

Sharing Learning Targets

Overview:

Learning targets come from standards. Standards are unpacked into lesson-size chunks called learning targets that will scaffold students up to the standard. These statements tell students what the learning intention is for the lesson. While the establishment of the learning target is done by the teacher prior to the lesson (and is therefore not an instructional move in and of itself), the explicit sharing of the learning target(s) with the students as part of the lesson is a necessary instructional move for students to be able to reflect on their learning journey, self-assess their work, and/or provide meaningful feedback to their peers.

Purpose: Learning targets break down a standard into meaningful, lesson-sized chunks that can be used to communicate to students exactly what they should be able to know, do, and understand at the completion of the lesson. Being able to provide students with very clear statements of what they will accomplish provides focus, clarity, and motivation. Without a clear sense of the destination, students are unable to effectively engage in self-assessment, reflection, and/or peer feedback.

Application: When and where can I use it?

Learning targets can, and should, be used at every grade level and in every discipline. Even our youngest students benefit from their teacher sharing with them, clearly, the learning that is expected to occur as a result of the lesson. A learning target may frame the lesson for one day or may span several days, weeks or months. Sharing the learning target(s) with your students not only makes the purpose of the lesson clear to them, but also allows them to engage in meaningful self-assessment, reflection, and peer feedback experiences.

Getting Started: What are some tips for starting and using this routine

Use student-friendly, empowering, language when writing your learning targets. Starting your learning targets with the "I can..." phrase not only communicates to all students what you expect they will be able to do at the end of the learning process, but it reminds you to write the targets from the perspective of the student and to keep it focused on the resulting learning, not the activity they will engage in to accomplish that learning. (See some of the links below for examples of strong, student-focused learning targets.)

Be sure to explicitly address the learning target during the lesson. Having the learning target posted on the board is nice but taking time to actually talk about the learning target and what students will do to accomplish it, is much more effective. Taking the time to make sure students understand the learning target will help them better connect the learning activity with the target itself, keeping the focus on the learning rather than the doing.

Use the learning target to formatively assess where students are in their learning journey. Students should be able to reflect on their learning, self-assess their progress, and provide feedback to their peers based on the shared learning targets.

See this Instructional Move in action:

[Using a Learning Target Throughout a Lesson - Bing video](#)

[Students Discuss the Power of Learning Targets - Bing video](#)

Read more about this Instructional Move:

[The Dos and Don'ts of Learning Targets - iWalkthrough.org](#) (includes a video link as well)

[How to Create Learning Targets to Motivate Your Students - The Teach Simple Blog](#) (includes examples of learning targets from many different disciplines)

[How to Use Learning Targets in Your Classroom - TeacherVision](#)