

Planning the inquiry

1. What is our purpose?

To inquire into the following:

- **transdisciplinary theme**

One of the six transdisciplinary themes **See page 12 of MTPYPH.**

- **central idea**

After deciding the theme above, teachers should choose what aspect of the definition for the theme will be addressed. Next, the teachers should create a statement (one sentence) that addresses the essential understandings for this unit. It should be substantial enough to generate in-depth inquiries, concept-driven, and promote the ability to think critically. It should challenge and extend students' prior knowledge, and should be a means of extending students' understanding of the transdisciplinary theme above. (POLICY)

The statement should be a universal generalization and somewhat ambiguous. A starting point is to simply state your beginning idea. Example: All cultures have celebrations. Then ask HOW or WHY. Why do cultures have celebrations? Modified Example: Celebrations express the traditions of a culture. Then ask SO WHAT or WHY again. Revised Example: Traditions reflect the beliefs, values, and heritage of a culture. (PRACTICE)

Summative assessment task(s):

What are the possible ways of assessing students' understanding of the central idea? What evidence, including student-initiated actions, will we look for?

The summative assessment task should be created immediately after formulating the central idea by addressing both of the questions above. It is an assessment OF student learning for the entire unit of inquiry. Ask yourself, how will I know if the students have understood the central idea? If there is no effective way that students can demonstrate their understanding of the central idea, the central idea will need to be revised so that students' understanding of it can be shown. The articulation between the central idea and the summative assessment task(s) needs to be resolved before further planning takes place. (POLICY)

Teachers need to be mindful of the diverse forms of evidence that may indicate understanding of the central idea. Student-initiated action may well be one form of this evidence. (POLICY)

This task can be open-ended, subject to student interpretation, and provide choice to students in demonstrating their understanding. The task should be worded so that other teachers understand the strategy being used; the assessment tool that will be used by the teacher or student to check for understanding, and the expected evidence that will be looked for by the assessor (see MTPYPH pages 48 and 49 for a list of strategies and tools). It is also recommended that teachers list possible action that may be initiated and carried out by students as a result of their learning. (PRACTICE)

Example: The summative assessment task will be for students to create a visual model of ____ (STRATEGY). A rubric will be used to assess the student work (TOOL). Evidence will include ____, ____, ____, and ____ (EVIDENCE).

Possible student action could include ____, ____, or _____. (PRACTICE)

Class/grade:

Age group:

School:

School code:

Title:

Teacher(s):

Date:

Proposed duration: number of hours over number of weeks



PYP planner

2. What do we want to learn?

What are the key concepts (form, function, causation, change, connection, perspective, responsibility, reflection) to be emphasized within this inquiry?

After discussing the relevance of the key concepts to the central idea, no more than three of the key concepts should be selected to focus on in this inquiry (see MTPYPH pages 15-20). (POLICY)

Think... Which of these concepts promote inquiry into the central idea? When we "unpack" the central idea, what conceptual understandings do we want to develop in students? If we focus on 3 key concept in each of the 6 transdisciplinary themes then we will have 18 (3X6) opportunities to develop the 8 key concepts listed in MTPYPH. Horizontal articulation should show that all 8 key concepts have been addressed at least once within the same grade levels' units of inquiry. (PRACTICE)

Consider which SUBJECT RELATED CONCEPTS that are connected. You may want to list them here (PRACTICE) **See MTPYPH for subject-related concepts, pages 86 for Maths, 97-8 for Science, 106-7 for SS, 117 for PSPE, and 132 for the Arts.**

What lines of inquiry will define the scope of the inquiry into the central idea?

- There should be 3 or 4 lines of inquiry that clarify the central idea and define the scope of the inquiry. The contributing aspects of the central idea extend the inquiry, focus student research, and deepen students' understanding. Connection should be made as appropriate between the lines of inquiry, as well as with the central idea. (POLICY)
- Lines of inquiry should be content-based (not skills). A direct relationship should be made to the three key concepts identified above. Example: Function is listed as a key concept for a unit of water, so one of the lines of inquiry should be focused on function. It might say: Ways that people use water to meet their needs. (PRACTICE)

What teacher questions/provocations will drive these inquiries?

- The teachers have the responsibility of framing the inquiries at the beginning of the unit through the questions they ask and/or the provocations they provide (for example, rearranging the learning environment). This is also the opportunity for them to model explicitly the asking of open-ended, driving questions that will promote conceptual development. As the collaborative planning process is ongoing, the planner will be revisited during the inquiry. (POLICY)
- There should 3-5 teacher questions. A direct relationship should be made to the three key concepts and the lines of inquiry above. In the example above on water, one of the teacher questions should be a function type question about ways that people use water. Example: How do humans use water to meet the needs of individuals and a community? (PRACTICE)
- A provocation can be listed. This might be an opening experience that is going to "hook" students and drive them to engage with the inquiries of this unit. (PRACTICE)

3. How might we know what we have learned?

This column should be used in conjunction with “How best might we learn?”

What are the possible ways of assessing students’ prior knowledge and skills?
What evidence will we look for?

An opening assessment task can be designed that assesses students’ prior knowledge and skills before embarking on the inquiry. Teachers can be mindful of previous learning from related units or other stand-alone units that took place in the current grade and in any previous grade level. The task should be worded so that other teachers understand the strategy being used; the assessment tool that will be used by the teacher or student to check for understanding, and the expected evidence that will be looked for by the assessor (see MTPYPH pages 48 and 49 for a list of strategies and tools). (PRACTICE)

What are the possible ways of assessing student learning in the context of the lines of inquiry? What evidence will we look for?

Students should be aware of the criteria used to assess their performance and regular feedback should describe the progress of students’ learning and identify areas for growth. Students should be encouraged to be reflective learners through self- and peer-assessment. Evidence of each student’s learning must be collected and presented in a manner that allows the student to reflect on the learning and describe his/her progress to others. Records should allow teachers and students to see progress in the development of knowledge, skills and understandings. Teachers should bear in mind that a well-designed assessment task becomes, in and of itself, a learning experience because it provides opportunities to reinforce or extend the learning. (POLICY)

Each task listed should be related to the lines of inquiry. Ask yourself, “How are we going to know if they are understanding ____ (from one of the lines of inquiry listed in section 2)? This is an assessment FOR learning. Teachers should be able to use the information from these assessments to adapt instruction so that student understanding of the central idea WILL happen and so that student success on the summative assessment task WILL happen. A variety of assessment strategies and tools should be used throughout the year. (PRACTICE)

The task should be worded so that other teachers understand the strategy being used; the assessment tool that will be used by the teacher or student to check for understanding, and the expected evidence that will be looked for by the assessor (see MTPYPH pages 48 and 49 for a list of strategies and tools). Example: The assessment task will be for students to journal about ____ (STRATEGY). A rubric will be used to assess the student work (TOOL). Evidence will include ____, ____, ____, and ____ (EVIDENCE). (PRACTICE)

4. How best might we learn?

What are the learning experiences suggested by the teacher and/or students to encourage the students to engage with the inquiries and address the driving questions?

- Suggestions of activities from students may be in response to their own questions, as well as those posed by the teacher. Learning experiences should also be designed so that students will have the opportunity to develop an understanding of, and make connections between, the key concepts. Teachers should bear in mind that a well-designed learning experience will provide data on students’ knowledge, skills and understanding, and is consequently a vehicle for formative or summative assessment. (POLICY)
- The learning experiences listed should be inquiry-based. A focus on structured inquiry is encouraged. A variety of learning experiences should be used throughout the year. The experiences should provide students with an opportunity to engage with the essential elements of the programme (knowledge, concepts, skills, attitudes, and possibly action). After designing a learning experience, ask yourself the following questions. What knowledge will the students gain in this experience? What concepts will this experience help them develop? What skills are integrated into and throughout this experience? What attitudes will this experience allow the students to show and further develop? What possible action could arise from this experience? (PRACTICE)
- The learning experiences listed can include open-ended opportunities for students to extend their inquiry through their personal questions related to the central idea and lines of inquiry. This section of the planning document can be revisited throughout the unit of inquiry to include student perspectives. (PRACTICE)

What opportunities will occur for transdisciplinary skills development and for the development of the attributes of the learner profile?

- When providing students with the opportunity to develop transdisciplinary skills, the attributes of the learner profile and/or the attitudes, teachers need to be mindful of the difference between opportunities that arise authentically from the learning, as opposed to explicitly targeted teaching opportunities. (POLICY)
- All 5 transdisciplinary skills should be developed in each transdisciplinary theme. Using the transdisciplinary skills and sub-skills listed in MTPYPH on pages 20-23, at least one or two of the sub-skills can be addressed. If 1-2 of these sub-skills are addressed in each theme, then 6-12 opportunities are available throughout each grade level. (PRACTICE)
- Three of the attributes of the learner profile listed in MTPYPH on page 4 should be focused on during each transdisciplinary theme. If 3 of these attributes are focused on in each theme, then 18 opportunities are available throughout each grade level to develop the 10 attributes of the learner profile during the units of inquiry. Attitudes listed in MTPYPH on page 24 can also be included here. (PRACTICE)

5. What resources need to be gathered?

What people, places, audio-visual materials, related literature, music, art, computer software, etc, will be available?

How will the classroom environment, local environment, and/or the community be used to facilitate the inquiry?

List available resources that you will use to support the inquiry. Discussions need to take place between the media centre staff, including the librarian and ICT support, and the classroom teachers to identify their roles both in the planning of the inquiry and during the extended inquiry itself. Whether or not the resources selected were adequate could be commented on in the teacher notes section. (POLICY)

6. To what extent did we achieve our purpose?

Assess the outcome of the inquiry by providing evidence of students' understanding of the central idea. The reflections of all teachers involved in the planning and teaching of the inquiry should be included.

It is understood that evidence of student learning will be found in student work, teachers' anecdotal records and classroom collections such as portfolios. One or two examples should be described here or attached to the planner. (POLICY)

Be specific and describe how you know that students understand the central idea as stated in section 2 of this planning document. Evidence could be collected from the summative assessment task(s), student self-assessments, or student-initiated actions that occurred as a result of student understanding of the central idea. (PRACTICE)

How you could improve on the assessment task(s) so that you would have a more accurate picture of each student's understanding of the central idea.

This reflection not only gives the teachers the opportunity to improve the assessments, but also to modify and strengthen the central idea. (POLICY)

Revisit section 1 of this planning document, products of student summative assessments, and also reflect on the process of students completing the summative assessment tasks. What changes need to be made in section 1? Also, since student understanding could have been affected during the unit of inquiry, teachers should also revisit section 3 and reflect on these assessment tasks. What changes could be made in section 3 to help students come to a more complete understanding of the central idea? (PRACTICE)

What was the evidence that connections were made between the central idea and the transdisciplinary theme?

Teachers should include clear and detailed examples of classroom discussions, comments or student work that demonstrate connections made between the central idea and the transdisciplinary theme. (POLICY)

Revisit section 1 of this planning document, focusing on the transdisciplinary theme and central idea. Be specific and describe how you know that students made the connection between the transdisciplinary theme and the central idea. Evidence could include student comments from class discussions, activities, or student self-assessments. (PRACTICE)

7. To what extent did we include the elements of the PYP?

What were the learning experiences that enabled students to:

- develop an understanding of the concepts identified in "What do we want to learn?" **See MTPYPH Pages 15-20**
- demonstrate the learning and application of particular transdisciplinary skills?
See MTPYPH Pages 20-23
- develop particular attributes of the learner profile and/or attitudes?
See MTPYPH Pages 2-6, particularly page 4 for the Learner Profile
See MTPYPH Pages 24-25 for Attitudes

In each case, explain your selection.

Learning experiences that were particularly engaging, relevant, challenging and significant should be noted. It is recognized that this planning tool cannot record all of the learning that takes place in a PYP classroom. Teachers should use their anecdotal records in order to more fully record the development of the attributes listed in the learner profile. This development is complemented and supported by the development of the PYP attitudes and teachers may also discuss them here. (POLICY)

Revisit section 2 and section 4 of this planning document. List some of the experiences that were most successful in helping to develop the concepts, skills, and attributes of the learner profile and/or attitudes noted. Teachers should provide evidence that helps to explain how these experiences helped to develop each of these essential elements. Teachers can also be mindful of student-initiated inquiries and the processes and learning engagements that they used for their personal inquiry. Teachers may want to make changes to sections 2 and 4 as a result of these experiences. (PRACTICE)

8. What student-initiated inquiries arose from the learning?

Record a range of student-initiated inquiries and student questions and highlight any that were incorporated into the teaching and learning.

At this point teachers should go back to box 2 “What do we want to learn?” and highlight the teacher questions/provocations that were most effective in driving the inquiries.

A range of student questions and wonderings should be recorded as evidence of the range of conceptual understanding in the group. Some student-initiated inquiries will be particularly influential in determining the nature of the inquiry and should be highlighted. These highlighted examples may influence and inform planning when the inquiry is next visited. (POLICY)

As you list student questions, some of them may be better at driving the inquiry than the teacher questions listed in section 2. The next time that this unit is revisited (next year) before being taught, then some of these questions could replace the teacher questions listed from the previous year. Teachers can also list a variety of student questions that focused on a range of key concepts. If these questions were more effective in influencing student understanding of the central idea, then the parts of section 2 that address the key concepts and lines of inquiry may need to be revisited and changed. (PRACTICE)

What student-initiated actions arose from the learning?

Record student-initiated actions taken by individuals or groups showing their ability to reflect, to choose and to act.

See MTPYPH pages 25-27 for Action.

As the action component may develop spontaneously during the course of the inquiry, or even after the inquiry has been completed, this section maybe revisited both during and after the inquiry. Not every inquiry will necessarily have a student-initiated action component. (POLICY)

Even though every inquiry will not necessarily have a student-initiated action component, every transdisciplinary theme should have some student action taking place. If action is not arising as a result of the unit of inquiry under a particular transdisciplinary theme, then certain aspects of the unit may need to be adjusted before implementing the unit again in the future. Specifics could include the central idea and lines of inquiry. Action is an essential element of the program and should be visible in what we teach. Inaction can be appropriate but it should be relevant to what is being studied. The unit was developed by teachers and opportunities for action were envisioned in section 2 and possible section 4. (PRACTICE)

9. Teacher notes

Further reflections and connections to other central ideas, transdisciplinary themes or single subject areas should be included where appropriate. (POLICY)

This is a great place for those general comments about the unit of inquiry that did not seem to fit into the questions outlined in sections 6, 7, and 8. Teachers of single subjects or specialists may also provide examples of learning engagements in their classroom that were designed specifically for this unit of inquiry. Also, grade level teachers may make connections to the single subjects or specialists' curriculum within the general classroom. All of these examples can be listed here and possibly incorporated into section 4 in the future. (PRACTICE)

The reflections for any unit of inquiry should be completed within 2 weeks of the end of the transdisciplinary theme. (PRACTICE)