

Module 1 – Course Objectives

QualityCore Course Objectives were empirically derived from an intensive study of high-performing high schools in high-minority and high-poverty schools. The study, *On Course for Success: A Close Look at Selected High School Courses that Prepare All Students for College*, was conducted jointly by ACT and the Education Trust (the full report can be found at www.act.org/path/policy/reports). Each set of objectives in the study, reviewed and cross-validated by a selection of classroom teachers in high-performing schools across the country, covers the important knowledge and skills of the discipline—the essential ideas that students must master if they are to have a firm grasp of the field. The objectives introduce knowledge and skills in an appropriate sequence, show an increasing intellectual sophistication with each subsequent course, and represent what is manageable in terms of instruction.

Teachers can analyze their courses by comparing their existing course content to the QualityCore Objectives. Although the review process can be completed by individual teachers, teams of teachers teaching the same course will realize the greatest benefit from this exercise. In a team review, reflective activities focus on what is actually taught and help to determine which objectives are the most important to master. Such conversations help teachers:

- Discuss issues of instructional equity and excellence
- Discuss the scope and sequence of curricular units
- Identify curricular gaps and unintended repetitions
- Identify potential areas for integration of cross-disciplinary connections
- Assess progress toward curricular implementation
- Discuss effective assessment methods that match course objectives
- Share successful teaching strategies

The Course Objective Activity on the next page provides an opportunity for teachers to evaluate their course content compared to content in the QualityCore program. It also allows teachers who teach the same course to engage in a horizontal articulation process. The Course Objective Worksheet that accompanies this activity can be downloaded from www.qualitycore.org.