

What are Historical Curricular-Pedagogical Languages (CPP), and from these languages, what should we retain?

Flipped Classrooms and Understanding by Design (UbD) are two methodologies that exemplify the positivist-technical languages, emphasizing scientific and empirical learning theories. This approach prioritizes observable and replicable outcomes, often leading to a reliance on standardized testing in today's educational landscape. Over time, we've seen a shift from locally developed objectives to state-mandated standards, such as the TEKS, which focus on benchmarking, identifying gaps, and addressing student deficiencies.

Understanding by Design, developed by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe (2005), is a prominent framework that aligns with these principles. UbD emphasizes the importance of planning curriculum and instruction with a focus on desired learning outcomes. The core principle of UbD is "backward design," which encourages educators to start with the end in mind—specifically, the knowledge and skills students should acquire by the end of a unit or course. This approach contrasts with traditional methods that often begin with content delivery rather than clear learning goals. UbD outlines a three-stage process for effective curriculum design, reinforcing the positivist-technical approach.

The first stage, "Identify Desired Results," involves determining what students should know, understand, and be able to do by the end of the learning experience (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Educators must consider essential questions that will guide the learning, the enduring understandings they want students to retain, and the specific

knowledge and skills necessary for achieving these understandings. To prioritize content, educators can use filters to assess the significance of topics, such as their enduring value beyond the classroom, their centrality to the discipline, the need for deeper exploration, and their potential to engage students.

In the second stage, "Determine Acceptable Evidence," educators focus on how to assess whether students have achieved the desired outcomes (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). This stage involves considering the types of evidence that will demonstrate student understanding and proficiency. Key considerations include what assessments will provide valid evidence of learning, how to measure students' understanding of enduring concepts, and what performance tasks will allow students to apply their knowledge in authentic contexts. A balanced assessment system is essential, capturing a comprehensive picture of student learning over time rather than relying solely on traditional tests at the end of a unit.

The final stage, "Plan Learning Experiences and Instruction," allows educators to design the learning experiences and instructional strategies that will help students achieve the identified outcomes (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Key questions to guide this stage include what knowledge and skills students need to acquire, what instructional activities will best facilitate this learning, and how to ensure that the learning experiences are engaging and relevant. In this stage, educators select teaching methods, resources, and materials that align with the desired results and assessments, focusing on creating coherent and effective learning experiences that promote student understanding and interest. Overall, Understanding by Design provides a structured approach to curriculum development that emphasizes clarity of purpose and alignment

between goals, assessments, and instructional strategies, ultimately fostering meaningful learning experiences that prepare students for real-world applications of their knowledge.

While UbD aligns with positivist-technical principles by emphasizing a structured framework for curriculum design, I question the necessity of retaining state standards and standardized objectives. The backward design approach is valuable for its focus on desired outcomes, but it should not be limited to predetermined standards that may not account for the diverse needs and interests of students. Instead, exploring variations in objectives and assessments could lead to a more holistic and engaging educational experience. Ultimately, while the scientific approach inherent in UbD has its merits, it is essential to remain open to alternative methods that prioritize student agency and creativity in the learning process.

The flipped classroom is a teaching approach that reverses traditional instruction by delivering lectures outside of class, typically through videos, while using class time for problem-solving and application. This model shifts the teacher's role from lecturer to facilitator, promoting hands-on, student-driven learning. Benefits include increased student motivation, differentiated instruction, self-paced learning, mastery learning, enhanced collaboration, and immediate feedback. Initially popularized by Jonathan Bergmann and Aaron Sams in 2007, the flipped classroom has shown positive outcomes, especially for students with learning difficulties (Bergman, 2023). Research indicates that students in flipped classrooms experience higher satisfaction and improved learning, particularly among lower achievers. The model allows for tailored activities that meet diverse needs and encourages collaboration, helping students de-

velop social skills. Additionally, the flipped classroom provides immediate feedback, enabling teachers to address misunderstandings in real-time. This immediate interaction helps create a responsive learning environment where students can receive support as they navigate challenging concepts. While challenges such as access to technology exist, many schools have found creative solutions to ensure all students can participate in flipped learning (Altemueller & Lindquist, 2017).

Although the flipped classroom emphasizes constructivist learning principles, such as inquiry-based learning and student-centered activities, it still operates within a positivist-technical framework. The model is often implemented with the goal of improving student performance on standardized tests, indicating a continued focus on measurable outcomes. Additionally, the flipped classroom typically adheres to state standards and subject area divisions, reflecting the positivist emphasis on predetermined objectives and traditional academic structures.

Reflecting on my understanding of the positivist-technical framework, I initially viewed it as a stagnant approach—one that was established long ago and has not significantly evolved. However, my exploration of Understanding by Design (UbD) and the flipped classroom has revealed that there is indeed an evolution in their application. While both methodologies emphasize measurable outcomes and adhere to state standards, they also demonstrate a commitment to adapting and improving teaching practices.

With the strong interest in holistic approaches to education, particularly from constructivist perspectives that prioritize student-centered learning and inquiry-based methods, there is much potential for continuous improvement in educational practices

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to better meet the diverse needs of learners. I believe it is important to retain objectives within educational frameworks, even as we engage in discussions about whose objectives should guide instruction. The scientific approach that has driven advancements in other fields can similarly enhance educational practices. By integrating the structured methodologies of UbD and the flipped classroom, we can create a learning environment that values measurable outcomes while remaining open to innovation and responsiveness to the evolving needs of students. One thing I know is that I will try both of these in my classroom this school year.

References

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