Writing Measurable Outcomes
I taught it.
They just didn’t learn it.

The transmission or delivery model of education
Here’s the stuff I know

The transmission or delivery model of education

I move the stuff into their heads
Here's the stuff I know. I move the stuff into their heads. The transmission or delivery of education.
In the transmission model, you start with the stuff you’re going to move.
But the transmission model is not the best model to help students learn.

What is better?
But the transmission model is not the best model to help students learn.

What is better? The learning paradigm.
*Big, Hairy, Audacious Idea*
How BHAi is the Learning Paradigm?
Copernicus, 1543, *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*: Earth-centric to heliocentric
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Early 20\textsuperscript{th} Century, Newtonian to quantum model shift
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From transmitting information \hspace{1cm} \text{TO} \hspace{1cm} Producing learning
BACKWARD DESIGN
What are the benefits to the student for taking the course?
What are the biggest questions that your course will help students begin to answer, and how can you raise those questions in ways that they will find intriguing?

--Ken Bain, *What the Best College Teachers Do*

The PERFECT way to start thinking about your course outcomes!
STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES ARE STATEMENTS OF WHAT STUDENTS WILL KNOW, BE ABLE TO DO, AND VALUE AT THE END OF THE COURSE.
STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES MUST BE:

MEASURABLE
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How will you know if students achieve the outcomes if you can’t measure them?
To measure something, you have to be able to see, hear, or touch it.

You can’t measure:

KNOW

UNDERSTAND

LEARN
But you can measure:

LIST
SELECT
PRODUCE
ANALYZE
DESCRIBE
COMPAR
DEFEND
etc., because . . .
. . . they are artifacts of student work which you can see or hear or touch because the work produced an ACTION which created measurable indicators like written analyses, debates, essays, portfolios, projects, and written exams.
so this means you must use **ACTION** verbs in your outcome statements.

Students will be able to . . .

- **Define** the underlying ______
- **Defend** their positions on ___
- **Create** a representative ______
- **Present** __________________
- **Choose** the best ___________
Practice . . .

Learning outcome for informed voting
Learning outcome for writing well
Learning outcome for celestial mechanics
Learning outcome for sewing
Learning outcome for psychology
Learning outcome for kindergarten math
Even for humanities classes, critical thinking, art appreciation, philosophy, . . . ?

YOU BETCHA!
Big Idea: an abstract & transferable concept, theme, or process at the heart of a subject or topic. (adaptation, survival)

Understanding: Full-sentence generalization specifying what we want students to come to understand about the Big Idea (Living organisms adapt to survive harsh or changing environments.)

Essential Question: Provocative & arguable question designed to guide inquiry into the Big Idea. By actively exploring the Essential Questions, students develop & deepen their understanding. (In what ways do living organisms survive harsh or changing environments?)
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What would I like the impact of this course to be on students 2-3 years after the course? What will distinguish students who have taken the course from students who have not?

--Dee Fink, *Creating Significant Learning Experiences*

Another PERFECT way to start thinking about course outcomes!
Stage 1: Identify Desired Results

- enduring understandings
- established goals
- Big Ideas
- six facets of understanding
- misconceptions
- essential questions
- knowledge and skill

Stage 2: Determine Acceptable Evidence

- performance tasks
- rubrics
- “think like an assessor”
- six facets of understanding
- GRASPS
- other evidence
- self-assessment

Stage 3: Plan Learning Experiences, Instruction

- learning plan
- engaging and effective
- six facets of understanding

Alignment
Learning Outcome:
The student will describe the causes and effects of the Civil War with emphasis on slavery, states' rights, leadership, settlement of the West, secession, and military events.

Understandings:
- There is rarely a single, obvious cause to a complex historical event.
- History is "story," and who tells the story affects how it is presented.
- States' rights disagreements, differences in the cultures and economies of North and South, and disputes over slavery were key causes of the Civil War.
- The legacy of the Civil War is still felt in regional differences, in national and regional politics, and matters of cultural values.

Essential Questions:
- What were the obvious (and unobvious) causes of the Civil War?
- Whose "story" is it?
- Is there ever a "just" war?
- Why would a brother kill a brother?
- In what ways are the effects of the Civil War still with us?

Big Ideas:
- Slavery (as economic, political, and moral issue)
- Federal control vs. states' rights
- "Just" cause

Predictable Misunderstandings and Errors:
- The war was fought over the morality of slavery, and the "good guys" won.
- If it is in a history book, it must be true.
- Most events have a single, obvious cause and obvious effects.

Goals or Rationale:
I want students to learn that the Civil War was complex, and that its meaning has changed over time, varies by place and still affects us and our views. I also want them to be aware of the horror of war and to empathize with the effects on families and sense of self (as conveyed so well in Ken Burns's Civil War video series).
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Understandings:
• Rarely a single, obvious cause for complex historical events
• History = “story”; who tells the story affects how it is presented
• States’ rights, cultural differences, North & South economies, and slavery were all key
• Civil War legacy still felt: nat’l/regional politics, regional differences, cultural values
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• Why would a brother kill a brother?
• In what ways are the effects of the Civil War still with us today?
I want students to learn that the Civil War was complex, that its meaning has changed over time & varies by place, and that it still affects us & our views. I also want them to be aware of the horror of war & to empathize w/effects on families & sense of self (as conveyed so well in Ken Burns’ video series).
Students will demonstrate a critical ability to analyze questions about the nature and value of human life as embodied in the traditions of the humanities.

PRACTICE (Core Curriculum Humanities Outcome)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>Tot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>THESIS</strong> A debatable, problematic assertion</td>
<td>An attempt at an assertion is made, but it is not problematic; discussion is mostly summary</td>
<td>Assertion is obvious and contributes little to the on-going discussion</td>
<td>Assertion is interpretive and moderately contributes to the on-going discussion</td>
<td>Assertion is interpretive, problematic, and clearly contributes to the on-going discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EVIDENCE</strong> Substantiate the assertion</td>
<td>The relationship between the examples and the assertion is unclear</td>
<td>Examples are not clearly or consistently linked to the assertion</td>
<td>Examples moderately support and are relevant to the assertion</td>
<td>Examples clearly support and are relevant to the assertion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ORGANIZATION</strong> Coherent Structure</td>
<td>The assertion is not logically maintained throughout the paper, and relationships between ideas are unclear</td>
<td>The assertion is logically maintained to a moderate degree; supporting statements are weak in connecting to the original assertion</td>
<td>The assertion is logically maintained throughout, and supporting statements are moderately consistent in referring to the original assertion</td>
<td>The assertion is logically maintained throughout, and supporting statements are highly consistent in referring to the original assertion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SIGNIFICANCE</strong> Establish a relevancy</td>
<td>Conclusion merely summarizes the assertion attempt</td>
<td>Significance or relevancy is implied but not clearly conveyed</td>
<td>Conclusion moderately conveys the significance or relevancy of the assertion</td>
<td>Conclusion clearly conveys the significance or relevancy of the assertion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mechanics</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grammar, sentence structure, punctuation</strong></td>
<td>Inaccuracies make paper difficult to read</td>
<td>Inaccuracies make paper moderately difficult to read</td>
<td>Few inaccuracies, advanced vocabulary, deliberate word choice</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Format</strong> For Paper: Does not meet MLA standards: format, heading, spacing, margins, and title; For Exams: Careless layout obscures points made &amp; conclusions drawn</td>
<td>For Paper: Meets some but not all MLA standards: format, heading, spacing, margins, and title; For Exams: Reader has to work to follow train of thought.</td>
<td>For Paper: Meets all MLA standards; For Exams: Reading is easy because assertions and arguments are logically presented &amp; lead to sensible conclusion(s).</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What are the benefits to the student for taking the course?

OUTCOMES

ASSIGNMENTS

SYLLABUS

TEXTBOOK