



# ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Understanding by Design (UbD)  
adapted from and based on  
the work of  
Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe

# QR Code



Link: <https://goo.gl/QzKq2v>

# What is UbD?

- ▶ Curriculum planning process
  - One method for developing units of study in any discipline
  - Integrates curriculum, instruction and assessment
- ▶ Way to enhance meaningful understanding and transfer of learning
- ▶ Start with the end in mind
  - Backward map focusing on results

# The “Big Ideas” of UbD

<i>UbD big idea</i>	<i>Why is this important?</i>	<i>If not...</i>
<b>Backward Design</b>	Plans need to be well aligned to be effective	Twin sins: Aimless activity and coverage
<b>Transfer as goal</b>	The essence of understanding and the point of schooling	Students fail to apply learning
<b>Understanding via Big Ideas</b>	How transfer occurs; creates connections in learning	Fragmented learning; more difficult, less engaging
<b>Meaningful Learning</b>	This engages and invites students	Plans need to be well aligned to be effective

# Remember this....

- Way of thinking more carefully about design; NOT a program
- Thinking like an assessor (not a designer) is key to effective design
- To move from covering standards and completing activities, we must think of BIG IDEAS related to the Standards
- Means to an end! (real-world, problem solving tools that make students life-long learners)

# Why use the Template?

## The Template:

- ▶ reflects principles of sound curriculum design
- ▶ is a helpful organizer
- ▶ helps avoid misalignment
- ▶ helps avoid lack of clear priorities

## Stage 1 – Desired Results

Established Goals (Standards)	Transfer	
	<i>Students will be able to independently use their learning to...</i>	
	Meaning	
	<b>UNDERSTANDINGS</b> <i>Students will understand that...</i>	<b>ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS</b> <i>Students will keep considering...</i>
	Acquisition	
	<i>Students will know...</i>	<i>Students will be skilled at...</i>

## Stage 2 – Evidence

Evaluative Criteria	Assessment Evidence
	PERFORMANCE TASK(s)
	OTHER EVIDENCE

## Stage 3 – Learning Plan

Pre-Assessment	
	Progress Monitoring

# Established Goals

- Content Standards
- Common Core State Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects

# Content Acquisition through Literacy

How can reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language serve as processes to deliver the content?

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# Transfer

What kinds of long-term independent accomplishments are desired?

**“A long-term transfer goal in history is for students to apply the lessons of history to contemporary issues and to become more proactive citizens based on their understanding.”** (p. 65 *The Understanding by Design Guide to Creating High-Quality Units* by Wiggins and McTighe).

# Transfer

**Occurs in new situations and requires**

- ▶ Application
- ▶ Strategic thinking
- ▶ Autonomy
- ▶ Habits of mind

# Transfer

**Demonstrated by six facets of understanding through authentic performance**

*The Capacity to*

- Explain
- Interpret
- Apply
- Shift Perspective
- Empathize
- Self-assess

# Transfer

- ▶ Literacy Capacities
- ▶ Mathematical Practices
- ▶ Science Practices

# GRASPS

- ▶ Goal
- ▶ Role
- ▶ Audience
- ▶ Situation
- ▶ Products and Performances
- ▶ Standards

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# Meaning

- ▶ **Understandings**
  - What specifically do you want students to understand?
  - What inferences should they make?
- ▶ **Essential Questions**
  - What thought-provoking questions will foster inquiry, meaning-making, and transfer?
    - **Note: Think through Transfer before developing Essential Questions**

# Understanding

## Two general connotations

- ▶ Transfer
- ▶ Making inferences

# Understandings

“Understandings reflect important (but unobvious) answers—stated as full-sentence generalizations that we want our students to ‘come to’ (in a meaningful way)” (p. 73 Wiggins and McTighe).

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# Essential Questions

“Frame ongoing and important inquiries about a big idea...” (p. 73 Wiggins and McTighe).

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# Acquisition

- ▶ Knowledge
  - What facts and basic concepts should students know and be able to recall?
- ▶ Skills
  - What discrete skills and processes should students be able to use?

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# Contact Information

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