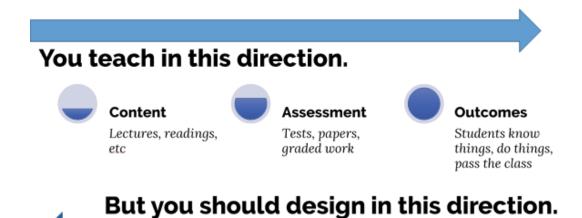
THE 3-PAGE GUIDE to COURSE DESIGN

A quick how-to on the basics of backwards design to help you easily create a course that is **intentional**, **aligned**, and produces **measurable outcomes**.



LEARNING OBJECTIVES aka STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES



These are often used interchangeably or (perhaps unintelligibly) indistinguishably...

And actually, that's ok!

Because a *learning objective* is the framing and stating of what you hope will be the *students' learning outcomes* after having successfully completed your course. Don't worry about mixing up the terms in practical usage.

HOW TO WRITE GOOD OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVES SHOULD BE SMART:

<u>Specific Measurable Achievable Relevant Time-Bound</u>

OBJECTIVES SHOULD FOLLOW THE ABCDS:

After reviewing this page, instructors will be able to write learning objectives using ABCD structure.



Now you try - fill in the table with an objective.

CONDITION	AUDIENCE	BEHAVIOR	DEGREE
After completing this course,	students	will will be able to [+ verb]	according to with a score of using etc

VERBS TO AVOID

In general, there are some verbs you should avoid because they are *not measurable or observable*:

understand	know
explore	appreciate
demonstrate	learn
improve	be aware of/familiar with

In general, there are some verbs you may avoid because they are *not rigorous enough* for higher education (especially graduate courses):

recall	define
recognize	identify
describe	summarize

USING OBJECTIVES TO BUILD ASSESSMENTS

Now that you have some solid learning objectives for your course, the next step is to create assessments that actually measure whether those objectives are being met.

Objective

After reviewing this page, instructors will be able to write learning objectives using ABCD structure.

Assessment

Ask the instructor to demonstrate their achievement by writing objectives. Use a rubric to evaluate whether they have met the expectation.

TIP #1: An important aspect of course alignment is that your outcome behaviors must match the methods you use to assess them.

So, if your objective is that students will "describe" a process, you should not expect to assess it via a multiple choice exam. Be sure you are writing objectives that you can assess, and that you are assessing them as written!

RUBRICS MAKE LIFE SIMPLE

A rubric will make it clear to you and your students how their performance on assessments will be scored. When designed well, rubrics speed up grading and minimize subjectivity.

Rubric

Criteria	Notes	Score
Objective includes "Audience."		
		/5
"Behavior" is measurable and		
appropriate to the audience.		/10
Objective includes "Condition" under		
which performance is expected.		/5
Objective includes "Degree" of		
expected performance.		/5
Objective is SMART overall.		
		/10

CONSIDER INCREASING GRANULARITY

As you develop objectives for your overall course, you may find that it becomes easier to break them down into smaller, lesson- or module-based objectives for more straightforward and frequent assessment.

Perhaps your course outcomes include students producing a 20-page analysis of a topic. Each module could address and assess just one section of that paper, effectively scaffolding the student into a more significant achievement.



Once you establish what you expect students **to be able to do** and how you will **know they have achieved it**, then you know exactly what and how you need to **teach them**.

FIRST, CHECK YOURSELF.

Do the topics you planned to teach still "fit" now that you know what you want the students to be able to do when they complete your course, and how you plan to assess them? This is the time to reconsider your ideas about the content before moving on.

KEEP THINKING BACKWARDS.

Going back to the example (and imagining the stated objective as an outcome – see Page 1 for a reminder about terminology):

Outcome

After reviewing this page, instructors will be able to write learning objectives using ABCD structure.

Assessment

Ask the instructor to demonstrate their achievement by writing objectives. Use a rubric to evaluate whether they have met the expectation.

Lesson

Present background information on objectives/outcomes, break down the components, and provide an example of what ABCD objectives look like. Then give instructors a chance to practice writing them.

Now turn this around to the "teaching direction" and what you have is tightly aligned, well-defined instruction that is essentially guaranteed to produce valid and defensible measurements of student learning.

TIP #2: Don't be afraid to use existing content for your lessons—or create your own REUSABLE content--when appropriate. Open Educational Resources (OER) can be helpful and are plentiful online.

It is completely acceptable if some of the material you teach is not original! Also, Fair Use copyright guidelines allow some flexibility for educational purposes even if the source was not originally intended for such uses.

APPENDIX: BLOOM'S TAXONOMY & "BEHAVIOR" VERB SUGGESTIONS

courtesy Global Digital Citizen Foundation

Lower Order Thinking Skills

Higher Order Thinking Skills

LOTS















Remembering

Remembering is when memory is used to produce definitions, facts or lists, or recite or retrieve material.

Understanding

Understanding is about constructing meaning from different types of function be they written or graphic.

Applying

Applying refers to situations where learned material is used through products like models, diagrams, presentations, interviews and simulations.

Analyzing

Analyzing means breaking material or concepts into parts, determining how the parts interrelate to one another or to an overall structure or purpose.

Evaluating

Evaluating means making judgements based on criteria and standards through checking and critiquing.

Creating

Creating is about putting elements together to form a functional whole, and reorganising elements into a new pattern or structure by planning or producing.

Bookmarking **Bullet-pointing** Copying Defining Describing Duplicating Favouriting Finding Googling Highlighting Identifying Labelling Liking Listening Listing Locating Matching Memorizing Naming Networking Numbering Quoting Recalling Reading Reciting Recognizing Recording Reteling Repeating Retrieving Searching Selecting Tabulating Telling

Visualizing

Advanced searching Annotating Associating Boolean searches Categorizing Classifying Commenting Comparing Contrasting Converting Demonstrating Describing Differentiating Discussing Discovering Distinguishing Estimating Exemplifying Explaining Expressing Extending Gathering Generalizing Grouping Identifying Indicating Inferring Interpreting Journaling Paraphrasing Predicting Relating Subscribina Summarizing Tagging Tweeting

Acting out
Administering
Applying
Anticulating
Calculating
Carrying out
Changing
Charting
Charting
Completing
Completing
Computing
Computing
Demonstrating
Demonstrating
Determining
Determining
Examining
Examining
Explaining
Implementing
Interviewing
Judging
Editing
Experimenting
Hacking
Loading
Operating
Painting
Playing
Preparing
Presenting
Running
Sharing
Sketching
Upfoading
Using

Advertising Appraising Attributing Breaking down Calculating Categorizing Classifying Comparing Concluding Contrasting Correlating Deconstructing Deducing Differentiating Discriminating Dividing Distinguishing Estimating Explaining Illustrating Integrating Linking Mashing Mind mapping Ordering Organizing Outlining Planning Pointing out Prioritizing Questioning Separating Structuring Surveying

Arguing Assessing Checking Criticizing Commenting Concluding Consideriing Convincing Critiquing Debating Defending Detecting Editorializing Experimenting Grading Hypothesising Judging Justifying Measuring Moderating Monitoring Networking Persuading Posting Predicting Rating Recommending Reflecting Reframing Reviewing Revising Scoring Supporting Testing Validating

Adapting Animating Blogging Building Collaborating Composing Constructing Designing Developing Devising Directing Facilitating Filming Formulating Integrating Inventing Leading Managing Mixing/remixing Modifying Negotiating Originating Orating Planning Podcasting Producing Programming Publishing Role playing Simulating Solving Structuring Video blogging Wiki building Writing