USING BACKWARD DESIGN IN CANVAS TO STIMULATE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN CLASS

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Overview of Backward Design

As instruction design trends shift toward focusing on learning outcomes, the Backward Design model of course design has gained prominence. Rather than beginning the course development process by designing instructional strategies, Backward Design starts by identifying learning outcomes and assessment methods.

Stage 1: Identify Desired Results

To achieve effective instruction, course design should start by clearly identifying learning objectives. The driving question at this stage is: what is worthy and requiring of understanding? This stage often requires narrowing the scope of what can be covered in a course by filtering out those concepts or objectives that "clutter the curriculum" to allow students to master the most important concepts without overburdening them too many ideas at once. As criteria, or filters, to help select the ideas to teach, you might look at each objective and consider to what extent does the idea, topic, or process: (1) represents a "big idea" having enduring value beyond the classroom (see also Big Ideas and Threshold Concepts); (2) resides at the heart of the discipline; (3) requires uncoverage; and (4) offers potential for engaging students.

Stage 2: Determine Acceptable Evidence

The next step is to identify how to know whether students have achieved the desired results. The driving question at this stage is: what counts as evidence of understanding? Consider a range of assessment methods, such as projects, portfolios, task performance, and papers, not just quizzes and tests. See also Evaluation of Learning and Assessment Strategies. Completing this stage will ensure that the final course design accomplishes the task of "anchoring instruction in credible and educationally vital evidence of the desired understandings."1

Stage 3: Plan Learning Experiences and Instruction

The final step is to plan instructional activities that will help students achieve the desired results and prepare them to demonstrate their learning. The driving question at this stage is: what learning experiences and teaching strategies promote understanding, interest, and excellence? Completing this stage will ensure that the final course design accomplishes the task of ensuring that "coherent learning experiences and teaching will evoke and develop the desired understandings, promote interest, and make excellent performance more likely."

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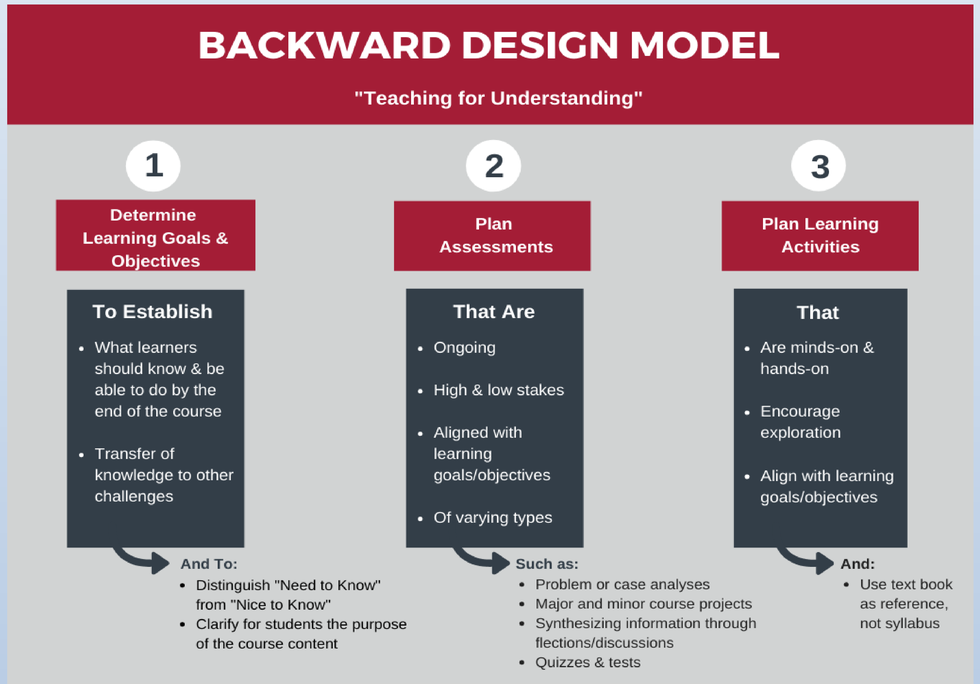

Resources

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Findings from CANVAS Usage

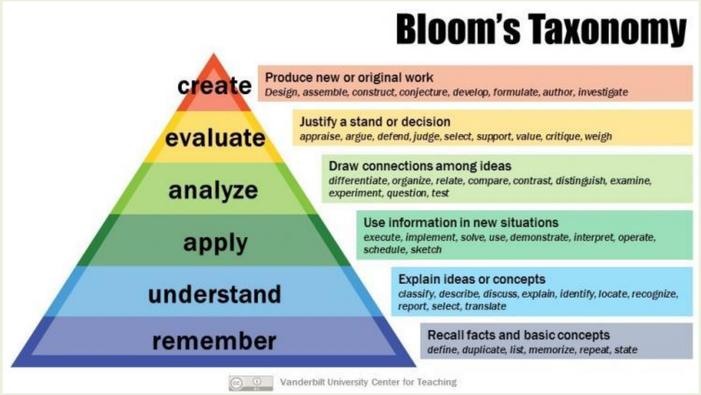
The focus of using backward design and incorporating materials on CANVAS was to ensure and improve student engagement and motivation with course materials.

Improving Student Motivation

Incorporate WHERETO in CANVAS Designed-Materials (Modules)

W - Ensure the students know **WHERE** the module is headed and **WHY**
H - **HOOK** students in the beginning; **HOLD** their attention throughout
E - **EQUIP** students with necessary experiences, tools, knowledge, and know-how to meet performance goals/course and program outcomes
R - Provide students with numerous opportunities to **RETHINK** their big ideas, **REFLECT** on progress, and **REVISE** their work
E - Build in opportunities for students to **EVALUATE** progress and self-assess
T - Be **TAILORED** to reflect individual talents, interests, styles, and needs
O - Be **ORGANIZED** to optimize deep understanding, not superficial coverage

Ensuring Greater Student Inclusivity



Ensuring Impactful Practices

G - Goal (What task do I want the students to achieve?)
R - Role (What's the student's role in the task?)
A - Audience (Who is the student's target audience?)
S - Situation (What's the context? The challenge?)
P - Performance (What will students create/develop?)
S - Standards (On what criteria will they be judged?)

Integrating Material with Real-World Outcomes

- Contextualize learning and course design to a real-world situation.
- Require students to use judgment and innovation.
- Call for exploration of the subject like a professional in the field.
- Replicate challenging situations in which people are truly "tested" in life and work.
- Compel students to use a repertoire of knowledge and skill to negotiate a task
- Allow opportunities to rehearse, practice, consult resources, get feedback, and refine performance (opportunities for review, reflection, and repetition).