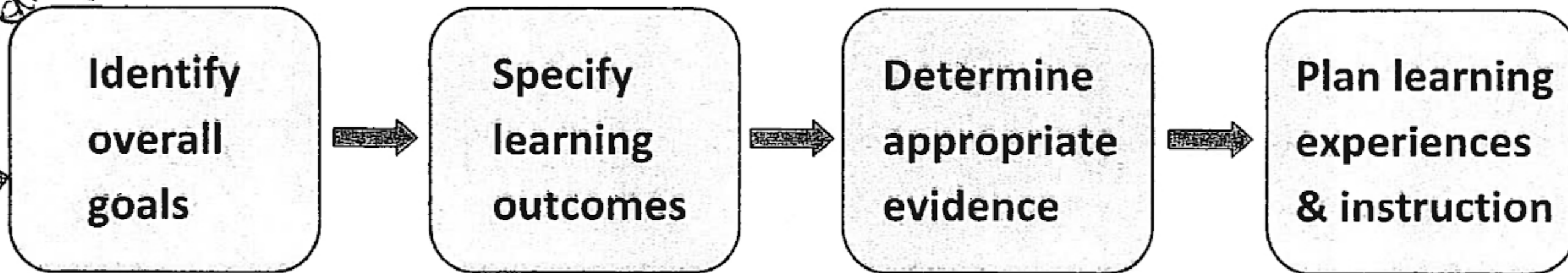


# A Guide to Backward Design of Courses

Harrison | updated 6/14

*Enduring understanding*



<p><b>Goals describe the instructor's aims, wishes, or aspirations for students in the course.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Goals are <u>general</u>: What do you want your students to have retained 3 years after the course?</li> <li>◆ What provocative questions are worth pursuing? What big ideas are worthy of understanding?</li> <li>◆ What new capacity is being sought?</li> <li>◆ What does the program or outside agency specify as required goals for the course?</li> </ul> <p>Each goal is then broken into more specific learning outcomes.</p>	<p><b>Student learning outcomes provide concrete descriptions of people performing a task.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Student learning outcomes (SLO) are <u>observable</u> and <u>concrete</u> and usually fall into one of three categories: knowledge, skills, and attitudes.</li> <li>◆ There is a logical relationship between goals and outcomes: outcomes make progress toward goals observable by identifying actions that will demonstrate successful completion or performance of a task.</li> <li>◆ Is the SLO specific and observable? Is it a result of learning in the class?</li> </ul>	<p><b>How will you know if your students have achieved the learning outcomes?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ How will you know that students really understand? How will you ask students to demonstrate their learning? What will you accept as evidence to document and validate that a learning outcome has been achieved?</li> <li>◆ Remember that multiple measures give a more valid assessment.</li> <li>◆ How will you ensure that the assessment methods and media you choose provide equitable opportunity for all your students to demonstrate what they have learned?</li> </ul>	<p><b>What instruction, experiences do you need to provide your students in order for them to achieve your learning outcomes?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ What information do students need in order to be prepared for the assessments? What do they need to do or experience or practice?</li> <li>◆ How will you make learning both effective and engaging given your SLOs and the evidence you need?</li> <li>◆ What sequence of activity will best prepare students to achieve your desired results?</li> <li>◆ Ensure accessibility of all information and activities.</li> </ul>
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Adapted from: Franklin, "Writing Student-centered Descriptions of Intended Student Learning Outcomes" (author's permission); Keeling & Associates, "Practical Guide to Writing Student Learning Outcomes" [http://www.eou.edu/saffairs/documents/keeling\\_doc-1.pdf](http://www.eou.edu/saffairs/documents/keeling_doc-1.pdf); McTighe & Wiggins, *Understanding by Design Professional Development Workbook* (ASCD 2004).