- Listen to the Pondering Education: Episode 5: A Conversation with Jay McTighe

Starting at time mark 5:30 thru 21:55 then 30:15 thru 31:40

- Read Understanding By Design Textbook pages 17 – 21

Questions are 10 points each, total 100 points.

Podcast Questions

Answer the follow questions:

1. **What is the first basic premise of UbD?**

   Understanding.

   As stated paraphrase by Jay McTighe, UbD is a "Curriculum and assessment planning framework, with a goal of developing and deepening student understanding of important ideas and processes ultimately so that they can transfer their understanding. The best way is to apply your learning to something new. Don't fill kids minds with facts, instead help kids find, critically appraise and apply information that matters most."

2. What is the second basic premise of UbD?

   By Design.

   Backward design. A useful idea for planning curriculum. It is based on curriculum being designed to the desired objective and outcomes that we want the student to walk away with. What do we want them to know and how are we going to get them to that understanding effectively?

3. What are essential questions, what is the purpose of essential questions, and how should they be designed?

   The essential questions are a doorway to student understanding. We are sparking their thinking. Understanding must be earned in the mind of the learner. You can't give a student an idea. Correlation does not ensure causality.

   How do things that are related, affect each other?

   The essential question should be open-ended. It should be thought-provoking. Lastly, the essential question should recur and is something that we can revisit, again and again.

Essential questions can include:

1) Content strand questions. For example, why and how do we identify geographical locations?

2) Process strand questions. These questions tend to be broader. Speaking. Reading. Writing. Research. What makes a great book? What is my purpose? Literature explores literary themes. What is a true friend? It is a "read between the lines," with internal knowledge, beliefs, ideas and thought processes.

4. How does Jay McTighe explain what understanding is and how it is different from knowledge?

Knowledge is equal to knowing something. Knowledge is binary. You either know the information or you don't.

Understanding is about abstract and transferable ideas. It's typically in the form of concepts, themes, and processes. We wouldn't say you know or you don't understand something- it's not binary. Understanding is more a continuum of deep insight, to solid understanding, to emerging understanding all the way to misunderstandings.

5. How is assessment of knowledge different from assessment of understanding?

The assessment of knowledge can be determined by objective multiple choice, true/false, and matching in order to judge the knowledge acquired by students. These types of assessments are highly effective for knowledge based learning.

The assessment of understanding can be determined by more rubric oriented assessments. The key objective is to determine facts, concepts, processes and themes that are based on the intrinsic values, ideas, beliefs and thought-processes of understanding. These are assessed through open-ended questions and discussions that are key determining factors in the student's judgments.

6. How is assessment of understanding best done?

Jay's belief is that the majority of tests should be left up to the teacher to create so as to include their freedom, ingenuity and creativity. He does not think that teachers should be micromanaged, however in order to bridge the gap in between teacher objective differences, the standards were created.

Likewise the standardized tests were made in order to correctly assess student knowledge against a more diversified and broader range of students (including internationals). It involves performance tasks of important outcomes of what we are looking for. It is also a set of agreed upon goals and the most important goals that we wish for students to know across the education system.

7. Explain each of the three stages of the UbD template and how they apply to teacher autonomy.

1. Identify Desired Results- This stage is based on established goals, and content standards. For example, 21st Century schools are established to follow the 21st standard goals. In the public school there are state mandated ITSE standards to follow with desired outcomes, desired understandings, as well as desired objectives and goals.

2. Determine Acceptable Evidence- What assessment evidence do we need based on our goals? What assessments of understanding do we want to implement for this specific goal and objective?

3. Plan Learning Experiences and Instruction - Lessons are developed "backwards" based on the goal objectives and the assessment types desired. After establishing these two critical steps, then the teachers begin to create and plan the classroom instruction. This is where teachers have full authority to be creative and find intrinsic methodologies for students to learn the content.

8. How should UbD be shared with students and parents?

UbD should be shared with students and parents when the teacher creates the school syllabi. It's important to publish the desired understandings, the essential questions that kids will be exploring and the core performance tasks and the rubrics that go along with them. We want authentic performance from the students. When the kids "know the game", then they are more willing to understand, work on the skills and practice the knowledge. The kids will be motivated to do more because it makes more practical sense, and thereby be more authentic in their work.

Performance tasks that are relevant, engaging, involve good-thinking as well as enhance motivation and increase task performance are what we are looking for!

Textbook Questions

1. Why is “backward” best?

It is purposeful task analysis that makes common sense. It allows for students to acquire more knowledge because you place them at the center of the learning process. The UbD begins with what are the objectives and goals that we want the students to learn. From there, you consider the assessments of how you will assess that knowledge and understanding, and then you will create the lesson plan. It presents a more complete and satisfying account of instructing students. It helps the teacher to set clearly identifiable goals as well as incorporates a more energizing, encouraging, thought-provoking and motivational classroom environment.

2. What are the “twin sins of traditional design”?

The "twin sins of traditional design" are activity-based and coverage-based design. They fail to provide purposeful objectives.

Activity-based fails to provide depth of learning solely on the activity alone, because it provides "no enduring learning for the students to derive. The work is 'hands-on' without being 'minds-on'...One might characterize this activity-oriented approach as 'Faith in learning by osmosis.' " (Understanding By Design, page 20 - 21). I find this phrase "Faith in learning by osmosis," to be quite comical, however the reality of it is true. Students need to have a thought provoking, knowledge-based understanding about the coursework they are working on; and there needs to be a learning plan with clear goals and objectives provided by the teacher. Some real ITSE curriculum content standards need to be learned in the process of the activity.

Coverage-based design covers vast amounts of content in a short period of time. It often entails hours of teacher lectures with them spouting out facts upon facts. The retention of the student learning is undetermined and the student's application of that knowledge could be minimal considering the bulk of the content is "going through the textbook."