Designing Units of Instruction for Competency-Based Learning
To identify key elements and considerations of designing instructional units that promote competency-based learning
To be familiar with and able to use resources and materials to design units within a competency-based learning environment.
Agenda

Outcomes

Review Stages of Unit Design in a CBL system

Examine and reflect on a CBL unit

Understand Resources for Unit Design development
Competency-Based Learning Simplified
A Great Schools Partnership Learning Model

**Transcripts and Report Cards**
- **Cross-Curricular Graduation Standards**
  - 5–8 standards taught in all content areas
- **Content-Area Graduation Standards**
  - 5–8 standards for each content area

**Progress Reports**
- **Performance Indicators**
  - 5–10 indicators for each cross-curricular and content-area standard that move students toward competency and the achievement of graduation

**Teacher Feedback**
- **Learning Objectives**
  - Learning objectives guide the design of curriculum units that move students toward competency and the achievement of performance indicators

**Assessment Method**
- **Body of Evidence**
  - Students demonstrate achievement of standards through a body of evidence evaluated using common rubrics
- **Verification of Proficiency**
  - Students demonstrate achievement of content-area graduation standards through their aggregate performance on summative assessments over time
- **Summative Assessment**
  - Graded summative assessments are used to evaluate the achievement of performance indicators
- **Formative Assessment**
  - Ungraded formative assessments are used to evaluate student learning progress
From Standards to Units

- Standards
- Performance Indicators
- Scoring Criteria
- Curriculum Mapping
- Designing Summative Task
- Unit Design
- Instructional Design
- Instruction
- Formative Assessment
- Supports/Interventions
- Students attempt Summative Assessment
- Scoring-with criteria
- Reporting Learning
- Reflection + Refinement
- Supports/Interventions

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From Standards to Units

Standards

- Performance Indicators
- Scoring Criteria
- Curriculum Mapping
- Designing Summative Task
- Unit Design
- Instructional Design

Instruction

- Reporting, Reflection, Refinement
- Scoring-with criteria
- Reporting Learning
- Supports/Interventions
- Instruction, Feedback, Evaluation
- Students attempt Summative Assessment
- Formative Assessment

Supports/Interventions

- Reflection + Refinement
Turn and Talk…

What does unit design currently look like in your school?
Focus on Instruction

Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe provide a way to move from “covering the curriculum” to “creating curriculum” and understanding
Understanding by Design

How is designing a competency-based unit different from what I’m already doing?
Standards must be clear and agreed upon
Scoring Criteria must be established and agreed upon
Stages of “Traditional” Design

Planning and Implementation

- Design Relevant Instruction
  - learning experiences and formative feedback
- Determine Acceptable Evidence
  - How students will demonstrate learning
- Define Desired Results
  - What students will know and be able to do
Stages of Backward Design

Planning

- **Define Desired Results**: What students will know and be able to do
- **Determine Acceptable Evidence**: How students will demonstrate learning
- **Design Relevant Instruction**: learning experiences and formative feedback
Stages of Backward Design

Planning

Define Desired Results
- Graduation Standards
- Performance Indicators

Determine Acceptable Evidence
- Scoring Criteria
- Summative Assessments

Design Relevant Instruction
- Learning Experiences
- Formative Assessment

What students will know and be able to do

How students will demonstrate learning

Learning experiences and formative feedback
Define Desired Results

What students will know and be able to do

Determine Acceptable Evidence

How students will demonstrate learning

Design Relevant Instruction

Learning experiences and formative feedback

Stages of Backward Design

Planning

Implementation

Reflection
Unit Design

STAGE 1: Desired Results

STAGE 2: Evidence of Student Learning

STAGE 3: Instructional Design

- Learning Targets
- Performance Indicators
- Graduation Proficiencies
- Transferable Skills
## Stages of Unit Design

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<td>• Unpack indicators</td>
<td>• Sequence skills/knowledge</td>
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<td>How will I know/show</td>
<td>• Select/develop scoring criteria</td>
<td>• Identify points for formative assessments</td>
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## Unit Planning Template
### Definitions/Guidance

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<th>Teacher:</th>
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<td>Grade Level/Course:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximate length of unit:</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

- Brief narrative comprised of 2-4 sentences discussing the unit.

### Stage 1 - Desired Results

#### Guiding Principles (21st century cross-curricular skills):

#### Graduation Standards (content area standards of primary importance in this unit):

### Primary Performance Indicators

- Define essential knowledge and skills to be assessed in the summative assessment;
- Determine what you intend to teach and assess explicitly.

### Supporting Performance Indicators

- Define content and skills you intend to review or introduce;
- Are assessed only in formative ways.

### Understandings

- Reside at the heart of the discipline and involve "doing" the subject;
- Make sense of information and skills, and help students mentally organize and apply information;
- Help students develop perspective and empathy;
- Are transferrable across contexts, places and times.

### Essential Question(s)

- Stimulate students to engage in inquiry and extended thinking;
- Provide relevance;
- Set the stage for students and preview what the unit is about;
- Are derived from unit understandings;
- Help students articulate those understandings.

### Students will know...

- Learning expectations of the unit based on the primary performance indicators;
- Factual information, vocabulary, and basic concepts of the unit.

### Students will be able to...

- Identify skills or processes that comprise the targeted primary performance indicators;
- Integrate skills and knowledge, and apply in new situations.

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The Understanding by Design Guide to Creating High Quality Units by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, 2011, ASCD Alexandria, VA.


http://gradnyc.com/curriculum-alignment-project/

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Stage One
 Desired Results
### Stage One

**What is worth understanding?**

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<td>‣ What matters about what we are learning? ‣ Identify related standards and indicators ‣ Clarify what students will know and be able to do</td>
<td>‣ What do I need to learn and why ‣ What makes this important or useful?</td>
<td>‣ What is the essential question? ‣ What is the hook? ‣ What activity, task, reading, or video will build upon students’ interests and experiences?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STAGE 1: Desired Results

Unit Planning Template
Definitions/Guidance

- Unit Title:
- Teacher:
- Grade Level/Course:
- Approximate length of unit:
- Unit summary:
  - Brief narrative comprised of 2-4 sentences discussing the unit.

Stage 1 - Desired Results

Guiding Principles (21st century cross-curricular skills):
Graduation Standards (content area standards of primary importance in this unit):

Primary Performance Indicators

- Define essential knowledge and skills to be assessed in the summative assessment;
- Determine what you intend to teach and assess explicitly.

Supporting Performance Indicators

- Define content and skills you intend to review or introduce;
- Are assessed only in formative ways.
Enduring Understandings

• Are **more than facts** and discrete pieces of knowledge
• Are **about the ideas and meaning** that provide coherence to a set of facts
• Are about the **inferences we make** based on facts and knowledge
• Are about skills and knowledge that are **transferable**
• Are about **when and how to use what we know**
Essential Questions

- **Open ended**; thought-provoking; intellectually engaging
- Require **higher-order** thinking
- Highlight important, **transferable ideas**
- Raise **additional questions**
- **Require support** and justification—not yes/no
- **Can be revisited** over time
Hook

- **Connects** to the essential question/s
- Immerses students in **related questions/challenges** that require more than “book” knowledge to resolve
- Builds **student interest, engagement or curiosity**—through thought or experience
- Encourages students to access **prior knowledge**
- Reveals multiple **perspectives**
- Allows students to make **personal connections**
Stage 1

“Notice, Wish, Wonder”

Examine stage 1 of a sample unit

• What do you notice?
• What areas cause you to “wish”?
• What areas cause you to “wonder”?
Stage Two
Evidence + Assessment
## Stage Two

How will students show understanding?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Student Considerations</th>
<th>Instructional Planning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Select and develop scoring criteria</td>
<td>In what ways do I have choice over how I represent my learning?</td>
<td>Share and discuss quality work through exemplars and scoring criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Design summative assessments</td>
<td>What does quality work look like?</td>
<td>Identify what students already know.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How will I know what they already know? What will the pre-assessment entail?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Stage 2 - Evidence of Student Learning  
**Assessment Design**

### Scoring Criteria

- Are outlined in a scoring guide or rubric format aligned with primary performance indicators;
- Define levels of performance for what students should know and do (e.g., 1-6; exceeds, meets, partially meets, and does not meet);
- Identify the criteria for meeting proficiency first;
- Include student input to ensure student-friendly language and understanding;
- Is exemplified by student work samples that clarify levels of performance (i.e. What does “meets” look like using prior student work samples?).

### Summative Assessment

- Evaluates student progress in achieving the primary performance indicators;
- Addresses the essential question(s) in a thoughtful manner;
- Integrates the identified Guiding Principle(s) in the demonstration of the content performance indicators;
- Aligns to the expected depth of knowledge identified in the primary performance indicators;
- Provide differentiated entry points for students to demonstrate the performance indicators.

### Entry-level Assessment

Conduct an oral, written, or kinesthetic pre-assessment to determine students’ strengths, weaknesses, understandings, and misconceptions in order to inform instruction.

- Includes questions related to each of the primary performance indicators;
- Groups the questions or activities in relation to each performance indicator so that data clearly indicates knowledge or gaps in knowledge per indicator;
- Includes a continuum of questions that transition from simple to complex, concrete to abstract, and recall to open-ended.
**Compile Scoring Criteria**

Scoring criteria describe levels of proficiency for each performance indicator.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Indicators</th>
<th>Does Not Meet</th>
<th>Partially Meets</th>
<th>Meets</th>
<th>Exceeds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students will be able to develop appropriate research questions. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12-7)</td>
<td>I can <strong>list</strong> some specifics about a topic that would help develop my understanding</td>
<td>I can <strong>identify</strong> broad questions that are relevant to my studies and focus my research</td>
<td>I can <strong>construct</strong> open-ended questions that build on one another and require evidence and support</td>
<td>I can <strong>analyze</strong> my own research questions to refine them based on my earlier questions and learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Design Summative Assessment

9 Steps

1. Cluster similar performance indicators into potential “units”
2. Review scoring criteria for these performance indicators
3. Brainstorm tasks, products
4. Develop a list of potential tasks for students
5. Determine the most appropriate task
6. Review and finalize performance indicators
7. Build a rubric using the scoring criteria
8. Write assessment directions using language that is accessible
9. Conduct a final tuning
# Summative Assessment Task Design Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>WEAKER ASSESSMENTS</th>
<th>STRONGER ASSESSMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ALIGNMENT:</strong></td>
<td>Graduation standards and performance indicators are not identified</td>
<td>Graduation standards and performance indicators are clearly identified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How aligned is the assessment task to the graduation standards and performance indicators?</td>
<td>Task requires skills and knowledge not aligned to standards and indicators</td>
<td>Cognitive level of assessment task matches the level in the identified indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Content knowledge and skills required in assessment task match those identified in the indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Method of assessment matches the level of thinking in identified indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACCESSIBILITY:</strong></td>
<td>Expectations are undefined or unclear</td>
<td>Expectations of the assessment task are clear to students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How accessible is the assessment task to all students?</td>
<td>Levels of student performance are not identified</td>
<td>Scoring criteria clearly defines levels of student performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work habits are combined with academic performance</td>
<td>Work habits are clearly separated (and independently assessed) from performance on academic standards</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Task is not easily differentiated</td>
<td>Assessment task could easily be differentiated to ensure all students can achieve proficiency at a rigorous level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Task provides little or no opportunity for student choice</td>
<td>Assessment task allows students to pursue multiple pathways and still demonstrate proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Task engages students in a novel or interesting way, connecting to student interests</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>TRANSFER:</strong></td>
<td>Task is strictly content-based</td>
<td>Task lends itself to a real-world or simulated real-world product</td>
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<tr>
<td>How relevant is the assessment task to the real world?</td>
<td>Task is only for a classroom audience</td>
<td>Task is complex (interdisciplinary, incorporates transferable skills, and/or assesses multiple performance indicators)</td>
</tr>
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<td>Task can be accomplished using only one source or familiar sources</td>
<td>Task provides opportunity for students to engage with a school, community, or expert audience</td>
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<td>Task requires the use of multiple sources</td>
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<td>Task requires application in a new setting or with new information</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>RIGOR:</strong></td>
<td>Task only requires students to recall, summarize, or define</td>
<td>Task requires higher order thinking – application, analysis, evaluation or creation</td>
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<tr>
<td>How challenging is the task? Does it require students to apply, analyze, evaluate or create using what they have learned?</td>
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Pre-assess

- Determine what students *already know*
- Determine what students *can already do*
- Use this data to differentiate—*plan for extra supports/challenges*
Stage 2
“Notice, Wish, Wonder”

Examine stage 2 of a sample unit

• What do you notice?
• What areas cause you to “wish”?
• What areas cause you to “wonder”?
Stage Three
Instructional Design
## Stages of Unit Design

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STAGE 3: Instructional Design

Entry Event or Hook:

- Engages students’ interest in the content
- Encourages students to access prior knowledge
- Provides exemplars for evidence of learning
Hook

- **Connects** to the essential question/s
- Immerses students in related questions/challenges that require more than “book” knowledge to resolve
- Builds **student interest, engagement or curiosity** through thought or experience
- Encourages students to access **prior knowledge**
- Reveals multiple **perspectives**
- Allows students to make **personal connections**
### Learning Targets

Achievable chunks of learning that collectively reflect the performance indicators:
- What students should know and do
- Shared with students
- Monitored through formative feedback

### Formative Assessments

**For Teacher:**
- Keep the end in mind
- Provide insight to improve student achievement;
- Results inform feedback to students and instructional decisions

**For Students:**
- Allow them to understand track and reflect on learning growth
- Maintain engagement

### Learning Experiences

- Focus on learning target
- Vary in length
- Maximize engagement
- Differentiated based on formative assessment results
- Connect learning target(s) to the performance indicator(s) and essential questions
Where can students have voice and choice
Sequence Skills and Knowledge

• Review the **unpacked standards** from stage 1
• Consider what will be **challenging** for students—allocate multiple opportunities to learn and practice
• Address **Why?** and **So What?** early and often
• Think **whole-part-whole**
• Think **learn-do-reflect**
Identify Points for Formative Assessment

- Determine **key skills** that will lead students to demonstrating mastery of the indicators on the summative assessment.
- Determine **when** you want and need to check student performance levels so you can adjust and intervene.
What supports and extensions will ensure that all students learn?
What materials and activities will engage students?
Materials + Activities

• Identify materials and activities that help you “uncover” meaning. (These will likely related to your EQs.)
• Go beyond the text book (if you have a textbook)
• Use authentic materials in a variety of modes
• Design activities where students do the heavy lifting
• Design activities where the teacher coaches, questions and supports
Stage Three
“Notice, Wish, Wonder”

Examine stage 3 of a sample unit

• What do you notice?
• What areas cause you to “wish”?
• What areas cause you to “wonder”?
Stage Four
Resources + Reflection
STAGE 4: Resources and Reflection

Resources:

- Varied based on student learning styles and needs
- Range of media and print materials
- Authentic applications of disciplinary knowledge and skills
STAGE 4: Resources and Reflection

Reflection:

Student Reflection:
Informs learning process and achievement:

- Think about their learning (meta-cognition)
- Through the unit and after summative assessment
Teacher Reflection:
Informs instructional practice:

- Before, during and after unit implementation
- Unit Design Reflection Guide
- Tuning Protocol for feedback from colleagues
- Review student work
- Notations and revisions for future reference
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Modified Unit Tuning (Looking at the “whole” project / process)

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<th>“Cool” feedback</th>
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Modified Unit Tuning
Next Steps...

What are some next steps you could take with colleagues at your school?
Questions?
THANK YOU

Angela Hardy
Director of Coaching
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