

The Logic of Backward Design

Making sense of “Understanding by Design”(UbD)

Identify Desired Results (UbD)

- Select standard(s) to be address
- “group” standards to emphasize “big ideas”
- separate significant content elements from insignificant content elements

Determine Acceptable Evidence (UbD)

- Determine what students will need to do to demonstrate proficient and/or advanced understanding of the standard(s)?
- create challenging situations where students test their knowledge by solving problems, building products and giving performances or writing reports that synthesize thorough analysis of a topic, a concept or an idea

Plan Learning Experiences and Instruction (UbD)

- Plan teaching and learning experiences (unit and lessons) that will equip students to demonstrate understanding of the targeted standard(s).
- Frame big ideas of the content through the use of essential questions at the beginning of a unit and guide learning. (“Use of higher order questions that require students to go beyond simple recall and engage in more sophisticated thinking-asking for responses to these questions before instruction activates prior knowledge and focuses attention and results in better learning”)
- Create a rubric to instruct students and target essential understandings. (assessments of understanding call for students to apply their learning in authentic contexts and explain or justify their work.)
- Present students with required performance/role that will be used to assess their understanding and provide a purpose for learning as well as help to focus instruction.
- As you plan your unit, consider the following questions:
 - How will the unit...
 - connect to the students’ prior knowledge?
 - address targeted standards?

- encourage critical thinking skills?
- meet the needs of diverse learners?
- align assessments to targeted standards?

Challenges Implementing Backwards Design

- **Time**-limited time spent training staff for a complete understanding of the process.
- **Training**-making the shift from teaching facts and covering content/moving from coverage to uncoverage
- **Support**-on-going feedback for teachers while completing a unit design + time for questions and peer review (teacher leaders.) + professional development