Chapter 1

Learning Targets

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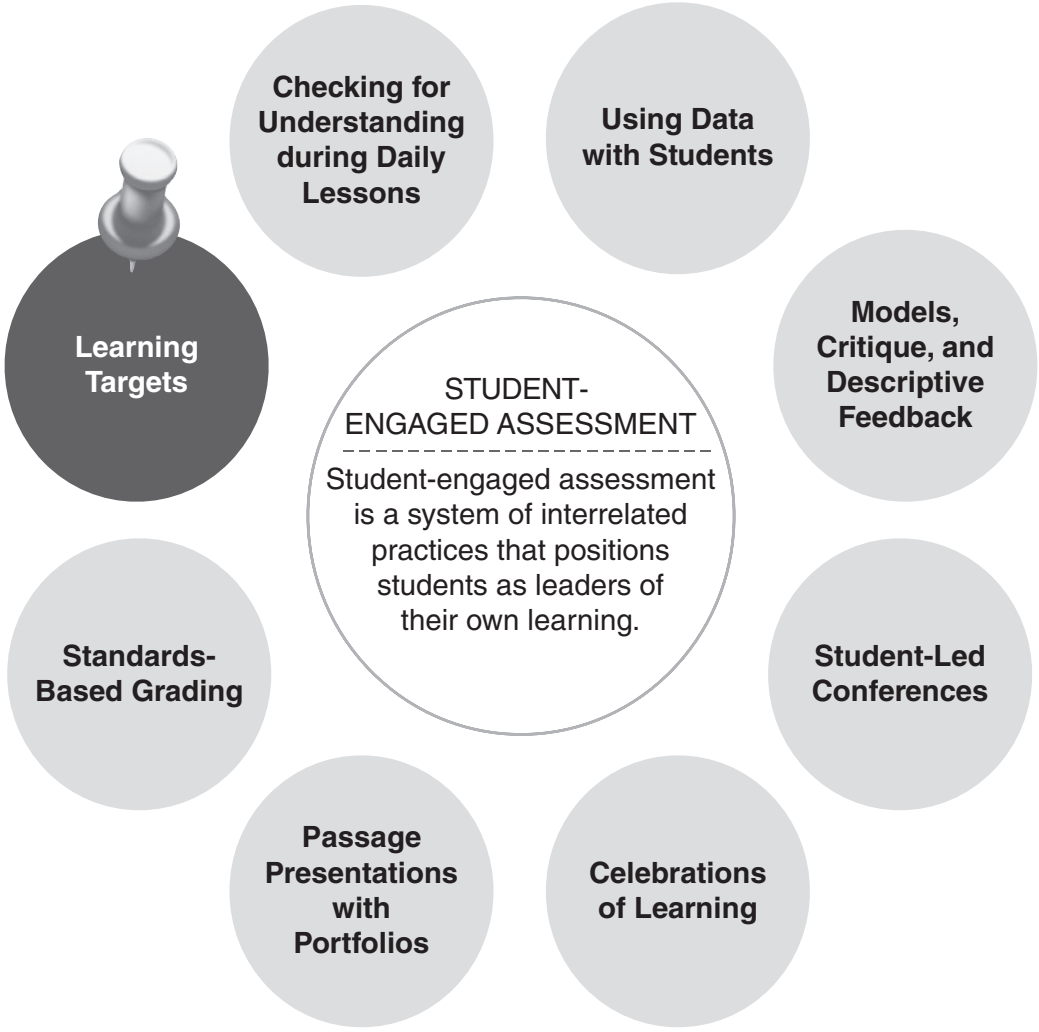

Learning Targets
Checking for Understanding during Daily Lessons
Using Data with Students
Models, Critique, and Descriptive Feedback
STUDENT-ENGAGED ASSESSMENT
Student-engaged assessment is a system of interrelated practices that positions students as leaders of their own learning.
Standards-Based Grading
Student-Led Conferences
Passage Presentations with Portfolios
Celebrations of Learning

What Are Learning Targets?

Learning targets are goals for lessons, projects, units, and courses. They are derived from standards and used to assess growth and achievement. They are written in concrete, student-friendly language (beginning with the stem "I can"), shared with students, posted in the classroom, and tracked carefully by students and teachers during the process of learning. Students spend a good deal of time discussing and analyzing them and may be involved in modifying or creating them.

After reading *Leaders of Their Own Learning*, you may have charged enthusiastically into using learning targets, only to discover that it's harder than you thought to craft high-quality learning targets and use them well. You may be struggling to write learning targets that focus students effectively on the intended learning, or you write them on the board but students don't really engage with them. These are common challenges.

Learning targets are the foundation of a student-engaged assessment system. Yet many teachers find that it takes two or three years, or longer, to master the use of them. We have found that it is most helpful to think of learning targets as a strategy that one never gets perfect. Instead, creating and using learning targets artfully and effectively can become a core part of your practice that is continually improving every year. Your hard work and persistence will be worthwhile! When students really know what they are trying to learn, can see a pathway to success, and can monitor their progress along the way, they are more engaged and motivated to work hard and grapple with challenges.

> The moment my eighth-grade year [in an EL Education network school] ended, I became nervous to leave the world of learning targets behind. . . . [In my traditional public high school] I got really nervous because without a target, I had no purpose, no clarity, and no direction. . . . So I wrote targets for myself every single day in every single class.[1]
>
> *—Elena Fulton, graduate of The Odyssey School of Denver*

In this chapter we will build on the techniques offered in *Leaders of Their Own Learning* to help you meet three learning targets. Along the way we'll give you an opportunity to explore solutions to the common challenges many teachers face when working toward each learning target.

Learning Targets for Chapter 1

1. I can craft high-quality learning targets.
2. I can use learning targets throughout a lesson to build students' understanding and ownership of their learning.
3. I can create sets of learning targets that ensure my students are aiming for grade-level standards.

[1] You can see Elena Fulton giving a speech about her experience using learning targets at: https://eleducation.org/resources/elnc25-plenaries-elena-fultons-speech

Pre-Assessment: Track Your Progress: Chapter 1

Before we dive in, take a moment to assess yourself on each of the learning targets for this chapter. In Table 1.1, circle or place an X along the continuum from Beginning to Exceeding: **How would you rate your progress toward each learning target *at this point in time?***

We'll give you a chance to assess yourself again at the end of the chapter.

Table 1.1 Chapter 1 learning target tracker

Learning Target 1: ***I can craft high-quality learning targets.***   Beginning----------Developing----------Meeting----------Exceeding   Notes:
Learning Target 2: ***I can use learning targets throughout a lesson to build students' understanding and ownership of their learning.***   Beginning----------Developing----------Meeting----------Exceeding   Notes:
Learning Target 3: ***I can create sets of learning targets that ensure my students are aiming for grade-level standards.***   Beginning----------Developing----------Meeting----------Exceeding   Notes:

Learning Target 1: I can craft high-quality learning targets.

Challenge #1: My students are working hard and generally doing what I've asked them to do, but they aren't always learning what they need to learn.

TRY THIS: GET *REALLY* CLEAR ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT STUDENTS TO LEARN *BEFORE* YOU WRITE LEARNING TARGETS

It may seem obvious, but it's important for you, as a teacher, to be really clear about what you want your students to learn before you start writing learning targets. It's easy to get caught in a trap of writing learning targets that map onto the basic *logistics* of a lesson, but fail to adequately target the intended *learning*.

For example, if students are going to create clay replicas of bird beaks during a lesson, you might be tempted to write a target something like this: *I can use clay to create an accurate replica of my chosen bird's beak*. However, if you pause to think about what you want students to learn during the lesson, you may realize that the learning target isn't quite right. Unless you are teaching an art lesson, the intended learning probably isn't about using clay. Perhaps the intended learning is actually about the purposes of different kinds of beaks (e.g., cracking seeds and nuts, probing for insects). A target that takes aim more directly at this might be something like: *I can use my clay bird beak model to explain how the beak shape helps my bird survive*.

Before writing your learning target(s) for any given lesson, it may help to write down or articulate to someone else your answers to two important questions:

1. What do I want students to learn in this lesson?
2. What do I want students to do in this lesson?

TRY THIS: USE PRECISE AND HELPFUL VERBS

When it comes to writing learning targets, the verbs are critical. They identify for students what they are supposed to do and, for both teachers and students, they give an indication of how progress will be assessed. Knowing, for example, that they will be *identifying* versus *describing* is good information for students – it helps them take greater ownership of their learning. If the verb isn't precise, things can go off track quickly. Consider, for example, a verb commonly misused in learning targets: *understand*. It's fair to identify understanding as a goal for your students, but as a target, it's not very helpful for students or for you because you can't directly see or measure understanding. Table 1.2 compares learning targets and assesses how precise and helpful their verbs are.

Figure 1.1 offers you a chance to take a stand. Are the verbs in the learning targets precise and helpful? Why or why not? If the learning target needs improvement, write a new version of it in the right-hand column: focus on precise and helpful verbs.

Table 1.2 Assessing learning targets for precise and helpful verbs

Learning Target	Precise and Helpful for Students?	Precise and Helpful for Teachers?
1.a. ***I can understand the difference between living and nonliving things.***	No. There's no action for students to take. It will be difficult for many of them to know if they've met the target or not. This may undermine students' ability to be truly engaged in the assessment process.	No. Because there's no action for students to take, there's no way for teachers to assess their progress. How can understanding be assessed? This question should lead teachers to a more precise and helpful verb.
1.b. ***I can explain the difference between living and nonliving things.***	Yes. Students know that in order to meet the target they will need to explain these differences. They must *show* their understanding somehow. What would be even more helpful to them would be an indication of what shape that explanation will take (e.g., . . . by participating in a Back-to-Back and Face-to-Face protocol; . . . by writing a paragraph that describes three differences).	Yes. Teachers can assess explanations, whether provided orally or in writing.
2.a. ***I can read about the antecedents to World War II.***	No. This learning target doesn't make clear to students what the intended learning is. Since this is a high school learning target, it is unlikely that the intended learning is the skill of reading, which is what this target suggests.	No. Teachers won't be able to assess what students are learning.
2.b. ***I can determine the most important antecedents to World War II.***	Yes. It should be clear to students that, as they read, they will need to evaluate what's most important. An additional learning target, such as "I can defend my reasoning about the most important antecedents to World War II in a five-paragraph essay," could be the learning target for the following lesson.	Yes. The intended learning is clear—determining what's important from what's not. The follow-up learning target also makes it clear how students will convey this learning—a persuasive essay.

Figure 1.1 Test yourself: Assessing learning targets for precise and helpful verbs
SOURCE: This document is available in the online toolbox at http://www.wiley.com/go/lotolcompanion.

Learning Target	Is the Verb Precise and Helpful? Why or Why Not?	If Necessary, How Would You Improve the Learning Target?
I can demonstrate understanding of whole class and individual data.		
I can cite evidence from the text to support my inferences.		
I can summarize a scientific journal article.		
I can create an accurate scale model.		
I can make sense of problems.		
I can think critically about current events.		

TRY THIS: FOCUS ON ONE THING AT A TIME

A learning target with more than one verb is usually going to be a problem, for you and your students. When a target demands multiple tasks, it is hard for students to know what to focus on. Many will struggle knowing where to start. And for teachers, it is difficult to assess progress because a student may succeed at one task and not another within a single learning target.

What follows are several sample learning targets. Consider what challenges each presents when it comes time for you and your students to assess progress:

1. I can read, analyze, and summarize the author's argument.
2. I can describe, compare, and represent my scientific thinking in pictures and words.
3. I can draw and calculate the surface area and volume of rectangular prisms.

It is important to emphasize that a lesson need not have only one learning target. There's no need to squeeze too many tasks together in one target. Two or three learning targets, with one verb each, will support students to focus on the task at hand and effectively monitor their progress. Remember, the whole point of the book *Leaders of Their Own Learning* is to engage students in the assessment process. One verb at a time helps them to know exactly what the intended learning is and to identify when they can say "I can."

What follows are the same learning targets, broken into multiple targets. Each set of learning targets may be introduced throughout the course of one lesson or span multiple days:

1. I can read, analyze, and summarize the author's argument.
   a. I can analyze the author's argument on pages xx of (text name).
   b. I can summarize the author's argument on pages xx of (text name).
2. I can describe, compare, and represent my scientific thinking in pictures and words.
   a. I can describe the science behind ____ during the Science Talk protocol.
   b. I can represent this scientific phenomenon in a scientific drawing with a caption and labels.
   c. I can compare my scientific drawing to my peers' during our Gallery Walk.
3. I can draw and calculate the surface area and volume of rectangular prisms.
   a. I can use a ruler to create 3-D labeled drawings of rectangular prisms.
   b. I can calculate the surface area of rectangular prisms.
   c. I can calculate the volume of rectangular prisms.

TRY THIS: WRITE LEARNING TARGETS THAT ARE FOCUSED ON THE *LEARNING*, NOT THE *DOING*

Since writing *Leaders of Their Own Learning* and working with teachers around the country who are implementing student-engaged assessment practices, we have found that understanding the difference between *learning* targets and *doing* targets is a key to success. This is an area in which many teachers struggle. If this is also true for you, know that you are not alone!

We offer an example in *Leaders of Their Own Learning* that is illuminating and helpful for many:

- *Doing target*: I can make a poster about the ideal habitat for a polar bear.
- *Learning target*: I can describe the ideal habitat for a polar bear in a poster format.

The first target suggests that all students need to do to be successful is make the poster. The second helps them understand the key learning in the lesson. Students often perceive "doing" targets as boxes to be checked off. They can be red herrings for students because they suggest that if they complete the task they will have met the target. For example, the learning target *I can complete two geometric proofs before the end of class* suggests that the goal is simply to complete the problems, not to learn the concept. A *learning* target here instead would be: *I can explain my geometric proof to another student*.

Sometimes examples are the best way to see the difference. Here are a few more:

- *Doing target*: I can complete my physics lab on force and motion.
- *Learning target*: I can use the data from my physics lab to demonstrate one of Newton's Laws.

- *Doing target*: I can create an interactive neighborhood map.
- *Learning target*: I can use eSpatial software to create an interactive map that shows demographic trends in my neighborhood.

- *Doing target*: I can finish my math problems before recess.
- *Learning target*: I can demonstrate two strategies for accurate double-digit addition.

- *Doing target*: I can read the text in English.
- *Learning target*: I can identify the new English vocabulary in our reading.

The key, as we have emphasized previously in this chapter, is to be clear on the intended learning for students. From there, write learning targets that take aim at that learning, rather than the way that students will demonstrate the learning (e.g., essays, drawings).

Just to make things a little more confusing, we would be remiss if we didn't point out that sometimes *doing* targets are entirely appropriate. If crafting a persuasive five-paragraph essay, accurately representing something in a scientific drawing, or creating a high-quality poster really is the goal for students, then the learning target can and should reflect that. Often such a *doing* target will come at the end of a set of related learning targets. For example:

- I can describe the ideal habitat for a polar bear.
- I can determine the top three threats to polar bears' survival.
- I can make a poster that includes full-color drawings and factual information that persuades people to protect polar bear habitat.

or

- I can identify the new English vocabulary in our reading.
- I can grapple with the sentences to make meaning.
- I can write sentences that use at least three new vocabulary words.

These sets of learning targets suggest pathways for students – the poster and the sentences are final products, but the learning students need to do to create these products is clear and achievable for them.

TRY THIS: CONTEXTUALIZE THE LEARNING TARGETS

As we point out in *Leaders of Their Own Learning*, it's easy to make targets too broad or too narrow. A target like "I can analyze scientific text" is hard for students to take ownership of because it feels like what they do every day in science class. While this target might accurately reflect a scientific literacy standard, it doesn't lend itself to a single lesson or even a series of two or three lessons. The best daily targets are *contextualized* in the topic, text, and task that students are engaged with, so that students can ground their learning in the specifics of the lesson. Table 1.3 shows four different ways that you can contextualize your learning targets.

Notice that the contextualized learning targets often include words that describe the *quality* of the work, as well as the way in which students will demonstrate the learning. Such learning targets go a long way to supporting students in producing high-quality work. Toward that end, consider using the same language in your learning targets and the criteria list or rubric for a product. Taking the first learning target from Table 1.3 as an example – *accurate* and *detailed* would be excellent words to use in the rubric for a high-quality scientific diagram. Figure 1.2 shows a sample set of learning targets and a criteria list for a healthy habitat. Notice how the learning targets and the criteria list for this product match.

Table 1.3 Strategies for contextualizing learning targets

Strategy	Noncontextualized Target	Contextualized Target
Reference the specific topic of the learning.	*I can create a scientific diagram.*	*I can create an accurate and detailed diagram for a healthy habitat for our land snails.*
Use the discipline-specific vocabulary you want students to learn.	*I can explain figurative language.*	*I can write a poem that compares two things using a metaphor.*
Reference something or someone specific to your students or community in the target.	*I can solve quadratic equations.*	*I can use Keisha's method for solving quadratic equations.*
Include the assessment in the target, so that students know what to expect.	*I can summarize the main ideas in a text.*	*I can summarize the main ideas in Chapter 5 in preparation for the upcoming unit test.*

Figure 1.2 Sample first-grade learning targets and criteria list

Learning Targets

- I can persevere to record in my science notebook every day.
- I can use my scientist's eye to notice patterns and details.
- I can use our science vocabulary to describe our snails and their world.
- I can create an accurate and detailed diagram for a healthy habitat for our land snails.

Criteria List

- My notebook is complete, with all pages filled in.
- My illustrations show patterns and details.
- My descriptions use our science vocabulary words correctly.
- My diagram is accurate and detailed, with all parts labeled neatly.

Challenge #2: I'm in a rut with my learning targets. I need help varying them more and making them more interesting for my students.

TRY THIS: VARY THE COGNITIVE DEMAND REQUIRED TO MEET EACH LEARNING TARGET

Just like in life, variety gives learning targets some spice, and one of the best ways to vary learning targets is to pay close attention to the cognitive work students will need to do to meet them. Learning targets that require students to use different cognitive processes or skills as they move through their days and weeks in school give their brains a more well-rounded workout. It's like the difference between going to the gym every day and working only on your biceps, versus doing a daily circuit of all the weight machines in the gym – biceps, triceps, quads, hamstrings, etc.

We want students to use *all* of their brains, not just parts of them. Variety ensures that they have the best opportunity to develop their strengths. Imagine day after day of learning targets that ask you to read something or listen to a lecture and then restate what you read or heard by completing quizzes or short answers. Tasks like this fall into the *Knowledge* category of the Knowledge, Reasoning, and Skills framework and the *Remember* or *Understanding* level of Bloom's Revised Taxonomy. Unfortunately, this is a common scenario in classrooms – the cognitive demand of tasks doesn't vary much.

It's important to note that we are not preferencing one kind of cognitive work over another. It's neither good nor bad to ask students to recall information on a quiz. It's neither good nor bad to ask students to analyze two arguments in a persuasive essay or create a model of a plant cell.

Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, creating) can be very useful, but it can also be harmful if it is seen as a rigid hierarchy in ways that don't always match the reality of the learning process. For example, sometimes truly understanding something is more challenging than evaluating. And sometimes understanding is actually built from students creating things; creating things shouldn't always be seen as the *end* point, as the graphics used to portray the taxonomy may suggest. These cognitive processes aren't discreet and hierarchical. What's important to consider when teaching – what we do *strongly* preference – is variety. And one of the best ways to ensure variety is to write learning targets for an arc of lessons – perhaps even a whole unit – and analyze the cognitive work they will require of students using available tools.

In *Leaders of Their Own Learning* we reference two tools for varying the cognitive demand of learning targets:

- The Knowledge, Reasoning, and Skills Framework, based on the work of Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis, and Chappuis (2006).
- The Hess Cognitive Rigor matrix, created by Karen Hess, based on Bloom's Revised Taxonomy and Webb's Depth-of-Knowledge Levels.

The Knowledge, Reasoning, and Skills Framework

As a refresher on the Knowledge, Reasoning, and Skills Framework, Table 1.4 shows how the verbs associated with each of the cognitive processes identified in the framework can be applied to sample learning targets.

Table 1.4 The Knowledge, Reasoning, and Skills Framework

Cognitive Process	Sample Verbs	Sample Standard	Sample Learning Target
Knowledge	explain, describe, identify, tell, name, list, define, label, match, choose, recall, recognize, select	**Third-grade social studies:** Discuss the lives of Americans who expanded people's rights and freedoms in a democracy.	*I can **describe** Susan B. Anthony's role in the women's suffrage movement.*
Reasoning	analyze, compare and contrast, synthesize, classify, infer, evaluate	**High school physics:** Understand the wave model and particle model for electromagnetic radiation.	*I can **compare and contrast** the wave model and particle model for electromagnetic radiation.* *I can evaluate which model is most useful for particular situations.*
Skill	observe, listen, perform, conduct, read, speak, write, assemble, operate, use, demonstrate, measure, model, collect, dramatize	**Seventh-grade ELA:** Use technology, including the internet, to produce and publish writing and link to and cite sources as well as to interact and collaborate with others, including linking to and citing sources.	*I can **write** an essay in Google Docs.* *I can use Google Docs to respond to suggestions and comments on my draft.* *I can use EasyBib to generate my bibliography in MLA style.*

The Knowledge, Reasoning, and Skills Framework + Bloom's Revised Taxonomy

Table 1.5 maps Bloom's Revised Taxonomy onto the Knowledge, Reasoning, and Skills Framework and identifies a sequence of learning targets that give students a full-brain workout in their study of insects. While a content standard for the study might be something like: "Given several pictures of adult organisms, identify and explain which organisms are insects and which are not," this standard can and should be mapped with literacy standards that are a good fit. In this case, students will be writing informative paragraphs and creating a scientific drawing for a class field guide. (We'll cover bundling standards in this way more thoroughly later in this chapter.)

Table 1.5 is copied in Figure 1.3, but this time the learning targets column is not filled in. We encourage you to print out Figure 1.3 and consider an arc of lessons you have planned for approximately one to two weeks. If you have already crafted the learning targets for these lessons, fill them into the table in the appropriate row. Do they leverage the full range of the Knowledge, Reasoning, and Skills Framework and Bloom's Revised Taxonomy? If not, how can you adjust them so that you are varying the cognitive demand of the tasks you are asking students to do? If you haven't yet created learning targets, do so with variety in mind – fill in most or all of the rows of the table with at least one learning target.

Bloom's Revised Taxonomy + Webb's Depth-of-Knowledge Levels = Hess's Cognitive Rigor Matrix

In Chapter 1 of *Leaders of Their Own Learning*, we provide a version of Hess's Cognitive Rigor Matrix (p. 39), which offers sample tasks for students mapped onto both Bloom's Taxonomy and Webb's Depth-of-Knowledge Levels. Hess's website[2] offers more detailed matrices specific to content areas:

- Close Reading
- Math-Science
- Written and Oral Communication
- World Languages
- Social Studies and Humanities
- Fine Arts
- Health and Physical Education
- Career and Technical Education

[2] http://www.karin-hess.com

Table 1.5 The Knowledge, Reasoning, and Skills Framework + Bloom's Revised Taxonomy

Knowledge, Reasoning, Skills Framework	Bloom's Revised Taxonomy	Sample Verbs	Sample Learning Targets
Knowledge Facts and concepts to be learned outright or retrieved using reference materials	**Remembering**	name, match, select, choose, order, label, list, arrange, identity, locate, define, duplicated, memorize, recognize, relate, recall, repeat. . .	*I can name the main body parts of an insect.*
	Understanding	tell, describe, explain, discuss, express, report, restate, review, translate, paraphrase. . .	*I can describe what makes an insect different from other bugs.*
Reasoning Using knowledge to solve a problem, make a decision, plan, etc.	**Applying**	use, draw, sort, write, solve, demonstrate, infer, dramatize, employ, interpret, operate, practice, schedule. . .	*I can sort insects from non-insects.*
	Analyzing	question, infer, test, experiment, compare, contrast, analyze, calculate, categorize, criticize, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, examine	*I can examine a specimen collected during fieldwork and determine whether or not it is an insect.*
	Evaluating	argue, assess, choose, compare, defend, estimate, judge, predict, rate, select, support, value, evaluate, appraise. . .	*I can assess whether a specimen should be included in our class's insect field guide based on the following criteria. . .*
Skills Using knowledge and reasoning to perform skillfully	**Creating**	create, do, perform, read, speak, operate, model, dramatize, measure, collect, compose, construct, design, develop, formulate, manage, organize, plan, assemble prepare, propose, arrange, write. . .	*I can write an informative paragraph on insect identification for our class field guide.* *I can create a scientific drawing of an insect for our class field guide.*

Figure 1.3 Map your own learning targets onto the Knowledge, Reasoning, and Skills Framework + Bloom's Revised Taxonomy
SOURCE: This document is available in the online toolbox at http://www.wiley.com/go/lotolcompanion.

Knowledge, Reasoning, Skills Framework	Bloom's Revised Taxonomy	Sample Verbs	Your Learning Targets
Knowledge Facts and concepts to be learned outright or retrieved using reference materials	**Remembering**	name, match, select, choose, order, label, list, arrange, identity, locate, define, duplicated, memorize, recognize, relate, recall, repeat. . .	
	Understanding	tell, describe, explain, discuss, express, report, restate, review, translate, paraphrase. . .	
Reasoning Using knowledge to solve a problem, make a decision, plan, etc.	**Applying**	use, draw, sort, write, solve, demonstrate, infer, dramatize, employ, interpret, operate, practice, schedule. . .	
	Analyzing	question, infer, test, experiment, compare, contrast, analyze, calculate, categorize, criticize, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, examine	
	Evaluating	argue, assess, choose, compare, defend, estimate, judge, predict, rate, select, support, value, evaluate, appraise. . .	
Skills Using knowledge and reasoning to perform skillfully	**Creating**	create, do, perform, read, speak, operate, model, dramatize, measure, collect, compose, construct, design, develop, formulate, manage, organize, plan, assemble prepare, propose, arrange, write. . .	

We urge you to familiarize yourself with the matrices that are most relevant to you and to use them as planning tools. Consider printing out the relevant matrix for an upcoming arc of lessons and map your learning targets onto it. Strive for learning targets that fit in boxes all over the matrix. Figure 1.4 shows an example of this mapping using the learning targets about insects featured in Table 1.5. The boxes that represent the cognitive process of each learning target are circled.

TRY THIS: DON'T BE AFRAID TO BE PLAYFUL

If your learning targets are boring (i.e., very much the same from day to day; only using dry, academic language), your students are likely to get bored or tune them out. Don't be afraid to surprise your students with playful learning targets. Keep everything else we've talked about regarding writing high-quality learning targets in mind, but throw in a little spice. See Table 1.6 for a few examples.

Table 1.6 Playful learning targets

Playful Option	Less Playful Option
I can earn a chili pepper cheer for juicy word choice in my story.	I can use strong verbs and interesting nouns in my story.
I can describe conditions that will keep our milkweed bugs living a cushy, cozy life.	I can describe the ideal conditions for a milkweed bug to thrive.
I can compose a rap about reconstruction that uses no swears and that will make me rich and famous.	I can summarize the main events of the reconstruction period in a rap format.
I can create an Olympic tumbling routine using the skills I know.	I can link together the tumbling skills we learned.
I can write a high-five solution to this week's mathemagical wizard stump-the-chump story problem.	I can solve mathematical story problems.
I can be a word detective by using context clues to identify parts of speech.	I can identify the parts of speech in our language dive sentence.
I can paint so my images pop and my colors capture your heart.	I can paint with vivid style.

Check Yourself Checklist

Crafting High-Quality Learning Targets Checklist

For each learning target, check all that apply:

- ❑ The learning target begins with "I can."
- ❑ The verb in the learning target makes clear to students the intended *learning*.
- ❑ The learning target contains only one verb. If students need to focus on more than one thing during a lesson, there is more than one learning target, each with only one verb.
- ❑ The target is a *learning* target, not a *doing* target (unless the learning target is purposefully written to take aim at a craftsmanship skill).
- ❑ The learning target is contextualized to the specific topic, text, or task in the lesson—it is not a general learning target that could be used for any old lesson.
- ❑ Multiple learning targets during a lesson or across more than one day fall into a variety of categories on a cognitive rigor tool (e.g., the Knowledge, Reasoning, and Skills Framework; Bloom's Revised Taxonomy; Hess's Cognitive Rigor Matrix).
- ❑ When appropriate, the learning target uses playful, engaging language.

(This checklist is available in the online toolbox at http://www.wiley.com/go/lotolcompanion.)

Figure 1.4 Hess's Cognitive Rigor Matrix with sample annotations

TOOL 2

HESS COGNITIVE RIGOR MATRIX (MATH-SCIENCE CRM):

Applying Webb's Depth-of-knowledge Levels to Bloom's Cognitive Process Dimensions

Revised Bloom's Taxonomy	Webb's DOK Level 1 Recall & Reproduction	Webb's DOK Level 2 Skills & Concepts	Webb's DOK Level 3 Strategic Thinking/Reasoning	Webb's DOK Level 4 Extended Thinking
Remember Retrieve knowledge from long-term memory, recognize, recall, locate, identify	• Recall, observe, & recognize facts, principles, properties • Recall/identify conversions among representations or numbers (e.g., customary and metric measures)	Use these Hess CRM curricular examples with most mathematics or science assignments or assessments.		
Understand Construct meaning, clarify, paraphrase, represent, translate, illustrate, give examples, classify, categorize, summarize, generalize, infer a logical conclusion), predict, compare/contrast, match like ideas, explain, construct models	• Evaluate an expression • Locate points on a grid or number on number line • Solve a one-step problem • Represent math relationships in words, pictures, or symbols • Read, write, compare decimals in scientific notation	• Specify and explain relationships (e.g., non-examples/examples; cause-effect) • Make and record observations • Explain steps followed • Summarize results or concepts • Make basic inferences or logical predictions from data/observations • Use models/diagrams to represent or explain mathematical concepts • Make and explain estimates	• Use concepts to solve non-routine problems • Explain, generalize, or connect ideas using supporting evidence • Make and justify conjectures • Explain thinking/reasoning when more than one solution or approach is possible • Explain phenomena in terms of concepts	• Relate mathematical or scientific concepts to other content areas, other domains, or other concepts • Develop generalizations of the results obtained and the strategies used (from investigation or readings) and apply them to new problem situations
Apply Carry out or use a procedure in a given situation; carry out (apply to a familiar task), or use (apply) to an unfamiliar task	• Follow simple procedures (recipe-type directions) • Calculate, measure, apply a rule (e.g., rounding) • Apply algorithm or formula (e.g., area, perimeter) • Solve linear equations • Make conversions among representations or numbers, or within and between customary and metric measures	• Select a procedure according to criteria and perform it • Solve routine problem applying multiple concepts or decision points • Retrieve information from a table, graph, or figure and use it solve a problem requiring multiple steps • Translate between tables, graphs, words, and symbolic notations (e.g., graph data from a table) • Construct models given criteria	• Design investigation for a specific purpose or research question • Conduct a designed investigation • Use concepts to solve non-routine problems • Use & show reasoning, planning, and evidence • Translate between problem & symbolic notation when not a direct translation	• Select or devise approach among many alternatives to solve a problem • Conduct a project that specifies a problem, identifies solution paths, solves the problem, and reports results
Analyze Break into constituent parts, determine how parts relate, differentiate between relevant-irrelevant, distinguish, focus, select, organize, outline, find coherence, deconstruct	• Retrieve information from a table or graph to answer a question • Identify whether specific information is contained in graphic representations (e.g., table, graph, T-chart, diagram) • Identify a pattern/trend	• Categorize, classify materials, data, figures based on characteristics • Organize or order data • Compare/contrast figures or data • Select appropriate graph and organize & display data • Interpret data from a simple graph • Extend a pattern	• Compare information within or across data sets or texts • Analyze and draw conclusions from data, citing evidence • Generalize a pattern • Interpret data from complex graph • Analyze similarities/differences between procedures or solutions	• Analyze multiple sources of evidence • Analyze complex/abstract themes • Gather, analyze, and evaluate information
Evaluate Make judgments based on criteria, check, detect inconsistencies or fallacies, judge, critique	"UG" – unsubstantiated generalizations = stating an opinion without providing any support for it!		• Cite evidence and develop a logical argument for concepts or solutions • Describe, compare, and contrast solution methods • Verify reasonableness of results	• Gather, analyze, & evaluate information to draw conclusions • Apply understanding in a novel way, provide argument or justification for the application
Create Reorganize elements into new patterns/structures, generate, hypothesize, design, plan, produce	• Brainstorm ideas, concepts, or perspectives related to a topic	• Generate conjectures or hypotheses based on observations or prior knowledge and experience	• Synthesize information within one data set, source, or text • Formulate an original problem given a situation • Develop a scientific/mathematical model for a complex situation	• Synthesize information across multiple sources or texts • Design a mathematical model to inform and solve a practical or abstract situation

Learning Target 2: I can use learning targets throughout a lesson to build students' understanding and ownership of their learning.

Challenge #3: I feel okay about writing learning targets, but I'm in a rut about how to use them. I always introduce them and unpack them in the same way.

TRY THIS: PLAN AHEAD

Writing high-quality learning targets is important work for teachers, but it's really just the tip of the iceberg. Learning targets must be also be *used* effectively in order to truly empower students to be leaders of their own learning. They can't just be written on the board or mentioned once and then forgotten. But, how exactly should they be used? Should you introduce all of the learning targets for a lesson at the very start of the lesson? Should you introduce them one at a time for each chunk of the lesson? Should students grapple with a problem or text prior to introducing learning targets?

The reality is that there is no one right way to introduce learning targets to your students. What's more important than having a set structure for the practice is that you have a strategy and a plan. In order to motivate students to take ownership of their learning and help them understand not only where they're going, but how they are progressing, they need to truly *engage* with the learning targets. That means that first they need to understand what the target means (we'll get to that in the next section), and then they need to see how they can take aim at it. Helping students connect any given learning target with what they already know and what they'll need to know in order to make progress is a key consideration for when to introduce each target.

There is a strong example of a strategic approach to introducing learning targets in the case study on page 28 of *Leaders of Their Own Learning*. Because it's still a strong and useful example, we have included it here for you as well. The teacher in this case study activates students' prior knowledge by giving them an engaging problem to grapple with. By the time she introduces the learning target, students are fully engaged in why that learning target makes sense in the lesson. They are hooked because they now care about meeting the target and can see their way forward with it.

Case Study

Finding the Right Time to Introduce a Daily Learning Target in an Algebra II Class at The Springfield Renaissance School in Springfield, Massachusetts

Just as they do every day, students in Hilary Ducharme's eleventh-grade Algebra II class come into the room and get right to work grappling with new problems, which are written on the board. Today Ducharme has asked her students to FOIL a series of problems, multiplying terms within parentheses in a particular order (first, outer, inner, last). A quiet hum settles on the room. Students are working together in groups while Ducharme walks around taking attendance and checking in with individual students. As students finish, several of them walk to the board and write their solutions.

Students pull out their homework, a problem set with one of four long-term learning targets for the semester written at the top: *I can construct quadratic models to solve problems*. Below that is the supporting learning target that Ducharme introduced to students the previous day: *I can find the zeros of a quadratic function by completing the square*. Students complete a reflection form about what was easy and challenging for them about the homework, and then they check their "complete the square" solutions using the quadratic formula. This leads into a lively classwide debate about the pros and cons of using "complete the square" versus the quadratic formula. "I like to have them take a stand like that," Ducharme says. "It increases their engagement. Suddenly they are speaking passionately about quadratic models!"

It isn't until about 35 minutes into the class that Ducharme points out the new daily learning target to the students: *I can identify and factor a difference of two squares*. She brings them back to the FOIL problems they had done in the first 10 minutes of class. As they explore the patterns in the solutions, awareness begins to dawn on the students. They see that their solutions to those problems have put them well on their way to the conceptual understanding they need to meet the new learning target.

Ducharme is strategic about when she introduces students to the daily learning target. She doesn't think it's a good use of time to introduce the learning target before her students have had a chance to do some grappling on their own. She says, "It will be meaningless to them unless they've had some experience with it." In this case, Ducharme knew that the students should be able to see the patterns based on the rules they have already learned about quadratics. "This is the fourth year I've taught these learning targets," Ducharme says, "and by now I've had enough experience to know how to build students to those 'aha' moments."

Choosing When to Introduce Learning Targets Depends on What Kind of Lesson You Are Teaching

By way of example, let's take a closer look at two related but different lesson structures. Workshop 1.0 – the ubiquitous Workshop Model – follows the traditional "I do/We do/You do" structure, beginning with a mini-lesson, followed by guided practice with teacher support, and then independent practice by students. Workshop 2.0, on the other hand, begins with students grappling individually and constructing meaning through peer discussion rather than with teacher modeling. A mini-lesson happens only after students have first had a chance to grapple.

Workshop 1.0 is often a better choice when students are learning a new skill that requires teacher modeling and when they may not be able to anchor new learning to past learning. In this case, you will most likely want to introduce the learning target right at the outset of the lesson so that students are grounded in the purpose of the lesson first. Table 1.7 shows the Workshop 1.0 lesson structure – the introduction of the learning target and opportunities to check in on the target with students are highlighted.

A Workshop 2.0 lesson is a good choice when you are prioritizing students grappling with a challenge first, and they have enough strategies to know how to begin. Once students have tried to make sense of a challenging text or math problem, and perhaps failed in that first attempt, they are more likely to be invested in learning the skill or knowledge required to meet the learning target. After students have grappled and the learning target is introduced, then teachers can conduct a mini-lesson to "mop up" misconceptions revealed during the grapple phase. This is the strategy used in the case study referenced previously. Tables 1.8 and 1.9 show the components of a Workshop 2.0 lesson for literacy and math, respectively, and highlight the logical places for learning targets to be introduced and checked in on.

Workshop 1.0 and 2.0 are just two possible lesson structures. No matter what structure you use, or what you call it, the important thing to keep in mind when it comes to introducing the learning target

is when it is most *needed* by students. At what point in the lesson will revealing the learning target capture students' attention and interest? How can the target be used to motivate students to dig in and feel motivated to learn new things?

Table 1.7 Workshop 1.0 lesson structure

Component	Purpose
Introduction	• Build students' curiosity and need to know linked to the purpose of the lesson. • **Introduce and unpack the learning target.**
Mini-lesson ("I do")	• Provide direct instruction through explicit modeling of the task (not just what to do, but how to think through the process). • Focus on one trait, strategy, or aspect of quality at a time in direct support of the learning target. • Prepare students for success during application by providing a model of proficiency.
Guided practice ("We do")	• Gradually release responsibility. Create a "safe space" for students to practice the task with support; give students experience with success. • Assess student readiness to move into practice/application. • Address student misconceptions (group or individual).
Practice/application ("You do")	• **Reconnect to learning target and support students to set a goal for application time related to the learning target.** • Give students the opportunity to practice/apply the particular skill or concept, independent of the teacher. • Provide intentional differentiation.
Share	• Honor student work, ideas, and voice. • **Share progress toward the target; celebrate successes.**
Debrief	• Assess students' proficiency in relation to the learning target (self-assessment; teacher assessment). • Make connections between the specific learning target and the larger context. • Build lasting understanding by synthesizing as a group. • Identify next steps and set goals.

Table 1.8 Workshop 2.0 lesson structure for literacy

Component	Purpose
Engage	• Build students' curiosity and need to know linked to the purpose of the lesson.
Grapple	• Build students' self-reliance, confidence, and perseverance through grappling with complex text.
Discuss	• Build students' skills to justify their thinking, make coherent arguments based on text evidence, consider the ideas of others, and be metacognitive about their own approaches.
Focus	• **Introduce and unpack learning target.** • Provide explicit instruction if needed to "mop up" whatever students don't figure out on their own, focusing on a particular skill or concept. • Respond to gaps in understanding, misconceptions, or good ideas from students. • Gradually release responsibility. Create a "safe space" for students to practice the task with support; give students experience with success.
Apply	• Allow time for students to practice the particular skill or concept, providing intentional differentiation. • **Pause the whole class periodically during work time to provide a structured opportunity for students to monitor progress on the learning target and set a goal for the next segment of application time.**
Synthesize	• **Clarify the learning target(s), assess progress, and identify next steps/set goals.** • Address misconceptions, generalize conceptual understanding, and build lasting understanding through synthesis.

Table 1.9 Workshop 2.0 lesson structure for math

Component	Purpose
Engage and grapple	• Build students' curiosity and need to know linked to the purpose of the lesson. • Build students' self-reliant problem-solving skills. • Grapple with an interesting, complex problem or problem set related to the learning target(s).
Discuss	• Build students' skills to be metacognitive about their own approaches, justify their mathematical reasoning, and consider others' mathematical reasoning.
Focus	• **Discuss the learning target(s).** • Provide explicit instruction if needed to "mop up" whatever students don't figure out on their own, focusing on a particular skill or concept. • Respond to gaps in understanding, misconceptions, or good ideas from students. • Gradually release responsibility. Create a "safe space" for students to practice the task with support; give students experience with success.

Apply	• Time for students to practice the particular skill or concept in a collaborative learning culture.
	• Options:
	  • May return to original problem
	  • Analyze models of student work–strong and weak
	  • Rotate through stations
	  • Work on one or more additional problems, focusing on the learning target
	• **Pause the whole class periodically during work time to provide a structured opportunity for students to monitor progress on the learning target and set a goal for the next segment of application time.**

Synthesize	• **Clarify the learning target(s), assess progress, and identify next steps/set goals.** • Address misconceptions, generalize conceptual understanding, and build lasting understanding through synthesis.

TRY THIS: BE STRATEGIC ABOUT HOW YOU "UNPACK" LEARNING TARGETS WITH STUDENTS

Like a lot of things, posting and unpacking learning targets risks becoming a rote formality if you don't give care and attention to the process of engaging students with them. One of our most important messages here is to give yourself the time and flexibility to dig into the learning targets and discuss them thoroughly with your students. The point of unpacking a learning target with students is making sure they understand the target and that they know what success will look like. Here are three key tips to consider when unpacking learning targets:

1. Review domain-specific and academic vocabulary in the learning target.
2. Focus on the verb in the target (e.g., describe, sort, analyze) and ensure that students know what cognitive work they will be doing in the lesson.
3. Ensure that students understand what success will look like. How will they know they have mastered the learning target?

It is important to vary your approach. Unpacking learning targets in the same way every day will cause some students to tune out, limiting their ability to take ownership of the process. For example, if your learning target is: *I can compare and contrast birds and mammals,* why not start with some low-risk – even fun – comparing and contrasting: Compare and contrast the Patriots and the Steelers (or Beyoncé and Taylor Swift, or *1984* and *Animal Farm*, or whatever will capture your students' interest). After students have had some fun, and hopefully a little spirited debate about this topic, you will be able

It is critical to give the process of unpacking a learning target the time it needs. Students must be clear about where they're headed and what success will look like.

Photo credit: EL Education

to unpack what it means to compare and contrast (i.e., what success on the learning target will look like) with students who are engaged and ready to get started.

Unpacking learning targets often takes three to five minutes, but there is no hard and fast rule. Teachers often rush through this process so that they can get to the lesson; however, unpacking the learning target can be viewed as a valuable part of the lesson in and of itself. It can and should be viewed as valuable learning time.

Explore this topic further by viewing the video and considering the questions in Video Spotlight 1.1.

Video Spotlight 1.1: Unpacking a Learning Target to Clarify Terms and Concepts
https://vimeo.com/313842309

This video features a middle school math teacher from Polaris Charter Academy in Chicago. Because the learning target contains an important algebraic concept, the teacher spends time unpacking that concept with students before they begin the work.

Video Reflection Questions

1. The teacher in this video takes time to carefully unpack key vocabulary, like *linear* and *variable*. When you use learning targets in your class, how do you make sure that the key vocabulary in the targets is understood by your students?
2. How does it help students to unpack learning targets together in groups, versus on their own?

Challenge #4: I teach young children. Learning targets are really abstract for them. How can I help my students understand and own them?

TRY THIS: MAKE UNPACKING THE LEARNING TARGET A PUZZLE TO SOLVE

For primary students who can't yet read, unpacking learning targets in a more traditional way (e.g., by asking one student to read the target out loud and then inviting other students to explain the words in the target) doesn't always work. Our youngest students often need a more innovative and engaging hook to help them truly understand where they are headed with their learning.

Try translating your learning target into a Mad-Lib style puzzle with strategically placed blanks in place of key words. Then engage students in a dialogue to solve the puzzle. A puzzle like this not only gets students truly excited to engage in their learning, it is also a wonderful way to teach critical academic and domain-specific vocabulary. The following Close Up provides an example used in a kindergarten study of bird adaptations.

Close Up: Unpacking a Primary Grades Learning Target

Steven, a kindergarten teacher in Boston, wrote the following learning target for a lesson in which students would study pictures of bird beaks in order to draw conclusions about how different birds use their beaks for various purposes.

Learning Target: *I can closely view pictures to gather information about bird beaks.*

To introduce the target to his students, many of whom still weren't reading, Steven wrote the following on the board and read it out loud:

I can closely _____ _____ *to gather* _____ *about* _____ _____.

"Before we begin today, we have a puzzle to solve," Steven told his students. "We've got all these photographs out on our tables. What do you think we are going to do with these photographs?" Students shouted out words like "look at them," "read them," and "study them."

"That's right," said Steven, "we are going to view them with our eyes." Then he wrote *view* in the first blank and, so that even nonreaders would be able to remember the word in that blank, he drew some eyes over the word. Now the learning target looked like this:

I can closely view _____ *to gather* _____ *about* _____ _____.

Next he asked Frances, a student in the back row who was starting to wiggle distractedly, "What are we going to view?"

"The pictures," Frances answered. (She was paying attention all along.)

"What can we put above the word to help us remember that?" Steven asked. He drew a picture of a picture. Before long the learning target looked like this.

I can closely view pictures to gather _____ *about* _____ _____.

Now Steven's students were really getting intrigued about what words and pictures would go in those other blanks.

"Why would we *closely* view pictures," he asked. "What would we hope to find in them?"

"Things," one student answered. "Colors," said another. "Details," said another.

Steven took his cue and synthesized their ideas. "So if we saw things and colors and details, we could gather a lot of information, couldn't we?" And then he filled in the next blank and drew a thought bubble over it as a symbol for information.

I can closely view pictures to gather information about _____ _____.

Finally, he invited students to look at a few of the pictures and fill in the last two blanks. Students noticed right away that all of the pictures had bird beaks in them.

Although Steven's students were only five, they now had a clear and memorable understanding of what they would do and learn in the investigative lesson that day. Before long they were gathered around the photos at their tables, pencils and note-catchers in hand, closely viewing the pictures in search of important information for their ongoing study of birds.

TRY THIS: USE A STORY OR POEM TO FOCUS STUDENTS ON THE LEARNING TARGET

The EL Education K–5 Language Arts Curriculum includes a kindergarten module on Toys and Play that offers another example of introducing learning targets to our youngest learners. This example confronts the challenge of learning targets being too abstract for young children in a different way – with story. Before introducing the learning target in the first lesson, the teacher reads the story of "The Magic Bow," which ends with a brief poem that students hear repeatedly throughout the Toys and Play module. Before long, students can recite the poem themselves and use it as a kind of mantra to help them maintain focus, believe in themselves, and work hard to learn new things. Read the story and poem in Figure 1.5. Consider how you can use stories and poems to help your primary age students take aim at their learning.

Figure 1.5 The Magic Bow: Taking aim at learning targets

"The Magic Bow"

Once upon a time, there was a little old woman who owned a magical bow. This bow would allow anyone who used it to do something amazing that they had never been able to do before.

A person would take up the bow, fit it with an arrow, take aim at their heart's desire, and "voila!" they would be able to do what they had always dreamed of learning. Whether they dreamt of learning to climb a tree, or play a musical instrument, or remember all meanings of all of the words in all of the world, the bow would help them achieve their goals.

People came far and wide to ask the woman to borrow her bow. And she would gladly share it with anyone who asked kindly. But one day, a greedy person came and stole the magic bow. Everyone was devastated. Many people thought that this was a terrible thing. They thought that no one would ever achieve their heart's desires again. They thought that no one would ever learn to do anything amazing again.

Of course the old woman knew better. She told the people who came to her that is wasn't the bow at all that helped them learn something new, but the effort they put forth and belief in themselves that gave them this power. From then on she gave the people who sought her this poem to help them remember the true power of learning:

Think of the thing you desire to learn.
Believe in yourself and your efforts will earn,
The ability to learn something new.
Now take your aim at the target true.

Created by EL Education for Instructional purposes.
Lexlle: 870L

Challenge #5: I have a high percentage of English language learners in my class. I'm never sure how much the learning targets help them stay focused on their learning because of language barriers.

TRY THIS: USE CONSISTENT ROUTINES TO UNPACK LEARNING TARGETS

English language learners (ELLs) deserve the same rich, compelling, and challenging curriculum that other students receive. They have the same cognitive needs as any student, which makes it critical that you *not* change learning targets by making the vocabulary or concepts simpler. Instead, offer supports that give ELLs equitable access to understanding rich and rigorous learning targets. Unpacking learning targets is an opportunity for all students – including ELLs – to learn academic and domain-specific language in context.

What follows are several strategies to employ when unpacking and using learning targets throughout a lesson that will support ELLs to understand where they are headed with their learning:

- Focus on the meaning and purpose of a key phrase within the learning target. For example, using the learning target *I can explain how the author uses reasons and evidence to support a point,* ask students questions like:
  - Can you figure out why we say *to support a point*? (to show purpose for reasons and evidence)
  - Why do we use the word *to*? (to signal that we will provide a purpose or reasons)
  - What follows the word *to*? (a verb + a noun/an action + a thing)
  - What if we remove *to*? (we no longer are alerted that the sentence will have a purpose or reasons)
- To better integrate the affective aspects of learning a language with academic content, check for comprehension by asking ELLs to summarize and then personalize the learning targets:
  - Can you put the learning target in your own words?
  - How do you feel about the learning target? (to assess if they feel overwhelmed and to discuss strategies to make progress toward the target)
- If you introduce more than one learning target at the same time, ask ELLs to use sentence frames with temporal words to put the learning targets in their own words (e.g., First we will _____; Then we will_____; Last we will _____. These steps link to the assessment by _____).
- If the learning target is connected to previous learning targets that day or in previous lessons, ask ELLs to recall and describe one time that they practiced working on the previous few learning targets.
- Pause the lesson to ask ELLs to give specific examples of how they have worked toward each learning target in the lesson so far. Invite them to rephrase the learning target again now that they have had experience with it.
- Ask students if they can figure out why you are introducing this particular learning target today. Why is it important? How does it help them with the lesson or unit?

- Emphasize different forms and meanings of the vocabulary in the learning target, particularly the key verbs. For example, using the learning target: *I can link two different ideas in one sentence*, emphasize the different forms and meanings of the word *link*:
  - Let's stand up and link arms. What part of speech is *link* in the first learning target? What part of speech is *link* when we link arms? (verb)
  - What other part of speech can *link* be? What does it mean? (a relationship or connection between two things; also, a loop in a chain)
  - Look at the links we made with our arms when we linked arms. As we write today, think about this question: How are our linked arms like our linked ideas when we write?
- Learn and practice vocabulary within the context of the topic and text. For example, in a second grade unit on schools and community, students read the learning target: *I can write about my observations after closely viewing community pictures*. They discuss the meaning of *observations* in this sentence and then observe school communities through some mystery pictures. Afterward, students talk about what they observed before they write about it. ELLs can also compare shades of meaning (e.g., observe, see, notice, spot), use sentence frames to describe what they observe ("I see _____. One thing I observe is _____."), and contrast the observing and noticing process to the inquiring, evaluating, and wondering process.
- Use word walls or vocabulary logs to track and learn selected vocabulary.

Challenge #6: I'm good at introducing the learning targets for every lesson, but I'm not so sure what I should do after that. How do I return to them throughout the course of a lesson?

TRY THIS: CATCH AND RELEASE

When you first begin using learning targets, it can feel a bit forced to keep referring to the target throughout your lesson. However, orienting students back to the target at major intersections in the flow of the lesson is a key to student ownership. It keeps the "why we are doing this" front and center for students. Over time your pointer finger will habitually track back to the learning targets on your board, and reminding students of the target will become part of the natural conversation in your lessons.

Here are some of the key intersections to attend to in your lesson plan, moments when students may need to be reminded of the target:

- Just before a mini-lesson
- When students are released to apply their learning
- When you are circulating and notice that several students are off track or off task

- When students ask questions about key vocabulary or concepts
- When you bring the whole group back to share, discuss, or debrief

One key to success with this practice is student involvement in tracking progress. You want to hear from them about how they think they are doing individually and as a class (e.g., "What do you think? Did we hit the target yet? Show me."). You want students to say things like "Yes, we've met the target. Here's the evidence." Rather than your assessing their progress, asking them to assess themselves and provide a rationale for their response will engage students more fully in meeting learning targets. There are many tools and protocols that can help you involve students in this process (see the next section Try This: Put Students in the Driver's Seat).

Catch and release doesn't always have to be a formal process that breaks the flow of the lesson (i.e., stopping the whole class and directing their attention to the learning target). You can naturally weave catch and release into the lesson through questions, reminders, or quick checks for understanding that you direct to individual students, small groups, or the whole class.

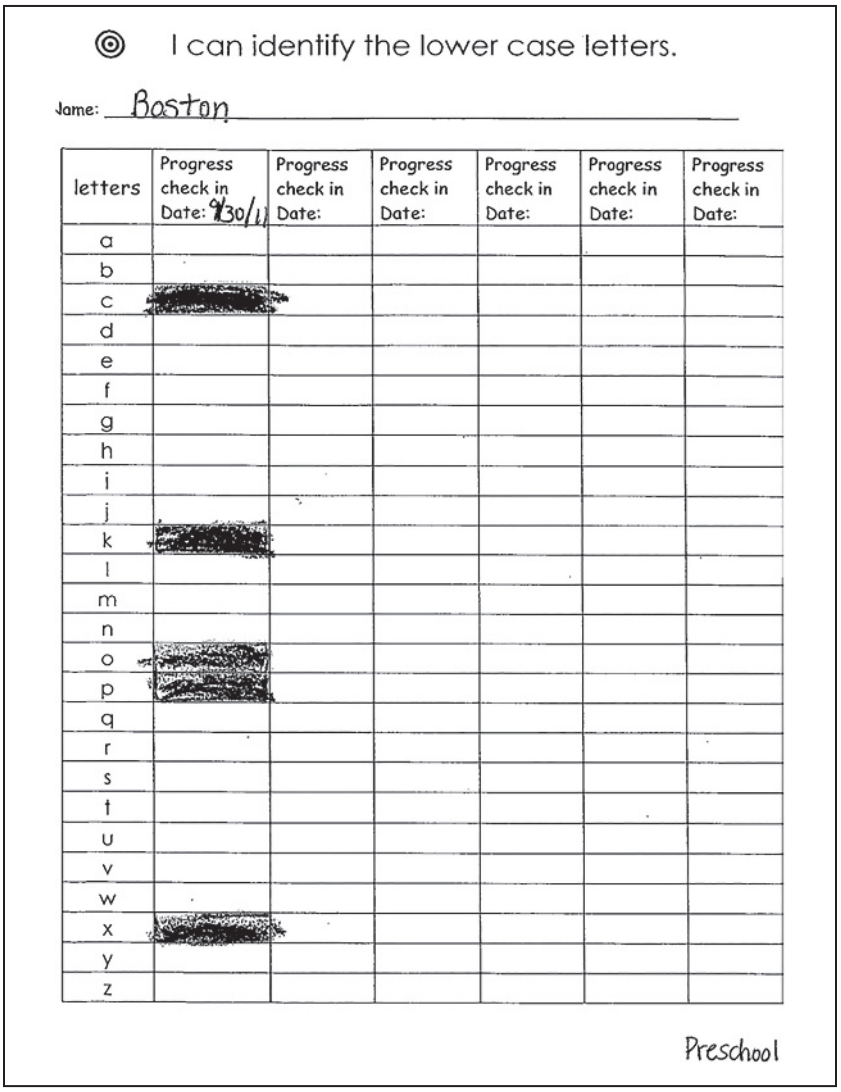
TRY THIS: PUT STUDENTS IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT

Often when we think of tracking student progress, we think of it as something that is done *to* students, rather than something done *with* students. Clearly you will need to track students' progress, but we urge you to also include them in the process. If we give students the tools to understand where they are headed with their learning, help them track progress along the way, and then debrief with them not only what they learned but how they learned it, we put them in the driver's seat. After all, students are the ones who are in control of their learning, not us. If they feel motivated to persevere when the going gets tough because they understand where they are headed and why, that will take them much further than our encouragement or admonishments.

There are many possible ways to engage students in the process (in Chapters 2 and 3 we explore this topic in more depth). Here are just a couple of examples:

- *Simple protocols*. In the previous section, Try This: Catch and Release, we list key points during a lesson when you might want to "catch" students to check in on learning targets. If you "catch" the whole class, you can have them check in with each other using simple protocols like Turn and Talk. Ask questions like, "Where are you in relation to our first learning target? Back up your answer with evidence."
- *Individual and whole-class tracking forms*: Learning target trackers are helpful for you and the class to get a picture of whole-class progress. You can also create the same form on a sheet of paper for students to reflect on individually before adding their dot to the whole-class tracker, or you can create one like Table 1.1 at the start of this chapter. Figure 1.6 shows another kind of form for tracking progress over time. Chapter 3 contains many more examples.

Figure 1.6 Sample form for tracking progress over time



◎ I can identify the lower case letters.

Name: Boston

letters	Progress check in Date: 9/30/11	Progress check in Date:	Progress check in Date:	Progress check in Date:	Progress check in Date:	Progress check in Date:
a						
b						
c	[redacted]					
d						
e						
f						
g						
h						
i						
j						
k	[redacted]					
l						
m						
n						
o	[redacted]					
p	[redacted]					
q						
r						
s						
t						
u						
v						
w						
x	[redacted]					
y						
z						

Preschool

TRY THIS: DEBRIEF, DEBRIEF, DEBRIEF

Debriefing learning with students, usually at the end of a lesson, is essential. This is students' opportunity to reflect on their learning targets individually and as a group. They can determine what they still may need to learn to meet a given learning target fully, and they can consider how they will apply their new learning or skills to future learning.

Asking debrief questions to the whole class and waiting for volunteers to answer is a strategy that should be used very sparingly. Instead, there are many different protocols that can be used to maximize student voice and participation in the process. It's important that every student is engaged in reflection. Just a few of the many protocols that are effective for debriefing learning include[3]:

[3] Fuller protocol descriptions, including step-by-step instructions, can be found in our 2015 book *Management in the Active Classroom,* which also includes many more examples.

- *Think-Pair-Share/Write-Pair-Share*: In response to a question or prompt, students think individually for a set amount of time. When cued, students turn to a partner and each shares his or her thinking, also for a limited amount of time. Pairs then share with the large group.
- *Back-to-Back and Face-to-Face*: Partners stand back-to-back and wait for the teacher to ask a question or give a prompt. After listening to the prompt and thinking, they wait for the teacher to signal "face-to-face" and each take turns speaking and listening. This can be repeated with the same or different partners as many times as is helpful.

Learning target trackers give teachers and students a visual indicator of whole-class progress toward meeting targets. On this tracker, different color dots represent progress at different points in the learning process. M.A.D.E stands for Mastery, Accomplished, Developing, Emerging.

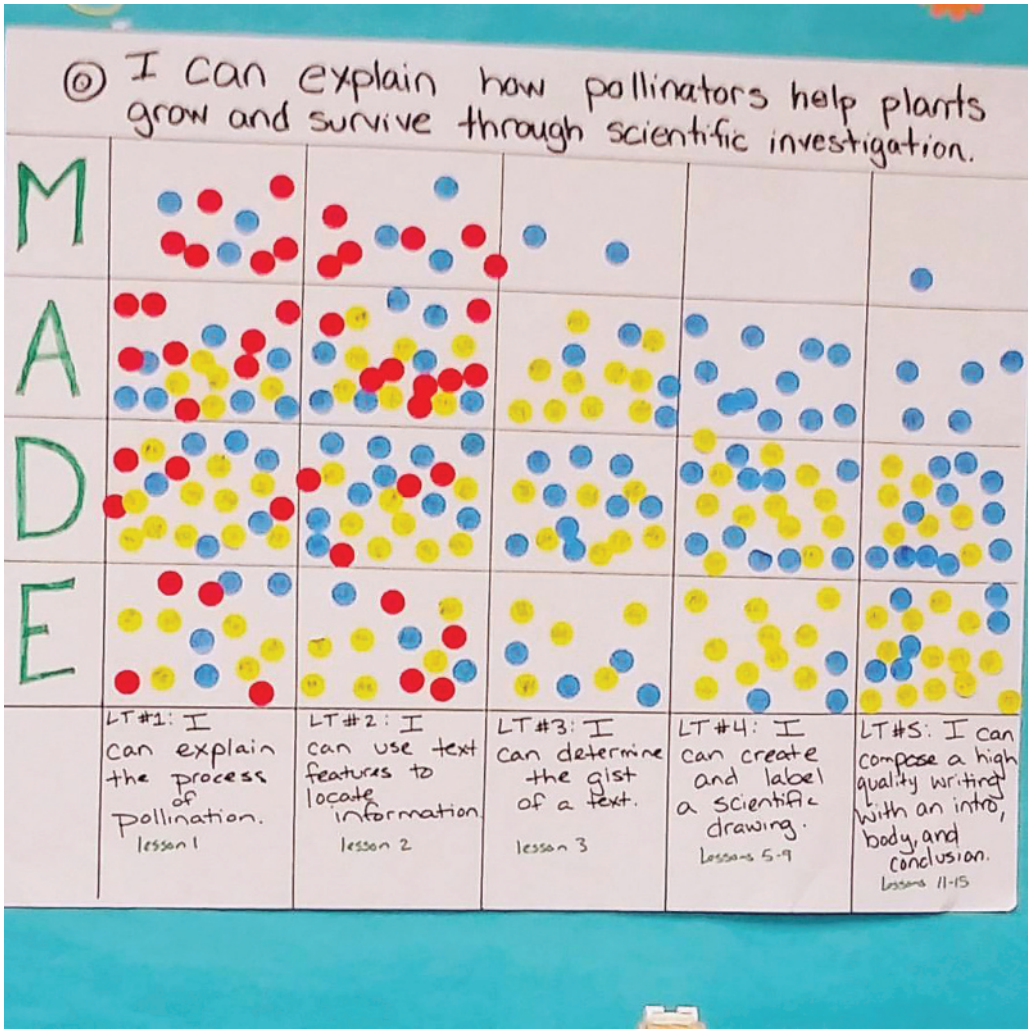


Photo credit: Wanda McClure

- *Human Bar Graph*: Teachers identify a range of levels of understanding or mastery (e.g., beginning, developing, accomplished) as labels for three to four adjacent lines. Students then form a human bar graph by standing in the line that best represents their current level of understanding. This provides a visual representation of whole class understanding.
- *Exit tickets*: Any relevant questions, prompts, or graphic displays of student thinking can be captured on an index card or small sheet of paper and viewed by the teacher or other student to determine a student's readiness for the next step or to assess learning from a lesson.

Note: Debriefs, protocols, and exit tickets are all discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2. For now you can explore this topic further by viewing the video and considering the questions in Video Spotlight 1.2.

Video Spotlight 1.2: Scaffolding Discussion Skills with a Socratic Circle
https://www.edutopia.org/video/scaffolding-discussion-skills-socratic-circle

This video features students at The Springfield Renaissance School in Springfield, Massachusetts, engaged in a deep conversation using a Socratic seminar as a scaffold for evidence-based discourse. Educator Linda Darling-Hammond offers commentary throughout the video and highlights the efficacy of the teacher's debrief strategy. This video was produced by Edutopia.

Video Reflection Questions

1. A few students participated in the Socratic seminar by tracking the conversation and then reporting out what they found. Why is this an effective debrief strategy, not only for those few students, but for the whole group?
2. In the video, Linda Darling-Hammond describes the students' exit ticket reflection as metacognitive. How does metacognition in a debrief help students transfer their learning from one setting to the next? If students don't have a chance to debrief, what learning opportunities are lost?

Challenge #7: I post my learning targets on the board or on chart paper, but as soon as students leave the room or move on to the next learning target, they forget what work relates to what learning target.

TRY THIS: WRITE THE LEARNING TARGET ON EVERYTHING

Well, not *everything*, but including the learning target on all handouts, homework assignments, anchor charts, and other related work keeps the target front and center for students. It also builds their understanding and ownership of where they're headed with their learning so that they can organize a body of evidence that demonstrates how they are progressing toward meeting it. See the following photos for two examples.

Learning target posted at the top of an assignment

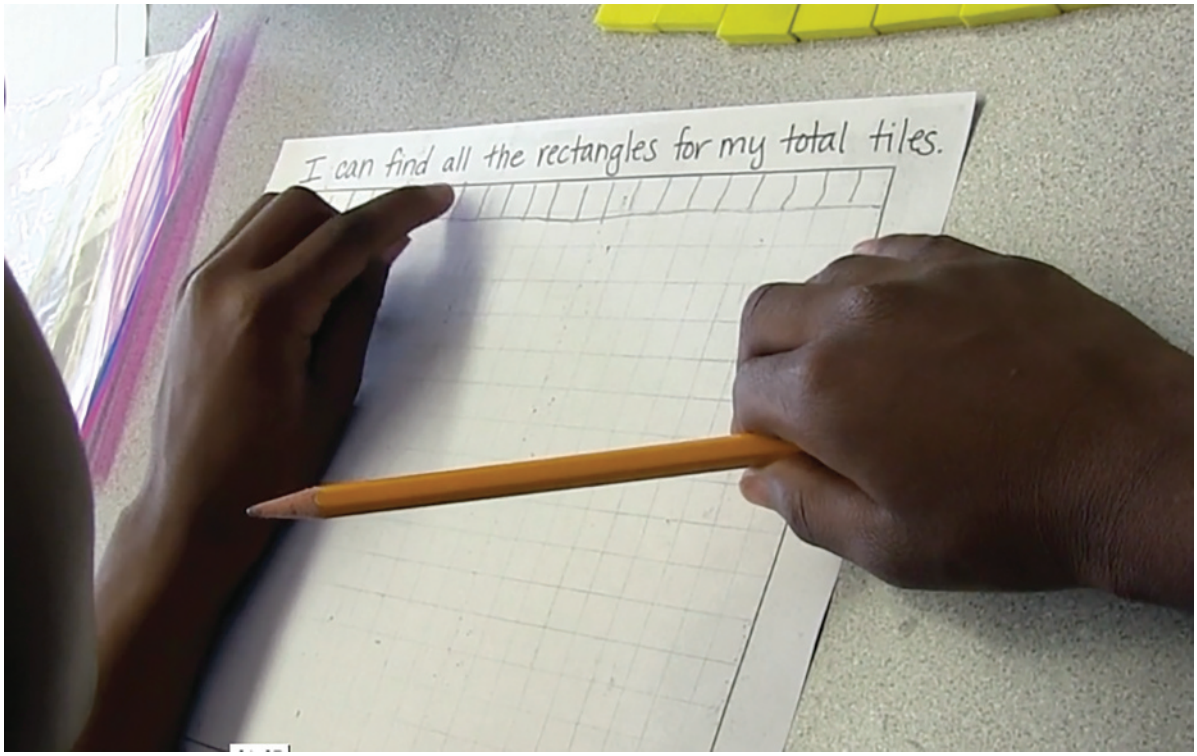


Photo credit: EL Education

Learning targets displayed with student projects and related standard

Photo credit: Anne Vilen

Challenge #8: I know that learning targets for character are a good idea, but I don't take them as seriously as academic learning targets, and therefore, I don't take the time to really focus on them with my students.

TRY THIS: CONNECT CHARACTER LEARNING TARGETS AND ACADEMIC LEARNING TARGETS IN A MEANINGFUL WAY

If you are like most teachers, you feel a lot of pressure to cover all of the academic standards you are responsible for. Too often, it just feels like you can't take time to talk about character learning targets. We feel strongly that this is a mistake! In the end, your investment in helping students be respectful, courageous, collaborative learners will make everything go better in your classroom. We believe that sets of academic learning targets should always include at least one related character learning target that will support students to meet their academic learning targets. EL Education's definition of character includes Habits of Effective Learners (i.e., work habits, such as initiative, responsibility, perseverance, collaboration) and Habits of Ethical People, such as empathy, integrity, respect, compassion.

Character issues are often a big impediment to students' ability to meet academic learning targets. Students who struggle to work collaboratively, those who give up if they don't understand something right away, or those who don't see the value in revising their work get in the way of their own learning. Character learning targets that are aimed at what might be difficult in a lesson, and that are unpacked with students just like academic learning targets, will support students' academic and character growth. It's worth the time.

Used alongside your standards-based academic targets, character learning targets can really help students understand how they need to work in order to be successful learners. This is especially true when the character learning targets are specific and contextualized for the task or concept you are teaching.

Once you have crafted a character learning target, remember that it's just as important to unpack that target as it is the academic learning target. Students need to know exactly what it looks like and sounds like to demonstrate the character learning target. Here's an example of what the unpacking dialogue for the character learning target pictured might sound like:

Teacher: Juan, can you read our first target?
Juan: *I can give feedback to my peers respectfully.*
Teacher: Talk to your tablemates. What do you think "respectfully" looks like and sounds like? What will we see and hear as you are doing your peer feedback protocol?

Possible Student Responses:

- You'll see us looking at each other.
- You'll see us not interrupting, but listening until the person is finished with their sentence.
- You'll hear us giving kind, specific, and helpful feedback.
- You'll see us giving each person a chance, so nobody gets left out.

The character learning target at the top of this list will help students meet their two academic learning targets.

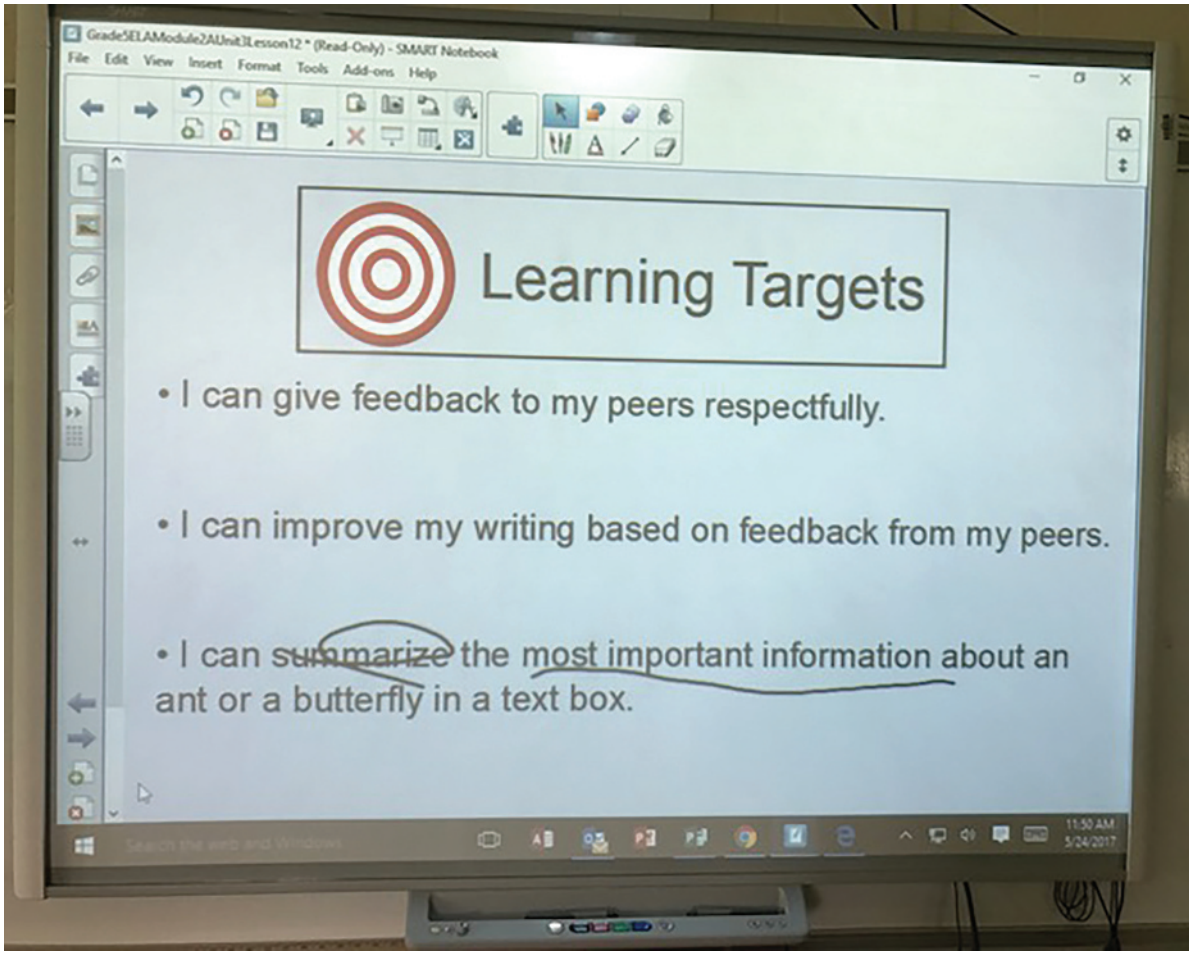


Photo credit: Anne Vilen

Teacher: So, let's write some of those things up here next to "respectfully." These are the things I'll be looking for and listening for as I circulate during your peer conferences.

How can you integrate character learning targets into your daily lessons? The most helpful place to start is to look at the academic learning target(s) for an upcoming lesson and consider what character learning target would be most supportive to students' effort to meet the target(s). Do this for a week until you get the hang of it – and you have debriefed with students – and then try to be disciplined about including character learning targets with every set of academic learning targets you write for your lessons. Table 1.10 shows a few examples of what this might look like.

Table 1.10 Connecting academic and character learning targets

Academic Learning Targets	Relevant Character Learning Targets
I can write a scientifically accurate migratory species profile.	*I can give kind, specific, and helpful feedback to my peers.* *I can incorporate feedback from my peers to improve my work.*
I can describe how friction affects the motion of various objects.	*I can collaborate effectively with my lab partner to generate accurate written data.*
I can gather relevant evidence from exhibits during our fieldwork at the museum.	*I can demonstrate respect and responsibility when representing our Crew off campus.*
I can write my paragraph in cursive.	*I can demonstrate a commitment to craftsmanship to make my writing legible and beautiful.*
I can read out loud with my partner.	*I can demonstrate academic courage.*
I can convert decimals into percentages and percentages into decimals.	*I can persevere by asking relevant questions when math is hard.*
I can accurately record information from my animal research in my project notebook.	*I can stay on task and focused through our entire independent research period.*
I can learn the rules of a new game.	*I can use words to explain rules I understand.* *I can use words to ask questions when I don't understand.*
I can use evidence to evaluate arguments in a debate.	*I can listen first to understand and then to be understood.*

Check Yourself Checklist

Using Learning Targets throughout a Lesson Checklist

Review your lesson plan and check off all that apply:

- ❑ I have strategically chosen when to introduce each learning target based on what's best for the lesson.
- ❑ I have built in enough time to thoroughly "unpack" each learning target so that students will understand where they're headed and how to begin.
- ❑ I have identified opportunities throughout the lesson when I may need to reorient students to the learning target(s).
- ❑ I have made plans to post the learning target(s) and include them on handouts and other classroom materials.
- ❑ The lesson connects character learning targets and academic learning targets in a meaningful way so that students can see how their character helps them make progress academically.
- ❑ I have created a tool or tools that will help students monitor their progress, individually and as a class (e.g., target trackers).
- ❑ I have built in time to debrief progress toward the learning target(s) at the conclusion of the lesson or chunk of learning.

(This checklist is available in the online toolbox at http://www.wiley.com/go/lotolcompanion.)

Learning Target 3: I can create sets of learning targets that ensure my students are aiming for grade-level standards.

Challenge #9: I'm struggling to translate standards into learning targets. I have so many standards to cover. Should there be a learning target for every standard? Is it a one-to-one relationship?

TRY THIS: DISSECT THE STANDARDS BEFORE WRITING LEARNING TARGETS

Now that we have looked closely at many of the lesson-level considerations necessary when writing and using learning targets, it's time to step back and explore how learning targets can be used to help students meet grade-level standards.

Standards are often complex and layered with meaning. Just as you unpack learning targets with your students, it's important to unpack standards for yourself so that you fully understand the expectations for what students should know and be able to do. This often works best when you have the opportunity to do this with your peers – your grade-level team or department – so that you can collectively discuss and debate the meaning of standards and what it would look like for students to meet them. It's not until you have done this that you can be sure that your learning targets will help students meet the standards.

Figure 1.7 shows the key steps for unpacking a sample standard. After going through this process with a sample standard of your own, you will likely never look at your standards the same way again! We want you – preferably in collaboration with teammates or colleagues – to dissect every word to really get at what the standard requires of students and how that impacts your curriculum and instruction. In the section that follows we will look closer at how standards can be bundled together in logical ways to guide the creation of learning targets.

TRY THIS: BUNDLE STANDARDS STRATEGICALLY

It's not necessary, or even wise, to create a learning target for every standard. After unpacking your standards (see Figure 1.7) you will discover that some will require multiple learning targets to address fully. And many standards can be bundled with others, particularly content standards (in science and social studies) and literacy standards, to make logical sequences of learning targets.

As with any design work, conceiving a long-term arc of purposeful student learning is messy, creative, multifaceted, and nonlinear. Figure 1.8 offers some key steps to consider when working to bundle standards to guide your curriculum.

Once you have done this work, you can create your long-term and supporting learning targets, based not just on each stand-alone standard but on bundles of standards that fit well together. As a reminder from *Leaders of Their Own Learning*, a long-term learning target may guide you and your students for an entire unit, case study, or long-term project. Supporting learning targets break the long-term target down into targets for lessons or arcs of lessons. Many teachers also use daily learning targets to further break down supporting targets.

Figure 1.7 Key steps for unpacking standards
SOURCE: The complete version of this document is available in the online toolbox at http://www.wiley.com/go/lotolcompanion.

Step 1
Locate your standards and choose a priority: one strand, one grade level, and one or two standards. (Use your school's curriculum map as a guide for your selection.)
Sample Standard: CCSS RI.2.2. Identify the main topic of a multi-paragraph text as well as the focus of specific paragraphs within the text.

Step 2
Get oriented to the standard(s) and annotate.

- Read standard once for gist. How might you nickname this standard? Why? How does it grow K–12?
- What words seem most important in this standard? Why?

Sample response for CCSS RI.2.2. Identify the main topic of a multi-paragraph text as well as the focus of specific paragraphs within the text.

- Read standard once for gist. How might you nickname this standard? Why? How does it grow K–12?
  - **Main idea standard**
  - As students progress through the grades, they must determine multiple main ideas and themes of texts, identify and explain how key details support those main ideas, and summarize the text.
- What words seem most important in this standard? Why?
  - **Identify, main topic, multi-paragraph, focus, specific paragraphs**
  - These are important words because they signal two different skills embedded in one standard. Students will also need to know what "main topic" and "focus" mean. They also inform the type of text that is needed in order for students to meet this standard.

Step 3
Reread standard more closely.

- What is the thinking this standard requires of students?
- What would mastery of this standard look and sound like?
- What scaffolding would students need to get there?

Sample response for Standard CCSS RI.2.2. Identify the main topic of a multi-paragraph text as well as the focus of specific paragraphs within the text.

- What is the thinking this standard requires of students?
  - Understand that individual paragraphs have specific foci and the paragraphs work together to support the main topic of a larger portion of text
  - Understand concepts of main topic and focus
  - Know strategies for finding focus of a single paragraph
  - Know strategies for connecting foci of single paragraphs to determine the main topic of the multi-paragraph text.
- What would mastery of this standard look and sound like?
  - Student applies strategies to find focus of a single paragraph.
  - Student applies strategies for connecting foci of single paragraphs to determine the main topic of the multi-paragraph text
- What scaffolding would students need to get there?
  - Define main topic and focus.
  - Ensure that students understand text structure (e.g., paragraphs).
  - Practice finding main topic of one paragraph first.
  - Move to finding main topic of multi-paragraph text and finding specific foci of individual paragraphs.

Step 4
Focus on specific word choice in the standard: the verbs, nouns, adjectives, whether there are any "ands" or "ors."

- What are the implications for instruction? Assessment? Writing prompt?
- Look at the standard at the grade level above and below. Based on word choice, what seems key about the grade-specific demands of this standard? (e.g., In RI.7.1, students identify several pieces of evidence. In RI.8.1, students identify the strongest evidence. The grade 8 standard is more challenging, requiring students to be able to weigh evidence.)
- Revisit the nickname you created for your standard. Now that you have read the standard more closely, consider whether you might adjust your nickname.

(*cont. online*)

Figure 1.8 Key steps for bundling standards
SOURCE: This document is available in the online toolbox at http://www.wiley.com/go/lotolcompanion.

Step 1
Know your content standards deeply (see previous Try This section on unpacking standards). Think about not only what the standards are, but why they matter. What are the enduring understandings you want to stick with students?

Step 2
Prioritize your content standards. Of the myriad standards, which will you select as the heart of students' learning – the focus of units, case studies, or long-term projects? Why are those priorities?

Step 3
Know your literacy standards deeply (see previous Try This section on unpacking standards). Unpack the literacy standards (Common Core State Standards [CCSS] or your state literacy standards). Focus on specific words that signal the increased challenge from one grade level to the next.

Step 4
Prioritize your literacy standards. Note that certain standards (e.g., CCSS W.3 about narrative writing or CCSS R.6 about point of view) may actually "drive" the focus or inquiry of units, case studies, or long-term projects. By contrast, other standards will always be in play (e.g., CCSS RI.1 about citing evidence, CCSS R.4 about vocabulary learning strategies, or CCSS RI.10 about reading complex text).

Step 5
Strategically bundle content and literacy. The standards are like ingredients – as if someone has stocked your refrigerator for you. Teaching teams can then decide what meals to make. Bundle standards that are synergistic or complementary. Begin with content. Then consider how certain literacy standards or ingredients naturally go together (e.g., in chemistry, as students learn about the pros and cons of nuclear power, you might teach CCSS RST.8 about analyzing arguments alongside CCSS W.1 about crafting written arguments). Tip: When bundling literacy standards, consider physically cutting up your standards into strips that you can manipulate and literally bundle together (see photo):

- Physically cut up the standards and distribute them across the year. Focus first on the "main ingredients" that will drive student work, projects, etc. (e.g., focus on CCSS W.1–3 types of writing, or Speaking and Listening standards if students will be creating a presentation of some sort).
- Then layer in Reading standards; then remaining Speaking and Listening standards and Language standards.

Step 6
Consider the progression and spiraling of literacy standards. Some standards are so foundational to an effective classroom that they need launching early in the year (e.g., CCSS SL.1 about collaboration). Others are so technical they need to be spread across multiple units, case studies, or long-term projects (e.g., CCSS L.1 about the conventions of standard English). And some are challenging enough that they need more scaffolding and repetition (e.g., CCSS W.2 explanatory writing).

In the following Close Up from Jeanne Boland's eighth-grade class at The Odyssey School of Denver, you can see how what she calls an "uber" long-term learning target, a set of additional long-term targets, and supporting targets nest together to create a coherent learning path for students. You can also see how both content standards and literacy standards are featured. When studying this content, it was particularly germane for her students to focus on these literacy learning targets, which were applicable on almost any given day.

Physically manipulating your standards will help reveal the ways that they can be logically bundled together.

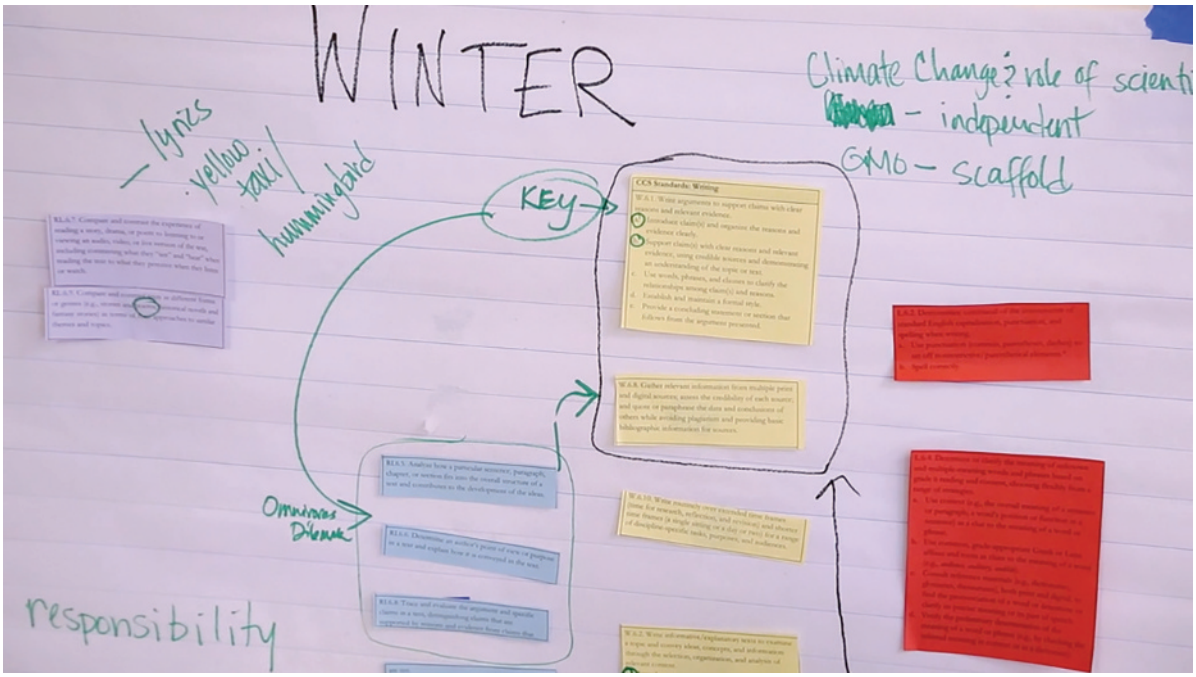


Photo credit: EL Education

Close Up: Nested Learning Targets

Uber Long-Term Learning Target

I can propose a peace plan for the Middle East that takes into account the needs of all parties.

Long-Term Learning Targets

1. I can describe what present-day life is like in Israel and the occupied territories.
   These sample supporting learning targets helped guide specific lessons related to Long-Term Learning Target 1.
   - I can identify which individuals, groups, and nations are involved in the conflict.
   - I can identify the current realities of the occupation (violence, separation wall, checkpoints, permits, conscription, etc.) for Israelis and Palestinians.
   - I can begin to compare/contrast Israeli and Palestinian views of each other and the conflict. I can describe why Israel and Palestine need a peace plan.
2. I can explain why the Middle East is defined as a distinct geographic region of the world.
3. I can compare and contrast the three major religions that arose in the Middle East.
4. I can analyze how religion has influenced the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
5. I can explain both Israeli and Palestinian claims to live in and control the land.
6. I can name and describe significant events in the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
7. I can describe and empathize with a variety of perspectives on significant events in the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
8. I can describe nonviolent resistance and peace-building efforts by Palestinians, Israelis, and internationals.
9. I can create a series of annotated maps that tell the "story" of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict over time.
10. I can actively and respectfully participate in Socratic seminars about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
11. **I can identify point of view and bias within a text.**
12. **I can use the strategy of determining importance to set a purpose for reading a variety of texts.**
13. **I can annotate texts and take notes that help me answer historical questions and further my inquiry.**

Long-Term Learning Targets 11–13 in bold are literacy-focused; they were joined to different content standards and woven into instruction throughout the unit.

Challenge #10: I'm pretty good at writing learning targets, but I struggle to choose or craft assessments that clearly demonstrate that my students have met a target (and are therefore on their way to meeting required standards).

TRY THIS: START BY TRANSFORMING STANDARDS INTO STUDENT-FRIENDLY, *MEASURABLE* LEARNING TARGETS

Turning standards into learning targets involves much more than tacking on the words "I can" in front of a standard. Standards are often inscrutable for students – they do little to motivate or engage them. Learning targets must be a simple sentence, with one verb, that students understand and that motivate them to reach for the target.

For example, in one first-grade classroom, a state standard called for all students to "understand the monetary value of standard U.S. coinage." This is a reasonable and useful standard, but putting the words "I can" in front of that sentence would not make it understandable or motivating to any first grader, not to mention that the verb *understand* would be difficult to measure. The teacher in this classroom used the learning target: "I can make change for a quarter in many different ways." This was exciting for the students. They all got good at it and could demonstrate it to their friends and families. When they were done, they had met the intent of the state standard beautifully.[4]

The target also needs to use verbs that suggest how you can measure students' progress. Verbs like *understand* or *know* are especially problematic. Since you can't actually see inside your students' heads, it's hard to measure what they understand or know. That's why, when you write the learning target, you'll want to choose a verb that makes sense to students and that allows you and your students to measure progress. Verbs like *explain, write, sort, match, assemble* give you and your students a clear picture of what success will look like (refer back to Learning Target 1 of this chapter if you need a refresher on the importance of verbs).

TRY THIS: CREATE A STANDARDS-TARGETS-ASSESSMENT DOCUMENT

Another way to ensure that your assessments actually measure student progress toward learning targets is to create a Standards-Targets-Assessment document (STA). An STA is a tool to help you align standards, targets, and assessments. Some teachers also use STAs as de facto curriculum maps. Table 1.11 is an excerpted example from an STA for a fourth-grade study of North Carolina history.

The following questions will help you design your own STAs.

- What type of assessments best fit the learning targets? (Consider multiple choice, extended written response, performance assessment, or product.)
- How do the assessments enable students to demonstrate the specific knowledge, reasoning, and skills in the learning targets?
- Will a single assessment measure multiple learning targets? Or, do you need multiple assessments of different types?
- Do the assessments enable you to assess students individually? (Group projects are often not good summative assessments of knowledge and skills, but can be excellent assessments of character learning targets.)

[4] This example comes from our 2016 book *Learning That Lasts: Challenging, Engaging, and Empowering Students with Deeper Instruction.*

Table 1.11 Sample standards-targets-assessment document

Standard	Long-Term Target	Summative Assessment
Social Studies		
Understand how human, environmental, and technological factors affect the growth and development of North Carolina.	*I can describe what happened in the Trail of Tears experience.*	RAFT (role-audience-format-topic) assignment, supported by primary sources
ELA		
CCSS R3. Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical text.	*I can compare and contrast the perspectives of Cherokee leaders, white settlers, and the federal government.*	Research-based student-led mini-lesson (5 min.) on the impact of one natural resource
CCSS R6. Compare and contrast a firsthand and secondhand account of the same event or topic.	*I can find information in primary and secondary sources.*	Trail of Tears illustrated timeline from two perspectives
CCSS W3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.	*I can explain how natural resources affected commerce and settlement on Cherokee lands.*	
CCSS W9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.	*I can explain some impacts of European colonization.*	

TRY THIS: ASSESS LEARNING FREQUENTLY

It is essential to create student-friendly learning targets with measurable verbs. These verbs suggest the kind of assessment that will be most appropriate. For example, a short answer format would not be appropriate when students are matching or assembling. Multiple choice will not work when students are explaining.

In addition to matching the type of assessment to the verb in the learning target, it is also important to assess progress frequently. Using quick *ungraded* assessments during or at the end of a lesson will let students know if they're on their way to meeting the learning target(s) without putting too much emphasis on testing. One or two math problems or a short written response to a question will give you the pulse check you need to adjust instruction if necessary, and will help prepare students for higher-stakes assessments that will be graded.

In the section Try This: Debrief, Debrief, Debrief, from Challenge #6, we describe protocols that can be used to help students reflect on their learning. These same protocols (or similar) can be used for quick assessments throughout a lesson:

- Think-Pair-Share/Write-Pair-Share
- Back-to-Back and Face-to-Face
- Human Bar Graph
- Exit Tickets

Chapter 2 offers many more tips for quick and frequent assessments.

Lessons for Leaders: Chapter 1

In supporting schools and districts over the past 10 years to effectively implement learning targets, one thing is clear: school leadership is the key to success. If teachers see this strategy as a mandate from above – a practice they will comply with but don't really value – there is little hope for its success. School leadership must create a culture where teachers can learn, individually and in teams, how to make the practice of using learning targets a foundational part of their instruction. Teachers need freedom to experiment, to fail, to revise, and to discuss honestly what is working for them. They need to grapple with the practice until they see its power and make it their own. This can take months or even years to achieve. Many veteran teachers are still learning more every day about how to create and use learning targets effectively in their lessons.

What does that mean for your leadership? It means leading this change with the right spirit: We are going to take this on together as a school and learn as we go. It means modeling the use of learning targets in meetings and in teacher goals. It means celebrating teachers for having a growth mindset with learning targets and supporting teachers to meet regularly to share their learning about how to make targets work for them. It means patience with the faculty as they get better at this practice.

Holding teachers accountable in this work is important, but accountability should focus on a shared commitment to try things out, learn from them, and share learning with other teachers. If the accountability structure for leadership is reductionist – "Every teacher will have learning targets on her whiteboard every lesson or else. . ." – then teachers may be obedient but it will just be compliance. A more powerful accountability structure would include visiting classrooms through learning walks and sharing general data of what you learn with the staff. The best way to look for successful use of learning targets in a classroom is not the whiteboard, but the students. You can ask students: "What are you working on?" or "What are you trying to learn today?" If they tell you what their learning targets are you know that targets are a part of the culture of their classroom.

Video Spotlight 1.3 is a great example of skillful leadership focused on implementing student-engaged assessment practices throughout a school.

Video Spotlight 1.3: Leading Professional Learning on Student-Engaged Assessment
https://vimeo.com/286915631

This video features four types of adult professional learning focused on student-engaged assessment at Amana Academy in Alpharetta, Georgia:

- Data-informed professional learning
- Coaching teachers
- Walkthroughs
- Learning walks

Video Reflection Questions

1. Principal Cherise Campbell names several strategies that facilitate consistent use of student-engaged assessment practices at Amana Academy. What two or three strategies do you think would have the most leverage at your school and why?
2. Is there anything holding you back from trying new strategies that would allow for greater schoolwide consistency with student-engaged assessment practices? How might you get past these barriers.

What follows are a few tips to help school leaders facilitate consistent and effective practice across the school so that, ultimately, students can take greater ownership of their learning. Table 1.12 then summarizes the key action steps for teachers and students that will lead to success.

Top Tips

- Crafting and using learning targets well is challenging. Teachers need time to learn from you and each other, and to practice. Establishing a school culture where teachers can take risks, discuss mistakes, and keep learning is invaluable to this practice.
- Weave learning targets into the fabric of the school. Adults can benefit from the clarity they provide, just like students can. Craft learning targets for professional development, parents' nights, etc.
- Accountability and compliance are not the goal. Rather than simply looking for evidence of learning targets being written on the board in every classroom, take note of particularly strong learning targets you see. Create structures to lift up these good examples (e.g., via a staff newsletter, at the start of staff meetings) so that everyone can learn from them. Take note of teachers who are struggling with the practice and provide additional support.
- Build time into the school calendar for teachers to understand standards deeply and map their curriculum (or review existing curriculum maps). It is essential that grade-level teams and departments have the expectation and time to dig into standards together – to discuss and debate their meaning and to describe what it would look like if students met them.

Table 1.12 Learning targets: Steps to success

What Should Teachers Do?
Work collaboratively with grade-level and/or content area colleagues to deeply understand standards and what student work that meets standards will look like.
Craft high-quality learning targets that help students know exactly what they are aiming for with their learning.
Write learning targets on the materials that students will reference throughout the learning process (e.g., handouts, anchor charts).
Refer to learning targets throughout lessons and align activities to support students to meet them.
Craft learning targets that are aligned to standards and bundled strategically to support a compelling curriculum.
Craft learning targets that require students to engage in a variety of cognitive processes.
Integrate character learning targets and academic learning targets.
Align standards, learning targets, and assessments.
What Should Students Do?
Engage with the learning target–explain it in their own words with a partner or small group; discuss specific vocabulary; ask clarifying questions; and explore how they will demonstrate how they have met the target.
Articulate how each learning activity is helping them make progress toward learning targets.
Self-assess where they are in relation to a learning target.
See the connection between *how* they are learning (i.e., their character learning targets) and *what* they are learning (i.e., their academic learning targets).
Understand how they will be assessed from the beginning of a learning experience.

Post-Assessment: Track Your Progress: Chapter 1

As you have read Chapter 1, maybe you have had an opportunity to try some of these strategies and techniques along the way. If not, come back to this post-assessment after you have had a chance to do so. Give yourself whatever time you need to address the learning targets and challenges in a meaningful way. Then take a moment to check your progress in Table 1.13, which is the exact same Learning Target Tracker that appeared at the beginning of this chapter.

Circle or place an X along the continuum from Beginning to Exceeding: **How would you rate your progress toward each learning target *at this point in time?*** Use the space provided to make notes regarding any remaining challenges you may be having or ideas for new and different strategies you want to try.

Table 1.13 Chapter 1 learning target tracker

Learning Target 1: ***I can craft high-quality learning targets.***   Beginning----------Developing----------Meeting----------Exceeding   Notes:
Learning Target 2: ***I can use learning targets throughout a lesson to build students' understanding and ownership of their learning.***   Beginning----------Developing----------Meeting----------Exceeding   Notes:
Learning Target 3: ***I can create sets of learning targets that ensure my students are aiming for grade-level standards.***   Beginning----------Developing----------Meeting----------Exceeding   Notes: