

# Teaching for Understanding in J.E. Burke's Desktop Publishing Course

**Overarching Understanding Goal:** *Students will come out of Desktop Publishing with both a critical eye that appreciates the design and presentation of publications and the ability to design, construct, and publish meaningful, self-reflective products.*

## Unit (Generative Topic): J.E. Burke Community Holiday Cards

This unit is designed to foster understanding of entry-level desktop publishing skills. Because the Community Holiday Cards are designed and produced by students for their community members, the unit relates to the concerns and experiences that occupy Burke students in their regular lives. The card project is designed to sustain students' interest in desktop publishing and to lead them to see connections between skills taught in class and real-life products. This unit is central to the discipline of desktop publishing because it provides a foundation for more sophisticated publication work. This unit is also designed to provide motivation for the teacher. Because the end result of the unit is a collection of original holiday cards designed and produced by students, and facilitated by the teacher, the public has tangible evidence of the type of meaningful learning occurring at the J.E. Burke High School.

UNDERSTANDING GOAL	PERFORMANCE OF UNDERSTANDING	ONGOING ASSESSMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Students will be able to distinguish between and make use of word processing, design, and illustration software as they apply to individual course projects.</li> <li>•Students will be able to combine their knowledge of basic design and layout skills with their creativity and their motivation to create more advanced products that they can use in their school and/or in their community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•<b>Word Processing:</b> Students will use Microsoft Word to:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Word process an individual letter to community businesses for a holiday card.</li> </ol> </li> <li>•<b>Layout and Design:</b> Students will use PageMaker to:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Set up specific margin and layout patterns for a community holiday card.</li> <li>2. Place text from Microsoft Word files into their holiday card templates.</li> <li>3. Enhance card layouts by creating shaded elements, placing clip art, and importing Illustrator files.</li> </ol> </li> <li>•<b>Illustration:</b> Students will use Illustrator to:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create unique pieces of art representative of a holiday theme and/or of the written message intended for the holiday card.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<p>Multiple Choice exams and other means of knowledge retention do not do justice to this type of meaningful learning. If the goal is to get the students to have such a facility with technology that they can literally "create" a product representative of what they have learned, the product ought to speak for itself. Assessment is never easy, yet some very tangible assessable products can be submitted by students throughout the course of each unit. By holding presentation and improvement sessions at the end of each production, students have the opportunity to self-assess and assess the work of their peers. At the same time, the teacher has the opportunity to highlight and assess the work of all students. This form of assessment is not final, rather it leads to generation of new and better ideas for the next project.</p>