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## Why and How Backward Design?

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# Why Backward Design?

Backward design is a process that focuses on assessment first and instructional activities last. It shifts teacher perspectives. Traditional curriculum design often begins with really interesting books or activities we want to teach or are required to cover. We then design a curriculum, often on the go and then decide on some type of assessment at the end. Backward design forces teachers to look at the big picture with the end goals in mind. In backward planning teachers set the vision or the essential understanding of their curriculum or unit, decide how students will provide evidence of their learning, and finally design instructional activities to help kids learn what is needed to be successful.

# Deconstructing Backward Design:

## Backward Design

Begin with the end in mind.
and execute

Develop a clear understanding

of where you want to go.

Map out the steps to get you there.

(vb) To have purposes and intentions; to pla

--Oxford English Dictionary

| Backward Design Stages | | Action steps to refocus the conversation and re-vision an ELA program. |
|---|---|---|
| **<u>Stage 1:</u> Identify Desired Results**<br>What "enduring" understandings are desired?<br>What should students know, understand, and be able to<br>do?<br>What is worth understanding? | Ø | __Set the vision. Focus on the big ideas.<br>__Create a shared vision.<br>__Departmental activities to focus on:<br>__Enduring Understandings<br>__Standards (national, state, district)<br>__Essential Questions |
| **<u>Stage 2:</u> Determine Acceptable Evidence of Learning**<br>How will we know if students have achieved the desired results and met the standards? What will we accept as evidence of student understanding and proficiency? | Ø | __Determine how students demonstrate<br>their knowledge.<br>__Focus on assessment before designing<br>the learning activities.<br>__Expand the assessment continuum. |
| **<u>Stage 3:</u> Design Learning Experiences & Instruction** | Ø | __Plan instructional activities.<br>__Share best practice.<br>__Build in collaboration.<br>__Ensure success for all learners. |

**"I always know where I'm going as I teach, because I've already been there in my planning process."**

**----Stacy Irvin, Highland Middle math teacher**