

Select the standards that correspond to what your students need to learn from this unit. Keep the list short and manageable. Are there standards in other curricular areas that this unit could match as well? Search for those.

In the Standards section of the UOP, list the standards your unit will address. Don't worry about getting the exact words. A summarizing phrase is probably more useful to you.

Next step: the Invitation

The next step is to frame the Invitation, a broad learning statement that suggests the goal of the unit. It should be in the form of a question that addresses the challenges you face as you teach this unit. A question such as: “How can we help students understand the relationship between climate and geography?” could be the Invitation for a global weather unit.

The rest follows ...

Complete the unit of practice elements, keeping the standards you’ve set in mind.

Phase two: now comes the power of the UOP ...

Work with a partner or small group to review each other’s units and answer the following questions:

Is the connection between the Standards and the other six components explicit?

Are the tasks compelling to students?

Do the tasks allow students to pursue authentic solutions to related challenges, problems and issues?

Is the Invitation tied to both the Standards and the Assessment?

Are there other curriculum areas that this unit could address?

As you look at the Tools, can you identify how they help your students meet the Standards in a meaningful way? How does the technology help your students meet the Standards in new and compelling ways?

Look at the Interactions to see whether you have planned for students to collaborate in their work. What is the nature of the collaboration: Online? Paired problem solving?

Look at the Situations to see whether you have planned for a variety of experiences both in the classroom and online. Have you allotted enough time for all Standards to be met?

How does the Assessment correspond to the Standards, Tasks, Situations, Interactions, and Tools? How will you know that your students have successfully met the challenge stated in the Invitation?