

Reflection – Summary of Learning

There has been a lot of information in this class and many takeaways. The three most important new ideas that I came across were the Understand by Design ideas, the written assessments based on standards, and the resistance to not “hating/blaming my curriculum director/coordinator.” That last one made me reflect a lot after watching your video and seeing you explain how it is important to not be so hard on that particular person. I have generally supported her and let colleagues know my opinion of “be careful what you wish for.” Our school offers almost complete autonomy amongst teachers. With that said, we also have minimal support when trying to obtain new curriculum. I am smarter than her with math. My colleague, a social studies teacher, is smarter than her at social studies (and so on per subject). Why would I leave that decision up to her? I should and I do fight for the curriculum that I believe works. The problem is what happens with credit of success and failure? When a teacher at our school is successful, this admin promotes her involvement. When the teacher is less successful, this admin encourages fault unbeknownst to herself. I would still take her over a micromanager. So this is a conundrum.

The other two parts about UbD and Standards Assessment were new to me. I always as a math teacher look at assessment. But I’ve never designed a curriculum looking at the “why, what and how.” I look at the progress and data after the fact (quite successfully) but don’t plan it formally initially. I want to emphasize the formal part. I know this is one of my weaknesses as a teacher. I think about it, but don’t share that thought in lesson planning or unit planning. That is something this class has taught me to be more aware of and use as an excellent tool in teaching.

Something that really reinforced what I already knew was the original goal that this course focused on. The idea of how “we can maximize opportunities for students while adhering to state and national standards.” (Nelson, 2017) was not new to me but was solidified in this course. <http://coursecast.mnstate.edu/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=262c2136-92f3-4034-a1d5-0b47bf6d0980> As a math teacher, standards are more important than you know. I teach a summer school course involving multiple subjects and am noticing the major differences in Blaine’s standards for Algebra 2 vs. Chaska’s standards for the same course. How does one call them the same when 4 out of 10 units are incredibly different? They lead to different parts of math, yet they are considered the same math class! I get standards and appreciated them. If I ever get to a level of distinction, I will make this math standard part a main focus.