

*This tool was created in conjunction with Jay McTighe and has been included in **Schooling by Design: An Action Tool (2008).***

Component	Addresses Problem of...	Strengthens System by...
<p>Mission-Related Accomplishments and Curricular Philosophy <i>Specifying the integrated accomplishments sought, indicative of transfer and habits of mind; the underlying beliefs about learning that the curriculum must embody.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of clarity about priorities • Treating the school Mission as an idealistic statement that has nothing to do with “our real work” • Idiosyncratic and personalized decision-making (e.g., “I have always done it this way.”) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing an agreed-upon Mission to clarify the larger aims of schooling • Establishing agreed-upon learning principles to guide instructional practices and curriculum design • Crafting consensus beliefs about learning to serve as the standards for making “depersonalized” educational decisions
<p>Understandings and Essential Questions Derived from Mission and Content Standards <i>Specifying the big ideas and recurring questions that should anchor the curriculum and shape how content is framed.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unprioritized “coverage” of discrete standards and benchmarks • Activity-driven teaching instead of a focus on the standards and important ideas of the disciplines • Treating the textbook as the syllabus rather than a resource to teach to the standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focusing teaching toward the standards • Helping students come to understand the “big ideas” of content • Engaging learners in genuine inquiry by exploring essential questions • Connecting discrete facts and skills around “big ideas” (“conceptual Velcro”)

<p>K-12 Curriculum Mapping <i>Showing how habits of mind, big ideas, essential questions and cornerstone assessments spiral through the curriculum, bringing intellectual coherence.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual teachers “doing their own thing” • Unnecessary redundancy in content teaching across grade levels • Important knowledge and skills “falling through the cracks” since 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulating a coherent Pre-K–12 curricular structure • Establishing a curriculum that spirals around “big ideas” and essential questions in the disciplines • Creating opportunities for making “natural” (i.e., not forced) cross-disciplinary connections • Identifying regular assessment points (i.e., cornerstone assessments) for gauging progress and guiding improvement actions
<p>Cornerstone Assessments and Collections of Evidence <i>Specific authentic tasks reflective of the key challenges and accomplishments in the disciplines, requiring transfer and habits of mind; collections of evidence in portfolios so that students graduate with a resume of accomplishments, not simply a collection of evidence.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on assessing discrete benchmarks (i.e., low-level knowledge and easily tested skills) • Fixation on the format of external, standardized tests • (i.e., “practice for test”) • The disconnect many students feel between work in school and “real life” • Difficulty in closing achievement gaps because of lack of student motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrations of the most valued, Mission-related learning targets • On-going measures of learning for gauging progress and guiding improvement efforts • Evidence of understanding through authentic, transfer performances • A vehicle for motivating students to produce significant work in the discipline • An authentic context for learning more specific facts and skills (i.e., “sideline drills” needed for playing “the game” effectively)

<p>Analytic and Longitudinal Rubrics <i>Common analytic rubrics for providing more consistent evaluation and specific feedback against goals; longitudinal benchmarks for gauging and reporting progress against long-term institutional and program goals.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No basis for judging learners’ progress in a consistent manner • Lack of clarity about what to do next to support achievement growth • Lack of consistent evaluation from teacher to teacher • Teachers’ grading based on different factors (e.g., achievement, work habits, progress) in ways that reduce the meaning of grades • Students and parents unclear how work will be judged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance benchmarks for judging learners’ progress in a consistent manner • A basis for assessing current performance levels and targeting “next steps” • Descriptions of the important dimensions in a product or performance • Specification of student performance for different levels of understanding, proficiency or quality • A basis for more consistent evaluation from teacher to teacher. • A basis for more meaningful “standards-based” grading and reporting • Students with specific performance targets and guides for assessing their own work
<p>anchors <i>Tangible examples of student work (with commentary) to illustrate various performance levels.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of clarity about evaluative criteria and performance standards • Inconsistent teacher evaluation of student products and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance standards • Models to assist teachers in understanding and consistently applying scoring criteria when evaluating student performance • Teachers with student examples for instructional use

	<p>performances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students and parents not understanding what “good” work looks like • Students unable to self-assess their performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students with clear targets and examples of excellent performance to motivate and guide their efforts • models to help students better understand and apply criteria when evaluating their own work
<p>Suggested Learning Activities, Teaching Strategies, and Resources <i>Including guidance and resources for teachers and strategic tools for learners.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing long lists of “stuff” that is related to the topic or focus of the learning • Using existing resources, activities, and strategies without evaluating whether or not they are effective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research-based strategies, resources, and activities most likely to support student learning • The basis for creating intelligent tools to support teachers and learners (e.g., reading strategies bookmark, poster of problem-solving heuristics)
<p>Diagnostic and Formative Assessments <i>Pre-assessments and ongoing checks to determine readiness levels, to reveal potential misconceptions and to gauge progress along the way.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers beginning to teach without knowing what the students already know and can do • Teachers moving on irrespective of results or need to re-teach • Failure to recognize persistent misconceptions that 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A basis for determining students’ prior knowledge (readiness) and revealing existing misconceptions • The information needed to plan needed differentiated instruction • On-going assessment information to guide instruction both for individual learners and for the overall program

	<p>students harbor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Teach, test, hope for the best.” • 	
<p>Suggestions for Differentiation <i>Specific suggestions for responding to learners’ differences in readiness, interests, and learning profile.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “One size fits all” teaching (i.e., doing the same activity with all learners, irrespective of differences in students’ readiness, learning profile and interests) • Students having no choice of learning process or product • Student strengths and needs rarely addressed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific ideas for tailoring instruction for students based on the given learning goal and the readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles • Resources (e.g., texts of varied reading levels) and strategies (e.g., tiered lessons) for responding to diverse needs of learners
<p>Troubleshooting Guide <i>Advice and tips for addressing predictable learning-related problems (e.g. misconceptions, performance weaknesses) and teaching predicaments (e.g. running out of</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers do not identify predictable rough spots (common mistakes, misconceptions, and misunderstandings) in their teaching • Students’ misunderstandings and errors are not revealed until the summative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of predictable rough spots (common mistakes, misconceptions, and misunderstandings) for specific topics and skill areas of subject areas • A basis for anticipating likely misunderstandings and student errors and focusing instruction to address these problems • Assistance for novice teachers based on the experience of veterans • A starting point for grade-level and

<i>time)</i>	assessments (if at all) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Novice teachers must “reinvent the wheel” and spend years coming to understand what the veterans already know	department staff conversations about student achievement and the “right teaching moves” to improve/ ameliorate areas of difficulty for the learners
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