Weeks 13 - Nov 29 to Dec 5

Are we there yet?
It is time for a grand review! At this point the focus will be on one final round of response for each of you. You will have a single response partner, someone who has probably not yet looked carefully at your unit. You will serve as consultants for each other by asking important questions to help the designer improve the quality of the unit. Rather than suggesting lots of ways to ‘fix” each other’s units, you will focus on asking questions that truly help the designer reflect on and find ways to make important changes. So, I am looking for you to ask questions that reflect the theories and knowledge you have gained through readings, assignments and course discussions. You will do all the discussions in your posted discussion in Caucus – not via email.
I will be looking in on discussions and using them as a dipstick assessment for your understanding of the process of backward design.

I do realize that most of you do not feel like experts in this design process yet. That is fine. If you use the following steps to help you think through your response, your questions and thoughts should prove helpful:

- **Post your unit on Caucus by Wednesday, December 1.**
  You will find an individual Caucus item for each class member. Post yours in your slot. Add any introduction to your unit that you think will help your partner get a better picture. This might include your particular teaching circumstances, or details for teaching this unit and how it fits in with your curriculum, or any information that you think will be helpful. Also, post at least one question or concern you have about your unit.

- **Read your assigned partner’s unit carefully.** (See partner list below)
• **Ask “skinny” questions by Friday, December 3.** These are questions that clarify information that you need in order to understand the details of the unit. This step is not looking for any theoretical or deep level questioning; it is just for getting a clear understanding of what is happening, when and how. So, questions will be specific. For example, you might ask about the order of events in a lesson; or if groups will be used for an activity and if so, how big the groups will be; or you might need to know more details about the culminating task—who the audience is, what the criteria is, etc.

• **After you get your answers to your “skinny” questions, ask “fat” questions by December 6.** “Fat” questions ask the designer to look more deeply and thoughtfully at the unit. They might help the designer see flaws, notice missing pieces, realize a lack of alignment between standards, understandings, questions and tasks, etc. They are not questions with right or wrong answers, but like essential questions, open doorways. Possible examples: How will the culminating task help you tell if students have gained the enduring understandings? Will the scoring guide for your culminating task actually measure the validity of the students’ answers? Is the culminating task an authentic activity? How could it be more authentic? Is there a way the technology use could be more authentic? Use the unit scoring guide, posted in the Resources section; it will help you form your questions. Also, use the criteria for good integration of technology that you all came to some agreement on earlier. (Posted below) You will want to include some general discussion of the unit along with your questions, but the questions are really your focus.

• **Remember: IT IS NOT YOUR JOB TO FIX YOUR PARTNER’S UNIT.** It is your job to ask questions that lead the designer to think more deeply as they work on final revision. Do feel free, however, to discuss freely with your partner and ask more questions as they arise. I know that communicating on
Caucus can be difficult, and that this process would be much easier in person. Please give it your best shot.

- Because I am only asking you to look at one other unit, I will expect you to do thorough and careful work. I will use the reflective writing scoring guide, also in the Resources section, to assess your response work.
- It is imperative that you complete this process in a timely manner. You will need to be online several times this week. Please e-mail me as soon as possible if you are not getting any response from your partner.

**Response Partners:**
Shannon Smith and Linda Van Winkle
Alan Degener and Ron Snyder
Stephanie Denkins and Jennifer Smith
Tim Andrew and Michelle Barton
Amy Witt and Holly Debenham
Saundra Hudson and Dwayne Eager
Gar Powell and Brittany Hanson
Judy Fulp and Sabrina Sutton
Mike Hood and Victoria Woodward
Kathy Christopher responds to Fran March
Fran March responds to Karly Gundersen
Karly Gundersen responds to Kathy Christopher

**Group-created criteria for effective technology integration:**
Is technology use appropriate to the skills, needs and resources of the learning community?

Is technology use meaningful and authentic (not isolated from curriculum) and does it support a variety of learning styles and intelligences?
Does technology use promote student engagement in inquiry and critical thinking to develop understanding and meet educational goals?

Does technology use give students opportunities to connect with the outside world and to contribute their understandings and projects to a larger audience?

Does technology use by the learning community reflect appropriate norms of behavior (digital citizenship)?

*And finally, the end is in sight!* Your last assignment for this week is to revise your unit after reviewing the feedback from your response partner. You may still be revising your unit into the last week of class.

*Final directions for the next two weeks:*

So, go ahead and push on for the next two weeks.

- Post the latest draft of your unit in Caucus no later than *Wednesday, December 1* in the conference with your name. Please ask your partner for the kind of feedback you would like. Pose at least one question about your unit. It is easy to post your unit as a file in Caucus. Just hit the upload button above the text box and then select your unit from your browser.

- I expect that you will continue to work on Caucus at least two times a week, offering feedback to your partner.

*Coming Up Next Week:*

*Week of December 6:* This is the last week of class! This is a work week for you. You may continue to revise your unit and
complete it to your satisfaction. You will complete some self-assessments. You will also complete a final reflective writing that incorporates self-assessment. Details to follow.

**December 13:**

*ALL WORK DUE BY DECEMBER 13!*