

Era 3 Curriculum Development and Design Websites*

Understanding by Design

Jay McTighe's website

One of the authors of *Understanding by Design* (UbD, ASCD) has his own website that provides a number of resources, including articles and a wide variety of weblinks, related to Era 3 curriculum development. An excellent website for also finding resources and learning about Understanding by Design, a curriculum development and design model using a backward design-teaching for understanding framework. The weblink resources are often organized by subject area.

Website: <http://www.jaymctighe.com>

What is Understanding by Design?

These introductions to Understanding by Design provides a brief overview of the model and the program and suggests some helpful resources:

<http://www.grantwiggins.org/ubd/ubd.lasso>

<http://cft.vanderbilt.edu/teaching-guides/pedagogical/understanding-by-design/>

Understanding by Design Resources from ASCD

The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) provides most of the resources about the program. For further information about the wealth of resources available through ASCD, go to:

<http://www.ascd.org/research-a-topic/understanding-by-design-resources.aspx>

Teaching for Understanding

Teaching for Understanding provides a set of general guidelines and helpful models for designing and developing a teaching for understanding educational approach. It focuses on four central questions about teaching and learning: What shall we teach? What is worth understanding? How shall we teach for understanding? And how can students and teacher know what students understand and how can students develop deeper understanding?

*Seif, Elliott. *Era 3 Curriculum Websites*. Original, 3-18-11. May be duplicated, shared adapted and revised for educational purposes. Do not publish without permission of the author.

The following resources can help to learn more about Teaching for Understanding and use the approaches and the model:

<http://learnweb.harvard.edu/alps/tfu/index.cfm>

<http://pzweb.harvard.edu/research/TfU.htm>

<http://www.exploratorium.edu/IFI/resources/workshops/teachingforunderstanding.html>

http://www.newhorizons.org/strategies/understanding/front_understanding.htm

<http://www.ncset.org/publications/viewdesc.asp?id=1309>

<http://www.edutopia.org/inquiry-project-learning-research> (article focusing on deep understanding and collaborative methods)

Curriculum Mapping in a 21st Century World

Curriculum21

(From the website) “Curriculum 21” is the outgrowth of the work of a dynamic group of educators worldwide attempting to help colleagues transform curriculum and school designs to match the needs of 21st century learners. The impetus originated from the Curriculum Mapping work developed by Dr. Heidi Hayes Jacobs. As we examined maps emerging across the United States and overseas it was evident that curriculum and instruction remains dated although both students and teachers recognize the need to become current and forward thinking in our planning. The website is designed to help educators upgrade the curriculum and provide numerous resources to help do so.

Website: <http://www.curriculum21.com/home>

Project Design

Buck Institute for Education

In addition to numerous resources and information about project-based learning, the Buck Institute for Education website contains resources to help educators learn how to design projects.

Website: <http://pbl-online.org/>

Designing Advanced Courses

Independent Curriculum Group -

The Independent Curriculum Group “[is] part of a growing movement of leading college preparatory schools that emphasize site-based, teacher-generated curriculum for advanced courses.” The website highlights schools and curricula programs that promote rigorous advanced courses with engaged students, purposeful schools, and brain based learning.

Website: <http://www.independentcurriculum.org/index.php>

Helpful School Curriculum Resources

High Tech High

(From its website) High Tech High currently operates nine schools in San Diego County: one elementary school, three middle schools, and five high schools. All of these schools serve a diverse, lottery-selected student population; all embody the High Tech High design principles of personalization, adult world connection, common intellectual mission, and teacher as designer.

High Tech High has three design principles: *personalization*, *adult world connection*, and *common intellectual mission*. Responding directly to the needs of students, all three principles connect to the broad mission of preparation for the adult world. Moreover, all three call for structures and practices that schools do not now routinely employ. High Tech High has also created a more recent design principle, known as *teacher as designer*.

The design principles permeate every aspect of life at High Tech High: the small size of the school, the openness of the facilities, the personalization through advisory, the emphasis on integrated, project-based learning and student exhibitions, the requirement that all students complete internships in the community, and the provision of ample planning time for teacher teams during the work day.

Website: <http://www.hightechhigh.org>

Additional, multiple resources can be found at:

<http://www.hightechhigh.org/downloads/WinterResidency2010/>

Big Picture Schools

The philosophy of Big Picture focuses on educating “one student at a time” in a small learning atmosphere. True learning takes place when “each student is an active participant in his or her education, when a course of study is personalized by teachers, parents and mentors who know that student well, and when school-based learning is blended with outside experiences that heighten the student’s interest.” The school focuses on creating a rigorous learning situation relevant to students, around student interests, along with strong relationships with other adults and students. Teacher/advisors work with the same students for all four years of high school. Core tenets include: Learning in the real world, advisory and assessment, applied academics and assessment, college transition program, health and wellness, and travel opportunities.

The Big Picture schools curriculum is focused around five areas posed as questions:
Communication: “How do I take in and express ideas?”
Empirical Reasoning: “How do I prove it?”
Personal Qualities: “What do I bring to this process?”
Quantitative Reasoning: “How do I measure, compare or represent it?”
Social Reasoning: “What are other people’s perspectives on this?”

General Website: <http://www.bigpicture.org/>

More information about the five goal areas that frame the curricular approach:
<http://www.bigpicture.org/schools/learning-goals/>

The Core Knowledge Curriculum

The main objective of the Core Knowledge website is to increase the educational focus onto subject areas, content, and knowledge based learning at all grade levels. Currently, it seems to be the only movement in education that supports rigorous subject area learning at all levels. While much of the focus is on inculcating students with specific knowledge, the idea behind this website and movement is a strong one, because it is designed to strengthen the rigor of schools and focus learning around social studies, science, literature, the arts and other subjects. The website is a fount of information about this movement – a K-8 sequential curriculum that incorporates key learning from each subject area at all grade levels; sample units developed by teachers, articles and readings about the Core Knowledge movement. The Core Knowledge curriculum is a good starting point for revising learning at all levels even though Core Knowledge could do better in its focus on conceptual understanding within each subject, interdisciplinary and integrated studies, explicitly outlining the key skills that are needed to prepare students for future learning, and embedding core skills into the curriculum

Website: <http://www.coreknowledge.org>

