

On Writing Skill Statements...

Measurable verb-target-descriptor: Skills are what students must do (cognitive abilities/actions) in relationship to the aligned knowing (Content).

Measurable verb

- Do not start a skill statement with Demonstrate ... Understand ... Know... Show ... Learn... (these are not measurable terms in that skill(s) lead to measuring the acquisition of what these terms require)
- Do not start with Practice... Review... (they represent an activity, not a skill)
- Do not start with Use... This word is often a part of the descriptor (e.g., Find slope using a calculator)
- If you start with Apply... You must write it using the word "to" Apply _____ to _____
- Look to the attached list of measurable verbs and instructional targets in this document for ideas.

Target

- Represents "how" the students are measured regarding the learning (in writing, visually*, orally, aurally*, manipulatively, kinesthetically, manually, digitally).
- *When using an asterisk target, it must be paired with another target (Examples = Identify aurally and orally... Critique visually and in writing ...)
- If you are writing a map in a discipline such as *mathematics* where a Skill statement is written using recognizable math terms (e.g., Solve... Calculate... Find... Graph...), you do not need to include the target *in writing* since this is how the verb will be measured. (If *orally* is a target, both orally and in writing need to be included the skill statement. For example: B2. Solve orally and in writing...)
- Another example--PE: If a Skill statement begins with Throw... The teacher(s) do not need to include the target *kinesthetically* as it should be obvious to the map reader that this will be the assessment measurement mode. But, if the PE teacher(s) start with the term Identify... this is not a PE-specific term and, therefore, needs the appropriate target or targets included in the Skill statement (Example = A1. Identify visually and orally court lines)

Descriptor

- The information after the target in a Skill statement *details* and *enhances* the Content listing, not repeats it. A skill's descriptor should aid map readers in *explicitly* recognizing student-learning expectations.

Examples

- **Describe in writing 3 variables that affect weathering (Climate, Differential Weathering, Particle Size) using real-world examples**
- **Organize graphically the essential components of a story (characters, setting, etc.)**

Measurable Verbs Examples

arrange	discriminate	name
assess	distinguish	organize
classify	elaborate	paraphrase
compare	evaluate	predict
communicate	explain	prioritize
compose	express	prove
construct	generalize	rank
contrast	identify	report
criticize	infer	respond
critique	interpret	sequence
defend	justify	select
define	label	state
describe	list	summarize
determine	locate	support
differentiate	match	transfer

Target - How the learning is assessed either in writing, orally, visually, kinesthetically, manipulatively, manually, or electronically

ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF AN ELA/LITERACY IN THE CONTENT AREAS UNIT

The following components are non-negotiable when it comes to a unit plan... standards, content, skills, and assessment. Below is a brief description of each component.

STANDARDS

NYS Standards: For all content area teachers, your NYS standards are most important. The CCLS are not intended to replace your NYS content standards... they are to be used in conjunction with the NYS standards.

CCLS: Given that NYS has recently adopted the Common Core Learning Standards, it is essential that we show evidence of incorporating them into our learning experiences.

NOTE: ELA teachers will no longer be addressing the 2005 NYS standards. Beginning in 2012-2013, teachers should be fully implementing the CCLS.

CONTENT/SKILLS

Content: The content is what the student should “know” at the end of the unit... the actual knowledge gained. (parts of a cell, causes of the civil war, elements of design, genres of music, tools in the shop, nonfiction text features etc.)

Skills: Skills refer to what a student should be able to “do” by the end of the unit. Skills should not be specific to the content. Although you used one topic to address the skill, students should be able to take that skill and apply it to different situations even if they haven’t encountered that situation before. (identify evidence from a text to support a claim, compare and contrast, collect information from print and digital resources, etc.)

ASSESSMENTS

Assessments: Standards are meaningless unless you know how they are going to be assessed. Therefore, it is imperative to include the various ways that you will assess a student's understanding of the content/skills you address within the unit. In this section, you should list the formative assessments (informal checks for understanding, tickets out the door, quizzes, etc.) as well as the summative assessment (the end-of-unit assessment). Keep in mind that the summative assessment does not necessarily have to be a unit test. It can be a performance task or project... as long as you can see evidence that the students have met the standards, content, and skills included in the unit.

OPTIONAL COMPONENTS OF AN ELA/LITERACY IN THE CONTENT AREAS UNIT

The following components are optional when it comes to a unit plan... big ideas, essential questions, learning experiences, vocabulary, and resources. Below is a brief description of each component.

BIG IDEAS/ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

Big Ideas: The big ideas are the main points of the unit you are teaching... Why are you teaching what you're teaching? What's the point? Students should be able to see a big picture behind the smaller day-to-day lessons and activities. Through guidance and support students should uncover the big ideas on their own. It should not be something they can google!

Essential Questions: Your essential questions will lead to the big ideas. These are the questions you prompt students with throughout the unit to ensure they arrive at the main purpose of the unit. What is it that you want them to get from the teaching and learning that is taking place? The questions you pose should eventually lead students to uncover the big ideas mentioned above.

LEARNING EXPERIENCES/VOCABULARY

Learning Experiences: Learning experiences are the actual day-to-day activities that will take place. This may include lessons, activities, projects, field trips, etc. It is not necessary to provide a full description of each learning experience, a bulleted list with a brief description is fine.

NOTE:

One of the major shifts in the new CCLS revolves around having students read a variety of informational/nonfiction texts deeply and carefully... asking them to use text in a way they haven't before (going back to find specific evidence, identifying the author's purpose for writing the text, critiquing the information presented in the text etc.) It doesn't necessarily have to be a long text, but a text that is complex in nature and offers some profound discussion points.

Another major shift in the CCLS revolves around asking students to respond to the ideas and events within a text through writing. More specifically, students are asked to focus on argumentative and persuasive writing, where they are able to make an argument for or against something and then back it up with concrete evidence from the text. As a result of these two shifts, teachers should be looking for additional ways to provide students with the opportunity to do this in their day-to-day lessons and activities.

Vocabulary: What vocabulary is essential for students to know in order to be successful in this particular unit? Try to think of it in different levels: need to know, nice to know, want to know. What are the words that a student must absolutely know in order to get through the unit? What are the words that would help tremendously but are not essential? What are the words that students with an interest in this topic would want to know?

NOTE:

One of the major shifts in the new CCLS is focused on academic vocabulary (words that show up across disciplines but aren't necessarily focused on because they aren't content-specific words). Teachers should keep an eye out for these words and pay special attention to them as they move through the unit.

RESOURCES

Resources: This is nothing more than a list of the resources you will use to carry out your unit. It may include: websites, texts (textbooks, articles, graphs, charts, etc), video clips, etc.

ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF A MATH UNIT

The following components are non-negotiable when it comes to a unit plan... standards, content, skills, and assessment. Below is a brief description of each component.

STANDARDS

CCLS: Given that NYS has recently adopted the Common Core Learning Standards, it is essential that we show evidence of incorporating these standards into the learning experience. It is no longer necessary to address the 2005 NYS standards.

CONTENT/SKILLS

Content: The content is what the student should “know” at the end of the unit... the actual knowledge gained. (fractions, equations, exponents, etc.)

Skills: Skills refer to what a student should be able to “do” by the end of the unit. Skills should not be specific to the content. Although you used one topic to teach the skill, students should be able to take that skill and apply it to different situations even if they haven’t encountered that situation before. (solving multi-step problems, reasoning abstractly, collecting and analyzing data, applying math to real-world scenarios etc.)

ASSESSMENTS

Assessments: Standards are meaningless unless you know how they are going to be assessed. Therefore, it is imperative to include the various ways that you will assess a student’s understanding of the content/skills you address within the unit. In this section, you should list the formative assessments (informal checks for understanding, tickets out the door, quizzes, etc.) as well as the summative assessment (the end-of-unit assessment). Keep in mind that the summative assessment does not necessarily have to be a unit test. It can be a performance task or project... as long as you can see evidence that the students have met the standards, content, and skills included in the unit. (All assessments should be aligned with the CCLS.)

OPTIONAL COMPONENTS OF A MATH UNIT

The following components are optional when it comes to a unit plan... big ideas, essential questions, learning experiences, vocabulary, and resources. Below is a brief description of each component.

BIG IDEAS/ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

Big Ideas: The big ideas are the main points of the unit you are teaching... Why are you teaching what you're teaching? What's the point? Students should be able to see a big picture behind the smaller day-to-day lessons and activities. Through guidance and support students should uncover the big ideas on their own. It should not be something they can google!

Essential Questions: Your essential questions will lead to the big ideas. These are the questions you prompt students with throughout the unit to ensure they arrive at the main purpose of the unit. What is it that you want them to get from the teaching and learning that is taking place? The questions you pose should eventually lead students to uncover the big ideas mentioned above.

LEARNING EXPERIENCES/VOCABULARY

Learning Experiences: Learning experiences are the actual day-to-day activities that will take place. This may include lessons, activities, projects, field trips, etc. It is not necessary to provide a full description of each learning experience... a bulleted list, with a brief description is fine.

NOTE:

One of the major shifts in the new math CCLS is dual intensity. This refers to the importance of balancing the amount of skill drill with the amount of real world application. While we want our students to be fluent with a number of different skills, we also want them to have the opportunity to apply those skills to authentic situations. As a result, teachers may want to include their daily learning experiences as a way of providing evidence that they are addressing this shift.

Although not listed as one of the six main shifts in the CCLS, the State Education Department has indicated that the NYS math assessments and Regents exams will require a significant amount of reading and writing. There will be more word problems and students will be asked to explain their reasoning in writing. With that said, math teachers should be looking for opportunities to incorporate more reading and writing into their classroom instruction.

Vocabulary: Vocabulary words are essential for student success in any given unit. Determining these words ahead of time and focusing on them in classroom instruction will improve student performance. Try to think of these words in three different levels: need to know, nice to know, want to know. Which words must a student absolutely know in order to get through the unit? Which words would help tremendously but are not essential? Which words would students with an interest in this topic want to know?

NOTE:

*One of the major ELA shifts in the new CCLS is focused on academic vocabulary (words that show up across disciplines but aren't necessarily focused on because they aren't content-specific words). **ALL** teachers should keep an eye out for these words and pay special attention to them as they move throughout the unit. Ask yourself "Which words show up in this unit that may show up in other content areas? Will these words have the same meaning in other content areas or do some of the words have different meanings?" Be sure to directly point these words out to students so they can see how vocabulary spans ALL curricula.*

RESOURCES

Resources: This is nothing more than a list of the resources you will use to carry out your unit. It may include: websites, texts (textbooks, articles, graphs, charts, etc), video clips, etc.