Let’s Take a Step Back(ward)!

Backward Design for Online & Distance Learning
MaFLA Core Practices

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Looking through the lens of Backward Design:
The key organizing principle behind planning & teaching for proficiency
What is BD?

“In backward planning, also called **backward design**, the teacher plans a unit or lesson by first identifying the desired end task or product, then working in reverse to identify the prerequisite learning tasks and benchmark assessments.”

Annenberg Teaching Foreign Language Workshop

https://www.learner.org/series/teaching-foreign-languages-k-12-a-library-of-classroom-practices/
Three core principles of Backward Design:

1. “Identify desired results”
   *What should students know and be able to do?*

2. “Determine acceptable evidence”
   *How can students show me what they can do?*

3. “Plan learning experiences and instruction”
   *What will it look like in the classroom?*
   *What are the best practices to get the results I want?*

*Wiggins and McTighe*
Three core principles of Backward Design:

1. Sequenced, realistic and attainable learning goals
2. Performance assessments that address those goals
3. Teaching and learning that aims for performance

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Three core principles of Backward Design:

1. Sequenced, realistic and attainable learning goals
2. Performance assessments that address those goals
3. Teaching and learning that *aims for performance*

*Wiggins and McTighe*
Initially, this was really hard for me!

“LET ME WRAP MY HEAD AROUND IT...”

https://dribbble.com/shots/2674399--Let-me-wrap-my-head-around-it
Why do we need goals? objectives? targets?

Yogi Berra:

If you don’t know where you’re going, you’ll end up someplace else.
BD felt... well, *backwards*!

Wait, you want me to put my classroom practice LAST?!
The BD cycle:

- Curricular goals
- Teaching & learning
- Performance assessment
Why now?!? Don’t we have enough on our plates already?

Our BD mantra: Keeping the end in mind
Or if you prefer...

![Keep Calm and Carry On](https://i.imgur.com/3.png)
First step in the BD cycle: Curricular goals

Identify desired results

Performance objectives: What they are...

- Concrete and observable: pass the Watch me / Show me test
- = I can! statements
- Reasonable and attainable: in the context of SLA reality

Performance objectives: And what they are not...

- A set of linguistic structures – grammar
- A corpus of lexical items – vocabulary

GOALS and TOOLS – an essential distinction
Curricular goals: What’s the difference?

A
- family and friends
- to be/to have
- briefly describe people
- family vocab
- ask and answer q’s about family members

B
- talk about future plans
- going to
- a dream vacation

C
- places
- free time
- to like/dislike
- ask and answer q’s about preferences
Our department’s *I can* statements

**Leçons 5 & 6**

**Objectives:** By the end of this unit, you should be able to perform the following tasks in written and/or spoken French:

1) Talking about FAMILY
   - list family members
   - ask and answer questions on make-up of family
   - describe people
   - express ownership/possession

2) Talking about ACTIVITIES
   - state and ask about future plans
   - state and ask about desires and abilities
   - issue simple invitations to do an activity
   - describe habitual or routine activities

3) Talking about HEALTH
   - identify basic body parts
   - express pain/discomfort with body parts

4) Asking and answering QUESTIONS
   - ask simple questions on the above familiar topics
Second step in the BD cycle: Performance Assessment

Determine acceptable evidence

A key reminder:

Feedback & Reflection

Assessment

Testing

Standardized testing

Formative vs. Summative
Second step in the BD cycle: Performance Assessment

Determine acceptable evidence

How students will show what they are able to do

• Directly linked to the performance objectives (I can)
• Mirrors instructional practice
• Include incentives to level up
• Address all communicative modes
Third step in the BD cycle: Instructional Practice

Plan learning experiences and instruction

What will it look like in our classrooms?
Third step in the BD cycle: Instructional Practice

Plan learning experiences and instruction

What will it look like in our classrooms?
What will it look like in our teaching & learning?

• Exposure to language in context: comprehensible input
• Highlighting necessary structures/vocabulary in context: targeted input
• Scaffolded language production: learner output that levels up
• Rehearsal for performance: mirror of assessments to come
Lessons learned in my career:
1. Not all games are effective
   Games for games’ sake
2. Not all tech/apps are effective
   Tech for tech’s sake

Recent application:
Not all online activities are effective!
Even when services are generously offered FREE.

Because something is possible does not mean that it is desirable.
Comprehensible Input at I+1

We can help students access:

1. Authentic materials
   - Infographics
   - YouTube (EdPuzzle)
   - Podcasts

2. Create recordings/supports
   - Jing / Screencast-O-matic
Output: Scaffolded language production

We can help students communicate:

1. With strategic support:
   • Postings: adapting our Word Walls
   • Sentence Frames / starters / formulas
   • Graphic organizers
   • Manipulatives (drag-and-drop)
   • Incentives to level-up
In all three modes of communication?

Interpersonal is the tricky one!

1. Online forums:
   • Initial presentational piece
   • Reaction to peers’ content
   • Follow-up questions

2. Zoom break-out rooms
   • Specific task
   • Reporting phase
The BD cycle:

- Curricular goals
- Inquiry
- Teaching & learning
- Performance assessment
Q & A
Thank you!
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