

# INITIATING UNDERSTANDING BY DESIGN: HOW NOT TO....

Ways to Kill UbD at the starting Date...

Actions for Starting UbD on the  
Right Foot

<p><b>1. Mandate that every teacher must use UbD for ALL of their planning (without sufficient training, on-going support, or some structured planning time).</b></p>	<p><i>Think big, but start small. Following UbD training, ask teachers to plan ONE unit per semester at the start. Encourage teachers to work with a colleague or team, and begin with a familiar unit topic. Also, provide some designated planning time (e.g., a staff development day or more).</i></p>
<p><b>2. Introduce UbD as this year's focus (suggesting that UbD can be understood and fully implemented in a year). In cases where a school or district does a "new thing" each year, staff are unlikely to invest too heavily since "this too shall pass."</b></p>	<p><i>Develop and publish a multi-year strategic plan that links your long term goals to UbD strengths, and show how UbD will be slowly implemented as part of the strategic plan.</i></p>
<p><b>3. Attempt to implement multiple initiatives simultaneously (e.g., UbD, Differentiated Instruction, Curriculum Mapping, Marzano's Strategies that Work)</b></p>	<p><i>Develop a multi-stage multi-year initiative to improve a current initiative via UbD (e.g., help people begin to see the need to improve their map categories, ask DI experimenters to focus on differentiating via Essential Questions.</i></p>
<p><b>4. Assume that staff understands the need for UbD and/or will welcome it.</b></p>	<p><i>Establish the need for a change before introducing a proposed change; make sure the staff sees UbD as an appropriate response to a need they recognize and "own."</i></p>
<p><b>5. Provide one introductory presentation on UbD and assume that teachers now have the knowledge and skill to implement UbD well.</b></p>	<p><i>Create a series of workshops for a small group of teachers (3 days) and have them develop a gourmet unit. Have them teach the unit and evaluate its impact on students. Expand staff development accordingly.</i></p>

<p><b>6. Provide UbD training for teachers, but not for school-based or district administrators.</b></p>	<p><i>Institute sustainable leadership. School-based or district administrators must be a significant partner in the training experience so that they can see and understand the sophistication of curriculum design attempted and support those being trained in its implementation. They must be trained at the same time as the staff.</i></p>
<p><b>7. Provide minimal UbD training for some teachers in a Train-the-Trainers program, then expect immediate and effective turn-key training of other staff.</b></p>	<p><i>Front load a Train-the-Trainers approach to curricular design change with ample time for preparation and commitment on the part of the teacher trainers. Some form of release time must be established to allow this process to move forward and affect the rest of the staff.</i></p>
<p><b>8. Train people in Stage 1 in year 1, Stage 2 in year 2, stage 3 in year 3- insuring that no useful results will occur for years.</b></p>	<p><i>Trained staff in the full design model so that at the end of training they will have constructed a “gourmet” unit ready to be taught and assessed. It is critical that the full program is delivered in a timely fashion.</i></p>
<p><b>9. Announce that UbD is the official way to plan lessons - even though UbD is not a lesson - plan system.</b></p>	<p><i>Recognize that UbD is not a lesson planning system. It is a course or unit design process. While one can evolve a method for teaching for understanding, the actual daily lesson plan will be very individualistic and resists uniformity.</i></p>
<p><b>10. Don't permit options/alternatives/different approaches to learning, trying, and using UbD.</b></p>	<p><i>“If you meet the Buddha on the road, Kill him.” While the design model is standardized, it must be adapted to the needs and culture of the district utilizing it. Therefore, recognize that teachers or curriculum design cadre can “enter” the UbD template at any place with any specialized or favorite lesson, assessment, strategy, content or skill. However, realize that once one enters through a particular “door” it is critical to complete the rest of the template.</i></p>