

Backwards Planning: From Standards to Curriculum
Presentation Notes and Activity

Slide #	Notes
1	Though most teachers have heard of backwards planning, many do not take advantage of the process for both improved teaching and the superior information it provides about student mastery of standards.
2	Very often veteran teachers have cabinets full of activities for a variety of topics. We tend to rifle through the cabinet and select the activities we like the best, and string them together under a general topic (e.g., "The Civil War") and then figure out how to assess them once we complete the unit of study. <u>This process puts the need of the students first!</u>
3	If you don't know where you're going, you don't know when or if you've arrived. Begin with a clear vision of where you want your students to be at the end of the unit of study. What do you want them to know? What do you want them to be able to do?
4	Generally, we tend to only <u>skim</u> the standards for general topics. However, to fully prepare our students for the various assessments they are required to take, we need to ensure that we, as teachers, have <u>carefully read and fully understand</u> what <u>each</u> standard is asking the students to know and do.
5	These questions were developed by Dr. Rick Stiggins, of the Performance Assessment Institute. Dr. Stiggins is nationally recognized as an expert on student performance and assessment.
6	There is more information on "Assessment Literacy" in the Assessment presentation. Also on this CD are handouts on each type of assessment.
7	For more information on each type of assessment, see the Assessment Presentation and handouts. For this presentation, a one-sentence or phrase definition of each type will be sufficient.
8	The purpose of this chart is to help teachers identify which type of assessment is most appropriate for the kind of skill they want to assess. For instance, if a teacher wants to know if students have knowledge of basic facts, a student skit or play (i.e., a "Performance") is not the best method to use; "Selected Response" is probably the best way to determine knowledge of basic facts.
9	Remember, the purpose of an assessment is to determine if

	the students are proficient, or have mastered, the standards. Focus on the <u>students</u> and the <u>standards</u> !
10	The verbs in the standards are very powerful. If you use the exact language of the standards in the assessment, you have a better chance of staying on target in terms of the level of performance required of the students.
11	Keep in mind that the "evaluation" of student work refers to how well the student performed the task at hand. That is, not everyone who writes an essay will perform at a mastery level. Teachers need to be very clear about how the assessment will be scored <u>before</u> the assessment is given.
12	Only after the assessment is created, and the scoring criteria are established, should the teacher head to the cabinet to select any activities to teach the concepts.
13	Make the needs of the students be the focus of all the activities! Now that the assessment is clearly defined, the teacher has the criteria to determine which lessons will help the students understand the content. Picture the student taking the test; what information will he need to get a passing – or better – grade on the assessment? Omit any activities that will not benefit the student, no matter how much the teacher enjoys the activity. The "shotgun" approach of throwing in any activity that addresses the general topic only confuses the students. They don't have the background or the intellectual development to filter out the extraneous information.
14	Once teachers know what their students need, they can gather the necessary resources.
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Activity

- Divide the teachers into pairs or small groups by grade level or department.
- Ask the members of each group to select a Standard (or Standards) and develop an assessment that would enable them to determine whether students have mastered the Standards or not.
- If time permits, have the groups share their results.