

EMPOWER AT THE LESSON LEVEL

This example shows EMPOWER planning at the lesson level. The lesson is for essential-question tracking and would be introduced at the beginning of the throughline unit on expertise and pursued throughout the unit. See the completed canvas for this lesson in Chapter 7.

Envision the Destination

Define what learners will learn to do independently by the end.

- **Goals:** Introduce the essential question and engage learners' interests. Make the essential question a central focus of the unit and for each day's lesson, and provide opportunities for reflection on how the essential question is being addressed throughout the unit.
- **Evidence:** Learners are conscious of the essential question and have opportunities to think about, write about, and discuss it throughout the unit.
- **Measures:** Concentric circles are complete at the end of the unit and show evidence of growth in learner thinking over time. Learners are able to articulate how their understanding has evolved.
- **Stakes:** The essential question guides learning throughout the unit and helps learners focus as they develop new understandings about expertise through collaboration and reflection.

Map the Path to Mastery

Identify tools, questions, strategies, and mental models for success.

- **Metacognition:** By reflecting on the essential question, learners are able to see how their personal thinking and learning change over time.
- **Scaffolds and Differentiation:** (1) Model a response to the essential question (without giving away too much information); (2) provide sentence stems to help learners get started in their writing (e.g., "One thing I know about experts is . . ."); (3) allow learners to discuss their thinking aloud before writing in responses to the essential question; and/or (4) provide opportunities for conferring or small-group support as needed.

Prime Learners

Frontload vocabulary. Activate prior knowledge.

- Share the essential question with learners: "In this unit, we will explore the essential question, *How do I become an expert?*"
- Define the term *expert* using a Frayer model on an anchor chart to help learners access the essential question.
- Discuss the essential question, allowing learners to ask clarifying questions about it.

Orient the Learning

Help learners see the purpose and payoff of the future learning.

- Introduce the concentric circles note-catcher, and explain how learners will use it to respond to the essential question over time. Use this conversation to set the purpose for reflection.
- **Optional:** Show learners a model of concentric circles for a different unit (ideally one from a previous learner). Ask learners to consider the model and share what they notice and wonder about the concentric circles.

Walk Through New Strategies

Model, demonstrate, mentor.

- Ask learners to respond to the essential question in the smallest circle.
- Provide learners time to discuss the essential question in small groups, sharing their thinking and gaining new perspectives from peers.
- Record the class's current thinking about the essential question on an anchor chart to be displayed in the classroom and added to throughout the unit. Encourage learners to share their own thinking and that of peers using, "My partner _____ said . . ."
- Have learners place the concentric circles in an interactive notebook or a similar safe space to be returned to later in the unit.
- Conduct the subsequent lessons in the unit sequence to engage learners in new learning.
- Revisit the concentric circles after significant learning experiences to add new insights and changes in understanding.

Extend Expertise and Explore New Territory

Practice deliberately and demonstrate mastery.

- Learners consider the dispositions, skills, and strategies of expert readers and mathematicians. They deliberately practice these in their independent reading and math problem solving.
- Ask "Who are experts in our community and what can we learn from them?" and similar questions to help learners make connections between the essential question and the real world. Learners should engage in independent inquiries that involve interviewing local experts and comparing their experience to what has been learned in the unit.
- Have learners respond to the essential question two or three more times at intentionally planned checkpoints within the unit's instructional sequence.

Reflect on the Journey

Summarize content and process. Self-assess and set next steps.

- At the conclusion of the unit, have learners respond again to the essential question. At this time, learners should revisit their prior thinking by rereading previous responses, consider their new learning, and expand on their thinking in their final response.
- Ask learners to consider how their thinking has grown or changed over time. You may provide a sentence frame to help learners engage in metacognitive thinking (e.g., "I used to think . . . Now I know . . ."). Have them consider what activities and experiences changed their understanding and to consider how and why this was so.
- Have learners complete a self-assessment on their essential-question tracking based on the established success criteria to help them consider how well they learned about the essential question and how they might transfer, apply, and expand on what they have learned.