Mr. Singh's Story
Collaborative Planning in an Elementary Classroom (Grade 2)

Mr. Singh, a Grade 2 teacher in a K–6 school, has a class with diverse learning needs. His students enjoy reading many different types of literary texts and graphic texts, but many students are not familiar with informational texts.

As a result, Mr. Singh is thinking about developing a unit on reading and writing informational texts. He wants the unit to include tasks that are designed to meet student learning needs and interests. He has noticed that the class enjoys science and technology, and he decides that reading and writing informational texts will fit nicely with the science and technology expectations in the Understanding Structures and Mechanisms strand.

Mr. Singh shares his thinking about his plan to teach his students about informational texts while they investigate movement with his colleagues. Together they look for ways to address the challenges of integrating curriculum from the two subject areas, while meeting the needs of students with a variety of levels of prior knowledge, different interests, and varied learning preferences. They decide to work together to create an assessment plan.

To get started, they gather the following curriculum and other policy documents:

- *Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools, 2010*
- *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: Science and Technology, 2007 (revised)*
- *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: Language, 2006 (revised)*
- Board policy documents related to assessment and evaluation and student learning
- Other relevant Ministry and board policy documents (e.g. *Learning for All: A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2011; Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation, 2009*)
The Assessment Plan Overview
The teachers begin their planning using three guiding questions:

1. **What are students expected to learn?**
   a. What is the context? Why do the students need to learn this?
   b. What are the big ideas? What knowledge and skills will be useful for the students in the future?
   c. What are the overall expectations that will be assessed and evaluated?
   d. How can these curriculum expectations be expressed as student-friendly learning goals?

2. **How will students demonstrate their learning?**
   a. What valid and reliable evidence will need to be gathered to be able to evaluate students’ achievement of these expectations?
   b. Is the evidence triangulated and balanced across the four categories of knowledge and skills in the achievement chart?

3. **How will assessment and instruction be organized for learning?**
   a. What variety of assessment tasks will give students multiple opportunities to demonstrate the full range of their learning as they practice?
   b. What tasks, aligned with learning goals and success criteria, will create a variety of assessment for and as learning opportunities for students?
   c. How will learning be scaffolded and sequenced in daily lessons?
   d. What are the success criteria that will be co-constructed with the students? What does it look and sound like when students successfully achieve each learning goal?
   e. What evidence of learning will the students produce in daily lessons?
   f. What interventions and supports will be put in place to ensure student learning?
1. What are students expected to learn?

Mr. Singh and his colleagues begin planning their integrated unit guided by the first of their three questions: *What are students expected to learn?*

First, the team identifies the overall and specific expectations from each curriculum document they will address in the unit. They rewrite the expectations to create student-friendly learning goals that they will share with their students to ensure that everyone has a common understanding of what they will be learning. The team also creates some initial success criteria that they use to ensure they agree on what successful learning looks like. They will allow the criteria to guide them when they co-construct success criteria with their students during instruction. They review their work to ensure that it reflects the principles of equity and diversity.

2. How will students demonstrate their learning?

Next, the team considers how students will demonstrate achievement of the expectations. They begin to identify the tasks students will do to provide evidence of their learning. They check to see that the tasks that they have identified are aligned with the learning goals and success criteria so that what the students are doing and what they are learning are the same. They consult the achievement chart to ensure that the tasks allow students to demonstrate the full range of their knowledge and skills. They discuss whether the tasks they have identified will give them evidence of student learning in the form of conversations, observations, and products.

Finally, the team decides that through investigation, writing, and oral presentation students will have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their achievement of the overall expectations by the end of the unit. The teachers will then be able to collect valid and reliable evidence of student learning.

There is no predetermined one-to-one correspondence between the achievement chart categories and the expectations. Some expectations align better with one category than others and could be assessed in more than one category. Some overall expectations require students to demonstrate performance in multiple categories. Purposefulness and teacher collaboration in planning units and assessments, and teacher moderation of tasks as well as of student work, help ensure balance and consistency.
3. How will assessment and instruction be organized for learning?

Having laid the groundwork by identifying (1) what students are expected to learn and (2) how they will demonstrate their learning, the teachers are now ready to complete their assessment plan. They discuss how they will scaffold the learning into lessons that will build students’ knowledge and skills. They plan to monitor students’ learning frequently throughout the unit by collecting evidence.

To begin sequencing lessons, the teachers look at the learning goals they developed from the curriculum expectations. They recognize that while they are integrating two subjects, language and science & technology, some of the individual lessons will focus on one subject only. They spend some time discussing which learning goals they think most “naturally” go together for their students and how they can be scaffolded for incremental learning. They agree on how these learning goals can be sequenced into lessons, although they each plan different ways to introduce and develop the concepts within each lesson. They recognize that their students’ readiness, learning preferences, needs and interests require them to differentiate their lessons. They agree upon the assessment tools, such as exit slips, journals, or checklists that they will use to assess student learning so they can adapt ongoing instruction and provide descriptive feedback to their students. They also build in opportunities for students to practice applying success criteria and giving and receiving feedback on their own and others’ work.

Once Mr. Singh and his colleagues have established the sequence of the lessons, they discuss resources and instructional strategies that will enhance the learning. The teachers agree to continue their collaboration throughout the unit by observing each other’s classes, moderating tasks, sharing the evidence of student learning, and reflecting on their own learning together.
## Resources for Further Learning

**From AER GAINS:**

*Planning Instruction with Instruction Video Series*

*Learning Goals and Success Criteria Video Series*

**From Research Literature:**

