



# Backward design for EAP courses: Learning outcomes, lesson planning, and assessment



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# Agenda

## Introduction to EAP Course Design

## Needs Analysis

- Situation and Context
- Learner Characteristics

## Backwards Course Design

- Setting learning outcomes
- Planning assessments
- Sequencing into units

## Plan learning experiences

- Presentation
- Controlled Practice
- Communicative Practice

# Poll: Which of these do you start with when you design a new course?

- The textbook
- The course objectives
- Activities
- Assessments
- Weekly Units

# Issues with Course Design

“If you don't know exactly where you are headed then any road will get you there.” (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005, p. 14)

- EAP courses that are designed only around a textbook or certain activities can lack focus and purpose.
- Students don't get a sense of what's important and how it all fits together

# Poll: L2 Writer Differences

- What are some ways learners might differ in different L2 writing contexts?
- How might L2 writer differences affect English language teaching and learning?

# Needs Assessment

Needs Assessment is the “gathering and interpreting information about a particular [group] in an institutional setting. In education, [it] focuses on learners’ needs... needs are translated into learning objectives, ...[then] ... teaching materials, learning activities, tests, program strategies” (Ferris and Hedgcock, 2018, p. 149)

When planning for a new EAP second language writing course, conduct a needs assessment (interviews, observations, surveys)

# Target Situation Analysis

What should the course prepare students to do? In what context?

- Disciplinary knowledge, and interpersonal communication skills
- Literacy events, purposes for writing, topics, and intended audiences
- Genres, register, and language necessary for writing

# Practical Constraints Analysis

- Class hours and instructional time
- Student and teacher access to materials, technology, space, etc.
- Institutional and program constraints
- Classroom size and seating



# Questions to Ask Administrators and Other Teachers

- What are the learning outcomes for the course?
- Is there a textbook?
- What do students want to be able to do with English?
- How long have they been studying? What level are they?
- What were their previous learning experiences?
- What type of instruction are they used to (lecture, group work, rote memorization, critical thinking, etc.)?
- What does the classroom look like (chairs, tables, technology)?
- Are there ‘taboo’ topics or cultural ‘no-nos’?

# Necessities, Lacks, and Wants

(Nation and MacAlister, 2010)

Conduct a necessities, lacks and wants analysis of student L2 writers

- **Necessities**

- What knowledge and skills, do students need to master to complete relevant literacy tasks?

- **Lacks**

- What do they know? What do they lack?

- **Wants**

- What do students want to learn? What are their expectation?

# Surveying Your Students

- Age, Education, languages and cultural backgrounds
- Level of English proficiency
- Level of writing skill
- Purpose for Learning English
- Expectations for the class
- Goals, interests, attitudes toward learning



# Student Information Sample

Please provide the following information about yourself. This information will help the instructor plan the course to best meet your needs.

1. Name (LAST, first) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Preferred Name, if different from above \_\_\_\_\_
3. Major: Undecided or \_\_\_\_\_
4. Year in your program: (circle) Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior
5. What other courses are you taking this semester?
6. Did you complete ENGL 1101 for Multilingual Speakers at GSU? Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_
7. Have you taken ENGL 1102 before? Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_ If yes, where/when? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Is English your second (or third or fourth) language? Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_
  - What is your first language (= the language you spoke at home with your parents as a young child)? \_\_\_\_\_
  - List your previous schooling in your first language: grade \_\_\_\_ through grade \_\_\_\_  
total years: \_\_\_\_\_
  - List your previous schooling in English: grade \_\_\_\_ through grade \_\_\_\_  
total years (or months): \_\_\_\_\_

# Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

## OVERALL WRITTEN PRODUCTION

<b>C2</b>	<i>Can write clear, smoothly flowing, complex texts in an appropriate and effective style and a logical structure which helps the reader to find significant points.</i>
<b>C1</b>	<i>Can write clear, well-structured texts of complex subjects, underlining the relevant salient issues, expanding and supporting points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples, and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.</i>
<b>B2</b>	<i>Can write clear, detailed texts on a variety of subjects related to his field of interest, synthesising and evaluating information and arguments from a number of sources.</i>
<b>B1</b>	<i>Can write straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within his field of interest, by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence.</i>
<b>A2</b>	<i>Can write a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like “and”, “but” and “because”.</i>
<b>A1</b>	<i>Can write simple isolated phrases and sentences.</i>

Note: The descriptors on this scale and on the two sub-scales which follow (Creative Writing; Reports & Essays) sub-scale have not been empirically calibrated with the measurement model. The descriptors for these three scales have therefore been created by recombining elements of descriptors from other scales

# Diagnostic Assessment of Language Skills for Writing

- Example from an undergraduate ESL academic writing course
- Purpose: To assess student editing and language skills for writing

**2. This paragraph is missing capitalization and punctuation. Add where needed.**

Lewis study offers a clue to why middle children often seem to have a harder time in life than their siblings  
Lewis found that in some families with three or four children dinner conversation tends to center on the oldest child who has the most to talk about and the youngest who needs the most attention middle children are invisible says Lewis when you see someone get up from the table and walk around during dinner chances are it's the middle child there is however one great equalizer that stops all conversation and deprives everyone of attention when the TV is on Lewis says dinner is a nonevent|

# Diagnostic Assessment of Writing Skills

- Example from an undergraduate Multilingual Composition course
- Purpose: To assess student writing skills

Please write your responses to #11 and #12 on a separate paper:

11. What other languages or dialects do you speak? Describe your listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities.
12. Write a one- page reflection describing your strengths and weaknesses in academic reading and writing. Also, tell me what you want to work on (your goals) regarding writing and reading. Be specific. Don't just say that you want to improve your skills. You might write about writing research, finding appropriate sources, reading/understanding sources, using academic English, paraphrasing, expressing your opinion, etc.

**Poll: What information would be most useful for a course you might teach?**



# Backwards Course Design: Principles

- Curriculum is planned backwards from desired results to evidence to learning plan
- Purposeful thinking about the course
- Goal of learning is to deepen student understanding
- Leads to standards-based instruction
- Learning is developmental; explaining interpreting applying, shifting perspectives, empathizing, and self assessing
- Teaching is coaching for understanding

# Backwards Course Design: Process

- Identify the desired results by prioritizing goals
  - What knowledge, skills, abilities will students need?
- Determine acceptable evidence of learning
  - What assessment to collect as evidence of learning?
- Plan learning experiences and instruction
  - What activities to cultivate?
  - What needs to be taught? And how?

## Stage 1—Desired Results

### Established Goals:

- What relevant goals (e.g., content standards, course or program objectives, learning outcomes) will this design address?

G

### Understandings:

*Students will understand that . . .*

- What are the big ideas?
- What specific understandings about them are desired?
- What misunderstandings are predictable?

U

### Essential Questions:

- What provocative questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?

Q

*Students will know . . .*

- What key knowledge and skills will students acquire as a result of this unit?
- What should they eventually be able to do as a result of such knowledge and skills?

K

*Students will be able to . . .*

S

# Step 1: Establish Learning Outcomes

# Writing Course Objectives (SWBATs)

- A course objective says what you want Ss to know or be able to do (SWBATs).
- Good objectives are **specific, measurable attainable, realistic, and time-bound** (SMART).

Students will be able to (SWBATs)

- Read and comprehend materials written for [English speakers] when the topic and language are familiar;
- Read simple materials independently, but may have to guess at meanings of longer or more complex material;
- Write short notes, uncomplicated personal and business letters, brief journals, and short reports;
- Write brief analyses of more complex content when given the opportunity for organization and advance preparation, though errors may occur more frequently. (Graves, 2000, pp. 242– 243)

# Poll:

Which of these course objectives is the SMARTest?

1. Ss Will Be Able To categorize new vocabulary.
2. Ss Will Be Able To correctly identify new vocabulary depicted by pictures on individual flashcards..
3. Ss Will Be Able To express what each member of their family does during vacation by substituting subjects and verbs in guided, open-ended sentences.

## Stage 2—Assessment Evidence

### Performance Tasks:



- Through what *authentic performance tasks* will students *demonstrate the desired understandings*?
- By what *criteria* will performances of understanding be judged?

### Other Evidence:



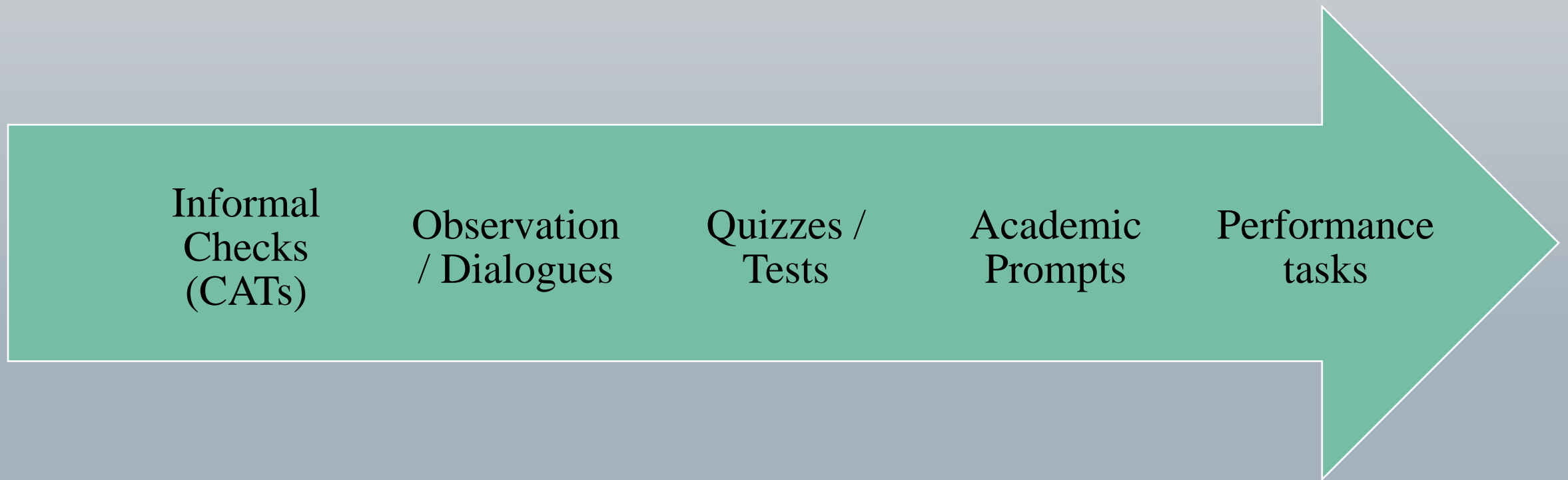
- Through what *other evidence* (e.g., quizzes, tests, academic prompts, observations, homework, journals) will students *demonstrate achievement of the desired results*?
- How will students *reflect upon and self-assess their learning*?

# Step 2: Choose Appropriate Assessments

# Types of Assessments

Different assessments give different information about student learning

Assessments are on a continuum



# Sample Writing Assessment

- **Example 1: Academic Prompt**

- Ss write paragraph(s) in response to a writing prompt. The teacher scores for content, organization, word choice, sentence structure, and mechanics (punctuation, capitalization, spelling).

- **Example 2: Performance Task**

- Ss complete a writing project and are assessed on multiple activities. Activities can include lists/mind maps, project prospectus or outlines, multiple drafts, peer reviews, student-teacher conferences, teacher feedback, final evaluation, and self-assessment.



# Poll

- Which assessment would be best for checking student progress?

## Stage 3—Learning Plan

### Learning Activities:



What learning experiences and instruction will enable students to achieve the desired results? How will the design

W = Help the students know **W**here the unit is going and **W**hat is expected? Help the teacher know **W**here the students are coming from (prior knowledge, interests)?

H = **H**ook all students and **H**old their interest?

E = **E**quip students, help them **E**xperience the key ideas and **E**xplore the issues?

R = Provide opportunities to **R**ethink and **R**evise their understandings and work?

E = Allow students to **E**valuate their work and its implications?

T = Be **T**ailored (personalized) to the different needs, interests, and abilities of learners?

O = Be **O**rganized to maximize initial and sustained engagement as well as effective learning?

# Step 3: Plan Learning Experiences

# Planning EAP Course Units

Writing courses can be organized around text types or genres, rhetorical school-based modes of writing, language functions

- Use Course Objectives and Assessments to divide the course into units
- For Each Unit:
  - Write learning outcomes
  - Include a written text assignment with an appropriate theme
  - Include models with similar themes, communicative purposes, and rhetorical styles
  - Teach writing strategies and language for writing
  - Use composing processes (pre-writing, multi-drafting, feedback)

# Sample Unit: Undergraduate EAP writing course



## Unit 2

**By the end of this week, students will be able to:**

- Revise personal bio statements using a more professional style of writing
- Revise sentence fragments, run-ons, and comma splices
- Use SCAD library resources and a citation manager to conduct preliminary research
- Apply knowledge of the documentation style in their field to create a visual poster of guidelines for writing
- Write effective sentences with complement clauses and reported speech
- Take notes while reading, paraphrase sections of an article, and summarize academic sources in writing

**Assignments:**

- Final Bio Statements (June 30)
- Research Worksheets (July 1)
- MFA Thesis Reflection (July 1)
- Documentation Style Poster Presentations **REVISED** (July 2)
- Sentence Errors (July 2)
- Reading: Streets Ahead (July 6)
- Complement Clauses: Grammar Choices Chapter 3, Exercise 6 (July 6)

# Poll: Survey

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# Teacher Resources

- [Backwards Course Design](#), McTighe and Associates
  - Access UbD templates and teacher resources for backwards design
- [Bloom's Taxonomy: Teacher Toolkit](#), Centre for Evidence-Based Medicine, University of Oxford
  - Action verbs and questions for planning course objectives
- [Student Information Survey](#), Composition Course, Boston University
  - Collecting information about your students on the first day of class
- [Classroom Assessment Techniques](#) (CATs)
  - Quick informal checks for formative assessment
- [Transparency in Teaching and Learning](#) (TILT)
  - How to build transparency about purpose, outcomes and tasks for units and learning activities