

UNDERSTANDING BY DESIGN

The structure for the curriculum framework and elements of the standards aligned system are adapted from Understanding by Design (UbD). The emphasis is on the teacher's role as a designer of student learning.

Understanding by Design helps teachers clarify learning goals, devise and utilize fair assessments of student understanding, and design effective and engaging learning activities.

Developed by nationally recognized educators Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, and published by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), Understanding by Design (UbD) is based on the following key ideas:

- The primary goal of education is the development and deepening of student learning.
- Students demonstrate their understanding most effectively when they are provided with complex, authentic opportunities which utilize interpretation, application, and self-assessment.
- Effective curriculum development reflects a three-stage design process called "backward design" that delays the planning of classroom activities until goals have been clarified and assessments designed.
- Student and school performance gains are achieved through regular reviews of results (achievement data and student work) followed by targeted adjustments to curriculum and instruction.
- Teachers are most effective when they seek formative feedback from students and their peers and use that feedback to adjust and design teaching.
- Teachers, schools, and districts benefit by "working smarter" through the collaborative design, sharing, and peer review of units of study.

To summarize the structure of Understanding by Design is:

- a three-stage "backward planning" curriculum design process anchored by a unit design template
- a set of design standards with attendant rubrics
- a comprehensive training package to help teachers design, edit, critique, peer- review, share, and improve their lessons and assessments.

More detailed information can be found in [Understanding by Design](#), Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe.