The LeafLIT

A Literacy Publication

BAM-Backward Assessment Model

By Hattie Leday

The Backward Assessment Model is a communication model. Its strongest attribute is that it provides teachers an opportunity to share their knowledge, understanding, skills, experiences, and resources with each other. Research strongly suggests that when teachers communicate and share their knowledge and successful strategies they help students succeed. Teachers often know where students are experiencing difficulty based on their daily observations and interactions. BAM also provides all teachers, veterans and novice, opportunities to re-examine and reflect upon their own practices.

Two Basic Premises of BAM:

- Testing drives instruction

- Teachers make a difference, and that teachers working together make a greater difference.

BAM changes the way professional development is delivered. **BAM** places the professional development emphasis on academic standards and best practices. The strongest attribute is that it provides teachers an opportunity to share their knowledge, understanding, skills, experiences, and resources with each other.

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Creating a BAM Document

Steps	Procedures	Example
1	Teachers meet together by grade level or subject to work on selected topic/unit.	5th grade teachers meet to discuss writing instruction based on student writing samples. Teachers select "Ideas" as a starting focus.
2	Teachers determine what students are to **know**, **recognize**, and **be able to do** within each unit and record those on their **SPECIFICATION SHEET**.	Teachers use the *Nevada Content Standards* for writing to determine what students are to **know**, **recognize**, and **be able to do**. Teachers also use *writing samples* as a baseline for their students' current writing abilities. **SPECIFICATION SHEET:** Use the steps of the writing process to explore a topic and plan written work. Focus on and develop one idea.
3	Teachers determine the approximate time (days or weeks) it takes for teachers to teach and students to learn what was identified on the **SPECIFICATION SHEET**.	Use prewriting strategies and explore a topic to plan written work. (1 Week) Developing a topic based on one idea. (2 Weeks)
4	Teachers develop an **ASSESSMENT BLUEPRINT**. A blueprint describes the number and types of questions that should appear on a balanced assessment-- not the actual questions.	Teachers will use the *Nevada Scoring Guide* (rubrics) and grade level common writing prompts as documents for their **ASSESSMENT BLUEPRINT**.
5	Teacher-made assessments based upon the **ASSESSMENT BLUEPRINT** will be developed later and placed in an Assessment Notebook.	Teacher will add benchmark and anchor papers to the **ASSESSMENT BLUEPRINT** for each trait.
Assessment Notebook	The Assessment Notebook should contain the **SPECIFICATION SHEET, ASSESSMENT BLUEPRINT** and **TIMEFRAMES**.	
Site Administrators	Site Administrators should examine these **ASSESSMENT NOTEBOOKS** to determine if the curriculum is balanced and being taught, and if there is consistency, reliability and fairness.	Administrators need to consider equity of scoring—i.e., does a score of "3" for ideas in one class equate to a "3" for ideas in a different teacher's class?

Remember…

- The blueprint does not identify specific questions.
- The goal is to assess students in similar ways and at approximately the same level of difficulty.
- Focus on what students should know and be able to do.
- Assessment in multiple forms should be ongoing.