

## Analyze Course Outcomes and Work Backwards

When you view your learning journey with a focus on the required skills, knowledge, and attitudes you need to be successful, you will find it easier to achieve success with your projects and assignments.

### Start with the Outcomes in Mind

Your course syllabus is a good place to start your journey as it will outline the intended outcomes of the course. As you read them ask yourself what do you already know. A little? A lot? Something in between? This prepares your mind for learning new information and organizing what you already know.

### Learning Objectives and Tasks are Stepping Stones to Success

In every course there will be learning objectives that include the steps and tasks to be completed to support these outcomes. Some people think that their courses are just a conglomeration of check marks to a degree. This is not the purpose of education. Each course is a building block to an integrated whole. You need to find the links that bring these together rather than seeing them as just separate hoops to be jumped through.

In each course, you will be guided weekly through readings, discussions, and activities (including, assignments, projects, and exams) that will support your learning the individual topics. Each of these is intended to prepare you to 'think like' a competent person in the professional area you are studying.

### Visualize Your Positive Future

See yourself as successful in your current course. Visualize the final week of the semester when you have completed everything and can meet the course outcomes confidently. Then work backwards to where you are now to create a plan for success. The process of working in reverse can be applied whenever you are striving to achieve personal milestones, whether in terms of career progression, skill enhancement, or course completion.

### Chunk the Content into Manageable Parts

After imagining the end of a successful assignment, think about the last step before it is complete. Let's look at wrapping up the major project for the term. The last step might be a final editing for grammar, spelling and formatting. What was the step before that? Perhaps it was to check the references and making sure that the paragraphs support the thesis statement. You will write your essay using the research and our own ideas. Before that it could be ensuring that you have a strong thesis and outline that fits with your research. The previous step would have been to summarize your research and decide on the focus. Your first step would have been to pick your topic and do your research.

These steps (chunks) are the ways to make the work manageable. At each step you will be referencing the assignment and instructor provided rubric to guide your work. This can be applied to any content and assignment.

You are in charge of your own learning and want to be able to explain what you know to others. Think about your curiosity in your course and how it relates to other area that you are studying. You are creating the foundation to build your whole professional expertise.

### Working Backward from Your Preferred Future

