



OLTD 502 - Reflection on Understanding by Design

I have always loved the idea of Understanding by Design. Planning with the end in mind seems like a logical progression, and I tried to do this on all of my units. However, I never had actually used the UbD framework to plan an activity, or gone through the steps of associating learning outcomes with learning activities.

We had a chance to revisit Understanding by Design on OLTD 502, and I was finally able to put the theory into practice. My project involved applying the UbD framework to the construction of a community mural. Keeping in mind that my ultimate goal is to engage groups of students online to spearhead projects in their own communities, I knew I had to keep the steps simple and clear, as well as make the learning meaningful. The schematic I ultimately designed would be a helpful tool for me to keep track of all the necessary activities: it involves the planning necessary and it links learning outcomes with goals in a colour-coded system.

This evidence supports the learning outcome: **Demonstrate basic competency with design and implementation within blended and online learning environments.**

My plan is to have this schematic available online, as well as each and every step in its own section. However, I will also ensure all necessary learning activities and resources are available for download in each section. After learning more about UbD, I have realized that while the step-by-step description I currently have online serves to document the steps I took to build a mural with my students, it does not achieve the goal of helping other teachers organize such a project, and in fact may be overwhelming to read through. My next step -- chunking the process and making new materials which will be available for download -- will help bridge this gap between what I think and see and do, and what other people think and see and do, if that makes sense. I think this need is applicable for every learning activity I plan online. In the past, I have made tutorials which were too long, but because we were using a blended learning model, I could encourage students to continue and to not

give up as I saw their eyes glazing over. But if tutorials are split in different portions, they will be easier to digest and students won't become tired; besides, finishing each section of the tutorial will provide students with a sense of completion and assurance that they are moving towards the end goal.

I want to prepare materials online so that anyone can easily follow, and so that the reader won't become tired or overwhelmed. Due to the fast-paced nature of the online environment, if something is hard to read, watch or follow, then the viewer quickly disconnects. There is a lot to think about when creating content, and it is even more crucial to ensure your teaching methods are lively, easy to go through and visually appealing if you are working on an online-only setting. Since my ultimate goal is to manage inquiry projects through an online setting, I have to consider the best way to bring these projects forward. This project really changed my thinking in terms of where I am and where I need to be, and I now know much more about what I need to change in my practice.