

## **Commentary for “The Science and Culture of Water” Unit**

Jeanne Almanzar, May 2020

Water is such an integral part of our lives. It seems, on the one hand, to be so simple, but the issues that surround it are often complex, both in science and in social studies. I think that both the science and culture of water will resonate with adults at all levels, and that they will be able to make connections to their environment, to society, and to themselves.

I designed this unit to be flexible and adaptable. The targeted level for this unit is 2 – 3.9, but I think that it could easily be adapted to a higher level. I included ideas for differentiation to accommodate a variety of student levels.

This could certainly be taught as a complete unit but could also be modified to focus on just the science or just the social studies content. This adaptability could be helpful to programs with shorter enrollment periods or who prefer to work with shorter units.

The main skills built into this unit are note taking and outlining. Accurate note taking, and the ability to organize those notes, are valuable skills for students at any level. Valuable, of course, as study tools, but also valuable out of school, as students navigate their world. Accurate note taking at the doctor’s office, in a community meeting, or as one does research before purchasing a car are just a few examples of where these skills might be of value.

Each segment of the unit includes many opportunities for explicit instruction. Modeling, guided practice, the gradual release of responsibility, and review of previous skills taught are built in as the unit moves along. This was designed so that even if the unit is segmented and only a part is taught, the basics are there. In the sample lesson plans I tried to highlight this, and also how formative assessment can be built in.

I have included a lot of videos as well as more traditional readings to help students to access content in a variety of ways. The video components and other online resources also make this a unit that could be adapted to hybrid or remote learning.

Have fun with this important topic!