

Collaborative Planning and Understanding by Design



What is collaborative planning?

At Edison, collaborative planning involves a grade level team and instructional facilitator working and learning together as they plan curriculum, units, or lessons including classroom-based assessments by analyzing standards and creating "Essential Questions."

Why use collaborative planning?

Collaborative planning provides opportunities for teachers to work together during the school day to make those connections through examining their practice, consulting with colleagues, and developing their skills.

What is Understanding by Design/Backwards Design?

Understanding by Design (UbD) is a framework for improving student achievement. Emphasizing the teacher's critical role as a designer of student learning, UbD works within the standards-driven curriculum to help teachers clarify learning goals, create assessments of student understanding, and craft effective and engaging learning activities that are integrated into various content areas.

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

- A primary goal of education should be the development and deepening of student understanding.
- Students reveal their understanding most effectively when they are provided with complex, authentic opportunities to explain, interpret, apply, shift perspective, empathize, and self-assess. When applied to complex tasks, these "six facets" provide a conceptual lens through which teachers can better assess student understanding.
- 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. This process helps to avoid the twin problems of "textbook coverage" and "activity-oriented" teaching, in which no clear priorities and purposes are apparent.
- 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 become most effective when they seek feedback from students and their peers and use that feedback to adjust approaches to design and teaching.
- Teachers, schools, and districts benefit by "working smarter" through the collaborative design, sharing, and peer review of units of study.