

## WHAT IS IT?

Concept based instruction engages students in critical thinking and helps them gain a deep understanding of topics. In concept based instruction, students are involved in higher levels of abstraction which allows them to focus on conceptual understanding and develop generalizations beyond the factual level.

## IMPACT?

Concept based instruction provides students with the ability to develop critical thinking skills.

# Concept Based Instruction

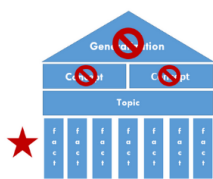
PROMISING PRACTICES

Office of the Maricopa County  
School Superintendent  
Steve Watson

Develop *Critical Thinking* with

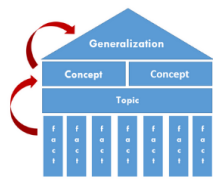
## CONCEPT BASED INSTRUCTION

"Concept-based instruction first requires that the teacher make the mental shift from teaching to facts alone, to teaching to conceptual ideas using the facts as a supporting tool." -H. Lynn Erickson



### Topic-Based Instruction

With traditional topic-based instruction, a teacher begins by identifying a topic for students to study. Students are taught a set of facts related to the topic and later assessed on their ability to recall the facts. With topic-based instruction, there is little opportunity for students to understand concepts, or utilize the critical thinking skill of developing generalizations.



### Concept-Based Instruction

To engage students in critical thinking and to help them gain a deep understanding of topics, we must involve them in a higher levels of abstraction. So, instead of stopping at the factual level, we move students toward a focus on concepts and generalizations.



### Generalizations...

are statements of the relationships between 2 or more concepts.

For example, *area* and *perimeter* are mathematical concepts. Through experiences with area and perimeter, students can discover generalizations such as these: (1) Rectangles with the same *perimeter* can have different *areas*. (2) Rectangles with the same *area* can have different *perimeters*.

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### Steps to plan for Concept-Based Instruction

- Choose a content standard
- Identify the stated concepts
- Identify any implied concepts
- Determine the generalization(s)
- Pinpoint the facts

### Strategies to help students make Generalizations

- Give students two concepts, and ask them to connect the concepts in a statement to develop a generalization.
- Provide students with a choice of a few statements, and ask them to identify the one that is a generalization of the learning and provide justification.
- Show students a generalization with key words missing, and have them fill in the blanks.
- Have students write a statement that reflects their understanding of what they learned: "I understand that..." or "I used to think..., now I think..."

## TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS RESOURCE:

[Develop Critical Thinking with Concept Based Instruction](#)

[Crafting Quality Math Generalization: Establishing Goals to Focus Learning](#)

[What are the Essential Elements of Concept-Based Curriculum Design?](#)