Understanding Learning Targets

OCS INSTRUCTIONAL FRAMEWORK

OCS ONSLOW COUNTY SCHOOLS

Domains	Concepts	Teacher Actions	Evidences
PLANNING	**STANDARDS ALIGNMENT**	Teachers use backward design to create learning target(s), lesson plans and assessments aligned to the NC Standard Course of Study and OCS Priority Standards.	• Standards are unpacked and teachers write clearly defined learning target(s). • Formative assessments are aligned to the skill and rigor of the standard(s) and created prior to designing the lesson.
	LESSON DESIGN	Teachers work together to design engaging lessons that use a gradual release instructional model.	• Planning takes place during regularly scheduled data teams/PLCs. • Formal and informal assessment data drive lesson design. • Standards-aligned, culturally relevant, and appropriately challenging instructional materials are used. • Lessons are designed using the gradual release model, which includes a standards-based learning target, activation of learning, modeling, guided practice, independent practice and closure.
	INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES	Teachers incorporate instructional strategies and processes that engage all students in learning.	• Daily lessons require students to read, write, inquire, and collaborate. • Lessons use research-based, high-yield strategies, which are culturally-responsive and differentiated based on student needs.
INSTRUCTION	**FOCUSED INSTRUCTION**	Teachers deliver lessons which are aligned to the NC Standard Course of Study and the OCS Priority Standards.	• Learning target(s) are posted, clearly communicated, linked to standards, and understood by the students. • The criteria for success are clear to students and the performance tasks provide evidence that students understand and apply learning in context. • Tier II and III vocabulary are used by the teacher and the student. • The lesson links students' prior and future learning to provide relevance and context to the student.
	ENGAGEMENT	Teachers use research-based, high-yield instructional strategies to help students learn.	• Student-to-student and teacher-to-student discourse reflects substantive thinking in relation to the learning target(s). • Opportunities to write, read, inquire, problem solve, and collaborate occur daily. • Research-based, high-yield strategies are used to support student learning. • Technology and innovative tools are used to facilitate and apply learning. • Instructional strategies engage all students and ensure equitable access to learning resources.
	PROGRESS MONITORING	Teachers monitor student learning and adjust instruction to address individual learning needs	• Checks for understanding are used to measure student progress toward the learning target(s). • Data are used to monitor student progress toward the daily learning target(s). • Students self-monitor their own learning in relation to the learning target(s). • Students are given multiple opportunities to demonstrate learning.
ASSESSMENT	**TEACHER REFLECTION**	Teachers collaboratively analyze assessment results and adjust instruction accordingly.	• Common formative assessments are developed by teacher teams to inform instruction throughout a unit of study. • Summative assessments are used to measure learning at the end of a unit of study and to generate enrichment and remedial instruction. • Benchmark data are used to analyze learning by standard and to identify individual students' needs for intervention and/or enrichment.
	STUDENT FEEDBACK	Teachers provide timely feedback to students.	• Students receive clear and specific feedback that informs their progression toward the learning target(s). • Student self-monitoring toward the learning target occurs daily.

What Is a Learning Target?

The most effective teaching and the most meaningful student learning happen when teachers design the right learning target for today's lesson and use it along with their students to aim for and assess understanding. A learning target describes, in language that students understand, the lesson-sized chunk of information, skills, and reasoning processes that students will come to know deeply and thoroughly.   – Connie M. Moss

	Instructional Objective— Framed from the Teacher Point of View	Learning Target— Framed from the Student Point of View
Where does it come from?	• Derived from a standard and/or curricular goal.	• Derived from an instructional objective.
Who uses it?	• Used by the teacher to guide instruction during a lesson or over a group of lessons.	• Used by the teacher and the students to aim for understanding and assess the quality of student work during today's lesson.
What does it describe, and how does it describe it?	• Content knowledge (concepts, understandings) and skills that students should be able to demonstrate. • Uses teacher language (the language of curriculum and standards). • May span one lesson or a set of lessons.	• Asks, "What am I going to learn?" • Uses student language as well as pictures, models, and/or demonstrations when possible. • Asks, "What should I be able to do at the end of today's lesson? And how is it connected to yesterday's and tomorrow's lessons?"
How does it connect to a performance of understanding?	• Generalizes to many potential tasks, from which teachers select one or several to be the performance of understanding for instructional activities and formative assessment for a series of lessons.	• Is connected to the specific performance of understanding that the teacher has chosen for today's lesson.
How does it promote evidence-based assessment?	• Includes criteria and performance standards in teacher language.	• Includes student look-fors—criteria and performance standards in student language—often accompanied by tools (e.g., "I can" statements, rubrics, checklists) and examples of work.

Checklist for Evaluating Learning Targets

A learning target contains ALL of the following characteristics. It must

☐ Describe exactly what the student is going to learn by the end of today's lesson.

☐ Be stated in developmentally appropriate language that the student can understand.

☐ Be framed from the point of view of a student who has not yet mastered the intended learning outcome for today's lesson.

☐ Be connected to and shared through the specific performance of understanding designed by the teacher for today's lesson (what students will be asked to do, say, make, or write that will deepen student understanding, allow students to assess where they are in relation to the learning target, and provide evidence of mastery).

☐ Include student look-fors—descriptive criteria that students can use to judge how close they are to the target, stated in terms that describe mastery of the learning target (not in terms that describe how the students' performance will be scored or graded).

MATHEMATICS EXAMPLE	To focus and direct learning, you need:		
	Content outcome	**Conditions**	**Criteria**
Teacher's instructional objective for a set of lessons focused on teaching: 3-digit addition with carrying.	Knowledge and/or skills a student should be able to demonstrate	Circumstances under which students will be able to perform	Qualities of performance by which you will know that the student has reached desired level of learning
	The student will be able to solve problems using 3-digit addition with carrying in the ones' place.	Without using calculators or fact charts.	The student will perform with 80 percent accuracy.
	What am I going to learn?	**How will I show what I know?**	**How will I know how well I am doing—what are my look-fors?**
Students' learning target for today's lesson on: Introducing carrying.	I am going to be able to use a method called "carrying" so that I know what to do with the 10 under 8+2 or the 12 under 9+3 in problems like these: 438 219 +152 +363	I will use a paper and pencil and show my work as I solve the problems.	I can explain and show how to put the carrying marks in the right places as I solve the problems (most of the time). My work will look like this example: 2¹9 +363 5̄82̄
Students' learning target for another day's lesson on: Practicing for accuracy and proficiency.	I am going to be able to use carrying to solve problems like these accurately and smoothly: 438 219 +152 +363	I will use a paper and pencil and show my work as I solve the problems.	I can put the carrying marks in the right places and use them to get the correct answers (most of the time).
Students' learning target for yet another day's lesson on: Identifying relevant problems.	I am going to be able to write my own story problems that need 3-digit addition with carrying as part of their solution.	I will create stories from my own classroom or home or shopping.	I can write three story problems that need 3-digit addition with carrying as part of their solution [depending on the lesson, may add "and I can solve them correctly"].
COUNTEREXAMPLE: NOT a learning target for today's lesson	I can do 3-digit addition with carrying in the ones' place to solve problems. [NOTE: This is not one lesson-sized chunk, and it is mostly in teacher language, just with an "I can" stuck on at the beginning.]	Without using calculators or fact charts.	I will get at least a *B* on my quiz. [NOTE: This criterion is about scoring, not showing learning. It is not shared as a student look-for.]

Learning Targets: Helping Students Aim for Understanding in Today's Lesson
Connie M. Moss and Susan M. Brookhart [© 2012 by ASCD. All rights reserved.]

READING EXAMPLE	To focus and direct learning, you need:		
	Content outcome	**Conditions**	**Criteria**
Teacher's instructional objective for a set of lessons focused on teaching: The concept of main idea.	Knowledge and/or skills a student should be able to demonstrate	Circumstances under which students will be able to perform	Qualities of performance by which you will know that the student has reached desired level of learning
	The student will be able to identify main idea.	In grade-level appropriate reading passages one paragraph in length.	The student can say, select, or write the main idea of a passage with 80 percent accuracy.
Students' learning target for today's lesson on: Identifying the main idea of a paragraph.	**What am I going to learn?**	**How will I show what I know?**	**How will I know how well I am doing—what are my look-fors?**
	I will learn that a main idea is the most important thing the writer of a paragraph is trying to tell me.	I will read paragraphs and choose the main idea for each paragraph from a list.	I can choose the right main idea and explain why it was more important than the other choices.
Students' learning target for another day's lesson on: Summarizing main ideas that are stated literally.	I will learn to answer the question "What does the writer say is the main idea?" in one sentence.	I will read paragraphs and look for main ideas that the author has stated. I will usually find these in the topic sentence.	I can restate the paragraph's main idea in my own words, in one sentence.
Students' learning target for yet another day's lesson on: Making inferences to identify the main idea.	I will learn to answer the question "What is the writer trying to tell me?" in one sentence.	I will read a paragraph, think about how all the details in the paragraph are related, and describe what the paragraph as a whole is trying to say.	I can summarize the paragraph's main idea in my own words, in one sentence.
COUNTEREXAMPLE: NOT a learning target for today's lesson	I can identify the main idea in a paragraph. [NOTE: This is not one lesson-sized chunk, and it is mostly in teacher language, just with an "I can" stuck on at the beginning.]	I will read a paragraph. [NOTE: This is too general. It is not connected to a specific performance of understanding.]	I will get all of the teacher's main idea questions right. [NOTE: This criterion is about scoring, not showing learning. It is also too general and cannot serve as a student look-for that promotes meaningful self-assessment.]