

Designing and developing a mural is one of the most collaborative activities that can happen in an art room. By using the Understanding by Design framework, we are able to see not only the important learning that occurs, but also the steps that are needed to accomplish this learning.

To help visualize the process, I have created a graphic explaining how each learning block contributes to our final goals.

The first step was identifying the most important learning goals to focus on when guiding students through a community project. I gave each one of these goals a specific colour. The following are the goals I have chosen to focus on:

1. Students will express what matters to them in individual art pieces which form a larger whole (blue).
2. Students will learn steps of mural painting including analysing the location and function of the mural (yellow).
3. Students become stronger communicators when explaining their ideas and preferences to teacher and peers, strengthening cooperation skills (green).
4. Students exercise their creative thinking and awareness, communicating their ideas and emotions through imagery (purple).
5. Students will experience meaning through the arts, and experience the strength that can be achieved working in a group (orange).

After I determined the main goals, the second step was to think of ways students could display their learning. After settling on a few guidelines, I added these assessment ideas to each of the goal bubbles. The assessment guidelines can be seen in red.

With these goals and assessment in mind, the third step was to organize a series of activities and colour-code these so that they would match my goals. For instance: "Students select a piece of the mural that speaks to them, based on shape and colour, and start sketching their ideas on a template corresponding to the piece" has three colours, because this single activity touches upon three of my goals (blue, yellow and purple).

Through the process, students will have several enriching experiences, providing me with ample opportunity to assess their learning and development of creative skills, communication skills and social skills. The greatest power of this process is the fact that the teacher takes the backstage, becoming a guide and facilitator; the final result is not predetermined, depending greatly on the ideas and interactions of the group.

See the resulting graphic on the next page.

Mural Project Through UbD Framework

