

Stage 1 – Desired Results

Goal(s):

- Ensure a more thorough understanding of what UbD is and how it can improve our daily work.
- Supervisors will be able to observe indicators of successful implementation and provide feedback to faculty on the application of UbD principles throughout the school year.
- Faculty will be able to effectively design, implement and review quality UbD units that are aligned to standards.

Understanding(s):

- Effective curriculum/units/daily lessons design evolves “backward” from clear goals and is aligned across all three stages.
- UbD is a way of thinking more carefully about curriculum/units/daily lessons design; it is neither a prescriptive program nor just a template for design.
- UbD design process is non-linear and ongoing.
- Teaching and assessing for understanding enhances learning of content standards.

Essential Question(s)

- *Why are the best curricula/units/lessons designed “backwards”?*
- *What is good design? How does UbD support curriculum/unit/lesson design?*
- *Why teach for understanding?*
- *How will we know that students really understand?*
- *How will we know that as a district we are moving from an awareness stage to an application stage in the change process?*

Knowledge: *Staff will know...*

- the 3 stages of “backward design”
- characteristics of “big ideas” and “essential questions”
- the six facets of understanding and GRASPS
- the WHERETO elements of instructional planning
- design standards of UbD

Skills: *Staff will be able to..*

- develop understandings, essential questions and assessment evidence.
- design units using the “backward design” template that meet UbD Design Standards.
- review other designs against the Design Standards.

Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence

Direct Evidence:

- Develop draft designs using UbD template and tools.
- All staff participate in a school-based unit peer review process for feedback and making necessary revisions.
- Pilot the UbD units, reflect on results, and plan for changes.
- Participate in regional peer review processes for final approval prior to District curriculum adoption.
- Principals integrate UbD standards into supervision and evaluation process, and observe implementation of UbD principles applied in daily lessons.

Indirect Evidence:

- Pre- and post-workshop surveys.
- Observations of participants’ understandings, questions, misconceptions, and frustrations.
- Quality of responses on exercises and worksheets.
- Participants’ self-assessments and reflections on their understandings and design.
- Written and oral feedback on workshops and UbD implementation
- “Needs” statements for future professional development.

Stage 3 – Action Plan

- Work as school-based teams to establish clear goals aligned to state standards.
- Regional curriculum committees will review and revise the regional curriculum guides to create common goals and core rubrics for assessment on a continuous basis as part of District’s Curriculum Development plan.
- Utilize portions of faculty meetings to facilitate deeper understanding of unit design and share works in progress.
- Provide guided design work time and workshops as needed.
- Build in opportunities for teams to work on units (through release times, summer work, after-school work, etc.).
- Provide opportunities for interested faculty to advance their learning through regional and/or school-based study groups, and local, regional, state, and national conferences.
- Provide ongoing peer review training opportunities in order to build expertise first regionally and then locally.
- Publish approved units and excellent UbD models on ubdechange.org and school-based intranets.
- Administrators will monitor implementation, providing faculty with ongoing input using observable indicators.

Backward Design Plan for an Elementary School Improvement Goal

Stage 1 – Desired Results

Goal(s):

- Reduce the amount of whole-group instruction and increase use of appropriate differentiated strategies.
- Increase the use of pre-assessments to diagnose students' readiness levels and guide differentiation.
- Increase the achievement (annual growth) of all student sub-groups in reading and mathematics.

Understandings (for teachers):

- Learners differ in their readiness (background knowledge, skills and experiences), learner profile (culture, gender, and preferred style) and interests.
- Learning is enhanced when these differences are acknowledged and addressed.
- Diagnostic (pre-) assessments are essential to reveal differences in readiness, profiles, and interests to guide differentiation.
- Respectful tasks engage learners with content standards in ways that appropriately challenge them.

Essential Questions (for staff exploration):

- *Why should we differentiate our instruction?*
- *What does effective differentiation look like in the classroom?*
- *How do we decide what differentiation is needed?*
- *How can we make differentiation feasible with large classes?*
- *Is differentiation compatible with a standards-based accountability system?*

Knowledge: *Staff will know...*

- basic principles and practices of differentiation
- the ways in which students differ
- the content standards and benchmarks that all students are expected to learn

Skills: *Staff will be able to..*

- apply basic differentiation strategies – tiered lessons, flexible groupings, scaffolded assignments, and giving appropriate choices
- use diagnostic (pre-) assessments effectively
- manage a differentiated classroom

Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence

Direct Evidence:

Classroom observations will find:

- decreased use of whole-group instruction
- increased use of pre-assessments and appropriate differentiated instruction
- effective management of the class
- increase in student engagement in learning

Student assessment data will show:

- Increased achievement by sub-groups in reading and mathematics.

Indirect Evidence:

- Lesson plans include plan for differentiation.
- Teachers can explain how their instruction is responsive to student learning needs based on assessment data.
- Staff surveys identifying needs for future professional development.

Stage 3 – Action Plan

- Purchase copies of *Differentiated Instruction and Understanding by Design* (ASCD, 2006) for all teaching staff, and encourage them to read the book during the summer.
- Use the pre-school professional days and our two in-service days for book discussion, exploration of essential questions, and staff workshops on differentiation strategies conducted by district specialists.
- Engage staff in developing a set of observable indicators of effective differentiated instruction in the classroom.
- Use the agreed-upon set of observable indicators for “walk through” classroom visits; provide feedback to staff.
- Encourage grade level teams in sharing lesson plans that incorporate differentiated strategies.
- Use one faculty meeting a month for exploring a particular DI strategy (determined by staff needs assessment).
- Use regularly scheduled grade-level meetings to examine assessment data (from district benchmark assessments and state test results) and make plans for improving sub-group student performance. (Note: May involve some regrouping of students across classrooms.)