

Exploring Backward Design

Rethinking Approaches to Foster Understanding in the Classroom

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Activity 1: Envisioning the End Product

- ❖ Imagine a student in your course, program or school
- ❖ What should this person be able to do on the completion of this class?

Activity 2: Goals of Higher Ed

❖ What do you see as higher ed learning goals?

Learning Goal	How is that manifested in your class/field?

Goals of Higher Ed



Critical Thinking – 99%



First 2 years of college

- ❖ Overall gain in CT skills – 7% students

Source: Arum, R., & Roksa, J. (2011). Academically adrift. Limited learning on college campuses.

Shortcomings

❖ Where do college grads come up short?

Hard Skills	% of Managers (Deficit)
Writing proficiency	44
Public speaking	39
Data analysis	36

Soft Skills	% of Managers (Deficit)
Critical thinking/problem solving	60
Attention to detail	56
Communication	46

Source: *Payscale's 2016 Workforce-Skills Preparedness Report*:

Backward Design

- Planning process
- An Example - Web Design 101 Topics
 - History of the Web
 - Design Fundamentals
 - Information Architecture
 - Web Project Management
 - Server side and Client side software
 - Create a website ?

Setting the Stage

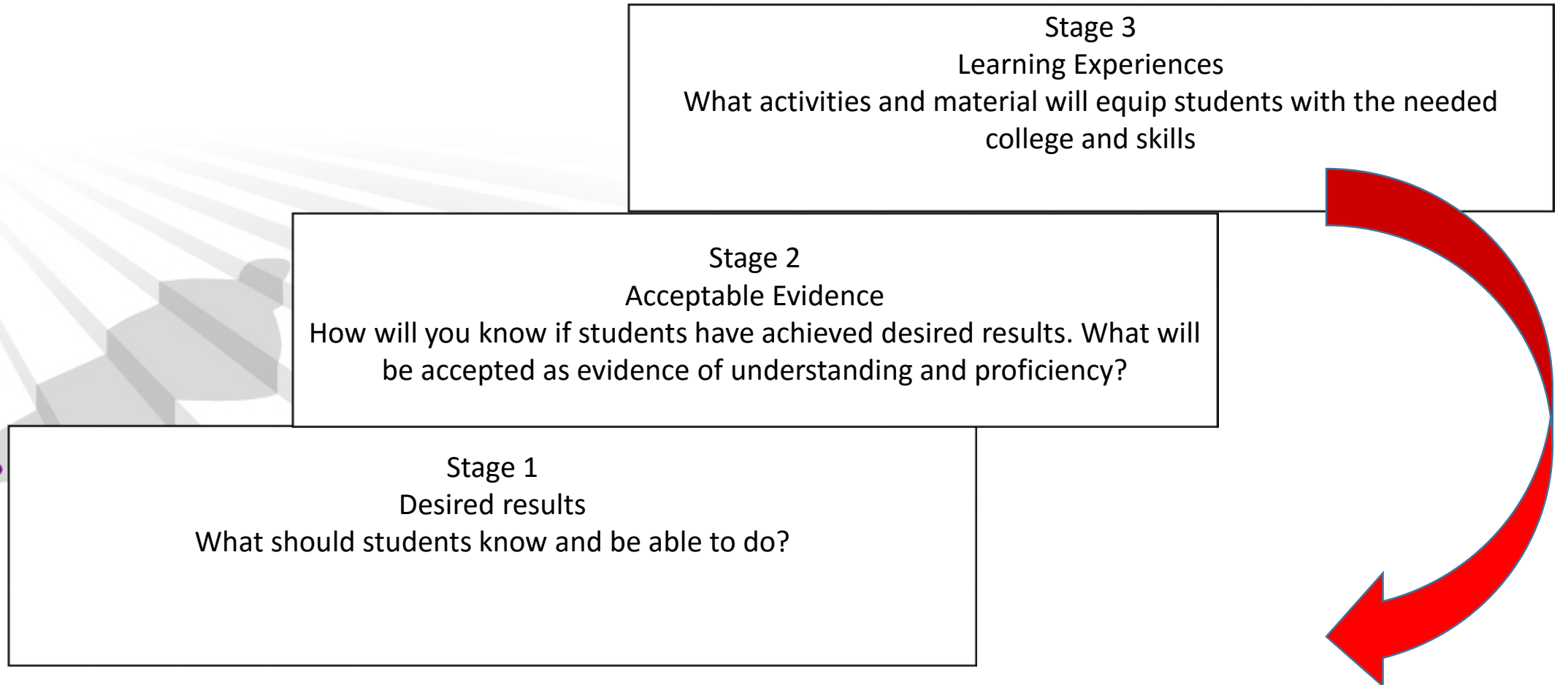
Can I plan for understanding?

What inspires students?

What is really important ?



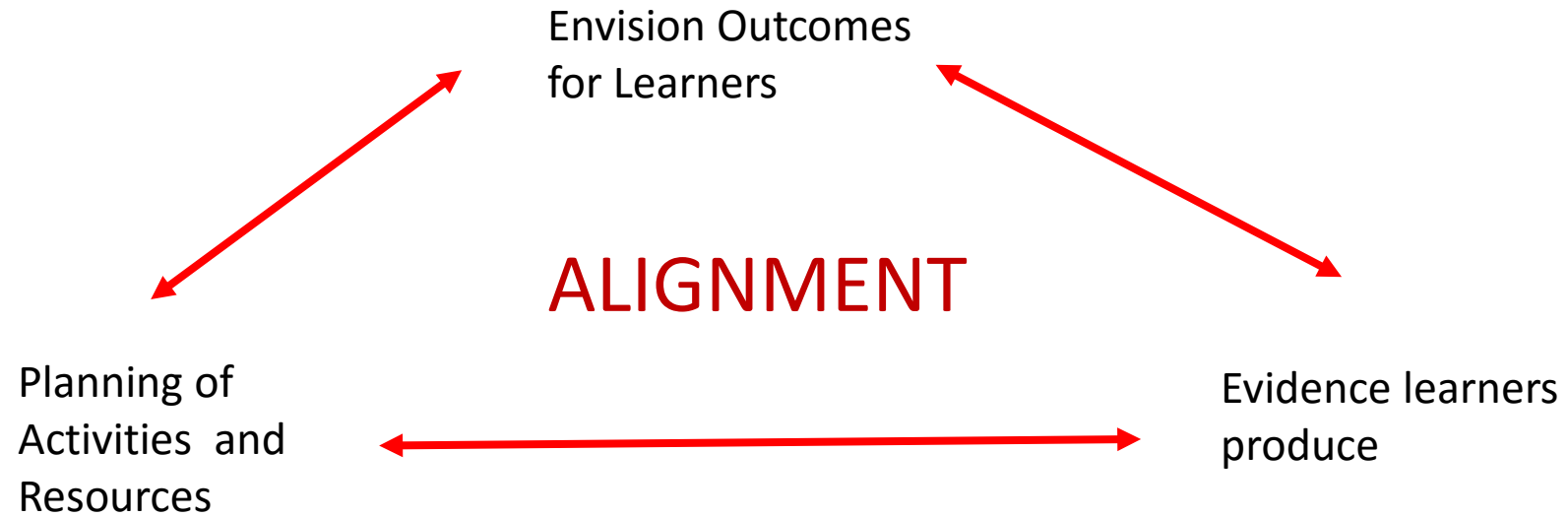
3 stage Backward Design



Rethinking Web Design 101 Example

- Learning goal - Understanding what is web design and apply principles to their own projects
- Evidence - Quizzes vs Development of projects?
- Class experiences
 - Opportunities to practice –technical aspects, learning to work together?
 - Space for thinking – What is web design?
 - External sources – professionals

Effectiveness of Backward Design



Effectiveness of Backward Design

STAGE 1

What is worthy of understanding?
What are essential questions?
What is important for them to know or do?

STAGE 2

What is acceptable evidence?
What is the learner's role?
How much evidence?

STAGE 3

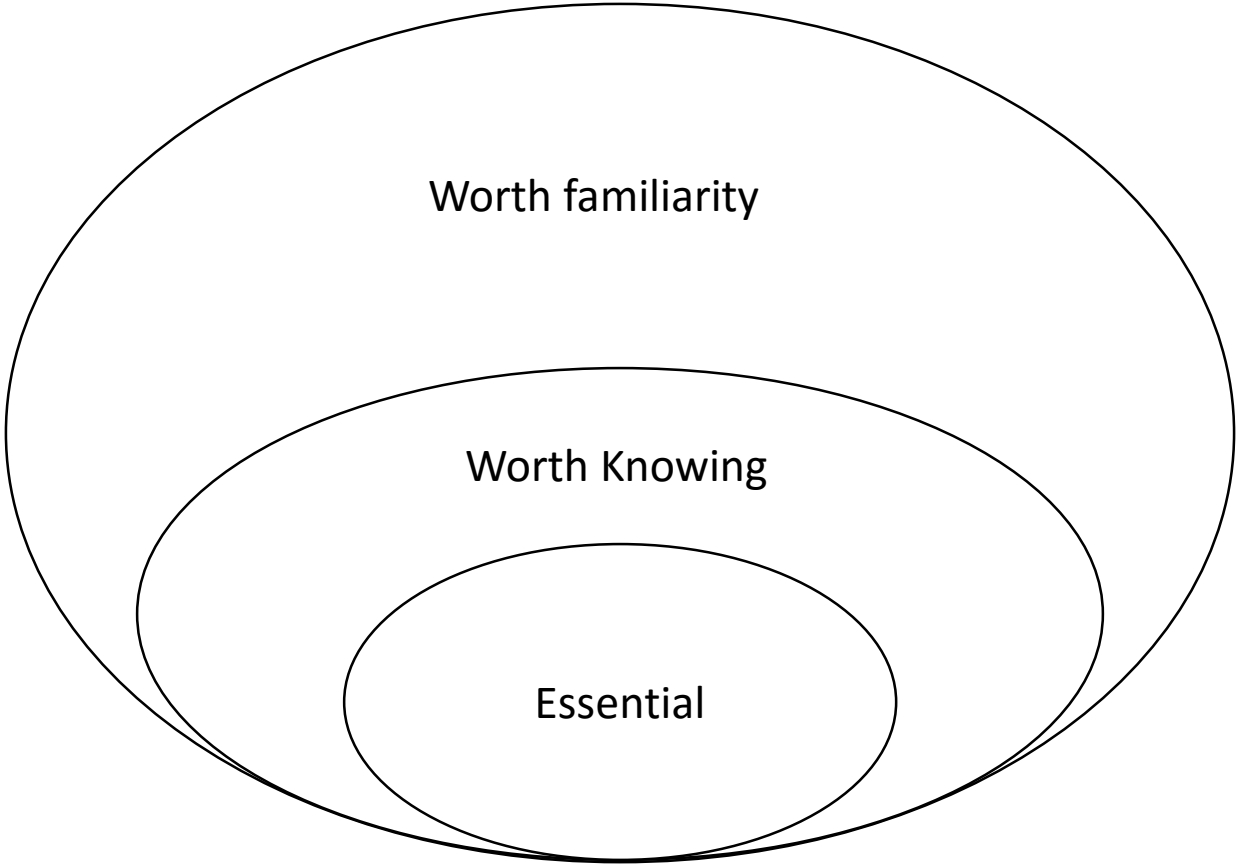
What activities that help make meaning ?



Worthy of Understanding (my focus)

- Has value beyond the class – Enduring
- Core to the discipline
- Requires uncoverage
- Engages Inquiry

Activity 3: Content needed to succeed?



Summation

Another approach to support understanding which is the heart of meaningful learning

