Leading Professional Development: Using Understanding by Design to Implement UbD

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Reflection

I relied heavily on the information from Darling-Hammond and Hyler as I went through the process of creating this professional development agenda and activity. I turned the effective PD practices into targets and goals, looked at the requirements of the assignment, and engineered each portion of the professional development day to encompass one of those goals.

The activities that I chose including the virtual mystery and the backwards crossword puzzle were pinned in to engage and create a sort of excitement and mystery about what we were going to introduce in the afternoon. Both of those activities are fun and engaging and they incorporate the active learning portion element as well as supporting collaboration (2023). I decided to go with a theme, a dystopian feel because I felt it would be more interesting to have an overarching theme and we are introducing something that may be new to some, but familiar to others. I thought about perhaps incorporating a "dress" day and asking the teachers to come dressed as their favorite dystopian character, which may be too much for secondary teachers, but I would most definitely dress up as Katniss Everdeen, arrows and all.

The models of effective practice will come with the slide show presentation that explains what UbD is and how it works (2023). As the person who will be presenting the slides, I personally hate when all of the text is on the slide and the presenter just reads it. I have developed the nasty habit of getting up and using my phone to take pictures of the slides if that is all that is going on. So, keyword slides were created that could guide me through explaining the process, provide keywords, and encourage notetaking and active engagement.

I addressed the suggestions in the prompts as I worked through the agenda narrative:

Purpose or why: The professional development day is an introduction to a year-long process of converting our written curriculum to the Understanding by Design format and methodology. Instead of simply sending an email and telling my teachers to watch a video and send me any questions, I will emphasize the importance of this process by allowing an entire professional development day to be given to learning about it.

Intended outcomes of the professional development activities: The first two activities are fun and engaging. The intended outcome of those activities is to have fun and become engaged and curious about what is being introduced. The other activities are intended to introduce the UbD methodology, template, thought process, and expectations. I want the faculty to understand this is not something that I expect to be done in a month, and it shouldn't be. They should understand that plenty of contract time will be given to this, that they are not expected to do it in their own time, and that we will be honoring them by giving them four extra days outside of the classroom with the principal and instructional coaches to collaborate and work on UbD.

Length of the professional development: While the UbD change-over will take place over a full school year and possibly into the summer, this introduction and first glimpse will offer an overview and workshop and will last only one day. I felt that introducing the idea and delivering the news that yes, we are doing curriculum again, might be best suited to a day of fun and instruction.

A broad agenda which includes topics and activities: We will review data, not because I am going to leverage performances to push UbD, but because data tells us what to do and what not to do. It is important for the faculty to see the entire picture of data from the school, where we are succeeding and where we need improvement so that no one feels targeted. Data review should not be punishment and it should not be the only thing on the agenda. The inference is that

the review of data will drive conversation to other topics that need to be discussed and so there are no topics scheduled or embedded in the data review as I would like for those topics to remain organic and spontaneous, but still directed toward student performance.

One thoroughly developed activity: I have included a copy of the backwards crossword puzzle, which but the way I tried out on my students and they had so much fun that is now in our rotation for Funday Friday activities! I created a slideshow based on the UbD book that I purchased in a used book sale at the library, but I think it is UbD 1.0 – still chock full of information. I also went the Vanderbilt website and found tons of other resources. I felt the slideshow would be a good call so that I can use it in the future.

A timeline for implementation: The professional development introducing UbD will be one day. Implementation will take the school year and possibly some time in the summer. But we are offering to pay for their time in the summer if they need to come in.

A plan for monitoring implementation (accountability): I am going to utilize social media and the school's website to launch the initiative. I will play on the idea that we are creating learning backwards and post short videos of students "going backwards." Walking, running, doing dances. And, because we are transparent, we will be rolling out new units on the website. This will ensure that work is happening at an acceptable pace and it is something that we will celebrate by highlighting the teachers and the departments with each roll-out.

NELP Alignment

Standard Four: Learning and Instruction

Candidates who successfully complete a building level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to evaluate, develop, and implement coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, supports and assessment.

This assignment definitely helped me understand the aspects of planning professional development. I am not sure if other states have mandated that curriculum must be posted where parents and other stakeholders have access to it, but in this situation, it works in my favor. By presenting the curriculum switch in a way that celebrates the work the teachers are doing and focusing positive attention on them while they are doing the work, we gain the approval of the community and draw them in to the learning process.

References

Darling-Hammond, L., & Hyler, M. (2023, May 9). *Effective teacher professional development*. Learning Policy Institute. https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/effective-teacher-professional-development-report

Nelp Building Standards. npbea.org. (2018, August). http://www.npbea.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/NELP-Building-Standards.pdf