



What do you mean . . . backwards design project?

Alberta Initiative for School Improvement

As part of our AISI projects (Assessment for Learning), teachers have been working on planning using a backwards design model.

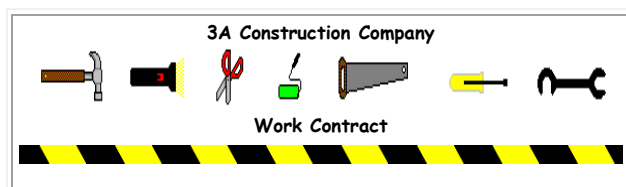
Traditionally, teachers started their planning by using activities and textbooks rather than looking at the big picture with the end goals in mind. In a backwards design project, teachers start their planning by looking at the end (learning goals and evidence of learning) first.

"To begin with the end in mind means to start with a clear understanding of your destination. It means to know where you're going so that you better understand where you are now so that the steps you take are always in the right direction." (Covey, 1994)

An example of a backwards design project:

Grade 3 Science: Building with a Variety of Materials

Grade 3A started their own construction company! The company started by each student being assigned to a crew. After they had a crew together, they reviewed and signed a construction work contract. The students then had to draw blueprints, make their pillars and beams, and then start constructing based on specific criteria. This project addresses many learning goals from cooperation to working safely to building a structure to measurement.



As a worker for the 3A Construction Company, I agree to:

- Always begin my work on time and work steadily until my project is complete.
- Work cooperatively with my crew. This means sharing materials, taking turns, and listening to everyone's ideas.
- Work safely at all times. I will handle tools carefully and always keep materials out of walkways. I will put all my construction materials away at the end of my job.
- Always listen carefully to instructions and do my best work for the 3A Construction Company. I will write about my activities and what I have learned.

Construction Crew Number: _____

Date: _____

Signature of Employee: _____

