

# Teaching for Understanding

## *Teaching & Learning Commons*

*Presentation*



# Teaching for Understanding

<b>Experimental</b>	Uses direct, active, hands-on concrete, engaging experiences.
<b>Reflective</b>	Has learners reflect on experiences and think about what they has learned.
<b>Authentic</b>	Uses content-rich, real ideas, events and material in purposeful context, useful, usable information.
<b>Social</b>	Uses social interaction and construction sharing, supports individual learning and thought.
<b>Collaborative</b>	Has cooperative learning, which allows for developing and learning outside the confines of competition
<b>Child-Centred</b>	Uses children's own interest, investigates their own questions, empowers the child
<b>Cognitive</b>	Uses higher-order thinking skills in conjunction with concepts to be understood. Children self-monitor their own thinking



<b>Developmental</b>	<b>Activities are adjusted for the needs of each child</b>
<b>Constructivist</b>	<b>Has children recreate knowledge and content to fit their own understanding</b>
<b>Psycholinguistic</b>	<b>Uses language as the primary tool for learning.</b>
<b>Activity Variety</b>	<b>Uses a variety of approaches, including thematic studies, collaborative group activities, learning logs, classroom workshop, conferences, centers.</b>



# Teaching for Understanding Reflection Checklist

YOU KNOW YOU ARE TEACHING FOR UNDERSTANDING  
WHEN ...

- ***The learning is generative:*** Instruction is focused around a few central topics
- The topics are personally significant for you and your students
- Students are actively engaged in their work.
- An atmosphere of genuine inquiry pervades the classroom.



# *The understanding goals are clear and explicit*

- Overarching goals or throughlines are explicitly stated and posted in the classroom.
- Goals for particular units are closely related to overarching goals.
- You and your students regularly discuss and reflect on unit-long and overarching goals to help students make the connection between what they are doing and why they are doing it.



# ***Students are working on performances of understanding almost constantly***

- Students work actively in varied formats: pursuing projects and reflecting alone, collaborating and conferencing in small groups, and interacting in whole groups
- Students can explain why they are doing what they are doing.
- You spend time coaching, conferencing, leading, participating in discussions, and sometimes lecturing.
- Students are thinking and making that thinking visible in the contexts of performances of understanding that challenge their misconceptions, stereotypes, and rigid thinking.
- The room is filled with student work, both finished and in process.
- Responsibility and authority for the work is shared between you and your students.



# *The assessment is ongoing*

- **Students engage in cycles of drafting, reflecting, critiquing, responding to, and revising their own and others' work.**
- **You and your students share responsibility for assessment.**
- **Everyone assesses work according to stated criteria and standards for quality, which are closely related to the understanding goals.**
- **Assessment is often casual, conversational, and spontaneous; periodically it is more formal, recorded, and planned.**
- **Responsibility and authority for the work is shared between you and your students.**



A grade one teacher collected well known proverbs. She gave each child in her class the first half of a proverb and asked them to come up with the remainder of the proverb.

- It's hard to believe these were actually done by grade one kids ("6" year-olds), because the last one is classic!
- Strike while the ..... insect is close.
- Never underestimate the power of..... ants.
- Don't bite the hand that..... looks dirty.
- Better to be safe than..... nch a grade 7 boy.
- If you lie down with dogs, you'll..... stink in the morning.
- It's always darkest before..... Daylight Saving Time.
- You can lead a horse to water but..... how?
- No news is..... impossible.
- A miss is as good as a..... Mr.
- You can't teach an old dog new..... maths.
- Love all, trust..... me.
- The pen is mightier than the..... pigs.
- An idle mind is..... the best way to relax.
- Where there's smoke there's..... pollution.
- Happy the bride who..... gets all the presents.
- A penny saved is..... .not much.
- Two's company, three's..... the Musketeers.
- Don't put off till tomorrow what..... you put on to go to bed.
- Laugh and the whole world laughs with you, cry and..... you have to blow your nose.
- There are none so blind as..... Stevie Wonder.
- Children should be seen and not..... smacked or grounded.
- If at first you don't succeed..... get new batteries.
- You get out of something only what you..... see in the picture on the box.
- When the blind leadeth the blind..... get out of the way.

And the favorite:

Better late than..... pregnant



# Thank You

[hansrajhr@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:hansrajhr@ukzn.ac.za)

