Course Mapping: Backward Design

Backward course design, a well-known course design framework, can be used to create a course map and help us structure the course and think about what students will learn in a systematic way. The figure illustrates three stages of backward design:

1. **Identify desired results of learning: Establish learning outcomes**
   In this first stage, we ask ourselves what students should know and be able to do at the end of the course. What attitudes, skills and behaviors should students develop during the course? By beginning with the end goals in mind, we focus on what we want students to learn (as opposed to what content we want to teach); this focus puts student learning, not content transmission, at the center of our design process.

2. **Determine acceptable evidence that results were achieved: Select assessment strategies**
   Next, we ask ourselves how students and instructors should determine how they know they are learning. What constitutes evidence of learning during the course? How will students know if they are meeting the learning outcomes? When we begin with the end goals in mind, we can use them as a reference point for determining the type of evidence to gather about student learning.

3. **Plan learning and instruction: Select activities and resources**
   Finally, we ask ourselves what teaching strategies and activities will prepare students to achieve the learning outcomes. What kinds of activities will students do to help them meet the learning outcomes? What kinds of readings, videos, podcasts, etc. will students use to complete the assessments? By beginning with the end goals in mind, we can use them as a reference point for selecting activities and resources.

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1 Retrieved from Loyola University, Faculty Center for Ignatian Pedagogy, [https://www.luc.edu/fcip/coursedesignfacilitation/coursemappingbackwarddesign/](https://www.luc.edu/fcip/coursedesignfacilitation/coursemappingbackwarddesign/)
3 Retrieved from Center for Education Innovation, [http://cei.ust.hk/learner-centered-course-design](http://cei.ust.hk/learner-centered-course-design)