

Understanding by Design and PBL

Big Ideas, Enduring Understandings, Essential Questions: How do these features of Understanding by Design, by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, fit with PBL? Easily. A project is an effective way to frame the UbD curriculum and instructional concepts with a focused Driving Question for students. For example:

Social Studies:

Big Idea = community

Enduring Understanding = communities are made up of interdependent parts, including people, government, businesses, and organizations

Essential Question = What is a healthy community?

DQ = How can we write stories to show what it means to live in a healthy community?

Science:

Big Idea = the Earth changes over time

Enduring Understanding = the Earth changes because of erosion, volcanoes, continental drift, and shifts in climate

Essential Question = How has the Earth changed?

DQ = What did the place where we live look like a million years ago?
(note: project product is to create an online museum exhibit)

As the examples show, the Driving Question sets students up to demonstrate that they understand the concepts.

Note: If you would like to include Big Ideas, Enduring Understandings, and Essential Questions on your Project Planning Form, add a row just below the one for the Driving Question.