

# BACKWARD DESIGN MODEL

A framework for planning curriculum, instruction, and assessment is provided in Understanding by Design (**McTighe**), with 2 key ideas:

1. a focus on teaching and assessing for understanding and transfer
2. a design curriculum 'backward' from those ends.

The deliberate use of backward design for planning curriculum units results in:

- more clearly defined goals
- more appropriate assessments
- more tightly aligned lessons, and more purposeful teaching.

The 7 principles

The 7 principles outlined in Understanding by Design (UbD) are encapsulated in W.H.E.R.E.T.O. - a mnemonic that assists in remembering them:

- W: Where and why
- H: Hook and hold
- E: Explore, experience, enable and equip
- R: Reflect, rethink, revise
- E: Evaluate work and progress
- T: Tailor and personalise the work
- O: Organise for optimal effectiveness.

What **W.H.E.R.E.T.O.** means

1. W: Where and why - It is a way of thinking purposefully about curriculum planning - it is not a rigid program or prescriptive recipe.
2. H: Hook and hold - the primary goal of UbD is student understanding, that is, the ability to make meaning of 'big ideas' and transfer their learning.
3. E: Explore, experience, enable and equip - understanding is revealed when students autonomously make sense of and transfer their learning through authentic performance. There are 6 facets of understanding which indicate understanding: the capacity to explain, interpret, apply, shift perspective, empathise, and self-assess.
4. R: Reflect, rethink, revise - effective curriculum is planned 'backward' from long-term desired results through a 3-stage design process: desired results, evidence, and

learning plan. This process helps avoid 'textbook coverage' and 'activity-oriented' teaching, in which no clear priorities and purposes are apparent.

5. E: Evaluate work and progress - teachers are coaches of understanding, not just providers of content or activity. They focus on ensuring learning, not just teaching (and assuming that what was taught was learned); they always aim - and check for - successful meaning making and transfer by the learner.
6. T: Tailor and personalise the work - regular reviews of units and curriculum against design standards enhance curricular quality and effectiveness.
7. O: Organise for optimal effectiveness - UbD reflects a continuous improvement approach to achievement where the results of lesson design/ planning, that is student performance, informs teachers of any needed adjustments to curriculum and instruction.

**BACKWARD DESIGN STAGES ARE GIVEN IN THE NEXT PAGE**

Description	Identifying the desired results for students by establishing the overall goal/s of the learning sequence/unit using syllabus standards. Focuses on identifying what students will understand, will know and be able to do.	Focuses on evidence of learning by assessment. Teachers plan the required performance tasks and evidence of understanding. Performance tasks determine what students will demonstrate and what evidence will prove their understanding. This can include self-reflections and self-assessments on learning.	Lists the learning activities that will lead students to the desired results.
Design questions	What should students come away understanding, knowing and being able to do?	What will evidence the desired results, such as understanding?	Which learning activities promote understanding, knowledge, skill, and student interest?
Design considerations	National, state and local standards, teacher expertise and interest.	The 6 facets of understanding.	Research-based repertoire of learning and teaching strategies. Essential and enabling knowledge and skills.
Filters (design criteria)	Enduring ideas and opportunities for authentic, discipline-based work.	Valid, reliable, authentic and sufficient assessment.	W.H.E.R.E.T.O... : Where and why. Hook and hold. Explore, experience, enable, equip. Reflect, rethink, revise. Evaluate work and progress. Tailor and personalise the

work. Organise for optimal effectiveness.

---

Results in	A unit or sequence of lessons framed around enduring understandings and essential questions.	A unit or sequence of lessons anchored in credible and vital evidence of the desired understandings.	Coherent learning experiences & teaching that evoke and develop the desired understandings, promote interest and make excellent performance more likely.
------------	--	--	--

---