

Understanding by Design (UbD) for Proficiency-Based Learning

Frederick H. Tuttle Middle School, August 5-9, 2019 (8:00 - 3:30 pm)

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"...I propose that for the sake of better results we need to turn conventional wisdom on its head: let's see what results if we think of action, not knowledge, as the essence of an education; let's see what results from thinking of future ability, not knowledge of the past, as the core...What else might follow from thinking of performance, not knowledge, as the aim of education?"

— *Everything you know about curriculum may be wrong. Really.* Grant Wiggins (2012)

Vermont's current transition to proficiency-based learning has raised a number of important questions about structures and strategies for unit design, assessment, and grading. This course will use *Understanding by Design* (Wiggins & McTighe, 2006) as a framework to help teachers create purposeful units driven by authentic assessment and inquiry. The underlying assumption of the course is that proficiency-based learning will improve student outcomes through greater precision, transparency, and relevance in intentionally structured learning activities and assessment. The course will examine the importance of habits of learning, growth mindset, and how feedback practices can either help or hinder future growth. Participants will have time to learn through professional dialogue, examine their own assessment strategies, and apply UbD principles to their own work during the course meeting time.

Course Learning Objectives

- How can clarity of purpose improve our assessment strategies?
- What is the difference between formative & summative assessment?
- What should we keep in mind when providing feedback?
- What is the difference between *knowing* and *understanding*? (cf. Wiggins & McTighe)
- How can essential questions foster inquiry-driven units of study?

Course Guidelines

- Due to the weeklong seminar format, participants will attend each day of the course.
- Participants will actively contribute to class discussions and participate in course learning activities.
- Participants will model cultural competence and exhibit respect for each other.
- Participants will bring an open mind to new ideas and use tuning protocols, as well as other group structures, to be productive members of a professional learning community.
- Participants will take an active role in their learning and seek to connect the research literature to their professional practice.

Course Work

(Additional details and assessment rubrics to be provided in class.)

Pre-Reading

Before meeting on August 8th, participants will read *Understanding by Design, Expanded 2nd Edition* (Wiggins & McTighe, 2006) to establish a common framework for effective assessment. Course participants are asked to write a 500 word reading response from the following questions to bring to the first day of class.

1. Write down your favorite quote from the book and say why you chose it. (Include page number.)
2. Which idea most clearly connects to your work as an educator? (When discussing your professional practice, please be specific.)
3. What is the most original or surprising idea in the book for you and why?
4. What is the author's bias? What values are reflected in the book's framework for learning?
5. Compare and contrast the vision of education here to the current reality for students in your school(s).

Final Product

Building on their work from the week in this culminating project, participants will use research and peer feedback to create or rework a unit or performance assessment with UbD in mind. Presenters will choose one key UbD element as a focus (e.g., essential questions, desired results, enduring understandings, performance tasks, formative assessment) with colleagues providing feedback by means of a consultancy or tuning protocol. The goal is for teachers to apply their new learning in a meaningful way and to leave the course with work that they can use with students in the fall.

Class Participation

Participants will self-assess their class participation according to the following criteria:

- collaboration & teamwork
- establishing connections between research & professional practice
- active listening
- positive contributions to the professional learning community
- applying new learning daily

Daily Work Time

In the spirit of learning by doing, time to apply new concepts will be provided each day of the course. Participants will collect this “building blocks” in a Google Doc to submit with the Final Course Product & Reflection.

Final Course Reflection

This final piece of work is an opportunity for participants to bring together key concepts and construct meaning from new learning in the course, notably from:

- Course readings
- Course daily work time
- Course discussions with fellow educators
- New insights into professional practice

Grading

Pre-Reading	20%
Daily Work Time	15%
Final Product	30%
Class Participation	20%
Final Course Reflection	15%

Course Overview

Monday, August 5	Tuesday, Aug. 6	Wednesday, Aug. 7	Thursday, Aug. 8	Friday, Aug. 9
UbD Intro What is UbD ? - Starting with the Desired Results - The Twin Sins of Traditional Design - Planning by unit instead of by lesson - Essential Questions	Inquiry Essential Questions - Purpose & Transparency - Engagement - Metacognitive EQs - Cross-curricular Connections	Unit Design Coverage vs. "Uncoverage" - Focus on what is learned, not covered - <i>Uncovering</i> = inquiry-driven	Assessment Checking for Understanding - Formative Assessment - Tightening the feedback loop & strategies - Teacher Roles: Instructor, Facilitator & Assessor	Sharing Out Finishing Touches Participants present and refine their work with colleague feedback & support
Knowledge vs. Understanding - Ways of Knowing - Transferability - 6 Facets of Understanding <u>Work Time:</u> Determine level of cognitive demand in an assessment	Creating EQs - Question Starters & Tips - Writing Hook, Lead & Essential Questions - Clarity of Intent & Scope <u>Work Time:</u> Write Essential Questions	Designing a Unit - Design Entry Points - Reworking a Unit - Enduring Understandings - Designing Assessment: Performance Tasks & GRASPS <u>Work Time:</u> (Re)design a unit starting with the end in mind (i.e. performance task)	Final Product <u>Work Time:</u> Participants prepare final product (i.e., new or reworked unit and assessment plan) to be tuned Friday morning with colleagues	Reflection & Conclusion - Key Themes - New Learning - Next Steps
Related Readings: UbD: pp. 13-22, 38-41, 82-85	Related Readings: EQ: pp. 1-14, 17-23 UbD: pp. 120-21	Related Readings: UbD: pp. 227-232, 256-263, 150-59	Related Readings: UbD: pp. 245-249	More Reading: Berger, Guskey, Dueck

Required Course Text

Wiggins, G. & McTighe, J. (2005) *Understanding by Design*, Expanded 2nd Ed. Alexandria, VA: ASCD. [ISBN-10: 1416600353]

Supplemental Course Texts

Berger, R., Rugen, L. & Woodfin, L. (2014) *Leaders of Their Own Learning: Transforming Schools Through Student-Engaged Assessment*, 2nd Ed. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass [ISBN-10: 1118655443]

Dueck, M. (2014) *Grading Smarter Not Harder: Assessment Strategies That Motivate Kids and Help Them Learn*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD. [ISBN-10: 1416618902]

Guskey, T. (2014) *On Your Mark: Challenging the Conventions of Grading and Reporting - a book for K-12 assessment policies and practices*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press [ISBN-10: 193554277X]

Wiggins, G. & McTighe, J. (2013) *Essential Questions: Opening Doors to Student Understanding*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD. [ISBN-10: 141661509]