Understanding By Design

The Backwards Approach to Curriculum Design
Backward design may be thought of as purposeful task analysis: Given a task to be accomplished, how do we get there? Or one might call it planned coaching: What kinds of lessons and practices are needed to master key performances?

- Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, *Understanding by Design*
Think with the end in mind, start with assessment

Differs from traditional approaches to designing curriculum. Instead of planning activities or tasks first, you begin with how and what will be assessed.
Stage One: Identify Desired Results

Elements of the Design: Goals, Knowledge and Skills, Essential Questions, Enduring Understandings
Key Elements

The Goals for each unit are typically the national, state, and/or local standards. Often represent specific content objectives that must be met for a particular grade level or subject.

Knowledge and Skills

- Objectives that students should be able to know and do.
- Specific content knowledge and skills.

Essential Questions

- Open-ended questions that are thought-provoking and interpretive.
- Essential Questions are at the core of your content and often lead to, or require further investigation.
- Essential Questions:
  - Have no obvious right answer
  - Raise more questions
  - Address concepts that are key to the discipline

Enduring Understandings

- Enduring Understandings:
  - are *Big Ideas* that can be transferred and made into statements.
  - Uncover abstract or misunderstood ideas
  - Reveals ideas

- Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe advance that there are *Six Facets of Understanding*.
- When the facets are a part of the curriculum, students are able to obtain true understanding.

Six Facets of Understanding
## Six Facets of Understanding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Sophisticated explanation and theories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>Narratives, translations, metaphors, etc. that provide meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application</td>
<td>Ability to effectively apply knowledge in a variety of contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td>Critical and insightful points of view. Recognize the significance of ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>Ability to see things from other points of view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Knowledge</td>
<td>Deeply aware of own boundaries and ability to recognize the limits of others</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

# Examples of Performance Tasks:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Task Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td>Write letters home describing what the pioneer life is really like compared to what you expected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>Compare English and Spanish versions of <em>Cinderella</em> to determine if language influences meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application</td>
<td>Adapt events from history that contributed to societal reaction to the Civil Rights Movement by recreating a scene and presenting to a group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td>Debate whether the First Amendment could negatively impact a group by participating in a roundtable discussion with classmates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>Create a diary that reflects the day in the life of an electron.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Knowledge</td>
<td>Write a self-assessment reflecting on your writing process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Three-ring Audit Process

What concepts should be students be familiar with

Worth Being Familiar With

Important to Know and Do

What important knowledge and skills must students have for mastery

Enduring Understanding

Anchors the unit; Why is this topic worth studying

Three-ring Audit Process Assessments

Worth Being Familiar With

Important to Know and Do

Enduring Understanding

Traditional quizzes or tests

Authentic performance tasks and projects

Constructed or selected responses

Stage Two: Determine Acceptable Evidence

G.R.A.S.P.S.
Stage 2: Determine Acceptable Evidence

- This stage identifies specific assessments that will be used.
- Identify the summative assessment
- What is the culminating activity that will represent the Understandings students have gained from the unit.

Examples of Assessment Types

- Acceptable Evidence
  - Tests/Quizzes
  - Observations/Dialogues
  - Academic Prompts
  - Performance Tasks
  - Informal Checks for Understanding

Examples of Assessment Types
G.R.A.S.P.S

Performance Task Scenario

- G = Goal
- R = Role
- A = Audience
- S = Situation
- P = Product/Performance and Purpose
- S = Standards for Criteria and Success

Select either Kenny Watson (The Watsons go to Birmingham, 1963) or Anne Frank (The Diary of Anne Frank) from the texts and propose a reality show that will follow them around for two months and create a documentary of an event that changed their lives and history.

Decide which part of their lives that you would like to film and explain why you think this particular time was historically significant.

After reviewing the text, informational resources, and documentaries regarding events that occurred during each of the major movements in history, create a multimedia presentation that includes events from history and the corresponding events in the text. Your product should have a creative title, photographic images, appropriate audio and video scene that reenact the story.

When you have complete your presentation, we will have a preview night where you will present your movie to the class.

You will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Read and comprehend informational materials and relate new information to prior knowledge and experience, extend ideas, and make connections.
- Deliver a presentation that projects a sense of individuality and personality
- Makes informed judgments about television, radio, and film production
Stage Three: Plan Learning Activities

W.H.E.R.E.T.O.

Stage Three: Plan Learning Activities

- This is the Stage where specific learning activities (lessons) are planned to accompany each unit.
- The lessons designed in this stage are should be based on the desired results from Stage 1 and 2.
- W.H.E.R.E.T.O. is an acronym for planning steps to help meet the requirements of the unit.
  - The acronym does not represent the order to be followed

### W.H.E.R.E.T.O.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>W</th>
<th>Where are we going? What is expected?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>How will we hook the students?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>How will we equip students for expected performances?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>How will we rethink or revise?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>How will students self-evaluate and reflect their learning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>How will we tailor learning to varied needs, interests, and learning styles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>How will we organize the sequence of learning?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next Steps…

- Begin with what you want your students to understand at the end of the unit.
- Identify each of the elements required in each stage.
  - Identify Desired Results
  - Determine Acceptable Evidence
  - Plan Learning Activities
Contact Information

For access to the UbD Exchange to search or build units in the UbD format, contact:

DeNelle Knowles
at
knowlesd@educationcentral.org