

Unit 3 Content
Beginning with the End: Goals, Objectives, and Learning Tasks

Beginning with the End: Standards-based Instruction for ELLs

Before you look into standards-based instruction, start by doing a quick investigation (not graded) of how curriculum and instruction is developed in our classes. The following activity should be from your own mind. There are no right or wrong answers. And no research required! ☺ Simply answer TRUE or FALSE to the following statements:

TRUE or FALSE

1. My school dictates required daily curriculum for me. I am given lessons to complete each day.
2. (If you have been teaching more than three years) I do the same exercises each year with my classes. Why reinvent the wheel?
3. I feel confused about how to plan long-term goals for my classes.
4. I feel confused about how to plan even my daily lessons—no one ever taught me how!
5. I spend a fair amount of time planning. I plan long-term goals, then divide them into quarterly goals, and weekly goals.
6. I don't like set goals, they are too restrictive and unrealistic. "Real life" gets in the way of any concrete plans.
7. I always intend to plan, but then school starts and I teach so many preps and I never seem to catch up.
8. I plan the night before depending on what we did that day.
9. I have never designed my own assessment; I use the ones provided in the Teacher Resource packs.
10. I don't give assessments.

Answering these questions about how you design curriculum can be an eye-opening activity. Again, there are no right or wrong answers. Responses vary from school to school and classroom to classroom. The idea is for you to have a clear understanding of your current practices and views regarding the curriculum and instructional development in your classes. So dig in!

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When designing curriculum for ELLs, it is imperative that you begin at the end. What do you want your students to know by *the end of your course*? What skills do you want your students to be able to demonstrate? Consider the needs of your ELLs in particular, but not exclusively. Think about a language class you teach; it may be language arts or reading. What does your long-term planning look like at the beginning of the school year? Do you start planning for your year-long goals? Semester goals? Quarter goals? Are you responsible for mapping out your monthly, weekly, and daily goals and learning activities or are some of them designed for you by your school or district?

The best way to make sure that students meet our learning goals is to first identify our long and short-term objectives and have a clear understanding of what each means. From there, we can decide how we will assess students' movement toward reaching our goals and select specific activities that will be most appropriate and effective for helping us to reach our objectives. This is often referred to as *backwards planning*.

The best way to understand this concept is by experiencing it. You are going to be asked to locate your content and grade specific standards and benchmarks as your assignment for this week. For now, let's narrow the focus by zooming in to one quarter at a time. You may choose to start with the first quarter of the school year, or you may decide to focus on the quarter that you are currently teaching. Either will do 😊. For some of us, the objectives we select will be goals that we have created ourselves. For others, the objectives may be selected from the district or school-wide instructional focus calendar (IFC). How goals are chosen and implemented for specific classes are school-based decisions and may vary from teacher to teacher. Your course facilitator (as wonderful as he or she may be) will not be able to tell you what your objectives should be –or where you should find them for that matter. You and your school will know best! If you have specific questions about what short-term and long-term goals you should have for your class (or where you can locate your IFC), you should consult your designated school-based curriculum contact (i.e. Department Head, Curriculum Specialist, Reading Coach, etc.). *If your situation is a unique one where you have not yet been assigned a subject and/or do not currently have access to a school-based

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curriculum contact, then you may choose your subject area and goals from www.floridastandards.org. Keep in mind, however, that this activity is most relevant and applicable when you use the curriculum that you will actually be teaching.

Next you are to read an article, make sure you are all clear about goals, and give yourself some time to locate your grade and content specific objectives. Please read **“Standards-Based Instruction for English Language Learners”** at the following link: http://www.prel.org/products/pc_standards-based.htm to find out more about what backwards planning for ELLs entails. We suggest reading the entire article as it outlines some of the important research and rationale behind standards-based instruction for ELLs. If, however, you want to fast-forward to the “how-to” part of the article, then you may start at, “Designing Standards-Based Instructional Units.” After reading the article, locate your content and grade specific standards and benchmarks at: www.floridastandards.org. This is one place to find them!

Great! Now that you have gotten hold of your quarter goals and read more about backwards planning for ELLs, it’s time to laser-focus. As you read in the article, backwards planning requires that you identify your desired results; determine what acceptable results will look like; and plan learning activities that will help students to be successful at demonstrating their mastery of, or movement toward, those objectives. With your goals for this quarter as your guide, focus in on identifying a few of the benchmarks that will help you to design a unit of study that is cohesive, clearly defined, and accessible to all students.

Use the following template to identify some of the most important objectives that you have identified for your students for this unit. As part of this week’s assignment, choose two to three of these benchmarks that work well together. This unit might be tied together by an overarching theme and can range dramatically based on grade and content. Backwards planning allows us to identify the most important goals we have set -and to prioritize our learning activities so that each goal is met. Ready, set, focus!

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Class: _____
Length of Time: _____ weeks.
Strand: _____
Standard(s): _____
Benchmark(s): _____

Example:

Class: Grade 7 English/Language Arts
Length of Time: 2 weeks
Strand: Reading Process
Standard: Reading Comprehension & Vocabulary Development
Benchmark: LA.7.1.7.3 The student will determine the main idea or essential message in grade-level or higher texts through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details.
LA.7.1.7.5 The student will analyze a variety of text features (main headings with subheadings) and explain their impact on meaning in text
LA.7.1.6 The student uses multiple strategies to develop grade appropriate vocabulary.

OK, now take a good look at your goals. This is where you start—with a very clear and concise idea of where your class is going. This list will serve as a guide to keep you focused for the days and weeks ahead. It is important that you and your students have a clear understanding of your objectives. Share it/them as a joint mission. You are a team, after all. ☺ When you display the objectives, remember that they should be as simple and accessible as possible to the ELLs in your class. Extra time might be needed here for ELLs to fully grasp the goals. L1 (first language support) might be necessary here. Another method to ensure all students understand the goals is to allow them to paraphrase them with one another. You know that they understand them when they are able to share the meaning in their own words. It also helps to write our objectives in inclusive and student-friendly language.

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Here's an elementary example:

*"This week we will identify **text features** (title, subtitle, subheadings, captions, illustrations) in two stories and use them to make **predictions**."*

(LA.3.1.7.1)

Notice that the word "we" was used. Using inclusive language like "we" and "us" helps to reinforce the idea that the class works as a team –teacher included!

Here's a secondary example:

*"This week we will use our experiences, **text features**, and **text structures** to make **predictions** about content, purpose, and organization within a short story."*

(LA.910.1.7.1)

In both of these examples, the objectives were shared in ways that are accessible to all students. They maintain their integrity to the actual benchmarks, while keeping the focus on key ideas and language that students will need to know and apply. Never do we water down the learning or lower our expectations for ELLs. Remember, English, like any other language is a means to an end. Your end is always to reach your learning goals. Go in depth of the myriad of ways that you can create avenues for your students to reach their goals. For now, let's celebrate that you have completed the first step in creating curriculum and instruction for all students.

Recap: You have clearly identified and articulated goals for a unit of study. And that's exactly where you needed to start. Your next step will be figuring out exactly how you know if students have achieved your goals. In other words, our next step is to design your assessment criteria. Do this, before you actually begin teaching lessons toward that goal. Have your objectives and all that you now know about ELLs and learning systems ready for Unit 4. You've laid the foundation. Now it's time to layer on the learning.