

Backward Design: Introduction & Templates

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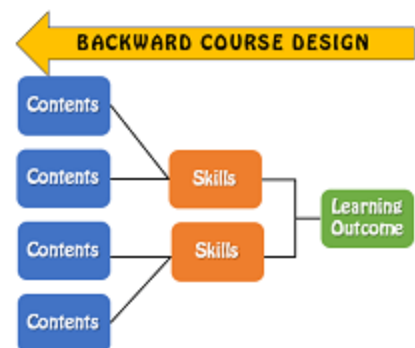


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[“Backward Design Fundamentals”](#) (web pages; [doc](#)) introduces "backward design," an approach to course planning in which instructors start by considering the core "big ideas"/essential skills and desired learning goals for their course (rather than the available textbook, resources, content, etc.).

Instructors then "work backward" from those goals, identifying the specific skills and knowledge students would need to fulfil the "big ideas"/essential skills required -- and what would be considered acceptable evidence/assessment allowing students to demonstrate their mastery of both the required knowledge and skills.



Only then do instructors consider the specific content, learning experiences, etc. that would allow students to develop the requisite knowledge, skill set, etc.

The source also provides templates to help instructors in this planning.

See also:

"Understanding by Design" (doc)

A. Overview: "What is Backward Design?"

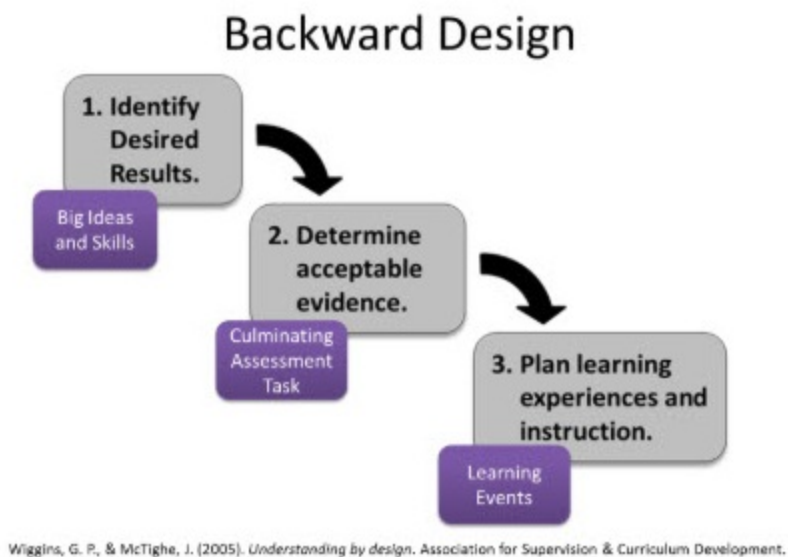
"The backward design approach consists of three general stages":

"Stage 1. Identify Desired Results: Goals"

"Stage 2. Determine Acceptable Evidence: Progress"

"Stage 3. Plan Learning Experiences and Instruction: Practice"

"This differs from a typical traditional course design as backward design flips activities and assessments":



B. "Stage 1: Identify Desired Results"

"Identify Desired Results = Goals"

"What should students know, understand, and be able to do?"

"What big ideas are worthy of understanding and implied in the established goals (e.g., content standards, curriculum objectives)?"

"What 'enduring' understandings are desired?" (See "[Backward Design: What Will Students Remember in 20 Years?](#)")

"What provocative questions are worth pursuing to guide student inquiry into these big ideas?"

"What specific knowledge and skills are targeted in the goals and needed for effective performance?"

"Stage 1: Desired Results"

"Established Goal(s): (G)"

"What relevant goals (course, program, learning, etc.) will this design address?"

"Understanding(s): (U)"

"Students will understand that..."

- "What are the 'big ideas?'"
- "What specific understandings about them are desired?"
- "What misunderstandings are predictable?"

"Essential Question(s): (Q)"

"What provocative questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?"

"Students will know... (K)"

"What key knowledge and skills will students acquire as a result of this unit?"

"Students will be able to... (S)"

"What should they eventually be able to do as a result of such knowledge?"

Wiggins, Grant, and Jay McTighe. "Understanding by Design: Overview of UbD and The Design Template." Ed. ASCD. 2003. File last modified on Sept. 2005. *PDF* file.

C. "Stage 2: Determine Acceptable Evidence"

"Determine Acceptable Evidence = Progress"

"How will we know if students have achieved the desired results and met the content standards?"

"How will we know that students *really* understand the identified big ideas?"

"What will we accept as evidence of proficiency?"

"Stage 2: Assessment Evidence"

"Performance Task(s): (T)"

"Through what authentic performance task(s) will students demonstrate the desired understandings?"

"By what criteria will 'performances of understanding' be judged?"

"Other Evidence: (OT)"

"Through what other evidence (e.g. quizzes, tests, observations, homework, etc.) will students demonstrate achievement of the desired results?"

"How will students reflect upon and self-assess their learning?"

Wiggins, Grant, and Jay McTighe. "Understanding by Design: Overview of UbD and The Design Template." Ed. ASCD. 2003. File last modified on Sept. 2005. *PDF* file.

D. "Stage 3: Plan Learning Experiences"

"Plan Learning Experiences and Instruction = Practice"

"The backward design orientation suggests that we think about our design in terms of the collected assessment evidence needed to document and validate that the desired results of Stage 1 have been achieved."

"With identified results and appropriate evidence of understanding in mind, it is now time to finalize a plan for the learning activities."

"What will need to be taught and coached, and how should it best be taught, in light of the performance goals?"

"What sequence of activity best suits the desired results?"

"How will we make learning both engaging *and* effective, given the goals and needed evidence?"

"Stage 3: Learning Plan"

"Learning Activities: (L)"

"W = [Where -] [H]elp the students know where the unit is going and what is expected?
Help the teacher

know where the students are coming from (prior knowledge, interests)?"

"H = Hook all students and hold their interest?"

"E = Equip students, help them experience the key ideas, and explore the issues?"

"R = Provide opportunities to rethink and revise their understandings and work?"

"E = [Evaluate -] [A]llow students to evaluate their work and its implications?"

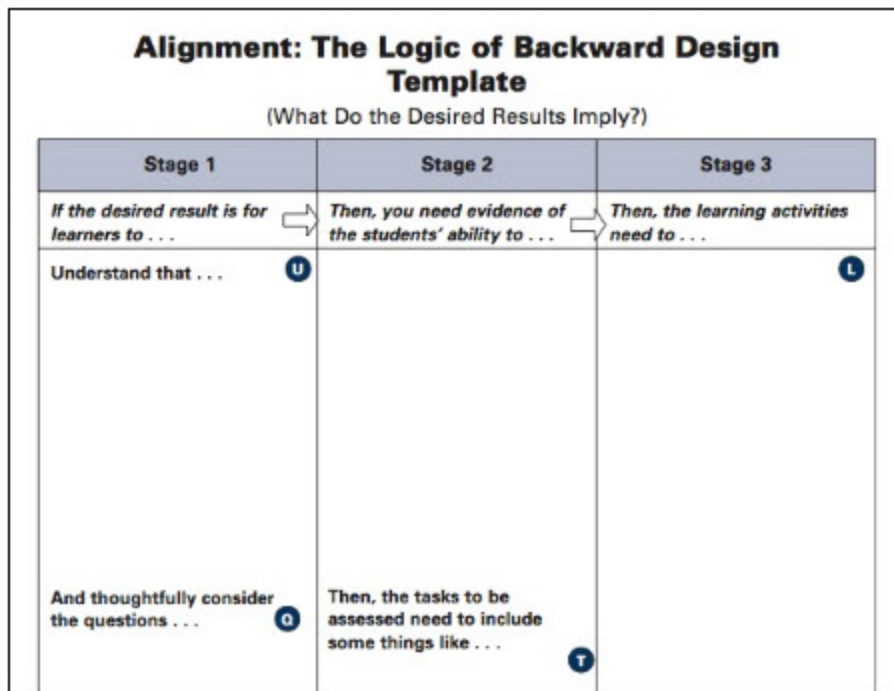
"T = [Tailor -] [Activities should] be tailored (personalized) to the different needs, interests, abilities of learners"

"O = [Organize] - [Activities should] be organized to maximize initial and sustained engagement as well as effective learning"

Wiggins, Grant, and Jay McTighe. "Understanding by Design: Overview of UbD and The Design Template." Ed. ASCD. 2003. File last modified on Sept. 2005. *PDF* file.

E. Template and Examples

1. "In order to help align your planning, consider the following graphic to guide you through your planning":



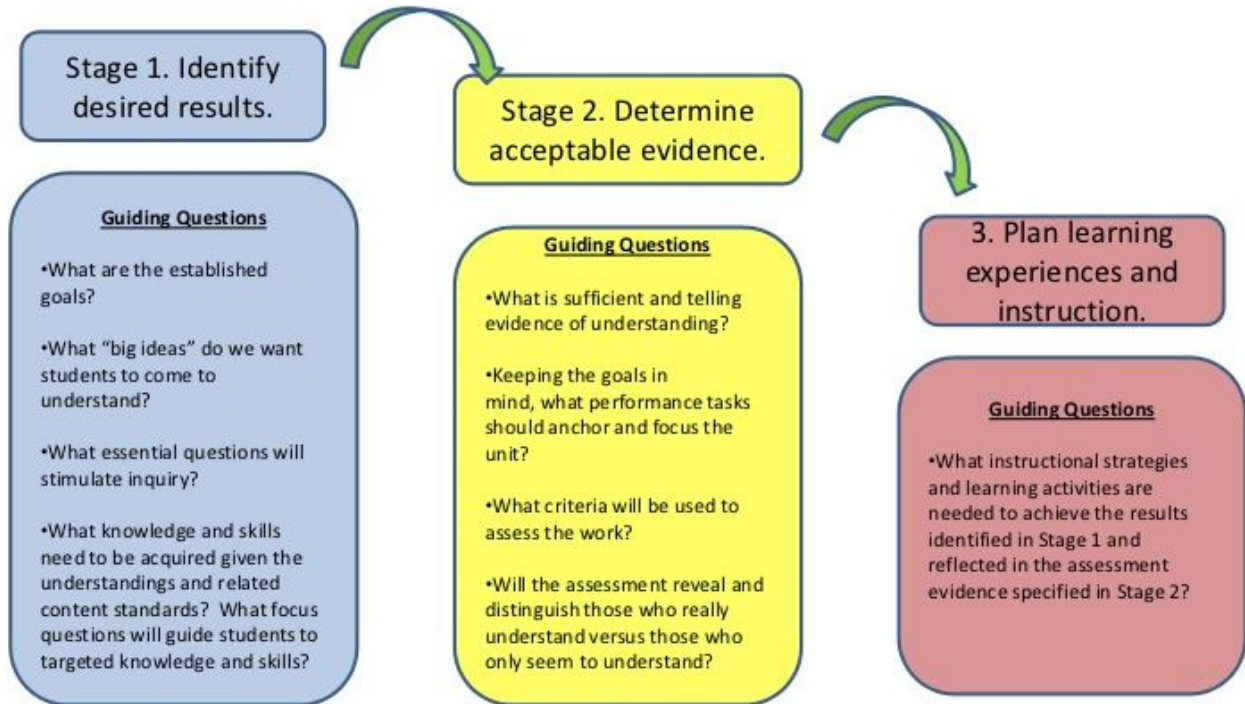
2. "[D]ownload the following templates" to design your own "backward-designed" classes and learning events:

[Page Template \(pdf\)](#)

Alternate template: [Backward Design Template with Descriptions \(doc\)](#)

F. UbD [Understanding by Design]: Stages of Backward Design

UbD: Stages of Backward Design



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