



Thinking in Reverse: Using Backwards Design in AFNR Course Planning

Intended Audience: Illinois Agricultural Educators

Date of Presentation: June 16, 2021

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The following learning plan has been developed using the principles of backwards design as described in *Understanding by Design (UbD)*. For an expanded look at UbD, please refer to the AFNR Teacher Guide provided by the Department of CTE & Innovation at the State Board of Education.

Learning Preview

Feel as though your lessons, courses, and assessments are lacking? Feel like some days you are simply “covering” information or perhaps exhausting yourself trying to get students to have fun with the lesson? You are not alone! Even the best teachers fall into this situation from time to time, but the answer is in the beauty of intentional curricular design using the backwards planning process. After a brief introduction to the key concepts, workshop participants model the backwards design process by learning while they work together on a shared unit, lesson, or course!

Big Ideas

Big ideas represent major themes of the learning plan. These ideas may be repeated or revisited throughout the learning experience to enhance and deepen understanding. See table below.

Big Idea 1	<i>Backwards design is an instructional design process comprised of three key stages: identify desired results, determine acceptable evidence, and plan learning experiences and instruction accordingly. (Understanding by Design, Wiggins & McTighe)</i>
Big Idea 2	<i>The Understanding by Design (UbD) Template, version 2.0, is a dynamic, adaptable framework that guides the educator in the Backwards Design process. This template can be used to design instructional from various starting points.</i>
Big Idea 3	<i>Developing a unit sketch that models the three stages of Backwards Design and uses the UbD Template allows educators to analyze the logic, sequence, and elements of a unit before planning specific details or activities.</i>

Learning Objectives

	<i>Audience will know...</i>	<i>Audience will be able to...</i>
Big Idea 1	<p>1. UbD is a curriculum-planning framework, not a prescriptive program.</p> <p>2. UbD focuses on helping students come to an understanding of important ideas and transfer their learning to new situations.</p> <p>3. The three stages of backwards design are: identify desired results, determine acceptable evidence, and plan learning experiences and instruction accordingly.</p>	<p><i>This space left intentionally blank.</i></p>
Big Idea 2	<p>4. The UbD Template is a tool that guides backward design and focuses a unit plan on the goal of understanding (as opposed to “coverage” or activities).</p> <p>5. Using the three-stage design process make it more likely that unit goals, assessments, and instructional plans are coherent and aligned.</p> <p>6. Backward design is a way of thinking; it is not about filling in boxes on a template.</p>	
Big Idea 3	<p>7. Sketching a unit in all three stages enables designers to quickly experiences the logic of backward design and its power.</p> <p>8. A backward-design template enables designers to efficiently check for unit alignment, which is key to all high quality-unit design.</p>	

Essential Questions

1. What challenges can teachers face when designing instructional units?
2. How does your current process of designing curriculum compare to the backwards design stages?
3. What are some ways to quickly determine if preformed curriculum is designed in the UbD format?
4. How can we adapt curricular resources to be more aligned to UbD?
5. Does the UbD template work in all situations? How can it be adapted to meet different needs?
6. What courses or content naturally lend themselves to a UbD approach? Explain.

Learning Tasks

- ✓ Assign workshop participants into workable small groups of 3-5 teachers.
- ✓ Ensure workshop participants have all necessary materials from the *Needs Checklist*

- ✓ **Module 1. The Big Ideas of UbD**
 - Play [Video Presentation Understanding and Design](#)
 - Discuss Essential Questions 1 and 2 in small groups for no more than 5 minutes.

- ✓ **Module 2. The UbD Template**
 - Play [Video Presentation UbD Template](#)
 - Complete [Activity 2.1 Examples of Design](#)
 - Discuss Essential Questions 3 and 4 in small groups for no more than 5 minutes.

- ✓ **Module 3. Developing an Initial Unit Sketch**
 - Play [Video Presentation Initial Plans](#)
 - Complete [Activity 3.1 Ready, Set, Reverse!](#)
 - While working on Activity 3.1, discuss Essential Questions 5 and 6 in small groups.

- ✓ Play [Backwards Design Workshop Conclusion Video](#)

Materials and Systems

Presentations

[Video 1. Understanding and Design](#) (Click  to View)

[Video 2. UbD Template](#) (Click  to View)

[Video 3. Initial Plans](#) (Click  to View)

[Video 4. Workshop Conclusion](#) (Click  to View)

Audience Activities

[Activity 2.1 Examples of Design](#)  

[Activity 3.1 Ready, Set, Reverse!](#)  

Needs Checklist

Unit or Lesson for Revision (Teacher Provides)

Laptop or Tablet with Internet Access (Teacher Provides)

Note Taking Materials (Teacher Provides)

References

1. Wiggins, G. P., & McTighe, J. (2011). *The understanding by design guide to creating high-quality units*. ASCD. ([Click to Purchase Original Text](#))
2. AFNR Teacher Guide to Understanding by Design. ISBE. ([Click here for Original Text](#))