

Shared thematic units celebrate community and culture. For example, a thematic unit might take us on a Pacific Island journey through the past, present and future. Elements of the thematic unit may include:

Rationale and Invitation

Goals for Literacy and Technology

Objectives and Expected Learning Outcomes

Technology Skills and Technology Integration Strategies

Assistive Technology and Adaptations for Students with Disabilities

Professional Standards

Lesson Plans

Evaluation

Extension Activities

Rationale and Invitation

This is your opportunity to explain the importance of your thematic unit, in terms of what you intend for your students to learn. Do you want your students to grow and change in their attitudes, feelings and appreciations? What new knowledge do you want your students to gain? Will there be new skills they will acquire? Does your thematic unit provide opportunities for children to grow morally and ethically? Does your thematic unit include a service component in which children "give back" to their families, school or community? Does your thematic unit provide exciting opportunities for children to explore and learn about technology? Does your thematic unit celebrate diversity and culture, including music and the arts? Is your thematic unit inclusive of all children, including children with disabilities? Does your unit involve parents and community? The "Rationale and Invitation" section of your thematic unit expresses the beauty and value of the project to your students' learning. Tell us why you are enthusiastic about your unit.

Goals for Literacy and Technology

You may think of 3 to 5 goals for your thematic unit (certainly do not include more than 7). Module One is entitled "Pacific Voices: Technology Supports for Language Arts and Literacy;" therefore, we would expect (a) that several of your goals reflect student growth in literacy; and (b) that other goals reflect student growth in technology.

Objectives and Expected Learning Outcomes

Objectives lead to learning outcomes that you can observe, document, and even measure. Can you specify what you intend for your students to do and learn in terms of changes in attitudes, values, knowledge and skills? As you write your objectives, ask yourself how you will measure them with each of your students. Think of ways that students can show you what they are learning by writing, speaking or demonstrating. After all, you want to know if what you teach makes a difference in your students' learning. Can students produce any permanent products, such as written stories or recordings? In "sustained silent reading," for example, students may be expected to read silently for 20-minutes every day. You can observe this. Students can keep their own records and even graph their progress.

Technology Skills and Technology Integration Strategies

The Pacific Voices Project is intended to support students to explore and learn new technologies, utilizing the computer, the camera, the tape recorder, Internet and e-mail, and perhaps even teleconferencing. What technology skills do you want them to learn in this unit? How will you organize your classroom and instruction so that all children have access to the learning opportunities?

Assistive Technology and Adaptations for Students with Disabilities

The Pacific Voices Project encourages the inclusion of children with disabilities in all our Pacific classrooms. This may present great challenges to you as a teacher, as perhaps we are not accustomed to working with children with blindness or deafness, physical disabilities, communication disorders, traumatic brain injury or cognitive delays. Do you have any children in your classroom with disabilities? Describe for us each of these children, including their interests, learning strengths and learning needs. What do you think might help you better teach and serve these children? How might we be of assistance? Is there any child with a disability who is not in your classroom who perhaps should be? Many assistive technology resources are referenced on our web site. Usually however children with disabilities require individualized programs and supports. We will assist you if we can.

Professional Standards

Teaching is a profession. As a profession, we are defining standards for teaching and learning. Standards are intended to stretch us as teachers to think "globally" and to plan rich sets of learning activities for our students. The Department of Education or Ministry of Education on your island should make available to you the professional standards intended to guide your teaching. Remember, nothing replaces the teacher. Standards provide foundations for your thematic unit. In the United States various professional organizations have published standards for English, Language Arts, Reading, Math and Science. These standards can be helpful, but they should not supplant the standards set by your own island entity. On our Pacific Voices web site, we have links to some of these national sites to make it easier for you to review these resources. You may want to contact the Curriculum Specialists within your own Department or Ministry of Education for the professional standards expected in your community.

Lesson Plans

Professional teachers plan their lessons in writing. Your own school principal and staff have probably reached an agreement on the policy for your school. For the Pacific Voices Project we suggest that you provide lesson plans with sufficient detail that other teachers who might wish to adopt your unit can actually visualize what you are doing with your students when you teach them. This will make it so much easier for other teachers to learn from your work.

Evaluation

How will you evaluate your students? This is a very important question. When you evaluate you see if children have learned what you expected. There are many ways to evaluate. You can test your students by asking them to write or tell you what they have

learned. You can also ask students to write, draw or tell you about how they are learning, what they are doing, and what it means to them. This may be done in journals. Students may write in their journals or record their reflections on the tape recorder. Sometimes you can ask students to simply to show you what they have learned. Sometimes we do this with technology skills, for example. Students show us how to use the camera or the tape recorder or to successfully operate a piece of software. If you are teaching children to read, you may want to hear them read aloud, observe them reading silently, ask them to re-tell what they are reading, and talk and discuss the materials with them. Students with disabilities may need to be evaluated differently but, remember, they too deserve to learn and to show you that they are successful.

Extension Activities

Your thematic unit should be rich with learning opportunities. Where might you go next with this unit if it is successful? If your students do not learn what you intended, how might you re-visit the unit differently, so that you and your students can tackle the content