

Rigor, Relevance, and Results: Building Capacity with UbD

This is one of the Center's capacity-building workshops, designed with focus on standards-based instructional planning.

UNDERSTANDING BY DESIGN AT A GLANCE

Understanding by Design (UbD) is the brainchild of Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, experts in the field of curriculum, assessment, and teaching for understanding. Through the UbD framework, Wiggins and McTighe have attempted to synthesize the best practices and the research-driven design principles associated with teaching and assessing for understanding. The UbD framework emphasizes a backward design process and involves three interrelated stages:

- **Stage One:** Identify desired results (such as enduring understandings, essential questions, and enabling knowledge and skill objectives).
- **Stage Two:** Determine acceptable evidence to assess and to evaluate student achievement of desired results.
- **Stage Three:** Design learning experiences to promote all students' mastery of desired results and their subsequent success on identified assessment tasks.

UbD is not a program to be implemented, Wiggins and McTighe assert. Rather, the framework helps educators create instructional experiences that foster deep understanding. Students demonstrate their learning through one or more of the following six facets of understanding:

- **Explanation:** The ability to demonstrate, derive, describe, design, justify, or prove something using evidence.
- **Interpretation:** The ability to create something new from learned knowledge – for example, to formulate a critique, create analogies and metaphors, draw inferences, construct meaning, translate, make predictions, or form hypotheses.
- **Application:** The ability to use learned knowledge in new, unique, or unpredictable situations and contexts – for example, to build, create, invent, perform, produce, solve, or test.
- **Perspective:** The ability to analyze and draw conclusions about contrasting viewpoints on a given event, topic, or situation.
- **Empathy:** The capacity to walk in another's shoes – for example, to participate in role-play, describe another's emotions, or analyze and justify someone else's reactions.
- **Self-Knowledge:** The ability to self-examine, self-reflect, self-evaluate, express reflective insight, and monitor and modify one's own comprehension of information and events.

Educators who have worked extensively with the UbD framework almost universally acknowledge its commonsense recommendations for (1) unpacking curriculum standards; (2) emphasizing students' understanding, not just formulaic recall; (3) expanding assessment tools and repertoires to create a photo album of student achievement instead of a snapshot; and (4) incorporating the best of what current research tells us about meeting the needs of all learners.

Source: From *Making the Most of Understanding by Design*, by J. Brown, 2004.

THE LOGIC OF UNDERSTANDING BY DESIGN (UbD)
A Comprehensive Approach to Instructional Planning

STAGE 1 <i>Identify Desired Results</i>	NOTES
<p>A. Current State Standards and Related Information plus Current District Documents</p> <p>B. Knowledge and Skills</p> <p>C. Big Ideas/Enduring Understandings</p> <p>D. Essential Questions</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">STAGE 2 <i>Determine Acceptable Evidence</i></p> <p>E. Performance Tasks</p> <p>F. Academic Prompts</p> <p>G. Quizzes and Tests</p> <p>H. Informal Checks for Understanding</p> <p>I. Self-Assessment and Reflection</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">STAGE 3 <i>Plan Strategic Learning Experiences and Instruction</i></p> <p>J. Sequence of Learning Experiences and Instruction</p>	

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