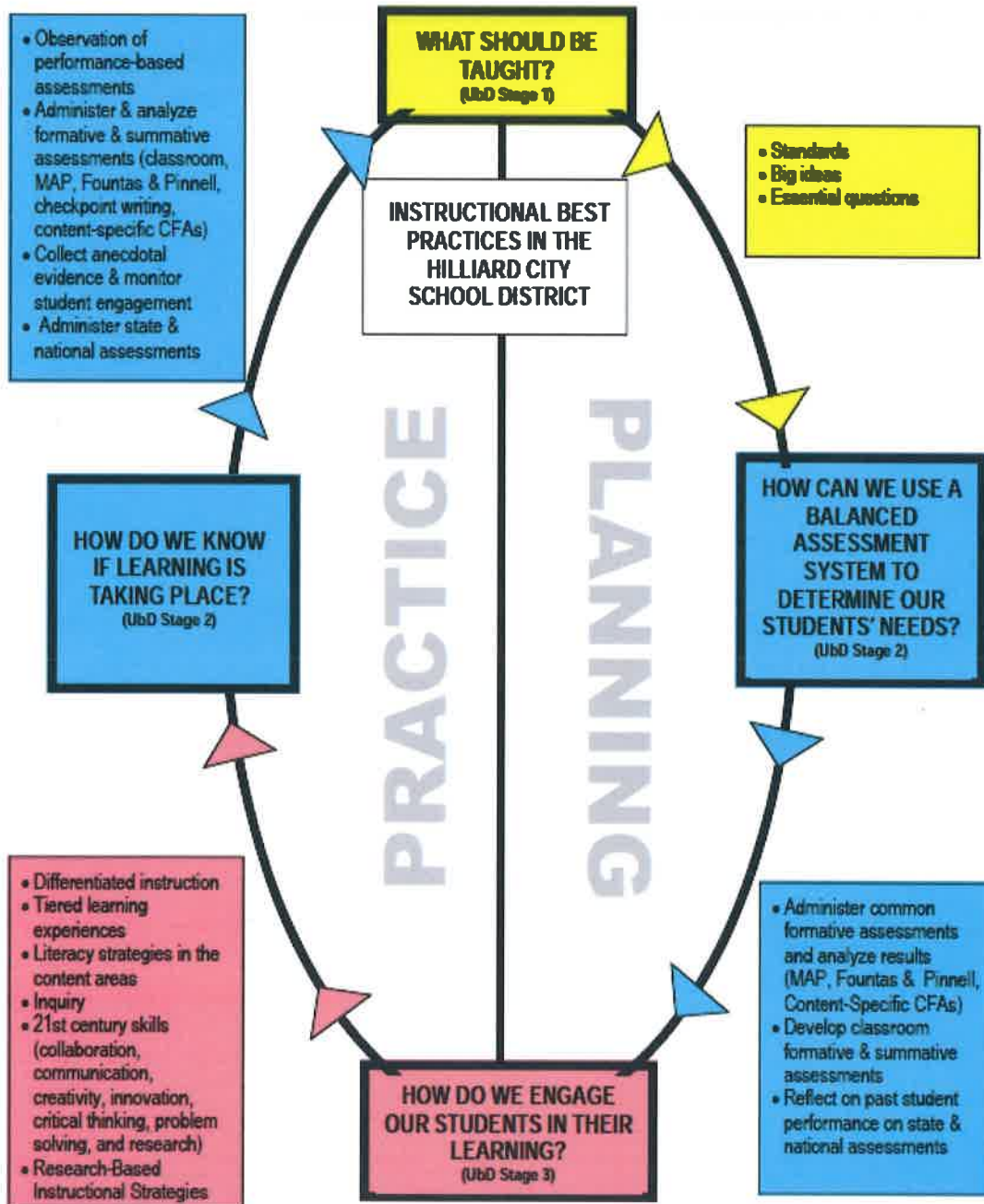


**Instructional Framework aligned to Understanding by Design**



## ***Beliefs about K-12 Curriculum:***

### **Understanding by Design**

The Curricula in the Hilliard City School District has been designed around the curriculum framework, *Understanding by Design* (Wiggins and McTighe, 1998). The *Understanding by Design* (UbD) approach is intended to deepen student understanding of important concepts and skills in such a way that this knowledge will endure over time. In contrast to the traditional way of designing curriculum (identifying objectives, planning lessons, and assessing results), the *Understanding by Design* framework uses a “backward design process” that identifies assessments before planning learning experiences and lessons. The “backwards design” process is set in three stages:

#### **Stage 1: Identify Desired Results: What should the students be able to know or do?**

- What understandings are desired?
- What essential questions will guide this unit and focus teaching/learning?
- What key knowledge and skills will students acquire as a result of this unit?

#### **Stage 2: Determine Acceptable Evidence: How will students demonstrate their understanding?**

- Through what authentic performance task(s) will students demonstrate understanding, knowledge, and skill?
- Through what prompts/academic problems, or test/quiz items will students demonstrate understanding, as well as more discrete knowledge and skill?
- Through what observations, work samples, etc. will students demonstrate understanding, knowledge, and skill?
- How will students reflect upon and self-assess their knowledge?

#### **Stage 3: Plan Learning Experiences and Instruction: What experiences will the students engage in to achieve desired results?**

- What sequences of teaching and learning experiences will equip students to develop and demonstrate the desired understandings?
- How will the design:
  - W= Help the students know where the unit is going?
  - H= How will the design *hook* the students and hold their interest?
  - E= How will the design *equip* the students, *explore* the issues, and *experience* key ideas?
  - R= How will the design provide built-in opportunities to *rethink* and *revise* their understandings and work.
  - E= How will the design allow students to *evaluate* their work?

A culminating performance task is designed to assess the degree to which students have achieved the desired results of a particular unit of study. The culminating performance task is also designed to provide students the opportunity to apply what they have learned in a unit in a real-world context.

UbD provides useful guidelines for designing a performance task. An authentic performance task has the following characteristics:

- It is realistic. It stimulates the way a person's knowledge and abilities are tested in the real world.
- It requires judgment and innovation. A student has to use knowledge and skills wisely and effectively to solve a real-world problem.
- It replicates or simulates the contexts in which adults are tested in the workplace, the community, or the home.
- It assesses the student's ability to efficiently and effectively use a variety of knowledge and skills to negotiate a complex task.

*Understanding by Design* uses the acronym ("GRASPS") to help teachers design performance task scenarios. The meaning of the GRASPS acronym is provided below:

- G** What is the goal of the task? What is it designed to assess?
- R** What real-world role will the student assume as he/she is performing the task?
- A** Who is the audience for the task?
- S** What is the situation that provides the context for the task?
- P** What is the product or performance that is required by the task?
- S** By what standards will the product or performance be judged?

McTighe and Wiggins (1999) suggest that teachers and curriculum designers identify the culminating performance task for a unit before they begin to develop a unit's learning activities. In this way, the goal of all learning activities is clear: to help all students develop the knowledge and skills to successfully complete the culminating performance task. This approach to curriculum design is often referred to as "beginning with the end in mind".

The UbD model strongly suggests that in performance-based instruction, we let students know- before they begin work on a performance task- what criteria will be used to assess the quality of a student's performance on that task. Thus, expectations are known to all, and there are "no surprises". For these reasons, a rubric or performance checklist should accompany the culminating performance task.